

Narratives of Exile

**Palestinian refugee reflections on three villages,
Tirat Haifa, 'Ein Hawd and Ijzim**

D.Phil. Thesis

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Source: Holliday, Eunice. *Letters from Jerusalem during the Palestine Mandate*.
London: Radcliffe Press, 1997:XII

Illustrations

Two houses of aṭ-Ṭīreh that have survived. Following page 17.

The entrance to Ijzim's praying room at the mosque complex. Following page 20.

One of the few built remains of Ijzim—the al-Māḍī house. Following page 20.

New 'Ein Ḥawḍ. Following page 23.

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Notes on the Transliteration and Translation

Transliteration

The transliteration follows the spoken Palestinian dialect. For example, *ṭa marbuṭa* ö is transliterated as “eh,” (as in *maḥrameh*). The long vowel “e” is transliterated “ei” (as in *‘ein*) and the long vowel “o” as “aw” (as in *ḥawd*).

Words from written texts (unlike the oral narration) are transliterated as the literary Arabic.

Names that have often appeared in English are left as they are in the English, such as sheikh, Jaffa or Haifa. The names of Arab authors who have published in English will appear without Arabic diacritics.

In the Hebrew, the consonants are transliterated but no distinction is made between long and short vowels (since the Hebrew spelling of vowels varies).

Original Language of Oral Quotes

When quoting from interviews, * before the quote signifies that the talk was originally in Arabic; # before the quote signifies that the talk was in Hebrew; + before the quote signifies that the talk was in English.

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Chapter I

Introduction: Setting the Framework

1.1 The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and Collective Remembrance

Shortly before this dissertation was submitted, in October 2000, violent clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israelis throughout the Occupied Territories with further repercussions in Israel and the neighboring Arab States. These clashes were another phase in a long history of conflict that began with the Zionist migration to Palestine and the dispossession of the Palestinians. Deposited beneath the current events are memories of a century of discord.

The seeds of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict germinated shortly after the arrival of the first Jewish Zionist settlers in Palestine at the end of the 19th century. The heart of the conflict was then, as still is now, over the control of land. The Zionists, backed by the money and support of world Jewry, made continuous efforts to purchase and settle land. Their acquisitions often led to the evacuation of Arab farmers. At the eve of the 1948 War, the Zionists owned between seven and eight percent of the area of Mandatory Palestine, ten percent was vested in the hands of the British Government and the Arab population owned the rest. Today, ninety two percent of Israel's territory (within the green line) is owned by the state.¹

¹ The "green line" excludes the territories occupied by Israel following the 1967 war. Israel's land is administered by institutions such as the Israel Land Authority, which is directly subject to the state, or by more autonomous organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund. For a review of the unidirectional land transfer in Israel see Yiftachel (1998); Yiftachel and Kedar (2000).

The conflict began to take on a national tone towards the end of Ottoman rule and especially during the British Mandate period (1917-1948).² The year 1917 was a landmark in political developments, remembered for the British Balfour declaration (in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild) that promised to “view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” The same declaration referred to the majority of Arab inhabitants of Palestine as “existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.”

Whereas at first Palestinian acts of resistance erupted sporadically and were limited to specific localities, by 1936 a general Palestinian six months strike was organized, followed by countrywide military activities. The armed activities against Zionists as well as against the British tended to be organized separately in the different regions. The British forces crushed this Arab revolt, which lasted intermittently from 1936 to 1939, and from here on imposed very strict control over Palestinian arms (including the mere possession of knives). The Second World War brought with it economic prosperity and a temporary relaxation of the Palestine conflict. However, immediately after the UN resolution of 29 November 1947 that confirmed the termination of the British Mandate and the establishment of two states in Palestine—an Arab one and a Jewish one, local fighting broke out. The first months of this war were characterized by small-scale local fighting between Jewish and Arab Palestinians, but in mid-May 1948, five Arab armies invaded Palestine and a Jewish state was declared. The Palestinians have long accused the Arab armies of misleading the local population, giving the impression that they would win

² See Tarif Khalidi (1981) and Rashid Khalidi (1997) who discuss the evolution of the Palestinian national consciousness during the late Ottoman period.

Palestine.³ The Arab armies failed to become fully engaged (each for its own reasons) and the prime victims of the defeat were the Arab inhabitants of Palestine.

The 1948 War is a focal point and a crucial watershed in the histories of both the Palestinians and the Zionists. The Jews emerged from it with a state in hand whereas the Palestinians remained stateless. Approximately 85% of the Arab inhabitants of the areas that became the State of Israel were forced to flee, from over four hundred villages and towns.⁴ In light of the disastrous consequences for the Palestinians, it is not surprising that the 1948 War is commonly referred to in Arabic as “al-Nakba,” meaning “the catastrophe”⁵ (en-Nakbeh in colloquial Arabic) whereas for the Jews it is “The War of Independence” or “The War of Liberation.” The great majority of the displaced Palestinians found refuge in the nearby Arab States-- Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, ‘Iraq and Egypt-- later moving on further away. The war of 1967 triggered another wave of Palestinian uproot and dispersion. The Palestinian refugee Diaspora today numbers over four million people.⁶

In order to comprehend the Palestinian exile it is necessary to realize that those who were either forced to leave their villages and towns or decided to leave out of fear

³ This accusation came up during this study’s interviews. For literary examples see al-Qāsim, 1965:20; ‘Allūsh, 1968:148.

⁴ The figures regarding the number of obliterated Arab villages and towns tend to range between a little above and a little below the four hundred. As the Arab population of Palestine subsisted off farming, many major villages had small “satellite” villages in their vicinity. In the case of the Carmel region, the British records did not list all of them. Hence, I tend to side with the higher estimates.

⁵ Nakba also means misfortune, calamity and disaster.

⁶ See http://www.shaml.org/facts/Facts.htm#PALESTINIANS_IN_THE_WORLD. See also Rami Khouri’s article “Palestinian Refugees and Biblical Times” in the *Daily Star* (Beirut), 28 June 2000. The highest estimate of the number of Palestinian refugees today is 4,940,000 (according to Salmān Abū Sitta). 3,677,882 are registered with UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees).

were sure that the evacuation was temporary. Abū Na‘īm (born in 1936), whose portrayal of the war events in Ijzim will appear in chapter II, reflected, like many other interviewees, on the hasty departure from his village:

The feeling was bad but we deceived ourselves, thinking we would be back next week. We did not feel as bad as we should have because we thought we would be back in a week or two. What happened? People imagined this was temporary, as if it was an outcome of rain or flood. We will move for a week and then the flood will be over.⁷ This was the feeling that led to this catastrophe.

From the Palestinian villagers' point of view, the events that preceded their forced migration were like a renewed eruption of the 1936 to 1939 revolt; an aggregate of local events rather than a full scale war. It was only after their dispersion, in light of the mass human dislocation, that their own uprooting was molded into a grander narrative. The uniqueness of the villagers' perspective derives from their experience as actors in the local context. Some scholars solicit a broader outlook that exposes varied strands of the Palestinian experience. Yezid Sayigh wrote against "telescoping" on the Nakba or on single events as they are "depriving me of the detail and texture of a much richer fabric" (1998:19). Sayigh, born in 1955 in Beirut, teaches international politics at the University of Cambridge. In a collection of short articles written on the Nakba's 50th anniversary, Sayigh wrote:

⁷ The Palestinian poet Mu‘īn Bsīsū used the same image in a poem on the Nakba. "And after the flood," he wrote, "nothing was left of this people or this land but the rope and the peg" (*lam yatrūk al-sīl ghayer al-ḥabal wal-watad min dhalika al-sha‘ab aw min dhalika al-balad.*). See the anthology compiled by ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Kayyālī, 1975:235.

For if there is one thing that I come away with from thinking about 1948, it is the need to deconstruct it and subject its distinct strands to separate analysis before reintegrating them into a dynamic narrative that is whole but multifaceted and multilayered and therefore both contractible and expandable. (1998:20)

It is not only the war but also the Palestinian history in its entirety that can be dissected into different facets and layers. The peasantry's descriptions, a corpus that in itself is far from being homogenous, provide an alternative to the political history that tends to dominate the Palestinian discourse. Fouad Moughrabi, originally of Bethlehem and today a political scientist at the University of Tennessee, dwelled on the tension between Palestinian political rhetoric and the experience of common people. He wrote:

For generations of Palestinians in this century, politics has prevailed over anything else in life.... Except, perhaps, for some moments during the *intifāda*, Palestinian politics were usually of the grand style, a kind of macropolitics dealing with strategy and national debate. It was rarely linked to the concrete in people's lives. In other words, it was never a politics of details. Somehow, dabbling with details was always seen as boring and tedious. Details were left to others to take care of, or better yet, postponed till later. That is why Palestinian politics always were concerned with liberating Palestine but not the Palestinians (Moughrabi, 1997:8).⁸

⁸ The above quote is part of Moughrabi's published reflections following a year that he spent in the West Bank as a Fulbright scholar.

The power of the villagers' narratives is that they bring "the details" to the forefront. At the same time, there is a certain hesitance to produce an outright subversive version.

Rafiq reflected on this internal tension, which is not merely a dichotomy between "official" and "popular," but rather a spectrum of historical descriptions, each accentuating different strands. When Rafiq, born in 1947 in aṭ-Ṭireh, spoke of his turbulent life story and his views, he shifted between what he called "talking politics" (-- expressing a more official line, associated with the Palestinian Authority he now worked for) and "not talking politics" (-- the conclusions he drew from his personal experience). Although he was conscious of a seam between "politics" and "non-politics," it was still a little tricky to draw the lines.⁹

The narratives of the villagers of Ṭirat Ḥaifa, Ijzim and 'Ein Ḥawḍ convey a perspective that differs from other Palestinian discourses but even more so from the Jewish Zionist versions of the conflict. Munīr, born in the new 'Ein Ḥawḍ (Israel) in 1953, emphasized his rejection of the historical agenda set by his surroundings and especially the Jewish Israeli apparatus. His response to a Jewish discourse that highlighted events from a distant past (such as the rule of King David or Jewish life in the time of the Second Temple) was to choose to deny the role of history as an explanatory means for his stand (see an extended discussion of his stand on chapter V). And yet in a recent meeting,

⁹ As Rafiq and I met only recently, his observations do not appear in the chapters that follow. Rafiq underwent many changes during his life. His family found refuge in Damascus following the 1948 war and it was there, in his years of youth, that he joined the Palestinian military faction of Aḥmad Jibrīl. He was sent on a mission to Israel and was caught and imprisoned for twelve years in an Israeli jail. Upon his release he rejoined his organization (during the Lebanon war in the early 1980s) and became a warden of Israeli prisoners (due to his command of Hebrew). He then left Jibrīl's organization, grew closer to 'Arafāt, served as the PLO ambassador in Sri Lanka and came to Gaza with 'Arafāt's personnel in the early 1990s.

three years after expressing the above opinion, Munir noted that he had realized that a rejection of a historical framing is impossible; in a conflict dominated by historical images, his only way to refute falsified images is by presenting alternative ones.

Hence, we discover that rejections of the official versions by Zionists and Palestinians alike sometime create mirror effects and an intriguing reciprocal response to a similar agenda. One curious example comes from commemoration practices of Palestinians in Israel. In the first decades after 1948, many obliterated Arab villages were declared “closed military zones” and access to them was granted only on Israel’s day of Independence.¹⁰ On that day, Palestinians living in Israel would pour in to see their villages.¹¹ In recent years these visits have become official commemoration days for the Nakba. Paradoxically, as Israel’s Independence Day is celebrated according to the Jewish calendar (on the 5th of Iyyar), so is the Nakba’s day of commemoration.¹² Not only is the same time a site of contest; the competition also applies to places. Palestinians, by visiting their old villages, by walking these sites, picking the fruit, tending the graves, naming them with Arab names (see these specific examples in chapter IV), are posing their rejection to the Judaization of the land.

¹⁰ Michel Khleifi, a Palestinian film director based in Belgium, dedicated one of his first films to such a visit during the late 1970s. See “Ma’alul celebrates its destruction,” Sindibad Films, 1980.

¹¹ Randa, a social worker born in 1958 to parents from Tīret Haifa (and quoted in chapter V), mentioned these visits: “I remember we used to go every year to aṭ-Tīreh on the “Day of Independence” or in the spring time. We’d go by foot and sit by the spring....They [the older members of the family] would always tell the same stories.”

¹² On the 50th anniversary day of the State of Israel the “Follow-up Committee of the Israeli Arabs” (that unites many Arab Israeli organizations under its umbrella), organized protest processions. On the 51st anniversary of the State, two protest assemblies were organized by the “Organization for the Protection of the rights of the Uprooted Arabs”-- one at the site of the obliterated village of Suḥmātā in the Galilee and the other at Umm al-Zīnāt in the Carmel. (See *Ha'aretz* newspaper, 20 April, 1999).

The overlapping between personal and national commemorative initiatives is linked to a wider phenomenon-- personal narratives are deeply entrenched in collective trends. Although the memories discussed in this dissertation draw from personal experiences, they are socially bound. Two French scholars, first Maurice Halbwachs (1877-1945) and later Roger Bastide (1898-1974), who were prominent in the exploration of memory as a social phenomenon, emphasized that what is supposedly individual memory is in fact embedded in a social framing, and in landmarks and “material centers” (Bastide, 1960:240-248). Since individuals belong to different social groups and are linked to multiple landscapes and objects, there is a variety of collective “scripts.” Moreover, collective patterns of groups, according to Bastide, remain in constant flux and are continuously reconstructed. It would be more accurate to speak of remembrance (re-membrance) rather than memory (Winter and Sivan, 1999). The investigation of scripts of remembrance that are of relevance for Palestinian refugees should be taken as a means of analysis, facilitating a better understanding, rather than a final aim.

1.2 A Brief History of the Three Villages in the Palestinian Context

Palestine can be divided into relatively distinct regions, each with its own geographical attributes. To avoid suggesting far-fetched implications that over-unify the characteristics of all the obliterated Palestinian villages, the villages chosen for this study are from one region. T̄iret Ḥaifa, ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and Ijzim, were three neighboring villages located on the Western slopes of Mount Carmel, overlooking the Mediterranean. All three were relatively prosperous villages that existed for many centuries. The detailed history of these villages is mostly obscure, however-- hundreds of years go unrecorded, neither orally nor in the literature. Occasionally, eras and events are revealed through scarce sources such as an early Ottoman survey of villages (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah, 1977), legal documents from the local Moslem court (*maḥkameh shar ‘iyyeh*) (Yazbak, 1998) or the biographies of prominent individuals from one of the villages (Mannā’, 1986:344; Schölch, 1993:181; Yazbak 1998:147).

The name “Palestine” and its geographical borders have shifted with history. Originally derived from the name of the Philistines who invaded its coast in biblical times, the name “Palestine” first appeared in the writings of Herodotus. It was used primarily as an adjective for Syria and probably applied to the coastal region (Lewis, 1980). In the Middle Ages, Palestine was a southern county in the larger entity of greater Syria. Medieval Arab geographers described its fertility, the rare need for irrigation, and the two largest towns-- al-Ramla and Jerusalem (Le Strange, [1890] 1965:28). In the 17th and 19th centuries, Gerber (1998:563) argued, there probably was a recognized entity referred to in texts as “*Filasṭīn*” or “*bilāduna*” (our country) by the local inhabitants. Even if the

borders of this entity were not always clear, the term was in usage during the Ottoman era, as we can gather from the establishment of the Jaffa-based Arab newspaper *Filastīn* in 1911.¹³ With the arrival of the British Mandate and division of the Middle East among imperial powers, the borders of Palestine were clearly delineated (Bernard Lewis, 1980).

Palestine's history is dominated by foreign rule. If we look at the last millennium, we find that the Crusaders, who arrived from Europe at the end of the 11th century, were defeated by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the Kurdish Moslem commander.¹⁴ They were restored to power for a few more decades, only to be defeated again by the Mamluk viceroys of Egypt who governed Palestine for over two hundred years. The Ottoman Empire succeeded the Mamluks in 1517 and reigned for four hundred years, until the First World War. The British captured Palestine at the end of 1917, ruling through a United Nations' Mandate until 1948.

Although, and possibly also because, Palestine was part of larger empires, local communities that stayed intact through the years enjoyed relative independence. The local elite accumulated power and often served as intermediaries between the indigenous population and the foreign authority. Most of the prominent families lived in the cities, the most common example being Jerusalem, whose family struggles had an impact far beyond the city itself (Hoexter, 1973). Although some studies as well as popular depictions of

¹³ The founders of the newspaper were two Christian Orthodox brothers-- Yūsuf and 'Īsā Da'ūd.

¹⁴ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn was the Ayūbbī army commander who led the re-conquest of the Holy Land from the Crusaders in the late 12th century. His most famous battle was the Battle of Ḥiṭṭīn in 1187, in which the Crusaders suffered heavy losses and temporarily retreated from the Holy Land. According to oral tradition, it was during his reign that the village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ was established.

Palestine tend to emphasize the divide between urban and rural populations,¹⁵ the location and history of ʿEin Ḥawḍ and Ijzim make this divide less evident.¹⁶ The city of Haifa, which was within a few hours' walking distance from all three villages, began to prosper in the 19th century. There was a growing agricultural market in the city, and the city mediated villages' consumption of foreign products. Notables who came originally from the coastal villages (and especially the al-Mādīs of Ijzim) secured influential offices in Haifa.¹⁷ Certain individuals went as far as to move their permanent residences to the city. Many rural families, especially during the British Mandate, had branches both in their village of origin and in Haifa. Conversely, prominent families in Haifa owned land in the nearby rural areas.¹⁸

The sociologist Salim Tamari (1998) points to the divide within Palestine between the highlanders (of the mountains of Nablus, Jerusalem and Hebron) and the lowlanders of the coastal plains. Whereas the highlanders were more conservative, the lowlanders,

¹⁵ For this stereotypical divide between city and country in the genre known as "travelers' accounts" see Baldensperger (1913).

¹⁶ See Baer (1982) for a comparative analysis of different patterns of rural-urban relations in the Middle East.

¹⁷ One influential political figure who was born in Ijzim in 1909 was sheikh Moḥammad Taqī al-Dīn al-Nabhānī. Receiving his higher education Cairo, he later returned to Palestine to become a judge in the *sharī'a* court. In 1953 he established Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, the liberation party, which is still active today and whose aim is to reinstate Islamic rule. See the party's website on <http://msanews.mynet.net/MSANEWS/199612/19961219.1.html>, 1 June 2000.

Taqī al-Dīn's grandfather, Yūsuf bin Īsmā'īl al-Nabhānī (1849-1932), a scholar of Sufism, wrote the seminal book: *kitāb jāmi' karāmāt al-awliyā'* (a collection of the miracles of the holy men) published in Cairo by dār al-kutub al-'arabiyya al-kubrā, 1911. Thank you to Sean O'Fahey for drawing my attention to this book.

Another religious leader who came from the district's villages is Sheikh 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Sallūm of ʿEin Ḥawḍ, active in the second half of the 19th century. He became a scribe (*kātib*) and then a judge (*nā'ib*) in the *sharī'a* court, first in Haifa and then in Caesarea (Yazbak, 1998:51-2).

¹⁸ See, for example, the history of the al-Ḥajj family of Haifa who owned land in Kufr Lām, at-Ṭireh and 'Ein Ghazāl. For a short review of this family see booklet published by The Municipality of Haifa on 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Ḥajj, n.d.

including both the city dwellers and the rural population, were more liberal, open to change and oriented toward the outside world. Tamari's conceptualization fits the present study. The communities of the three villages were immersed in economic and social relations with other villages and towns.¹⁹ Agricultural innovations such as tractors and automated olive presses were adopted, and modern businesses were established such as bus and taxi companies and wholesale commerce (Abū Rāshed, 1993; al-Māḍī, 1994). Apart from the link to Haifa there were close links among the villages, including the custom of taking "foreign" women (mainly from the district's villages but sometimes from further away).

Until recently, Ottoman rule in Palestine (especially in its late phase) was described in the literature as stagnant and declining, a state of affairs that ended only with modernization brought about by the British. However, new research, based on understudied Ottoman sources, emphasizes continuity in the transition from one empire's hold to the other rather than a total transformation (Doumani, 1995; Yazbak, 1998). Change came about gradually, often stemming from local circumstances. Judging from the villagers' oral testimonies, two main episodes from the Ottoman period imprinted a lasting negative mark on local memories. One was the forced conscription of village men and the harsh conditions they endured in the Turkish army. Many never returned and

¹⁹ The location of Ṭīret Ḥaifā, on the southern outskirts of Haifa, exposed it to external influence and pressure from the 19th century. German Templars who settled in Haifa in the 1860s, expanded in later years their land holdings and purchased agricultural plots in Ṭīret Ḥaifā. There were continuous incidents between the local population and the Templars. In 1910, a Templar guard killed a Ṭīrawī, followed by the Tirawīs taking revenge and killing a Templar. Furthermore, expansion from the east was felt from the 1920s when the Jewish neighborhood of Aḥūza (originally known as Aḥuzat Shmuel, named after Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner) was established on the mountain north east of Ṭīret Ḥaifā.

those who miraculously did either deserted or came back only after many years. The second episode still remembered by some interviewees was the famine during the First World War.²⁰

The British period, which is the background to many of the oral accounts in this study, brought economic prosperity to the northern coastal region. Haifa's population increased rapidly, from 24,640 in 1922 to 128,800 in 1944.²¹ British military camps were erected on the outskirts of the city and interdependence developed between the villagers and the camps; many of the villagers worked in the camps or sold products to the British Army. Other villagers found work with the Mandate government as policemen or as soldiers and over 9,000 Arab men were drafted into the British army during the Second World War, of whom 2,854 served in The Royal East Kent Regiment known as the "Buffs" (*Sefer Toldot HaHagana* 3, 1:111-2). Moreover, growing industry supplied jobs such as building and working at Haifa's port, Haifa's oil refineries or 'Atlit's salt industry.²²

²⁰ For a description of conditions in Palestine during the late Ottoman period see Robinson-Divine, 1994. For a general description of the Decline of the Ottoman Empire during this period see Palmer, 1992.

²¹ See Shinon Stern, 1980:52.

The split between the different segments of the population is presented in this atlas as follows: In 1922, according to a British census, there were 9377 Moslems, 8863 Christians, 6230 Jews and 164 "others." In 1944 the estimate is of 35,900 Moslems, 26,600 Christians, 66,000 Jews and 300 "others." As the population is divided according to religion, it is not clear what percentage of the Christians was Arab, although it was clearly the great majority.

²² One can learn of the close link between the villages and Haifa by the following example. In 1941 there were two buses running continuously between Tīret Ḥaifā and Haifa. They would normally depart when they were full and usually when one bus was heading towards Haifa the other was returning. See Israel State Archive, M 2457/71/41--Mandate police files. The bus drivers' testimonies for an investigation of a murder case. Summer, 1941.

Parallel to this fast economic expansion, the British government needed more land. Villages on the coastal plain faced ownership disputes because roads, camps and quarries were erected, and because of a British initiative to re-register the division of land.²³ In some cases, land was expropriated from private owners, including the peasants of Ijzim, ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and especially Ṭīret Ḥaifā, which was the closest to Haifa. In the last months of the First World War, the British army, hastily constructing a railway line connecting Ḥaifa and Rafah, took land (“without any formality whatever”) from at-Ṭīreh’s residents who owned plots near the sea.²⁴

The land ownership regulations changed drastically from the mid-19th century as part of general reforms known as the *Tanzīmāt*. The Ottomans introduced a new land registration method in order to “provide for the eventual registration and issuance pursuant thereto of title deeds on every piece of privately held land in the Empire” (Ruedy, 1971:123). Whereas until then much land was collectively owned (*mushā’*), or was state owned land leased to cultivators for long periods (*mīrī*), the Turks now encouraged registering land under private ownership and registering it as such in the *ṭāpū*. *Ṭāpū*, commonly pronounced *ṭābū* in Palestine, referred to the “title deed” by which an inhabitant of the Empire could prove his right of usufruct to the *mīrī* land in his possession. These measures assisted the Ottomans in better controlling the local

²³ See Israel State Archive, M 3484/GP 4 (39) and M 3484 4/GP (38).

²⁴ See British correspondence regarding the Ṭīrawīs following the construction of the railway line between Rafah-Haifa in 1918-1919. Public Record Office C.O. 733/50
This file includes a letter regarding the matter from the High Commissioner of Palestine to the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies 2.11.23

population for extracting taxes and conscription to the army (Asad, 1975:12-3).

Therefore, some peasants in Palestine feared to register their property under their own name and allowed notables (mostly from the large cities of Beirut, Damascus, Jaffa and Jerusalem) to register it as their own.²⁵ By the end of Ottoman Rule, the largest land-owning families (roughly 120 families) owned an average of 9000 *dūnum* whereas the average holding of a peasant was 50-60 *dūnum* (Graham-Brown, 1980:73).²⁶

Nonetheless, the *Tanzīmāt* edicts did place more land in the private ownership of ordinary peasants. During the British Mandate, those who wished to ratify their ownership were required to produce copies of their Turkish *ṭābū* ownership (known as *kūshān*, pl. *kawāshīn*).²⁷ Disputes between the government and the peasants ensued when peasants who cultivated land or used it for grazing could not produce ownership documents.²⁸

Ṭīret Ḥaifā (aṭ-Ṭīreh): There were at least four villages named aṭ-Ṭīreh in Palestine-- two of them uprooted in 1948 and two that are still intact. It is perhaps for that reason that the village name this study is concerned with was often accompanied by an adjective characterizing it specifically. It was known as “Ṭīret Ḥaifā” or “Ṭīret al-Karmel,” both

“Without any formality whatever” was the term used by Lieut. Colonel Nancarrow from the Central Claims Bureau in Palestine to describe the situation to the Director of Lands, Jerusalem. See P. R. O. C.o.733/50, 1.10.23

²⁵ The Zionist movement, especially in its early years, purchased large plots from some of these families. The peasants living on the land, who did not own it according to the land registration, were dispossessed and were amongst the first to demonstrate against the “Zionist invasion.” One famous incident erupted on land purchased from the Sursuq family of Beirut in Marj Ibn ‘Amr (the Jezreal valley). Clashes between the uprooted peasants and the newly settled Jews resulted in casualties on both sides (see Rashid Khalidi, 1988:215-224).

²⁶ *Dūnum*, the common measurement of land in Palestine, equals 1000 m².

²⁷ For a description of Mandate land laws (ordinances) see Shepherd, 1999:99-100.

²⁸ For an example of a dispute between the government and villagers see the legal case between the Wushshāhī family of Ijzim, Bedouins using grazing land as well as cultivation land east of the village, and the British government. Israel State Archive, Mandate Collection, M 3484/GP 4 (39)

names echoing its geographic location, as well as “Ṭīret al-Lawz” or Ṭīreh of the almonds, which were one of the village’s main crops and a source of pride along with the vast number of olive trees.²⁹ The origin of the name at-Ṭīreh is probably foreign and its meaning is unknown.³⁰

With the 19th century wave of travelers and explorers coming from Europe and North America to rediscover the holy land, came an account written by the British Survey of Western Palestine, financed by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF). The survey, led by lieutenants Conder and Kitchener, published a seven-volume report, dedicating a few short sentences to each of the villages in Palestine.³¹ They quote vice consul Rogers who fixed the population of at-Ṭīreh at 1200 souls in 1859.³² However, they add that due to conscription to the Turkish army, “the village has decreased in prosperity.”³³ Some interviewees nowadays support this claim, telling stories of their fathers or grandfathers who were taken to the Turkish army and never came back. Many families became impoverished without a breadwinner. However, by the end of Ottoman rule in Palestine, circa 1916-7, at-Ṭīreh was a large village of approximately 230 households.³⁴

²⁹ See Muṣṭafā Murād al-Dabbāgh, volume II, 1974:590-1. Dabbāgh notes that there were 4600 *dūnum* planted with olives. Only few of the olives’ plantations remain to this day.

³⁰ For an extended discussion of the possible origin and meaning of the name at-Ṭīreh, see Abū Rāshed, 1993.

³¹ The PEF, like the many travelers’ accounts, paid little attention to the local population and focused on Biblical aspects of the Holy Land. For a critique of this phenomenon see Said, 1978; Doumani, 1992.

³² Vice Consul Rogers was the British representative in Haifa.

³³ The Survey of Western Palestine, Vol. 1- “Memoirs”, 1881:285.

³⁴ According to the *Nufūs* ledgers. Israel State Archive, samekh 380

Aṭ-Ṭīreh was located approximately 12 kilometers south of Haifa, at the edge of the western slope of the Carmel ridge.³⁵ British statistics from the village survey conducted in April 1945 fix the number of its inhabitants at 5,270 of whom 30 were Christians.³⁶ The village paid taxes for 3,409 *dūnum* of plantations, 15,035 *dūnum* of cereal and owned 3954 *dūnum* of uncultivable land (used mainly for herding). It was the largest village in the district in terms of population.³⁷

After aṭ-Ṭīreh's depopulation in the war of 1948, most of the village houses remained intact. New Jewish immigrants were housed in them and the original Arab-built environment only gradually disappeared. Today, few of the village houses still stand and new Jewish houses (mainly apartment blocks) now cover the site. 'Abdallāh Salmān's house (the village *mukhtār* or headman), that was barely finished in 1948, has become a police station and one of the village's mosques was turned into a synagogue (see photographs on the next page). Tirat Hakarmel, the name of the Jewish neighborhood on the outskirts of Haifa set on the ruins of aṭ-Ṭīreh, numbers approximately 17,900 inhabitants.³⁸

Ijzim: As in the case of aṭ-Ṭīreh, the date of Ijzim's establishment is unknown. The Ottoman registers from the year 1596 fix its heads of households (all Muslim) at 10,

³⁵ This distance from Haifa is quoted from *al-Mawsū'a al-Filastīniyya*, first volume, 1984:130. Today, the area of the city of Haifa is much larger, and it incorporates aṭ-Ṭīreh's area into it.

³⁶ Southwest of aṭ-Ṭīreh, on the plain, was a farm and a small village, Sheikh Bureiq, inhabited by Armenians. Possibly some of the Christians listed under "aṭ-Ṭīreh" were actually living there.

³⁷ See the British Mandate *Village Statistics* (as at 1.4.45), Plate: "Haifa Sub-District."

³⁸ The number refers to 31 December 1998. See "List of Settlements and their Population" published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), October 1999. (Hebrew)



The home of ‘Abdallah Salman in at-Tireh. Today, an Israeli police station.



One of at-Tireh’s mosques. Today, a synagogue.

whereas in at-Ṭīreh the number for the same period was 52. Hence, we can infer that it was still a relatively small village during the early Ottoman Period. The origin of the village name is, again, obscure. The suggestions are that it is possibly a mispronunciation of the Cana'anite word Ikzib (meaning inundation), a derivative of the Arabic root j.z.m., meaning "to fell," or simply a non-Arab name (see al-Māḍī, 1994).

Unlike most of the villages along the coast, which lay close to the main road, Ijzim was located three kilometers east of it. The village was built on an oblong hill, 170 meters above sea level, which was bordered by a large plain (*sahl al-Ḥammām*) from the northeast and a wide valley from the south. In 1945, the British village statistics reported a total of 2,970 villagers in Ijzim, all Moslem, apart from 140 Christians. The villagers owned much land-- 2,367 *dūnum* of plantations, 17,7918 *dūnum* of cereal and 3,370 *dūnum* of uncultivable land (Dabbāgh, 1974; *Al-Mawsū'a al-Filasṭīniyya*, 1984; Walid Khalidi, 1992a).

The dominant family was the al-Māḍī family. The al-Māḍīs, according to the oral tradition, arrived on the scene after the village was established. Some oral accounts claim the family originated from east of the Jordan River, as there are still people by that name in Jordan today. One member of the family claimed that the al-Māḍīs escaped from blood revenge in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula.³⁹ Marwān al-Māḍī wrote in his book on Ijzim that they are of Bedouin origin, a claim supported by other history books (Mannā', 1986; Yazbak, 1998:147).

By the early years of the 19th century, the family of al-Māḍī already owned vast property in Ijzim's locality and their wealth probably affected their integration into the heart of the district's political élite. The most prominent member of the family at that time was Mas'ūd al-Māḍī, who was appointed as *multazim* (tax farmer) under the rule of Sulaymān Pasha (1805-1819) (Yazbak, 1998:23). Baer notes that the *multazim* in Palestine was, in practice, a powerful semi-autonomous ruler: "In the villages belonging to his domain, he had military power, arbitrated the disputes of the fellahs and inflicted punishment upon offenders" (Baer, 1982:131). Mas'ūd al-Māḍī became *sheikh mashayekh* (sheikh of sheikhs) of the 'Atlit coast, ruling from Haifa in the north to Umm Khāled (near today's Netanya) in the south (Mannā', 1986). With the conquest of Palestine by Ibrāhīm Pasha of Egypt and the attempt to weaken local leaders, Mas'ūd was deposed from his post as tax collector, then later reinstated. However, in 1834 Mas'ūd and his son 'Īsā were both publicly executed near the gates of Acre for allegedly organizing the peasant revolt against the Egyptians (Yazbak, 1998:23-4,147).

The luxurious mosque complex that Sheikh Mas'ūd built in 1808, including a well, study rooms, a prayer room, a courtyard and steps that lead to the roof, still stands today, abandoned, in the midst of Kerem Maharal, the Jewish settlement that was established on Ijzim. Above the entrance to the prayer room is an inscription of sheikh Mas'ūd's

³⁹ There are al-Māḍīs also in Egypt and Lebanon but it is said that they are not of the same origin.

dedication (see photograph on the next page). Mas'ūd al-Māḍī also built the mosque of the village of Lūbyā in the Eastern Galilee, as his daughter was married there.⁴⁰

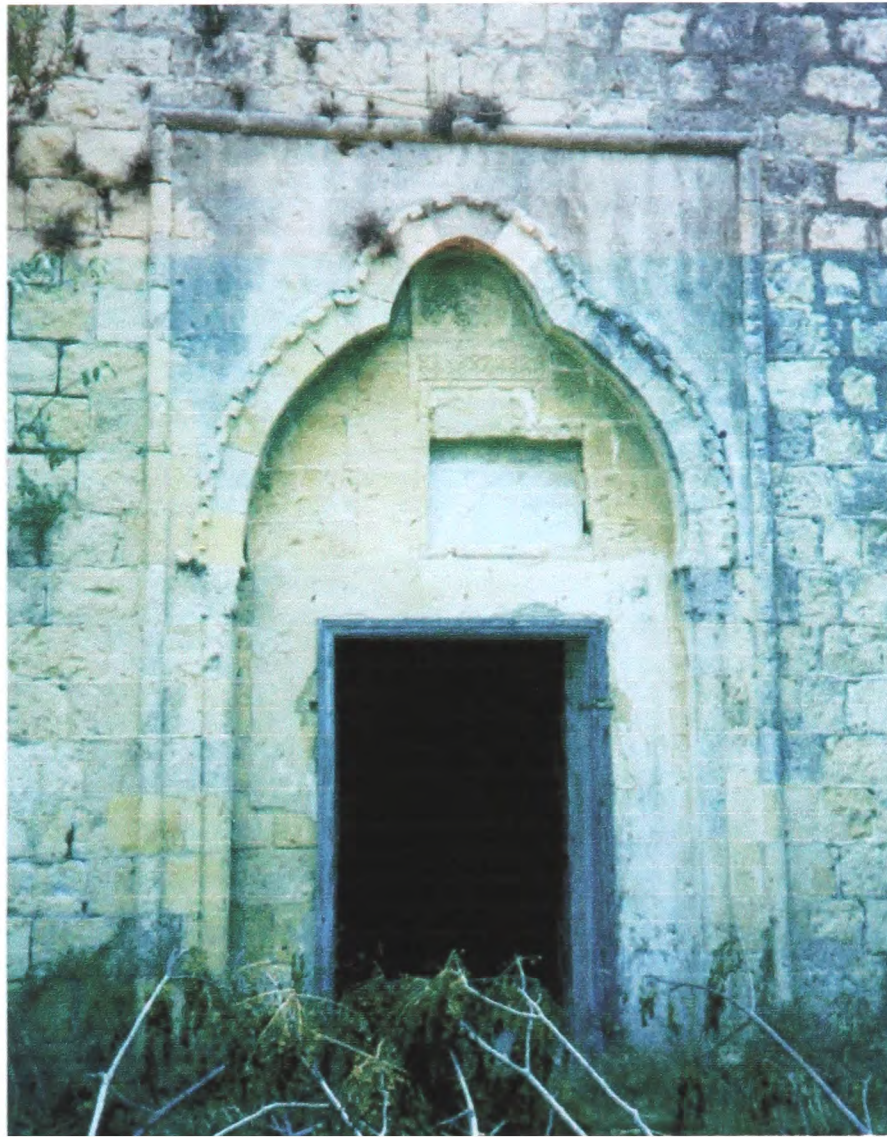
Members of the al-Māḍī family remained politically important even after Mas'ūd's execution. By the second half of the 19th century, Ottoman reforms had integrated local dignitaries into the state bureaucracy.⁴¹ Nā'if al-Māḍī, Mas'ūd's grandson, who, like his grandfather, owned large plots of land, was also a public figure. One of the impressive old buildings still rising above the new houses built on the ruins of Ijzim is the house that Nā'if built for his first wife, when he married a second at the age of sixty seven. The house resembles an ancient fortress but in fact was built in the 1920s of stones collected from the ruins of Caesarea (see photograph on the second next page).⁴²

In 1949, Jewish immigrants from Czechoslovakia established Kerem Maharal in Ijzim). Some Jizmāwīs (people of Ijzim) remained in Ijzim until 1949, when they were forced to leave by the Israeli army (described further in chapter II). Few families lived in scattered houses and huts in the village vicinity until the 1970s, but as the authorities prevented them from renovating the old houses or building new ones, and as they were remote from facilities such schools and shops, they gradually moved out. A single Arab

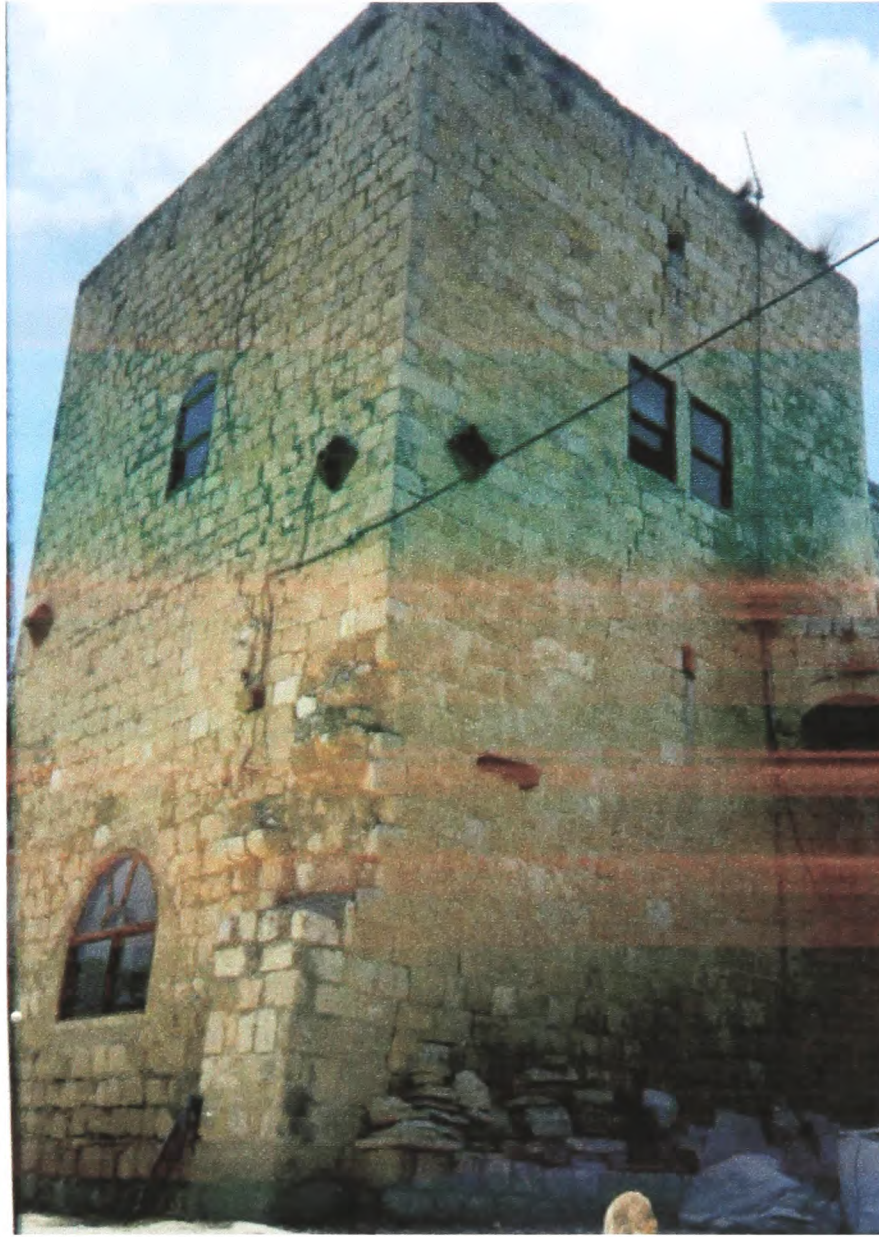
⁴⁰ See Mahmoud Issa's study (1997) of the history of Lūbyā.

⁴¹ See, for instance, the political history of 'Abdallāh al-Māḍī and his son Mu'in at the turn of the 19th century and the early 20th century (Yazbak, 1998:147; Seikaly, 1995:161-3).

⁴² This information was given me by Abū Da'ūd.



The entrance to Ijzim's praying room at the mosque complex. The inscription of Mas'ud al-Madi is just above the door lintel.



One of the few built remains of Ijzim-- the al-Madi house.

family still lives on its land in Māqūra, a kilometer south east of Ijzim. Kerem Maharal today numbers approximately 365 inhabitants.⁴³

‘Ein Hawḍ: The rough outlines of the oral tradition regarding the origin of ‘Ein Hawḍ are known to all members of the village, from young to old. According to this oral tradition, the founder of the village, known as Abū al-Heijā' (meaning father of battle or war), came to Palestine from a small village near al-Muṣul in Kurdistan with Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. However, the details regarding his arrival, his exact name, the consequences of his death and his burial place vary. Abū al-Heijā' was either a brother or an officer in Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's army, who arrived in Palestine after having captured Egypt. Some say his name was Ḥussām al-Dīn al-Samīn Abū al-Heijā', who is buried in a shrine that still stands in Wādi al-Ḥammām near the village of Kawkab Abū al-Heijā'. Others suggest that he was actually buried in Jerusalem and perhaps it is his tombstone that is kept in the museum at the holy mount (*mathaf al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf*).⁴⁴

The clan's founder received, as a reward for his efforts, plots of land at different sites in Palestine, which he distributed among his sons. On these plots, called *iqṭā'iyeh*, the Abū al-Heijā's established villages. Some of these sites were associated with the famous battles of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn: al-Ḥadatheh was located near the site of the battle of Ḥiṭṭin, al-Ruways near the site of the siege of Acre, ‘Ein Hawḍ near the Crusaders’

⁴³ The number refers to 31 December 1998. See “List of Settlements and their Population” published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), October 1999. (Hebrew)

⁴⁴ Jamīl referred me to an article that discusses the inscription on the tombstone that is kept at the holy mound. See Hamilton and Abul-Hajj, 1979.

fortress of 'Atlit. Other villages that belonged to Abū al-Heijā' were Sirīn, Kawkab, Sha'ab and al-Yamūn. Until 1948, when Sirīn, al-Ḥadatheh and al-Ruways were uprooted, there were members of the family of Abū al- Heijā' in all these villages.

According to oral tradition, the village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ has existed for almost eight hundred years. It has always been a small village. The number of its inhabitants in 1945, according to the last census conducted by the British, was 650. At that time, the villagers owned 1,418 *dūnum* of plantations, 2,223 *dūnum* of taxable cereal and 880 *dūnum* of uncultivable land. Al-Dabbāgh (1974) notes that until 1948, the Jews did not take possession of a single *shiber* (the measure of the span of one hand) of its land. The reason may have been that the land was *waqf* (Moslem endowment), which prevented it being sold to people other than family members.

The village was situated on the southern slope of a large hill, 120 meters above sea level, overlooking the Mediterranean coast, bordered on the south by a small valley. According to some of the oral accounts, a wall once surrounded it with four gates, one in each direction of the wind. 'Ein Ḥawḍ's name, unlike that of Ijzim and aṭ-Ṭīreh, is clearly Arabic and means The Spring of the Basin. However, there is no spring in the immediate vicinity of the village.

Whereas most of the built environment of the Arab villages along the coast was either intentionally destroyed immediately after the war of 1948 or deteriorated through the years afterwards (as in the case of Ijzim and aṭ-Ṭīreh), the houses of 'Ein Ḥawḍ were

deliberately preserved by their Jewish inhabitants. In 1953, a group of artists, headed by the architect and artist Marcel Janco, settled in 'Ein Ḥawḍ and named their new artists' village 'Ein Hod (roughly translated from the Hebrew as "the glorious spring"). It was Janco's idea and part of his "dada" concept to preserve the original architecture and restore the Arab style (Slyomovics, 1998:72-6). The artists' village expanded through the years and numbers today a little over 400 Jewish inhabitants.⁴⁵ It is a popular tourist attraction nowadays, with its many galleries and picturesque appearance.

After 1948, when the great majority of 'Ein Ḥawḍ's inhabitants fled to the Arab lines or were transferred by the Israeli army from the nearby Dalyet al-Karmel to the border, a few of the villagers managed to stay within Israel. One of them, Abū Ḥilmī (Muḥammad Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Ghanī), continued to tend his plot at *al-waṣṭānī*, east of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. At first he and some other family members lived there in shacks and gradually they started to build houses. However, the state of Israel, although recognizing the inhabitants of this settlement as its citizens, has not recognized the settlement itself. To this day there are no signs pointing to its location, no paved road leading to it (but rather an eight kilometer dirt road) nor roads within it, no official supply of water, sewage system, electricity or telephone line.⁴⁶ The new settlement, commonly known by its inhabitants as 'Ein Ḥawḍ or 'Ein Ḥawḍ aj-Jdīdeh ("the new 'Ein Ḥawḍ"), numbers today over 200 residents (see photographs on the next two pages).

⁴⁵ The number refers to 31 December 1998. See "List of Settlements and their Population" published by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Israel), October 1999. (Hebrew)

⁴⁶ The Ministry for Environmental Affairs recently re-affirmed a previous decision to recognize 'Ein Ḥawḍ. However, no practicalities were yet implemented.



New 'Ein Hawd, established shortly after the 1948 war a few kilometers east of the original village. (A view from the south).



Children of the new 'Ein Hawd looking into the village well. *Kibbutz Nir Ezion* in the background.

1.3 *The Region and the Landscape*

Mount Carmel is a small ridge, 700 km², stretching along the Mediterranean coast for roughly thirty kilometers between the Haifa Bay in the north to Caesarea in the south, its highest peak reaching 546 meters. It is assumed that the name Carmel is derived from two Semitic words—*kerem/karm* and *el/allah*, namely, the vineyard of god. In the bible, both in the book of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the name is used to denote fertile land (in contrast to barren land) or land covered with trees and bushes.⁴⁶ Most of the mountain was, and still is, covered with Mediterranean ever-green forest dominated by low oak trees (*Quercus calliprinos*) and Terebinthes (both *Pistacia lentiscus* and *Pistacia palastinea*) with many other bushes and creeping plants in between. It is mostly a dense thicket that can be crossed only on trails. In its bare parts forestation (mostly of pine species) began during the British Mandate and is carried on to this day. The ridge, comprised of limestone and some “pockets” of volcanic rock, enabled the natural creation of hundreds of Carst caves, especially along its western slopes. The creation of the caves was also due to the relatively high yearly average rainfall-- 950 mm at the top of the mountain and 700 mm along the slopes.

Until 1948, mostly Arab villages and some Jewish settlements covered the coastal plain along the western slopes of Mount Carmel.⁴⁷ Many of the villages and settlements were located above the coastal soil, atop the long and narrow strips of fossilized sandstone (known in Arabic and Hebrew as *kurkar*) stretching from north to

⁴⁶ See Isaiah 10:18, Jeremiah 2:7. “Carmel” is also used for “grain” (Leviticus 23:14; II Kings 4:42).

⁴⁷ The Jewish settlements, established as part of the Zionist project, are Zikhron Ya’aqov (established 1882), Bat Shlomo (1889), ‘Atlit (1903), Kibbutz Ma’ayan Zvi (1938), Kibbutz Beit Oren (1939), Kibbutz Neveh Yam (1939), Kibbutz ‘Ein Carmel (1947). Baron Edmund Rothschild supported some of these settlements.

south. Other villages and settlements, including the villages of this study, were situated on the Western foot of Mount Carmel.⁴⁸

Via Maris, the major thoroughfare that historically linked Ancient Egypt and the northern empires of Mesopotamia, did not run through the Carmel Coast, as it was once densely forested and inundated by swamps.⁴⁹ The way's main branch stretched along the coast but left it near Caesarea, turning east and running through Wādī 'Āra. It was only in the 1930s that the British Mandate Government opened a road that ran at the foot of Mount Carmel, connecting in a direct line the cities of Jaffa/Tel-Aviv and Haifa. The road and other British investments in the region induced economic prosperity (in comparison to other, more peripheral regions).

Along the Carmel coast, especially as the months of the war of 1948 progressed, the Israeli forces were eager to evacuate the Arabs to insure safe passage along the Haifa-Jaffa/Tel-Aviv thoroughfare. Of the tens of Arab villages that dotted this area, only two Moslem Palestinian villages were not uprooted—Fredīs and Jisr az-Zarqā'.⁵⁰ In addition, the two Druze villages situated at the top of the Carmel Ridge-- Dalyet al-Karmel and 'Isfiyyeh, also remained in place.⁵¹ The Druze's doctrinal deviance and long-standing separation from mainstream Islam, as well as the political

⁴⁸ The low *kurkar* ridges were created through the petrification of sand dunes. Ancient and modern quarries are scattered along them.

⁴⁹ Via Maris is a very ancient route. Inscriptions, such as the ones that record Thutmose III's expeditions to Palestine, testify that it was in use during the second millennium B.C.

⁵⁰ In both cases—Fredīs and Jisr al-Zarqā', the villagers abstained from joining the fighting and Jewish neighbors intervened on their behalf (to prevent any deportation).

⁵¹ The Druze (*Durūz*, in Arabic) are members of a sect that divorced from Islam during the reign of the Fatimid Caliph al-Ḥākim in Egypt at the end of the 10th century. They are settled mainly in Syria and Lebanon and number approximately 200,000 people. In the past they used to inhabit many villages on Mount Carmel. However, due to historical hostilities between them and the neighboring Moslem villages, they were forced to concentrate in two villages (Falah, 1975). For a general overview on the Druze see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, 1965:631-7. For the involvement of the Druze in Palestine in the 1948 War see Parsons, 1995.

constellation in Syria and Lebanon during the 1930s, influenced the close ties established between them and the Jews (Porath, 1977:271-273). These links became apparent in 1948 when Dalyet al-Karmel (also known as Dalia, or Dalie by the Moslem villages) and 'Isfiyyeh "opened their gates" (as it is phrased in Israeli books and some Druze oral narration) to the Jewish army. In both these villages there are small communities of 1948 refugees from the obliterated Moslem villages and a small number of Christian families who have lived there for many centuries.

Today, throughout the region, the old Arab presence is still apparent-- many of the Mosques still stand, some of the old houses survived and were refurbished, stone terraces, stone fences and fruit orchards dot the landscape. At the same time it should be noted that since 1948 the landscape has been considerably transformed. The "abandoned" Arab villages, as they were often termed by the Jews in Israel, were soon populated, mainly by newly-arrived immigrants to the Jewish State. In the first decades after 1948, most of the new settlements retained their rural character and continued to subsist off farming. New crops were gradually introduced such as bananas and avocados (at the foot of the mountain) and large fishponds closer to the sea.⁵² The rural settlements in Israel today, however, cannot make a living off agriculture only. Whereas the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* have established factories and tourist attractions, other settlements such as Kerem Maharal or the new neighborhoods of Zikhron Ya'akov have become residential quarters for the middle upper class who work elsewhere.

⁵² The fishponds receive water from rivers (*nahal taninim/wādī zarqā'* and *nahal dalia/wādī difleh*) fed by springs that are located at the foot of the Carmel.

The naming policy towards Jewish settlements established on Arab villages often preserved either the sound or the meaning of the previous Arabic names. The city of Haifa retained its name but was Hebreized by a slightly different pronunciation—Ḥeifa, with the emphasis on the first syllable. Ṭirat al-Karmil was literally translated into Hebrew and named Tirat Hakarmel, and is popularly still known as “Tira,” just as in its Arab days. On the ruins of ‘Ein Ghazāl, meaning in Arabic “the spring of the Gazelle,” Ofer, a young Gazelle in Hebrew, was founded. Lower on the plain, on land owned by ‘Ein Ghazāl, ‘Ein Ayyalla, using another Hebrew name for a gazelle, was established. Other settlements adopted the sound of the Arab names: ‘Ein Ḥawḍ (the spring of the basin) became ‘Ein Hod (the glorious spring), Aṣ-Ṣarafand became Tsrufa and Jaba‘ became Geva. In some cases, by contrast, names were completely altered-- Ijzim became Kerem Maharal,⁵³ Ṭanṭūra became Dor⁵⁴ (a *moshav*) and Naḥsholim (a *kibbutz*), and Kafr Lam became haBonim.

Most of Mount Carmel was declared a national reserve (22,000 acres).

Whereas the status of the land prevented further development on the mountain, the coast and the city of Haifa continued to change. In the 1970s a highway was paved along the coast between Haifa and Tel Aviv, running west and parallel to the former British road (now known as “the old road”). The city of Haifa also expanded into the mountain, covering its northwestern tip. Haifa’s population today is roughly 270,000 inhabitants.

⁵³ The *Maharal*—an acronym for the full Hebrew title of *moreinu harav rabbi Lyvva*, a learnt Jewish rabbi in Czechoslovakia in the 16th century. Most of the Jewish settlers were from Czechoslovakia.

⁵⁴ Dor is the name of an ancient city that was located at the site.

Despite the urban development, agriculture is still practiced along the Carmel coast. Some of the olive and carob trees have survived from the period prior to 1948. For those who seek “the old map,” it slips through the new one, as the Palestinian poet Laila ‘Allush, born in Israel in 1948, wrote in “The Path of Affection”:

... despite the estrangement of signs, shops and graveyards

I gather my fragmented self together,

To meet my relatives in the New Haifa.

My companions on our smooth trip in the minibus

Know nothing of my suffering

But I am an authentic face, well-rooted,

While their seven faces are alien.

This land is still the old land

Despite pawned trees on the hillsides

Despite green clouds and fertilized plants

And water sprinklers spinning so efficiently

On the startling road seized from the throat of new accounts

The trees were smiling at me with Arab affection...⁵⁵

⁵⁵ “The Path of affection” was translated by Lena Jayyusi and Naomi Shihab Nye and published in Jayyusi (1992:106).

1.4 Personal Notes

The “discovery” of the Arab map of Palestine, and specifically that of Mount Carmel, came to me, a Jewish Israeli, gradually. In Israel, national military service is obligatory. Men serve for three years whereas women serve for two years. Arabs are exempt.⁵⁶ My national service was in a civilian institution, The Society for the Protection of Nature, and my job was to guide groups (mainly children) who came to hike on and around Mount Carmel.⁵⁷ Although I roamed the area daily for over two years, the “Zionist map” that I had always been made to see did not change substantially. Exploring the ruins of Arab villages had to do with cheerful summer outings in which we enjoyed the abundant fruit on the solitary trees: almonds and *ṣabbār* (prickly pear), figs and grapes, carobs and pomegranates. Although Mount Carmel is dotted with many ruined Arab settlements, we rarely spoke among ourselves nor explained to our groups about the people who used to live there-- what their life was like, how many they were and where they went.

The tragedy that overcame the former dwellers of these places was hardly part of our discourse. In a strange process we managed to neglect the fact that the people who planted these trees were *real people*, who lived in this place until quite recently and many of them are still alive. We knew more about the Romans of two thousand years ago than about the Arabs of fifty years ago, and we were easily, even eagerly, carried away by the general neglect of anything Palestinian. The consciousness of these deserted villages that are scattered wherever one treads in today’s Israel budded

⁵⁶ The precise situation of conscription is slightly more complex. Roughly 50% of the Jewish women choose not to join the army (the pretext usually being religiosity) and they are exempt. The Druze are obliged to serve but some do not. Some Bedouins volunteer and join the army, usually those who belong to tribes that have close links to the Jewish apparatus. The ultra-religious Jewish men serve less than the usual or do not serve at all.

as a response to this Israeli neglect. My “Palestinian map” is constantly being altered as it acquires more and more detail.

The seeds of this awareness may have been planted before my period on the Carmel, when my father told me a few firsthand stories on the war of 1948. Glory did not envelop these stories; they also echoed the shame of a participant who had witnessed the ugly face of war, what my father termed, following Hannah Arendt, the banality of evil. Here, as in other interactions, his private recollections stood in stark contrast to the widespread national representations.

⁵⁷ Civilian posts during national service are available only for women; men serve only in the army proper.

1.5 Demographic Distribution, Legal Status and Social Conditions: Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, Israel and the West Bank

Laws, government policies and social conditions affect both the daily practices and the perceptions of Palestinians. As fieldwork was conducted in Jordan, in the West Bank and in Israel, these political entities need briefly to be surveyed here. The villagers of aṭ-Ṭireh, Ijzim and ‘Ein Ḥawḍ have all become refugees and yet their current condition is influenced not only by their refugee status but also by the general conditions of the Palestinians (including those who were not uprooted) in each setting. Before considering the different settings, I review some numerical figures relating to the distribution of the Palestinian population and the United Nations’ involvement in the provision of services to Palestinian refugees.

The number of refugees uprooted as a consequence of the 1948 war is subject to dispute. Whereas some Palestinian spokesmen quote a figure of 900,000 to one million refugees,⁵⁸ Israeli officials usually refer to “about 520,000.”⁵⁹ The United Nations Economic Survey Mission puts the figure at 726,000.⁶⁰ Benny Morris considered it impossible to reach a final number and estimates the number at between 600,000 and 760,000.⁶¹ Janet Abu Lughod, who dedicated an article to this issue, claimed that the number was roughly 770,000-780,000 (Abu Lughod, 1971:161). At any rate, given that the total Arab population of Palestine was between 1.3-1.4 million⁶², we can deduce that between one third to over half of the Arab population

⁵⁸ See Cattani, 1969:52; Nakhleh, 1991, vol.I:4

⁵⁹ See Morris, 1987: appendix I.

⁶⁰ See Takkenberg, 1997:19.

⁶¹ Morris, 1987:298.

⁶² It is 1.3 according to Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993:188 and almost 1.4 according to Janet Abu Lughod, 1971:160.

inhabiting British Mandate Palestine was uprooted as a consequence of the 1948 War.⁶³

During the war and immediately afterwards, the United Nations established the Disaster Relief Project (in July 1948) and the Relief for Palestine Refugees (in December 1948), allocating large sums of money to the Red Cross and other voluntary agencies involved in the Middle East. According to many interviewees, much of the assistance in the first year that followed the dispersion was supplied by Arab governments and private Arab donors. Later, in December 1949, the UN general assembly resolved to set up the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA, which was established in May 1950, had in that year 914,221 refugees registered with it in four locations-- the Gaza Strip (198,227), Jordan and the West Bank (506,200), Syria (82,194) and Lebanon (127,600) (Takkenberg, 1997:20).⁶⁴ Smaller numbers of Palestinian refugees found their way to Iraq, Egypt, Kuwait and elsewhere.

Through the years (and especially in the 1960s and 1970s), there was a gradual move of Palestinians to the Gulf States for the sake of finding employment. Whereas at first men emigrated alone, later on whole families were permitted to stay (although the great majority was not granted citizenship). The estimate is that at the peak of this

⁶³ See this estimation in Davis, 1999:3. Davis also notes that eighty three percent of the Arab population that used to live within the borders of what became the State of Israel were uprooted.

⁶⁴ This number excludes the 45,800 persons receiving relief within Israel (see Takkenberg, 1997:20). UNRWA was well aware of the fact that the number of refugees was inflated, claiming in the 1950 report that it is hard to determine who is a refugee and that the poverty of the majority of the population, including non refugees, is "frightening", hence many try to receive the UN support, even if they are not eligible. Moreover, due to the miserable situation, some registered in more than one region and in more than one name, increased the figures of family members, registered false births and hid deaths

United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees, 'Report by the Secretary-General for the period 30 September 1949 - 30 April 1950.' New York, 1950, UN doc. A/1452, 21.

trend 750,000 Palestinians lived in the Gulf.⁶⁵ However, following the Gulf war of 1990-91 there was mass expulsion of Palestinians, especially from Kuwait (Hovdenak, 1997; Le Troquer and Hommery al-Oudat, 1999).

Approximately 160,000 Palestinians remained within Israel's borders after 1948, of whom one fifth were "internal refugees"-- people uprooted from their homes.⁶⁶ UNRWA was responsible for some 50,000 Palestinian and Jewish refugees within Israel's borders until June 1952, when the state of Israel requested the termination of UNRWA's involvement (Takkenberg, 1997:20). Other than supplying relief, UNRWA's aim was originally to induce public works programs and speedy economic development in the countries of refuge. Both aims were only partially accomplished (Buehrig, 1971:113). UNRWA set up 59 refugee camps. In the beginning, the dwellings in the camps were tents, gradually converted into shacks made of temporary materials such as tin and asbestos. Today, the camp houses are built of cement, blocks and even stone, although more provisional dwellings are still prevalent in the poorer camps. Ten of UNRWA's camps are in Jordan and nineteen are in the West Bank.⁶⁷ One third of the registered refugees live in camps.⁶⁸ UNRWA's main areas of activity are the health services, social services, education and relief. Whereas the health and relief services kept to their original aims after their

⁶⁵ See Janet Abu-Lughod, 1988.

⁶⁶ Cohen (2000) argued that of the 50,000 refugees in Israel, only 30,000 were Palestinian. The number of "internal refugees" grew shortly afterwards due to the inclusion of new territories within Israel's borders following the agreement with Jordan and due to "family unification." Cohen estimated the number of "internal refugees" in Israel in 1996 at 120,000, excluding Bedouins of the Negev and the annexed East Jerusalem population, see Cohen, 1996:103-5. Ahmad Ashkar estimated their number to be much higher-- 250-300 thousand, probably because he takes all 50,000 refugees in the early stages of the state to be Palestinian. This figure is based on an MA thesis written by Mahmoud Said. See Ashqar, 1996:16.

⁶⁷ The distribution of the other camps is: 12 in Lebanon, 10 in Syria, and 8 in the Gaza Strip (see www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/me.html)

⁶⁸ See UNRWA fact sheet, UNRWA Public Information Office, Gaza. 31 December, 1997. See also www.un.org/unrwa/refugees/p2.html

establishment and did not expand dramatically (Buehrig, 1971:chapter VI), the educational programs developed rapidly. The UN provides today almost all levels of schooling, including teaching and vocational training (Mshasha, personal communication; Buehrig, 1971:chapter VII; Schiff, 1995). The decision to develop the educational programs was due to pressure from the Palestinians who aspired to upward mobility by acquiring professional training and higher education.⁶⁹

It is difficult task to establish the exact number of refugees from aṭ-Ṭireh, Ijzim and 'Ein Ḥawḍ. UNRWA's files, which give the number of refugees registered with the agency in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, record 28,105 refugees originally of aṭ-Ṭireh, 11, 655 of Ijzim and 2,692 of 'Ein Ḥawḍ (see appendix I listing a detailed distribution in camps and towns).⁷⁰ However, there are refugees who have not been registered with UNRWA and it is possible that UNRWA's figures are slightly inflated. It has been suggested that the number of refugees has increased in the last fifty years fivefold. Interviewees noted that there are re-clustered communities from these villages in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and Iraq.⁷¹ In the following pages, I survey the general conditions in each of the fieldwork settings.

⁶⁹ Sami msha'sha', UNRWA's public information officer in Jerusalem, personal communication, January 2000.

⁷⁰ The relatively low number of Jizmawis registered with UNRWA is probably due to the large community based in Iraq.

⁷¹ On the refugees in Iraq see Qudsīyya, 1997. The Qudsīyya family is originally of Ijzim.

Jordan

The origins of modern Jordan are in the days following the Great Arab Revolt of World War I. The British placed ‘Abdallāh of the Hāshemite Family of Mecca as Emir of what became known as Transjordan. The Hāshemites, foreign to Jordan, fostered their relations with the local Bedouins, recognizing the power of customary institutions and incorporating the sheikhs into instrumental roles in the state system. Although King ‘Abdallāh governed from 1921, the British Mandate officially ended in Transjordan only in 1946. The British remained influential until 1957, when the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty was annulled.

Formally, the Palestinians in Jordan are full-fledged citizens who enjoy equal rights. In practice, there is a social differentiation between those of Palestinian origin and the population living in Jordan prior to 1948. Jordan, officially, does not acknowledge this internal social schism and discourages research into this delicate issue. Indeed, little has been written on the subject.

Following the 1948 War, Jordan acquired the West Bank, which was previously under the British Mandate of Palestine. As a consequence of the newly acquired territory and the influx of Palestinian refugees, there was an addition of more than 700,000 people to the original Jordanian population of 350,000-400,000. Of the 700,000, 300,000 were refugees whereas the remainder was the permanent West Bank population (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993:188-192). In other words, following the 1948 war, the “new” Palestinians now numbered two thirds of Jordan’s entire

A crew of West Bank reporters visited Baghdad in late 1999. In a newspaper article and a video film they present the Jizmāwī community which, according to their figures, numbers 10,000 people in Iraq only. The community’s sports’ club in Baghdad is named it Haifa. *Kol Ha’ir*, 3.12.99, p.86 (Hebrew).

population.⁷² Transjordan officially annexed the West Bank in 1950 and the new “Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan” was declared.⁷³

The newly arrived population legally acquired the status of citizens in 1954 when the Jordanian Nationality Law came into force.⁷⁴ One of this law’s paragraphs states that “Any person with previous Palestinian nationality, except the Jews, before the date of May 15th, 1948, residing in the kingdom during the period from December 20, 1949 and February 16th, 1954” is considered a Jordanian citizen.⁷⁵ The Palestinians, like other citizens, were obliged to serve in the army and were, seemingly, free to ascend to the highest positions in public life.

During the 1950s, Palestinians, not only in Jordan, tended to side with pan-Arab movements. The disappointment that followed from these movements and from the Arab States in general (and the disintegration of the Egyptian-Syrian Pact) led to Palestinian initiative to establish their own political and military apparatus. However, dispersed and stateless as they were, the Palestinians needed the consent of the Arab States in order to organize themselves (Harkabi, 1979). Whereas at first, small independent cells with varied ideologies budded in different places, those were later gathered under a joint umbrella, The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), supporting their continued activity.

⁷² It should be noted that population moved between the East and the West Bank of the Jordan continuously long before 1948. Hence, many of the families who are defined as “Jordanian” here are actually of Palestinian origin.

⁷³ This annexation was recognized by the United Kingdom and Pakistan only (Takkenberg, 1997:219).

⁷⁴ The earlier Transjordan Nationality Law from 1928, stipulated that: “All Ottoman subjects habitually resident in Transjordan on the 6th day of August 1924, shall be deemed to have acquired Transjordan nationality” (Davis, 1999).

⁷⁵ Takkenberg, 1997:159; See also Davis, 1999:12.

In May 1964, the first Palestinian National Council chaired by Aḥmad Shuqayrī was convened in Jerusalem, then under Jordanian rule. The Council included the different Palestinian movements and it adopted the Palestine national charter as a basic constitution of the Palestine Liberation Organization. On this occasion, a plan was made for the establishment of a Palestine Liberation army and a year later, Fataḥ (the organization led by Yasser ‘Arafat) launched its armed struggle (Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993:307). At that time Jordan was the main site of activity of the Palestinian movements.

The Palestinian resistance movement against Israel increased its influence within Jordan through the 1960s. The Jordanian regime (as well as Jordan’s non-Palestinian population) was alarmed by the development of autonomous Palestinian armed militias and an attempt to assassinate King Hussein, and open hostilities broke out in September 1970, named by the Palestinians “Black September.” In these clashes, the Jordanian Army eradicated the Palestinian armed forces, killing and expelling its fighters. Palestinian refugee camps and residential areas were shelled, as well as the centers of the armed militias.⁷⁶ In Irbid, where many of the interviews for this research were conducted, the fighting was exceptionally fierce. The clashes left their mark as “a gap was opened up between Palestinians and Jordanians which persists down to the present day” (Lalor, 1993:354).

⁷⁶ For a thorough description of the relations and events between the Jordanian regime and the Palestinian resistance movement between 1967-71, see Lalor, 1993. The number of casualties is unknown. The estimate ranges between 700 and 20,000 killed. See Sela, 1999:436.

In spite of the legal measures, which foster equal rights, Palestinians retain a separate identity in Jordan. Their sense of being outsiders is affected by social mechanisms that come into play in daily life. The limited research that has been done shows a process of tagging and marginalizing the Palestinians. Whereas most of the pre-1948 Jordanians carry family names that are derived from their tribal origins, Palestinian family names are different, and are evident markers of origin (*aṣl*) that appear on the individual's identity card. The identification of people as "tribal" versus "Palestinian", combined with the powerful unofficial system of "personal favors" (*wasta*), in which one assists those closer to him socially (and develops a network of reciprocal favors), alienates and diminishes the chance of equal rights for the Palestinians, especially in governmental employment and services (Cunningham and Sarayrah, 1993; Brand, 1995:179-180; al-Omari, 1998). One of the outcomes is that the public sector, and especially the high level bureaucracy, is dominated by "Jordanians" (Hamarnah, 1996). However, in commerce and economic activities in general, Palestinians have been very successful.

Concurrently, many Palestinians do not wish to fully integrate into the Jordanian State. Aseel Sawalha (1999:1) quotes a Palestinian refugee who lives in a camp near Amman, saying "I am not Jordanian and I will never become so. I and my sons and daughters are Palestinian refugees in Jordan". Such exclamations were not uncommon among interviewees in my own research.

The West Bank was under Jordanian rule from 1948 until 1967.⁷⁷ After the June 1967 War, when Israel captured the West Bank, its Palestinian inhabitants were able to keep their Jordanian citizenship, but twenty years later King Hussein signaled this situation was about to alter. In 1988 the king took steps, known as *fakk al-irtibāt* (“severing relations”), towards the creation of a clear political distinction between the Palestinians of the West and the East Banks. Phrasing his change of policy as a reaction to the *intifāda* (the Palestinian uprising) and Palestinian aspirations for independence, King Hussein renounced his claim to sovereignty over the West Bank and severed the “legal and administrative links between the two banks”. The theoretical implications were that Palestinians residing in the West Bank (under Israeli military occupation) would lose their Jordanian citizenship and remain without any citizenship at all. Palestinians were alarmed. However, King Hussein agreed that West Bank Palestinians could continue to use their Jordanian passports, and indeed these passports have been renewed ever since. Until then passports had been renewed every five years; now, they were to be renewed every two years. Those who have lost their West Bank residency face increasing problems having their passports renewed.⁷⁸ Moreover, West Bank Palestinians can no longer choose to change their residency to the East Bank and their visits to the East Bank are limited to a period of thirty days (Takkenberg, 1997; Davis, 1999).

⁷⁷ Although Jordan “unified” the East and the West Bank in 1950 by annexing the West Bank, economic investments were mostly located in the East Bank. See Kimmerling and Migdal, 1993:192; Rosenfeld, 1997:28, footnote 9.

⁷⁸ Until recently, the Israeli Civil Administration was the one to grant residency permits. Whoever left the West Bank and did not return within the time set by the administration could lose his/her residency.

Israel

Israel's Proclamation of Independence (*megilat ha'atsma'ut*) encapsulates an inherent contradiction. On the one hand, the state is committed to granting equal rights to all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex, and yet on the other hand, the state is defined as a Jewish state for the Jewish nation.⁷⁹ A continuation of this idea is found in "The Law of Return" (1950) that grants any Jew throughout the world an unhindered right of immigration and settlement and automatic Israeli citizenship. Non-Jews, including Palestinians, can become citizens only through complying with the requirements of the Citizenship Law, enacted in 1952. In order to be afforded citizenship at the time of its enactment, one was obliged to have had continuous residency in Israel from the day the state was declared (14 May, 1948) until the enactment of the law. One assumes that the rationale behind this was to minimize the number of Arabs within the state and withhold citizenship from all the Palestinians who fled during the war and now wanted to return (Kretzmer, 1987:38; Benziman and Mansour, 1992:128).⁸⁰

In terms of property ownership, the most devastating law for the Palestinians was the Absentees' Property Law, enacted in 1950.

All the Palestinians who had ended up outside Israel's borders, as well as those who remained within Israel in places other than their homes, were declared absentees and their property was "transferred" to the Custodian of Absentee

⁷⁹ See English translation of the State of Israel Proclamation of Independence in Laqueur and Rubin (eds.), 1984.

⁸⁰ At the time the Law of Citizenship was enacted, 32,000 Arabs had to go through naturalization. According to the law, they had to have been residents three out of the five years prior to applying for citizenship, they had to have a residency permit in Israel and they had to declare their faithfulness to the State of Israel (Benziman and Mansour, 1992:128).

Property.⁸¹ Later, The Authority for the Development of the Land (*Reshut lePitu 'ah ha' Aretz*) was established, and the Custodian, who until then was supposedly maintaining the property for its original owners, transferred to the authority 2.3 million *dūnum* of land (Benziman and Mansour, 1992:161; Yiftachel and Kedar, 2000). All the refugees from at-Ṭireh, Ijzim and 'Ein Ḥawḍ who had remained in Israel were defined by the state as “absentees,” despite the fact that they were given Israeli citizenship, since they could no longer reside in their villages of origin.⁸²

In 1953 the Land Acquisition Law (*hoq rehishat meqarqe 'in*) was enacted, enabling further seizure of land. Compensation was allowed to owners who still resided within Israel—an alternative plot, if the land was the owners' only means of support—but the compensation was assessed according to the value of the land on 1.1.1950 and not on the day of expropriation (Benziman and Mansour, 1992:163-164). The lawful owners were hesitant to accept this type of compensation because of the unrealistically low sum of money offered by the state and complications with family members in exile.

The Israeli appropriation of land has been a unidirectional transfer from Arab hands into the custody of Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Agency and the Israel Land Authority (Yiftachel, 1998). These organizations supposedly act on behalf of world Jewry and are involved in the construction of Jewish settlements only (Yiftachel, 1992:chap.5). Whereas prior to 1948, seven to eight percent of the country's land was in Jewish hands, the state and its institutions currently own 92

⁸¹ Davis, 1999:4; Benziman and Mansour, 1992.

percent of the land within the Green Line, the pre-1967 borders (Yiftachel, 1998:9). Another state mechanism to prevent the expansion of Arab settlements (implemented since the 1970s) is through the encirclement of villages by Jewish settlements, where Arabs cannot purchase houses (Yiftachel, 1998:10).⁸³

Haidar (1990) has shown how the government, by way of controlling the economic resources, controls the Arab participation in the labor force. The labor survey of 1989 indicates a low representation of the Arab population in professional, high ranking jobs and their over-representation in the low ranking, unskilled jobs.⁸⁴ Discrimination against Arabs in Israel is also applied through financial aid granted only to army veterans. As the Arab population of Israel (apart from the Druze) is legally excluded from the army, only Jews receive an enlarged national security allowance; reductions in university fees, increased mortgage, and other advantages granted to "army veterans" (Benziman and Mansour, 1992:13-5). Unlike the case of Jordan, extensive research has been conducted in Israel on the discrimination of Palestinians (Jiryis, 1976; Zureik, 1979; al-Haj, 1995; Rouhana, 1997). The data presented above are only a sample. Whereas within its boundaries, Israel does attempt to maintain a democracy, its ruling policy in the West Bank was, and to a large extent still is, governed by the relationship of a military occupier to an occupied population.

⁸² On present absentees see Davis, 1999:5. For a literary perspective, including a description of new 'Ein Hawd, see David Grossman, 1993.

⁸³ In a precedent verdict (from March 2000), the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that Arabs must be granted the permission to buy homes in Jewish settlements administered by the Jewish agency.

⁸⁴ The 1989 labor survey shows that the participation of the Arabs in Israel in the work force is 10.15% although they compose 17% of the population. Only 3% of the Arab population work in scientific and academic professions (in comparison to 9.4% of the Jewish population) and only 1.5% of the Arab population hold management offices. On the other end of the social status scale, 7.7% work in agriculture (in comparison to 3.8% among the Jews), 41.9% work in trained jobs in industry,

The West Bank

In the June 1967 War Israel gained control of new territories-- the Golan Heights, the Gaza strip and the West Bank. Excluding Jerusalem, which was annexed by the state, the West Bank population came under Israeli military occupation. At first, Israel sought to achieve a "benign" occupation by applying restricted security measures so as to allow the "civilian population to maintain a regular way of life despite their subjection to military occupation" (E. Cohen, 1985, referring to Moshe Dayyan's objectives).⁸⁵ In a policy of "gradual annexation", Israel sought to transfer the administration to local Palestinian institutions, absorb the labor surplus into the Israeli market and gradually dissolve the refugee camps and open the bridges on the Jordan, enabling indirect relations with the Arab world (Tamari, 1992:8).

However, a benign occupation was hardly accomplished. The 600,000 West Bankers who came under Israeli occupation following the war suffered from Israeli security measures-- administrative arrests with no trials, deportations, forced population removals, house demolitions and house detentions.⁸⁶ From the beginning of the 1980s, the expropriation of land intensified and many new settlements were established, as well as army camps. Moreover, after a period of economic prosperity and an improved standard of living, a regional economic recession during the 1980s (both in the Gulf states and in Israel) had strong effects on the West Bank population, leading to high levels of unemployment (Gelber in Gelber and Susser, 1992).

construction and transportation (in comparison to 20.4% of the Jews) and 10.5% work as untrained laborers (in comparison to 2.3% Jews). See Benziman and Mansour, 1992:179.

⁸⁵ At times, over 200,000 Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank worked in Israel, earning higher salaries than the ones earned within the Occupied Territories or, earlier on, under Jordanian rule. The other side of the coin was Israel's economic interest in this cheap labor.

⁸⁶ 600,000 excludes the population of East Jerusalem. See Gelber in Gelber and Susser, 1992:22.

Palestinian national aspirations intensified, leading to a popular uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza strip in December 1987, known as the *intifāda*. By the end of June 1994, more than 1,400 Palestinians had been killed and 80,000 injured.⁸⁷ It is commonly agreed that the *intifāda* was a catalyst leading to secret negotiations in Oslo. The Oslo talks culminated in the signing of a declaration of principles between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, in Washington D.C. on 13 September 1993. Yasser Arafat, the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), became the head of the newly emerging Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

In May 1994, in an agreement signed in Cairo by the two parties, the Palestine National Authority (PNA) was stipulated as successor to the Israeli "Civil Administration" in five spheres-- education and culture, health, social welfare, direct taxation and tourism. In line with the peace accords, territories within the West Bank were gradually being handed to the Palestinian Authority. As an intermediate state within the peace agreement implementation, the West Bank was internally divided into three zones -- A, B and C. In zone A, the Palestinian Authority had full responsibility for internal security and public order as well as civilian life. In zone B the Authority was in charge of civilian matters whereas Israel was responsible for security, and Zone C was under complete Israeli responsibility. To this day, only the West Bank's city centers are defined as zone A, in which the PNA carries full responsibility.

⁸⁷ UNRWA Annual Reports, covering from 1 July 1987 - 30 June 1994.

From the Palestinian perspective, the prolonged so called "peace process," characterized by the ongoing oppression of the Israeli occupation (still present in large parts of the West Bank), lead to a growing discontent. Moreover, the papers signed in the course of this Peace Process postponed the resolution of major issues such as the rights of the Palestinian Refugees and the status of Jerusalem. In addition to these conditions, the Palestinian Authority was accused of corruption and criticized for its harsh security measures against its own people (acting as a "sub-contractor" for the Israeli regime). The self-governance exposed internal tensions that were previously more latent. The Islamic Movement in the West Bank and Gaza, known as the Ḥamās, gained increasing support during the 1990s.

The transformation of the PLO from a revolutionary movement into a state-building apparatus, and the opposition towards its policies, led to loss of its legitimacy as the 'sole representative' of the Palestinian people. Randa Farah argued that "with the political changes, the PLO has been ruptured as a unifying organizational body and homogenizing discourse, allowing for various ideologies, discourses and organizational structures and references upon which Palestinian identity is being reproduced" (2000:8).

In practice, first due to the "peace process" and then due to the violent clashes, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been under Israeli "closure," and unless one possesses a permit to cross the "green line," one cannot enter Israel proper. The number of West Bank and Gaza Strip residents who work within Israel dropped from over 150,000 in the 1980s to a few thousands and currently to virtually zero. The current rate of unemployment in the West Bank has increased dramatically since the

violent clashes erupted. Moreover, those in the West Bank who until then had regularly visited relatives within Israel could no longer do that. Their relatives in Israel could enter the West Bank to visit them, and many did, especially during the weekends. In 1997, following suicide attacks of the *Hamas* in Israel, a closure within a closure was imposed on the West Bank for a time. People could not move from one town to the other, and villagers could not visit the nearby cities.

The West Bank closure lasted throughout the period of fieldwork, from the summer of 1996 until the summer of 1998. This had a direct bearing on the fieldwork encounters. It was generally easier to interview Palestinians in Israel, or even Palestinians in Jordan, than in the West Bank, not only in terms of access but also in terms of individuals' readiness to talk. Thirty years of military occupation have left their mark.

1.6 Historiography and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

Public debate surrounding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has undergone considerable changes in the last fifty years. These historiographic transformations are the backdrop to the historicity that prevails among the Palestinian refugees of this study. The first reason for surveying these developments is that they reverberated in the villagers' discourse. The second reason is that they place this research within a wider context.

The scope of this research could scarcely be confined to an analysis of the interviewees' oral accounts or cross checking these details against documents, for the lives and concerns of uprooted villagers were and are entangled with inseparable "external" effects. This ethnography was grounded not only in different political settings but also in specific environments such as refugee camps, residential city homes, Arab neighborhoods and Arab villages. Other influences were broader, such as the rhetoric of Palestinian politicians, developments in the implementation of the Oslo agreement and violent clashes. "The field" was continuously molded by factors that were not themselves under study, as Rashid Khalidi argued, "Palestinian identity can only...be fully understood in the context of a sequence of other narratives" (1996:187). The same holds true for the Israeli side.

* * *

Books describing the historical-political circumstances in Palestine during the first half of the 20th century and aimed at an Arab readership began to appear during the

Mandate period. The first book, as far as I know, is Īsa al-Safarī's *Filastīn al-'Arabiyya baina al-Īntidāb wal-Ṣahyuniyya* (Arab Palestine between the Mandate and Zionism), Jaffa, 1937. Some of these early works were written in English for a foreign audience. Such was Tawfiq Cana'an's *The Palestine Arab Cause* (1936). Cana'an was a doctor interested in local ethnography. He published extensively with the Palestine Oriental Society, which was based in Jerusalem and united Arabs, Jews and British. Another milestone book was George Antonius' *The Arab Awakening*, published in 1938. Antonius, a Palestinian Greek Orthodox Christian and a graduate of King's College, Cambridge, served as an assistant director of the Palestine Department of Education but his promotion was continuously blocked and by 1929 he resigned from governmental service and became a prominent Arab spokesman (Shepherd, 1999:160-1).

Although the number of Arabic books on Palestinian history increased after the Nakba, this literature was not abundant. The 1936-9 Arab Revolt was one of the subjects that was then being analyzed. An illustrative book is Muḥammad 'Izzat Darwaza's *Ḥawla al-Ḥaraka al-'Arabiyya al-Ḥaditha* (On the New Arab Movement) published in Sidon, 1951. In the book, Darwaza, a member of the Istiqlāl party and a participant in the Arab Revolt of 1936-9, analyzes British and Zionist policies as well as the internal schisms within Palestinian society. He discusses at length the revolt, being one of the first writers to sketch its sociological characteristics-- the extensive participation of the peasants, the weakness of the revolt's steering committee that was based in Damascus, and the factionalism and personal interests of the revolt's participants. Other books on the Arab revolt followed such as *al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-Kubrā fī Filastīn* (The Great

Arab Revolt in Palestine) by Şubhī Yāsīn (Cairo 1959) and the diaries of Akram Zu'aytir (*Yawmiyyāt Akram Zu'aytir: Al-Haraka al-Waṭaniyya al-Filasṭīniyya 1935-1939*) published in Beirut in 1980. The preoccupation with the revolt testifies to its central place in the Palestinian national ethos already in the 1950s.

The bond between the revolt and the outcome of the Nakba has been stressed and recently re-appeared in the work of Rashid Khalidi, who argued that the failure of the revolt had a detrimental effect on the consequences of the 1948 War.⁸⁸ The second prominent subject and, in fact, the more salient one to appear in the Palestinian literature from the 1950s, was the war of 1948 and its immediate consequences (Costantin Zurayk, 1948; Al-'Āref, 1956-60; Qamḥāwi, 1959).

Diaries were also a popular genre, providing valuable information. Such is the diary of Khalīl al-Sakākīnī (1955), published after his death by his daughter Hāla. Sakākīnī worked in the field of education and his diary describes political organizations active during the Mandate, especially in his own city, Jerusalem, and the cooperation as well as tensions between the Christian and Moslem communities. Other important diaries are that of Aḥmad al-Shuqayrī (1969), who grew up in Acre during the late Ottoman period and later established the PLO. The PLO research center published the diary of 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādi of Jenīn district, a leading figure in Palestinian politics, and

⁸⁸ Rashid Khalidi argued the above at a lecture delivered at St. Antony's College (Oxford) in November 1998. The 1936-9 events and those of the 1948 War merged in the oral accounts of my interviewees. When I asked a woman about 1948, she recalled how the British Army broke into houses and arrested the men. Family members corrected her, noting that these were the Revolt's events.

the diary of Fawzī al-Qā'ūqjī, who acted as a military leader both during the Arab revolt and in the 1948 war (Qasmiyya, 1974; Qasmiyya, 1975).

Lebanon, and especially Beirut, became an intellectual center for the Palestinian Diaspora. It is here that many of the above mentioned books were published. The relative autonomy that the Palestinians attained here enabled the establishment of a complex set of organizations. Shortly after the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964, its Research Center was inaugurated in Beirut in February 1965. Whereas some of the center's publications were dedicated to the study and criticism of Israel,⁸⁹ other studies dealt with Palestinian history and society (Kayyali, 1978; Nuwayhid al-Hūt, 1981; Qasmiyya, 1974; Qasmiyya, 1975; al-Qāsim, 1967; Şāyigh, 1966). In 1971, the center began publishing a newspaper—*Shu 'ūn Filastīniyya* (Palestinian Affairs), edited by Ānīs Şāyigh.

It was also during these years that the Palestinians emerged from two decades of relative silence with regard to an English readership. Books in English started making their way into the market in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁹⁰ Such were, for example, Walid Khalidi's edited volume *From Haven to Conquest*, published in 1971, Ibrahim

⁸⁹ Among their publications about Israel are: "The Desecration of Christian Cemeteries and Church Property in Israel," Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1968; "Israeli Violations of the Religious Status Quo at the Wailing Wall," Beirut, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1970; "Militarisme, Racisme et expansionnisme: trois aspects fondamentaux de l'état Israélien" by Ibrahim Al-Abid, Beyrouth, Organization de Libération Palestinienne, 1970; Fayez Sayegh, *Zionist Colonialism in Palestine*. Beirut, PLO Research Center, 1965; "Crime and No Punishment: Brief Record of Israeli Terrorism" PLO, Beirut, 1974.

Among the prominent writers who published both independently and in collaboration with the PLO was Sami Hadawi (1967; 1988), a Christian Palestinian from Jerusalem who found refuge in the United States.

⁹⁰ Articles in English presenting a Palestinian perspective appeared sometime before the books. See, for example, Walid Khalidi's two articles in *Middle East Forum* (1959, 1961).

Abu-Lughod's edited volume *The Transformation of Palestine*, published in 1971, and Edward Said's *The Question of Palestine*, published in 1979.⁹¹ Abu Lughod, a political scientist by training, and Said, a professor of English literature, illustrate the fact that it was not only historians who wrote of the history of Palestine. These three authors, who have been publishing extensively on Palestine ever since, were the beginning of a research current conducted by Palestinians on Palestine.⁹² A project initiated by Palestinian scholars in the Diaspora is *The Journal of Palestine Studies* (JPS), which was established in 1971. It was first based in Beirut and associated with Kuwait University and then based at the University of California, Berkeley.⁹³

A prominent scholar in recent years, younger than the aforementioned, is Rashid Khalidi, a professor of Middle Eastern History at the University of Chicago.⁹⁴

As we can see, committed individuals, mostly of Palestinian urban upper class origin, initiated and continue to dominate much of the research on Palestine and the promotion of Palestinian public image towards the west.⁹⁵ The lack of a Palestinian state-apparatus, a geographical place of gathering and central archives meant a diffuse, slow to emerge

⁹¹ A few years ago Ibrahim Abu-Lughod returned to Palestine as the president of Bir Zeit University, after many years in the USA.

⁹² For other such works see, for example, Nazzal (1974); Jiryis (1976); Kayyali (1978); Zureik (1979); Nakhleh and Zureik (1980); Muhawi and Kanaana (1987).

⁹³ The founding editor was Prof. Hisham Sharabi and the first editorial board included Burhan Dajani, Suleiman Kalender, Walid Khalidi, Shakir Mustafa, Anwar al-Nouri, Fuad Sarruf and Constantine Zurayk. Sharabi was still the editor and Dajani, Khalidi and Zurayk were still on the editorial board in 1999. See in chapter IV Jamil's reaction to Hisham Sharabi's appearance on a film about his visit to Palestine

⁹⁴ Rashid Khalidi is a member of a large and influential family of Jerusalemite origin. Some of the material for his seminal book *Palestinian Identity: The construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997) was collected at the family's private library at Jerusalem. Many of the Palestinian libraries are private collections of prominent urban families. Documents, until lately, were mostly kept in the family and not in public institutions.

⁹⁵ This self-reliance had an impact on some of the material produced. For instance, Walid Khalidi's photographic album *Before Their Diaspora* (1984) contains many photographs of Jerusalemite notable families-- Khalidi's social milieu.

body of work. It is perhaps for these reasons that this literature has not been “revisited” and analyzed with introspection. However, the seeds of such a trend can be detected in recent work.⁹⁶

One salient characterization of much Palestinian historiography is in its focus on large-scale politics—it deals with leaders and their policies and with the emergence and function of parties and social institutions. It draws from diaries of prominent men, daily newspapers and it documents political activities. Common people, and specifically villagers, are often absent in this literature. Moreover, many of the Palestinian academics are also political spokesmen, and recently, some were involved in the Peace negotiations (such as Rashid Khalidi and Elia Zureik) or in opposing them (most notably, Edward Said). They write articles to popular newspapers and participate in the ongoing political debates; their political roles and wide perspective influences their historiographic preoccupation with “grand politics.”

Going back to the history of the conflict’s historiography, we see that parallel to the spread of literature written by Palestinians, came a growing world interest in the subject and an increasing number of reporters and scholars, neither Palestinian nor Israeli, who had become involved in writing about the conflict. Erskine Childers, the Irish journalist, was one of the first to write of the Middle East and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (1961;1965). Rosemary Sayigh, an Englishwoman living in Lebanon who married a Palestinian, wrote for a Western audience of the Palestinian exilic experience in

⁹⁶ See, for example, Tarif Khalidi’s article (1981) and Doumani’s (1992) reconsideration of the historical work created by Palestinians prior to 1948.

Lebanon. Her first book *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (1979) was probably the first detailed account to sketch the social processes that took place in the refugee camps.⁹⁷ By the 1980s the list of “foreign” writers on the conflict had expanded.⁹⁸

The belated appearance of Palestinian perspectives may be related to their need to penetrate world opinion dominated from much earlier on by the Israeli version of the conflict. The young Israel, like many nascent states, was active on different fronts not only to establish its legitimacy in the eyes of the world but also to create a self-image for its citizens.⁹⁹ The power of the Israeli State-- its control over school curricula, archeology, place-naming and many other arenas, assisted in the emergence of a rather monolithic historical version. The Israeli ethos regarding 1948 was (and some would say still is) a combination of facts and interpretation with little distinction between the two. Among the main Israeli assertions was the claim that the Arabs could not demand a state because they were not a nation but an aggregate of people with local identities (reminiscent of the conceptualization of the “native” in colonialist perceptions);¹⁰⁰ the Arabs initiated the fighting, therefore they must bear the consequences; if the Arabs had won, they would have massacred all the Jews (or as the popular saying goes, “thrown us into the sea”); the small Jewish army who fought the masses of the Arab invasion won

⁹⁷ In the early 1990s Sayigh described the vast changes undergone by the Palestinians in Lebanon in her book *Too Many Enemies* (1994).

⁹⁸ See, for example, Graham-Brown (1980); Parmentier (1984); Saraste (1985); Palumbo (1987); Swedenburg (1989).

⁹⁹ For a critical retrospect on Israeli national myths see Zerubavel (1995); Oḥana and Wistrich (1996).

¹⁰⁰ See Childers, 1965:94.

against all odds (echoing the biblical story of David and Goliath); the Jewish army adhered to “purity of arms” during the war. The official version is well known.

The Jewish community perceived the war as a war for survival and the era that followed the 1948 war was discerned, in the Jewish Israeli consciousness, as a miracle of victory against all odds. The war of 1948 was then given the name “The war of Qomemiyut.” The word *qomemiyut* is usually translated in this context as “independence” but its Hebrew root comes from “becoming erect” or “becoming upright” or “restoring oneself.” The two commonly used names today are “The War of Liberation” (*Milhemet Hashiḥrur*) and “The War of Independence” (*Milhemet Ha'atsma'ut*).

Israelis and pro-Israeli writers published numerous books during the first decades following the establishment of the state. Politicians such as Golda Meir, Pinhas Sapir, Moshe Sharet, Abba Eban and many more published autobiographies both in Hebrew and in English, weaving their personal political careers into the Zionist narrative. These books reached a wide audience and some of their protagonists, such as General Moshe Dayyan, became known world-wide. No less influential was Leon Uris' fictional book *Exodus*, later adapted to the cinema screen. For a variety of reasons, and not simply that they had lost a war, there was no Palestinian equivalent.

On the local Israeli scene, some “classic” books in Hebrew, compiled shortly after the 1948 War, became the backbone of the post 1948 Zionist ethos. One such book was

Sefer Toldot Ha'hagana (The Book of the History of the *Hagana*), published in 1954, comprising eight volumes and covering the period from the first Zionist settlement in 1882 to the end of May 1948, when the Israel Defense Force was founded. The last part of the series is dedicated to the *Hagana* during the war of 1948. The opening passage of the book is instructive:

The book "The History of the Hagana" is here to tell a faithful story, based on authoritative documents and cross checked testimonies, about the whole "affair of the history of Israel's defense on its land, the defense of its renewed settlement in it, the struggle for its establishment and the return of the nation to it," until its battle for freedom and independence. This affair, which is one of the most glorious in the history of the days of Israel from the time it became a nation and led to the revelation of the ancient courage that was concealed within the nation, is interlaced and interwoven in the renewed settlement of Israel on its land.¹⁰¹

This *History of the Hagana* was followed by a similar publication named *Toldot Milhemet Haqomemiyut* (The history of the War of Independence), published in 1959. The Israel Defense Ministry publishing house published both books.¹⁰²

The relatively unquestioned Zionist narrative of the conflict persisted in Israel well into the 1980s, when a trickle of studies questioning its elements found their way to

¹⁰¹ *Sefer Toldot Hahagana* (1954), vol.I, p. alef.

¹⁰² Another popular book about the war, largely based on the information of *Toldot Milhemet Haqomemiyut*, is Netanel Lorch's book "The Edge and the Sword: Israel's War of Independence, 1947-9," first published in English in 1961. In Israel, Lorch was considered as one of the leading experts on the war.

the general public.¹⁰³ Access to archival documents, which had become available in the 1980s, had a significant impact on scholarly Israeli perceptions of the Palestinian issue. New research revealed that part of the Israeli ethos, such as describing the Jewish forces as smaller than the Arab ones, was simply wrong. Some writers began to question the principles of Zionism altogether.¹⁰⁴ In the 1980s the work of what became known as the “new historians” and “critical sociologists” was perceived as peripheral to the academic world and even more so to the media and to public opinion, but by the 1990s their claims had become more widely accepted. In a circular manner, some of their legitimacy within Israel may have been established through the attentive ear they found abroad.¹⁰⁵

However, the voice of the “new historians” does not dominate the Israeli scene even today and the controversies persist. The Defense Ministry Publishing House has just begun to publish a Hebrew series of studies on 1948 named “The War over the Cities.” It seems that one of the series’ aims is to refute the arguments of the “new historians.” The first volume, dedicated to the city of Lyd (Lod in Hebrew), begins with a quote from Morris’ *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* on the city’s conquest in 1948 and the fifty pages that follow aim to prove why Morris was wrong.¹⁰⁶

On the cover, the author’s role in the war is emphasized through the title that precedes his name, “Lt. Colonel,” while the introduction of the book was written by General S.L.A. Marshall of the U.S army.

¹⁰³ Associated with the revisionist thinkers are Kimmerling, 1989; Morris, 1991; Pappé, 1992, 1997, 1999; Ram, 1995, 1999.

¹⁰⁴ That, however, was a step undertaken only by some scholars such as Ilan Pappé, Uri Ram or fiction authors such as Itzhaq La’or.

¹⁰⁵ Avi Shlaim, originally an Israeli, established his career in England. Benny Morris first published *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* in English, with Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰⁶ See Tom Segev’s article on the series “The War on the Cities” in *Haaretz* 12 May 2000, p. B12. The editors of the series are Avraham Sela and Alon Kadish of the Hebrew University.

Some of the claims advanced by the “new historians” and “critical sociologists” were expressed in Israel earlier on (see Gabbay, 1959; Davis, Yuval-Davis and Mack, 1975 ; Flapan, 1987; Avnery, 1986). However, the social conditions for the acceptance of such “post-Zionist” ideas ripened only in the late 1980s. Hence, the transformation in perception is certainly not due only to the uncovering of new material but to the emergence of a new, more critical generation such that some of its members could cope with undermining the conservative Zionist version.

The revisionist thinkers were preoccupied not only with re-reading historical events but also with the mechanisms that created and disseminated partial and distorted images. Benny Morris, by cross checking documents from 1948, traced the early processes of self-censorship that were implemented by politicians. In one example, Morris showed how the record of a meeting about Arab affairs summoned by Ben Gurion early in 1948 quotes one of the advisors saying: “...The Arabs were not ready when they began the disturbances. Moreover, most of the Arab public did not want them.” Ben-Gurion jotted in his diary only the first part of the sentence, choosing to omit the fact that most of the Arabs were not interested in initiating a conflict (Morris, 1995:51).

Self-censorship, Morris demonstrated, was applied everywhere, including what were supposedly “stenographic” records. During a meeting of the Political Committee of *Mapam* (one of the Israeli left wing parties) conducted in November 1948, the attendants discussed atrocities that had recently been committed by the Israel Defense Force. Whereas one of the participants listed in his private notes a long version of the events and

massacres, the “stenographic” record fails to mention substantial parts of the discussion (Morris, 1995:58). The internal rationale of omission and confabulation in these documents signaled the first steps in creating an “acceptable version.”

Although these re-readings of history are seemingly an internal Israeli affair, there is interest in these developments outside of Israel. The *Jordan Times* published an article on the new historians in Israel in February 1998.¹⁰⁷ An article published by Clovis Maksud (former Arab League Ambassador to the US and the UN) in the Beirut based *Al-Hayāt* newspaper presented a critique of the Israeli “new historians,” arguing against the assumption that there is truly a transformation of political conscience in Israel.¹⁰⁸ In response, Mohammed Sayyed Ahmad of the Egyptian newspaper *al-Ahrām* argued with Maksud and discussed the potential international implications of a different historical discourse within Israel.¹⁰⁹ Rami Khouri, the popular Jordanian journalist, in a recent article entitled “Moving Slowly through Historical Minefields,” discussed the meaning of Israeli debates regarding the schools’ history curriculum.¹¹⁰ Also in America, Israeli “New Historiography” is finding an attentive ear. The *New York Times* reviewed two recent books published by Benny Morris and Avi Shlaim, situating their work among recent debates in Israel over history textbooks.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ See Pascal B. Karmy, “New Israeli Historians Reveal Facts on Expulsion of the Palestinians from their Homes.” *Jordan Times*, Sunday, February 1998, p.6.

¹⁰⁸ *Al-Hayāt*, 29 August 1999.

¹⁰⁹ *Al-Ahrām*, 7-13 October (vol. 450), 1999.

The above mentioned two articles and another Palestinian critique of the new historians and critical sociologists is published in Hebrew in *Mitsad Sheni* 20, December 1999, a monthly newspaper published by the Center for Alternative Information.

¹¹⁰ *Jordan Times*, 12 January 2000.

Textbooks are often considered as “the high court of history.”¹¹² It is in school curricula that a “laundered” national version of the conflict, thoroughly reworked, can be found. Elie Podeh, who reviewed Israeli history and civics textbooks from the years 1953-1995, concluded that the presentation of the conflict was generally unilateral, inaccurate and bordering on outright distortion (1997:66). A turning point in the school curricula came when the revisionist work started “penetrating” school textbooks in the late 1990s, leading to fervent debates in the Israeli media.

One specific case concerns a textbook on the 20th century (for grade nine) that sparked a public controversy in the autumn of 1999. Discussing the 1948 War, the author, Eyal Naveh, wrote that although there were more Arab soldiers, in practice, “on almost every front and in every battle, the Jewish side enjoyed an advantage over the Arabs in terms of planning, organization and operating the equipment, as well as the number of skilled fighters who participated in the battle.” He also mentioned that Arabs were expelled, unlike the common mainstream Zionist version according to which the Arabs escaped because their leaders told them to do so. Naveh made a conscious decision to use clean, unbiased language, bereft of inherent connotations, which were popular until recently (such as “gangs” for the Arab military units).¹¹³

¹¹¹ See *New York Times*, “Books,” November 14, 1999.

www.nytimes.com/books/99/11/14/reviews/991114.14bronjt.html

¹¹² The phrase was coined by the Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling (1995:57) with reference to academic textbooks. For a similar attitude to school education see the Popular Memory Group (1982); Anderson (1991:91-2); Hobsbawm and Ranger (1993:264).

¹¹³ It was not only the Jews who used connotative terms to refer to the Arab military units. In a book that was written by Jack Binsley who served with the British Police in Palestine from 1930 to 1948, the caption under one photograph says: “Arab bandits under training during the Arab Rebellion (1936-1939)” (Binsley, 1996:117).

Naveh's work was attacked by conservative writers for being "revisionist" (in its new meaning, namely representing the "new historians"),¹¹⁴ whereas writers associated with the political left thought many unquestioned Zionist assertions in his book still needed to be addressed.¹¹⁵ The debate over Naveh's book was perhaps not accidental. The book was drawn into the midst of a historiographic change that is fragmenting the previously accepted narrative and creating new modified versions.

Although there is still a huge gap between the two national historiographies-- Palestinian and Israeli-- there are also sites of convergence. Revisionist Israeli history is now incorporated into Palestinian literature about 1948. For instance, in the large compilation on the Palestinian obliterated villages, *All That Remains*, edited by Walid Khalidi and published in 1992, the main source of information about the events of the war in each village is Benny Morris's book *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*. Articles by the Israeli "new historians" have been published in the last two decades in *The Journal of Palestine Studies*. The Documentation Center of the Palestinian University of Bir-Zeit even uses *The History of the Hagana* to describe events in the Palestinian villages in 1948.¹¹⁶ Another interesting fact is that Palestinian sources mention the new Jewish settlements that were established on the sites of the obliterated Palestinian villages after the war. This trend began with Muṣṭafa Murrād al-Dabbāgh's seminal work on the villages and towns of Palestine, published in 1974, and is carried on to this day in the *Palestinian Encyclopaedia* (al-Mawsu'a al-Faleṣṭīniyya, 1984; Khalidi,

¹¹⁴ Bambi Sheleg, "lo bebeit sifrenu" (not at our school). *Ma'ariv*, 17 September 1999:15.

¹¹⁵ See Segev, Tom "Tir'eh ma asita lamitos sheli" (Look What You've Done to my Myth). *Ha'aretz*, 17 September 1999: B12.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, www.birzeit.edu/crdps/tier@vil.html#1948, 1 December 1998.

1992a).¹¹⁷ The recent Palestinian literature does not freeze the landscape as it was prior to 1948; the alteration is recorded.¹¹⁸

In conclusion, despite these mirror effects, the paths and especially the context of operation of Palestinian and Israeli historiography is very different. Palestinian historiography appeared on the Western scene over two decades after the Israeli one, having to respond to the Israeli narrative. Palestinian historiography, along with newly opened archival material from Israel, was a major catalyst in the evolution of a revised Israeli historiography, which in turn, triggered some responses in the Arab world and has been, at times, incorporated into Palestinian publications. Israel has been producing its historical versions for many years. Palestine, in contrast, has had an active civil society for a while but only now is emerging, with difficulty, into a sovereign state that can control, configure and name places, decide on an archeological agenda, establish museums and control the school's curricula. It was against the lack of these institutions that villagers created a language and practice of remembrance.

Uprooted Palestinian villagers have recently begun writing their own historiography. Its unique ingredients are autobiographical stories, oral traditions, family photos and documents. This "local historicity" that will be discussed in the chapters that follow, is both attached to and detached from the general literature on Palestinian history.

¹¹⁷ See Shakarna (1991) on Dabbāgh.

¹¹⁸ Salman Abu Sitta, a Palestinian civil engineer and a member of the Palestinian National Congress in the last twenty years, has forwarded a plan named "The Feasibility of the Right of Return" which takes into account the existing Jewish settlements. See www.arts.mcgill.ca/mepp/prm/papers/abusitta.html (20 March, 2000, originally published in June 1997). Ilan Pappé of the University of Haifa has recently joined Abu Sitta in the research for this project.

Chapter II

Oral Accounts and Army Documents: Ijzim in 1948

In this chapter I discuss the village of Ijzim during the war of 1948. The chapter is organized according to subjects and not chronologically. The two major sources for the material presented here are oral descriptions of the war given me by villagers who became refugees, whether from Ijzim-- the *Jizmāwīs*-- or from neighboring villages, and documents found at the Israel Defense Forces archive (IDFA).¹ The IDFA material comprises officers' reports of attacks and battles, intelligence evaluations, informers' reports,² confiscated Arab documents, prisoners' interrogations³ and UN questioning of the villagers after they had reached the Iraqi lines. Complementary sources incorporated into this discussion include oral testimonies of Israeli soldiers who participated in the fighting in Ijzim and the surrounding area; extracts from books about the war; correspondence between state institutions (such as the Minorities Ministry⁴ and the Military Government); Mandatory archival material and newspaper reports.

¹ Israel Defense Force is the army's official name-- *Tsva Hahagana L'Yisrael* in the Hebrew.

² The names of informers are usually censored in the documents.

³ The interrogations were conducted with men after the fall of the village. The IDF no longer needed details about the village but mainly wished to prove certain claims to the UN commission that was investigating the circumstances of the fall of Ijzim. Because of the terms used in these investigation reports (such as "gangs" for the village fighters and "police" for the Israeli army forces), I suspect that some reports were written by the Israelis and the villagers were made to sign. Not surprisingly, I find these reports a most dubious source. See the State Archive, 2427/1 Foreign Ministry files, for example.

⁴ The Minorities Ministry (*misrad hami'utim*) was established with the establishment of the State of Israel and was dissolved in May 1949. The term "minorities" is a term used for referring to the Arab population of Israel. The plural alludes to the fact that the government tends to divide the non-Jewish population into "Moslem," "Christian," "Bedouin," "Druze," "Caucas," etc.

By concentrating on one village (and to some extent on its vicinity) at a given time-- February till July 1948, I hope to probe the war and its different phases in detail. Issues and terminology that may seem clear from a general overview, often disguise ambiguous situations. We shall see that there is more than a single obvious interpretation to widely spread terms such as “expelled” or “fled”, “negotiations” or “collaborators”.

The gap between Palestinian oral accounts and most of the Israeli archival documents lies in the national sentiment embedded in the narratives. But there are exceptions as, for example, the informers’ accounts, which are found with other IDFA documents and retain identification with the Arab side.⁵ What is common to the main sources-- the villagers’ accounts and the army documents-- is that they derive from people who witnessed the war. They are predominantly first hand accounts. Needless to say, the distinction between archival sources and the villagers’ oral accounts is that the latter are told after fifty years of “remembering”. One striking finding, however, is that in spite of the dissimilarity between the sources, their content is not substantially different and provides a relatively coherent story of the war of 1948 in Ijzim.

⁵ There are similarities between the informers’ material (found at the IDFA) and the *Jizmāwis*’ oral accounts. Informers often describe the Palestinian perspective with sympathy, in spite of their alliance with the Jews. See further on in this chapter, for example, the informer explaining why shooting began on the main road.

2.1 General Background

The 1948 “war” erupted immediately after the UN resolution of 29 November 1947, which recommended the implementation of a partition plan in Palestine.⁶ The first part of the “war,” from the end of November 1947 until mid May 1948, was characterized by clashes between local Arab and Jewish forces. A change came after 15 May 1948 when the British Mandate officially ended and Ben Gurion, the Jewish leader, declared the establishment of a Jewish State. It was then that units of five Arab armies-- the Trans-Jordanian Legion, the Egyptians, the Iraqis, the Syrians and the Lebanese, entered Palestine. Altogether, these armies numbered between fifteen and thirty thousand soldiers (Khalidi, 1971:867; Morris, 1991:41).

The Arab revolt in Palestine, which took place ten years earlier (1936-9), had left a sore mark on the local Arab population. That revolt, aimed against the growing Zionist presence in Palestine and the support it seemed to receive from the Mandate government, had been crushed by the British, who killed and executed over 5,000 people in the course of three years and wounded almost 15,000 (Khalidi, 1971:846-9).⁷ However, the national sentiment that triggered the revolt was not suppressed and some of its leaders, as well as the fighters, who gained experience during the revolt, re-emerged in 1948.

⁶ UN resolution 181 (II).

⁷ Internal disputes and mass assassination of alleged “collaborators” characterized the revolt, mainly in its late phases.

One of those men was Fawzī al-Qā'ūqjī, originally from Tripoli, Lebanon, who was appointed in 1948 as the head of "The Arab Liberation Army" (*Jeish al-Inqādh*) having served as the leader of the Arab volunteer force in 1936-9.⁸ The Liberation Army, which was organized and trained in Syria, entered Palestine in February 1948, before the rest of the organized armies, and operated mainly in the northern part of Palestine. Al-Qā'ūqjī was in touch with the coastal villages of the Carmel during the early months of the war, though only for a short period.⁹ Apart from al-Qā'ūqjī, other influential Palestinian regional leaders were 'Abd al-Qāder al-Ḥusseinī, active in the Jerusalem area, Ḥasan Salāmeh in the Ramla-Jaffa area and Abū Maḥmūd Saffūrī who operated in the Western Galilee and to a lesser extent in the Carmel region (Khalidi, 1971:859).

The 1948 war was characterized by a lack of any central Arab administration uniting the whole of Palestine. The Higher Moslem Council, based in Jerusalem and led by the influential Ḥusseinī family, was one of the few national Institutions. The Ḥusseinīs established the *Futūwā*, a military youth movement that trained youngsters in drill and the use of arms, but the movement never numbered more than a few hundred. A second Arab military organization, *al-Najjāda*, was established after the Second World War. It was led

⁸ See the English translation of selected excerpts of Qā'ūqjī's diary and papers in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, summer 1972, pp.27-58 and autumn 1972, pp.3-33.

⁹ Documents in the IDFA record a correspondence between 'Abdallāh Salmān, aṭ-Ṭireh's *mukhtār* (headman), and al-Qā'ūqjī, whose headquarters in Palestine at the time was in Kabatiya, south of Jenīn. All of the letters date to March 1948. IDFA 1/1957 file 55. 8-20 March 1948
In many localities the population rejected the interference of al-Qā'ūqjī's army because his men were seen as "foreigners" and because of the burden of supplying them with produce. There are also examples of relatively cooperative relations with the Arab Liberation Army (See Shoufani, 1972:108-21).

by Muḥammad Nimr al-Hawārī and most of its officers were men who had served in the British Army. However, neither the *Najjāda* nor the *Futūwā* had strong branches in the villages (see Morris, 1991:38). Because the Palestinians tended to organize themselves according to localities, there was limited co-operation between the populations of different villages and even more so between the urban Arab population and the peasants. The implication of this state of affairs during the war was that the Palestinian population fought *in situ*, unlike the Jewish forces that were mobilized throughout the entire country.

The Jewish side had a complex apparatus that united the entire community. The Jewish Agency (*Hasokhnut Hayehudit*), the National Committee (*Ha'va'ad Hale'umi*), the local councils and the *histadrut* (the worker's union), were all pre-state institutions, which within few weeks could convert into state governance. Another influential body sponsored by world Jewry was the Jewish National Fund (*Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael*)-- JNF-- which formed the main body responsible for the purchase of land and its distribution amongst the Jews (Sachar, 1976). The principal Jewish armed force, meanwhile, was the *Hagana* (meaning "defense" in Hebrew), which was established in 1920.¹⁰ When war broke out in 1948, it was already a well-established body, comprising specialized units such as a police force (which was also subordinate to the British police force and trained by it), ground forces (that included the *Palmaḥ* and *Heil Sade*), local forces to protect each settlement (*Heil Mishmar*) and pre-army training for youth (*Gadna*). Furthermore,

¹⁰ The *Hagana* was established by the main Zionist party-- *Aḥdut Ha'avoda*. After 1929 it incorporated members of other (leftist) parties as well.

there were other nascent units such as the communication service (*Sherut Haqesher*), the intelligence service (*Sherut Yedi'ot*), the marine corps and the air corps (*Toldot Milhemet Haqomemi'yut*, 1959:71-9).

Following the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, the *Hagana* with other additional forces of the *Etsel* and *Lehi* (the military arms of the rightist parties)¹¹ became the official Jewish army-- The Israel Defense Force (IDF). Six brigades were established-- Golani (in the NorthEast), Carmeli (in the NorthWest), Alexandroni (in the Coastal region), Kir'yati (in the Tel-Aviv area), Giv'ati (in the south) and 'Etsyoni (in Jerusalem area) (*Toldot Milhemet Haqomemi'yut*, 1959:79). Both Carmeli and Alexandroni were involved in the fighting in Ijzim.¹²

Whereas the Jewish forces were mainly on the defensive until March 1948, in April they adopted an offensive policy. Following "Plan D", the Jewish intent from now on was to subdue the villagers or else expel their population and demolish the village. However, in many cases the Arab population chose to flee before the Jews arrived. Whereas the departure of Palestinians had been relatively small in the first months of the war, from April the numbers of the people escaping increased dramatically: between April and May 1948, 200-300,000 Palestinians became refugees.¹³ Their flight was encouraged by horror

¹¹ The *Etsel* numbered 2000-3000 members and the *Lehi* a couple of hundred members.

¹² Later, three more brigades were established: Brigade "seven," The Armored Brigade and "Oded" Brigade. Those IDF ground forces operated parallel to the *Palmah* battalions.

¹³ See Morris, 199:51, 91-103,179.

stories that circulated about a massacre the Jewish *Etsel* and *Lehi* had committed at the village of Dīr Yāsīn, west of Jerusalem, on 10 April 1948 in which 100-250 villagers were murdered.¹⁴ This massacre, that included the mutilation of bodies (and some say rape), was publicized throughout the country and planted fear in the hearts of the Palestinian population. Other massacres, less known to the general public, were known to the villagers in the regions where they occurred. The villagers of Ijzim, for instance, were familiar with a massacre that took place in Ṭantūra, a nearby village.

The UN became involved in Palestine prior to the 1948 war, when it sent a delegation to study the Arab-Jewish conflict, foreseeing the termination of the British Mandate. This delegation prepared a partition plan that was never implemented.¹⁵ During the war itself, the UN sent intermediaries whose intervention led to the signing of two armistice agreements. The first lasted ten days in June and the second was valid from 19 July 1948 and continued on and off until the end of the war. Ijzim was attacked during this second armistice agreement and its villagers asked the Iraqi forces by radio to call for the intervention of Count Bernadotte, the UN mediator, as he was in Haifa during this assault. The Count, whether or not he received the message, did not intervene. He was assassinated four months later by Jewish right wing activists who were never captured.¹⁶

¹⁴ See Jacques de Reynier, 1971:761-766; Morris, 1991:158-9.

¹⁵ The UN general Assembly formed the Special Committee on Palestine in May 1947. It was composed of representatives of the following countries: Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Guatemala, India, Iran, Netherlands, Peru, Sweden and Uruguay.

The war in Ijzim was structured by both local and external conditions. On the one hand, there was a country-wide context, briefly outlined above. On the other hand, the heads of village families would decide on tactics and during most of the period, the fighters were the men of the village, not foreign forces. Local incidents caused direct economic difficulties to the villagers themselves as their income relied on work in the fields and on marketing the agricultural products, as well as long term storage for self-subsistence. This last factor had a devastating effect on the refugees when they were dispersed since they could not take their wealth with them.

2.2 *Local Factors*

Until the outbreak of the war, Mount Carmel and its coastal plain were densely populated. The district's villages numbered 52 in 1945.¹⁷ That year the village of Ijzim numbered 2,970 inhabitants and by 1948 it was probably over 3,000.¹⁸ Ijzim was situated on top of a hill, roughly three kilometers east of the Haifa-Jaffa/Tel-Aviv Road. Two to three kilometers away were small "satellite" villages: al-Mazār, led by Mas'ūd Efendī al-Māḍī, was to the northwest; Umm ad-Daraj to the north east; Khirbet Kumbāzeh to the southeast (known as Nimr al-Māḍī's village); Māqūra, also known in the British period as *al-Bayyāra* (the plantation), was east of the village and the closest to it (see map on the

¹⁶ See Lundstrom, 1971:789-94; Sachar, 1976:338.

¹⁷ Dabbāgh, Vol. II, 1966:453

¹⁸ This data is based on a census of "Village Statistics" conducted by the British Mandate on 1 April 1945. An IDFA document, (2168/1950, file 57), from 17 September 1948, based on the last official British statistics from December 1946, states that the inhabitants of Ijzim numbered 3140. It is a memo adjunct to a letter to the Foreign Minister regarding the three villages. A Jewish intelligence report from 1942

next page). On the mountains to the east lived Bedouins called 'Arab al-Fashsha, who were also known as the Wushshāḥī family-- *al-wushāḥiyyeh*.¹⁹ Two Druze villages were situated a few kilometers East of Ijzim-- Dalyet al-Karmel and 'Isfiyyeh.

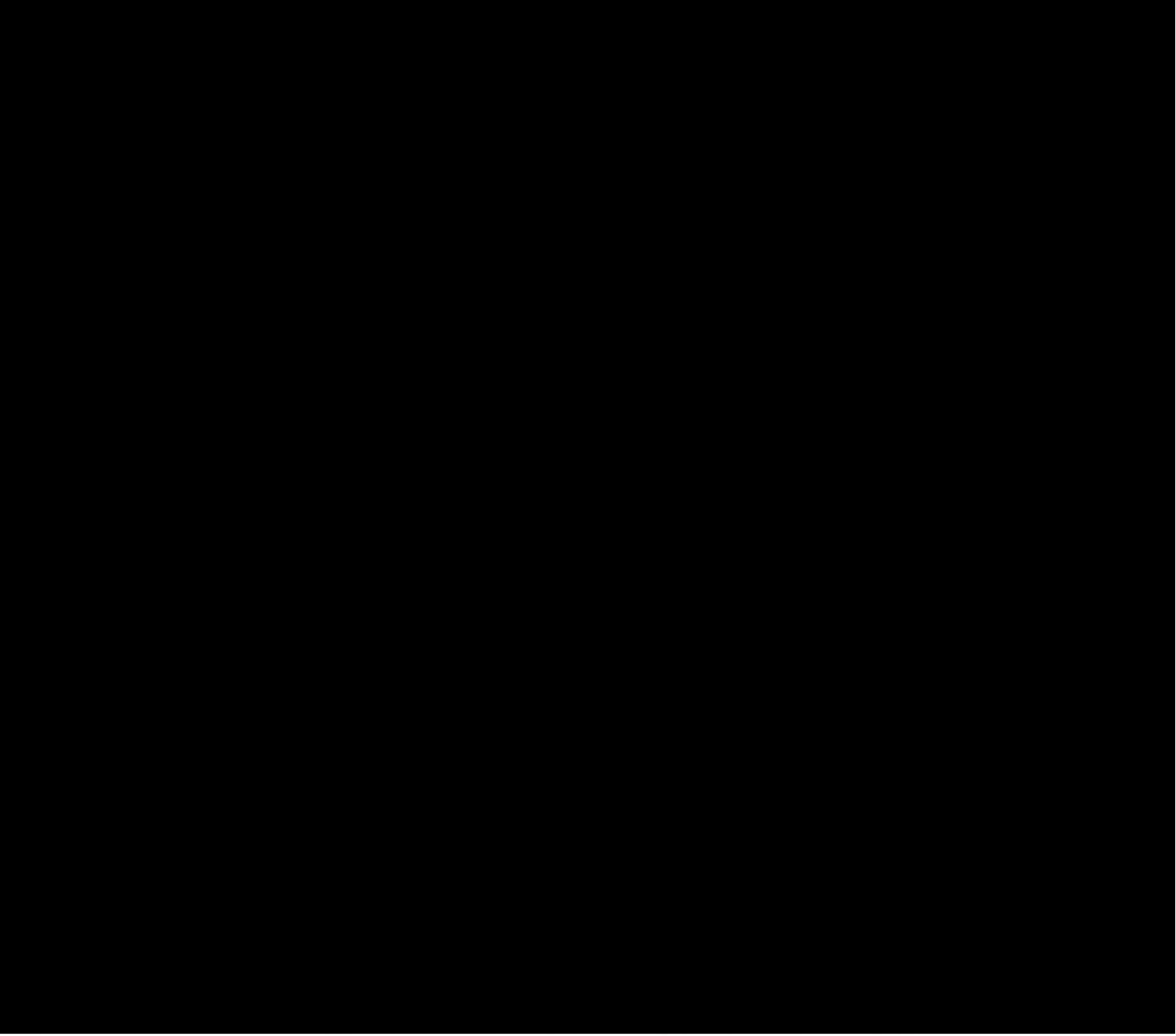
Haifa, 25 kilometers north of Ijzim, was the district's urban center during the Mandate Period; a prosperous city with a mixed population of Arabs, Jews and British. The Jewish army captured it on 21-22 April 1948, when the British army withdrew from parts of the city to concentrate in camps, which they would leave permanently a few months later. The great majority of Haifa's 70,000 Arab inhabitants left the city hastily through the port immediately after it fell into Jewish hands, landing first in Acre, on the northern tip of the Haifa Bay, and later continuing to Lebanon.²⁰ The culminating situation of violence in the city between the two groups and the massacre of Arabs by Jews in the village of Dīr Yāsīn ten days earlier had their impact on this mass exodus.

Many of the villages of the Carmel district held on for three months after the fall of Haifa. Ijzim and its two neighboring villages, Jaba' and 'Ein Ghazāl, numbering 1,140 and

(Hagana Archive 224), states the number of Ijzim's inhabitants is 3500. The British may have underestimated the population if they disregarded the sub-villages such as Umm ad-Daraj or Qumbāzeh.

¹⁹ There was intermarriage between the *Jizmāwīs* and 'Arab al-Fashsha. Generally, there was intermarriage in Palestine between peasants and Bedouins. Many of the Bedouins were sedentary and made a living on agriculture and herding.

²⁰ Morris (1991:150-154) wrote of the harsh conditions in Acre after the arrival of the refugees from Haifa and the outbreak of a typhoid epidemic. After a two-day attack, Acre surrendered to the Jewish forces on 18 May.



The village of Ijzim and its vicinity

Source: al-Mādī, 1994:27.

شکل ٤

2,170 inhabitants respectively, were the last to fall, on the 26th of July.²¹ An IDF informer reports that a pact was signed among these villages early in the war to cooperate as one fighting unit:

Cooperation between the villages of aṭ-Ṭireh, Ijzim, Jaba‘, ‘Ein Ghazāl: These four villages gathered their respective representatives and decided not to leave the villages under any circumstances, to fight to the last man, to cooperate in matters of defense.²²

The strongest ties were between Ijzim, ‘Ein Ghazāl and Jaba‘, as they were geographically close to one another. This military bond echoed pre-existing social links and marriage ties. The agreement persisted all through the months of war and it was one of the rare cases in which villages cooperated for a lengthy period.²³ The Jews nicknamed the three villages “the little triangle,” in contrast to what was known as the “large/Arab/dangerous triangle” which also formed a Palestinian enclave during the war and was situated in the area of Tul Karem-Nablus-Jenin.

²¹ These numbers are drawn from the above mentioned Mandate “Village Statistics” of 1945. The population was probably slightly higher by 1948.

²² IDFA 6400/1949, file 66 dated 2nd of May 1948.

²³ See Morris, 1991:24-5.

The continuous resistance and steadfastness of the three villages of “the little triangle”-- Ijzim, ‘Ein Ghazāl and Jaba’-- is mentioned in Israeli books about the war. In the *Hagana* history book (*Sefer Toldot Hahagana*) we find the following passage:

Only in a few places do we encounter exceptions: villages and settlements that hold on in a sea of panic. Therefore, we must mention, militarily speaking, the latitude [‘*amida*] of the villages of aṭ-Ṭīreh, ‘Ein Ghazāl, Ijzim and Jaba’, in the Carmel district, south of Haifa. These villages held on (*heḥziqū ma‘amad*) long after the fall of Haifa, and, furthermore, their people continuously disturbed the Jewish traffic to Haifa and forced it to pass through Wādī Mileḥ. Aṭ-Ṭīreh was captured by the IDF on the 9th of Tamuz, tashaḥ (16.7.48). The three other villages, that were nicknamed “the little triangle”, similar to “the dangerous triangle” (Tul Karem, Nablus and Jenin), were conquered on the 18th of Tamuz (25.7), after they repelled two previous IDF attacks and were under siege. Roughly 800 of their people broke through [the lines of siege] and reached the Arab lines in Wādī ‘Āra with their arms.²⁴

In a curious reverse manner, we find Palestinian sources that quote the Jewish sources that describe the steadfastness of these villages. For example, Walid Khalidi in *All That*

²⁴ See *Sefer Toldot Hahagana*, 1965:1363-4, my translation. For similar Jewish descriptions see *Toldot Milḥemet Haqomemiyut (The History of the War of Independence)*, 1959:253; Lorch, 1961:277-279

Remains (1992:164) quotes *The History of the War of Independence*. The Bir Zeit web-site on at-Ṭireh quotes *The History of the Hagana*.²⁵

Most of the coastal villages of the Carmel were situated close to the main road that connected Haifa and Jaffa/Tel Aviv. The villagers, as well as the Jewish forces, were involved for months in erecting roadblocks and in continuous reciprocal attacks along this route, causing an impediment to the daily flow of traffic. The Jewish army was eager to empty the villages as quickly as possible and this intention is expressed in an IDFA document that seems to have slipped the censor's attention.²⁶ Tuvia Arazy had worked for the *Shai* (*Sherut Yedi'ot*, literally 'The Information Service'), the *Hagana* intelligence arm, and later for the Arab section of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency. Arazy was holding talks with representatives of the Druze villages of Mount Carmel and reported their outcome to Moshe Carmel, the commander of the Carmeli Brigade, the

²⁵ See www.birzeit.edu/crdps/tier@vil.html#1948

²⁶ Under Israel's Law of Archives, the 1948 documents at the Israel Defense Force Archive (IDFA) are theoretically to remain closed for fifty years, namely until 1998. However, a special committee declassified many of these documents some years earlier, in light of the growing interest "generated by the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the State", writes the archivist, Yoram Mayorek (www.research.co.il). Hence, requested documents were made open to the public from the early 1990's. As the documents are not to be opened automatically but are still going through weeding and due to the slow work of the censors, the great majority of them are still unavailable to the public. At the moment the procedure is that the researcher approaches the archive and lists his/her interests. The archivist chooses the relevant files and transfers them to a censor who weeds them. Then they are loaded on a computer. It is a matter of months until the researcher gains access to the documents. When a document has been weeded from a file, a form noting its place and general outline (who wrote to whom, when and the nature of the correspondence) is inserted in its place. In some documents only specific sentences or words are censored. One can guess from the context that it is mainly names of people or deeds such as civilians' expulsion that the archive still wishes to conceal. My own archival work for this research was conducted from the end of 1996 to the middle of 1998.

army unit responsible for the area.²⁷ The following is a reply Moshe Carmel sent Arazy in May, 1948:

.... I emphasized this to you by phone before the meeting and I repeat, the *Hagana* has not authorized anyone to negotiate with the Druze in matters of security and defense, nor to make agreements with them in these matters either in writing or verbally. Whatever was decided in this meeting does not bind the *Hagana* and it will operate according to its own considerations and inclinations. Furthermore, this meeting if it touches on military matters, contradicts the *Hagana* inclination to cleanse (*letihur*) the Carmel and causes damage in matters of security and I have forwarded this information to the P and the A.²⁸

This plan “to cleanse the Carmel” was not carried through fully. The two Druze villages, Dalyet al-Karmel and ‘Isfiyyeh, remained intact as well as two Moslem village, Fredīs and Jisr az-Zarqa’ (originally ‘Arab al-Ghawārneh). The rest of the villages in this area were depopulated. In some cases, such as in the village of Şarafand, which was relatively small, the inhabitants left out of fear before they were attacked whereas in other cases the

²⁷ Moshe Carmel (1949) published his memoirs of the 1948 war. The conquest of Ijzim is mentioned in his book; the policy expressed in the following document is not.

²⁸ IDFA 244/1951 file 67 dated May 1948.

I do not know who the P and A are (Hebrew Peh and ‘Ain).

Benny Morris commented that “to cleanse” might refer to army forces only.

inhabitants did not leave until they realized they had lost the battle. Such was the case of Ijzim.²⁹

Ijzim, Jaba' and 'Ein Ghazāl went through several months of war that involved, as the refugees describe it, distinct events and phases. Incidents, mainly on the main road, had begun already in January 1948. After the fall of Haifa, at the end of April, the villagers were *de facto* under siege, unable to leave their villages to enter Haifa and unable to sell and buy produce. They managed to bypass the difficulties either by using the Druze as mediators (mainly for merchandise) or by walking at night to the Arab lines (in the Wādī' Āra area and Jenīn) to bring in supplies as well as weapons. After a few failures, the Israel Defense Force (IDF) seized the three villages on the 26th of July,³⁰ during the second truce, which had begun on the 19th of July. Most of the fighters escaped on the previous night to Wādī' Āra for fear of Israeli revenge. Some of the civilians joined them whereas many others escaped to 'Isfiyyeh and Dalyet al-Karmel, from where they were deported a few weeks later by the IDF. When the army marched into Ijzim at two in the afternoon on Monday, the 26th of July 1948, during the month of *Ramaḍān*, the village was virtually empty.³¹

²⁹ In many cases, some elderly, women and children inhabitants remained in the villages after they were captured. In the case of aṭ-Ṭīreh, after the fall of the village, the captive men were taken for interrogation in prison and the Jewish forces transferred the rest of the population to the border with Jordan.

³⁰ The conquest operation was named "Operation Policeman" (*mivṭsa shoter*).

2.3 The Early Period of the “War”

Abū Ashraf was born in Ijzim in 1927 and today lives in Israel. We met for the first time in the summer of 1996, at the beginning of my fieldwork, when I came to his current village of residence and asked passers-by for the whereabouts of villagers from Ijzim.³²

Abū Ashraf had a natural talent for story-telling and was usually eager to speak of the past. He was well informed about the war, as he had been actively involved in it, being of fighting age in 1948. We met roughly five times, twice for a more formal interview and at other times just for chats.[#]

Abū Ashraf: I’ll tell you about the war of Kerem Maharal [the name of the Jewish settlement that was erected on the site of Ijzim]³³. The war of Kerem Maharal began bit by bit. It began on the main road. People would go, people would pass to Haifa. Haifa was not gone yet [that is, had not fallen into Jewish hands yet]. The war’s first incident-- there was a Jewish jeep on the road. And there was a bus from Ijzim to Haifa [an Arab bus]. In it were a nurse and a teacher named Tawfiq...[Abū Ashraf is trying to recall Tawfiq’s family name]

Umm Ashraf [his wife]: Tawfiq al-‘Āref.³⁴

³¹ IDFA 922/1975 file 1176, 26 July, 1948 and IDFA 922/1975 file 1032, dated 26 July, 1948. Both are telegrams from *modi ‘in tsafon* (northern Intelligence) to the headquarters. The villagers were the ones to note that it was *Ramaḍān*.

³² I abstained from using this method for detecting ex-villagers later on because it could harm trust relations. I later adhered to being referred to informants by family members or friends.

³³ Abū Ashraf was one of the few people who used the new Jewish names when speaking of the places during the war of 1948. The explanation may be that he was living in Israel.

³⁴ Tawfiq al-‘Āref was one of the village *makhātir* (headmen).

Abū Ashraf [correcting his wife]: Tawfiq al-Murād, Tawfiq al-Murād.

That jeep was shooting at the bus. It killed that girl [i.e. the nurse] and that man, who was educated.

Efrat: Why were they shooting at the bus?

Abū Ashraf: It was the beginning of the war.... The bus arrived back at the village in the evening. They said: “This nurse was killed and the man from the al-Mādī family”.³⁵

On the next day, this man who owned the bus went [to Haifa]. His name is Sa‘īd al-Madanī. From Ijzim. He went by bus and they saw the jeep on the road. He said to the people on the bus: “Hold on tight” and he ran over that jeep. Killed the people. But the English were still here. They hadn’t left yet. And it began-- The Jews were shooting buses, and people were shooting at the Jews.

Abū Ashraf described these two events on the main road as the first significant war incidents in the area. The Ijzim bus, which collided with the Jewish car, was a memorable event also for Jamīl who lives in the northern Jordanian City of Irbid and to whom I was referred by a family member in Israel. Jamīl, of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, was born in 1937 and overflowed with vivid recollections of his childhood. He was a boy of ten and a half at the

³⁵ Tawfiq al-Murād is also mentioned by ‘Awād when describing Ijzim’s school teachers:*

“‘Awād: There were four to five teachers. There was amongst them Tawfiq al-Murād.

Efrat: Was he from Ijzim?

‘Awād: From Ijzim.

‘Abd al-Rāzeq [who is sitting nearby, adds]: Tawfiq al-Mādī.”

time of this road incident and as he studied in the village of 'Ein Ghazāl, he often rode the bus that connected Ijzim and Haifa, driven by Sa'īd al-Madanī. The following is his version, delivered in English, of the incident in which Sa'īd al-Madanī ran over the Jewish vehicle:⁺

Efrat: What else do you remember from the early months of the war?

Jamīl: The early months.... Once the driver called Sa'īd al-Madanī, and I think he was living in Baghdad... Perhaps he died. Perhaps he is still living. Till three or four years [ago] he was still living. He was the driver of the bus [that] belonged to Ijzim and he was from Ijzim. And he saw a small taxi. Inside it-- three or four engineers-- political men, I don't know. And he told the people in the bus-- just seize your desk tightly.³⁶ As we say in the airplane-- fasten your seat belt. And he used the brakes over the taxi to go down and kill the people there. After that, of course, a trial was held by the English people in Haifa, and people from aṭ-Ṭireh surrounded the court to prevent any hurt to that person.... After that, and that is funny really, instead of glass for the windows for his bus, they put steel windows. Imagine.

The event, as it is narrated by Abū Ashraf and Jamīl, is personalized through the naming of the actors involved-- the teacher, Tawfīq al-Murād, who was killed, and the bus

³⁶ When saying desk Jamīl is referring to the seat in front.

driver, Sa'īd al-Madanī, who carried out the act of revenge. Whereas Abū Ashraf and Jamīl limit themselves to telling the story as part of a discontinuous historical chronicle, Shafīq added a theory that framed this event within the escalation of the war in Ijzim. Shafīq, born in 1930 in Ijzim and today a resident of Haifa, thought the people of Ijzim would never have chosen to get involved in the war since "they were simple farmers who did not own weapons and did not know how to use them." Shafīq, who was part of the wealthy class of the village, relates the events with a certain distance from "the simple farmers." Both he and another member of his family were trying to figure out what had happened to the village leadership through the narration of the historical events. They deplored the fact that the leadership before 1948 did not invest in education and in the preservation of the family's property. In addition to this internal weakness, they noted, came the events of 1948. In Shafīq's opinion, two Jewish acts of provocation triggered the lethal "war." One was the kidnapping of seven men who were working in the fields near the main road and the second was the shooting at Sa'īd al-Madanī's bus.

The components of the oral story on Sa'īd al-Madanī pay attention to unique details. Jamīl noted that until not long ago al-Madanī was still living in Baghdad; Jamīl was informed because people kept in touch. Furthermore, the story of his action had been circulated for the last fifty years and his act and its significance for the district's villagers did not end in 1948. The narration is not only for the sake of recording history; it is also part of a continuous act of commemoration in which people are being transformed into

local heroes. In retrospect, these events are perceived as landmarks in the national struggle.

Tales on specific events of the 1948 war were repeated again and again, mainly in the family and ex-village setting. War story-telling was a social event that involved a crowd; people gathered round to listen even if they had heard the story before many times. These settings encouraged fervent discussion. Each person wanted to express his/her opinion, and disagreements surfaced. Men tried to hush the women, the elderly wished to hush the younger people. Even in my presence, (an outsider/ a partial or full enemy), story-telling constituted of multi-tracked accounts. Moreover, the villagers were well aware of the fact that their versions, especially between families, differ.³⁷ Winter and Sivan, in an attempt to decipher the creation of social collective “scripts,” liken the process to a group of people singing. They write:

...it is possible to speak of collective memory, à la Bastide, as a sort of choir singing, or better still, a sing-along. This is a kind of event which is not very regimented, and in which each participant begins singing at a different time and using a somewhat different text or melody which he himself has composed or developed. But he does it according to norms-- musical, linguistic, literary-- accepted by other members of that informal choir. Moreover, when each sings,

he hears himself in his inner ear, but he also hears the collective choir in his external ear. That is, he hears the product of the collective effort. Certainly, this product may modify or even slant his own singing, almost in spite of himself (1999:34).

The war stories of Ijzim, like other stories told by Palestinian refugees, are constructed and rehearsed in public, forming “collective scripts” that are continuously molded. Despite the geographic dispersion, the story of the war is still exchanged. Present developments (such as the recent violent clashes) are weighed against the 1948 events.³⁸

Going back to the 1948 road incident of Sa‘īd al-Madanī, and now in search of the Jewish perspective, in *Ha’aretz* (a common Jewish newspaper at the time) of 3 February 1948, a short article with a bold header describes what is possibly the event to which Abū Ashraf, Jamīl and Shafiq were referring:

³⁷ For instance, when Abū Da’ūd of Ijzim (and today of Haifa) heard that Abū Ashraf told me something that he believed to be wrong, he phoned him to clarify the matter. Abū Ashraf (also of Ijzim and today of a village in Israel), avoided talking to him.

³⁸ The 1948 events resurfaced during the autumn 2000 violent clashes in Israel and the West Bank. For instance, an Israeli Palestinian, who was interviewed by the local radio following the clashes in Nazareth, recalled his expulsion in 1948 from a Galilee village and the abolition of his home. Another example came from an Israeli Jew who noted in a radio talk show that the situation in the Galilee reminds him of 1948, when roads were unsafe or closed altogether. He ended by saying with reference to the Arabs—“they should remember what we have done to them then.”

Two men killed in a road accident

Yesterday morning, at half past eight, Two Jews were killed and one was injured on the Haifa - Tel Aviv way following an accident between the small car that they were driving and an Arab bus. Three of the bus passengers were also hurt. After the accident shots were heard.³⁹

The Jizmāwī stories on the 1948 war, which still circulate today, are many and diverse.

The Jizmāwīs recall a succession of armed groups that passed through Ijzim starting at the beginning of 1948, camped near it, made plans, but in the long run, contributed little to the struggle. Abū Ashraf described the presence of Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣaffūrī, a military leader from the Galilee village of Ṣaffūriyyeh, who was stationed with his men near Ijzim during the spring of 1948.[#]

Abū Ashraf: In the beginning, in those villages [Ijzim, 'Ein Ghazāl and Jaba'],

there was a man called Abu Maḥmūd aṣ-Ṣaffūrī.⁴⁰ Abū Maḥmūd aṣ-Ṣaffūrī came

³⁹ *Ha'aretz* (a Jewish newspaper), 3rd of February 1948, p.4.

The remainder of the article follows:

The car left Haifa at 8 o'clock in the morning and in it were Binyamin Te'eni, Its'hak Frukhter and Avraham Byalopolsky. When the car reached 'Atlit's area, it hit Arab bus number 25 and was overturned. Te'eni and Frukhter died immediately and Byalopolsky was wounded and taken to the Rothschild Hospital in Haifa.

Binyamin Te'eni, age 48, was the director of the water system of the Hadar Carmel Committee. He left behind a wife and a daughter who is serving in the army. Its'hak Frukhter, age 48, was in charge of the Hebrew Stone Committee in the Organization for Home Produce in Haifa; a veteran. Left behind a wife and a son. Avraham Byalopolsky who is injured is a member of the Clerk's Union.

⁴⁰ Abū Maḥmūd's name was actually Muḥammad Maḥmūd Ṣaffūrī, (his oldest son was named Maḥmūd, after his grandfather's name, as is common), hence, the variations of his first name.

with about 60 men, 60-70 men to Ijzim. He came there for about two months and then Ijzim said to him-- 'get out'.

Efrat: Why?

Abū Ashraf: They did not want him. They said-- 'we are strong'. They did not want foreigners to say that 'we are men for you'. 'You, we do not want to see you in the village.'

Efrat: Was Abū Maḥmūd linked to Qā'ūqjī?

Abū Ashraf: Before he was connected with Qā'ūqjī. And to Damascus. He was sent from Damascus. But they said to him-- 'We do not need you. Leave the village. We are strong and don't need you'. They were in the village, and each family...was sent rifles from Damascus... We would share this rifle when we went on guard at night. It was like that in the beginning of the war. Later, people started to take from the British. Took the rifles from the British.

Efrat: And where did the money come from?

Abū Ashraf: The British army, they would come to sell to people. They would come to aṭ-Ṭireh to sell. They would come to Kerem, Ijzim, and sell. Arms.

The issue of money intrigued me because each gun would have cost about 35 Palestinian Pounds at the time Abū Ashraf is describing and the villagers were paying for them out of their own pockets.⁴¹ At first, the villagers had expectations that the Arab

⁴¹ For the price of guns as well as other products during the war see IDFA 244/1951 file 129 (an investigation of a prisoner).

Forces would distribute arms but as time progressed, they decided to abandon their hopes for foreign assistance, such as that offered by aṣ-Ṣaffūrī, and no longer relied only on arms supplied from outside Arab sources; they switched to buying guns for themselves and sent emissaries to cities such as Beirut and Cairo with money to make the purchase.

In an IDFA intelligence report, dated 12 March, 1948, we are told that an informer, named “The Lawyer,” says that Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣaffūrī’s gang left the village of Ijzim and is now in a house near Fārūq’s orchard. They also moved their ammunition and arms. Outside the house people stand guard with Canary rifles.⁴² “The lawyer,” who is, most likely, Fārūq himself,⁴³ gave more information to the Jews a few days later: a re-enforcement of 30 men in addition to aṣ-Ṣaffūrī’s men had been sent to Ijzim with a Turkish officer, probably associated with “The Arab Liberation Army.” They said they had been sent by ‘Abd al-Qāder al-Ḥusseini, the leader of the fighting forces in the Jerusalem District. The officer and aṣ-Ṣaffūrī were in conflict since the Turk was subordinated to Ṣaffūrī but thought Ṣaffūrī knew nothing of military issues. The Turk drew sketches of the areas of the nearby Jewish settlements and with his men dug pits for mines between the Arab village of Fredīs and the Jewish settlement of Zikhron Ya‘aqov (a couple of kilometers south of Ijzim).⁴⁴ From both sources we learn that foreign forces

⁴² IDFA 7249/1949, file 152, 14 March 1948 [An intelligence account from Ḥiram to Ṭeneh]. Also filed elsewhere 5942/1949, file 23.

⁴³ Fārūq was the only lawyer in Ijzim at the time. Many of the villagers, even those who described the positive aspects of Fārūq’s actions, claimed he had relations with the Jews. Fārūq’s prominent role will be discussed further on in this chapter.

⁴⁴ IDFA 5942/1949, file 23, 16 March 1948 [An intelligence report from Ḥiram to Teneh].

came and went, stayed outside the village, and seem to have had problems in communication amongst themselves and with the villagers.

Early in April, the newly formed Jewish Golani Brigade sent the following information to the Alexandroni Brigade (both units had some responsibility for the Carmel area): "...The [Ijzim] gang (*knufiya*) is active on the Haifa-Zikhron Road [Zikhron is on the same road]. The Arab drivers use their horns near the olive grove as a sign. They intend to attract our force into an ambush by hanging the body of a Jew ..." The body of the Jew was supposed to serve as a trap, of course.⁴⁵ This plan was never carried out and yet the Jaffa-Haifa road became dotted with ambushes, unsafe for either side.

Aḥmad, who is originally from a small village situated within the old Crusader's fortress of 'Atlit and today resides in Israel, was a boy of twelve in 1948, and was working in the kitchen of one of the British Camps north of Ijzim.⁴⁶ A few years ago, he wrote a small booklet "for the progeny", as he put it, and named it "Memories". The booklet was written in Hebrew, the only written language Aḥmad commanded, and with the assistance of family members he translated it into Arabic. The two versions appear side by side in the booklet. Much of the content of this rare enterprise is dedicated to the period of the war and in it he describes an event along the Jaffa-Haifa road. I quote from

⁴⁵ IDFA 6400/1949, file 66, 6 April 1948.

⁴⁶ The Fortress of 'Atlit is situated roughly ten kilometers northwest of Ijzim.

this booklet, which he gave to me during an interview in his village home, not far from the whereabouts of his childhood scenes:

One day I longed for my friend whom I had not seen since we abandoned the fortress. He moved to his relatives in the village of Jaba' [adjacent to Ijzim]. My uncle Yūsef used to bring his donkey to the farm [where Aḥmad's family was staying, north of Ijzim] to enjoy the pasture, and he would tie him by the olive groves. I wished to see my friend in Jaba' and I asked my mum to borrow my uncle's donkey but she wouldn't give her consent to such an adventure. She said: 'You'll be killed on the road. Do not dare to wander outside the farm, for the land is harsh'. I did not pay attention. My mother was smart so she had taken the saddle. I went to the olive grove, when she did not notice, and rode the donkey without the saddle through the vineyards of 'Atlit colony in the direction of Jaba'. I rode along the Haifa-Tel Aviv road and just near 'Ein Carmel a truck with an Israeli flag approached me. I was on the donkey's back cracking green almonds when the truck drew closer and hit me. I was thrown into the road's drainage ditch and almost lost consciousness. I gathered myself up and went to the donkey that lay on the road. I was about to raise him when I realized he was dead. When I looked around me I saw the roadblock of Kibbutz 'Ein HaCarmel. The Israeli soldiers were pointing their guns at me but they probably had pity on me and enjoyed the scene.

Aḥmad never reached his friend. He writes that he came home with a broken leg and somehow concealed the story from his mother. The incident probably occurred in the spring, as this is the time of green almonds. About a month later, Aḥmad and another friend bumped into Jewish soldiers on the main road again, and hastily escaped. Like Aḥmad, Abū Ashraf also recalled the roadblocks. In the following description, he refers to the roadblocks that were erected near Ijzim by the *Jizmāwīs*:[#]

There was a man from the al-Māḍī family named Ibrāhīm an-Nā'if,⁴⁷ brother of Fārūq. He was a policeman with those who were on the sea...with the British. At the beginning of forty-eight he escaped with his gun and he knew how to make roadblocks. He would walk on the road and prepare in case a tank came. This is what he would do. They would prepare a coil on a battery. When they [the Jews] drove on the road, it was in groups of 10-15 cars. And they would have an armored car at the front. When the armored car would pass they [the Arabs] would stop it and blow it up. Whoever was able to run away, ran away. [The others] were dismounted and undressed [possibly meaning disarmed]. Then the automobiles were brought to Ijzim. There were 130 automobiles in Ijzim.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ The Jews took Ibrāhīm an-Nā'if al-Māḍī (the man Abū Ashraf mentions) prisoner after the village fell. At the Israel State Archive there is a declaration taken from him on 17 September 1948. 2427/1 ḥet tsadik.

⁴⁸ Abū Ashraf who spoke Hebrew used the word “automobile” and not “cars” or “trucks” to describe the vehicles on the road. The word stood out as a vocabulary relic of the time he was speaking about.

Ambushes were one part of this prolonged small scale local fighting. Another component, often mentioned, was the kidnapping of people on the road, carried out by both sides. An Arab informer reported the following to the IDF:

On Thursday, three Arabs from Ijzim were captured by the Jews in the fields of 'Ain Ghazāl near the road to Ijzim. One's name is [the name is censored] and the other [the name is censored]. They left the third.

Two weeks ago six Arabs were captured in the fields of Jaba'. Two were released and four have not returned yet.⁴⁹

There were continuous negotiations and exchanges of prisoners all through the war. One of the last roadblock events, well remembered by the villagers as well as thoroughly documented in the Jewish archives, took place on the 6th of July, three weeks before the village fell. This is the incident's description in an IDFA record:

At 11:15 there was a fierce attack on the [Jewish] transportation on the 'Atlit-Zikhron Road. The attack was with heavy arms and machine guns and came from both sides of the road near Jaba'. The driver of the armored car, which was accompanying 16 cars, was lightly wounded and two other passengers from the cars were also wounded. All were transferred to a hospital.

⁴⁹ IDFA 7249/1949, file 152 dated 4th of July 1948.

At 11:15 a gunnery car arrived on the scene from Tel Aviv with a taxi. While they were near Jaba', three armed Arabs were shooting at them. They replied with small arms. At that time a big convoy arrived from Haifa. It was stopped by heavy fire. A fuel carrier started to burn and blocked the road. The rest of the cars managed to escape to a safe place. It is assumed that some unarmed people jumped off the cars during the attack and hid in the fields of Jaba'.

At 13:15 an armored car was sent by us from 'Atlit to Jaba' and attacked the posts that face the road. There is an effort to find the people who may still be in the fields.⁵⁰

During this assault a few Jews were taken captive. One of them was Perets Velvel Etkes who is mentioned both in the IDFA documents and in the oral accounts. Etkes was one of many prisoners but he became one of the more famous captives perhaps because of his previous post as an engineer in the British Public Works Department in Haifa. Etkes' kidnapping crossed Amīn's thoughts while he was telling me about the many cars that were captured on the road and were brought to the village. Amīn, born in Ijzim in 1934, lives in a village in Israel.[#]

Amīn: I remember one time when the fighters on the road brought a car loaded with poultry.... One time they brought maize. And I remember one time they

⁵⁰ IDFA 244/1951 file 67, 6 July 1948 [sent to the officer in charge of Haifa by the city's intelligence officer]. A shorter version in 922/1975 file 1176 dated 7 July 1948.

caught someone named Etkes. He was driving, I think, a motorcycle, and they attacked him and he escaped into the cornfield near Jaba' and they chased him and caught him as a prisoner, that is, he was taken to Ijzim.

Abū Na'īm, born in Ijzim in 1936, remembered Etkes as well. Abū Na'īm lives in a village in Israel. I met him twice in his home which still resembles the homesteads of the past. In the space adjacent to the house Abū Na'īm has a hen-coop, some sheep and goats.[#]

Abū Na'īm: There was one man named Etkes who was kidnapped. He passed on the coastal road with a car, I think in the area of 'Ein Carmel-Zerufa,⁵¹ I am not sure....They stopped his car and brought him. His wife was injured. I remember her, a fat woman. She was wounded in her hand. They made her a bandage from a piece of cloth and brought her. What's this? [I thought to myself]. I saw this woman in this situation, [and felt] uneasy. Two people holding her and she...;her husband, they tied his eyes. So what do they want to do with her? She will die in their hands. And then people were quick, someone mounted a horse and ran to Dalia.⁵² He brought [Druze] people, they placed her on a second horse and took her. And he [the husband] stayed in Māqūra. The headquarters was in Māqūra. Where did he stay? With Fārūq. And who was his guard? My uncle, Murshid...;

⁵¹ As with Abū Ashraf, Abū Na'īm uses the Hebrew names of the location. The two have been living in Israel since 1948.

and I remember, he was the guard and they were in good relations. And I saw how they released him, through negotiations in 'Isfiyyeh.

Abū Ashraf knew the Druze who came as Fārūq's guests and who acted as mediators between Ijzim and the Jews.[#]

Abū Ashraf: And in our village were four Jewish men, they were brought [from the main road, where they were captured]. One was called Etkes. Etkes. He was at Fārūq's. And there was a man in 'Isfiyyeh called Labīb Abū Rukun.⁵³ He came to Ijzim to exchange men between those who were in Ijzim and those whom the Jews captured....And there was an exchange. There was someone named Rā'eq Raja Abū 'Abed, held by the Jews, and they swapped him. They would come to Jaba', Jaba', and the exchange would be held there.

Fārūq, as we saw, was a lawyer. Originally from Ijzim, he studied in Damascus and upon his return he opened an office in Haifa. He owned a large plot of land east of Ijzim, which he turned into a fruitful orchard known as *al-Bayyāra*. During the Arab Revolt, in 1937, an attempt to murder him led him to leave for two years to Beirut with his family. When he came back he discovered that the rebels had destroyed his home and trees.

⁵² Dalia, the shortened name for Dalyet al-Karmel, the Druze village a couple of kilometers east of Ijzim.

⁵³ Labīb Abū Rukun, born in 1913, was a Druze who had long standing relations with Jewish leaders (and especially with Abba Ḥushi). He was the head of 'Isfiyyeh's local council (1950-9) and a Member of Parliament (1960-2).

Nevertheless, he chose to rebuild his farm, spending weekdays in Haifa practicing law and the weekends at his Ijzim farm. During the Mandate period he established close links with British officials as well as with influential Jews. Due to these alignments, he served as a mediator during the war, trying to achieve an agreement between Ijzim and the *Hagana*.

On the very same day that Etkes was captured, Fārūq, who was keeping the captive in his home in *al-Bayyāra* near Ijzim, wrote the following letter to a Jewish acquaintance:

To Mr. Dov Ben Alter Ha'adom, Abū Yūsuf hello,

I have received your letter today through a man from 'Ein Ghazāl regarding the engineer Etkes. Salomon, the lawyer from Haifa, also applied in this matter. Also, Mr. Hayat of Haifa came and met the elders of Jaba' and promised to release five of the people the Jews captured in 'Atlit. Perhaps by tomorrow the exchange will be over and engineer Etkes will be released. He is in my home, healthy and well and honored as usual with the Arabs.⁵⁴

Shafiq, Fārūq's son, remembered the prisoners vividly. Because of Fārūq's delicate role, I thought Shafiq would not wish to meet me. However, when I called him to ask about another matter, he suggested I come and interview him. I met him in July 1998, at his home in Haifa. The following was his description of the Jewish captives.[#]

Shafiq: One day, people came to my father and told him that one of the Jews had surrendered and they had shot him. My father said to them that this is no good-- whoever surrenders should be placed in captivity. A few days later they brought him prisoners-- a truck driver, who later worked as a guard at the income tax office on Port Street.... He was an elderly man. I do not know if he is still alive.... And a taxi driver who later worked in a clothes warehouse on Hertzl Street.... And Etkes and his wife. His wife was injured in her hand and we happened to have guests from Dalia. As we didn't have a doctor, my father said-- "what shall I do?" and asked the guests to take her. And they took her, you know, through the mountains....

The three remained in the house and my mother would make food for them every day.

You know, the Jenin Triangle was under Iraqi army control and they sent Iraqi soldiers to take the prisoners. My father refused. He said to them, "You cannot take them. These are our prisoners. We are going to exchange them for our prisoners that the Jews took. We do not want to give away the prisoners, or else our prisoners will remain there." So they left and did not take them. No one guarded the three prisoners. I used to visit the room where they stayed every day.

The driver, I remember, from Port Street, said to me "let me escape" and I said to

⁵⁴ IDFA 4663/1949 file 46. The letter is dated 6 of July. The army document that quotes it is dated 10th of July.

him: “There are too many people for you to be able to escape. They’ll catch you and kill you. You cannot”. To make the story short, there was an exchange later... and with the assistance of some Druze, Mrs. Etkes sent a gift to my mother, stockings and perfume and I don’t remember what else was in this suitcase.

An Arab informer of the IDF reported his version of the same incident:

On 6.7.48 a Jewish jeep was driven near Jaba‘. The Jews tried to kidnap Arabs who were working in the fields. When the Jaba‘ guards noticed this they opened fire on the Jewish traffic. Etkes and his wife happened to pass there in their private car and were captured. They were led, blindfold, to Ijzim. Fārūq heard the story and insisted that they should be brought to him immediately. Supposedly, he wanted to release them, but the villagers interfered and demanded the release of Arabs who were held for a month in Jewish hands. Nevertheless, they agreed to release Etkes’ wife. She was sent by three Druze, headed by Abū Kammāl (our informer).⁵⁵

When Etkes returned from his imprisonment, he was questioned by the IDF and supplied information about the situation in Ijzim, including a description of the Iraqis who had come to take him. The following is an extract from the report that was written by Etkes’ interrogator:

On Thursday night, an Iraqi unit with an officer showed up on the estate. The people were well armed and one had a machine gun. They looked very tired as if they had come from afar. Then he [Etkes] discovered they came from 'Arrābeh [a village south west of Jenīn] where the Iraqi headquarters is at the moment. The officer spoke fluent English but Etkes is sure he is not an Englishman. He looks like an Iraqi. The officer questioned him briefly and then said he was about to take him to 'Arrābeh for a thorough interrogation. But after consulting with Fārūq, he changed his mind and said Etkes would be released if we were to release Ijzim's prisoners. The unit stayed for a short while and then continued to Jaba'.⁵⁶

Kupershtock was the name of the truck driver who was also a prisoner at Fārūq's house and who was mentioned by Shafiq. From his imprisonment he sent two letters to Ya'aqov Salomon, a Jewish lawyer who was a *Hagana* liaison officer in Haifa and a participant in the negotiations with Ijzim. Salomon knew Fārūq long before the incident, as they were both lawyers in Haifa. The following letters were found in Ya'aqov Salomon's archive in a small envelope that contained other notes from that period.⁵⁷

13/7/48. Dear Mr. Salomon. My name is Zvi Kupershtock, of 20 Tel Hai Road. A driver of a truck. I have been imprisoned for a week already. For a couple of days

⁵⁵ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3, 8 July 1948 [from Teneh to Hiram].

I was with Mr. Etkes and another taxi driver named Eli'ezer. They were freed on Saturday and I remain here alone. They promised to do something for me, whatever they can. Unfortunately, there is not a sound. You know me very well. I have been to your home many times. Until recently. My situation is very grave. I am sick both in my body and in my head and I need medical attention but I have none. Therefore, I ask you to set me free any way possible, as soon as possible. I can be lost any minute...I have done much for society...until recently. With all due respect, Zvi Kupershtock.

Two days later, Kupershtock sends to Salomon another, more desperate, letter:

15/7/48. Dear Mr. Salomon. I have received your letter and I cannot comprehend why is it taking so long when my head and body are not well...and I need medical treatment... and I have nothing here. "Moḥammad Efendī"⁵⁶ is willing to set me free if you give him one Arab. You should know that the situation here is very tense and I am liable to pay with my life any minute. Our airplanes dropped many bombs...and there were many casualties...They already wanted to set me up, only Muḥammad Efendī wouldn't let them. You cannot imagine how critical my situation is. I now write to you clearly and I ask for a clear reply. Then I will know what to do, as I will have no other choice but to escape and risk my life in

⁵⁶ IDFA 6400/1949 file 66 dated 12 July 1948.

⁵⁷ Amongst the notes was a list of names of Arab prisoners held by the Jews.

one hundred percent.⁵⁹ I am lost and I find it difficult to carry on. They are watching me with seventy eyes. Please take everything into consideration. I thank you in advance. Zvi Kupershtock.⁶⁰

On the 8th of July, while Kupershtock and Etkes were still in Ijzim, there was a Jewish infantry assault on the village, described as a reprisal for the Arab road attack two days earlier. The soldiers failed to reach the village and were fiercely attacked by the Arab fighters, their position was surrounded from three directions and they hastily retreated, leaving behind two dead and taking back with them nine wounded. The Israeli officer who documented the event concluded by saying, amongst other observations, that “the enemy was fast to get oriented and attack, well commanded with an offensive spirit and tendency to assault.”⁶¹ On the 10th of July Etkes was released and on the 16th of July, Kupershtock was released as well.⁶²

2.4 The relations with the Druze and the Iraqi Forces

Since the villagers were isolated and were prevented from entering Haifa during the months of May, June and July (following the fall of Haifa), they used Druze intermediaries

⁵⁸ Kupershtock is probably referring to Fārūq.

⁵⁹ Kupershtock may have reached this conclusion following his chat with Shafiq, Fārūq’s son. Note that earlier on Shafiq mentioned that Kupershtock wanted to escape and that he warned him that it is dangerous.

⁶⁰ State Archive 931/6/P.

⁶¹ IDFA 6400/1949 file 66.

⁶² IDFA 7249/1949 file 137. Members of Etkes’ family told me that not long after the establishment of the State of Israel, Etkes and his wife left to the U.S.A. (where he had spent a few years prior to his arrival in Palestine).

to transfer and sell their agricultural products in the city.⁶³ The prices of staple products rose during the war. The IDFA sums up the information gathered from the villages:

Subject: Ijzim

...Supplies: Supplies reach Ijzim from Dalyet al-Karmel and 'Isfiyyeh. The price of one sack of flour has reached 7-8 Palestinian Pounds. There is a shortage of sugar and oil. Clothes too are purchased from Dalia and 'Isfiyyeh. Supply is brought by donkeys. The people of Dalia and 'Isfiyyeh are granted entrance to the village.

Another route out of the siege led to the Iraqi Forces based in Jenīn, twenty kilometers south of Ijzim. The Iraqis entered Palestine with the other Arab Alliance forces on 15 May 1948. One of the main issues scrutinized to this day is the involvement of Arab Alliance forces in Palestine in 1948-- Did they really participate actively, as the Israeli chronicle tends to emphasize, or was the presence of these forces partially symbolic and misleading for the local Palestinians who relied mistakenly on their help, as the Palestinian sources often present it? It should be noted that the Arab States had soldiers and honor at stake in their war involvement. However, unlike the Palestinians, loss would not bring about dispossession. Hence, whereas for the Arab Leaders "Palestine" was an idea, a sentiment, a mythic symbol to ornament their speeches, for the Palestinians it was a very concrete home. The Palestinians depended on the assistance of these state powers—first on their military assistance, and later, as refugees in those Arab states.

⁶³ IDFA 7249/1949 file 152.

Thus, even though the official Iraqi rhetoric was strongly pro-Palestinian, in practice the Iraqi involvement in the war was very limited. Many of the Iraqi officers, and specifically General Jabouri in his memoirs, complained about the lack of orders (*mākū awāmer* in the Iraqi colloquial Arabic) and lack of a clear policy.⁶⁴ As a result, personal initiatives were taken by Iraqi officers in certain localities. On the borderline between the Jewish and Iraqi forces, in a place between Ijzim and Jenīn, we find a correspondence between the local Iraqi and local Israeli officers to settle a dispute concerning the usage of a certain plot of land. The Iraqi officer sends a letter to the Jewish officer. In it, he assumes responsibility for the local farmers who were shot by the Jewish army while trying to access their land. Moreover, he notes, Jews are now collecting the Arab crops. Writing in English, the Iraqi officer notes that such a deed has no “military spirit.” In order to solve the problem he calls for a meeting, to which the two parties should come unarmed. (See copies of the letters written by the Iraqi officer in appendix III). Such rare local initiatives testify to the general disorderly state of affairs. The general passivity of the Iraqis may explain some of their puzzling reactions in the case of Ijzim.

⁶⁴ Charles Tripp argued the above in a paper concerning the Iraqi involvement in Palestine in 1948. The paper was delivered at The Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Oxford, 4 December 1998. A book on the subject is due in the near future.

There is still a popular saying amongst the Palestinians regarding this Iraqi lack of orders: *bayn akū wa-mākū al filasṭīniyyūn intākū* – between the presence [of orders] and the lack [of orders], the Palestinians were screwed. Avraham Sela drew my attention to this saying.

However, the Iraqis did provide some assistance. We know from the IDFA records that there was a constant flow of arms and products between the little triangle and the area the Iraqi forces occupied, especially when the little triangle was under siege.⁶⁵ Abū Ashraf said that: “At night time we would go from Ijzim to ‘Āra [20 kilometers south of Ijzim]. The Iraqi Army was stationed there. We would go and bring bullets on camels. At night. Between the Jews. I also went a few times”. Elsewhere, Abū Ashraf described how easily he penetrated the border from Jordan into Israel early in the 1950s since he had walked it so many times during the period of the war. The documents show that the Jewish army knew about the open route through the mountains:

An informer reports Ijzim’s fighters have good contacts with the village of ‘Āra and Umm az-Zīnāt [a village roughly 8 kilometers east of Ijzim]. ‘Āra is held by the Iraqis and they have a big force there. Iraqi soldiers visit Ijzim. Last week Ijzim’s leaders visited ‘Āra and the Iraqi commander notified them that when the truce is over, there will be a general attack on Haifa from the direction of Mishmar Ha‘emeq by the regular forces, with air and sea forces.⁶⁶ He notified them not to

⁶⁵ IDFA 6400/1949 file 66 dated 4 July, 1948 -- “...The people of Ijzim receive small arms from Ṭul-karem, through paths in the mountains that pass by Umm aj-Jimāl near Zikhron.”

IDFA 6400/1949 file 66 --“... No foreign army in Ijzim.... Every night food supplies, ammunition, arms and equipment are transferred from the triangle to the village.”

⁶⁶ Mishmar Ha‘emeq is a Jewish kibbutz south east of Haifa.

allow Arabs into Haifa and to tell the Arabs of Haifa to keep away from it due to the danger.⁶⁷

In the case of the Carmel district, although some inhabitants were evacuated, the fighters were encouraged and even forced to stay. In at-Ṭīreh, 20 kilometers north of Ijzim, many of the women and children were evacuated by the Jordanian Legion in an organized manner. This protection of the family and especially the women is linked to the central role of honor (*sharaf*) in Arab society. A man's honor is dependent on the prevention of any harm, and especially sexual harm, inflicted on the women in his family. Therefore, the men felt it necessary to keep the women and girls away from any potential damage, while they remained to fight. However, in retrospect, the men considered the disintegration of families during the war a detrimental factor. In an interview, 'Abdallāh Salmān (Abū Wajīh), at-Ṭīreh's *mukhtār* (headman) and a prominent figure in the district, mentioned the evacuation of the women and children. His comment provoked a remark (or was it an accusation) from Abū Majdī, who was sitting with us and was a child in Ṭīreh in 1948:*

I have one question to ask, Abū Wajīh: The reason that the women and children were sent away and the men remained-- what was the planned policy? The reason the women and children went to Jordan and one is left here without the women and children—what is this politics? Was it the politics of the forces from outside or

⁶⁷ IDFA 7249/1949 file 152 dated 4 July, 48. The reference regarding relations with Umm az-Zīnāt is bewildering as Umm al-Zīnāt was conquered on the 15th of May.

from within? *Ya'ani*, when my mother and my wife left, what was left for me to do?

This comment sparked a debate between the men in the room (--another man from aṭ-Ṭireh, Abū Wajīh's son and a man from 'Ein Ḥawḍ). Some claimed that the fighters' spirit was low because they were left alone in the village without the support of family. If it had not been for this evacuation, they noted, the outcome might have been different. The village was much more vulnerable when the circumstances of war did not enable the preservation of the usual social order. The social fabric of the village was portrayed as rural and traditional, where gender roles were clearly delineated (Abū Rāshed, 1993). The evacuation of the women and children in April 1948 entailed new domestic arrangements—who would cook for the men? Who would do the laundry? It was not only the practicalities that posed difficulties; it was the image of the village as a functioning unit that was shattered.

The Iraqi army was a new factor intervening in the regular social order. That may explain the villagers' reluctance to allow the Iraqis to base themselves in the village or to fight on their behalf. However, when the situation got graver (especially from the middle of July), the *Jizmāwīs* called on the Iraqis to join the fighting and yet this assistance failed to come.[#]

Abū Na‘īm: We used to consult with the Iraqi army. “So what do you think?” we would say. “Carry on” [they would reply]. “We will come next week. Next week”.

Efrat: So they actually forced the men to stay and fight?

Abū Na‘īm: Yes, and they cheated them. They said-- “look, do it...carry on fighting, hold on, next week we shall come”. And once there was a battle, in the place where a tower stands today in the mountains of Geva Carmel⁶⁸, so they called [the men of Ijzim], they had communication, the first communication, [they called] the Iraqi army-- “send us reinforcements”. They [the Iraqis] said they’ll send airplanes. Airplanes indeed came, but bombed them.

Abū Na‘īm meant that they waited for Iraqi planes and discovered that the planes were Jewish. They thought the airplanes had come to assist them and therefore revealed themselves to the pilots and that enabled the Israeli planes to bomb them. He was hinting at the fact that the villagers were tricked by the Jews-- the Jews made them think the airplanes are Iraqis and then bombed them. Shafiq described a similar deceit. The airplane would approach the village but then fly towards the sea and drop a bomb there, as if targeting the Jewish settlement. Then, the plane would fly to the mountains to the east and drop a bomb there. When the people of the village came out to hail the Arab plane, a bomb was dropped on them.

The Jews possibly knew when the villagers were expecting the Iraqi planes because the IDF was monitoring radio transmissions between the Arab ground fighters in Ijzim and the Iraqi forces in Jenīn. This may have enabled the Jews to trace the fighters accurately and explain Abū Na‘īm’s above-mentioned story of the bombing in Geva Carmel. The following is an intercepted radio transmission between the little triangle fighters, who were already desperate, and the Iraqi headquarters, dated 21 July, three days before the final attack on the village that led to its fall:

10:40. To Ḥasan [of Ijzim] (2)

From Madar [assumed by the IDF to be the village representative in Jenīn] (1)

1 - The Red Cross will reach you today. You must defend as strongly as you can until the Red Cross Committee comes.

2 - When will the committee arrive?

1 - It will arrive today. It is on its way to you.

2 - The attack is still fierce.

1 - We will inform *ra’īs* Khalīl. If you wish, you can speak to him.

2 - Let him speak to me.

1 - I’ll go and call him.

⁶⁸ See previous footnote regarding the anachronistic usage of place names.

I have just been making inquiries about you. The committee will arrive in an hour. Stay in your trenches.

2 - [unclear]

1 - Just one hour. The representatives will reach you

2 - [unclear]

1 - I could not sleep all night. We hear every bomb that falls on you. We have sent a radio warning to the Jews.

2 - [unclear]

1 - I am now speaking to you from Jenīn. I went there in order to speak on your behalf.

2 - *Inshālla* [with God's help] they will look upon it favorably.

1 - The committee will reach you before the Mundels [?]⁶⁹ reach you. Mūsa is in the headquarters in Nablus and takes care of your matters.

2 - We have been exposed.⁷⁰

The expectation of assistance from the Iraqis is still evident in the following intercepted radio transmission of 25 July at 18:00 in the afternoon, just a few hours before the fighters gave up and fled:

⁶⁹ The army translator clearly marks that he cannot identify the word *mundel*. It is possible that it comes from the Arabic *munāḍilīn*—fighters and is used in an ironic and cynical manner. I thank 'Issam Aburaiya for this suggestion.

-- The Jews have attacked us and we are bombed by artillery shells.

-- All right. Reinforcements will reach you in a short while, as fast as possible.

There are many people here. If they don't reach you by twelve, let me know.⁷¹

The villagers still remember the Iraqi failure to come to their assistance. The accusations towards this foreign force came from their own experience; it was not just a common amorphous accusation towards the Arab armies who promised help and failed to supply it. In 1948, Arab rhetoric had a detrimental effect: the talk of unity was hardly implemented on the ground. In retrospect, the villagers lament the fact that they may have organized themselves better if they had known how limited was the assistance that the Iraqis were willing to offer.

2.5 A British Army Deserter Moves to Ijzim

The British Presence in Palestine was not seen favorably by most of the Arab population. 'Abd aṣ-Ṣamed Abū Rāshed dedicated a chapter of his book on aṭ-Ṭireh to the "Dark Background" of Mandate rule. Amongst other things, he wrote: "In spite of the sharp ideological difference between the Christian West and Zionism, both sides met on the grounds of greediness and the destruction of Islam and the Moslems" (1993:251). The villagers perceived the British Mandate as pro-Jewish. Furthermore, there were local reasons for the discontent such as the large plots of land that were expropriated by the

⁷⁰ This passage is translated from the Hebrew translation that is kept at the IDFA. The word used for "exposed" in Hebrew was "*nitgalenu*." IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

Mandate government for building army camps and the railway track or the acts of oppression that were carried out by the British Army during the Arab Revolt. The villagers' recalled the British soldiers forcefully entering houses, spilling and ruining the yearly storage of agricultural produce, compelling the villagers to stand in the hot sun in the village square for a whole day or beating men with Prickly Pear (*ṣabbār*) cactuses.⁷²

Ismā'īl was one of the interviewees who reiterated their resentment towards the English although his ideas are no exception; like him, most Palestinians blamed British policy for the consequences of 1948. The following were some of Ismā'īl's accusations, expressed during our meeting that took place in his home in Amman: "The British, they have done nothing for us. They were very nasty with us"; "The British brought the Jews from Europe. They used to bring them to Haifa port and 'Atlīt port, bring them down and spread them to Palestine"; "The British, where there is a problem, you find the British. In Pakistan, Palestine, Cyprus."⁷³ In light of this generally unfavorable attitude towards the Mandate Government, the presence of an ex-British soldier who deserted the army and joined the Arab forces, first in aṭ-Ṭireh and then in Ijzim, was a rare phenomenon and well remembered. Let us look at the consequences that led to this soldier's involvement in Ijzim.

⁷¹ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

⁷² On torturing methods used by the British, see Shepherd, 1999:211-2.

⁷³ Ismā'īl talked both in Arabic and in English.

Muḥammad, also known as Johnny or George, was previously a British soldier who deserted the British army and came to train the fighters of aṭ-Ṭīreh. At the fall of aṭ-Ṭīreh, or perhaps earlier, he joined the *Jizmāwīs*. Aṭ-Ṭīreh's defeat on the 15 July was felt in Ijzim. Aṭ-Ṭīreh's fighters were relatively well equipped since they bought, stole and perhaps even received free ammunition from the surrounding British camps.⁷⁴ When aṭ-Ṭīreh fell, its inhabitants escaped southwards and many passed by Ijzim. The IDF thought that some fighters from aṭ-Ṭīreh remained in Ijzim⁷⁵ but 'Awād and 'Abd ar-Rāzeq, both originally from Ijzim, said that the Ṭīrawīs only left some arms for the little triangle. 'Awād and 'Abd ar-Rāzeq have been neighbors for the last fifty years. The following conversation took place while we were sitting in 'Abd ar-Rāzeq's home in Irbid's refugee camp in March 1998.*

'Awād: They conquered aṭ-Ṭīreh ten days before us.

Efrat: And the people of aṭ-Ṭīreh came to you?

'Awād: They came to us.

'Abd ar-Rāzeq: They came to us and saw us.

Efrat: How many people of aṭ-Ṭīreh came to you? A thousand?

'Awād: Many, more than a thousand.

⁷⁴ Khaḍer of aṭ-Ṭīreh noted: "A man who was hungry, he'd go out and steal. British army camps surrounded us. So one would go, three or four friends, go at night and steal tires....Someone who'd steal a tyre could live off it for a month at that time....And [we'd steal] spare parts for cars."

⁷⁵ IDFA 7249/1949 file 137. IDFA 5942/1949 file 3 dated 18.7 --"The armed men that were in aṭ-Ṭīreh and its vicinity are now in Ijzim's area."

Efrat: And did they stay in Ijzim for a while, the people of aṭ-Ṭīreh?

'Awād: They continued to Jenīn. They passed by us and went to Jenīn.

They sat for a day or two and most carried on.

Efrat: Did the fighters of aṭ-Ṭīreh stay in Ijzim in order to fight?

'Awād: No

'Abd ar-Rāzeq: No, they all left

Efrat: Did they leave their weapons with you?

'Awād: They had many arms. They had British arms and they left them here [in Ijzim].

Abū Ashraf was the first to mention to me the arrival of the English deserter Muḥammad in Ijzim.[#]

Abū Ashraf: And there was someone who escaped from the English army. He came to Ijzim. He was also teaching the men.

Efrat: What was his name?

Abū Ashraf: His name, I do not know, but while he was in Ijzim he was called Muḥammad. They invented a name and called him Muḥammad.

Efrat: Was he English?

Abū Ashraf: English, English. And could not speak Arabic. He came. He deserted the army and came to Ijzim. And he began to train the youngsters and to teach the people how to shoot.

Many interviewees knew of Muḥammad's premature death in Jordan, in an explosives' accident not long after the war ended. Jamīl, of 'Ein Ḥawḍ, asked 'Abdallāh Salmān about the man.*

Jamīl: Were you in the company of an Englishman who was in aṭ-Ṭīreh, who converted to Islam?

'Abdallāh Salmān: Muḥammad, yes. Muḥammad was with me....

Jamīl: And what happened to him?

'Abdallāh Salmān: He died in Jenīn. He was training the soldiers.

As Mohammed/Johnny was staying with Shafiq's family, Shafiq remembered with clarity his time in Ijzim.#

Shafiq:...One day Johnny [namely--Muḥammad] came from aṭ-Ṭīreh, after it was captured and he lived on our farm. Johnny, as I have been told, one of his relatives, his brother or cousin, was killed by the Jews. He escaped from the port as they [the British army] were boarding the ship. He escaped and reached

aṭ-Ṭīreh in order to take revenge on the Jews. That was his aim. He gathered all the ones who had guns and trained them. He said to them-- you mustn't shoot the armored car because it doesn't hurt anyone. It is armored. You are only wasting bullets. Wait. And they sat on the hill opposite 'Ein Ghazāl [near the main road] and waited. Then a group of Jews came, descended and started to go up the hill. So he shot and everyone started to shoot and people were killed.

The above description is similar to an IDFA description of an attempted attack on the three villages on the 18th of July, just after Johnny/Muḥammad arrived on the scene, if he indeed came immediately after the fall of aṭ-Ṭīreh:

At 14:10 an infantry company comprising two navy platoons and one *ḥa'atz*⁷⁶ platoon went searching for Jaba's northern commanding posts. The enemy opened fire just as the men were getting off the buses.⁷⁷

2.6 Intermediate Discussion

As the story of Ijzim unfolds-- Sa 'īd al-Madanī's act of revenge, ambushes on the road, prisoners kidnapped and later exchanged, the Iraqi limited assistance and Johnny/Muḥammad training the fighters of Ijzim-- the oral accounts of the villagers and

⁷⁶ In Hebrew the three letters ḥet, 'ah-yeen, tsah-dee.

the army documents often complement each other and sometimes converge. Knowing that the army documents were written shortly after the events (within a few hours or days), for internal use (usually being classified as “secret”), it is perhaps not surprising that they carry relatively little imprint of the intervention and reconstruction of official state representations.

What the army documents lack is a description of distinct people and their characteristics, especially those of “the enemy.” The information recorded is mostly that which is relevant for the struggle. This is due not only to the fact that the writers of these documents express a national Jewish sentiment but also to the nature of practical army documents. In comparison, the oral accounts, despite having been recounted fifty years after the events and having been re-told numerous times, retain their own adherence to the details of the local events. The Palestinians who recall Johnny/Muhammad tell of the family story behind his motivation to join their forces, his training methods and his fate while dedicating himself to the Palestinian cause. Unlike the army documents, the oral accounts are characterized by an ability to inject life and volume to the story. As Collingwood noted long ago, the historical inquiry is not about the positivistic “study of successive events lying in a dead past.” For Collingwood, the proper task of the historian is to penetrate the thoughts of the agents whose acts he/she is studying (1946:228).

⁷⁷ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

Many of the stories are constructed around certain people and are given a personal twist. In some cases there is a hero, such as the driver, Sa'īd al-Madanī, or Tawfiq al-Murād, the man who was killed on al-Madanī's bus. These men, through the stories and through the years, have become heroes of and symbols for the dispersed community. In other stories, each family has its own protagonist, as when Abū Na'īm recalls his uncle Murshid who guarded the Jewish captives. Other expressions of the animation of the oral accounts are found in the naming of places, the inclusion of dialogues, (though reconstructed, and as such, not totally faithful to the original ones), and exposure of the emotions and incentives that motivated the people. In the discussion regarding the evacuation of aṭ-Ṭireh's women and children, we learn of the devastating emotional effect on the men when they were left without their families. The fighters' motivation was impaired when the village's social fabric and the usual rigid gender roles and distribution of labor changed. It was not necessarily only strategic conditions such as the fall of Haifa that determined the outcome of the war. Rather, it was also the villagers' subjective interpretation of the meaning of such events.

Beyond the interpretation of specific events, the complete picture of the "war," as is portrayed by the villagers, is not a sequential historical chronicle (as it often comes across in books) but an assemblage of incidents. As has been noted in the previous chapter, until recently political historiography of 1948 tended to focus on what happened at the national scale, obscuring what really happened at village level. That is perhaps a partial answer to

why most of the elderly villagers were cooperative and even eager to voice their experience. This local experience is gradually turning into a documented history, as we shall further explore in chapter VI. In the remainder of this chapter I will discuss the last phases of the war-- the events that led to the fall of Ijzim and the consequences following the dispersal, in order to complete the story and further reiterate the themes outlined so far.

2.7 Negotiations with the Jews

In Ijzim, as in Jaba' and 'Ein Ghazāl, the fighters hoped that they could hold on until the second truce was activated.⁷⁸ During the last days, there was fear of falling into Jewish hands and becoming victims of revenge. Abu Na'im, whose family was close to Fārūq (the *Jizmāwī* lawyer mentioned earlier), described the circumstances.[#]

Abū Na'im: People who know nothing said: "How many Jews are there? Ten Jews will be able to make a state? We do not agree." [Nevertheless] a link began between the... Jews and the Arabs. Delegations. Coming and going-- "Lets make up, come, come". People did not want [this]. They went to fight...:

So Fārūq and other notables were gathered and Fārūq, as he had links with the Jews, he said to them-- "Look, there is a delegation from 'Isfiyyeh now. I shall

⁷⁸ As, for example, is described in a statement collected by the UN in Jenīn on the 30th of July, 1948 (less than a week after the fall of the three villages and the flight of some of its inhabitants to the Iraqi lines), from Na'if Ḥalif, Jaba's school headmaster and Moḥammed Zayadi, a teacher in Jaba's school:

leave with it to 'Isfiyyeh and conduct negotiations. You can see 'Atlit from here.⁷⁹ Stay here.”⁸⁰ So they said-- “The Jews will come and murder us.” There was this opinion that the Jews are human beings that eat human beings. The opinion was so and so and that led to a state in which people were fearful. Instead of coming, staying, waiting for the negotiations, they fled.

Fārūq was doing his best to exert the remainder of his influence on his fellow villagers. Abū Ashraf recounted:[#]

There was a man in our village called Fārūq. He was a lawyer. When all the villages [around us] were gone, he summoned a meeting, like the head of an army, where the school is [where it used to be], where the synagogue of Kerem Maharal is. He did it there. There were three tents. The head of each family came. My father was there as well. He was the head of his family. And they [the Jews] sent [a delegation] to our village presumably in order to make peace. And Fārūq's father came to all of the elders like my father, like Tayyeb 'Abd al-'Azīz, like the heads of the families. He said to them-- “People, I have a letter from Salomon”.

[#]A meeting was held during which a majority of elders said “we will defend the village till 17:00 hrs in the afternoon and the second truce will begin”. State Archive, het tsadiq 2427/1.

⁷⁹ Fārūq is suggesting that the Jewish friends in 'Atlit are within an eyesight distance from Ijzim. They may help when the help is needed. This assumption later proved wrong.

⁸⁰ Yūsri, originally of 'Ein Hawḍ, mentions a similar theme: “In the beginning of 1948 they [the people of 'Ein Hawḍ] were neighbors of Zamarin, Zikhron Ya'aqov. They said to the village people -- stay. If the Jews come, hang a white flag, and if the Arabs win, we will hang a white flag.”



Ijzim's school. Today, a Synagogue.

This Salomon was the head of the army.⁸¹ “We have to make peace and nothing will be done to us.” The elders, they agreed-- “Yes, we are willing”. The youngsters said-- “Tomorrow we will go and kill him in the middle of the road. No one should make peace”. And people began taking their arms and going down to the main road.... Even my older brothers said no. They said to my father-- “Aren’t you ashamed? Is this what you shall say in the village?”

In an IDFA document about “the little triangle,” compiled from Arab sources, the following was recorded: “Some of the inhabitants wanted to surrender but the youngsters objected, claiming that in Ijzim’s case, the capitulation terms were not kept and anyway, the Jews are expelling and killing the population.”⁸²

After the fall of most of the villages of the Carmel, apart from “the little triangle”, the Jewish leadership, at least the military leadership, was probably less eager to sign any agreement. On 17 July, a telegram signed by Yigal Yadin was sent from the IDF headquarters to “Yirmiyahu” (Moshe Carmel), head of the Carmeli regiment which said: “The truce is likely to begin tomorrow.... Liquidate the enemy’s enclave of Ijzim- ‘Ein

⁸¹ Ya‘aqov Salomon, the Jewish lawyer who was mentioned earlier, was the representative of the *Hagana* in Haifa. Salomon described in his autobiography the prisoners’ exchange as well as the negotiations with Ijzim (1980:160-163) .

⁸² IDFA 922/1975 file 1044. The document is probably mistaken as no capitulation terms were agreed on in Ijzim, as far as I know.

Ghazāl- Jaba' before the truce is validated.”⁸³ An intelligence report of the same day reads:

On the eve of 17.7.48 the elders of Ijzim asked for negotiations to surrender through the *mukhtār* of 'Isfiyyeh. They were given an interval of time to accept our conditions, until 06.00 of the morning of 18 July, 48, but no response was given by 07.00....

At 10.00, there began an attack by armored cars to clear the road. Al-Mazār [north of Ijzim, on the main road] and its surroundings were cleared of the enemy and the armored cars advanced to Jaba'⁸⁴

To sum up the escalation of the war in Ijzim's area: We have seen that for months there were bursts of attacks on both sides, armed clashes on the main road, taking of hostages, and even unsuccessful attempts on behalf of the Jewish side to capture the village. By mid-July, the villagers were exhausted after three months of siege; they were isolated since the majority of the villages in the area had already been captured by the Jews and they received little assistance from the Iraqis stationed 20 kilometers to the south. Since the Jews had not managed to capture the three remaining villages – Jaba', 'Ein Ghazāl and Ijzim at the beginning of the truce (on 19 July), they decided to do it during the truce, under the guise of a police operation.

⁸³ IDFA 922/1975 file 1182.

⁸⁴ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

2.8 The Final Days and the Hazardous Flight

The interview with ‘Abd ar-Rāzeq and ‘Awād, which included a long discussion of the events of the war in Ijzim, was a noisy one. ‘Abd ar-Rāzeq’s family had gathered to listen and to be heard, including ‘Abd ar-Rāzeq’s wife-- Widād, their eldest son, and a relative also from Ijzim—Na‘īmeḥ. Ten younger women, children and babies were sitting further away and a curious neighbor originally from Gaza was sitting on a nearby chair, unlike the rest of us who were seated on the floor on cushions. One has to imagine the background noise and people’s emotional involvement in the following discussion:*

Efrat: What do you remember from the last days of Ijzim? What happened in the last days?

‘Awād: Airplanes were dropping bombs and machine guns were shooting.

Na‘īmeḥ (in her sixties): We would hide.

‘Awād (71 years old): Anxiety and fear. And we were worried about the children and babies.

‘Abd ar-Rāzeq (69 years old): We feared a massacre. Fear of being slaughtered.

‘Awād: This forced us to leave.

Someone in the room: It was fear.

Na‘īmeḥ: It wasn’t fear.

Widād ('Abd ar-Rāzeq's wife): They killed them in the wild forest [*wa'er*].⁸⁵

'Awād: By God, if we had had supplies no one would have left.

[Everyone is speaking at the same time arguing about the reasons the village was abandoned.]

Widād: They were killed in the forest and they left them there.⁸⁶

Efrat: So who decided to leave the village? Was there a leader who said "let's go"? Was it simply the people's initiative?

'Awād: No, there was no such agreement....

'Awād: In 48, in the time of the fighting, we wanted weapons, bullets. We wanted *wireless*. They gave us *wireless* from the Iraqi army in Jenīn. We placed it in a cave. In the end, we would go with camels at night and take weapons. And after that, we went to get it and we were not given any. They said to us-- "We are not giving any more weapons to you. Use your head." What did they mean? It meant -- leave [the village].⁸⁷ ...

Widād: [They said:] "Leave for four days and we will enable your return. Four days."

⁸⁵ Widād is probably referring to approximately twenty fighters who were killed near 'Ein Ghazāl on one of the last days of the fighting.

⁸⁶ Because of the chaos and fierce bombings the villagers did not have the chance to bury their dead.

⁸⁷ The Iraqis requested Great Britain re-supply them with weapons, according to an agreement signed in 1930 yet the British refused (see Charles Tripp, forthcoming). That may be one of the reasons why the Iraqis withheld further arms supply from the villagers.

Fear of a massacre was either the major reason for the hasty escape or an additional catalyst. A massacre had taken place two months earlier in a neighboring village and the Jizmāwīs knew its details. The village of Ṭanṭūra, located near the beach a couple of kilometers south west of Ijzim, was captured by the Jewish Alexandroni unit, (which was responsible for the Coastal plain,) on 23 May 1948. Between 70 to 200 people were killed in Ṭanṭūra during and following its conquest. Yig'al Fried was the commander of one of the Jewish units that fought in the area.⁸⁸ When we met in Haifa and went for a car-ride along the Carmel Coast, Yig'al noted that he knew of no such massacre in Ṭanṭūra but that there was "a tendency" to shoot men of fighting age. He later corrected himself and said that one would shoot only "the men who carried guns that were of fighting age". Although Ṭanṭūra's events did not become publicly known (until recently) and symbolic like other massacres (such as that at Dīr Yāsīn), they were nevertheless known in the region.⁸⁹ Shafīq, who stayed with his family in Māqūra near Ijzim after the war, heard from his relative of the events in Ṭanṭūra.[#]

⁸⁸ I was referred to Yig'al Fried by a mutual acquaintance. Yig'al, who had been a politician and a Member of Parliament previously and was involved with the Arab population in Israel, endowed on his account of the war his right wing worldview. In 1948 he was an army officer in charge of a unit that set up ambushes in the fields north east of Ṭanṭūra in order to prevent any assistance from arriving during the battle. He said to me that as far as he knows, over seventy people were killed.

A Ṭanṭūra survivor who lives in a nearby village said he recorded the names of the dead and the list reached 95 people. The information I have is not sufficient to be certain what happened in Ṭanṭūra.

⁸⁹ Yūsri of 'Ein Ḥawḍ mentioned Ṭanṭūra when trying to explain the decision to leave his own village: "There were some people who said no [to the option of surrendering] -- 'We do not want to stay here.' There were other reasons as well, especially the massacre of Ṭanṭūra that they had witnessed in which a hundred people were killed. So people feared they [the Jews] will come and slaughter them."

Shafiq: In Ṭantūra the men were killed. The men were taken out and killed. And how do I know this? My father's uncle came after 1948, through...[it seems Shafiq doesn't want to say that his uncle came "illegally"]. He came to the village, to my father, to visit my father. He was from Ṭantūra. My father's uncle told me that when the Jews entered Ṭantūra, one of the soldiers made him lay down, took a knife, and was about to slaughter him. Then, one of the Jews from Zikhron recognized him and said to him [to the soldier with the knife]: "let him go". "And then he saved me," he said. And he was taken as a prisoner. Put in prison. And then they expelled him to Jordan. And he said to me: "when we were standing there, with bound hands, all the men of Ṭantūra...They killed five and then called for another five. And then when they finished those...And I counted one hundred and fifty men who were killed in this fashion. Five buried five."

Within the locality the story of the massacre traveled fast and intensified the *Jizmāwī* fear of falling into Jewish hands.

By July, Ijzim's men were extremely worried and predominantly trying to defend the village from a series of attacks. Following the road incident on 6 July, an IDF "retaliation attack" took place on 8 July but the soldiers failed to reach the villages.⁹⁰ Airplanes were

⁹⁰ The attacking force included a unit from Alexendroni (most likely meaning a battalion); two three inch mortars, ten men and an officer; 2 *bizeh* machines, ten men and an officer; medical force; three communication machines; 40 Carmeli commander's course men; 30 garrison men.

extensively used by the IDF during the last two weeks. The airplanes were usually not fighters or bombers, but cargo and liaison planes (such as Dakotas and Pipers) from which bombs were probably thrown by hand. These airplane raids were something completely new to the villagers, noted Abu Na'im.[#]

The Jews began to bomb with airplanes. I remember the first time there was a bomb. They were Pipers. It was dusk hour. The first to be killed from the first bomb was my aunt's husband. My mum's sister. And we thought that if you escaped under a tree the plane would not see us.

Abū Ashraf added.[#]

And the airplanes began. They came from the direction of al-Lyd. At night. I remember it. There were about four airplanes in the middle of the night bombing... You could see the whole village as if it was daylight. They threw this [fire] and when they could see they began to throw [bombs]. That continued for a month. More than a month.

Whereas the field forces (*heil sade*) were mobile and living in camps, the garrison forces (*heil mishmar*) were comprised mostly of older men, above the age of 35, who would remain in their homes and be mobilized for local assignments. Therefore, some of the fighters on both sides knew one another. See IDFA 6400/49, file 66, and 2506/1949, file 85.

Saying that the air bombings lasted for over a month is probably an exaggeration. They lasted for two weeks. On the 12th of July at 21:00 planes dropped 420 kg of explosives plus incendiary bombs on Ijzim. On the 17th, Ijzim was bombed again. On the 19th Ijzim was bombed twice.⁹¹ On the 20th the air-raids preceded an infantry raid: "...From 19:15 till 20:10 [20.7] three flying fortresses and one Dakota bombed 'Ein Ghazāl, Ijzim and Jaba'all together four tons...the attack of the military police began at 23:00."⁹² This raid failed to capture the village and another one was organized a couple of days later, on the 24th at night, this time with a larger force.⁹³ The village fell to this attack. It was preceded by an air raid as well: "...bomb the south western part of the village Ijzim and the area that is between the village and the most eastern part of the way into village. Bomb load 1200 kg. + incendiary bombs. Time 0030-0130. Light target area with flares. First hit target with incendiaries and than systematically bomb targets hit by first bombs."⁹⁴

On the 25th at night, Ijzim was bombed again. The instructions to the pilot were as follows: "Enemy forces are concentrated on the hill dome half way between Ijzim and

⁹¹ The documents regarding the air bombings of the 12th of July are IDFA 137(38)/1951 file 178 as well as IDFA 922/1975 file 1182; the document regarding the 17th of July is IDFA 922/1975 file 1176; the document regarding the 19th of July is IDFA 922/1975 file 1032.

⁹² IDFA 5942/1949 file 3. The units that participate in this attack, on the 21st of July, are six companies from the military police organized as three companies and one company from an auxiliary force (H.A.T.) organized as three companies (IDFA 7249/49, file 130).

⁹³ IDFA 922/75, file 1044 --The final operation - one battalion (Alexandroni number 33) (about 900 soldiers) (only two companies from this battalion are mentioned in the description of the battle); 1 company from battalion 21 (Carmeli); 1 company from battalion 15 (Golany). Supporting weapons -- two sixty five millimeter cannons; two one hundred and twenty millimeter mortars (heavy mortars); six armored cars from the 7th and 3rd brigade; bombers and battle aircraft.

Jaba‘ and in the village of Ijzim. ... Bomb the hilltop between Jaba‘ and Ijzim with 800 kg. and incendiary bombs between 01:00-02:00 and 08:00 with the same load.”⁹⁵ The hilltop was probably empty when it was bombed on the next day as well.⁹⁶

The second truce began on 19 July, but as we see, the agreement was not respected by the Jews in the case of Ijzim-Jaba‘-‘Ein Ghazāl. The final Jewish attack on Ijzim, which combined air raids with infantry assaults, began on Saturday night (24 July) and carried on for two days. On the second evening and night, between the 25 and 26 of July, the Arab fighters yielded and decided to retreat in a south easterly direction, to ‘Āra and ‘Ar‘ara, where the Iraqi army was encamped.

Abū Da‘ūd summed up Ijzim’s last week:[#]

For seven, eight days [there was bombing and fighting] night and day. That began on the main road. The army, the *Hagana*, soldiers, people from Ijzim, ‘Ein Ghazāl and Jaba‘. One would shoot the other. Then, they [the Arab fighters] were left without arms, they had no bullets. They were about to run away. Fārūq was from the leaders, officers, and ‘Abdallāh Zeidan, my uncle, my father’s cousin.

⁹⁴ IDFA 137(38)/1951 file 178.

⁹⁵ IDFA 137(38)/1951 file 178.

⁹⁶ IDFA 137(38)/1951 file 178 dated 26 July 48 -- “bomb same dome at 1000 and search from low altitude.[...]”.

One says let's give up, the other says no, and one says yes. They fled during *Ramaḍān*, in the afternoon, only men, going towards Bat Shlomo.

During this final attack, two Jewish reserve companies were on hold south of Ijzim, near the Jewish settlement of Meir Shfeya.⁹⁷ The commander of one of these Jewish units, Ma'oz, described to me his recollections of the conquest:^{# 98}

Ijzim's story is a continuous one. There were a few attempts to subjugate the village. It was not myself. I haven't got the exact chronology. But we failed there a few times, utter fiasco [*kishalon ḥaruts*], and our battalion lost two people there who by chance were placed in another unit. They tried to capture Ijzim, Jaba' and 'Ein Ghazāl. The three villages were very united and well trained. There were, most likely, foreign forces there. We knew that.... And then happened what had happened and they remained intact in the enclave until the truce, and did not get out easily.... And then it was decided in the truce that...that they were on our main route, Haifa - Tel Aviv, and shooting [on it]...from aṭ-Ṭīreh... then it was decided somewhere to end this affair.

⁹⁷ IDFA 721/1972 file 369 -- one company from the section commanders' course and the other from battalion 35.

⁹⁸ As the scope of this work is limited, I not did aim to interview Israelis who participated in the war. Nevertheless, curiosity stirred me into meeting just a couple of them. Another dimension whose absence is felt is the British perspective. See Horne (1982) for an account of the British Palestine Police.

As we saw earlier, Count Bernadotte, the United Nations' arbitrator, was in Haifa during these crucial days. On the 25th at mid-day, the fighters begged the Iraqis by radio to call him to their rescue although they also said of Bernadotte on the same radio transmission: "What can we do? They can violate the truce because Count Bernadotte is on their side."⁹⁹ Bernadotte did not interfere and on the next day Ijzim fell; the transmitter was now being used only for arranging vehicles to be sent to evacuate the women and children.^{#100}

Abū Ashraf: I remember the last day. About twenty men from Ijzim were killed near 'Ein Ghazāl.... I remember one of those killed was Sheikh Ḥofzi. His father had only him [i.e. he was an only son]. Alone. And there was one called Maḥmūd 'Āzayzzeh, from al-'Āzayzzeh. I remember it, the last day. Later, people started to flee; to escape wherever they could escape-- to Dalyet al-Karmel and some escaped to 'Āra.

On the afternoon of 26 July, the IDF intelligence department reported to headquarters:

⁹⁹ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

¹⁰⁰ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3. An intelligence report, compiled by the IDF and based on Arab sources, gave the following description of how things developed in the three villages:

...After a battle of a night and a day it was decided that all of the armed youngsters would leave the villages and break their way out towards 'Āra and 'Ar'ara. At dusk, 'Ein Ghazāl and Jaba' were abandoned. The people gathered at Khirbet Kumbāzeh and from there left in convoys, fifty to one hundred people in each convoy. Each convoy was secured (IDFA 922/1975 file 1044).

Our forces entered these villages this morning: Jaba' and 'Ein Ghazāl, and found them empty. All commanding positions east of the Haifa - Tel Aviv road are in our hands. The bridge is now being fixed to enable a renewal of traffic in the areas previously held by the enemy. In Ijzim there are still 600 women and children.¹⁰¹

When the army entered Ijzim, it was practically empty. The six hundred women and children were in nearby Khirbet Kumbāzeh,¹⁰² either waiting for their caravan to leave for Wādī 'Āra or, as some were too young, old, sick or injured to walk another fifteen kilometers to 'Āra, they were getting organized to go to Dalyet al-Karmel and 'Isfiyeh, only five kilometers away.

The hilly escape route to 'Āra was not safe. When the IDF realized the villagers were retreating through this route, ambushes were arranged along the route, near Wādī Mileḥ and *Qanīr*¹⁰³ and roughly sixty people were killed on their way to 'Āra.¹⁰⁴ Hajid Had Saleh (the name is probably misspelled), an elder of Ijzim, and 'Ali Mohammed Hanuti, a Sheikh of Ijzim, were questioned on 30 July 1948 by UN investigators about the circumstances of the fall of the village and the flight. In their joint statement they described what followed the last attack on 25 July:

¹⁰¹ IDFA 922/1975 file 1032.

¹⁰² IDFA 5942/1949 file 3 dated 27 July.

¹⁰³ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

¹⁰⁴ IDFA 922/1975 file 1044. According to this document eight hundred people reached 'Āra safely.

...After these heavy attacks, women and children started for al-Māqūra. During the move, women and children were attacked by plane machine gun fire but I could not estimate the casualties because everyone scattered. The men left the village and went back through the mountains to Jenīn. The women and children were in charge of Fārūq. Most women and children went to ‘Isfiyyeh, Dalyet al-Karmel, ‘Ar‘ara and ‘Āra. The people returned.¹⁰⁵ Jews stole cattle, sheep and machine gunned the flocks and people. They stole money from the women. You can still find dead in the mountains. Nobody was allowed to take baggage.

Some of those who had escaped to Dalia and ‘Isfiyyeh were warmly received, especially those who had friends there,¹⁰⁶ but some were actively driven away by Druze and Christians and made to carry on in their escape.¹⁰⁷ Abu Na‘īm, like the other village men, daily mourns the retreat and its outcome: #

The people in the front lines were afraid of being caught and killed. They began [escaping]. We were in Māqūra. My family. People started passing by. “What happened?” [we asked]. They said-- “we can not hold on.” They just threw down their rifles [saying]-- “We have no ammunition, we have no food, we can not carry

¹⁰⁵ I do not know what is meant by this sentence. Possibly, that some of the people who stayed near by (in the mountains or in the Druze villages) tried to go back to the village to rescue their produce and belongings.

¹⁰⁶ This information was mentioned both by the *Jizmāwīs* and by Druze from ‘Isfiyyeh and Dalia.

¹⁰⁷ IDFA 2506/1949 file 91.

on.” Then he came, Fārūq, and said “Let’s talk, wait a couple of hours.” People did not wait and everyone began...one fled, everyone started to flee.

Fārūq was probably one of the few men to suspect that whoever left would not be able to come back. He chose to stay in Māqūra, on his farm, but a few years later he was compelled to sell the property and move to Haifa.

2.9 The Aftermath

Ma‘oz, the Jewish officer who was outside the village when it was captured, remembered the scene when he approached the village after it was abandoned: #

There were villages that we would walk into and the houses were barren and poor. Shacks.... But in this village there were stone houses, streets, two story houses. You could tell the population here had a different standard of living. It also explained to us why they insisted on staying there. They were surrounded and should have left much earlier.

Ma‘oz also offered his interpretation of the villagers’ actions: #

They sensed something was evolving from all kinds of directions. They did one of the cleverest things they could have done, they simply decided to leave the three

villages. I do not know today whether they were given the chance or simply no one paid attention. They walked through one of the valleys, crossed Wādī Milek (Mileḥ in Arabic) and off to the direction of Umm al-Fāḥem.

Some elderly people and some women and children were found in the vicinity of the three villages and were transferred to the Iraqi lines. Roughly forty bodies were found in two concentrations, behind Ijzim's mosque and near 'Ein Ghazāl's school. It was clear that there was not enough time to bury the dead and the corpses were covered with a thin layer of earth.¹⁰⁸

The Arab states filed a complaint to the UN central truce supervision board concerning the Israeli violation of the truce. A UN board investigated the case and found the great majority of the refugees in the Jenīn area, in August 1948. From this report we hear that in the case of Ijzim, 32 people were reported killed, 25 were reported missing and 4,153 were located.¹⁰⁹ The refugees in Dalyet al-Karmel were transferred to the Arab lines by the IDF in six buses on 17 August 1948, after they were made to sign a document stating they were going of their free will.¹¹⁰ Those who evaded the first transfer were "collected" and placed near the border on 23 August¹¹¹ and again, in an operation named

¹⁰⁸ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3.

¹⁰⁹ IDFA 2168/1950 file 26. As for 'Ein Ghazāl, 22 were reported killed, 33 were missing and 2464 people were located; Jaba' - 8 killed, 5 missing and 1494 located.

¹¹⁰ IDFA(2)716/1949 file 1.

¹¹¹ They were 90 people mainly from Ijzim-- 39 children, 44 old women and 7 old men. See IDFA 244/1951 file 129.

“Tie” on 6 October.¹¹² In the statement to the UN committee, the villagers speak of their attempts to return to Ijzim. These journeys continued for months as the inhabitants tried to retrieve some of their produce and belongings and later, less often, to barter with the inhabitants who remained in Palestine.¹¹³ The army, aware of these widely spread nightly activities, patrolled the hilly routes and often shot or caught refugees with donkeys laden with flour, sugar or rice.¹¹⁴ Ismā‘īl, born in Ijzim in 1922 and today a resident of Amman, spoke of one of his attempts to return to Ijzim, shortly after they left.⁺

Efrat: And you went to see Ijzim?

Ismā‘īl: Many times. And we went to a place in Ijzim in *ḥayy fawqa*. [The village was divided into the upper neighborhood and the lower one. Ismā‘īl referred to a place near the upper neighborhood]. Some Jews, army, they were taking the hay. We thought them, you know, friends. We were going to them. Oohh. As soon as we saw their hay-cart there, with their arms, oohh. They shot at us. We were running, running, running, far away from there.

Efrat: When was this?

Ismā‘īl: After two weeks.

¹¹² IDFA 7249/1949 file 82.

¹¹³ IDFA 1261/1949 file 6.

¹¹⁴ IDFA 240/1954 file 399. See also 4663/1949 file 105; 922/1975 file 1032; 240/1954 file 383; 7249/1949 file 82; 244/1951 file 129; 721/1972 file 369.

The correspondence between the Custodian of Arab Property (the body established by the Jewish state to appropriate Palestinian land and goods) and the army testifies that individual soldiers as well as organized army units were the first to plunder Arab possession. For example, a tractor was taken by the Alexandroni unit just a couple of hours after the army entered the three villages.¹¹⁵ Later, Jewish neighbors from the area gathered to “collect” what they could. An IDF report described the following: “... In the villages Ijzim and ‘Ein Ghazāl Jews were seen coming with carts from ‘Atlit and the nearby surroundings and looting Arab property.”¹¹⁶

In the autumn of 1948, a few *Jizmāwī* families were permitted to come back from Dalyet al-Karmel and live in Ijzim. They were prevented from returning to their own homes so they settled in other *Jizmāwī* houses and most of them had to work on Fārūq’s farm, which was still active in Māqūra.¹¹⁷ The Israeli Minister of Minority Affairs, a personal friend of Fārūq, sent the following letter on 12 December 1948, to General Avner, the head of the Military Government (*Hamimshal Hatsva’ee*):¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ IDFA 4663/1949 file 125. Also 4663/1949 file 125 -- In this letter, the deputy officer of the Arab Property in Haifa writes to the head of the Alexandroni unit demanding the return of the property taken from the three villages.

¹¹⁶ IDFA 5942/1949 file 3, dated 11 August 1948. In a letter Maḥmūd al-Māḍī writes to Shitrit, he wishes to be granted permission to rescue his property in Māqūra “before it is presented to robbing and looting hands” (State Archive, gimel 302/86). Already back in April 1948, a committee comprised of representatives from Jewish settlements was established in order to oversee the handling of Arab Property (IDFA 4663/1949 file 46). At the end of August they confiscate some looted property such as four horses found with four different people in Zikhron Ya’aqov (IDFA 4663/1949 file 125).

¹¹⁷ Whereas the houses of Ijzim remained intact, most of the houses of Jaba’ and ‘Ein Ghazāl, which were closer to the main road, were systematically destroyed shortly after they were seized.

Subject: The people of Ijzim

In accordance with the decision that was affirmed in the weekly meeting of the transfer committee (*ve 'adat haha 'avara*) on the 8.12.48, I have informed the head of our office in Haifa as follows:

1. One man from your office and one man from our Haifa branch will meet in Ijzim with Fārūq and together they will clarify who are the people of Ijzim that are in place, hand them documents and not bother them any more with threats of being uprooted from the place.

2. The people of Ijzim, now in Dalyet al-Karmel, will be returned to the village of Ijzim, registered and treated as in article 1.

Please let me know when your representative will be meeting our representative in Haifa in order to travel to Ijzim and implement the decision that we have reached.

Signed,

B. Shitrit,

Minister of Minorities

This letter, as well as other letters in the file, testifies to the diverging attitudes between the Minister, on the one hand, and the local army officer in charge, on the other hand.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ State Archive, gimel 1319/66.

¹¹⁹ State Archive 1319/66 gimel

Furthermore, Fārūq was a friend of Bekhor Shitrit for many years, from the time Shitrit had worked with the British Police Force. When the Israeli state was declared, Bekhor Shitrit became the Minister of the Minorities Office, and later, the Minister of Police.

The few *Jizmāwī* families who were allowed to stay in Ijzim “shared” it with soldiers and new Jewish immigrants from Czechoslovakia. Abū Na‘īm described how in the spring of 1949 the army decided to expel the Arab families from the village houses:[#]

One morning the army surrounded our dispersed neighborhood. They said-- “you must move to your *khirbeh* [Māqūra]. You have nothing to look for here.” We said to the soldiers [whom they personally knew]-- “What’s this?”. They said-- “We are sorry, we are just following orders. We know we have eaten with you and sat with you”.... It wasn’t like today, when an officer says something the whole world clamors. He gave the order to get out.

Efrat: And you had no one to turn to in this matter?

Abū Na‘īm: No one to turn to. We didn’t even know there was police. We didn’t know how to reach the police. The world was a closed state-- no one knew what was happening in his surroundings.

A few families remained in khirbet Māqūra and its vicinity, but not in Ijzim, some until the 1970s, when they were eventually made to move out. The only one to remain

was Abū Māzen (‘Alī al-Yūnīs al-Māḍī) who went through years of lawsuits concerning ownership of his land near Māqūra. He died a few years ago and his widow and younger children still live in Māqūra in a run-down house they are not allowed to refurbish and are still involved with the courts. The great majority of refugees ended up far from the village-- in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and the West Bank.

* * *

The local Palestinian discourse can be divided according to different groups of reference. People’s narratives focus mainly on three collectivities-- their family, their village community and the cluster of villages of the area. Although, naturally, there were internal divisions (certain al-Māḍīs speaking of “simple peasants”), the accounts as a corpus depict a local common experience. The missing voice in many accounts is the purely individual one. Few interviewees voluntarily offered their account of the night flight from the village, the chaos, or loss of family members. The oral accounts were personified-- the narrators were part of the stories, but they omitted the very personal. Laurence Kirmayer (1996:189) argued that the sharing of traumatic memories is defined by the surrounding social milieu-- whether it accepts this discourse or it does not. His example is of holocaust survivors who went through a similar experience and hence were able to share it with one another (Kirmayer compares their experience to the social solitude of victims of sexual abuse). However, when holocaust survivors encountered “foreign” audiences (who had not been through the holocaust), they imposed upon

themselves self-censorship and selectivity. The Palestinians narrate the collective story more than they do the personal one, probably as an outcome of the setting.

At the same time, the local version does not always “fit” the known public versions. Stereotypes regarding “the war” are contrasted with a unique local string of events. When the Iraqis are accused of deserting the local fighters, the Jizmāwīs have credentials-- their claims come from a personal experience. Even though the English are remembered unfavorably, Johnny/Muḥammad, precisely because he is English, is a local hero. The oral accounts touch on similar themes to those expressed in the public sphere, but the grass roots level conveys nuances and is tied to reality’s constraints

Chapter III

The Lost Village and the Cultural Practice of Nostalgia

I see what I want from the people: their desire for yearning to anything. Their slow movements while they walk to their work and their swiftness when returning to their families... and their need for greetings in the morning...

Mahmoud Darwish, 1993:18

Fragments of memory are not simply represented as flat documentary but constructed to give a “new take” on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation... Thinking again about space and location, I heard the statement “our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting”; a politicization of memory that distinguishes nostalgia, that longing for something to be as once it was, a kind of useless act, from that remembering that serves to illuminate and transform the present.

Bell Hooks, 1990: 147

A deep longing for their lost home colored the speech of the villagers of aṭ-Ṭīreh, Ijzim and ‘Ein Ḥawḍ. However, this longing did not correspond with what is commonly associated with the term “nostalgia.” The 17th century Swiss Physician Johannes Hofer coined the term nostalgia, made of the two Greek words, *nostos*-- “to return home” and *algia*—“a painful condition,” to describe the homesickness of Swiss mercenaries (Davis, 1979:1). The word became popular and struck root beyond its medical definition. Bryan Turner showed how a paradigmatic nostalgia became a persistent feature of western culture, its meaning expanding into literature, art, medical history and social theory (1987:152). He sketched the four major dimensions of nostalgia as (a) a departure from a golden age into a historical decline, (b) a sense of loss of personal wholeness, (c) a sense of disappearance of social relationships and individual freedom and (d) a loss of simplicity,

personal authenticity and emotional spontaneity (1987:150-1).

Nostalgia, translated into Arabic as *hanin*, was expressed in the narratives of Palestinian villagers in different ways. However, just as the meaning of *hanin* encompasses different types of yearning (Scott-Meisami, 1998), so was the villagers' nostalgia not quite what I had expected. Having expected to find the constituents that Turner lists in Palestinian narration of the past, I was surprised to discover that the homesickness, the yearning and the nostalgic feelings towards the village and community called for a different framing. Some recollections did indeed echo the notion of "the lost paradise" but at the same time there were recollections of many neutral and negative aspects associated with village life; positive and negative recollections resided side by side.

Kathleen Stewart's (1988) reconsideration of the term "nostalgia," comprehending it as a cultural practice rather than comprising a given content, offered an alternative useful meaning. Stewart points to the multiplicity of nostalgias such as that of the "middle class," "working class" or "mass culture." Nostalgia, according to Stewart, is mobilized in order to "make an interpretive space that is relational and in which meanings have direct social referents" (1988:227). Although Stewart, like many scholars before her, was preoccupied with nostalgic expressions in the Western, postmodern reality, her proposal is no less fruitful in other cultural contexts.¹

¹ For a general sociological study of the term "Nostalgia" see Fred Davis, 1979; for the "problem of nostalgia" among intellectuals and especially for sociological theory see Bryan Turner, 1987; for the nostalgic construction of an uprooted community in Malta see Jon Mitchell, 1998; for a discussion of the deconstruction of nostalgia by Russian immigrants see Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2000.

3.1 *Jil al-Nakba and the Status of Peasants in Local and National Perception*

Jil al-Nakba, meaning the Nakba generation (pronounced *en-nakbeh* in colloquial Arabic), is a term often used by Palestinians to denote those who were uprooted following the catastrophe of 1948.² Karl Mannheim wrote of “a *generation as an actuality* only where a concrete bond is created between members of a generation by their being exposed to the social and intellectual symptoms of a process of dynamic de-stabilization” (Mannheim, 1972:303. Italics in original). As Mannheim assessed long term processes, he was less attentive to abrupt changes that sweep entire populations such as the one brought about by the Nakba, which is a clearly defined case of an *actuality* that bonded and consolidated the Palestinian identity and specifically the generation of the Nakba.

The age factor deserves mentioning since most of the interviewees were children, adolescence or young adults in 1948.³ Schuman and Scott, who attempted to sketch a model for a generational “collective memory,” have demonstrated that events experienced during this formative period (ages 15-27) leave the strongest impression and are the

² The people who spent most of their years in Palestine prior to 1948 were often referred to as *jil Filastin* whereas the youngsters, born outside Palestine and the initiators of the political and military activities of the late 1960s and 1970s, especially in Lebanon, would be named *jil eth-Thawra* -- the Revolutionary generation. For a thorough discussion of *jil eth-Thawra* see Sayigh, 1979. In the books written by ex-villagers, those born outside of Palestine would be named “the New Generations” -- *ajyāl ej-jdideh*.

³ Rex Brynen of McGill University recently estimated the number of surviving members of the Nakba generation, naming them “the first generation.” He notes that: “... in 1997 some 76,913 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (WBG) were born in “1948 areas.” This represents between 6.0% and 7.2% of all refugees in the WBG. If these proportions held true for other areas, and using UNRWA registration numbers as a basis for calculation, it would suggest a total of around 205,000 to 245,000 surviving “first generation” refugees in 1997. These totals will, of course, decline sharply as this population continues to age. A rough estimate, based on the known age profile for Palestinians in the WBG, would suggest that the total number of first generation refugees will have declined to around 165,000 by 2001” (FOFOGNET Digest - 24 Jun 2000 to 25 Jun 2000 (#2000-170), FOFOGNET@LISTS.MCGILL.CA).

common denominators of a cohort (1989:365).⁴ They note that “age is clearly the most general predictor of memories for events and changes over the past 50 years, and the graphing of the age relations provides strong evidence that in all or almost all such cases, age represents cohort effects, which in turn have their origins in adolescence and early adulthood” (1989:371). For Schuman and Scott, a cohort’s collective memory consists of a process of incorporation of “widely shared images of the past event.” Hence, in the case of the villagers of the Nakba generation, we would expect to find widely shared images, mainly regarding their rural background.

The literature on the Middle East tends to perpetuate certain images of “the Orient” and specifically of “the Middle-Eastern peasant” (Said, 1978) and yet even when this tendency is changing, little has been written of the self-image of Middle Eastern societies. Gabriel Baer, in a historical study of the relations between town and village in the Middle East, mentioned this lack of sociological and anthropological studies, which ought to fill in the gap of knowledge regarding the self-perception of the *fellah* (1982:103). (This spelling of the Arabic word for peasant struck root in the English; properly it should be *fallāḥ*, pl. *fallāḥīn*). The memories of the ex-villagers shed light both on their self- representation and their reaction to other images imposed on them.

In response, Salman Abu-Sitta argued that, based on UNRWA’s registration lists, the number of Palestinian refugees over the age of 51 is 16% of those registered in Jordan and 12-13% of those in Gaza (FOFOGNET Digest - 2 Jul 2000 to 3 Jul 2000 (#2000-178), FOFOGNET@LISTS.MCGILL.CA).

⁴ Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott (1989), reconsidering Mannheim’s sociological distinction between generations, looked into individuals’ memories of public events within a fifty-year time span in the U.S.A. One of their findings was that “adolescence and early childhood constitute a critical age for

It is not surprising that ex-villagers spoke at length about their rural experience. The terms and objects that dotted the stories were the land (*al-ard*), the village (*al-balad*), the livestock (*mawāshī*)-- goats, sheep, cows, camels, horses and donkeys, the crops (*zirā'a*)-- wheat, barley, broad beans, chick peas, sesame, melons, grapes, carobs and olives, in short-- the *fallāḥ*'s way of life.

Generally speaking, the economic situation of most peasants in Palestine stabilized toward the end of the 19th century, with the exception of the harsh conditions that prevailed during World War I. Donna Robinson Divine described the improved situation in the late 19th century:

Population growth created more demand for local products. Peasants built finer houses; they purchased more cattle and farm animals. Architecture in villages began to reflect wealth and the ability to purchase luxuries. More village dwellings contained glass windows, and their designs indicated concern for aesthetics and comfort rather than simply defense. Investment in animals afforded access to cash through the marketing of animal skins at the tanneries. Foder has observed that “of the fellahin of Palestine...it was said that they increasingly began to carry their grains to be ground in watermills, as ‘even the fellah is beginning to grasp the idea that time is money’” (1994:133).

acquiring knowledge of public events.” This finding was later reasserted by research conducted in Russia by Howard Schuman and Amy Corning (2000).

Gabriel Baer argued that in the Middle Eastern context, it would be a mistake to equate “the economic domination of the countryside by the city with capitalist exploitation” in its western manifestation (1982:103). The great majority of the villagers of aṭ-Ṭīreh, Ijzim and ‘Ein Ḥawḍ owned land, including many of those who made their living in professions other than farming (mostly during the Mandate Period) -- as mechanics or messengers in the British camps, policemen or guards, or as manual laborers. Even those who were newcomers to the villages would eventually purchase land. Although there was wealth in merchandise and respectable pay in labor and services, economic status was still largely linked to ownership of land and livestock, as Ṣāleḥ noted in response to being questioned whether his family was wealthy:[#] “It was not like today...he who had land, cows, goats, would be called a rich person. Not like today when you have a doctor, a lawyer. It was hardly like that then.” (Episodes of Ṣāleḥ’s biography are found in appendix III. The reader is recommended to read appendix III at the end of this chapter). According to Ṣāleḥ’s rendering of the changing meaning of wealth, his personal decision following the Nakba, (which was characteristic of Palestinians in general), was to invest in his children’s education—one of his sons is a doctor, another is a high school teacher and his daughter is a biology teacher.

‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed Abū Rāshed, who wrote a book about his village, Ṭīrat Ḥaifa, accused the British of managing a policy that weakened the traditional rural Arab agricultural subsistence.⁵ The Mandate, he claimed, transformed the distribution of labor by attracting the locals to new jobs, in addition to expropriating from them large plots of

land. One outcome of this policy, he noted, was the emergence of a landless rural class (1993:53, 108). Whether Abū Rāshed's claim is justifiable or not, his accusation suggests the significance of land ownership in the Palestinian context and the pride that the farmers took in their occupation. Abū Rāshed's book, which tries to reconstruct village life, revolves around agricultural practices, giving detailed accounts regarding the general conditions and specific practices of the *fallāḥ*. He discusses the yearly cycle, the sources for cash and loans, methods of enlarging the crop, tools for pruning, types of oil pressing, the best season to market melons, the construction of scarecrows and so forth. In his book, as in the oral narratives, the *fallāḥ* is portrayed as an independent, dynamic and active agent.

However, there is a gap between the self-image (of taking initiative and being economically active and independent) and the image of the Palestinians peasant in most historical literature. Palestinian historiography, argued Ted Swedenburg, in an article that focused on the image of the *fallāḥ*, tended to diminish the role of the *fallāḥīn* in the crystallization of the national identity. In this literature, showed Swedenburg, the *fallāḥ* is portrayed as lacking political awareness and handicapped by traditional structures such as local interests, clan loyalties and influential headmen (1990:26-7). Despite this passive image, Swedenburg demonstrated how in recent years and in an intriguing process, the *fallāḥ* has been "elevated to the status of national icon" (1990:27). Raja Shehadeh's (English) book *The Third Way: A Journal of life in the West Bank* (1982) exemplifies this

⁵ For further discussion of Abū Rāshed's book, see chapter VI.

reverence for the *fallāḥ*'s way of life. Shehadeh, a Palestinian lawyer originally of Jaffa and based in Ram'allah, elaborated on his idea of resistance to the Israeli occupation. He developed the notion of being steadfast, in Arabic—being a *ṣāmid*. Steadfastness is achieved by clinging to the land and the land is likened to an object of love. Shehadeh writes:

Sometimes, when I am walking in the hills...-- unselfconsciously enjoying the touch of the hard land under my feet, the smell of thyme and the hills and trees around me—I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol of the *ṣāmidīn*, of our struggle, of our loss... And the beauty of the hills and the olives have become symbols of my people (1982:87).

Shehadeh notes that the “national possessiveness” that overcomes him is a reaction to the Jewish national attitude (1982:88). The land is relegated from being real to being a national symbol. The same tends to hold true for the peasant—his reality is sacrificed for the sake of a certain symbol. This figuration is also apparent in popular culture; for instance, posters entitled “Palestine” (printed in the 1980s in the West Bank) depicted a *fallāḥ* walking beside an olive tree and tilling the land. This symbolic and aestheticized image of the *fallāḥ* constructs a sense of Palestinian unity, obscuring internal Palestinian divisions of religion, origin or class.

It is evident from this study, as it is also apparent to Swedenburg (1995:27-30), that ex-villagers do not embrace the image that is created for them by others. Apart from portraying themselves as active participants-- in the revolt, in the war, in economic enterprises and innovations, the ex-villagers' narratives, at times, serve the opposite of their iconization. The autobiographical recollection of the village is fragmented, non-chronological and inconsistent; contradictory images intermingle. External influences and personal memories conglomerate into single narratives.

3.2 *"The Lost Paradise" and its Counter-Narrative*

The *fallāḥ* is not the only image a "national discourse" appropriated from the agricultural realm. The olive tree appears as the counterpart, both in pictures and in literature and so does the orange tree.⁶ Ghassan Kanafani, the famous Palestinian novelist who found refuge in Beirut, named the short story of his departure from Acre in 1948 "The Land of Sad Oranges" (1978).⁷ Another image bound to the entire rural representation is that of Palestine as the lost paradise. 'Āref al-'Āref (1892-1973), a prominent Palestinian scholar and politician, published a six volume book in the 1950s entitled "The Nakba: The Catastrophe of the Holy Mound and the Lost Paradise"

⁶ Tawfiq Zayyad wrote in the poem "On the Trunk of an Olive Tree," "...I shall carve the number of every usurped plot of our land, the location of our village and its boundaries, its people's houses that have been razed, my uprooted trees..." in Parmentier, 1994:76.

Mahmoud Darwish inserts the following passage in his poem "A Gentle Rain in a Distant Autumn"-- "...and the sun is a citrus grove at dusk, And I, a stolen orange..." See his *Victims of a Map*, 1984:47.

⁷ The highly esteemed Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani, who was the spokesman of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was killed in 1972 when his car was booby-trapped in Beirut.

(*Al-Nakba: Nakbat Bayt al-Maqdes wa al-Firdūs al-Mafqūd*).⁸ As we see, Palestine started to be commemorated as a lost Paradise shortly after the Nakba.

The image of “the lost paradise” was and is pervasive both in the literature and in oral accounts. Julie Peteet, who interviewed Palestinian women in the camps of Lebanon, noted: “Umm Mohammed, a widow from Tel al-Za‘atar, engaged in subsistence farming in Damur, vehemently insisted that the fruits and vegetables of Palestine were far superior to those of Lebanon. Umm Nabil, nearly ninety years old, refers to Palestine as the ‘days of paradise’”(1991:78).⁹ A close inspection of the recollections of the villagers of at-Ṭireh, Ijzim and ‘Ein Ḥawḍ showed that although there were examples that perpetuated this image in the narratives, there were also alternative representations of what rural life meant. But before undermining the image, let us look how some villagers did construct “a lost paradise.”

Fāṭmeh’s “paradise” highlighted the richness of the peasants’ world, the abundance and the well being, described mostly through agricultural produce. Fāṭmeh was born in 1928 in ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and now resides in a West Bank refugee camp. We met at her home shortly after she had returned from the *ḥajj*. Her hands were painted with henna and I

⁸ ‘Āref al-‘Āref was born in Jerusalem. He studied political science in Istanbul, worked as a translator for the Ottoman Foreign Office and served as an officer with the Ottoman Army in the Caucasus. Upon his return to Palestine he established a pan-Arabist movement- *Sūriya al-Janūbiyyah*, was accused of anti Zionist activity and banished by the British to Syria, where he acted as a Member of Parliament. Herbert Samuel gave him amnesty and from 1921 he worked with the British Mandate administration for many years. He was District Officer in Bīr Saba‘ and later in Gaza. Under Jordanian rule he was the Mayor of Jerusalem (1950) and a member of the Jordanian Parliament (1955). He spent his last years in Rāmallah.

was offered dates -- two customs associated with the pilgrimage to Mecca. The interview was slow to develop into a discussion and Fāṭmeh's responses to the questions were short. When we spoke about the children she bore, she briefly mentioned the fact that she had given birth to her first child, a daughter, during the months of the war, when the women and children were hiding in the forest east of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. (Others noted these months of "hiding" as well-- the women and children stayed for three months before the fall of the village in caves near Khirbet Ḥajaleh, east of the village, while the men guarded the village itself). Fāṭmeh fled from the village with her kinsmen the day that the Jews conquered 'Ein Ḥawḍ, on 16 July 1948. Her daughter, who fell sick while they were hiding near the village, died shortly after they fled.

Because women were acquainted with arenas men knew little about, our talk turned around "feminine" issues-- visits to holy sites, customary village dishes and practices relating to childbirth. When speaking of the latter, Fāṭmeh said that she cannot recall any accidents during birth deliveries and added "I wish to tell you that every year, when they would come to our village to take the statistics of our dead... from Ḥaifa ..., they would find no one had died." As we were reaching the end of the interview, Fāṭmeh's monologue grew long:^{*10}

⁹ The taste of the fruit probably did change. The villagers prior to 1948 were not using chemicals as fertilizers and insecticides, nor hormones, the species were not genetically developed to look good or fit well in the box, nor were they kept refrigerated for months or waxed to lengthen their shelf life.

¹⁰ It is a recurrent pattern that interviewees adduce significant events or interpretations at the end of an interview. In some of the cases the reason for this pattern seemed to be that the interviewees realized they had not gotten the chance to speak of things that were important for them to deliver.

Our village is good. On the mountain, it is pleasant to go strolling (*kullha siyāḥah*). It was wealthy. The wealthiest village. The olives, we would make oil from them. We would pour it [?] and carry it in the days of *kawānīn* [the months of October/November].¹¹ We had oil. We had vegetables. Plums. All kinds of plums. All kinds of pomegranates. All kinds of grapes. All kinds of olives.

Nihād [Fāṭmeh's son]: We were very rich

Fāṭmeh: The apples were like this [showing us their size with her hands] and the pomegranates... the pomegranates, because there were so many, we would make jam (*tatlī*) from them. It was like honey. Oh, the richness in which we lived. The figs were like that [showing us once more]. Each lemon was big. If you went in under the trees, you could not be seen. The figs, they were long, they were long. When we exported figs, it was 50-60 boxes. 100-200 boxes of grapes. 200 boxes of beans and broad beans [*fūl*] in big sacks. We were *fallāḥīn*, *fallāḥīn* we were and blessed was our village, very blessed (*rizq*). Our village was rich and happy (*mis'adeh*). You would eat olives like that. Each black olive was like a dried fig (*qutayn*) while it was still on the tree (*taḥet imo*).

... Listen, in these dwellings, we had a silk tree. Its leaves were that thick [and again, she shows us how thick]. And every fruit was so. If you opened the fruit,

¹¹ *kānūn al-awwal* and *kānūn ath-thānī*.

silk came out of it. When the fruit was ripe, it turned yellow. Then one would open it....

When my father went to the forest (*wa'er*).¹² He would take a knife with him and he would produce a tank of honey. When he returned it was full. This honey was from bees that collected [honeydew] from the flowers, it was not sugar honey.

The grapes were that long [showing us] and scented.

The good things in our village exist no longer. And my family were farmers.

Everyone would sow and plow and our village was very rich. It was greatly blessed. Our village was rich. We had land not only in the plain (*sahel*) but also in the hilly forest (*wa'er*), as far as the boundary of Dalia.... Our village was very rich (*baladnā ghaniyyeh bishakel*).

All of the houses were of stone. Castles. All were of stone.

After fifty years of living in a refugee camp, and in spite of the fact that her sons acquired higher education and well-paid jobs, village life for Fāṭmeh stood for abundance that had been lost. Khalīl's description of his family's agricultural plots was strikingly similar to that of Fāṭmeh. Khalīl, born in 1920 also in 'Ein Ḥawḍ, noted:[#] "We had apples, we had plums. The figs were as big as apples. We had 2,000 plants of apples and eight *dūnum* of grapes and 3,000 plum [trees] and apples—2,000. 400 almond [trees] and we would live off it".

¹² The term *wa'er* is widely used by the people of the area. It literally means wild or bush. This was the term used to describe the mountainous area of the Carmel, which was covered by natural evergreen forest.

Village life cannot be viewed but through the prism of the consequent years of barrenness and poverty. Following the war of 1967 and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Fāṭmeh could now visit her village. However, she chose not to do so. She commented that she would probably die of a heart attack upon witnessing the Israeli appropriation of 'Ein Ḥawḍ; She did not wish to shatter her image.

The village's agricultural life and its healthy environment was a common object of yearning. Abū 'Āṭef, who is of the same age and of the same village as Fāṭmeh, went through a different separation from the land. Having moved to the family's plot east of the village immediately after the 1948 war, he and his kin established the new village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. For many years they carried on with their agricultural occupation. In 1964 the State of Israel expropriated their plots and planted pine trees on them. The inhabitants of the new 'Ain Ḥawḍ were now prevented from carrying on as farmers but managed to maintain their herds. However, in 1975 they were forced to sell the herds.¹³ Like Fāṭmeh, Abū 'Āṭef framed the village's agricultural life and health through the present deficiency.[#]

Abū 'Āṭef: There is nothing natural now. There is a garden that is not watered and not treated with chemicals, and that is. You can tell them by the taste. An apple, you could smell it once. Cows today, apart from the injections they get, they are fed with chicken dung.... Once, a man could reach a hundred, a hundred and five.

¹³ Not long after the elimination of their agricultural income, in 1978, the people of the unrecognized village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ established a committee that would publicly fight for their rights. The village, which numbers over 200 people today, has only recently (in the year 2000) been recognized.

My grandmother didn't miss a tooth at a hundred and five. Her eyes [could still see very well]. Today, at the age of thirty or forty, one needs glasses.

Health and longevity, the natural life versus the artificial one, were tied together. A family from Ijzim expressed this attitude in similar ways when we met in their small impecunious home in Irbid's refugee camp:*

'Awād (born 1929): [It was] Much better. No one would go to the doctor.

Faiṣal (born 1952): *Ya'ani* it was very rare that someone would go to the doctor.

Widād: We were never sick

'Awād: *Ya'ani*, this is the Karmel region. No one was ever sick. There were no illnesses; not like today when everything is polluted. Today, the diet is based on chemicals.

Someone adds: hormones

Na'īmeḥ: Those days were nicer (*aḥla*). It was nicer in the time of Palestine, much better. But you came and drained it (*shafattu*)

[Everyone bursts in laughter]

People were better off then, the story goes; they worked hard, walked long distances and died simply and suddenly. In some respects, there is a yearning for what may seem like a "golden age." The emphasis, however, should be placed on the comparative mode. The descriptions of the village echo the rupture between being

peasants and forcefully turning into poor, property-less refugees. The “lost paradise” is a term that stems from this relative perspective in order to offer a different outlook.

Edward Said relates to this phenomenon when noting that: “For an exile, habits of life, expression, or activity in the new environment inevitably occur against the memory of these things in another environment. Thus both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally” (1984:55). However, it should be said that the contrapuntality of each exile is unique. The idea of contrapuntality finds an echo in Salman Rushdie’s *Imaginary Homelands*. Referring to Indian writers in exile, he notes that they “are capable of writing from a kind of double perspective: because they, we, are at one and the same time insiders and outsiders in this society. This stereoscopic vision is perhaps what we can offer in place of ‘whole sight’ (1991:19).

If, indeed, the “revival” of the past is not just the need to blur the present through the past but an outcome of a “contrapuntal” ability (or need), the past life cannot remain paradisaical or “picture perfect”; it has to form an alternative reality. Hence, it is no wonder that in the narratives of the villagers, the discourse of the “lost paradise” was often complemented by less favored recollections. The ex-villagers recalled all aspects of life, including sinister stories about themselves and their families, and these were sometimes commentary on the present.

Family feuds (*fasād*) and specifically *damm* (blood feuds) were *not* a favorite topic. They were delicate issues often only hinted at, but the gaping silences that covered them attested to their centrality and the lasting predicament they present. It was at one of

our subsequent unrecorded meetings that Abū Da'ūd explained why he was not in Ijzim but rather in Ḥaifa when the village fell to the Jews. Early in 1948, he and his brothers killed a fellow villager. They were tried and sentenced to imprisonment but when the British left they were released. Fearing revenge, they remained in Ḥaifa, working for the Iraqi Petroleum Company, and hence, when the village fell to the Jews, they were saved from the fate of a distant exile. However, the banishment from the village community that began prior to 1948 carried on to the present. Abū Da'ūd lived in Haifa in Wādī Nisnas, a neighborhood that was populated by an aggregate of Palestinians who have been separated from their places of birth, their families and their communities, due to the 1948 war.

Class differentiation and social tensions were charged and mostly undesirable topics, but they too emanated from some stories of the past. Abū Na'im described the powerful al-Māḍī family of Ijzim and their exploitation of the members of the poorer segments in the village:^{14 +}

They [the al-Māḍīs] did not purchase land. They took the land cunningly. I'll give you an interesting example that I've been told. A woman...who had nothing to feed her children in the times of the Turks, went to X al-Māḍī.¹⁵ She said to him: "I have nothing to feed [my children]" and he gave her a bag of flour, and then he made her sign up her land. That's how they ruled, in a deceptive way. They did not pay a single *kirsh* [=1/100 of Eng. pound] for it.

¹⁴ For comments on class stratification in Ijzim, as seen from the perspective of members of the al-Māḍī family, see the previous chapter, page 79.

Abū Na‘īm first distanced the event, by choosing to relate an incident from the Turkish period and yet at the same time, he clarified that that is “how they ruled”, namely, it was an on-going pattern of relations.

Abū Da’ūd of Ijzim described a meandering story about a feud in the neighboring village of ‘Ein Ghazāl. Here, as in the previous story, the events are distanced-- they occurred in another village. The *mukhtār* was involved in a conflict with a certain family during the time of the Arab Revolt. The family turned to Abū Durra, the head of the rebels in the area, accusing the *mukhtār* of collaborating with the Jews. Abū Da’ūd named the man associated with Abū Durra who came at night and killed the *mukhtār*, and later, was accused of the murder and was killed by the British. According to Abū Da’ūd, the British Police did not formally execute him (like many others during the revolt) but rather shot him near the entrance to the village. Through these stories, the social relations come to life, both between families and between the villagers and the British authority. The memory of past conflicts continues to influence family relations today. For instance, a recent marriage arrangement was prevented between two families of aṭ-Ṭīreh due to a land dispute that occurred sixty years ago.

¹⁵ Abū Na‘īm mentioned the man’s name.

3.3 Reviving Village Life

In addition to incidents that left a lasting mark on class and clan relations, there were memories of the laborious daily chores. Village life did not only stand for abundance. Abū Na‘īm, born in 1936 in Ijzim and still lives in the vicinity, recounted in a combination of Hebrew and Arabic: “The worst thing was the water shortage. We would carry the water from ‘Ein Ghazāl. We would come to their well and buy two *jarra* (earthware, pl. *jirār*) for *ta‘arifeh*, half a *kirsh* We’d have problems with the *jirār* because they would break.” He returned to the issue of water while trying to demonstrate the difference in lifestyles between then and now: “[life was] simple...We didn’t lack, we simply lived. It wasn’t like today, with [running] water and toilets. We’d go and fetch two jars of 40 liters, and that would have to be enough for almost the whole day for the entire family.” And again, the water regime came up in Abū Na‘īm’s talk when he recalled one hot summer day in his childhood:[#]

I remember one year when it did not rain. It did not rain. There was a heat wave....Some people had cisterns but they did not fill up because there was no rain. And that day there was something wrong with ‘Ein Ghazāl’s water pump. We had no water and the teachers let us go home [in the middle of the day] because of that. We went to my uncle and could not find any water...neither did we find any at my aunt’s....We went home and couldn’t find water. My dad came from work [recording unclear]. Do you know where he went to find water? As far as Kafr Lām, where they had wells [located near the beach]. They had wells

and if you dug too deep the water would become salted.... My dad came from the sea [where Kafr Lām was] and brought water till we [all] drank. Half the village ran towards him to drink. If you told this to someone today, would they believe it?

The contrapuntal perspective comes into play in Abū Na‘īm’s story-- there is the first life and the second life, one set of representations and another different set, and the two co-exist, shedding light on one another. Others, those who have not experienced the two lives, he noted, would find it difficult to believe. We see that the reflections on the past are mobilized in two opposite ways. In some cases, mainly in terms of social patterns, accounts of the past can be commentaries on ongoing relations or processes. In other cases, especially in terms of the physical environment, the past is recalled by way of contradiction to present conditions.

Seeing these stories as told after many years of exile, we must take into account the specific setting of each narrator. Fāṭmeh, after growing up in a relatively wealthy family in ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, had to endure years of exile in a West Bank refugee camp. Abū Na‘īm, who more willingly spoke of the negative aspects and daily burdens of village life, remained a farmer near the village land for many years and then moved to a nearby Arab village. Notwithstanding the personal circumstances, there is a repetitive attitude that comes alive in many narratives of the Nakba generation, in which the village life is recalled in its totality, encapsulating the good and bad.

The spring of al-Mashariyyeh was conspicuous in the accounts of the ‘Ein Ḥawḍīs. It was located in Wādī al-Bustān, roughly three kilometers east of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ. It did not have a strong flow and today it is no longer detectable and yet it was central to village life.¹⁶ Salmeh (born circa 1937), whom I met at her home in Irbid’s refugee camp, recalled the spring:*

Al-Mashariyyeh was only for drinking water. There was also ‘Ein az-Zarqa, a little closer than al-Mashariyyeh, to the west, and this is where they would collect water for washing, for the cows and for the goats and sheep. They said it wasn’t clean and so we took the drinking water from al-Mashariyyeh.

Some people had cisterns at home yet insisted on fetching their drinking water from al-Mashariyyeh even though a return journey to the spring took roughly two hours. Fāṭmeh recalled how she walked the path to the spring with a group of girls and how they would stray into the forest and pick wild fruit and shrubs -- *zarzarok*, *‘oleq*, *kokab*, *za‘arūr* and *qandūl*.¹⁷ Salmeh mentioned the narrow path that one had to walk along to reach the spring, just wide enough for a donkey: “when we were small, when we would go to fill up [the jars with] water, the donkey would touch the rocks and the jars would break. Later, they made jars of metal.” Jamīl, Salmeh’s age, also grew up in ‘Ein Ḥawḍ,

¹⁶ According to some people from new ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, the Jews from the nearby settlement buried the spring.

¹⁷ Zarzarok is described elsewhere by Jamīl as a huge tree with large flowers that are bluish; ‘Oleq -- twining and creeping plants or shrubs of various kinds, possibly blackberries; Kokab – possibly a star shaped plant; Za‘arūr -- Azarole, Neapolitan medlar, *Crataegus azarolus*; Qandūl – *Calicotome villosa*.

and like Salmeh, he too remembered his childhood trials with the clay jars: (The language mistakes were left in the text, as it was told in English)⁺

...They asked me to go to al-Mashariyyeh spring for water, to bring water at noon for four o'clock, *al- 'aṣr* (afternoon), riding on a donkey [loaded] with two jars and to be aware that they will not be broken from a tree branch of tree because the path was very very narrow. And I was always afraid that animals and beasts might go down to the water at noon or in the evening. That is the trip that really terrified me. And I could not say no because I'll be [considered] a coward man.¹⁸

Children were sent to fetch water from the age of six. Jamīl later noted that the jars often did break when the donkey strayed. Walking alone in the mountains for the sake of fetching water or collecting wood was something children and women would do, even though there were frightening stories associated with it. One of the famous stories narrated not only by villagers of 'Ein Ḥawḍ but by people from the surrounding villages, tells of the young bride from 'Ein Ḥawḍ who had an eye infection and decided to seek treatment from the nuns of the monastery in 'Isfiyyeh, east of the village. It is said that someone from the village told her not to go on her own but for some reason she took no notice. At the time, Druze were living in Ḥajaleh, later to become a *khirbeh* (ruin), located a couple of kilometers south east of the village, between 'Ein Ḥawḍ and Dalia. The Druze spotted her as she was walking. They had "their eyes on her gold jewelry". She was killed and buried in a charcoal burner (*mashḥareh*) and her people could not find

her until an eagle drew her head from its burial place and dropped it near a flock whose herdsman recognized it. Following this incident, the Druze, who inhabited many small villages on Mount Carmel, were forced to flee and were later allowed to return to two villages only, 'Isfiyyeh and Dalyet al-Karmel, through the intervention of the people of aṭ-Ṭireh. This story tells us something of the continuous tension between the Moslems and the Druze.¹⁹

The paths and surrounding forests were the scene of the daily routine-- there the women passed on their way to the spring, there they collected wood (*khashab*) for cooking and heating and wild shrubs. At the same time, the very same places were dreaded, associated with fearful stories from the past and believed to be inhabited by the *ghuleh* (demon, pl. *aghwal*), especially at nighttime.²⁰

Despite the different conditions of exile, village life was narrated by members of the Nakba generation in similar ways in all the places of exile, be it Jordan, the West Bank or Israel. There were no clear rules as to what should be the content of the stories. Some of the men liked to recall the school days. 'Awād, for instance, originally of Ijzim and today residing in Irbid's refugee camp (Jordan), began his talk by saying: * "I did not want

¹⁸ See Tawfiq Cana'an's classical article on Palestinian folklore of springs and demons (1922).

¹⁹ Different versions of this story were recited to me by a few people from 'Ein Ḥawḍ, aṭ-Ṭireh and surprisingly also Druze from Dalyet al-Karmel. Falah (1975) published the story. However, it should be borne in mind that there were also close ties between members of Druze and Moslem villages. Note the assistance that the Moslems received in Druze villages during the 1948 war that is described in chapter two. See photographs on the next page for illustrations of some personal friendships.

²⁰ A woman from 'Ein Ḥawḍ told Ben-Elkana that the children of the village were afraid of a certain place in the forest where three Jews were thought to be buried. They feared that they would fall prey to *ghulet al-Yahūd* (the demon of the Jews). See Ben-Elkana, 1986:66.



'Abdallah Salman of at-Tireh and Tawfiq esh-Shami (deceased) of Dalyet al-Karmel , two old friends. This combined picture of the two is kept at the home of 'Ali, Tawfiq al-Shami's brother.



A plaque given to 'Abdallah Salman by guests from Dalyet al-Karmel, hanging in his home in Irbid, Jordan.

to go to school. My father beat me. He told me—read. I did not wish to.”²¹ Abū Da’ūd, also from Ijzim and today living in Haifa, liked to narrate folktales that conveyed the character of the villagers, such as the following story about the dim-witted Jizmāwī:²²

Once a Jizmāwī went to Ṭanṭūra, taking with him five camels to carry goods. He was riding one of them on his way back and the four others were behind him. At mid-way he looks [back] and counts: one, two, three, four. “Where is the fifth?” he asks “ ’Il’an Abū-hu, al-‘Ārṣ [he curses].” He goes back to Ṭanṭūra and says: “Aḥmad, how many camels did I bring with me?” Aḥmad replies: “five.” And where is the fifth?” The Jizmāwī asks. Aḥmad says: “What is it that you are riding, a donkey or a camel?” The Jizmāwī beats his camel on the head and scolds him: “Why did you keep silent?”

Many of the women were fond of stories regarding the social life, such as collective harvesting or olive-picking, or joint trips to the spring (as was mentioned earlier on). Another favorite feminine topic concerned pilgrimage to the many nearby holy graves, usually on Fridays. These stories often contained mythic elements. While we were seated at the home of ’Āmneh’s brother in law, at the village of Fredīs in Israel, many members of the family gathered round to hear (and interfere) in ’Āmneh’s recollections. When I came to ’Āmneh’s family a few weeks earlier, the younger members

²¹ For another reflection on schooldays, see in chapter V how Firās’ relates to his older brother’s recollection of the sea sight from aṭ-Ṭīreh’s school.

²² See in chapter V Abū Da’ūd’s tale on the effects of the Jizmāwī water on the travelling gypsy.

urged me to talk to her as she was considered an expert on village life and folktales, although she was only twelve in 1948. When we spoke about the holy shrines that surrounded Ijzim, I asked:*

Efrat: What would you do when you'd come to the grave?

'Āmneh: We would ask Allah to improve our condition, protect the children, give us sustenance, that he would have mercy on us, that he would distance from us the evil and the wicked...

Ḥajj 'Abdallāh [one of the holy graves not far from Ijzim] had a woman. Because Allah loved her dearly she would spin with her leg ['Āmneh demonstrates how this women would spin fast on a single leg]. She would place one leg on top of the other and turn in the air and then ask Allah for [people's] wishes.

Before 'Āmneh could end her story, her son interrupted, commenting that he does not believe such stories. Tensions between the first and second generation will be discussed later. Let us now consider how the contrapuntal mode that is revealed in the villagers' accounts comes into play in Palestinian literary depictions.

3.4 Literary Versions

The prominent Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, originally from the village of al-Birweh near 'Akka, wrote a diary that was published as a book (both in Arabic and English) under the name *Memory for Forgetfulness (Dhākira lil-Nisyān)*, set in August

1982 in Beirut-- the height of the Israeli bombings of the city. In this memoir, Darwish sketched scenes from his biography, including his childhood's rural experiences in the Galilee countryside.²³ In one of the more equivocal passages, he wrote:

A time for childhood and a time for lust. A body made for forgiveness; a body made for desires. The marble of speech melts to polish the praise of legs that split the graveyard into two gardens -- one for the past, and one for the dream. The first lightning flashes in youthful bones (1995:119).

Ibrahim Muhawi, who introduced the book and translated it, tried to clarify the passage:

The text here collapses time and place into a moment of reverie, where the literal turns into the metaphorical, and vice versa. The graveyard is a reference to an actual graveyard through which the footpath between two villages in Upper Galilee passed during the poet's youth. Darwish's earliest memory of an overwhelming sexual desire -- "when the first lightning flashes of youthful bones" -- was that of seeing a woman's bare legs as she walked on the path (1995:119).

Both the title of the book-- memory for forgetfulness, and the image of two gardens-- one for the past and one for the dream, point to an internal clash. The contradictory past, with

²³ Mahmoud Darwish, born in 1942, fled with his family to Lebanon in 1948. A year later he returned to Israel but as al-Birweh had been obliterated, he became an "internal refugee" in the village of Dīr al-Asād. In 1971, after productive years of writing poetry and editing *al-Karmel* Newspaper and after continuous harassment by the police, he left Israel and lived in Beirut until the Israeli invasion of August 1982. He currently resides in Amman and Rām'allah.

its complexities, is an alternative to a dream that reduces it into a single revered image. Likewise, the villagers of Ijzim, at-Ṭireh and 'Ein Ḥawḍ reject clinging to reductionist images only and the village comes to life through its contradictions. This comparison between Darwish's longing and that of the villagers' need not obscure the differences between the two genres, however. Whereas Darwish's literature openly discusses his personal lust (turning it into part of his political statement), lust was a topic that remained vague and implicit in the villagers' narratives.

A somewhat different literary perspective is the one taken up by Bashir al-Khairi. His book *Letters to a Lemon Tree* is a compilation of (genuine) letters exchanged between him and Rachel, the new Jewish occupier of the house that the al-Khairi family left behind in Ramleh in 1948, once a prosperous Palestinian town east of Jaffa. In this correspondence, al-Khairi writes to Rachel of his yearning for a real life that he cannot reconstruct in exile: "This is how we were uprooted, Rachel. Uprooted, leaving behind in Palestine our spirit, our hopes, our childhood, our joys and sorrows" (1997:65). Al-Khairi, in his insistence on placing both joys and sorrows as the content of remembrance, again, takes us back to a non-paradisiacal past.

3.5 Epilogue: The Two Lives of the Nakba Generation

One of the points I hoped to convey was that similar images reverberated in the narration of the Nakba generation; the different places of exile did not seem to affect memories of the village. Speaking of the past was a way to fight forgetfulness, to revive the details of an intricate reality (shattered by forced migration), and to bestow a little bit

of the essence of village experience to the next generation (further discussed in chapter five). Story telling was also an ongoing attempt by the villagers to reassemble the two lives, the one that preceded the dispersal and the one that followed it.²⁴

This endeavor to close circles surfaced the second time I met Salmeh (in her early sixties) and her family in their home in Irbid's refugee camp. As we were approaching the end of the interview, I asked her whether she had visited 'Ein Ḥawḍ. She said she went twice, once in the 1970s and the second time, three years ago when they stayed with her husband's family [*slafeh*] in new 'Ein Ḥawḍ. Unaware of the significance and meaning of this last visit, I thanked her for the interview and almost turned the tape off when she renewed her speech.*

Salmeh: They took us to the sea.

Efrat: To Haifa?

Salmeh: 'Atlit [the beach closest to 'Ein Ḥawḍ]. Yes, I sat on the seashore (*jamb ash-shatt*) and a wave (*mūji*) approached...me and overcame me, and retreated, and I still sat there. And the waves approached me and broke over me and I was still sitting. And they [-- the relatives] were shouting at me, and I still sat there.

²⁴ Stewart claims that the nostalgic practice is to "reassemble a broken history into a new whole" (Stewart, 1988:236).

Efrat: Did you go swimming?

Salmeh: No, I was just sitting. I did not wash. I was hoping just to go and watch the sea.

Efrat: When you were small, would you go to the sea?

Salmeh: No, I never went. I was afraid when I was small. They would go but I would not and it stayed in my thought that I should go to the sea and see it. Until three years ago when the day came and my brothers-in-law went and took us. We went in the morning, and they said the sea is not quiet (*bkhabet*) and not good. So we went to a park in 'Atlit and we ate lunch there and in the afternoon, after we had eaten, we went down to the beach. We were sitting on the beach for a while, and with us were my son and his children.... We went and we sat and my son and his cousin pulled their pants up and went to the sea, and I started shouting at them to return, so that they would not drown in the sea; so that they [the brothers-in-law] would not say that they brought them and the son drowned. I shouted at them to return. And when I managed to make them come back, my leg sank in the sea and I fell. They said to me: "stand up, stand up," but I wouldn't and I remained sitting on the sea, and the wave approached me and retreated. My brother in law and his daughter came to pull me up so I grabbed them and made them sit down as well till they became wet and soaked with water. Then, we left.

Efrat: You were like a child.

Salmeh: Yes. This was my life's hope to go and see the sea.

* * *

Exile, for the Nakba generation, is also a break of one's biography. They treat homesickness by pulling together contradictory images, creating a bricolage of memories where the broken is reassembled. Their representations reject simplicity, iconic *fallāhīn*, golden ages and lost paradises. They shuttle within two kinds of contrapuntal modes—the one expressed through stories and the other carried out in daily activities. The first, discussed in this chapter, considered the content of recollections that portray the complexity of the past, placing recollections beside the current condition. The second “double living” mode, to appear in the next chapter, is when acts and practices associated with the lost village are re-inserted into daily life.

Chapter IV

Jil al-Nakba: The Embodied Remembrance of a Broken Generation

Proust's description of the "petite madeleine" would not have turned into a twentieth century icon if it were not for his ability to grasp the power of ephemeral moments and their deep and long lasting relevance. In his influential passage describing the overwhelming effect that pervaded the narrator due to a familiar taste, he brought the senses into the forefront of the remembrance process:

But when from a long-distant past nothing subsists, after the people are dead, after the things are broken and scattered, taste and smell alone, more fragile but more enduring, more unsubstantial, more persistent, more faithful, remain poised a long time, like souls, remembering, waiting, hoping, amid the ruins of all the rest; and bear unflinchingly, in the tiny and almost impalpable drop of their essence, the vast structure of recollection. (Marcel Proust, [1913] 1982:50)

Not only was Proust interested in the "structure of recollection" that a taste triggered, but he also attempted to convey the therapeutic capacity of the ephemeral experience:

An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once, the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory-- this new sensation

having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it *was* me (Proust, [1913] 1982:48).

In this chapter I will try to demonstrate how such fleeting moments, moments from the past relived in the present, occupy a central place in the lives of Palestinian first generation refugees. I expand the category of “sites of memory” that inspire this conciliatory mechanism beyond sensory experiences to include other tangible encounters such as visits to the site of the obliterated village, the consumption of food that characterized village life and the preservation of artifacts from the time prior to the uprooting.

The literature on Palestinian refugees tends to concentrate on contemporary social and political issues. Less attention has been given to the cultural concerns of Palestinians and to questions regarding the presentation of identity within the historical context.¹ In recent years there has been a growing wave of documenting oral histories and these narratives sometimes include the speakers’ reflections.² However, there are few sources that go beyond personal descriptions and try to sketch a shared social way of relating to the past. As was noted earlier on, Palestine was often presented as an idea and a symbol rather than a concrete homeland. In contrast, the villagers narrate their own Palestine by

¹ For studies on Palestinian cultural settings and identity see Bowman, 1994; Farah, 2000; Magat, 2000; Swedenburg, 1990; Slyomovics, 1998.

² See Bir Zeit University’s series on the obliterated Palestinian villages. So far they have published over twenty ethnographies. For other collections of oral accounts see Lynd, Bahour and Lynd, 1994 and Yahya, 1999. A second interesting source is personal memoirs. See, for example, Fawaz Turki, 1988 or Edward Said, 1999. See also web sites such as that of Dheisheh Refugee Camp (www.dheisheh.acrossborders.org 10/2/00) or Dīr Yāsīn commemoration web site (www.deiryassin.org 10/2/00).

reference to specific places. These village sites concretize and epitomize what Palestine is for them.

This chapter accounts only to the cohort commonly referred to as “*jil al-Nakba*” whose members carry dense actual autobiographic recollections of life in the village prior to 1948. The lives of the members of the Nakba generation changed dramatically when they were forced to leave their villages, abandoning their familiar physical environment and material culture. Their experiences of returning to “sites of memory” is perhaps similar to that of any migrant and yet it is powerful because it comes as a consequence of forced migration and, often, years of living under harsh conditions.

A theoretical question related to this inquiry touches on the meeting point between autobiographical recollection and collective images. Maurice Halbwachs, the French sociologist who was active between the two World Wars and was the first scholar to explore systematically the topic of collective memory, claimed that “the memory of the group realizes and manifests itself in individual memory” (1992:40). As a student of Durkheim, Halbwachs placed much emphasis on a structured and habitual type of shared remembrance. For him, all memory was social memory. In the following material, where autobiographic memories cross with family, village and general Palestinian frameworks of reference, I try to show that personal memories are not necessarily defined by collective concepts. Rather, there are tangential points in which the private and collective images intersect. What does transpire as collective is the fact that the members of the Nakba generation, rather than sharing the content of memory, share practices of remembrance.

4.1 The Family and the Community

Few “acts of remembrance” remain private. Most acts are carried out with family members, or else their narration gives them public significance. Stories are often rehearsed over and over, in the presence of one’s peer group, children, relatives and even outsiders. Therefore, an analysis of the processes of remembrance should be understood with respect to the centrality of the family and the village community in Palestinian society, even under (or precisely due to) the circumstances of exile. In a side note it should be added that the Arabic word *dār* denotes both a house and a family.

Social research into Arab society, be it peasant, urban or tribal, places much emphasis on kinship ties and family affiliation as central forms that define other aspects of social life. Arab society is seen, almost unanimously, as family oriented-- the family is a major socialization agent, acting as the basis for the establishment of social relations as well as institutions such as political parties or ruling mechanisms. The “ideal” Moslem family is described as patriarchal, where the men control the women, the older members control the younger ones and the male head of the family oversees the administration and the economy of the household (Joseph, 1993:459-60). Other characterizations of the Arab family are that it is patrilineal (a member’s identity is defined by the male ancestry); it tends to be patrilocal-- a young couple is usually expected to reside with the male’s parents; it favors endogamy-- a preference towards marriage within the lineage, and especially marriage with cousins from the male side (*bint ‘amm, ibn ‘amm*); the pattern of

dwelling tends to be of an extended family (parents, married sons and their families and single sons and daughters).³

Exiled Palestinian families often try to adhere to these patterns in their new localities. Moreover, Palestinian families go to considerable expense and travel long distances in order to keep in touch with family members. The streets of Irbid (Jordan), populated by a majority of Palestinians, are jammed only in the summer, when Palestinians who are employed elsewhere (such as the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Europe and the United States) return for a summer vacation to see their families. Likewise, every summer, one is bound to find a few Abū al-Heijā's from Jordan, originally of 'Ein Ḥawḍ, who have come to visit their kin in the New 'Ein Ḥawḍ (in Israel) or in Jenin Camp (in the West Bank).⁴

Karīm (born in 1932) clarified the centrality of maintaining a bond with his extended family. Originally of aṭ-Ṭīreh and today a resident of Irbid (Jordan), Karīm spoke at length about his affinity with members of his family who remained in Palestine/Israel⁵ and his enthusiasm to preserve family links was not exceptional. I heard

³ For general studies of the family in Middle Eastern societies see Peristiany (ed.) 1976; Eickelman 1981; Abu-Lughod, 1989.

⁴ Traveling, including that for the sake of family visit, is so prevalent that a blackhumored folklore has developed around the issue of border crossings. Because Palestinians are so often stopped for interrogations when crossing international borders, a joke says that when the Palestinian State is established, the Palestinian border policemen at the terminals will make the Palestinians feel familiar by saying, "stand aside."

⁵ Most Palestinian refugees still use the term Palestine rather than Israel even when speaking about the present. I tend to use the word "Israel" when presenting my own analysis and "Palestine" when describing the viewpoint of Palestinians.

of Karīm from Khadijeh, his cousin, whom I met at her home in Haifa (Israel). She was the one to suggest I should go and see him in his shop located at Irbid downtown.

Karīm was evacuated (by the Jordanian Legion) from at-Ṭīreh at the age of 16, in April 1948 and became an owner of a bar and butchery. It was in that bar that we met and there he told me of his first return to the West Bank and Haifa after the 1967 war.⁶ It was 1970 and as communication between Jordan and Israel was difficult, he simply decided to show up at his relatives' house without prior notice. He instructed a taxi driver, based on his memory of the route as it used to be prior to 1948, on how to reach his kin who still lived on their land a couple of kilometers north of at-Ṭīreh.⁷ Having taken the old way, he was surprised to discover he was inside an Israeli army camp. Surrealistic as it may seem, he walked through the camp, climbed the fence and approached his family's dwelling. They welcomed him into their house although they were quite confused about his identity, unable to grasp who this man was whom they had just seen coming out of the nearby army camp. Suddenly, one of the older people recognized him and began crying. Thus, the relationship was restored after 22 years of separation, Karīm stressed, and from then on, both sides labored to maintain it.

Karīm said he calls Khadijeh (his cousin in Palestine) regularly and although his phone bills are very high, it is worth it. He visits Palestine as often as he can, and recently went there in order to attend the wedding of Khadijeh's granddaughter in Nazareth. He said that he was worried that the occasion would be difficult for him. Though he did not

explain why, I suspect he feared facing the divisions that evolved in the years of exile. He was neither familiar with all the new family members nor with the ways of celebrating weddings in today's Palestine/Israel. However, he recounted that contrary to his expectations, he enjoyed being in the warm embrace of his extended family. It was for him some proof that they manage to overcome the gaps that are the outcome of dispersion.

Whereas the ties within extended families are maintained with devotion, the ex-village community is also an important frame of belonging. Palestinians would always identify one another and ones self through the place of origin—be it village or town. Many communities re-cluster in exile in the same refugee camps and neighborhoods, including in European cities such as Hamburg or Stockholm.⁸ Social contacts within the ex-village community are maintained through marriage ties, the establishment of men's clubs (*dīwān*, *madāfeh*), attendance at funerals and celebrations, and distributing charity.⁹ These clubs, which are active mainly in Jordan, are established and financed by the members of the exiled community. Tensions among extended families lead to the emergence of new clubs and the dissolving of others, hence, some ex-village communities administer more than one club. The functions of the *dīwān* may alter. For instance, a wealthy family originally from aṭ-Ṭireh residing in Jordan is now building a club complex that would serve as a “cultural center,” and would include a mosque and a clinic. The

⁶ Due to the public setting of the meeting with Karīm, I decided not to take out the tape recorder.

⁷ The family moved to this land, owned by them prior to the war, following 1948.

⁸ For a description of the re-clustering in refugee camps in Jordan see Sawalha, 1999; Randa Farah, 2000. See also proceedings of Shaml's conference on Palestinian refugees in Europe that convened at Oxford on 5-6 May 2000 (<http://www.qeh.ox.ac.uk/rsp/ws1.html>).

⁹ See extended discussion on the role of 'Ein Ḥawḍ's men's club in Slyomvics, 1998:137-168.

following discussion regarding remembrance practices of the Palestinian refugees has to be understood within the context of the ongoing salience of family and community ties.

4.2 Settings of Remembrance

Interviewees, naturally, varied in their responses, some reacting swiftly to questions whereas others were reserved and inhibited, and yet fluency was not solely a matter of personality. Stories of the past surfaced when they were linked to specific places and objects, as was apparent in the previous chapter in Fāṭmeh's vivid account of 'Ein Ḥawḍ's agricultural setting, packed with fruit, vegetables, honey and silk. Some interviews offered a chance to encounter the internal process of recall. If, for instance, one spoke of the village spring, then the path that led to it or the social group that accompanied him/her, came to mind. Abstract recollections were recalled through their fixture to places.

Halbwachs maintained that social relations had to be understood as linked to the geography where they had originated.¹⁰ He wrote: "The reason members of a group remain united, even after scattering and finding nothing in their new physical surroundings to recall the home they have left, is that they think of the old home and its layout. ... Thus we understand why spatial images play so important a role in the collective memory" (Halbwachs 1980:130 quoted by Bahloul, 1996:28). More recently, the centrality of place was further explored (Berdoulay, 1989; Hayden, 1995). Henri Lefebvre, possibly the

¹⁰ Vidal De la Blache influenced Halbwachs in this matter. See Coser's introduction to Halbwachs, 1992:16-17. See a recent return to "Vidalian" conceptualization in Berdoulay, 1989:126; Rodman, 1992:642.

strongest advocate of this approach, states that: “groups...cannot constitute themselves, or recognize one another, as ‘subject’ unless they generate (or produce) a place” ([1974] 1991: 416).

Whether access to the village site was possible or not, stories were indeed grounded in its landscape. However, this landscape was in no way uniform but rather infinite, as Lefebvre ([1974]1991:85) noted: “How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can even be given in answer to this sort of question.” Indeed, the village landscape that transpired through the oral narratives was of plural dimensions, what Rodman (1992) defines as “multilocality,” analogous with “multivocality”.

The delineation of the village boundaries was one favorite topic, especially among refugees who live far away from the village. In the summer of 1997, Muhannad and I visited a family from ‘Ein Ḥawḍ who resides in Irbid’s refugee camp. When we arrived at the house, only Salmeh was present. Shortly afterwards, her husband and his uncle, Abū Darwīsh, arrived too. Salmeh, who until then told us of the communal sharing of carob picking, ceased to talk and gave the floor to Abū Darwīsh, born in the mid 1920s. Abū Darwīsh began by reciting the story of the establishment of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, how Salah al-Dīn gave land (*qit‘a*) to the first Abū al-Heijā’ as an endowment (*waqf*) that may not be sold. “Shall I outline the borders of the land?” he then asked, and when I said yes he named all the settlements that marked the village borders, systematically surveying the four

directions of the wind. This geographical positioning was a mapping of the locality, in this case the coastal plain and the western part of Mount Carmel, clarifying the place of each village within it.

A second common topographic characterization was expressed by referring to the complementary dichotomy between the mountains and the plain. Each village had two types of terrain, corresponding with two main forms of agriculture-- the mountainous areas (*aj-jabal*) and the coastal flat land (*as-sahl al-sāhili*). The mountain, namely the Carmel, a ridge cut by valleys and basins, was the site of natural forests, its deforested terraces and dry riverbeds suitable for growing mainly fruit trees. The flat area, stretching between the mountain and the sea, was apt for the cultivation of cereal and vegetables. Most families owned land on both types of terrain.

This dichotomy was further particularized, recounted through specifically labeled valleys, springs, mountains and caves. There was a continuous attempt to attest to familiarity by naming places-- an act that turned them into shared places. Naming places is also a political act of appropriation within the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, argued Rashid Khalidi. "Although such measures may seem petty," Khalidi wrote,

They are related to the significant process of attempting to signal control by imposing placenames. This has, for example, rendered the West Bank as Judea and Samaria in the official terminology used for Israel's Hebrew, English and Arabic pronouncements and publications. For the past few decades many such

archaic or invented place names have been imposed throughout Palestine over the Arabic ones employed for many centuries and still used by much of the present-day population (many of these Arabic names, ironically, are based on earlier Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin or French Crusader names for the same sites). This process of naming is an attempt to privilege one dimension of a complex reality at the expense of others, with the ultimate aim of blotting the others out or decisively subordinating them to Israeli hegemony (Khalidi, 1996:193).

Indeed, in the wider political context names are intentionally buried, recovered, invented. In the more private setting of village story-telling, placenames acted as codes of a closed sect. The multiplicity of places uncovered manifold types of belonging.

Even if the crux of a story had nothing to do with the scenery, places were always a necessary and integral component. For instance, in the story about the girl from 'Ein Ḥawḍ who was seeking a remedy for her eye disease (that appears in the previous chapter), we are told where she headed to find a cure-- it was to 'Isfiyyeh, the nearby Druze village. We also know where she was attacked-- near Khirbet Ḥajaleh, slightly east of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. The narrators sometimes halted here, explaining the exact whereabouts of Khirbet Ḥajaleh and what it looks like. Those who lived nearby sometimes offered to show me the place. We are even told where the girl's decapitated head was found.

Whereas places often dominated narratives, places were also the external condition that triggered recollections. Interviewees were eager to look at photographs from the

village, each photograph inspiring its own stories. Memories were not arranged according to abstract categories that could be drawn from a mindshelf under topics such as “childhood experiences of fear” or “adolescents’ mischief.” Familiar landscapes, especially when encountered in real life, were important mnemonic devices.

The phenomenon of landscapes which stimulate a specified type of recall is described outside the Palestinian context (see Rosaldo, 1980; Basso, 1988; Cole, 1997; Bloch, 1998). Maurice Bloch, in his study of the villagers of Zafimaniry in Madagascar, demonstrated the decisive effects of the surrounding on the narrative that was produced. Whereas earlier on in his fieldwork, Bloch had been told by three elders of the terrible hardship in the region between 1947 and 1949, when later he found himself in a field hut with one of the elders, he was given a totally different version of the same events, a version he described as much more “factual and lacked the timeless mythological quality of the first.” Bloch noted that this “was largely prompted by the fact that from the field hut we could see a valley where important events from the time of the rebellion had occurred” (1998:118). The proximity and sight of the topography revived the scenes of the past and the elder recalled details and facts that seemed to have slipped his mind earlier on.

This observation coincides with psychological experiments that have shown that retrieval of memories is best implemented when one is in the place where an event was recorded (Baddeley, 1989:55-6). It is not only real life objects but imagined images that act as effective mnemonic devices. Carruthers (1990:75-79) described a study of

memorization that Professor Luria, a Russian neuropsychologist, conducted. Luria studied S. who possessed a phenomenal ability to recall (to the extent that he had difficulty forgetting things). S.'s technique to memorize words, nonsense, numbers or objects was to convert them into visual images set in a sequence. In the Palestinian refugees' case, real physical cues or the mere act of mentioning them, brought details to life that otherwise remained dormant.

4.3 Visiting the Site of the Village

Few Arab houses remain on the ruined sites of aṭ-Ṭīreh and Ijzim and yet the few houses that are intact have turned into sites of pilgrimage, especially for the members of the extended family of the former house dweller (see photograph on the next page of Ṣāleḥ near his uncle's home in aṭ-Ṭīreh). Interviewees often recounted with pain how the current Jewish dwellers of Arab houses would rarely allow them to enter the interior.¹¹

In the virtual absence of the pre-1948 built landscape, the majority of the Arab houses exist in a quasi-imaginary form and the mere site of where they used to stand becomes a significant place. This reconstruction of the landscape, which takes place in the minds of the ex-villagers, is demonstrated in 'Awād 'Allaw's attempt to show his village, aṭ-Ṭīreh, to an Israeli television crew. Although 'Awād is from aṭ-Ṭīreh and I have interviewed his daughter, I choose to demonstrate the phenomenon through a filmed encounter in which I did not participate. The film, a short documentary, has the ability to

¹¹ A similar situation that comes to mind is of Jews who visit their family's former dwellings in Germany and Eastern Europe. The visit involves a confrontation and the surfacing of anger towards the current inhabitants. See, for example, Kugelmass, 1993; Schama, 1995.



Saleh near his uncle's home at at-Tireh

encapsulate the experience of being confronted with the village remains, and yet it disjoins it from reality and turns its components into images for the audience (Buck-Morss, 1994:47). Moreover, the film medium enables the viewer to better reflect on the effects of the geographic setting.

In this television documentary, we see ‘Awād, born in 1929 and today a resident of Haifa, walking in the spring-time through a field of tall grass, formerly his family’s neighborhood location. Although one cannot see a single remnant of a house, ‘Awād searches for remains, saying:¹²

All these houses, from this side as well as from that side, belonged to the family of ‘Allaw. Here my grandmother’s house used to stand. She was one hundred and five when the Jews came and conquered the village...

What do I think? I am crying. Even if you can not see the tears, I am crying in my heart. What do I think? I see aṭ-Ṭireh. Where is aṭ-Ṭireh? Apart from the house, where are my parents? Where is the family? Where are my friends? What do I see?!”

For ‘Awād, the houses stand for their inhabitants and he is filmed searching for remains of a lost set of social relations. The camera follows him as he searches for more signs of life and when he discovers his home’s flight of stairs, he calls out to the crew to come and see.

¹² ‘Awād is speaking Hebrew in the television report, prepared by Hen Shalem and screened in Israel on channel three in the early 1990s.

This unearthing, on this occasion almost a literal one, provokes a flow of memories, each spot inspiring more details and events.

Due to the emotional turbulence involved, some refugees refuse to visit the village. ‘Azīz, in his early thirties, originally of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and today a resident of a West Bank refugee camp, described his father’s rejection of such a visit:*

He refused to visit because it hurts, because it is there that he passed his childhood and his entire life and therefore it would cause him pain if he returned-- to see the olives that they had planted and the house that he had built and of course, to see his childhood and the days he was a sheikh; to see the wealth he used to own and his poverty today.

The visit acts as a catalyst, invoking heart-searching. And yet, in spite of the strong emotional reaction and the pain associated with facing the alteration of the village landscape, the majority of the refugees who could visit, desired to do so. If we adopt an attitude that points to the diversity of the pilgrimage experience (Eade and Sallnow, 1991), the Palestinian visit to the village site is a kind of pilgrimage. The visit, unlike regular tourism, involves a sacrifice—going to the trouble of reaching the village site, encountering difficulty in the practicalities and the confrontation with the current inhabitants who produce their own version of the place. Moreover, as we shall see in what follows, there is also a sense of release and pleasure when overcoming the obstacles and re-rooting oneself, even if temporarily, in the village site.

Visits to the site of the village were often narrated as acts of resistance, as is evident from Qāsem's account of an event that happened sometime at the end of the 1960s. (More on Qāsem's biography in appendix VI). Qāsem, who was born in aṭ-Ṭīreh in 1931 and remained in Israel following 1948, married a girl from Haifa in the 1950s and bought a house not far from the site of aṭ-Ṭīreh. He has been visiting aṭ-Ṭīreh all his life, but this specific visit left a lasting mark:#

We used to own some olive trees at the entrance to aṭ-Ṭīreh.... I would go there every year to collect the olives.... There was an 'Iraqi man [a Jew]. He saw my children picking olives and thought that the children were alone. [He passed them with his car and then] made a reverse and came back to them. I was on the tree. I came down and he said to me: 'Oh, it's you'. I said: 'Yes, it's me'. 'Are you the owner here that you come every year and pick olives?' I said: 'These are my father's olives. My grandfather planted them and we pick them every year'. He said: 'No, it used to be yours. It's not any more'. I said to him: 'You came from Baghdad yesterday and now it is yours and my grandfather planted it here and it isn't mine. I want to come every year to pick the olives, and you do as you please.'

Here, the visit is not only commemorative but also a minor act of political opposition, when one confronts the new inhabitants. The Palestinian Israeli conflict was and is expressed in a miniature, real life setting in those encounters. 'Abd al-Mālek

described how the Jewish owner of the restaurant in today's Ein Hod, once 'Ein Ḥawḍ's village mosque, would not let a member of the Abū al-Heijā' family film the place, exclaiming that it was never a mosque and it will never be one.

These Jewish-Israeli versus Palestinian-Israeli individual encounters have been going on for the last fifty years.¹³ The refugees living in Israel tend to visit their village regularly, unlike those coming from elsewhere whose visits depend on political circumstances. The post-1967 war era saw a wave of refugees from the West Bank who were now able to visit their villages. Even Palestinians from countries such as Saudi Arabia or Syria could receive temporary Jordanian papers and enter through "The Open Bridges" between Jordan and Israel. The 1994 Peace Agreement with Jordan brought another wave of Palestinians coming to their villages.

People interpret visits in varied ways. Moreover, they exert some control over the way they "rediscover" the site. Kamāl's portrayal of his two visits to aṭ-Ṭīreh reflect his shifting demeanor. I met Kamāl a few times in Irbid, Jordan, where he is a successful businessman who owns a publishing house, a restaurant and agricultural enterprises. Born in 1937 and uprooted in 1948, Kamāl began by telling me about his recent visit to aṭ-Ṭīreh. Later, when I asked whether it was his first visit, he noted that he had been to Palestine in 1972, having come to seek medical assistance for his son who suffered from

¹³ Arabs in Israel use varied terms such as Arab Israelis, Palestinian Israelis and Palestinians in the State of Israel to define themselves. When I once, accidentally, used the term "Israeli" to refer to the Jewish inhabitants of Israel, I was chided by an interviewee who noted that there are Israeli Arabs too.

speech and hearing problems.¹⁴ Since the village of at-Ṭīreh was not obliterated immediately after the 1948 war and its houses were given to Jews, it so happened that when Kamāl came in the early 1970s, he witnessed how his house was being erased. At the end of that day, Kamāl's cousin attested on another occasion, Kamāl came back to his cousin's home in 'Isfiyyeh despondent, sinking into a passive state, wishing to see no more. All he wanted was to go back to Jordan.

Another quarter of a century passed before Kamāl, now a man of sixty, decided to visit the village again, this time for no reason but to see places. On this second pilgrimage-like visit, Kamāl was joined by his cousin from Irbid:

Kamāl: We went to Beit Oren [the Jewish settlement near the family's land], to the land pertaining to our childhood (*ila al-arḍi likunt tuḥūlitnā*). We came down to at-Ṭīreh from Beit Oren, from the mountains. Then we went to Wādī Fallāḥ. We walked and it was nice and healthy. We walked ten to fifteen kilometers in a single day.

Efrat: And what did you feel?

Kamāl: My feelings...I wished to die there....

I am one of the richest men of the village. And on this one visit, when I saw it, it made me forget everything. I have seen the world. I've been to Germany, I've

¹⁴ Kamāl's son was treated in Cairo. Having been given advice to try out the treatment in Israel, he traveled to see Dr. Shlomo Kumick only to discover that there is not difference between the treatment in Israel and in Cairo. He described with some bitterness how the doctor spoke to him Arabic when they came to see him in Nazareth, whereas on their second visit, this time in 'Afula (at a Jewish hospital), the same doctor asked him to get someone to translate for him.

been to Vienna and always longed to return to Irbid. But on this one time in Palestine, my soul did not wish to leave (*mālush nafs yiṭla ʿ*)

Kamāl described his encounter with the remains of the village as a bodily experience; the body becomes an active agent in the discovery and unveiling of the scenery; by descending from the mountain and walking, one mobilized the senses to rejuvenate the past.¹⁵

Kamāl's transformation from the first visit to the second one is representative of a process that other refugees underwent, especially those who were away from their village site for a long period. It took time and confrontation with the destruction of the village to realize that what one yearned for has been transformed.¹⁶ However, perceptions adapted to the changes and many members of the Nakba generation expressed both in speech and practice their attachment to whatever remained. A website established by refugees and non-refugees from the city of Jaffa applies this attitude. The site does not only commemorate the Jaffa of pre-1948 but rather follows up on present-day Jaffa by keeping in touch with its current Palestinian community and by reporting on old houses in danger of demolition, new construction projects and rehabilitation plans.¹⁷

¹⁵ The act of walking in order to nationally commemorate (and symbolically own) finds resonance in Zionist practices of hiking to redeem the land.

¹⁶ A famous story about such a return is "Return to Haifa" by Ghassan Kanafani, 1984. See Slyomovics, 1998:22-4 for an analysis of the story.

For descriptions of such actual visits see Rubinstein (1990:49); Bashir al-Khairi (1997).

¹⁷ www.yafa.org 5 December, 1999.

Other fieldwork occasions demonstrated the same sense of reenactment as the one emanating from Kamāl's account. At the end of October 1997, while Şāleḥ (born in aṭ-Ṭīreh in 1938), his family and I were eating *za'arūr* (*Crataegus*) on their balcony, Şāleḥ recounted how he had picked the fruit a few days before when he went to visit aṭ-Ṭīreh.¹⁸ Although he was short of time, he suggested we go right away to aṭ-Ṭīreh and to the *za'arūr* tree. Soon we were on our way, joined by Şāleḥ's youngest daughter, a teacher in her mid twenties.

We headed directly to the *za'arūr* tree. Although he was almost sixty years old, Şāleḥ was quickly up between the tree's branches, shaking it vigorously to drop the fruit to the ground. As they had to attend the wedding of a close family member on the same evening, his daughter was begging Şāleḥ to leave and yet he refused to stop (See Şāleḥ near the *za'arūr* tree on the next page).

Şāleḥ, both the first time he went to pick the *za'arūr* by himself, as well as the second time, when accompanied by his daughter and myself, was caught up in what Nadia Seremetakis calls "a moment of stillness" that emancipates "sensory experience from the social structure of silence" (1994:12). This personal "moment of stillness" fits into the public one. Pilgrimage to the village site is a popular ritual but its content for each individual is unique, comprised of moments that enable an "exit from historical dust" (Seremetakis, 1994:13). Whereas Seremetakis describes "slippery" moments, that

¹⁸ *Za'arūr*, known in English as Azarole or Neapolitan Medlar, is a small fruit (the size of a cherry) that looks and tastes somewhat like an apple.



Saleh picking *za'arur* fruit from a tree at the site of at-Tireh.

incidentally trigger remembrance, I suggest that the “exit from historical dust” is also an alternative way in which people, individually and collectively, conscientiously choose to reenact their pasts.

To reiterate the impact of the senses and places on attitudes towards the village and towards exile, let us look into some of the embodied experiences of Şāleḥ’s family reunification. Şāleḥ traveled to Jordan in 1998, accompanied by his son Muḥammad, a doctor by profession and an amateur collector of family and village history. Muḥammad was the one to recount to me the visit in detail.¹⁹ The objective of the trip was to meet Samīr, Şāleḥ’s brother, whose permanent place of exile is Syria. Şāleḥ and Samīr had not seen one another for almost fifty years. When the two brothers met, one of the first things Samīr said to Şāleḥ was: “Come, I wish to smell you and see if you have the aroma of aṭ-Ṭīreh-- the fragrance of the village”.²⁰

Samīr was eager to see aṭ-Ṭīreh and asked Şāleḥ if he could arrange permission for him to visit Palestine/Israel. Since it was impossible, they decided to go for a car ride along the Jordanian/Israeli border. Muḥammad described how near Bakūra they stopped in an orchard and his uncle faced Palestine taking deep breaths.[#]

¹⁹ I mention the fact that Muḥammad was the source of information because there is a crucial difference between first and second hand observation.

Joëlle Bahloul, in her study of the memories of her extended family from Setif, Algier, emphasized the mediators’ role and its impact: “Their recollections of these reunions are a discourse on narrative, a narrative of narrative, a narrative molded in another narrative” (Bahloul, 1996:127). Muḥammad recounted to me many scenes from that visit but did not relate explicitly to the bodily mode of communication and remembrance.

²⁰ Muḥammad attested to the strange relationship that developed between the two brothers during their stay in Jordan. He said that it seemed as if time had halted for fifty years and both were behaving as if they were still the children from back then.

He was crying there. He had tears. He said-- “I do not know if I shall live another day to see this again, to go back there”. He stood and wept. It wasn’t very nice. Bakūra wasn’t nice. He said, “look at the absurdity. I am just a few meters away here.... I can almost grab it with my hand yet it is so far”.²¹

4.4 Registers of Meaning

The existence of a set of activities that the members of this generation carry out to reestablish a link with the village should not obscure the fact that the same objects, acts and images do not communicate the same message for all Palestinian refugees. Any encounter and remembrance should be understood within its context, taking into account who is the speaker and what are the circumstances under which the discussion takes place. Images that seem to have turned into “public property”—a shared acknowledged type of rhetoric, are re-inserted with private meaning in a continuous process, as Jamīl and Kamāl tried to illustrate to me.

Jamīl, born in 1937 in ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and today a university professor in Jordan, was the one to introduce Kamāl to me, whose two visits to aṭ-Ṭireh were described earlier. Both Jamīl and Kamāl knew that this research was concerned with the memory of their villages. While the three of us were sitting at Jamīl’s home, Jamīl recounted a scene from a documentary film he had recently watched on television. It was the second time Jamīl

²¹ Muḥammad commented that shortly after they stopped to look at Palestine, an Israeli army jeep stopped on the opposite side of the border and a man watched them with binoculars. The incident epitomized the state of affairs and added to the discomfort.

mentioned this specific scene, which apparently left a mark on him. In this documentary, Jamīl noted, Hisham Sharabi, an American University professor originally from the Palestinian City of Jaffa, was filmed while visiting Israel/Palestine. In the film, when Sharabi reaches his house in Jaffa, he strokes the wall and says-- “a jasmine used to grow here.”

Kamāl reacted immediately to Jamīl’s description by recollecting the mulberry tree that used to grow near his uncle’s house in aṭ-Ṭireh and still stands there today. Kamāl was creating an analogy between his mulberry tree and Sharabi’s jasmine and yet this analogy may oversimplify different intentions. Sharabi’s recollection was a public statement, addressed to the vast and foreign audience of a film. At the same time, however, Sharabi’s observation struck another chord for Jamīl and Kamāl. For Kamāl, it lined up with a private experience. In both cases it touched on recollections triggered by plants that beyond being palpable objects, they are living and changing ones, working on olfactory and flavor senses. For Jamīl, Sharabi’s film episode served as a case study; it enabled self-reflection on the process of recollection. He followed the jasmine story by developing the theme, arguing that the suffering and the consequences of exile “enlarged memories.”²² The jasmine and the mulberry trigger a similar process, acting as mnemonic devices, but each of them lines up a unique experience. The signifiers do not only create homogeneity but also delineate differences. Just as people maintain the multiplicity of localities, they also maintain a multiplicity of individual experiences. One of the unfixed seams runs along private recollections and public representations.

²² Jamīl, who spoke English to me, invented the word *exlarge* for this context.

Personal attachment to specific places, intensified by the peasant background and the role of agriculture in the villagers' lives, is linked to other collective Palestinian representations of the land. The image of the land is a combination of autobiographical experiences entwined with the representations that appear in public discourse (as in Shehadeh's *The Third Way*, quoted in the previous chapter). Emile Habiby conveyed in *The Secret Life of Saeed the Ill-fated Pessoptimist* what he sees as an umbilical cord that binds the Palestinians to the land. Moreover, the land is personified—just as man yearns for the land, the land yearns back:

“But what about the kibbutz people?” Yu‘ad asked.

“After a week of cordon,” Abu Mahmoud replied, “their lands yearn for our able hands. Then they intercede to have the cordon removed and we return to work in the fields.”

“Why you in particular?” she asked.

“Because they were our fields, and it was we who planted them and we do so still. They love us and we love them. The authorities, you see, were unable to confiscate this friendship” (Emile Habiby, 1982: 143).

This type of literature both creates images and disseminates existing ones. Hence, public images and individual narration do not only diverge but also converge. When one walked into Hussein's little fruit juice shop in Irbid, one found two containers on the shelf. One contained the earth that he had collected at aṭ-Ṭīreh and the other, the sole of his shoe.

On the latter he wrote in a poetic manner (in literary Arabic), explaining that with this shoe he once trod Palestine-- the land of his beloved village-- and the precious earth that clung to the sole must not be let fall back to the ground.²³ Ḥussein's visit was concretized, transformed and abstracted into an artifact that became a public exhibit.

A custom amongst Palestinian refugees, especially the ones who live abroad, is to collect earth from their village in a handkerchief (*mahrameh*) and take it back with them. This act, like the container at Ḥussein's shop, both concretizes the village and yet converts the earth into a sacred substance. This tradition is found elsewhere and is described with regard to Turks who were uprooted in Cyprus during the Turkish invasion of 1974. Peter Loizos (1981) heard about this custom from a Greek woman who arrived as a fresh refugee in the Turkish Quarter of Paphos where she encountered a Turkish woman who was about to depart:

They didn't want to go and they took earth from here so that they would come back again. Earth in tin cans. They have a custom like that-- when you take earth from your home, and go off somewhere, it helps you to come back home again. We didn't think of doing that-- we thought we were only leaving Argaki for a few days, two or three at most.(1981:144)

The people of Ijzim, at-Ṭireh and 'Ein Ḥawḍ could not imagine that their hasty escape would turn into permanent exile. When they escaped from their villages, thinking it was

²³ In Arabic, there are two main registers of language-- colloquial (*'āmmiyyeh*) and literary (*fuṣḥā*). The

just for a few days, they took very little with them. A ritualistic sanctification of the earth evolved later. This act of reverence for the earth may be associated with the need of uprooted exiles to re-root themselves, even if only metaphorically.

4.5 Biographical Objects and Daily Practices

The role of revered objects should be understood within the context of the speedy retreat from the village. Aṭ-Ṭīreh was attacked several times in 1948, including a night attack early in the war on some of the houses in the village's northern neighborhood. In that attack, approximately fifteen members of one family were killed. Khaḍer, of aṭ-Ṭīreh, born in 1940 and today an Israeli citizen, described the atmosphere that preceded the evacuation of the villagers:[#]

Each one was worried about his family. Today my house would be blown up and tomorrow-- my neighbors. You should know that everyone was scared. There were Iraqi and Jordanian army trucks and buses, and they started to take people. They persuaded them psychologically that they would be back in a week or two....People went to the beach, near the beach they were loaded and taken by buses and trucks.

Jamīl, of 'Ein Ḥawḍ, described his family's departure, on foot, accompanied by a few donkeys:⁺

usage of Literary Arabic signifies the intention to elevate this text.

My father was thinking that we are staying one week, two weeks, perhaps a month, and then we return back. That is the culture of the town and the son of Haifa. My mother took two carpets. We bought them a month before [we fled] from Gaza and we bought them for a lot of money. She tried to put them over the donkeys just to use them. She tried and he [my father] refused. And also she took a thermos, just to make tea or coffee. “We can drink coffee or tea from the coffee shop” [my father said]. He was taking all he had in his pockets-- sixteen *jineh* only.²⁴

Virtually no one succeeded in rescuing wealth in the escape. However, one of the few objects that some refugees managed to salvage and keep are the land deeds (*kawāshīn*, sing. *kūshān*). Some people escaped with the *kawāshīn* whereas others came back-- “infiltrated,” as the new Jewish State defined it-- in order to retrieve them. These papers were often the sole objects that survived the dispersion. They were treasured at first for practical reasons, to reclaim the land, but they also attested to past economic independence and to a dignity lacking under new external circumstances.²⁵ Much like the objects discussed in Janet Hoskins’ book (1998) with regard to personal objects in Eastern Indonesia, the *kawāshīn* became “biographical objects”-- people’s biographies were narrated through these significant objects.

²⁴ *Jineh* is derived from the English “guinea”-- an abbreviation for the Palestinian pound.

²⁵ In Sāhera Dirbas’ book on aṭ-Ṭīreh, photocopies of *Kawāshīn* owned by Ṭīrawīs are appended, 1991:53-67.

Hoskins noted that in the case of modern consumerism and shopping, the motivation to collect objects draws on “the hunger for novelty and the need for “life- style changes” to revitalize the self with newly manufactured identities” (1998:191). *Kawāshīn* represent the very opposite; for those who strive to maintain and render identities from a past, *kawāshīn* are treasured artifacts, “authentic” relics charged with meaning. ‘Azīz’s story demonstrates their role.*²⁶

I’ll tell you one incident that happened when my brother was going to Russia. He wanted to go to Russia to study. Because of this, my father wanted to get him a Jordanian passport. He went in 1989 to get a passport and said to my uncle “I want the *kawāshīn* of the land to prove my Palestinian nationality to have a passport.” I remember that my grandfather, Suheil, and my uncle immediately refused to take the *kawāshīn* to my father. To give them to him. And they went to the Ministry of Interior with him and the *kawāshīn*. Why? When I asked my uncle and my grandfather why they did so, they said to me: “ Because if we give anyone these *kawāshīn*, he could sell this land to the Israelis. Sell it. Because of this we cannot give anyone these *kawāshīn*”. I saw those *kawāshīn* only in his hands. I asked if I could photocopy them but they [the uncle and the grandfather] refused.

²⁶ ‘Azīz, whose family is originally from ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, is in his mid-thirties and lives in a West Bank refugee camp. We met at the camp in the home of his friend Nihād.

The *kawāshīn*, presumably, were always carefully guarded as proof of ownership and yet they later gained a sacred aura that they did not have prior to the dispersion. Having become evidence, hard data, in the struggle, they were guarded from transaction even within the family, carving for their owners a social stand in exile by linking wealth and social status then and now. These land deeds had a power to revive the past, causing family tensions over ownership of land which, in practice, has been out of the family hands for fifty years.²⁷

Whereas biographical objects such as *kawāshīn* and old keys are consciously imbued with symbolic meaning, certain practices indirectly imply that they are linked to re-membrance. Such is the consumption of “traditional” food, the same food that was eaten prior to 1948, or the usage of popular medicine in the daily lives of Palestinian refugees today. On the one hand, we could claim that those are consumed out of habit. However, I would argue that there is an act of re-enactment in meals or perhaps, what Connerton defines as “a combination of cognitive and habit-memory” (1989:88).

One meal at ‘Abd al-Mālek’s home can serve as an example for understanding meals as commemoration performances. ‘Abd al-Mālek (born 1942) and Ramziyyeh (born 1949), both originally of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, live in a small house situated near the main road of a large Arab village in the Galilee. In its front is a small patch of land that ‘Abd al-Mālek converted into a cherished garden. The following lists one of the lunches Ramziyyeh

²⁷ The old keys to houses are also fraught with symbolic power and are exhibited as testimonial objects. See, for example, Ziyād Abbās’ article “The key and the Lost Gift.” *Mitsad sheni* (published in Hebrew by the Center for Alternative Information, Jerusalem), May 1998.

prepared: The main dish was *kufta*, and with it we ate a fresh marjoram (*za'atar*) salad made from the leaves of a bush 'Abd al-Malek had transplanted from the mountains into his garden. Ramziyyeh picked the small leaves from the stems, washed them and spiced them. She also served a mallow (*khubazeh*) salad, its leaves collected in the wild and cut into small pieces to which lemon juice was added. The lemons came from a tree that grew behind their house from a tiny piece of soil between their house and the neighbors' concrete wall. In the refrigerator 'Abd al-Mālek kept a liquid brewed from water and *za'atar fārisī* [*Satureja thymbra*], another mountain plant which he and his family inhaled or drank when they had a cold or were feeling slightly sick, as it is known to contain an antibiotic component. In this house, as in most Palestinian houses, the past was sustained through its taste. The plants of the past have not been forsaken and both in a continuous process and in ephemeral moments the past comes into life through the preparation of specific dishes and their consumption. The connection between food and memory is more than obvious in ritualistic re-enactment such as the Christian sacrament or the Jewish Passover meal. The full meaning of vernacular practices in which the borderline between the conscious choice to recall in contrast to unintentional continuity of customs is yet to be explored.²⁸

4.6 Return to the Land

A recurrent image of yearning that appears in the narratives of the Nakba generation is the willingness to yield one's current possessions such as wealth (as Kamāl

²⁸ Seremetakis claims that "Memory and the senses are co-mingled in so far as they are equally involuntary experiences" (1994:9). I suggest that there is a large gray area between the voluntary and involuntary.



Food served in two Palestinian homes. Above—a meal at the home of “second generation” refugees in Israel. Below—a meal in Irbid. Among the dishes—stuffed vine leaves, stuffed zucchini, chicken, melukhiyyeh (*Corchorus olitorius*), bamiya (gumbo, okra) and yogurt.

noted) or university degrees, for the sake of being able to return to the village. In a gathering at the spacious Irbid home of ‘Abdallāh Salmān, aṭ-Ṭīreh’s one time *mukhtār*. Abū Majdī, in his fifties, asked ‘Abdallāh Salmān, then a man of 96, the million dollar question in its Palestinian version: “If you could choose to return and be told-- we will give you all the money in the world but you must leave aṭ-Ṭīreh, would you give up aṭ-Ṭīreh?” ‘Abdallāh Salmān replied: “Someone asked me-- ‘what is your property?’ I told him-- ‘so and so,’ and I added-- ‘I would sacrifice everything I own as long as I could return to aṭ-Ṭīreh and die there.’” He further continued by listing his possessions:*

It’s about 386 *dūnum* that I would give up. Do you know al-Ajziyyeh? There I have eighteen *dūnum*, in the region of Haifa and I would give it up and let go of Birket Kheir and give up Bustur and give up Tal Yiqra and I would give up Şaffa and surrender Abū ‘Ali and give up Abū Shamiyyeh and give up ‘Aqrab al-‘Ein and I would give up Zalafeh, as long as I was granted a return to Ṭīreh.

As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, one way of expressing attachment and social bonding was by naming specific places, in this case maybe known to some of the people who were present. This kind of description, a delineation of the map in the mind, was characteristic of the Nakba generation. The names meant something else for the members of the younger generation who did not know the places. To borrow the terminology that Bahloul uses to describe the processes of memory of her family house in

Setif, Algier, the Palestinian landscape was “gradually withdrawing from tangible reality and beginning to take root in genealogical memory” (1996:1).²⁹

The wish to return (under any condition) is a recurrent motif among the Nakba generation. Mahmoud Issa (1997), writing about the destroyed village of Lūbyeh (in the Galilee), quoted an old man who returned to the site of the village after 46 years and was interviewed for a documentary film screened by Danish television: “I would never exchange all the palaces of the queen in Denmark for a tent on the ruins of my house here...And if there is a wish I want to fulfill, it is to die here right now, where I am standing, rather than to leave again.”³⁰

The return visit, like a mini-rehearsal of the real national return (*al-‘awda*), is circulated by the returnees. Those who return make their experience public, generating stories in the men’s club and in family gatherings, and video cameras now enable those who stayed behind to join in on a virtual visit. Muḥammad described the disagreement that surfaced during a family gathering in Irbid, at which everyone viewed a videocassette taken by some family members during a visit to aṭ-Ṭīreh.[#]

²⁹ “Genealogical memory” is basically the registration of family trees. It is more structured and less open to interpretation in contrast to personal, emotionally charged and contested history. Shryock (1997:109-110), in a study of oral and written histories of the Balqa Bedouins, quotes a local Jordanian historian who explains why genealogical memory is “safer” and more easy to publish in comparison to other histories.

³⁰ <http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/MEPP/PrrN/papers/RAHUS.html>, 15 March 2000. Mahmoud Issa’s paper was presented at the conference: *Worlds & Visions, Perspectives on the Middle East Today; Local and National Histories*, 5-7 December 1997, University of Århus, Denmark.

They began filming in 'Isfiyyeh... They reached aṭ-Ṭīreh from above and filmed it from above... It was important for me to see my uncle's eyes, who was watching it for the first time after fifty years. He was observing and they said [the narrator of the film, a family member] that this is the *manzūl* (the village square) and he jumped up and said-- "couldn't be... it couldn't be it. This is a lie" I don't know why he always responded to things [in the narration] as if they were lies.... Until they reached the spring... in Wādī al-'Ein... *al-mghāra*. "Yes, it is *al-mghāra*" [was the uncle's reaction]... and *mghārat ash-sheikh* up there, and he said "yes." ... I noticed he calmed down and shut himself up....

They would argue about the width of the road and the argument would heat up. [At the end of the film] he concluded: "This is not my aṭ-Ṭīreh. This is not my aṭ-Ṭīreh."

Video films are confusing, especially for those who have not been to the site of the village for fifty years. The village has become an assembled set of images, and for each villager they are somewhat different. Tensions reach the surface and heated debates erupt, partially because the gap between the "internal" images and the ones reproduced on screen is exposed.

Speaking of return to the village for people who are now in their sixties and seventies, was often associated with dying in one's homeland. This motif, returning to the land to die, again finds its expression in the literature. It is prevalent in the work of Fadwa Tuqan, an eminent feminist poet from Nablus (in the West Bank), who voiced the exile's

aspirations: "... I will return, and there will I close the book of my life, let the noble soil tenderly cover my remains."³¹ Mohammed Siddiq, a Palestinian who teaches Arabic Literature, interprets "the recurrent symbolism of death" in Palestinian literature not as a message of finality but rather the opposite-- "To die in the homeland is to pledge oneself never to leave it again" (1995:139). The preoccupation with death suggested that dying in Palestine also implied that one's children will be there to bury the dead, or at least one's cemeteries will be there as a memorial and a site of pilgrimage; a potential trajectory to maintain some kind of continuity.

In reality, even those residing in Israel can no longer bury their dead in the cemeteries of the obliterated villages. The cemeteries of Ijzim, 'Ein Ḥawḍ and aṭ-Ṭīreh have all either been destroyed or placed under threat of obliteration in recent years (each village having more than one cemetery). 'Abd al-Mālek, who was born in 'Ein Ḥawḍ and as a resident of Israel visits the site regularly with his family, contrasted the preservation of Jewish graves with the destruction of Moslem Palestinian ones:

³¹ Translated by A. L. Tibawi in "Visions or the Return: The Palestine Arab Refugees in Arabic Poetry and Art," *The Middle East Journal* (autumn 1963), p. 517. Elsewhere Tuqan returns to the theme:

Enough for me to die on her earth
be buried in her
to melt and vanish into her soil
then sprout forth as a flower
played with by a child from my country.
Enough for me to remain
in my country's embrace
to be in her close as a handful of dust
a sprig of grass
a flower

Translated by Naomi Shihab and Salma Khadra Jayyusi in Jayyusi, 1992:314.

I was in Turkey and we went to the largest [?] in the world, a historical site in Kapadokia. No, sorry, in Pamukaleh... We went to see the grave of an important Jew and yet our cemetery [in 'Ain Ḥawḍ] is dilapidated. We have been waiting for permission to fence it for ten years. Ten years.

As an Israeli citizen, 'Abd al-Mālek daily witnesses the molding of a Jewish landscape at the expense of the Arab one. One exceptionally charged event was a visit with Abū and Umm Jihād to Abū Jihād's village, at-Ṭireh, which he left as a boy of ten. The gloomy feeling was closely associated with the fact that we were literally standing on the ruins of at-Ṭireh, witnessing the disappearance of its few remnants under the developing plans of the Israeli State. The following is an excerpt from my fieldwork diary.

Abū Jihād and Umm Jihād walked through the neglected cemetery of at-Ṭireh.

We visited Abū Jihād's father's grave. He visits it regularly and tries to take care of it but one senses he is not satisfied with what he can do. It is a shrinking cemetery with broken and unattended graves, piles of debris surrounding the place.

Cemeteries, and mosques, often the only remains of an entire village, are becoming the foci of struggle for Palestinians in Israel.³² Salim Tamari, a Palestinian sociologist originally from the city of Jaffa, related in the *Journal for Palestine Studies* one disturbing visit to the city's old cemeteries. Describing himself as having "a fetish for the dead," he

was joined by friends to a call upon Jaffa's deteriorating Arab cemeteries. When the party discovered that new Russian immigrants are now being buried in the old cemetery of Jaffa and the Arabic inscriptions on the old slabs' are being erased by new Russian and Hebrew script, Bishara, one of Tamari's companions, felt that it was the final blow: "First they take the 'abandoned' houses in Jaffa, then they displace Arab workers from their jobs, and now they have occupied our cemeteries" (in Tamari and Hammami, 1998:77).

Salmeh (born circa 1937 in 'Ein Ḥawḍ), who lives in Irbid's refugee camp, explained what the loss of a homeland meant for her. When I asked her what was the most difficult thing for her about losing 'Ein Ḥawḍ, she clapped her hands with sorrow and said:*

That I have lost my homeland (*waṭani*). The homeland is the land (*ard*). One hopes to die in his homeland. He who dies a foreigner (*gharīb*) is called a martyr (*shahīd*). Now, those who had died are foreigners but is there anything like dying in one's homeland?!

Her choice was clear. She did not want to be a martyr. Like her, Mūsa tried to convey what a home and a homeland are for him and how he yearned for them. Born in 1943 in at-Ṭīreh and today a wealthy businessman in Irbid, Mūsa noted:*

³² In many Arab villages the only buildings not to be destroyed by the Israelis were the mosques, because of their sanctity. However, in many villages even the mosques were erased.

Everything can be precious. Soil is all soil (*turāb*). I do not know the soil because I have not worked it. I do not know the value of soil because I did not sow nor plow. I only know that every one yearns for his place of birth (*masqat ra's-hu*). Many prominent figures or historical figures before they die, they write a will asking to be buried in their place of birth. For example, the last who had died, Nizar Qabbani, wanted to die on the land where he was born, in Damascus, which is his city, his homeland (*watan-hu*). Me, for example, I was born in 1943 and now it is 1998. For fifty years I have not known my land.

* * *

When Keith Basso tried to explain the salience of placenames, he referred back to two great poets. He wrote: "...As T. S. Eliot (1932) and Seamus Heaney (1980) have remarked, placenames provide materials for resonating ellipsis, for speaking and writing in potent shorthand, for communicating much while saying very little" (Basso, 1988:103). Smell and sensation, as Proust has shown, are also mobilized as condensation mechanisms and as referential to the past. For the Nakba generation, placenames, visits to the village and certain objects are sites of vernacular commemoration. Although these practices are found everywhere, for them they are a salient and necessary part of daily life.

The "vast structure" that these material mnemonics call to mind is multivocal and reveals internal divisions. The earth taken from at-Ṭireh and placed for exhibition on a shelf in a shop in Irbid or the jasmine in Hisham Sharabi's TV performance change

meanings. Even the old houses that remain in aṭ-Ṭīreh to this day and have turned into sites of pilgrimage disclose family divisions within the community-- whereas Ṣāleḥ takes his guest to his uncle's home, 'Awād takes the television crew to the invisible remains of his own family house. At the same time, the shared practices of remembrance conjoin the Nakba generation.

This "material remembrance" applies only to the Nakba generation and hence sets them aside as a separate group within the multiple Palestinian experiences of exile.³³ With the emergence of a new generation, even if remembrance were still closely associated with practices and artifacts, it would no longer "contain" dense autobiographical recollections. However, precisely because those concrete sites of memory (and especially the village site) are open to interpretation, they are taking on new significant roles. Cemeteries and village mosques, a palpable geographical hold, are already mobilized politically. The younger generation of Palestinians within Israel organizes protests in these mosques and cemeteries.³⁴ Whereas for the older generation they are personal and communal sites of memory, cemeteries are becoming national memorials and "sites of accusation" in a country that systematically obliterates the "Palestinian map." Whereas these palpable sites are available for the Palestinians within Israel, other means of commemoration are

³³ See Bowman (1994) for an analysis of the varied coexisting exilic Palestinian positions.

³⁴ Meron Benvenisti, an independent Israeli scholar who writes extensively on Palestinian issues, wrote in *Ha'aretz* Hebrew newspaper that of the 300 Moslem cemeteries in 1948 only 10% still exist. Furthermore, he notes, "the efforts of the authorities to liquidate them proves that the destruction of Moslem cemeteries is not an outcome of 'development pressures and needs of the public' but rather is done with an intention: this is ethnic cleansing of the dead." The implications are clear according to Benvenisti -- "he who treats the memory of the dead in such a manner, does not respect the rights of the living" (Benvenisti, in Hebrew, 4 March, 1999).

practiced elsewhere. In the next chapter we will discuss the transformations that take place when “village life” is narrated to the younger generation who was born in exile.

Chapter V

***Transmission and Transformation:
From the Nakba Generation to the “Second Generation”***

“It is not the literal past, the “facts” of history, that shape us, but images of the past, embodied in language.”

Brian Friel¹

“Remembrance must not proceed in the manner of a narrative or still less that of a report, but must, in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner, assay its spade in ever-new places, and in the old ones delve to deeper depths.”

Walter Benjamin²

This chapter considers the shift from the generation that remembers life in Palestine prior to 1948, to the generation born in exile.³ The perspective on the process of transmission is the one expressed by the younger generation, which I name the “second generation.” These are the children of people uprooted from the three villages of this study. Their ages range from those in their forties to those in their twenties. Some of the “second generation” interviewees have brothers or sisters who are significantly older and remember life in the village. Hence, the generational dividing line is drawn not always between parents and children but between those who were born in the village and remember it in contrast to those who were born into the state of exile.⁴

¹ Brian Friel, quoted in the *International Herald Tribune*, 2 October 1987.

² Walter Benjamin in “A Berlin Chronicle,” 1978:26.

³ All the uprooted Palestinians, including their descendants and including those who were born in Israel post 1948 are here defined as “refugees.”

⁴ Shils noted that “The boundaries of any generation are vague: there are no natural boundaries” (1981:35).

As noted earlier, Mannheim's (1972:303) definition of a generation is linked to an "actuality" that is shared by a group of people and creates "a concrete bond." Renato Rosaldo elaborated further on how a generation's unity comes about. He wrote: "When a number of individuals reorient their lives in relation to certain historical events that impinge upon them over a particular span of time...they emerge to a greater or lesser degree as an identifiable group within their larger society" (1980:111). There are significant similarities in the life cycles of the Palestinian Second Generation cohort. Apart from sharing the fact that they were all born to uprooted parents, most of them were born into the harsh conditions Palestinian refugees endured during the 1950s and 1960s, some then experiencing a gradual economic recovery. These are the years that saw the emergence of Palestinian political and military organizations (Tibawi, 1963; Ḥabībī, 1970; Harkabi, 1979).

And yet Mannheim himself realized that even under similar conditions, the members of the same generation may separate into distinct units, each unit working up the material of the common experience in different ways (1972:304). Moreover, a comprehensive generational analysis cannot ascribe historical developments to single deterministic explanations but rather should "fix some sort of definite order of importance in the structural factors involved" (1972:313). The narratives of the second generation present a multiplicity of what Mannheim named "entelechies"—"collective impulses" that create a "realization of potentialities inherent in the location" (1972:309). We will find that, on the one hand, the members of the second generation are motivated by a common generational entelechy with regard to their parents and their own exilic condition. On the

other hand, the second generation is fragmented into units defined by their varied geographic locations, their political opportunities, their gender as well as their ideological choices. Bowman (1994) has shown that another crucial element in this fragmentation of the Palestinian national discourse is the effect of antagonistic forces (against which people unite) within each location.

This chapter begins by looking at the way members of “the second generation” compare themselves to their parents’ generation. The main issue that the youngsters emphasize is their complexity in contrast to their parents’ naïveté. The gap between these two generations is further manifested in the link to the village and the homeland. There is a significant difference between the parents’ autobiographical lived experience, entrenched in the recollections of specific places and practices and the youngsters “second hand” narrative. Members of the second generation note that what they assimilate from their parents are fragmented “stories.” For some, especially those who had never been to Palestine, these stories are remote and disconnected from the present. Rather than only repeating narratives, the members of the second generation critically judge and re-interpret their parents’ narratives. As Edward Shils noted with regard to the younger generation in the modern age, they are “seeking out and realizing the potentialities which the elders have neglected or suppressed” (1981:36).

5.1 Relating to Parents

My acquaintance with most of the members of the second generation came as a sequel to discussions with their parents. Hence, I was able to meet representatives of

different cohorts from within one family. Although the children often empathized with their parents, the arenas where they opposed the parents' position were intriguing. A generational analysis, as Lison-Tolosana demonstrated, "provides a structure of reactive reinterpretation in which the emphasis...is on discontinuity" (summarized by Davis, 1989:110). Although Lison-Tolosana's emphasis is on the post civil war political setting in a Spanish town, his analysis of the younger generation as reacting against their parents' socially construed past is applicable in the Palestinian case. One might assume that the response towards exile would encourage a search for continuity but the second generation was commonly judgmental towards their parents. The gap between the generations may have been amplified by the abrupt break of 1948; "cohort traits" become more evident under the shifting historical conditions (Rosaldo, 1980:112; Schuman and Corning, 2000:950).

Randa, born in 1958 to parents from at-Ṭireh, a social worker in Haifa, described how after the establishment of the State of Israel, her grandfather's Jewish partner tricked him into signing a document which was supposedly an exchange of land but actually a yielding up of land. Her grandfather, she said, signed with his thumb. "What could you expect?" she stated, "The Jews came from Europe and brought with them everything that was there. They were educated, they were different, they had seen the big world." Jihād emphasized the same gaps that Randa mentioned. Because of the older generation's naïveté, he saw himself as a more suitable representative than his parents to explain the situation (especially when speaking to an Israeli).

Jihād, who earned a second degree at the University of Haifa and was a high school teacher, passed by his parents' home as we were about to leave for a visit at at-Ṭireh. Having heard from his parents about me (since I visited the house previously), he wanted to make a few clear points. Unwilling to shake my hand (for religious reasons) and unwilling to be recorded, Jihād offered two pieces of advice.⁵ One was "Be objective!" or at least aim at objectivity, and the other was "see the macro!" and the long term processes, not the micro short-term picture. What exactly, in his opinion, were the long term processes, was unclear. Alluding to the gulf between the first and second generation, he suggested that I should not be attentive to the old people's talk. When I inquired why, he assessed the older generation as being too emotional-- "they speak of feelings" he claimed, whereas his generation is rational.⁶

Inter-cohort criticism became even more apparent in the examination of the actions undertaken during the Nakba. Nihād, born in the 1960s, a statistician living in a West Bank refugee camp, commented on the conduct of his parents' generation during the war, and specifically on their decision to withdraw from the village before it was captured. He said that even if he could comprehend and accept his parents' account of the war, thinking that they would be able to return in a week or two, he still considers them "very simple". "They shouldn't have left," he stated bluntly, and the implications for his generation were clear: "We will not be simple forever." This contrast should be understood within the

⁵ Jihād's refusal to be recorded was exceptional. "I wish to write those things in my own book," was his explanation.

⁶ Michael Schudson, in a study on "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory," writes that "there tends to be a loss of emotional intensity" in the transmission from one generation to the other (1995:348).

context of a wide educational divide between the parents (*jil al-Nakba*) and children (the second generation), elaborated on in the next chapter.

This divide is further accentuated by the fact that whereas the parents' generation grew up within a rural agricultural society, the second generation was born in towns and large refugee camps. The growth of globalization and media technology affected the Palestinians, as it did everyone else (Thompson, 1995). Literature as well as information regarding daily politics was more accessible to them through intensified circulation of books and newspapers (as well as the availability of radios and later televisions). The consequences of this diffusion, in addition to the spread of literacy, altered the Palestinian situation and created shared images that transcended locality. Bowman argued that a sense of community does not evolve simply through people's simultaneous exposure to certain texts but rather "a national identity is constituted by discovering a set of concerns he or she 'recognizes' as his or her own within a text or texts" (Bowman, 1994:3).

In terms of political affiliation, for many years the PLO was perceived as "the sole representative of the Palestinian nation," linking Palestinians across borders. The last decade, however, with the discord sown by the peace process within Palestinian society, revealed internal rifts. Under these conditions, the divide between settings of exile also became more apparent. Nevertheless, in times of crisis, such as the violent clashes that broke out in autumn 2000, Palestinians protested everywhere (but again, in different manners). There is a push and pull process of unification and fragmentation.

5.2 Transmission

Members of “the second generation” contemplated the selective nature of the transmission process from parents to children. Before we look at the process of transmission, I allude to a methodological phenomenon. The borderline between the observations suggested by interviewees and my own analysis, the emic and etic points of view, at times, converged. Inherently torn between the dialectic of being insiders and outsiders, Palestinians seem to be in a position to distance and objectify themselves. James Clifford (1997) noted that key informants are often hybrids, products and mediators of different places and cultures, incorporating both “the traveler” and “the native”. Palestinian transitional and transglobal condition placed many in this liminal reflective position.

Firās embodied the particularities Clifford indicates as characteristic of key informants. He was born in Irbid’s refugee camp in 1956 to a family from aṭ-Ṭīreh whose single room was shared by thirteen family members. He recalled the dripping ceiling in the winters, the biting cold inside the room and the heater that leaked gas and “would kill everybody.” However, as time went by, Firās’ oldest brother, twenty years senior to him, succeeded in his business and the family’s financial situation improved. Firās completed his second degree at a university in Irbid and left for the United States to earn a doctoral degree. He later became a university professor in America.

We met in Irbid when Firās and his family came for a summer vacation. Firās' elderly mother did not wish to meet me. I was told that she had sarcastically commented-- 'they have chased us out of Palestine and now they are coming to search for us as far as Jordan.' Therefore, we met at Jamīl's home, who was previously Firās' teacher at the University and a friend of Firās' older brother. It seemed that the presence of Firās' well-respected teacher as well as his older brother caused him to be cautious in the way he phrased his opinions. Perhaps he accentuated the contrast between himself and the older generation, intentionally acting as if he knew less than he truly did, due to the seniority of those present.⁷ Furthermore, he emphasized that he, as an individual, had become an outsider to his own culture, having lived in the United States for the last fifteen years.⁺

Firās: The old generation, they still have the memory of it [life in Palestine prior to the uprooting]. So they are not willing to give up. That's in their mind....

[Turning to Jamīl, known as Abū Mājed] Abū Mājed, I don't think they want to talk about it very openly?

Abū Mājed: They select.

Efrat: What do they select?...

Firās: For that particular story, they tell you the entire story but they are not willing to continue telling stories if those stories...if those stories are not relevant for that particular setting.

Abū Mājed: [can not be heard]

⁷ The fact that Firās accentuated the contrasts suggests that his reflections emphasize the gaps more than others. What he describes in a straight forward manner came across in a more subtle way in other narratives.

Firās: Things, they start coming back pretty quickly. So when they tell a story and they say-- O.K., I don't want to talk about it. After they finish the story they say 'I don't wanna talk about it,' so they change the subject. But if somebody starts, if there is a joke... But most of the stories they tell, it's about their social life, the way they used to function on a daily basis; what happened to them on a daily basis.

Firās observed a distance from his parents' memories, cognizant of the alterations that begin with the narrator: events are being re-shaped when they are told and in some instances, censored by the older people. Not everything is said and he is precluded from understanding certain episodes of the elders' experiences. Sensing that the totality of their life cannot be transmitted, Firās felt that he is left with a puzzle that is missing pieces:⁺

There is a story that my mom told me before I came here about the shepherd who was taking care of the sheep in the Carmel, [in] Wādī Fallāḥ or somewhere [around] there.⁸ And she said: "Three guys tried to take three small sheep with them; to steal them. [It was] about two three miles away from the group of sheep." She said: "Five minutes later, those sheep ran away from the thieves and came back" and I was laughing. You know, these are the types of stories they tell. And when I hear this, I start laughing and the way they look at it is from a pure religious point of view. You know, my mom said: "Because we paid *zakā* [alms],

⁸ Wādī Fallāḥ begins at the heart of the Carmel ridge, between the two Druze villages and comes out of the mountain near 'Atlit Prison. Firās' family owned large plots in this valley, which was the southern boundary of at-Ṭireh's land.

because we paid *zakā*, God told the sheep to come back and join the group.”⁹ So I was laughing. And she said: “well, our neighbors did not pay *zakā* and thieves came and stole them and took them away.” And I was just laughing and she thought I was not believing what she was talking about.

Firās was not concerned with the veracity of this tale. What seemed to preoccupy him was his distance from his mother’s world. He recognized the cleft dividing him and her in terms of conceptualizing events in a rational versus a religious framing. Moreover, he was bothered by his unfamiliarity with the environment she was describing, since he had never visited aṭ-Ṭireh. As he stated earlier, the autobiographical recollections of his parents’ generation were triggered by daily reminders and never delivered in their completeness. Firās kept discovering new details, “stories,” as he termed it, which he never knew about the village:⁺

Efrat: Can you imagine what the village looked like?

Firās: Even imagining was pretty tough for me. You know...we did not...for example, in Jordan or anywhere, we did not live around cows and horses. So I don’t know it. And their life was different; the lifestyle was different. So when they tell a story, it looks like it’s a story-- a story that I did not live. They lived it.... They tell about the sea, for example. My brother said: “when we used to go to school, you looked from the school window and the sea is there.” So [I think] “wow”. We lived in Irbid and the only sea we’ve seen is the Dead Sea and you

⁹ *Zakā* means either charity in general or an obligatory donation of foodstuffs required at the end of

have to drive all the way down... So when he said it, I said: “Wow, what kind of a childhood you had there”.

The inability of the older generation to explain to their children these childhood experiences and specifically the feeling of the Mediterranean sea is picturesquely expressed in ‘Omar al-Qattan’s film *Dreams and Silences* (1991). The protagonist, a Palestinian uprooted from Jaffa in 1948 who spent her life in refugee camps in Jordan, takes a trip with her son to the Dead Sea. While they sit on the seashore, her son asks her: “Is the sea there more beautiful?” and she replies: “There is no comparison. This is a Dead Sea, can’t you see it? If only you could see the sea of Jaffa.”

Despite Firās’ feeling of detachment, he expressed his urge to learn and to draw from the older people, those who knew Palestine, what he could no longer gather through practice or knowing the place. One of the aims of his vacation in Irbid was to bring together his children and his mother, so that her stories would take root in his children. Walter Benjamin’s observation regarding story-telling may illuminate the process of transmission in the Palestinian case. A story, asserted Benjamin, is committed to memory if “its comprehension involves immediate integration into the experience of the listener” (in Andrew Benjamin, 1989:123). The listener bears the story from now on, and its imprint is new and unique. The stories of Firās’ mother were incorporated into his and his children’s experience. Having been given “a collection of stories,” they re-discovered them, highlighting some components while omitting others.

Ramaḍān, the month of fasting [*zakāt al-ḥiṭr*]. To give *zakā* is one of the “five pillars” of Islam.

5.3 Crossroads

Some members of the second generation attested to the way a better understanding of village life became possible when they visited the village site with their parents. The “stories” were concretized through engagement with relics-- stone fences still erect, fruit trees, graveyards or remnants of houses. Ṭāreq’s uncharacteristic response to one such visit illuminates his reaction to his father within such consequences. Born in 1967 in Jordan, Ṭāreq recounted how he chose not to become acquainted with his father’s village, aṭ-Ṭīreh, in order to distance himself from witnessing his father’s bereavement. Ṭāreq, who completed a first degree at the University of Yarmūk in Irbid, was stationed by the Jordanian Ministry of Education as a teacher in a southern Jordanian city. A couple of years ago, he and his father traveled together to Palestine. On the day his father wanted to see the ruins of aṭ-Ṭīreh, Ṭāreq refused to come along.⁺

Ṭāreq: For me, it’s a good dream in the past. It’s my dad’s country. And he was crying there [in a place not far from the village, where their relatives are still living]: ‘We used to go from here riding a donkey and bring things from the fields and go back.’ And I said, ‘Well, no, I’m not going.’ I just told them ‘go’ and they did that. I didn’t want to see my father in pain, you know, maybe that’s why I didn’t go with him. But had I the chance to go there alone, with someone from my relatives there, I would.

However, a little later, Ṭāreq related the same episode in a different manner: “As for the village, I went there [to Palestine] but I didn’t go to the village because I thought if I did, I would be too much related to it.” Whereas in the first instance, Ṭāreq avoided his father’s reactions to a visit, in the second he refrained from establishing a direct link to the village landscape. Ṭāreq, as was obvious from our discussions (including a consequent e-mail correspondence), was torn between maintaining some of his father’s concepts of the village and establishing a new approach. His younger brother, Hishām, who was present and yet silent during most of our talk, was irritated by his attitude. He interrupted and rejected Ṭāreq’s unswerving dissociation from his parents, saying that it is impossible for him to break loose from a destiny imposed on them.

The disagreement that surfaced between Hishām and Ṭāreq reveals the buds of a new intellectual exploration undertaken by *some* members of the second generation. Whereas some, like Hishām, focus on the preservation of certain customs (such as visits to the village site), those who try to disengage possibly indicate a future change of attitude. Hishām, still leaning towards stronger continuity with the perceptions of his parents’ generation, emphasized an unquestionable bond to Palestine:⁺

Hishām: If you have children you will raise them to be Palestinians, to know about the village.... To raise our children to go back to Palestine, where they came from, where their grandfathers came from. You know, Palestine is their land; their right to go back.... Even if you ask Murād, my son, who is four years old, where are you from? He will say -- I am from Palestine, from Haifa, from aṭ-Ṭīreh.... I taught

him. I told him that you are Palestinian. Your father is Palestinian, your grandfather is Palestinian. We have land in at-Ṭīreh. We have a house in at-Ṭīreh also. It's our land and here we are nothing but "a refugee." ... I want him to go back in a political way, in a war way, in a peace way. In any way it's possible.

In stark contrast to Hishām, Ṭāreq sought after some sort of separation between himself and their father's preoccupation with the past. Ṭāreq and Hishām could perhaps be understood as representative of what Mannheim referred to as polar forms within the same generation.⁺

Ṭāreq: I don't want to be living in the past. I think this is an Arabian principle or doctrine. They are living in the past. So O.K., we want Khāled ibn al-Walīd to come back to free Jerusalem and we want 'Omar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and we want....I mean, I am looking ahead for the future and I say, I don't look to the past as much as I expect more from the future to come.

Ṭāreq was arguing not simply with a current Palestinian agenda but with an age old Arab legacy of yearning for a golden past, often expressed in literature (Scott Meisami, 1998). Pointing to the link between the discourse of yearning and political evaluations based on historical comparisons (such as the one made between the Crusaders and the Zionists), Ṭāreq wanted to free himself from certain pre-defined notions.

A similar dislike of certain overriding historical conceptualizations was expressed by Munīr, born in the new and unrecognized village of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ in 1953.¹⁰ Although Munīr is the only person I have met who had established a large classified and computerized archive documenting the new as well as the old village of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, he spoke against the Palestinian fascination with history and remembrance. For him, he said, history began on the day he got involved in the political struggle for his village, in 1978.[#]

Munīr: The truth is that I am not interested in the history of way back. I became interested only in 1978. That’s it. I didn’t bother to inquire about things that happened earlier. No. I knew from here and there but it didn’t attract me. Indeed, it is interesting but there are others who are preoccupied with it....I wasn’t a good pupil in history. I did not like history, amongst other things that I disliked. All these strong men and wars. He did this to him and the conquests. He conquered this. And Turkey was here and then wasn’t. It didn’t appeal to me. The Battle of Yarmūk or any other battle. Why does it matter who had won and who lost? Goliath and the Philistines, that’s what they call it. Who cares? He hit him and finally, he killed him. What’s all this nonsense.... I truly think-- why should I care about them? If there was a war, it is finished. That’s it. Enough is enough (*khalās*).

Munīr personified a contradiction. If he disliked history, why did he document it in detail in his archive? On another occasion he demonstrated further the dissonance

¹⁰ See more on Munīr in chapter VI and VII.

within him. He refrained from telling me stories about 1948, claiming that he did not know enough about the events because he was never interested. Nevertheless, he probed me to tell him what I had gathered regarding the war events in 'Ein Ḥawḍ and in the district. Munīr, as becomes apparent, did not reject history altogether; he simply rejected specific versions of it.¹¹

Munīr was more revealing than others were in his attempts to pursue a new dialogue with his past as well as choosing which past is of interest to him. He clarified that he tried to achieve liberty from certain agendas set by others; he rejected Zionist history, noting that he disliked the Jewish rhetoric of a return to the Holy Land after two thousand years. To his mind, such discussions dragged the Palestinians into irrelevant issues. He further challenged the history set by the Palestinian forefathers' generation, the Nakba generation, which, according to him, portrayed a mythic-historical version of the past.¹²

Munīr did not encourage his children to visit the site of the old village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ despite the fact that they lived just an arm's length away. Reminiscent of Ṭāreq's evasion of joining his father's visit to the site of aṭ-Ṭīreh, Munīr had not yet resolved his attraction to and rejection of the village remains or what kind of historical awareness he wished to implement. His choice between establishing a change of perception or fostering continuity was linked to political considerations. Being of the new village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ,

¹¹ For plural histories within the European setting see Kirsten Hastrup (ed.) *Other Histories*, 1992.

¹² What Munīr refers to as the Nakba generation mythic-historical version of the past is further discussed in the next chapter.

Munīr's current aim was to win the recognition of the State of Israel for his unrecognized village. Hence, unlike his peers abroad and some of those within Israel, Munīr was less compelled to maintain links to the original 'Ein Ḥawḍ.

5.4 "A Large Ocean of Ideas"

Fawzī, whose family is also from 'Ein Ḥawḍ, was irritated by Munīr's priorities. In his early thirties, Fawzī grew up in Irbid's refugee camp in the north of Jordan, studied medicine in Eastern Europe and returned to Irbid to open a private clinic. Like many other interviewees, he was eager to learn what other interviewees said to me. On our second meeting in a quiet cafe in Irbid, he expressed his concern regarding views such as those expressed by Munīr. Fawzī's exasperation grew from his wish to place an emphasis on uniting the people of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. He made a failed attempt to establish a political party in Jordan, based on village (of origin) alliances. He blamed some of the participants that he had invited who voiced opposition, suspecting that they were sent by the authorities to arouse a quarrel.¹³ His opinion was that "governments want you to forget everything about your roots, about your real country." Despite his hopes for unification, he was very suspicious of his peers:⁺¹⁴

Efrat: If you compare yourself to Palestinians in the West Bank...

Fawzī: I can't.

¹³ Other members of the Abū al-Heijā' clan established a family association, uniting the family across borders.

¹⁴ As the interview was in English and English is Fawzī's third language, some minor language corrections were inserted in the following quote.

Efrat: Is their life different [from yours]?

Fawzī: Their thought is different.

Efrat: And you know how they think?

Fawzī: Yes, because I have had contact with them. They came to study with me and I have asked them many things. They began to think like Israelis... the young, those who are twenty years old, what do you expect from them?! ...He wants to live, he wants to have a girlfriend, he wants to go to the disco, he wants to go to the sea, he wants to go swimming. These are the only things that he thinks of.

Efrat: How about the one who grew up in Israel-- The "Israeli Palestinian"?

Fawzī: He is a big problem for our nation. Maybe he learnt many things in a wrong way. He didn't pick the truth that he must learn. He learnt in a Jewish school and he must learn what they learn and if you learn from the beginning the wrong thing, you will grow up in the wrong thing.

Efrat: But he has parents to tell him the right thing

Fawzī: He doesn't want to hear it because this is a sweet life that he lives. He doesn't want to have the life that his father had...

If you want to be a Palestinian in an Israeli country, you will think: "I am a Palestinian. What am I doing here? I must do and I must fight for my country, real country." This is one way. Another way is: "I am a Palestinian but I don't have

an identity that says I am Palestinian. I have a passport—[it is an] Israeli passport. It means that I am an Israeli.” He is like a lost child who is five years old. He doesn’t know his father, he doesn’t know his mother and there are these parents who picked him from the street and gave him a home and gave him food. What do you think—would he think even once about his real fathers?

Earlier on in the interview, Fawzī lamented his own condition and the loss of identity of the second generation:⁺

Fawzī: I can characterize the generation that lives far away [from Palestine]: they live without an identity. They hear of something called Palestine. They hear the stories about it. They hear a lot of things about how it is a beautiful country. How it is more beautiful than paradise but they have never seen it; they don’t feel it. If you want to understand something, you must feel. Like air...you can’t feel the air, you breathe the air. But these people, they don’t feel anything from these things, only words in one’s head that he heard from his father and grandfather....

You live in an ocean. A large ocean of ideas, of thoughts. You are a lost man. You know, I want to build my house...I can’t build my house here because I want to return. It’s madness, you know, you live in real madness.

For Fawzī, his condition in exile seemed the harshest. He was deeply suspicious towards others-- towards the youngsters of the West Bank who abandon the national ideology for good life or the Palestinians in Israel who, according to his understanding,

have adopted an Israeli identity. Whereas Fawzī emphasized his state of limbo, he was more reluctant to acknowledge the limbo of his peers elsewhere.

Fawzī's opinions were extreme but they indicate divisions that were mentioned by others. Farīd, a truck driver in his late thirties living in Haifa, noted that he was envious of his peers in the West Bank and Jordan who had easier access to higher education.¹⁵ Another division among Palestinians in Israel and in the West Bank is between "internal refugees" and those who were not uprooted; the latter, who remained in their places of origin, still own the forefather's land (although they too suffered from vast land expropriation by the state).

Gendered Narratives

So far, second generation men, who accentuated the generational break and actively sought a new political rendering, have dominated our discussion. The women's position was somewhat different. Randa, who appeared at the opening of this chapter, described how her grandfather unknowingly gave up his land by signing a document he could not read. Indeed, as in the "masculine narratives", Randa considered her grandfather naive. However, her tone towards him, as well as towards her mother and father, was more tolerant. Unlike Jihād, she did not criticize her parents as being too emotional. On the contrary-- she spoke in terms of identification with her parents and her absorption of their pain: #

Randa: On the one hand, we carry the pain and wounds of our parents, inherited through culture, through the day to day socialization, through their education and their memories of their prior lives. On the other hand we have to learn to cope with modern life in this state.

Efrat: Do you feel exceptional obligation towards your father?

Randa: Yes, towards my father...and towards my mother when she was still alive. I carry the feeling that he has done enough and he has suffered enough. In recent years I've learnt to understand him better. At first I was in coalition with my mother but after she died I was drawn closer to him and I can sense his pain; what he's been through. He once wrote his memoirs, I read them and it was...he has really had a tough life.

It is possible that young women more readily expressed these feelings of deep empathy whereas young men were less apt to expose their emotions in public. Līnā, Jamīl's daughter who studied journalism, also alluded to feelings of compassion towards her father (and her mother, both of 'Ein Ḥawḍ). When we were sitting in her Irbid home, she spoke of the stories that he would tell her about the 1948 war:¹⁵

Līnā: He told us that he and my mother and their whole family walked to this country (Jordan) without having shoes on their feet. It was a very humiliating situation. Always, when I imagine this picture in my mind, how they got out of the country, it is very humiliating. I don't like this picture.

¹⁵ Mer'i (1976) described and explained the high rate of higher education among West Bank and Diaspora

Young women often brought up these scenes of suffering, accompanied by descriptions of fear and humiliation. Samīra, who is married and lives in a village in the Galilee near her parents (who are from ‘Ein Ḥawḍ), urged her mother to recount how Jews attacked her with an axe. For Samīra, these scars were an important component of the story.

The woman’s village of origin, however, in comparison to that of the man, is limited in its relative weight within their new families. Upon marriage young women (and later their children) become part of the husband’s family. Samīra expressed this point clearly: “I live in Ṭamra because my husband is from here.... I now have children and my husband is not of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ.... My children belong to my husband.” Her father elaborated: “A woman belongs to her husband. Her identity is transferred to the man as soon as she gets married. Her identity is the man’s identity, that’s how it is.”

However, this situation does not completely erase the relevance of a woman’s village of origin. Samīra’s father, who is close to her husband’s parents, took them to Ein Ḥawḍ many times. Moreover, matches between people of the same family, of the same village or of the same region, continue to be made despite the dispersal. As Muḥammad once noted when his father tried to match him with a woman of the same family as his grandmother: “My dad felt that if his grandfather made such a matching choice, we should carry on in his path.” Because of the dispersion, marrying into the family or to families of

the same village of origin often entails moving to other countries. Hence, if one does not wish to send the girl to a far off place, the solution is to arrange a marriage to someone of the same region and a similar background who still lives near by. To mention just a few examples, Munīr's daughter (of the new 'Ein Ḥawḍ) is due to marry a young man whose family is originally from Umm al-Zeināt (an uprooted village on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel) now living in Dalyet al-Karmel. Ṣāleḥ's daughter (originally of aṭ-Ṭīreh) has recently married a young man of the al-Māḍī family of Ijzim who now live in Fredīs (just three kilometers southwest of Ijzim). When 'Aisheh and I chatted about her brother's wife, she noted that if her brother could find a woman of *Ṭīrawī* origin (their father's village), it would be preferable over a woman from a distant village.

Even if a girl does marry someone from a distant village or town, her "village of origin identity" is still significant, as becomes apparent from Yasmīn's story. Abū Da'ūd's youngest daughter, Yasmīn, a 26 year old high school teacher working in a Galilee village, was still living with her parents in Haifa when we met.¹⁶ When I would come to see Abū Da'ūd, who is originally of Ijzim, Yasmīn sometimes joined in, adding a sentence or two to clarify her father's stories. When we went to tour Ijzim, Yasmīn joined us. However, she did not nod and affirm whatever her father was saying and often expressed an equivocal position towards Ijzim. When her father said that he wished he could go back to Ijzim and live in a small hut, she said: "I'd never think of doing such a thing." At the same time, when she met a man she hoped to marry and was about to introduce him to her

¹⁶ Almost without exception, young Palestinian women live with their parents until they are married. Many marriages are still pre-arranged by family members who tend to ask for the girl's consent.

family (the man was from a village in the Galilee), it was through the folklore stories about Ijzim that she described herself and her family to him:[#]

Yasmīn: When my fiancé came I said to him—“we are from Ijzim.” And I told him father’s story of the monkey who drank the village water and would not dance. “That’s how stubborn we are” [I said to him]. And he said to me: “Oh, now I’m afraid of walking into your house. If you are stubborn then your father is stubborn and your brother is stubborn.”

Thus, Abū Da’ūd told me the story of the monkey:

Once there was a gypsy (*nawar*) with a donkey, a he-goat and a monkey. The gypsies would travel through the villages and perform and dance. They’d sometimes climb trees. Now one of them came from the direction of ‘Ein Ghazāl and Ṭanṭūra. His monkey was tired and sweating, as it was summertime. Before there was a road you’d enter the village from the north and there was a cistern [located there]. It had lovely water. He drank. Everyone drank. Then they walked further to the site of the village shop and began to sing. The he-goat and the donkey began to dance [Abū Da’ūd demonstrates how] and the monkey would do nothing [Abū Da’ūd demonstrates his apathy.] The gypsy beat him again and again. The young village fellows came by and asked: “Did the monkey drink from our cistern?”

However, there are also examples of couples who first meet one another and later ask for the family’s

Yasmīn: the water

Abū Da'ūd: The gypsy said—"yes." They said to him—"what can you expect?!

Even if you beat him harder he would not dance. It should be done in a positive way." And so off went the gypsy and came back half an hour later. The monkey was now willing to dance. He danced so much until he had diarrhea.

This story triggered a sequence of fables and humorous allegories about the people of Ijzim. Abū Da'ūd was the main story teller and Yasmīn interfered every now and then, adding her own details, laughing at the stories and at the fact they had been told so many times.

Storytelling and familiarity with folklore are often attributed to women in Palestinian society (Masalha, 1984; Muhawi and Kana'ana, 1989; Slyomovitz, 1998:207). The older women are considered the experts. They are sometimes mocked by the men who treat these stories as unreliable "women's talk".¹⁷ Although the women of the second generation are often as educated as the men, they are still well versed in the folklore stories. Moreover, as in the case of Yasmīn's reference to the monkey story, they seek images of the past that are embodied in these tales. In contrast, (as we will see in the next chapter), the younger men tend to collect documents in the hope of creating an objective-historical narrative. This generalization should be qualified by noting that the

permission to marry.

¹⁷ See an example in chapter III: 'Amneh's son disapproves of her story about a woman who would grant wishes by spinning on one leg near a saint's tomb.

line between the genders is not clear-cut. There are young men who collect local tales and treat them as cultural emblems, and there are women who collect historical data.¹⁸

The attraction of the young women to verbal and oral transmission finds resonance in general studies of memory which have shown that “females, whether adults or children, appear to be better on tasks involving verbal material” whereas men appear to better remember spatial information (Loftus et al., 1987:68-9). This takes us back to Firās who complained how difficult it is for him to understand his mother’s story without ever seeing the landscape of Wādī Fallāḥ, or follow his older brother’s story without having visited the Mediterranean beach of aṭ-Ṭīreh. Again, we discover that the process of transmission is no less crucial than the content of the stories. The same issues come up again when members of the second generation deliberate over the education of their own children—the third generation of exile.

5.6 Onto the Next Generation

Born in 1960 in Israel to a father from aṭ-Ṭīreh and a mother from another obliterated village, Muḥammad grew up in a Druze village, studied medicine in Italy, worked in public sector of medicine in Israel and spent the last several years among Bedouins in the south of Israel. He, too, like Firās and like Fawzī, would fit James Clifford’s category of interlocutors who are both natives and travelers. Having heard about this research from relatives in Jordan, he decided to contact me by calling my home

¹⁸ It should also be noted that the dividing line between different genres of narration (such as historical and fictitious) is not always clear.

and by asking his relatives in Irbid to give me his phone number. His interest and urge to study his family and village of origin motivated him to undertake some personal inquiries. For instance, he had joined his father on a trip to Irbid, where they met his father's older brother, whom he had not seen for over forty years (a short description given by Muḥammad of this meeting is quoted in chapter IV). Muḥammad kept notes of this trip. On another occasion, Muḥammad went to visit a distant relative whom he had never met before, whose life story as a freedom fighter spurred his curiosity.

When Muḥammad and I first met in the summer of 1998, a meeting that lasted seven hours, he was in no need of guiding questions to elucidate his inquiries and interpretations. After narrating what were for him significant family stories, he skillfully moved on to reflect on their meaning, beginning with the generational gap.[#]

Muḥammad: My dad's problem is that he always sees fragments. He doesn't see the total picture. I say to him -- "we lost, you lost. It's a fact that we lost and they won.... It is not only the war -- we lost as a nation.... They speak the language of victory. We speak the language of defeat.... Then he always has something to say like: "Something was wrong with us. So and so [giving the name of a certain village elder] acted wrongly, the leaders were doing wrong. But, he adds, the world was against us. He always accuses others—the Jews, the English....He doesn't like to see our part in the defeat, whereas I am exceptionally intrigued by this issue.

After addressing issues of identity within Israel and relating to the Moslem Andalusian heritage as a golden age to look back to, Muḥammad drew attention to his current central dilemma— how is he and his generation to educate their children? #

Muḥammad: The problem is not only a question of territory, a piece of land here, a piece of land there. The problem, the Palestinian problem, is in the heart of every Palestinian person who lived at that time and the problem is how do we inherit the Palestinian problem. And the greatest problem is how am I to present it to my children. This is one of the greatest dilemmas of my life...I, as a member of the second generation, face a serious problem. I know how the story was delivered to me, the story of the Nakbah, we call it, yet how am I to tell it to my children? ... At the moment, I can partially control my feelings and use my brain.... I live with the hope that something will change every day now. Change for the good. Because by now I understand that I will tell my daughters...I will not teach them hatred. I will not teach them how to hate. Nevertheless, I shall tell them that my story is differentI would very much like to show them by appealing to their mind and not their emotions...

I would very much like to get involved in taking children, small children, with their grandfather who had known the place, to the place where he used to live. He will take the children and he will begin to tell [stories] till they leave. Then I would like to interrupt when he reaches two topics: how he used to play-- he would display that and [I will] show them what unites the two games [his and the children's] and

how he transmits history to them. I wish to understand how the children absorb it.... What is interesting for me is how one transmits to the other. I have a problem with that. It is very important for me. I have made some attempts to write such a dialogue—how grandpa transmits. For example, [grandfather] would take me into a house and say—you know, when I was a youngster I used to sit down here, and here my dad used to be, and here we would go and here we would climb to the roof.

Efrat: Has your father not taken your children to the village?

Muḥammad: No. Not yet. I will not let him take them for the time being. They are too small.

Muḥammad's educational steps would not be spontaneous, as he wishes to modify the process of transmission. Again, the site of the village plays a central role—it is there that he wants to perform and examine the old people's narrative. Whereas childhood games can represent continuity, Muḥammad is also intrigued by the gap that emerges from this encounter. He hopes to distill what the children absorb.

* * *

“The quicker the tempo of social and cultural change is,” wrote Mannheim, “then, the greater are the chances that particular generation location groups will react to changed

situations by producing their own entelechies” (1972: 310). The members of the Palestinian second generation emphasize that exile intensified the break between the generations. The divide is related to the physical destruction of the village and the second generation’s inability, and at times, unwillingness, to reconstruct a tangible village life. For them, concepts of Palestine and village life are imaginary and fragmented, “stories” and “pictures” as some called it.

Moreover, the second generation faces different conditions of exile, what Bowman called antagonistic forces. For example, within Israel, Munīr is struggling for the state recognition of the new ‘Ein Ḥawḍ and tens of other unrecognized villages. In Jordan there is a glass ceiling for Palestinians in Government and military offices and little tolerance towards separatist political organizations (as demonstrated in Fawzī’s story).

Shared visits to the village (such as the one rejected by Ṭāreq) or stories of the parents’ suffering (such as the ones narrated by Randa) unite the members of the second generation to their parents and to one another. Another uniting force is the reconstruction of village historiography and folklore— be it through story telling or collecting documents and writing books, as we shall see in the next chapter. I conclude this chapter with Peter Burke’s explanation for the motivation of the dispossessed, which can shed light on the second generation’s active strategies to remember:

It is often said that history is written by the victors. It might also be said that history is forgotten by the victors. They can afford to forget, while the losers are

unable to accept what happened and are condemned to brood over it, relive it, and reflect how different it might have been. Another explanation might be given in terms of cultural roots. When you have them, you can afford to take them for granted but when you lose them you search for them (Burke, 1989:106).

Chapter VI

From Oral History to the Production of a Local Historiography

“The story itself. I have yet to write it or forget it”

Mahmoud Darwish¹

“The historian is the physician of memory. It is his honor to heal wounds, genuine wounds. As a physician must act, regardless of medical theories, because his patient is ill, so the historian must act under a moral pressure to restore a nation’s memory, or that of mankind.”

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy²

Early one summer morning in July 1998, Mūsa Malakī and I met in his spacious restaurant located in downtown Irbid. Mūsa mentioned to me the day before that there was something that he wished to show me. He drew out a plastic bag with some old boxes that contained family documents-- his father’s diary from 1948, his father’s British passport and Syrian *laissez-passer*, family land deeds, a British Mandate shop license, copies of letters sent and received and a photograph of his grandfather.³ Mūsa's attachment to these relics was apparent. The amount of paper was perhaps greater than the usual but similar documents were kept in many homes—small diaries registering in handwriting dates of children’s births, official birth certificates or

¹ In *Memory for Forgetfulness*, 1995:163.

² In *Out of Revolution*, 1964:696.

³ Our two meetings were conducted both in Arabic and in English. Peculiar among Mūsa’s papers was his father’s diary from 1948. Keepers of diaries, it seems to me, were exceptional in 1948.

drivers' licenses. What did this collection of documents testify to? Earlier on some of these documents were analyzed as biographical objects that encapsulate people's pasts. And yet here I suggest that the passion for documents can also be explained in light of the mass acquisition of education among Palestinians in exile. This educational revolution is now fostering grassroots' enterprises that record new kinds of Palestinian histories.

As has been noted in previous chapters, the boundaries of a generation are fluid. We will find historical literary ventures within the Nakba generation and advocates of old patterns among the new generation that was born in exile. The aim of this chapter, however, is to sketch the gradual shift towards new historical explorations among Palestinian refugees in recent years. It begins by surveying the level of education that was usually the share of peasants during the Mandate Period. It moves on to consider briefly an example of the oral history that is still commonly narrated by members of the older generation. What is of interest in the oral narration is how it is perceived currently, especially by the younger generation. A change of perception came about with the introduction of schools and the spread of literacy, especially after the 1948 exile. Recent years have seen the diminishing role of oral tradition and a growing production of Palestinian literature. A sub-group within the proliferating Palestinian literature in recent years is the compilation of monographs dedicated to villages that were demolished in 1948.

This genre of monographs, written by ex-villagers, is evolving everywhere-- in Damascus, in Baghdad, in Irbid and Amman, in Jerusalem and in the Galilee-- and in spite of this geographic diffusion, the monographs resemble one another. Their authors write the community's story (usually placing the emphasis on their own extended family), noting that they wish to revive the memory of those who remember and transmit what is not known to the new generations. The authors combine oral accounts gathered from village elders and their own autobiographic memories with information extracted from documents and books. These books are a unique contribution to Palestinian attempts at constructing their own history as part of the process of nation building.

6.1 Education Prior to 1948

Public education among the peasant society of Palestine began in the late 19th century. Although the Ottoman Empire dedicated some tax revenues for education as of 1883 (Robinson Divine, 1994:119), it seems that little or none of this money reached the villages. The schools in villages, known as *kuttāb*, were mostly the enterprise of the villagers themselves. The teacher was often a sheikh who would teach either at his home or at the mosque. The teacher would decide on the curriculum, much of it comprised of Qur'ān recitations.⁴ The teaching, only for boys, would last three to four years and the families of the students would pay the teacher with produce (Abū Rāshed, 1993:163-4).

⁴ The official language of instruction during the Ottoman Period was Turkish.

The first British High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, who arrived in Palestine in the summer of 1920, worked out a plan that would create an infrastructure for the education of the Arab population. However, he managed to establish only sixty village schools out of three hundred that he had planned; his momentous aspirations for education were not implemented (Shepherd, 1999:57). Generally speaking, the British education policy towards the peasants of Palestine was determined by two factors, argued Shepherd-- budgetary constraints and fear of new segments within Arab society who would be "over-educated" (1999:126-178). As the Mandate financial priorities were foremost to security and secondly to public works, the share of the annual budget devoted to health and education never exceeded seven-percent of total government expenditure. Moreover, noted Shepherd:

Colonial experience had taught the Colonial Office, the officials in the Education Department of the Mandate and the missionaries that peasants educated beyond mere literacy left the countryside for the cities, where, on the margins of society and often unemployed, they might be recruited to nationalist movements (1999:155).⁵

⁵ Jerome Farrell, who acted as the Mandate Director of Education, further developed the theory to justify preventing from acquiring further education. In February 1941 he sent a memorandum to all the senior education officials outlining "a statement of practical policy" with regard to the demands for secondary education: "Academic secondary schooling had to be severely limited, 'since the maximum percentage of those capable of a high standard of achievement in this branch is very small...fixed by nature...and cannot be increased by education'" (Shepherd, 1999:158).

In view of these presumptions, and since the British wished to discourage nationalist aspirations, it is not surprising that by the end of the British Mandate only half the villages had schools. The peasant population, however, demanded a budget and agenda for improved schooling. Sarah Graham-Brown wrote that: "Increasing numbers of villagers saw education as a way of securing their children's future in an increasingly uncertain world and the competition from the more advanced Jewish agricultural sector increased the demand for agricultural education" (1984:19).⁶

Whereas the Arab population failed to establish a nationwide educational organization, the Jews administered their own independent pedagogic system. Apart from the ultra religious schools and the private schools, the majority of Jewish children studied in schools attached to political parties-- general (usually right wing), *Mizrahi* (religious Zionists) and Labor (Shepherd, 1999:171).

Within the Arab sector, other than a small percentage of private schools, the British government managed the school system. Conditions differed between towns and villages; towns had more schools and students attended them for a longer period. In villages, children mostly began school at the age of seven and attendance lasted 3-4 years, (in comparison to 5-6 years in town). Moreover, there were distinct curricula for town

⁶ The Chief Secretary files contain numerous petitions sent by villagers demanding a budget for educational purposes. See for example, Education in Gaza District, State Archive RG2 G91-135-2461-0

children and for village children.⁷ The language of instruction was Arabic and English was not taught in village schools (Tibawi, 1956:78; Segev, 1999:291). Although the Education Department was state-controlled, in some cases the villagers ended up paying the teachers' salaries.⁸

The village girls were the most neglected sector in this segregated boys/girls system. By 1946, only 7.5 per cent of village girls were engaged in elementary education, including girls who attended private schools (Tibawi, 1956:228). If there was an inclination among Arab parents not to send girls to school in the early days of the Mandate, it gradually changed. It was the British who were not equipped to supply the demand: "...the Department of Education made no scheme for the training of women rural teachers before 1935, when a single training center was opened," noted Tibawi (1956:230).

The schools of at-Ṭīreh, Ijzim and 'Ein Ḥawḍ were better off than most. This was possibly due to the well-informed segments in the village population that demanded schooling effectively and proximity to Haifa, the administrative center. All three villages had an elementary school for boys and girls (although some had only four years of schooling whereas others had seven). There was schooling in the villages even before

⁷ According to the British School Syllabus from the years 1920-9, the subjects that were taught in villages were religion (Koran); Arabic; Mathematics; hygiene; history; geography; object lesson; physical training; drawing; agricultural instruction and handiwork. See State Archive 010/2 M4488

⁸ The Assistant District Commissioner notes that the government financed only 57 out of 104 teachers in the Hebron area. See Report on Education (Feb. 1941-Oct. 1945) written by A.L.Tibawi. Tibawi's file is kept at the Middle East Centre Archive at Oxford.

permanent buildings were erected for this purpose (Abū Rāshed, 1993:169; oral accounts). In aṭ-Ṭīreh, the boys' elementary school, established in 1931, had eighteen rooms and provided seven years of schooling. There was also a girls' elementary school in aṭ-Ṭīreh (ad-Dabbāgh, 1974; Khalidi, 1992a) and few of the village children were sent to Haifa and Acre for their secondary schooling.

The question is what did this elementary schooling, which placed much emphasis on hygiene, gardening and handiwork, accomplish? Were the graduates of these schools literate? A. L. Tibawi, who was working for the British administration as an inspector of education in the Southern district of Palestine tested the level of the graduates of four years of schooling among his district's villagers and reached the conclusion that they fell short of accomplishing full literacy; those children who were exposed to texts in the years after school sustained and sometimes even improved their abilities, but those in non-literate environments (such as women or shepherds) lapsed back into illiteracy (1956:218-224). A survey conducted by Rafiq Tamimi Bey, a teacher and headmaster in Jaffa, concluded that many of the children who completed school were only semi-literate.⁹

The spread of schooling, slow as it was, was parallel to wider changes. Although some 70 percent of the population still subsisted off farming (Swedenburg, 1990:27), a growing number of villagers, especially in the Carmel Coastal strip, were now working outside the village as labourers, mechanics, government employees, merchants and the like

(Oral accounts; Yahya 1999:15). The period that preceded exile had sowed the seeds of the educational revolution that was still to come. Sarah Graham-Brown, in the introduction to her study of Palestinian education after 1948, wrote:

...by the time the British left, Palestinians were probably slightly better educated than their neighbours in surrounding countries. Most importantly, with a growing nationalist consciousness among the Palestinians, the idea became implanted of education as a universal solution, a means of individual advancement and cultural modernisation (1984:21).

6.2 Images of the Past and Historical Conscience

After the 1948 dispersion, few members of the Nakba generation, especially among those who had passed school age, had the chance to acquire further education. One manifestation of this can be found in their adherence to history-telling based mainly on oral narration. Like oral accounts elsewhere, these were characterised by lack of dating, by the highlighting of specific episodes and by gaps in information regarding the occurrences in between.

If we take 'Ein Hawḍ's oral history as an example, the most prevalent and elaborate historical episode, told with variations by all the ex-villagers, dates eight-hundred years back, to the time of the establishment of the village. The following

⁹ Rafiq Tamimi Bey received his education at the Sorbonne. He sent the above information to Wilfred

oral version, told by Abū ‘Āṭef (born in ‘Ein Ḥawḍ in 1927, residing today in Israel), dedicates much attention to war strategies and spatial descriptions of the Moslem conquests in Palestine.^{#10}

Our grandfather, the forefather of the village, came from ‘Iraq, from a village near [Musol?] where you find petrol. He came here during the Crusaders’ War with Salāḥ ad-Dīn al-Ayyubi. They came to Jerusalem. And from Jerusalem they took the Latroun route. In Latroun they were confronted by [?] and a group of Crusaders. Then they came to Caesarea and took it. Then they came to [the Crusaders’ Fortress of] ‘Atlit.¹¹ For five years they could not capture ‘Atlit because it had an enormous wall. They planted a vine and ate its grapes and still did not capture it, but gradually they conquered the surroundings. There the sea is from the West. One day, they saw a dog approach the army’s garbage. The [Arab] soldiers said: “We have never seen a dog. Where did he come from and how did he leave?” They went and found near the beach a kind of perforation [in the wall]. And they said: “We will enter at night.” You know, the Crusaders’ army did nothing for five years. They entered while they were sleeping...

[Omitted here are Abū ‘Āṭef’s descriptions of other conquests of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn-- in Egypt, Acre and Hiṭin].

Jerome Farrell, the head of the Education Department on 23.12.44. See State Archive RG8 125/23.

¹⁰ It is intriguing that, as in so many other myths of origin, the forefather is defined as the man who took a long voyage and settled in a new place-- in this case-- ‘Ein Ḥawḍ. His forefathers are forgotten. He is perceived as someone who establishes a new clan. However, as we shall see in what follows, the forefather’s exact origin has become a pressing subject, open to current disputes.

Oh, I forgot to tell you that there was a Crusaders' monastery in 'Ein Ḥawḍ. You can still see it today, at the entrance to the village. But the Arabs built on the monastery. They demolished it and built on it....And later, our grandfather was given a place in 'Ein Ḥawḍ. He later had some children. Four children and a girl. Two girls. And as time went by...I remember, someone sent us a book from Germany, in German. At that time there were only thirty-five people in the village.

Abū 'Āṭef highlighted the long siege, the Arabs' patience and sharp eye, and the transformation of the Christian landscape into a Moslem one. His story continued by describing the family's internal divisions-- the family branched from 5-6 children, each child being the founder of a *hamūleh* within the Abū al-Heijā's of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. His story leaped centuries and was oblivious to dates. A certain German book came to Abū 'Āṭef's mind although he did not clarify the content of this book or what knowledge he extracted from it.

Other interviewees, mostly younger literate people, incorporated information from books into their accounts. Such was the historical story recounted by 'Abd al-Mālek, born in 1942 in 'Ein Ḥawḍ and today a resident of a village in the Galilee. Like Abū 'Āṭef, he too was interested in the strategic moves and the consequences of each important conquest during the days of Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn but the oral narrative was not satisfactory for him. Moreover, he wanted to discover which of the Abū al-Heijā's

¹¹ 'Atlit is located on the beach, approximately 3 k.m. to the west of 'Ein Ḥawḍ.

mentioned in the history books is truly the family's forefather. It was in history books that 'Abd al-Mālek searched for answers.

'Abd al-Mālek, who earned his living as a locksmith and a taxi driver, had already retired when we met. All his children received higher education-- (in computers, architecture and geography). One of his daughters, who had studied for her first degree at the University of Haifa, helped him in his family research.[#] "I would read [a book] and ask her to fetch me a certain book that was cited," he noted. "Whenever she travelled [to Haifa University], she would come back with a basketful [of books]." 'Abd al-Mālek set out on this historical research because, as he noted, "I said to myself: let's find out who our grandfather was." Taking the oral accounts that circulated among his kinsmen as his starting point, he now wished to validate them in light of documents.

The name Abū al-Heijā', meaning, "father of war/fight/combat/battle," is generally believed to be a nickname. There are more than a few people who carry this name who are mentioned in Arab history books. The question of the true forefather was imperative for 'Abd al-Mālek and he held bitter arguments with other family members regarding this issue. When someone said to him that the forefather was the Abū al-Heijā of the Ḥamdānī Family of Syria, "Abd al-Mālek noted that "this person is stupid for he had not read the fourteen books that I did."

‘Abd al-Mālek summarised in writing the details of each Abū al-Heijā he surveyed. During the interview he ruminated over what he had seen written about the traits of the man that he considered the real Abū al-Heijā. It seemed that Abū al-Heijā’s character was perceived as a prototype—a thematic key for the entire family. Reading from a book, he noted that the first Abū al-Heijā’—Ḥusām ad-Din Abū al-Heijā’ as-Samīn, was an expert politician who had the talent to gather men around him, a generous man who gave charity, conspicuously distributing all his money, as he did not fear to become poor. Each step he took was for the honour of God.

After discussing the origin of the family, ‘Abd al-Mālek moved on to describe his father Zeidān who was the *mukhtār* of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ for many years: “Where ever there was a *sulḥa* (conciliation) needed, he was the one to tie *al-‘uqda*¹² ...He was a very generous man and humble.” The traits of the first Abū al-Heijās and ‘Abd al-Mālek’s father were pointed out as interrelated. ‘Abd al-Mālek clarified the common denominator:[#]

And when I survey the entire Abū al-Heijā’ family today, we have no leaders. Truly. We have no leaders. We have only temporary ones, for certain times, people, villages, but the Abū al-Heijā’ family has no leader like Zeidān used to be. We just don’t. Truly. Not because he was my father.

¹² The *‘uqda* is a knot. It is symbolically tied when agreeing on a contract of reconciliation.

‘Abd al-Mālek’s narrative was not told simply for the sake of “historicizing”. His historicity was instructive, reminiscent of the oral histories Andrew Shryock collected among the Balqa Bedouins of Jordan, of which he wrote: “Though committed to talk of a bygone era, Zyudi oral traditions are linked metaphorically and genealogically to the present; they serve as commentary on *now* as it happened *then*” (1997:146). Perhaps because ‘Abd al-Mālek’s claims were bound to provoke potential disagreements, he has chosen, for the time being, not to publish his historical findings.

The accessibility of books, and the belief that incorporating their information will yield a true and reliable story, seems to affect the oral genre today. Abū ‘Āṭef mentioned a German book that contributed to his historical knowledge and ‘Abd al-Mālek surveyed many books regarding his family’s ancient origin. This type of generalised reference to books is one kind of tendency. The other is to endorse “the written” even further, and to reject “the oral.” Certain members of the younger generation note that the oral accounts are not historical records but rather, they are perceived as “tales.”

Another indication of this shift from the oral to the written was casually mentioned during the interview with aṭ-Ṭīreh’s old *mukhtār*, ‘Abdallāh Salmān. When I asked how many olive trees were owned by the village (as aṭ-Ṭīreh was renowned for its olive trees), ‘Abdallāh Salmān replied “5200 *dūnum*” and Abū Majdī, a man in his fifties also from aṭ-Ṭīreh repeated after him-- “5200 *dūnum*. This history will be written in books.”

6.3 From Orality to the Written

‘Abd al-Mālek, who turned to books in order to reconstruct his village history, received his schooling after the dispersion of 1948, when his family settled in the Druze village of Dalyet al-Karmel. The State of Israel provided more education than was available in Mandatory Palestine since compulsory education was of eight school years in the first decade of the State.¹³ However, in Israel, upward economic mobility was attainable without the acquisition of higher education;¹⁴ hence, Arabs in Israel were not as eager as their brethren in the Diaspora to continue their studies. Moreover, Arab students faced difficulties in adjusting to Hebrew universities and Arab academics encountered obstacles in obtaining jobs (Mer‘i, 1976).

The leap in education came about outside Israel, where the UN assumed responsibility for the Palestinian refugees. UNRWA’s target during the 1950s was to provide six years elementary school to all refugee children. Attendance at UNRWA’s elementary schools multiplied by two and a half between 1951-1960 and in some places in Jordan it multiplied threefold (Rosenfeld, 1997:159). By the late 1960s, UNRWA had accepted responsibility for secondary education as well, in light of the refugees’ growing demand and the absence of such services from the host countries (UNRWA, RCG, 1965-6). Obligatory education was now for nine years and in recent years it has increased

¹³ Gradually, compulsory education in Israel extended from eight school years to ten.

¹⁴ The upward economic mobility in Israel was due to the relative high standard of living, in comparison to other Arab states and to Palestine prior to 1948, and a market in need of labor. However, it should be borne in mind that within Israeli society, the majority of Arabs were (and still are) relegated to blue collar jobs (see chapter I section 1.5).

to ten years. By 1985, over 85% of students who completed elementary school continued to high school (Rosenfeld, 1997:162). Nevertheless, in order to complete the two last years of high school, Palestinian students enroll in government schools, and to a much lesser extent, in private ones. UNRWA, which has faced endless financial crises,¹⁵ managed to provide schooling that in many cases was superior to that of the host country.¹⁶

Palestinians in the Diaspora, deprived of their property, sought and attained social and economic mobility through the acquisition of higher education (Mer'i, 1976). In 1968-9, 11.4 per 1000 people was the rate of Palestinians with higher education in the Diaspora. In comparison, the rate in 1970 in Egypt was 7.11, in Iraq 4.54, in Syria 6.82, in West Germany 8.3 or in Britain 10.8 (UNESCO Statistical Yearbook, 1981: table 3.10—third level enrolment per 1000 inhabitants). Two thirds of the Palestinians studied in Arab universities and a third in Europe and the United States (Abu Lughod, 1973:108). By the 1980s, the rate of Palestinians with higher education was no less than 17.8 (Tahir, 1985:34).¹⁷

How did these general developments manifest themselves among the interviewees of this study? Jamil represented one of the early heralds of this mass wave of educated

¹⁵ UNRWA is financed by the international community and has no fixed yearly budget. Every cut down by one of the contributing countries effects UNRWA's services.

¹⁶ Especially poor was the government schooling in the West Bank from 1967, controlled by the Israeli military rule and later by its civil arm (see Rosenfeld, 1997:164-8).

¹⁷ However, this relative advantage of the Palestinian population within the Arab world has shrunk in recent years (UNESCO, 1994: table 3.11)

Palestinians. Having left 'Ein Ḥawḍ at the age of eleven in 1948 and in spite of the desolation of the first years of exile, Jamīl managed to obtain a doctorate from the University of Cairo. His case is even more exceptional since as the eldest child of a large family, he was expected to help support his younger brothers and sisters. Jamīl's ability to achieve this social mobility may have been influenced by his father's worldview and dynamic career. His father, originally of 'Ein Ḥawḍ, was orphaned at an early age and spent most of his childhood and adolescence in Haifa with relatives. The father attained a profession during his years in Haifa-- an expert builder. During the Arab Revolt he decided to return to 'Ein Ḥawḍ and there he built a large house for his family.¹⁸

Although Jamīl grew up in 'Ein Ḥawḍ, he recalled how his father would take him to the cinema in Haifa, a custom not all that common amongst village families. Moreover, noted Jamīl, with regards to his father:¹⁹

He was playing football and attending a club. And he had a suit and a *tarbush* (fez).... When he went back to the village, the *tarbush* remained in our house and we were playing with it. And the suit remained till we left, 1948. A smoking suit. Even when he visited me in Jericho when I was a teacher [after the Nakba], I went

¹⁸ The Arab Revolt began with a six months commercial strike. Many villagers decided to go back to their villages where they could also farm. Moreover, the British imposed difficult conditions for Palestinian peasants in the cities.

¹⁹ As the interview was in English, its English has not been corrected.

with him to the cinema. He had an [?] and an open mind even though he could not write his name.²⁰

These values probably influenced Jamīl, who has become a university professor of Arabic literature. While talking about 'Ein Ḥawḍ's history, the available written sources and the option that Jamīl would finally gather the material and publish a book about the village, he described his culture as dominated by orality. "I believe that we are an oral tradition nation since *al-Jāhiliyya*,"²¹ he said, when deliberating the gaps in information he would have to face in his quest for 'Ein Ḥawḍ's history. He continued by giving an example of what he meant by "oral": "When I go to give a lecture, if I read from a book, I notice that the students are not listening. They think that I did not prepare my lesson. But if I say anything, even rubbish, they say that it is a well known professor [who is speaking so eloquently]."

Jamīl was bothered by the absence of a village historiography. He wanted to write a history of 'Ein Ḥawḍ that would begin with the days of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn. On the one hand, the village oral tradition left its mark on his decision as to the period in which his history book would begin. On the other hand, he was not content with the oral tradition that circulated among the villagers because "it would only account for 100-200 years." He

²⁰ In spite of his illiteracy, Jamīl's father could prepare house plans. His skill was acquired when he worked in the fast growing city of Haifa in the 1930s, continued during his years in 'Ein Ḥawḍ, and further developed after 1948 when he built houses, schools and commercial buildings in the West Bank.

²¹ *Al-Jāhiliyya* is the pre-Islamic times, associated with paganism and ignorance. Jamīl is well acquainted with the poetry of *al-Jāhiliyya*.

wanted “hard data,” but written records, he noted, were to be found mainly in the *shari‘ah* Courts and not among the villagers. Moreover, even if he were to use available documents “all those written materials concentrate on famous things such as wars,” he lamented, whereas he wished to restore the peasants’ daily experience.

One solution, for Jamīl, to overcome the absence of a historical record was to turn to archeology. Familiar through his university work with other fields of study, he mentioned the stone inscriptions in Jordan and the archeological findings from the ancient town of al-Fau in Saudi Arabia. He hoped for such research to be done on Palestinian villages. “Nobody began to dig and discover and I think also the government of Israel perhaps did not try,” he commented, by way of an understatement.

The treatment of Archeology, as Jamīl noted off hand, is an interesting test case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The Israeli Antiquity law states that a site is considered an archeological site only if the remains are from prior to 1700. Hence, there is no attempt whatsoever to preserve the remains of Arab villages unless they are turned into Jewish places, such as in the case of ‘Ein Ḥawḍ. The policy is even harsher-- Israeli archeologists tend to see the remains of Arab villages as a hindrance and if they happen to be above the target site, as they often are, they are erased. Moreover, few Israeli archeologists specialize in the Mamluk Period (13th to 16th centuries) and even less on the Ottoman Period (1517-1917) in contrast to the very extensive Israeli research on Biblical and Roman-Byzantine periods. The archeologist Albert Glock, who was based at

Bīr Zeit, noted that "...the "archeological record" has been selectively used to document and sometimes defend the version of the past required by Christian and Jewish Zionists to justify the present occupation of Palestine" (1994:71). The outcome is a historical picture that tends to ignore the spatial Islamic continuity and the Jewish absence of 2,000 years.

Despite the inability to implement a Palestinian-oriented archeology and despite the lack of documents, Jamīl did try to assemble an historical record. He owned a large private collection of books, many of which were about Palestine and 'Ein Ḥawḍ. This collection has acquired a mythic dimension among the village folk. Munīr, of new 'Ein Ḥawḍ, was hoping that one day Jamīl would transfer his library to new 'Ein Ḥawḍ, where Munīr had already established a village archive.

6.4 A Passion for Documents and Village Ethnographies

Recent years are marked by a sweeping fashion of collecting written testimonies about the village. Archival documents such as lists of the families in each village from the late Ottoman period, British village statistics, old maps and the correspondence of villagers with the authorities, are among the most sought after commodities. Bringing copies of these documents as a gift was one of the best ways to establish reciprocity. It was mainly the members of the younger generation-- literate, educated and curious-- who were seeking new perspectives through these sources.

Examples of this craving for “the written” are numerous. Nabīl, of new ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, asked me to bring him Von Mülinen’s book, an early 20th century German traveler who wrote mainly of the ancient remains on Mount Carmel. Tawfiq, also of new ‘Ein Ḥawḍ, prepared a newspaper article about the massacre carried out in the nearby village of Ṭanṭūra in 1948. He dropped by his brother’s home where I was visiting, showing me an old photograph that had been published in a Jewish newspaper shortly after the fall of the village and asking if I had any documents on the subject. Faiṣal, born in the early 1950s, a resident of Irbid’s refugee camp, drew out a book about the PLO-- *The Organization Under a Microscope*, a translation from English into Arabic, and asked if I could find for him similar books. The members of the second generation were now in search of sources that would complement what they had learnt from the oral histories of their parents and relatives.

An aura of authority was attributed to documents. Fawzī, born in Irbid and trained as a doctor, claimed that ‘Ein Ḥawḍ was the last Palestinian post in the region to fall to the Israelis. When I questioned his assumption he said:⁺ “I will tell you history, the same truth, if my uncle brings the book. [Earlier we spoke about Fawzī’s uncle who lives in Damascus and wrote a book about ‘Ein Ḥawḍ]. Because this is an Israeli document, translated, and he wrote it in his book.” Unfortunately, a meeting with Fawzī’s uncle did not come through, nor did I get to see the book. But the intriguing aspect was that the Israeli document was considered authoritative.

Shortly before leaving Irbid, during my last visit there, while dining with some people from aṭ-Ṭīreh, they asked for a favor. They asked me to retrieve from the Israel Land Authority a historical land deed of their father's land near aṭ-Ṭīreh. Although they knew where the land was located and what the size of the plot was, they wanted to possess the document.

The more committed individuals take a further step, compiling and editing the information that they have gathered. One of the growing enterprises in recent years is the writing and publishing of monographs about each village. Members of Jamīl's generation, who left the village as children and received further education after 1948, were the vanguard of this trend; members of the second generation sustain it. These monographs vary in their length and in the amount of information they provide, but they resemble one another in their structure and address similar topics. Moreover, their writers express cognate motivations for embarking on such a project.

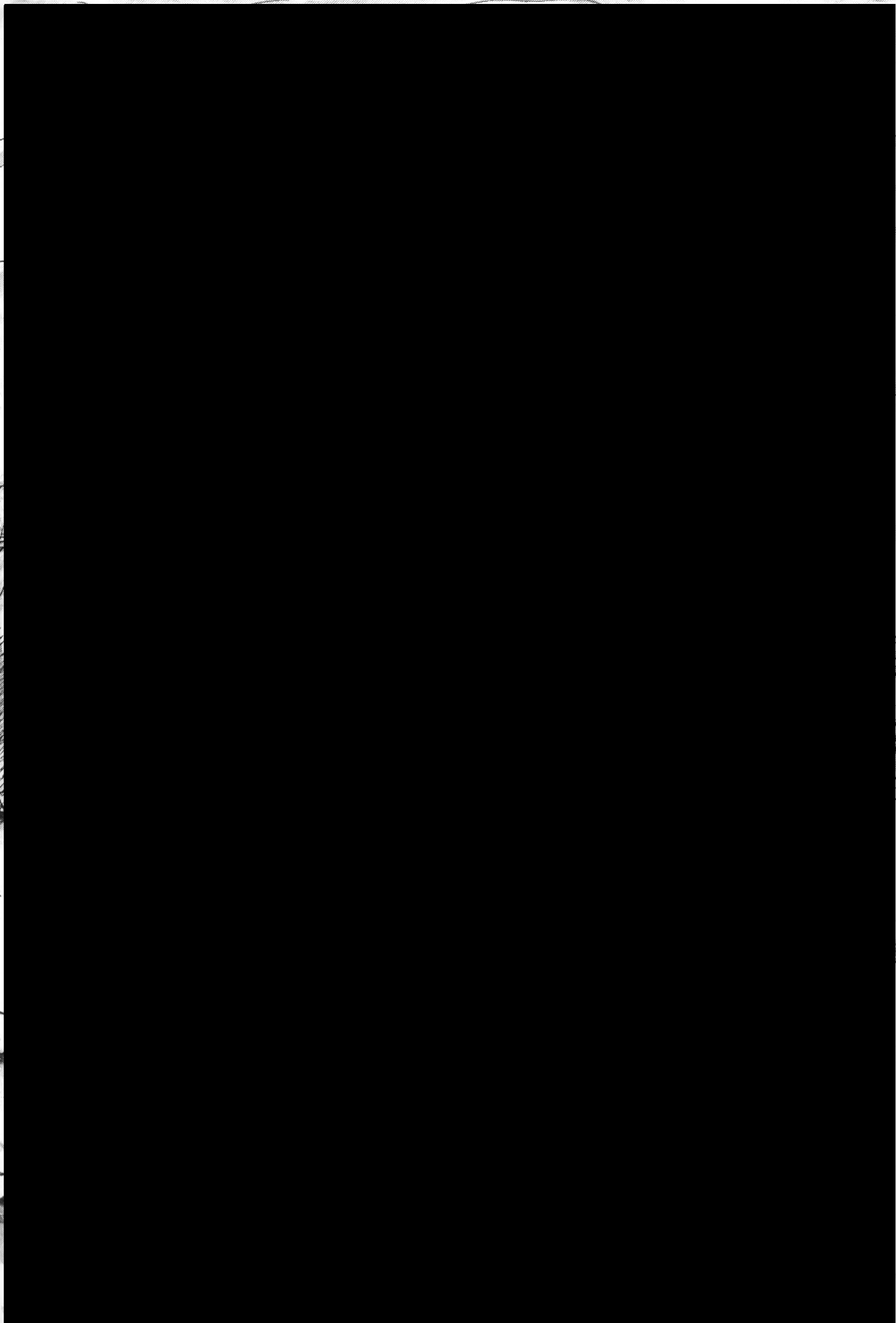
These books are usually printed by the authors and are rarely sold commercially. Rather, they are distributed among the exiled village community through networks of family and friends. One comes across them by mere chance. Taking aṭ-Ṭīreh as an example, ex-villagers have so far written four monographs about the village (of which I am aware). One was compiled by Sāhera Dirbās (1991), born in the 1960s in Haifa to a father from aṭ-Ṭīreh; one by Maḥmūd Aḥmad Sa'īd (1991), whose book I only saw mentioned; one by 'Abd aṣ-Ṣamed Ḥajj Yūsef Abū Rāshed (1993), born in 1933 in

aṭ-Ṭireh and today a resident of Irbid (Jordan); and one by Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Bāsh (1998), born after 1948 to a Ṭirawi family and a resident of Damascus.

A brief description of one of these volumes, ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed Abū Rāshed’s book *Ṭirat al-Karmel: al-arḍ wa-al-insān* (Tirat Carmel-- the land and the people) can demonstrate its main features. Abū Rāshed published this volume close to his retirement in 1993. ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed’s father, Ḥajj Yūsef, the head of the entire Abū Rāshed *ḥamūleh*, found refuge with his family in Irbid, Jordan. There, ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed completed high school, then worked first as a teacher and later as a headmaster with UNRWA. During his career he obtained an academic degree in Literature and Arabic Language from the University of Damascus (1968).²²

The book is based on ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed’s personal memories and knowledge accumulated through the years, on oral stories collected specifically for the book project from fellow village-men, combined with information gathered from over forty books. The text is accompanied by footnotes. It is illustrated by a few photographs from the time of the village, by photographs that were taken on a recent visit, by hand drawn maps of the village and of agricultural tools. The cover of the book (see next page) is a black and white sketch of a mountain with a large cave, with stones placed around its opening. At

²² This information is supplied by ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed on the back cover of his book.



the forefront of the picture are a broken skull and two broken bones.²³ It is a large book of over three hundred pages, supplemented by a table listing the extended families of aṭ-Ṭīreh.²⁴

The first chapter of the book, entitled “The Lands” (*al-arād*), is divided into subsections about the origins of the village’s name, its geographical borders and environs. The second chapter, named “The people” (*al-insān*), is divided into four subsections-- agricultural life (*al-ḥayāt al-nabāṭiyyah*), economic life (*al-ḥayāt al-iqtiṣādiyyah*), intellectual life (*al-ḥayāt al-fikriyyah*) and social life (*al-ḥayāt al-ijtimā’iyyah*). The last part of the book, which makes up roughly a third of the total, highlights certain historical events. It begins with discussing the prehistoric relics found on the Carmel, swiftly moving on through the periods, dedicating the bulk of the discussion to the events of the Arab revolt and the 1948 War.

The book highlights the Ṭīrawis’ direct descent from the ancient inhabitants of the land; they are the authentic population, tied to the land with bonds of love.²⁵ Abū Rāshed

²³ The first impression from the picture suggests the disaster of the Nakba, the unattended bodily symbolizing the victims. However, as the author’s family owned land in Wādī Fallāḥ, the cave may represent the important prehistoric findings from the caves at the opening of this valley (they too are surrounded by handmade walls of stone.) In line with this possibility, the skull may hint at the prehistoric human remains and the bond between them and the Ṭīrawis.

²⁴ The table listing the families notes their place of origin, the smaller families that comprise the *hamuleh*, their whereabouts, names of members who remained in Palestine and members who traveled beyond the Arab States.

²⁵ He writes: “The Ṭīrawis, like the rest of the people of Palestine, clung to their land and became an integral part of it, spiritually uniting with it in a manner similar to the Sufi unification [with Allah]. It is

relates the village to the cultural heritage that the Cana'anites left on the region (1993:234-5) and reaches the conclusion that the village name is probably of Arab-Cana'anite origin (1993:9).²⁶

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Bāsh's book *Ṭirat Ḥaifā-- Karmeliyyatan al-judhūr-Filastīniyyatan al-intimā'* (Ṭirat Haifa—Rooted in the Carmel, Belonging to Palestine) argues more emphatically for the succession from ancient times to the Arab inhabitants of aṭ-Ṭireh. His brother Ḥasan Muṣṭafā al-Bāsh, who wrote the introduction to the book, echoes its spirit:

Al-Ṭireh's roots extend into the heart of the rocks (*sukhūr*) of the Carmel and the sands of the Mediterranean. Al-Ṭireh is reminiscent of the Carmel and the Carmel is the reminiscence of Paradise (*janāt allah*) and of the Cana'anite ancestors who

all they have and the most important thing, and their belonging to it is stronger than anything; aṭ-Ṭirah is their address/topic and their identity under their Palestinian umbrella where ever they might be (1993:50).²⁶ The theme of the Cana'anites as the ancestors of the Palestinian is prevalent, especially in the Palestinian political rhetoric and literature. See, for example, the Cana'anite emblem on the cover of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*; Kishtainy's history of Palestine, 1971 (a PLO publication); www.iol.ie/~afifi/BICNews/Harbinger/Harbinger17.htm, 29 February 2000 (facts and figures published on the site of "The Belfast Islamic Centre").

engraved on the caves of the mountain the signs of their civilization (*ma'ālim ḥadāratihim*), their agriculture (*zirā'atihim*) and their humanity (*insāniyatihim*).

The mere production of these books, as well as their content, manifests the refugees' preoccupation with continuity. The books try to reenact in writing what is absent, creating what Pierre Nora named "lieux de mémoire".

Nora, the Prominent French sociologist, in his compilation of a five-volume collection on French history suggested a theory linking history and memory. He argued that modern society "banished ritual" and "renounced memory" and that all that remains are fragments, symbolic substitutes where "a sense of historic continuity persists" (1989:7). He named these "fragments" *lieux de mémoire*. Memory and ritual dissipated, according to Nora, in light of modern conditions and the domination of history over memory. Nora wrote of these sites of memory in their French context. It is interesting to compare the consequences that he describes with the Palestinian experience despite the fact that the causes and conditions are considerably different. For the Palestinians, it was the physical uprooting that was a major catalyst, robbing them of the possibility of continuity. What they strive to maintain and recreate is the only continuity available—the conceptual one. Nevertheless, Nora's description of *lieux de mémoire* can shed light on the role of the Palestinian village ethnographies:

Our interest in *lieux de mémoire* where memory crystallizes and secrets itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn-- but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory (Nora, 1989:7)

The authors of the Palestinian monographs stress a continuity that is linked to the general need to vocalize what they consider to be their neglected and silenced historical narrative. In the introduction to his book, ‘Abd aṣ-Ṣamed lists four reasons that stirred him to create a written record. The first is to produce a detailed history, not merely for the sake of knowledge but as a means of deciphering political moves and constellations (such as the “Jewish plot” and the “British treachery”). The second is to explain the Palestinian issue as a precedent to the Western treatment of the entire Arab nation. The third is to present the true facts (as a counter to the way history has been portrayed by Zionism) and the fourth is to fight forgetfulness (for it is a crime, writes Abū Rāshed, 1993:21).

Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Bāsh, on the back cover of his book on aṭ-Ṭīreh, elaborates on his motivations:

Even if the enemy employed the policy of annexation and dispossession (*dam wa-ighṭiṣāb*) of our homeland, it will not be able to implement the same policy on our minds (*‘uqūlinā*) and our presence/self consciousness (*wujdāninā*). The Palestinian nation is still the nation of Palestine and sticks to its principles as well as its heritage (*turāthihā*) and its land. And the village, whether large or small, its borders, its sites, its cemeteries, its forests, its water sources, lives in the memory (*dhākira*) and in the consciousness (*wijdān*) and cannot be erased....

The objective (*mawḍū‘iyya*) in writing about any village in Palestine is the obligation (*fard ‘ain*) for anyone who belongs to Palestine, just like the Jihad in the cause of the god (*al-jihād fi sabīl illah*) in order to protect the homeland under attack by an enemy or greedy entity (*ṭāmi‘*) (1998).

For some of the authors, the recreation of the homeland in script is an obligation likened to a religious act. The struggle is diverted from the actual landscape, from the borders and the wars, to the mind. The mission is double-edged-- within, it preserves and creates a shared memory and consciousness, and to the outside world it contradicts the enemy's attempt to annex and dispossess the Palestinian mind.

Sāhera Dirbās expressed similar reasons for writing her own monograph on aṭ-Tireh. Born in Haifa in 1964 to a father from aṭ-Tīreh, she completed a science degree at the Hebrew University. She lives in Jerusalem and it is there that we met. While

presenting her ethnography as a gift, she discussed it with me.²⁷ She noted that it was her way of counteracting the Zionist narrative, speaking up after years of being silenced, and informing her own generation, who are ignorant of historical facts. Dirbās, in speech but not in writing, pointed to the fact that she, personally, had been silenced. As a resident of Israel, she could not be as candid as her counterparts in Damascus or Irbid. She noted that the history that she sought to record in her book was not taught in schools or even at home, where only the adults would discuss it among themselves. When she grew up she felt it was almost dangerous to speak about the village.

The imposed silence that Dirbās hoped to disclaim is also described in literature. Habiby, in *The Secret Life of Saeed: The Ill-fated Pessimist*, sets the scene for a confrontation between a Palestinian adolescent and his mother. The son, who grew up in Israel and chose to become a freedom fighter, rebukes his mother for being hushed ever since he remembers himself.

I have come to this cave to breathe freely. For once, breathe freely! In the cradle you have stifled my weeping, and when I grew up and listened, I could hear nothing but whispers. When at school, you warned me: “watch your tongue!” When I told you that my teacher was my friend, you whispered: “he may be observing you!” And when I heard about the story of Ṭantūra and cursed, you whispered “watch your tongue” (Habiby, 1995:108).

²⁷ The talk was conducted in Hebrew.

Dirbās seeks remedy for the censorship that was imposed on her generation. She is unique in her choice to expand her project beyond a single ethnography and so far she has published three village monographs—on aṭ-Ṭīreh, on al-Birweh and on Salāmeh.

There is, however, a certain paradox between the motivations that are expressed by the authors and the fact that the books are written in Arabic and distributed mainly within the closed circles of the community— what is the use of preaching to the converted? One possible explanation of this discrepancy lies with the practical difficulty in translating the text into English and distributing it within larger circles. A second possibility is that the primary audience for the authors is the ex-village community and especially, as the authors note, the second generation. The writing, the circulation and the shared reading of these books recreate a sense of community.

There is also a subtle message that is disseminated through these books; it is the refusal to be consoled. Some historians are, indeed, the physicians of memory, as Rosenstock-Huessy notes in the opening passage to this chapter, and yet unlike the continuation of his argument, these popular historians have no intention to heal the wound. On the contrary, the personal, as well as the national message are to keep the wound open. This attitude prevails in the writings of Walter Benjamin, who relentlessly returned to the banality of death and suffering of the First World War, as Martin Jay shows:

He refused, that is, to seek some sort of new symbolic equilibrium through a process of collective mourning that would successfully ‘work through’ the grief. Scornfully rejecting the ways in which culture can function to cushion the blows of trauma, he wanted to compel his readers to face squarely what had happened and confront its deepest sources rather than let the wounds scar over” (Jay, 1999:225-6).

Despite the considerable difference between the popular historians of the Palestinian villages and Walter Benjamin, the writings of both draws from a refusal of what Martin Jay termed as a “false symbolic closure” (1999:229).

6.5 Popular Historiography and Academic Concerns

It is intriguing to discover the positivistic approach of the authors of the monographs. ‘Abd al-Mālek was seeking the *true* forefather of the Abū al-Heijā’ clan and his findings, he claimed, were authoritative (at least in comparison to those of the family members with whom he was arguing) because his information was gathered from fourteen books. Aḥmad al-Bāsh emphasized that it is an obligation for anyone who belongs to Palestine to write *objectively* on any village. Doctor ‘Āhed al-Māḍī, in the introduction to

Marwān al-Māḍī's book about Ijzim, *Qaryat Ijzim: qiṣṣa al-ḥamāmah al-bayda'* (The Village of Ijzim: A Story of the White Dove)²⁸, wrote:

Al-ustādh Marwān al-Māḍī took upon himself the mission of this writing in spite of the scarcity of written evidence or living sources about the village. But he had gathered what he could and established the personal relations and conducted interviews and fieldwork, hence he possessed ample reliable scientific material (*fatawāfar lahu qadr min al-māddah al-'ilmiyya al-muwaththaqa*) as a base for his inquiry.

The writers stand amidst an abundance of oral testimony but are attracted to written evidence. Personal reminiscence has become suspect just when the reversal dominates Western academia. To note just a few of these academic approaches, Patrick Hutton suggests that "What is at issue here is not how history can recover memory, but, rather, what memory will bequeath to history" (1993:72).²⁹ James Young, developing the same theme, states that "no document can be more historically authentic than that embodying the victims' grasp of events at the time" (1997:56).³⁰ Susan Crane argues that the products "manufactured" by historians cannot be disjoined from the historian's personal

²⁸ It is the author who chose to append the positive image of the "the white dove" to Ijzim. Mahmoud Darwish relates to Haifa as "the dove" (1995:164-5).

²⁹ Patrick Hutton, a professor of history at the University of Vermont, wrote the book *History as an Art of Memory*.

³⁰ James Young is a professor of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts. He had written of memory of the Holocaust.

history (1996).³¹ These academic circles undermine the dichotomy of “history” and “memory” that prevailed until not long ago.

Some Palestinian academic enterprises are tangential to the villagers’ monographs. Such is the series of village ethnographies published by The Center for Research and Documentation of Palestinian Society (*markaz dirāsāt wa-tawthīq al-mujtama‘ al-filasṭīnī*) at Bīr Zeit University in the West Bank. In the last fifteen years they have published over twenty village ethnographies, among them a volume on ‘Ein Ḥawḍ (1986) and one on Ṭiret Haifa (1995).³² ‘Adel Yahya, an ex-professor at Bīr Zeit University who is also a second generation refugee who grew up in a Jalazone Refugee Camp, recently published *The Palestinian Refugees 1948-1998 (An Oral History)*.³³ Whereas Bīr Zeit’s series is in Arabic, Yahya’s book was published both in Arabic and in English. Seemingly, the academic ethnographies are a separate genre and yet, the similarity in content indicates a similar intention—both enterprises recover oral histories and set them up as a legitimate strand within the national-historical narrative.³⁴

Susan Slyomovits, who analyzed ‘Ein Ḥawḍ’s monograph that was published by Bīr Zeit, placed it in the larger category of “memorial books,” be they Jewish, Armenian

³¹ Susan Crane is a professor of English specializing in Cultural History at Rutgers, State University of New Jersey.

³² See www.birzeit.edu/ourvoice/history/ 15 February, 2000.

³³ Dr. Adel Yahya. *The Palestinian Refugees 1948-1998 (An Oral History)*. Ramallah: The Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange, 1999.

³⁴ For another large-scale literary enterprise that documents the Palestinian villages see Khalidi, 1992. On the villages of the Galilee see Jamīl ‘Arafāt, est. 1995

or Palestinian. She concludes that memorial books schematize “what might have happened” and “the narrative voice that tells the tale in the memorial book presupposes that narrator and listener know the entire story in advance” (1994b:12). Indeed, her general attitude may explain why the books are primarily in the Arabic and circulated within the close social network. And yet if the narrative was publicly known, what was the incentive for such individual investment? The motivation behind all the monographs, it seems to me, whether academic or “popular,” was to mobilize research also towards political ends. The additional value of the village monographs is in their local perspective and the very detailed picture they reproduce. In that sense, they are tidings of an inadvertent historiography that deconstructs previous ones, calling to mind Yezid Sayigh’s call (quoted at the introduction to this dissertation) against “telescoping” on single events as they are “depriving me of the detail and texture of a much richer fabric” (1998:19).

Sayigh wrote:

For if there is one thing that I come away with from thinking about 1948, it is the need to deconstruct it and subject its distinct strands to separate analysis before reintegrating them into a dynamic narrative that is whole but multifaceted and multilayered and therefore both contractible and expandable. (1998:20)

* * *

Village monographs are a new genre, an outcome of the vast changes that the rural Palestinian population underwent in the last fifty years. The villagers' popular history is in many ways similar to the historiography documented by Palestinian academics. Both types of books are a reaction to a political historiography that has dominated the scene and failed to represent accurately the Palestinian experience and especially the rural one.³⁵ This literature is also a manifesto against forgetting and against consolation. The collectors of old papers, the compilers of village monographs and the Documentation Center at Bīr Zeit are seeking literary ways to document the past, an "authentic" representation of the village and an "objective" and "truthful" history. These practices should be understood in the context of the Palestinian modernist phase of nation building.

Paradoxically, in the attempt to preserve "memory," the modern Palestinian historians are caught up between conflicting aims of history-writing and remembering, elaborated on by Pierre Nora. The Palestinian historians of memory are bound to face the crisis Yerushalmi describes for the modern Jewish historian:

Those Jews who are still within the enchanted circle of tradition, or those who have returned to it, find the work of the historian irrelevant. They seek, not the historicity of the past, but its eternal contemporaneity. Addressed directly by the

³⁵ A third genre, which was not discussed here, is the artistic means of expression. Palestinian art combines the political context and the individualistic perspective. An interesting example is Tony Hanania's book *Homesick* (1997) that tells the story of Hanania's childhood as a Palestinian boy in Beirut and later as a student at an English boarding school. His recollections are placed against the background of the civil war in Lebanon. See also Shamma's (1988) masterpiece *Arabesques* set against the background of his home village Fasūta.

text, the question of how it evolved must seem to them subsidiary, if not meaningless (1982:96).

This gap between “living memory” and “a dead past” is one tension that underlies the new Palestinian historiographic genre. A second dilemma abides between the written and the oral, as Andrew Shryock (1997) describes with regard to the Bedouins of the Balqa (Jordan). In the Balqa, things that can be said, tensions that may survive in the spoken language, cannot be written down. Likewise, the Palestinian written narrative, which aims at the consolidation of the dispersed community and is trapped within contrasting pulls, is bound to “contain” intentional omissions such as class and family tensions. The incorporation or rejection of the villagers’ genres into the national narrative and the evolution of new genres will tell how internal tensions will be handled.

Chapter VII

The Setting of Fieldwork: Some Methodological Observations

This study's fieldwork, conducted from July 1996 to August 1998, was constrained by overriding circumstances such as political incidents and national tensions, as well as an unequal power distribution inherent to anthropological methodology. Moreover, specific conditions within interviews-- non-verbal elements such as feelings and nuances of behavior, contained implicit meanings. This short chapter will touch on some methodological circumstances.

One should give due attention to the fact that an Israeli conducted this study of Palestinian refugees. Within the context of the national conflict, the subjects' belonging was significant. When encountering the "other side," both researched and researcher often expressed themselves as constituents and representatives of their nation. For instance, Muḥammad said: 'I think you too, sorry for saying "you" but "the Jew,"'; Na'īmeḥ said: "It was nicer in the time of Palestine, much better. But you came and drained it (*shafaṭtu*)"; Salmeh noted: "We would not mix with the Jews, and you would not mix with the Arabs and that would allow us to live in peace." However, individuals were not only representatives. There was also an ongoing shift between the more private and more collective expressions. At times, the individual voice predominated. That is not to say one eluded a collective origin but simply that one met the "enemy" in order to "bracket"

for a passing moment the fact that they are “enemies;” at some points the politicized discourse was set aside.

As the research progressed I began to ponder the encounter between “researched” and “researcher.” The methodology of fieldwork had a direct bearing on the material that was produced and the patterns that evolved. The main fieldwork diary-- Diary A, comprising transcribed interviews and a few pages’ description of the interviewee, his/her family and a summary of unrecorded discussions, was not conveying the entire setting. Diary A had too few interpretations and personal “impressions.” Due to the decision that Diary A’s content should remain relatively rigid, when coming back from “the field,” I often recorded some personal impressions in a diary I named diary B.

Diary B’s status gradually grew, as I became convinced that its issues constitute readers’ indispensable preliminary knowledge. The issues discussed in this chapter are based on the observations that were recorded in diary B. Paradoxically, while writing the chapter, a new additional diary evolved-- diary C, containing new reflections. This is probably an endless process-- with the uncovering of one stratum one becomes aware of another that is hidden underneath it. Each ethnographer chooses his/her bottom line in which the exposure of this archeological dig ends.

7.1 Emotions as Undercurrents

To demonstrate diary B's disposition I begin with a quote describing my first fieldwork visit to the West Bank. After a friend and interviewee in Israel referred me to Nihād, a young academic originally from 'Ein Ḥawḍ, I wrote to him and described the nature of the study and my wish to meet him. We spoke on the phone and he invited me to come to his home in a refugee camp located in the northern part of the West Bank. As I was driving to Nihād's home, one April day in 1997, I was struck by its proximity to places I had known for years. It was close and yet completely alien. Crossing the Israeli army roadblock at the entrance to the West Bank was like traveling abroad with the additional tumult of something forbidden. This feeling was intensified when at the entrance to the Arab town of Jenīn, I passed another roadblock, this time erected by the Palestinian authority and manned by its policemen.¹ Because of the "strangeness" of this trip, I recorded the following impressions on tape on the way back, and then wrote them down in diary B, adding a few more details and interpretations:

Spring, 1997. Saturday afternoon in Nihād's spacious and cool guest room.

Nihād, an educated man in his early thirties, and I sat alone since the friends and relatives he invited have not yet arrived. Cold drinks were served almost immediately. We talked English. After I introduced the study and myself, Nihād started speaking, beginning with the subject of the right of return. Many of the things he said seemed to be addressed to me as an outsider and an Israeli. When

¹ After a while, when these border-crossings turned into a habit, they were no longer an experience to contemplate. However today, due to the renewed fighting, the borderline is much clearer and I would not consider such a crossing.

I asked about the camp, he underplayed the role of schisms when he said: “So the relations here among the family members are very, very good, actually.” Later, when being asked about his family’s internal subdivisions (*ḥamūleh/ḥamā’i*), he said, “You know, I don’t believe in that. I don’t believe in *ḥamūleh*.² I believe in Abū al-Heijā’ [the name of the entire family]...there is no difference actually between one *hamūleh* and another one.” Nihād highlighted the unifying dimensions.

After positioning himself as a Palestinian versus me as an Israeli, we started speaking about other things: his knowledge of his family’s oral tradition concerning the days of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, the history of the family and the village, what happened to his family during the war and what his childhood was like. The more we went into detail the more, it seemed, the situation was perplexing to Nihād since we breached the usual rules of an encounter that is bound to be a political one.

What was the hidden agenda, interviewees often wondered aloud.

Tea was being served; by then Nihād’s friends and relatives have arrived, the talk switched from English to Arabic. I was being asked questions -- what do I think about the political situation? ‘Azīz asked about my name; he wanted to be sure of my exact identity. Finally, as if completing a circle, we went back to speaking about current affairs. This was the endless cycle these interviews triggered -- from general public affairs down to what is more personal, and back to politics.

² *Ḥamūleh* usually means the extended family. In this case it is used to describe a subdivision of the

Coffee was being served. It is customary to serve coffee to a guest and hence signal that all that should have been done and said has been fulfilled and that I could leave now.

It is difficult to grasp the environment of any encounter since its subjectivity consists of the combination of people's moods, the smells, sounds and tastes that provide a mode in which words take on special meanings (Stoller, 1989). Each spoken sentence, even when quoted verbatim, is wrapped and sealed in ways that a reader will find difficult to decipher. Maurice Bloch argued that "much of the knowledge which anthropologists study necessarily exists in people's heads in a non-linguistic form" and that is why participant observation is so crucial (Bloch, 1991:189). His inference was that:

Perhaps we should make much more use of description of the way things look, sound, feel, smell, taste and so on - drawing on the realm of bodily experience - simply for heuristic purposes, to remind readers that most of our material is taken from the world of non-explicit expert practice and does not only come from linear, linguistic thought. (Bloch, 1991:193)

Bloch differentiated between the anthropologist's awareness of the knowledge that is transmitted to him/her in nonverbal ways and the process in which the anthropologist

family of Abū al-Heijā'.

transforms them into writing (Bloch, 1991:193).³ The third relevant factor, by now well present within the discipline, is that it is not simply knowledge “out there” that we collect. By being part of an encounter we directly affect the way knowledge is produced.

The following, a description from diary B, is based on my recorded impressions when coming back from a meeting with Khaḍer and his family at aṭ-Ṭīreh, October 1996:

It was wintertime early in the morning. I came to interview three brothers and their elderly mother who are one of two extended families who managed to stay in aṭ-Ṭīreh, now a predominantly Jewish neighborhood on the outskirts of Haifa. No road reached the house. As I walked and sank into the deep brown mud, I realized that the landscape encircling the house was about to change; the Jewish neighborhood was expanding and all around this family’s house, situated at the mouth of a valley, construction work was already underway. Soon new Jewish buildings will surround the house. Khaḍer and his younger brothers waited for me outside. They seemed to wonder why I should come to see them on a rainy morning, trying to sense whether I am a friend or a foe. Later, when they spoke of the Israeli attempts to evacuate them and their struggle to remain and retain their land, their threatened position became clearer.

³ Bloch described the “problem of words”: “The process of putting knowledge into words must require such a transformation in the nature of knowledge that the words will then have only a distant relationship to the knowledge referred to” (Bloch, 1991:192).

Interviewees sometimes related to the feelings that surfaced during our discussions. While Randa narrated a recent bus ride through aṭ-Ṭīreh (her parents' village), she suddenly stopped and commented that, due to the pain, she does not wish to speak of it anymore. These were intricate feelings, being felt in that specific moment but also evoking past emotions.⁴ At the same time, some emotions remained implicit; they were silent companions of a discussion whose presence was not mentioned, such as the depressing visit with Abū and Umm Jihād to Abū Jihād to aṭ-Ṭīreh's cemetery, described in chapter IV.

Listening to recorded cassettes brought back the sense of heightened tension that engulfed some interviews. Many recordings sounded embarrassing months later, touching on open nerves. Others, at a distance, had a reverse effect, conveying a feeling of exhilaration, brought about by the recollection of treasured memories. Such was the afternoon spent with two elderly women from Ijzim, now living in Fredīs. They spoke of feminine issues that have transformed since the time of the village such as the birth methods used by ḥajjeh Bakrīyyeh and ḥajjeh Zbeideh, the midwives of Ijzim, the substitutes for feeding babies whose mothers had no breast milk or the sleeping arrangement of families.⁵ Part of the enjoyment came from undermining common myths, such as the assumption that small children were left with their grandmothers:*

⁴ See Reddy (1997) who formulates a framework that takes into account the two-way character of emotional utterances and acts within historical ethnography.

⁵ Most of the village families shared a single room for father, mother and unmarried children.

'Āmneh: At harvest time the baby would be placed in a small cot and taken to the field. On the way home the woman would carry him on her head. Of ten women there was maybe a single one who'd leave her child with his grandmother.

Food from "the days of the village" was an exceptionally favorite and vivid subject. Specimens were brought from the kitchen, such as sweetened pumpkin pieces, members of the women's families joined in, interrupted, and contributed their own stories and jokes. Everyone laughed when someone recalled the noises and foul smell that pervaded the house after the family would eat the traditional winter dish *salīqeh* made of cooked chickpeas and wheat.

Wendy James referred to the centrality of feelings to fieldwork in her experience with Uduk refugees in Ethiopia:

But real people are never in a state of *normal* emotionless abstraction, nor even of *average* fleshly comfort; they are always either hungry or satiated, optimistic or depressed, rested or tired. Nor are they alone; they are always entangled with others and infected by the social exchange of feeling. (James, 1997:121, italics in original)

When James wrote about "real people", unlike "objects" of study, she included her "reality" in the definition, scrutinizing her own behavior as well. She explored the different kinds of fear that she experienced during a violent outbreak in a refugee camp,

revealing her position and pointing to the emotional similarities between herself and the people she was studying.

The encounters of this study, like James' study, involved ceaseless emotional stimuli that impelled a reaction. The following is another quotation from diary B, describing the political occurrences that erupted during my first visit to Irbid, Jordan and my emotional impulse to disappear:

Bad luck struck on my first visit to Irbid, at the end of September 1996. Israel had chosen this time to open the tunnel under the Temple Mount (Al-Ḥarām ash-Sharīf) and fighting had broken out in Jerusalem and in the West Bank.

During the afternoon, the Palestinians who worked at my hotel and I were sitting together in the common room and watching the events of violence as they unfolded on the television. We were extremely uneasy. In the evening I was supposed to meet Kamāl for dinner at his chicken restaurant. Due to the political events I came with the intention of postponing this interview, but Kamāl, who has invited his brother and two of his sons, insisted that we should speak. On the next morning I cut my visit short and left Jordan.

Events such as these violent clashes or the closure of the West Bank by Israel shaped both the practicalities of daily life and people's mood. Fieldwork was constantly molded by

external circumstances, and yet, no less important were the autobiographical experiences that each person brought to the encounter.

7.2 *Munīr's reflections*

On a Saturday morning early in the summer of 1997, my family joined me for a visit to Munīr and Rafīqa, originally from the village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ. Today, as in fact they have been all their lives, Munīr and Rafīqa are the residents of the new village of 'Ein Ḥawḍ, situated a couple of kilometers east of the original village. It was not our first meeting and by now our children had become friends. Having begun re-considering this study's methodological circumstances-- issues of reciprocity, silences and suspicions-- and having known Munīr for some time now, I expected he would have his own penetrating insights. Although Rafīqa and her three brothers had a long chat with us, when I raised the somewhat intrusive issue of the trust relations in this research, everyone turned silent apart from Munīr. This talk was conducted in Hebrew. Munīr's Hebrew, like that of many Palestinians living in Israel, is rich and precise.⁶

Munīr: Whoever comes to talk with us about our problems from the other side, is first and foremost from the other side. We suspect him and keep suspecting all the time... because this data, whatever is written down, will help the other side.

Therefore, I mean generally, therefore, people will hide certain things. Certain people will hide things.

⁶ This long dialogue is edited. ... signifies omissions.

Efrat: Like what?

Munīr: Allow me not to give examples.

Efrat: You too hide [things]?

Munīr: I'll come to myself in a minute. Some people will hide things in varying degrees. One will hide so, another will hide less, and so forth. But they will never allow digging into their bodies.... Even if it is someone from the Arab side who attempts to do the same. They will suspect him too. Perhaps it is a general trend. Why do you ask me how many goats I owned in 'Ein Ḥawḍ? What for? Why do you ask me if I was 18 during the war? 1948 still rings a bell for everyone. Did you participate in the war or didn't you? Did you see who was shooting or didn't you? We are still threatened by the Israeli establishment. People are still probing and searching for who was and who wasn't. We still pay the price. So who will dare open his mouth and speak of it? No one.

Now, a certain relationship develops between the person who does the study and certain people, a human relation, depending on the researcher's success. Whether he succeeds in entering the person and speaking from his heart and persuading, without words.

Efrat: Of what does he have to persuade?

Munīr: That he is not from the other side.... That he does not come as a result of the fact that he is on the other side. That he comes as a human being to understand a problem or to write about it. If he manages to be persuasive. This is difficult. This is difficult because most of our population did not forget 1948. ...

Whoever comes for such a study is, in the eyes of the people, working for the secret police.⁷ When you leave or whenever some researcher leaves, people sit and talk: “we were asked so and so and we answered such and such.” Some people think it useful to tell a different story, no matter which one, because they are afraid....

Now if you ask me personally, without reference to anything, whatever I know I say, I do not know much, I do not like history. I’ve said that to you before. That is why I know so little and did not inquire much. I did not absorb from my family, my parents, any information.⁸ I have nothing to hide. Therefore, my facts are exposed. I was born here, I was born under the Israeli government and I have nothing to hide. If I had come from then [before 1948] I would have had things to hide....

Efrat: Does it matter whether I am a man or a woman?

Munīr: No. With a woman it is nicer. He will treat the woman better, all right. A man can be dangerous.

Efrat: Threatening?

Munīr: Threatening. You are not a direct threat but an indirect one, you are thought of as being 60% of the man. It makes it easier for him to speak to you than to a man. Because a man is 99% from the secret police, a woman -- 70%.

⁷ A year later, during another visit to Munīr and Rafīqa, I spoke with one of Rafīqa’s brothers. He said that on my first visits he was sure I worked for the secret police because I had a white car with two antennas, like those of the secret police.

⁸ Munīr’s father died when he was a child. Munīr’s “dislike” for history is discussed in section 1.1 and in chapter V.

This is unconscious. It's a matter of conduct. Whoever walks into this village and speaks to someone, they will say:

“Oh, these are in the secret police. People from the secret police came to see him.”

“But they are not, they are writing a book.”

“Yes, all right, I know, but they are from the secret police.”...

Efrat: Now how about the option, does it sound logical, that whomever I interview has an impetus to tell me things because he feels history has been distorted and his own story will represent it in a more accurate way?

Munīr: There are such people. Of course there are. Say, someone who is educated, like Jamīl. I do not know him but he must have read stories and knows how history has been written, but he knows it differently and it drives him crazy and he wants to say so. And he says so. From whatever he can let go and not hide....

But there are people, another kind, that will not like what has been written, the way something has been written about them, because it offends them. So they will try to correct it so that it will not offend them, and it is for you to figure out what is true. People wouldn't want something negative to be written about them. Say if someone will write that they had collaborated, even if they did collaborate, they would not want it to be written down. Or if for example a certain family from the village was not Abū al-Heijā', only the mother was, people would not want this to be written down.⁹...

⁹ Generally speaking, all of the members of 'Ein Ḥawḍ belonged to the Abū al-Heijā' family.

[I ask Munīr about the interviewer's nationality; is it a central issue when trying to create trust?]

Munīr: There was another one here, Jewish, I can't remember her name. She's been to Gaza, to the [Occupied] Territories, to Israel among the Arabs, and she is really anti-Israeli, but I did not believe her.

Efrat: Maybe you expect her to identify with her people -- if you are an Israeli then be one?

Munīr: Yes. That's one thing. If you are with us, you remain Jewish. You cannot be one of us. There's a screen and I think it is true. One cannot jump to the other side. You must be proud that you are Jewish. Why are you against anything Jewish? How come? So that makes her a suspect....

[Finally, we go back to Munīr's reasons for helping me.]

Munīr: What do I want in exchange? Of course, I do have some kind of an aim. I want to live within this new reality as an equal among everyone, and what you do, I see it as aiding my aim. What you do will supposedly help me reach what I want and that is to live respectfully, to live peacefully, to live as an equal within this new reality.

The relative sincerity of the above exchange was not characteristic of many other conversations during this study. On another occasion, Munīr reflected on his personality and his rebellious nature. Fear did not seem to affect him. Moreover, there was a "cultural" component that may explain his candid style – "I have turned Hebrew"

(*hit'avratety*), he once commented, somewhat bitterly. What he meant to say was that the "Hebrew environment" in which he operates affects his conduct. One characteristic component of Hebrew speech is its directness.¹⁰ This Hebrezation may have contributed to Munir's boldness. Unlike himself, Munir noted above, the elders' discourse (and in fact the Arab discourse in general) is subtler, especially when dealing with delicate issues; silences are entwined into speech, as are unexpressed assumptions.

7.3 *Relations and Power*

One of the companions of most anthropological studies is the overriding power structure. The Popular Memory Group¹¹ tried to demonstrate how inequalities are inherent in any relation between interviewee and interviewer:

In oral history and in similar practices the epistemological problem -- how historians are going to use their "sources" -- is also a problem of human relationships. The practice of research actually conforms to (and may in practice deepen) social divisions which are also relations of power and inequality.... On the one hand there is the "historian" who specializes in the production of explanations and interpretations and who constitutes himself as the most active, thinking part of the process. On the other hand, there is his source who happens in this case to be a living human being who is positioned in the process in order to yield up information (1982:219-220).

¹⁰ The Arabic word *dughri*, meaning straight, was incorporated into the Hebrew language as a slang word meaning directness and explicitness in speech. See Katriel (1986).

¹¹ The Popular Memory Group was based at the Cultural Studies Centre at the University of Birmingham.

The Popular Memory Group phrased it in a rather fatalistic manner, as an external, non-controllable force that fixes the relationship between the interviewer as the powerful, active “leader” and the interviewee as the passive powerless “led”. Anthropologists have long been aware of this issue. Over the past fifteen years both oral historians and anthropologists have published extensively on the crisis of social science research and the attempts to come to grips with them.¹² Fieldwork should be understood in its fluidity, noted Herzfeld in his critique of anthropologists’ pitfalls: “They often write as though they were describing a virtually immutable society or culture, rather than a rhetoric of cultural difference in which they are themselves actively engaged” (1987:181).¹³

One interesting method to try and overcome gaps of perception can be pursued when the scholar decides to share his/her assumptions with the interlocutor.¹⁴ In the case of this study, as was noted earlier, some of the interviewees were preoccupied with the issues in question. Therefore, they often contributed unique insights, shared their own observations and made a significant contribution to the theoretical discussions.

Sometimes, however, the researched and I differed in focus. Whereas some Palestinians

¹² See the work of Paul Thompson (1978, 1993 with Bertaux, Chamberlain and Thompson, 1998) for an extensive discussion on the methodology of oral historians. Marcus and Fischer’s book (1986) is a notable critique of anthropological methodology. Bilu (1997) contemplates a recurrent phenomenon of “postmodern fieldwork”-- a reversal of roles between researcher and researched. An entrepreneur Bilu was studying used Bilu’s prestige as a university professor to promote himself as the guardian of a Moroccan saint.

¹³ Herzfeld, in this specific essay, was influenced by Bourdieu’s theorizing, placing practice at the heart of any inquiry. A couple of years later Bourdieu elaborated on the subject in his book *The Logic of Practice* (1990). There he wrote: “The theory of practice as practice insists, contrary to positivist materialism, that the objects of knowledge are constructed, not passively recorded, and, contrary to intellectualist idealism, that the principle of this construction is the system of structured, structuring dispositions, the *habitus*, which is constituted in practice and is always oriented towards practical functions (Bourdieu, 1990:52).

¹⁴ See the work of Alistair Thomson (1990) who discussed his research assumptions (regarding official and personal memory) with his interviewees-- veterans of the First World War.

form a history based on their own personal viewpoint, often stressing their family branches and prominent relatives, an outsider seeks a wider perspective. At other times, some of my interlocutors aimed at an “objective” history (such as revealing the true founding forefather of a family), whereas I, having heard different “histories,” tended to record contrasting representations. By documenting both parallel and conflicting versions, the anthropologist is bound to disappoint people and reveal a dissonance that, in some people’s eyes, is better kept obscure. In other words, the academic concerns that guided this study were not necessarily what were personally and politically important to the refugees.

Gender was also a factor in the setting of power relations. Because it would take us far afield, I will only mention briefly my ambiguous feminine identity. On the one hand, women are treated as weak, domestic, and requiring protection. I complied with certain norms that expressed my feminine role, such as coming in modest clothes or requesting the help of men in taking me to new interviewees. In turn, I was treated as a woman, when offered escort. Often, women kept me company when men were busy. On the other hand I was, usually, travelling alone which is uncommon for an Arab woman. The bolder people expressed their astonishment at the fact that my husband allowed me this freedom and their pity over my children, neglected by their mother.

My identity “shifted” towards femininity during the last months of my pregnancy and shortly after my son was born, when I would take him with me to the interviews. The women drew me closer to them, joining me when I was nursing, creating for us a distinct,

closed arena. Some shared personal experiences and gave me advice on child rearing. Occasionally, I was chided for dragging a little baby on these excursions. More often, women helped take care of the baby so that I could continue an interview. During this “feminine period,” there were times when I felt that my affinity with women distanced me from the men, yet added a dimension that I had lacked before. The temporality of this effect emphasized the distance between the worlds of men and women.

7.4 Public Rhetoric and Private Versions

The ambiguous ways in which my gender and status were apprehended form part of a thread that is woven throughout this discussion, that is, a slight blurring of boundaries that occasionally freed both the interviewees and myself from predetermined categories. In a conflict that strips us of our individuality, where every statement is translated into its political meaning, we are constantly oppressed with having to fit thoughts and feelings into acknowledged rubrics. Within the small space of this study, sometimes the interviewees and myself managed to sustain an individual discourse parallel to more collective ones. It is time to recall Fouad Moughrabi’s comment on the “overpoliticization” of the Palestinian existence:

For generations of Palestinians in this century, politics has prevailed over anything else in life.... Except, perhaps, for some moments during the *intifāda*, Palestinian politics were usually of the grand style, a kind of macropolitics dealing with strategy and national debate. It was rarely linked to the concrete in people’s lives. In other words, it was never a politics of details. Somehow, dabbling with details

was always seen as boring and tedious. Details were left to others to take care of, or better yet, postponed till later. That is why Palestinian politics always were concerned with liberating Palestine but not the Palestinians.” (Moughrabi, 1997:8)¹⁵

Moughrabi’s assertion regarding the high politics that are somewhat detached from reality had been noted as a recurrent phenomenon in the Middle East. Emmanuel Sivan demonstrated how historical myths mold the Arab political rhetoric, their prominence casting a shadow over other, less fitting details. Even when revisionist Arab writers attempt to deconstruct these processes, their counter-versions are easily caught up in the same grand and imposing perceptions (Sivan, 1988). The Palestinian villagers of this study had their unique and personal experience and interpretation, yet these private recollections were entwined into collective representations.

State histories are powerful within this constellation and it was not easy for the villagers to appear as if they oppose the grand narrative. John Davis described how a story recited by an elderly man regarding his youth was transformed (by a teacher in front of a class) into a glorified episode in the national Libyan struggle against the Italians (Davis, 1989). Likewise, in the Palestinian case, personal narratives are part of the unified national struggle and that is why revealing social schisms formed a problem (and yet surfaced nevertheless). Within the national context, the villagers were in some ways

¹⁵ Dr. Fouad Moughrabi, originally of Bethlehem, was at the time of writing this thesis a political scientist at the University of Tennessee. Moughrabi spent a year in the West Bank as a Fulbright scholar.

expected to conform to “the process of ironing out the specific details of an event, to make it general to the whole population” (Peters, 1977:72). Andrew Shryock (1997) has shown that the historical versions of each tribe in Jordan are so disharmonious (and cannot form together a “national history”) that some scribes choose not to publish their work altogether.

Within a Middle East comprised of nation-states in need of history, and within the context of a Palestinian national struggle, some feel the urge to tell the “national story.” Ted Swedenburg (1989), an anthropologist who interviewed elderly Palestinians who participated in the 1936-1939 revolt, advocated blurring certain facts and maintaining vagueness for the sake of a national aim. Swedenburg noted that his interviewees “actively forgot” “that some insurgents committed robbery in the name of the revolt, that differences between commanders fractured the rebel movement, that peasants sold properties to Zionist land purchasers, that rebels attacked Jewish settlements as well as British army patrols” (1989:169). Reflecting on the gaps in their narratives and regarding himself as a political activist for the Palestinian cause, Swedenburg consciously used his study for political ends:

Little wonder that when their existence as a people is so endangered, my informants wanted so urgently to convey an image of their insurgency that would preserve the national honor. We must understand the necessity for Palestinians to conceal some “truths,” to forget others, and to embellish the positive, even if those operations might appear to those of us who do not live under siege, xenophobic or

fanatical. Out of solidarity, therefore, I felt compelled to participate in those veilings and to resist a full revelation before the holders of power. Positioned where I am, part of my role is to help develop some “socially acceptable” narrative within which the Palestinian case might be argued in the West. Such a narrative, like all narratives, will necessarily be based on partial truths and strategic exclusions (1989:268).

Swedenburg took Halbwachs observation with regard to the past’s subordination to the present to its furthest limit; he chose to “sacrifice” the potential of the past to reproduce different strands of a narrative for the sake of serving (what he saw as) a pressing present condition. This concealment can perhaps contribute to national aims but may also, as Moughrabi implied, over-unify the details of an intricate reality. Swedenburg decided to obscure certain facts and produce, what he thought was, a more heroic national “acceptable” narrative. However, it should be noted that Swedenburg conducted his fieldwork during the 1980s, when the national unifying rhetoric was at its peak. Randa Farah demonstrated in her study of Palestinian popular memory that following the political developments during the 1990s “the articulation of Palestinian identity and belonging has become more eclectic, swinging below, through and beyond the nationalist framework” (2000:9). It is within this more multivocal setting that this study was conducted.

Munīr, earlier on, noted that omissions and gaps are inescapable within any study. However, he added, the rigid categorical framing of events and people can be reduced. Those are reduced not only due to a relaxation between interviewee and interviewer but as

an outcome of people's urge to convey a complex past. Some speakers were highly conscious of the impact of their personal worldview on the narrative that they presented. Jamīl of 'Ein Ḥawḍ (born in 1937) began our very first meeting by telling me of his family's history and yet continuing by diminishing its significance:⁺ (as we were speaking English, language mistakes are not corrected):

Our family tried always to say that we are from Abū al-Heijā' and they are proud of this. I am proud but not with the same zeal or in the same emotion. I am proud because I am Jamīl and I am a human being. I love my people, my country, my village, my parents—all people, all the human beings—if they are friendly to me. I am not insisting that they should be Abū al-Heijā' or English or Jews. All I need is that they should be human beings. They like me and I like them. I talk to them, they talk to me. That's it!

But even with Jamīl's humanistic approach, the structural conditions brought about a degree of discomfort. Jamīl, who had been a refugee in Jordan since 1948, tended to introduce me as "the student from Oxford" rather than mentioning my nationality. It was difficult to exchange letters because prying eyes would question his correspondence with Israel. At the same time, he attempted to overcome the animosity and was exceptionally hospitable, insightful and sincere. After having read an earlier draft of this paper he commented "Why do you not write about your suspicion too?"

* * *

This chapter touched on the nonverbal modes of expression and the presence of emotions as components that shaped the circumstances of the research's encounters. "Munir's reflections" alluded to the predisposition, which draws from past personal and collective experiences, that one brings to the setting of an interview. Moreover, political circumstances, differential power relations within any research and gender were external factors that left their imprint on the methodological process of fieldwork.

Parallel to the structural divergence and tensions within these encounters, some common ground also emerged. This middle ground-- a deconstruction of categorical conceptualization-- expressed one's origin yet enabled the maintenance of unique perspectives. Narratives, those of the interviewees as well as those of the scholar, appear as conglomerates of facts, emotions, suspicions and interpretations, incorporating collective and private representations. Individuals shifted between expressing and disposing of these images and stereotypes, both those imposed on them and those imposed on the enemy. These manifold narratives form an alternative mode that complements other political expressions.

Chapter VIII

Closing Theoretical Remarks

In the following pages I position some of the observations drawn from this Palestinian case study in the context of collective memory and social history theorizing. One of the major ongoing debates in the field of social memory relates to the power relations and the degree of influence of “the past” versus “the present.” Remembering, for Maurice Halbwachs, was a process of “reshaping” during which “even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present milieu” (1992:49). Halbwachs likened memories to ancient stones fitted into newer buildings, vestiges bereft of an independent meaning (1992:47). Many of the studies that followed adopted this “constructionist” perspective, conceiving the past as “precarious, its contents hostage to the conditions of the present” (quote from Schwartz, 1991:222; see also Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1993; Lowenthal, 1985). The opposite conceptualization was of “an ‘available past’ that people accept as given and that possesses a self-sustaining inertia” (see Schwartz 1991:222 summarizing Schudson, 1989; see also Shils, 1981). Some scholars refrain from a deterministic perspective, cognizant of the fact that whether a finding tilts towards a “presentist” approach or a “pastist” one, none of them occur as ideal types justifying solely one or the other (See Barry Schwartz’s work on American history for this combining approach).

The outcome of my research indicates that a crucial factor in the past-present debate is whether we are dealing with an autobiographical past or not. The autobiographical past is clearly more resistant to re-formation. Those who speak in the first person of the village prior to 1948 or the war itself seem to be committed to the many facts of life (at times, contradictory ones) that constitute their past. Even though certain people will obscure certain facts (as noted by Munīr in chapter VII) such as who collaborated or who sold land, the cross-checking of different narratives will substitute for these omissions. The wider picture of this corpus of memories depicts a complex local history that holds a dialogue with other historical representations.

In contrast, those who were born outside the village receive “slim slices” through the oral transmission, consisting of what the members of the older generation choose to tell them or what they happen to come across. Often, the members of the second generation are quite conscious of the selectivity of their knowledge of the past and the particular ways they reproduce it (as Firās tries to explain in chapter VI).¹

The dispersal of the second generation exposes its members to contrasting pulls. On the one hand there is the shared experience of refugeeness, exposure to the same channels of media and rhetoric and a shared urge for political activism. On the

other hand, the outcome, as Karl Mannheim had argued, is not a unified “second generation” perspective. Mannheim, in “the problem of generations,” brought to the discussion two issues that are especially relevant to this study. The first is the focus on the generation as a social framework of reference and the potential for change that is embodied in the move from one generation to the next. Writing under the influence of the First World War upheaval, Mannheim’s theory was influenced by the vast changes that were taking place.² Likewise, the analysis of a generational transformation within the Palestinian context is useful because it is linked to the abrupt uproot and dispersal.

The second Mannheimian issue that has been somewhat overlooked is the internal fragmentation within each generation. Mannheim insisted that the understanding of a generation can not be severed from the understanding of the “prevailing tempo and impact of social change” (1972:310). He emphasized the way members of a generation react to “specific dynamism of the historical and social sphere” (1972:311). In the Palestinian case the second generation, due to their geographic dispersion as well as other factors such as differing levels of education and diverging political affiliations, is prone to internal fragmentation. Hence, historical conditions bring to the forefront the generation as a unifying unit and at the same time, trigger its fragmentation.

¹ Robert Borofsky (1987), in his study of Pukapuka (a Polynesian Island), demonstrated the flexibility of the historical knowledge. The revival of traditions can be an outcome of a conscious choice.

² See Kecskemeti in his introduction to Mannheim, 1972:2.

Despite dispersion and fragmentation, there are mechanisms that preserve community ties (be it family, village and locality networks as well as a national discourse). Whereas talk and acts of remembrance (as described in chapters III and IV) were common all through the period of exile (and were an integral part of daily life especially for the Nakba generation), historiographical attempts as a commemoration practice are becoming popular in recent years. Similar to village historical monographs (that are written by the ex-villagers) are the academic sponsored projects that document localities. Both genres are politically committed to nation building and yet both genres are also an alternative to the PLO and national literature that dominated the scene until lately.³

Although anthropologists are sometimes reluctant to become involved in probing for historical facts (and prefer to focus on the representations of history), this study questioned the necessity to divide a “historical” inquiry from an “anthropological” one. The reconciliation of the two was promoted decades ago by the interdisciplinary approach of the French school of the *Annales*.⁴ Lucien Febvre, one of

³ There is another transformation embodied in the emergence of the villagers’ literature that has only been indirectly glimpsed at in chapter III: The villagers are coming to the forefront as an active agent in the creation of the national ethos (in opposition to the traditional urban elite). This process began with their vast participation in the freedom movements and some leading roles that they acquired in the 1960s and 1970s, their decisive role during the *intifāda*, and now their involvement in the field of documentation.

⁴ The name *Annales* draws from the name of the journal that Febvre established with Marc Bloch: *Annales d’histoire économique et sociale*, later *Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations*.

its founders, sought and wrote a social history that, among other things, would include the subjective interpretations of its protagonists:

For the historian cannot understand or make others understand the functioning of the institutions in a given period or the ideas of that period or any other unless he has that basic standpoint, which I for my part call the psychological standpoint, which implies the concern to link up all the conditions of existence of the men of any given period with the meanings the same men gave to their own ideas. (Febvre in Burke, 1973:19)

In accordance with Febvre's call, anthropological methodology opens the way to the subjective interpretation of the actors. Historical actors, as has long been argued, are not merely kings, political leaders or the members of the elite. The history that emanates from the participants' voices (in this case, those Palestinians who were later dispersed and exiled) is that of active actors as well as victims.⁵ The 1948 war, a determining event for the understanding of the Palestinian fate, is examined in chapter II through a double prism-- the narratives of Palestinian individuals involved and archival documents. This formulation, other than illuminating the crucial period of the war, clarifies the potential contribution of oral narratives such as their description of

⁵ James Young, a historian of the Holocaust, advocates a history that incorporates "the uncanny voice of one who is in history and who tells it simultaneously, one who lives *in* history as well as *through* its telling" (1997:52)

feeling or the impact of the collapse of traditional social roles on daily life. Oral narratives are becoming publicly known and central in recent years as complementary sources and as an alternative to the “high politics” that characterized Palestinian rhetoric and literature.

Febvre had hoped to create a history of emotions, noting that: “[We have] no history of love, just remember that. We have no history of death. We have no history of pity, or of cruelty. We have no history of joy” (Febvre in Burke, 1973:24). We probably cannot produce such pure Febvrian histories of emotions since their subject is overly diffused, entwined with other factors. However, methodologically speaking, we can seek the subjective interpretations within a certain place and time. For instance, the decision of Ijzim’s villagers to escape at the end of July 1948 cannot be explained unless we uncover the emotional dynamics of a collective fear, the suspicion between members of the same village and the differentiated generation’s spirit towards fighting. Such an inquiry draws us close to what Maurice Halbwachs would refer to as a village’s collective memory (in contrast to a family’s collective memory, an army unit’s collective memory and so forth).⁶

⁶ Halbwachs noted that: “While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember.” Lewis Coser, the editor of Halbwachs work, adds that: “It follows that there are as many collective memories as there are groups and institutions in a society. Social classes, families, associations, corporations, armies, and trade unions all have distinctive memories that their members have constructed, often over long periods of time” (Coser 1992:22).

Although three quarters of a century have passed since Halbwachs' sketched the sociological outline of "collective memory", the definition and usage of this terminology have only become more vague. Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins recently concluded that: "Despite substantial work in a variety of disciplines, substantive areas, and geographical contexts, social memory studies is a nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centerless enterprise" (Olick and Robbins, 1998:105). Within this state of affairs, when social memory has become all encompassing, perhaps best is to anatomize it by establishing a closer link between "memories" and their groups of reference, be it a family, a village or a nation.

In this age of nation-states, or as some would say-- their continued invention, it is not surprising that many of the studies on collective memory dwell on national memory (See Schwartz, 1991; Kammen, 1995; Zerubavel, 1995; Sturken, 1997). Other studies, although set in a national context, concentrate on concrete communities such as communities of mourning following war in Europe and Israel (Sivan, 1991; Winter, 1995) or American high school reunions (Vinitsky-Seroussi, 1998). Anthropology is more closely associated with studies of concrete communities since fieldwork explores the miniature setting and daily practices. Whereas the official or public versions of commemoration are to be found in pageants, school curricula or monuments, the more spontaneous and personal expressions of remembrance are those that are performed in the everyday. Young (1992), following Adorno (1967), argued

that when there is an abundance of state-sponsored commemoration, individuals will be less obliged to find their own means of commemoration. Conversely, when there is merely a weak Palestinian ruling entity, common people will turn into more dedicated memory agents (by visiting the village site, telling stories of the past, collecting documents or writing books). Moreover, as noted with regard to the proliferation of local historiographies, these enterprises are an act of reviving the community as a framework of reference and resisting consolation. The dispersion of the Palestinian refugees further increases this diffusion of remembrance practices.

One way to pin down intangible memories is to look at perceptible displays that jar them, coined by Pierre Nora as *lieux de memoire*-- "sites of memory" (1989). In those sites, which can be spaces, gestures, images or objects, "a sense of historical continuity persists" (1989:7-9). Other scholars, aiming to focus their analysis further, elaborated specifically on bodily memory (Connerton, 1989) and on the interface between cultural context and the bodily experience (Feldman, 1991; Kleinman and Kleinman, 1994). Although both issues—bodily remembrance per se and its bond to the social context are still largely cast in the dark, the Palestinian case study inspired a preliminary exploration in this direction. The preservation of a tight community bond linked to a place of origin, the consumption of specific dishes or visits to the site of the obliterated village, were acted out as memory practices.

Somewhat paradoxically, the gaps and absences within narratives were also part of the memory praxis. Laurence Kirmayer (1996) wrote of “landscapes of memory,” referring to the context in which memories are told, understanding them as decisive in defining whether something will or will not be narrated.⁷ Kirmayer argued that “if a community agrees traumatic events occurred and weaves this fact into its identity, then collective memory survives and individual memory can find its place (albeit transformed) within that landscape” (1996:189-190). In the Palestinian case, as both the forced migration and the village life prior to it are collective experiences that also make sense within today’s national aspirations, there is a “social space” that invites their telling. Implicit to this, and a point clearly made by Kirmayer, is that the retelling is bound to be selective “lest they [the witnesses] meet with incomprehension or others recoiling and avoiding them” (1996:189). Fissures in the narrative may pertain to personal matters such as people’s avoidance of describing their most desperate moments (chapter II). Other silences would be linked to the political setting such as matters that may complicate one’s relations with the regime (chapter I section 1.5) or an adherence to a rhetoric of unity (chapter VII).⁸

Competing historiographies are also a response to omissions in the counter narrative; Palestinian and Israeli versions of the conflict emerge from the need to

⁷ Kirmayer’s observations pertained to the traumatic memories of Holocaust survivors and of child abuse.

⁸ See Gittins (1998) for an analysis of silences in a Psychiatric hospital.

vocalize what has been silenced by others or to down play (and silence) certain parts of the narrative that were emphasized by others. Palestinian local history-telling and historiography is, among other things, a reaction to Zionist versions, to the discourse of Palestinian urban élites and/or the political leadership. Moreover, it is a counter-narrative to the Palestinian image in the globalized media where their experiences are commodified and turned into what Kleinman and Kleinman call “infotainment” (1996:1). Although this era is marked by the proliferation of information seemingly accessible to all, the Palestinians are still often “marketed” and through the images of “heroes,” “victims” or “terrorists.”

Inescapably, this study created its own incomplete narrative constructed by my own inclinations, bound to academic concerns, giving more weight to specific topics and focusing on the local setting sometimes at the expense of depicting wider forces. This was a response to a negligence of local narratives within the wider political discourse of the conflict. Within the development of recent years in which Palestinian oral sources are more widely disseminated and recorded and documents and books are becoming new means for preserving the dispersed community, this study played a double role. In addition to describing and analyzing the villagers’ representations of the past, this study participated in the communal process of remembrance.

Shortly before the completion of this work, I received an e-mail note from a young man based in the United States who is of the al-Ḥasan family of Ijzim. He learnt through the electronic media of the chapter that I had written on Ijzim during the 1948 war and asked for a copy, accompanying his request with a description of his memorable visit to Ijzim. It is with his description that I choose to end:

I had the extraordinary experience of returning to Ijzim in 1998, exactly 50 years after my grandfather made the painful decision to evacuate his wife and children from his homeland. During his last days, my grandfather told my father he had a dream that an Al-Ḥasan would indeed return to Ijzim.

My trip to Ijzim was truly a surreal experience. As we approached the village we noticed an older woman in full Palestinian dress walking on the side of the road. My cousin, an Israeli Arab citizen, opened the window and asked her where we were as he was unsure about the exact location of the village. She looked over at me and with a smile told me in a crisp voice: "You are in Ijzim."

Appendices

Appendix I:

The distribution of the refugees of 'Ein Hawḍ, Ijzim and aṭ-Ṭireh who are registered with UNRWA (five pages including this one).

	Code of Origin					
	Ein Hawd 50116		Ijzim 50128		Tira 50175	
	No. of Families	No. of Individuals	No. of Families	No. of Individuals	No. of Families	No. of Individuals
West Bank	174	828	549	2639	307	1386
Gaza			1	1	16	58
Lebanon			18	68	658	2803
Syria	37	194	984	4294	3208	14190
Jordan	306	1670	872	4653	1848	9668
Total	517	2692	2424	11655	6037	28105

Field		Center		Code of Origin		
Name	No.	Code	Name	50175 Tira	50116 Ein Hawd	50128 Ijzim
S Y R I A	4	4101	QEIMAR I	61	6	127
	4	4102	TIKIYEH	58		7
	4	4103	ALLIANCE I	1171		122
	4	4104	MIDAN	15		12
	4	4105	YARMOUK I	2867	74	479
	4	4106	YARMOUK II	2292	78	407
	4	4107	YARMOUK III	888	5	194
	4	4108	QEIMAR II	14		13
	4	4109	ALLIANCE II	65		6
	4	4110	YARMOUK	358	9	108
	4	4111	YARMOUK	195	22	63
	4	4112	MAZZEH I	2195		323
	4	4113	MAZZEH II	52		16
	4	4117	YARMOUK VI	135		86
	4	4123	JARAMANA UNOFF CMPII			1
	4	4124	HUSEINYEH	1		
	4	4133	JOBAR I	1329		517
	4	4134	JOBAR II	59		12
	4	4155	KHAN ESH SHIEH CAMP	6		
	4	4157	SBEINEH EM CAMP	10		
	4	4158	QABRESIT EM CAMP	17		
	4	4159	JARAMANA EM CAMP			21
	4	4191	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	42		14
	4	4209	DERAA DISPLACED	6		148
	4	4221	DERA VILLAGES	34		54
	4	4250	DERA CAMP	9		1410
	4	4301	HOMS TOWN	144		
	4	4311	HAMA TOWN	1		
	4	4350	HOMS CAMP	517		
	4	4355	HAMA CAMP	97		
	4	4391	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	1		
4	4401	ALEPPO TOWN	126		21	
4	4405	EIN TAL CAMP UNOFFIC	88		30	
4	4406	ALEPPO MOBILE NORTH	71			
4	4412	LATTAKIA CAMP UNOFF	213		88	
4	4450	NEIRAB CAMP	1044		14	
4	4491	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	9		1	

14190 194 4294

Field		Center		Code of Origin		
Name	No.	Code	Name	50175 Tira	50116 Ein Hawd	50128 Ijzim
G A Z A	2	2110	JABALIA VILLAGE	10		
	2	2120	JABALIA VILLAGE II	6		
	2	2160	JABALIA CAMP II	5		
	2	2210	RIMAL VILLAGE I			1
	2	2300	ZAITUN VILLAGE V	1		
	2	2310	ZAITUN VILLAGE I	5		
	2	2340	ZAITUN VILLAGE IV	3		
	2	2410	NUSEIRAT VILLAGE I	1		
	2	2460	BUREIJ CAMP	27		

58 0 1

Field		Center		Code of Origin		
Name	No.	Code	Name	50175 Tira	50116 Ein Hawd	50128 Ijzim
J O R D A N	5	1102	MUZDAR I	5		5
	5	1113	AQABA	25		3
	5	1114	MUZDAR II	39		12
	5	1116	AM TOWN SOUTH I	36		
	5	1123	MUZDAR III	8		1
	5	1124	AM TOWN SOUTH II	2	5	8
	5	1125	AM TOWN SOUTH III	36		13
	5	1151	AMMAN NEW CAMP I			4
	5	1201	IRBED TOWN I	1322	61	303
	5	1203	DEIR ABU SAID	16	33	24
	5	1206	MAFRAQ	3		14
	5	1207	KRAYMEH	25		25
	5	1208	RAFI ZINATI	6		
	5	1210	WAQQAS	62		
	5	1213	HUSON			49
	5	1214	RAMTHA	11	65	
	5	1215	IRBED TOWN II	1868	170	387
	5	1216	IRBID TOWN III	992	98	239
	5	1217	JARASH TOWN	12		29
	5	1218	IRBED TOWN IV	999	72	129
	5	1250	IRBED CAMP	2329	507	740
	5	1251	HOSUN CAMP	35	9	136
	5	1801	AM TOWN NORTH I	51		11
	5	1802	KARAMEH TOWN			11
	5	1805	SWEILEH	18	10	8
	5	1808	NAOUR	20		
	5	1810	BAQAA SQUAT EXKARAME	19	5	14
	5	1811	AM TOWN NORTH II	19		35
	5	1815	AM TOWN NORTH III	27	24	211
	5	1817	AM TOWN NORTH IV	31		101
	5	1853	BAQAA CAMP I	49		34
	5	1857	BAQAA CAMP III	8		7
	5	1898	UNRWA STAFF	1		10
	5	1899	UNRWA STAFF		6	
	5	1903	ZERKA TOWN I	105	54	3
	5	1918	RUSEIFEH	41	27	49
	5	1919		73		
	5	1921	PRINCE HASSAN QUAR	1	7	
	5	1922	MARKA SUBURBS	4		4
	5	1925	ZERKA TOWN II	54	16	
	5	1926	ZERQA TOWN III	71	5	17
	5	1952	ZERKA CAMP	29		
	5	5106	AM TOWN SOUTH II	62		14
	5	5112	AM TOWN SOUTH III	21	28	17
	5	5118	AM TOWN SOUTH IV	22		
	5	5119	AM TOWN SOUTH V	15	11	36
	5	5201	IRBED TOWN	291	118	567
	5	5202	IRBED TOWN WEST	99	57	237
	5	5211	SOUF SQUATTERS			28
	5	5212	JORDAN VALLEY	8		1
	5	5242	JARASH CAMP I EG	4		
	5	5250	HUSON CAMP		45	
	5	5250	HUSON CAMP			172
	5	5252	SOUF CAMP	12		24
	5	5801	AMMAN TOWN NORTH I			9
	5	5804	AMMAN TOWN NORTH II	51	93	231
	5	5807	SWEILEH	51		42
	5	5810	BAQAA SQUATTERS	2		35
	5	5811	AMMAN TOWN NORTH III	47	37	76
5	5814	AMMAN TOWN NORTH IV	44	25	51	
5	5850	BAQAA CAMP I	11		9	
5	5852	BAQAA CAMP II			7	
5	5858	BAQAA CAMP UN OFF	22		24	
5	5898	UNRWA STAFF			18	
5	5899	UNRWA STAFF			8	
5	5903	ZERKA TOWN I	129	36	7	
5	5910	SUKHNEH	28		18	
5	5915	RUSAIFEH	34	8	259	
5	5916	PRINCE HASSAN QURT	8		11	
5	5917	MARKA SUBURBS	25		13	
5	5919	ZERKA TOWN II	230	38	93	
5	5951	MARKA CAMP			10	

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Field		Center		Code of Origin		
Name	No.	Code	Name	50175 Tira	50116 Ein Hawd	50128 Ijzim
L E B A N O N	3	3101	MUSEITBE I	80		8
	3	3104	RIVER ROAD	1		
	3	3111	MUSEITBE II	70		
	3	3112	MUSEITBEH III			2
	3	3191	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	1		
	3	3205	BURJ BARAJNEH VILL	19		
	3	3209	HARET HUREIK	1		
	3	3210	BURJ HAMMOUD	2		
	3	3214	SABRA CHATIL SURR.	28		
	3	3215	HAZMIEH	41		
	3	3251	DIKWANEH CAMP	40		
	3	3253	CHATILA CAMP	24		
	3	3254	JISR EL BASHA CAMP	7		
	3	3291	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	2		
	3	3301	SAIDA TOWN I	100		
	3	3309	EIN EL HILWEH VILL	14		1
	3	3311	SAIDA TOWN II	53		
	3	3350	EIN EL HILWEH CAMP I	214		
	3	3352	MIA MIA CAMP	590		
	3	3355	EIN EL HILWEH CAMP II	439		
	3	3356	EIN EL-HILWEH CAMP 3	111		13
	3	3391	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	9		
	3	3399	UNRWA STAFF	101		
	3	3401	TYRE TOWN I	44		
	3	3402	BUSS SURROUNDING I	27		5
	3	3403	RAS EL EIN	7		
	3	3406	MARAKEH	3		
	3	3407	TEIR ZIBNA	21		7
	3	3411	TYRE TOWN II	19		
	3	3415	BUSS SURROUNDING II	1		
	3	3450	BUSS CAMP	133		31
	3	3451	RASHIDIEH CAMP I	27		
	3	3455	RASHIDIEH CAMP II	15		
	3	3491	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	9		1
	3	3499	UNRWA STAFF	16		
	3	3501	TRIPOLI TOWN	50		
	3	3504	BEDDAWI VILLAGE	31		
	3	3550	NAHR EL BARED CAMP I	3		
	3	3551	BEDAWWI CAMP 1	337		
	3	3552	NAHR EL BARED CAMP II	6		
3	3553	BEDAWWI CAMP 2	2			
3	3599	UNRWA STAFF	20			
3	3602	BAALBECK	17			
3	3651	WAVEL CAMP	66			
3	3691	WIVES MARRIED TO NON REFUGEE	1			
3	3699	UNRWA STAFF	1			

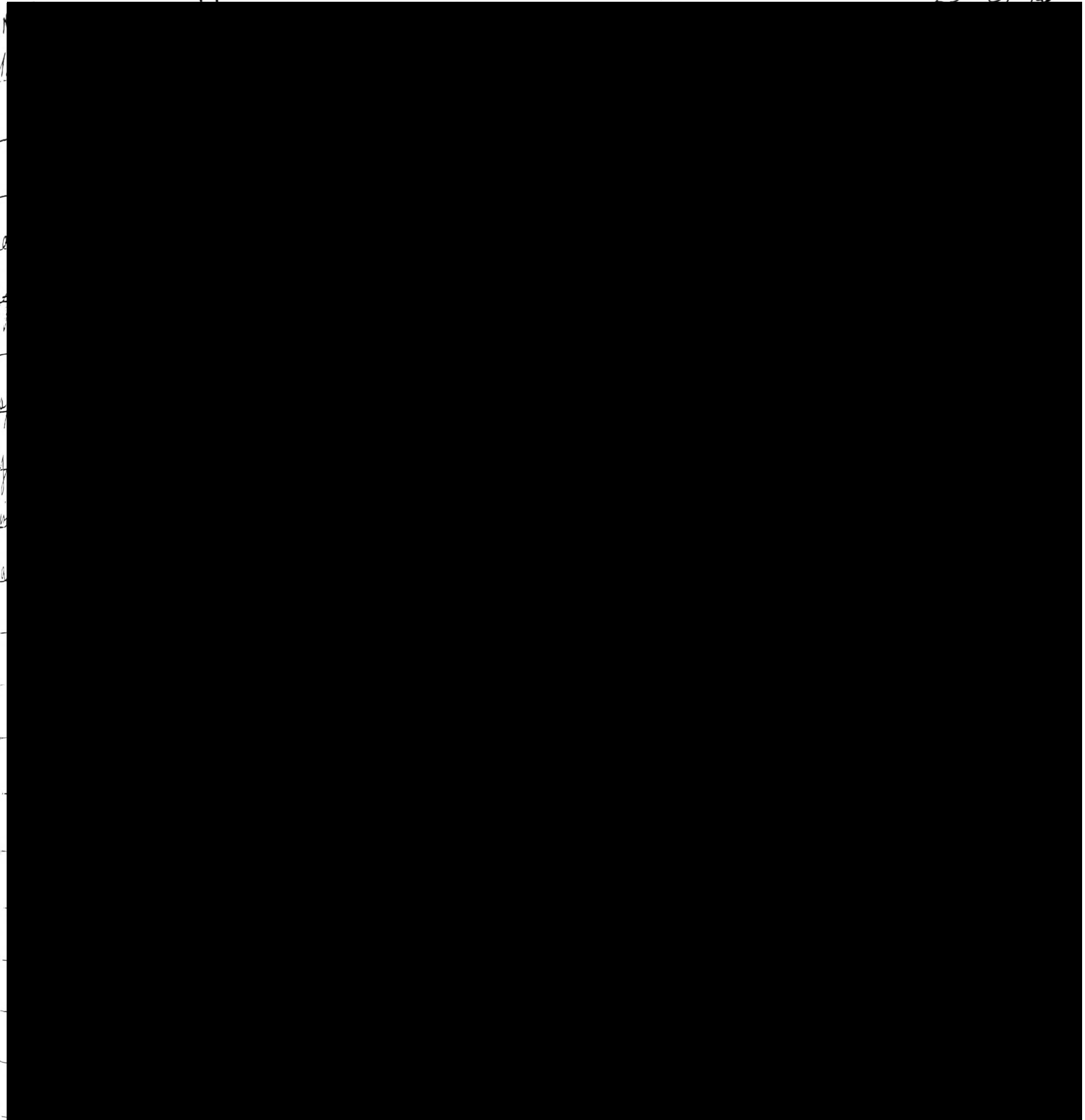
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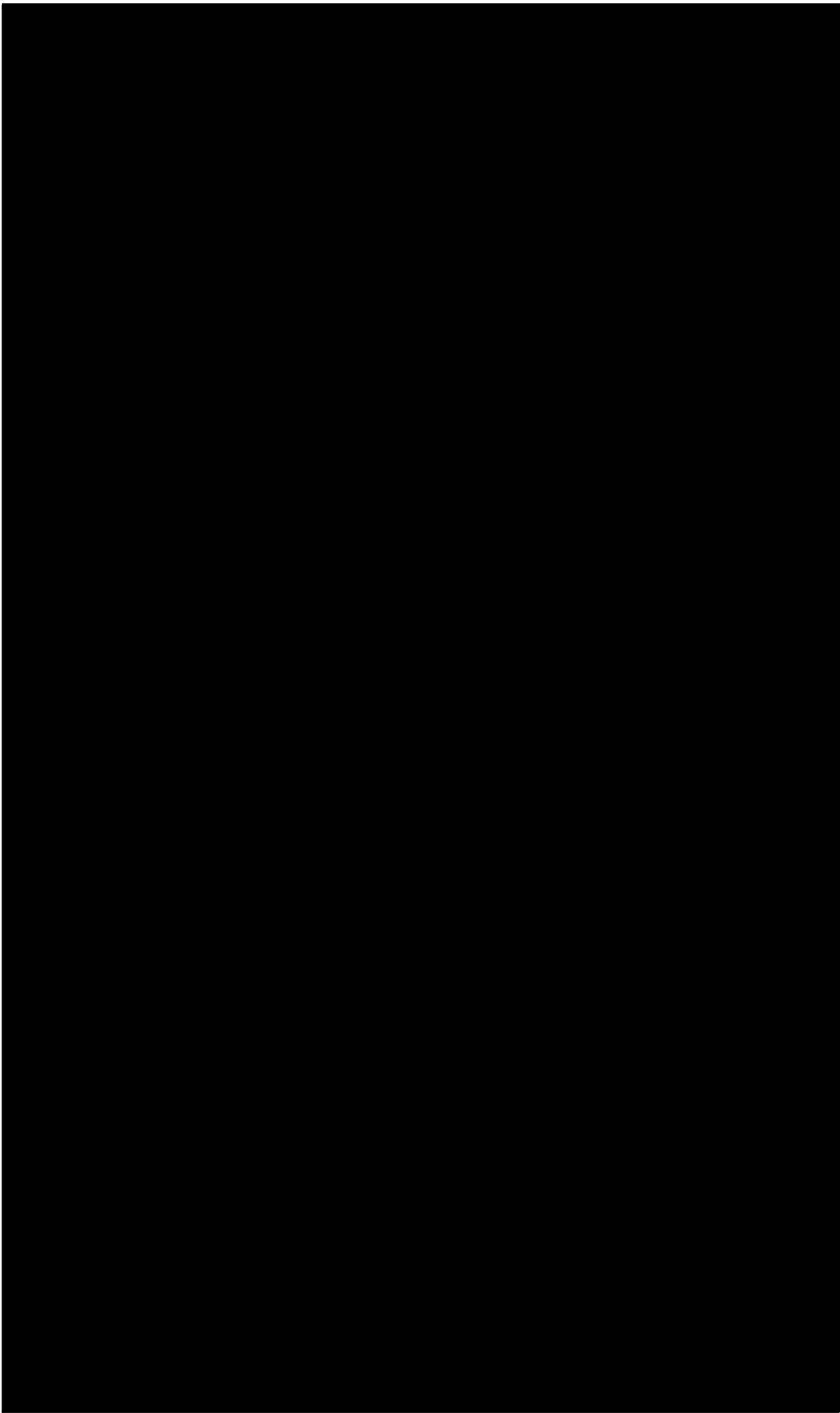
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Field		Center		Code of Origin		
Name	No.	Code	Name	50175 Tira	50116 Ein Hawd	50128 Ijzim
WEST BANK	1	1301	JERICHO TOWN			5
	1	1401	JERUSALEM CLASS A I		1	
	1	1403	JERUSALEM VILLAGES	2	5	
	1	1404	RAMALLAH I	70		3
	1	1416	AROURA	18		
	1	1417	BIR ZEIT	4		
	1	1422	SILWAD	46		23
	1	1427	JERUSALEM CLASS A II	5		
	1	1428	RAMALLAH II	5		
	1	1452	KALANDIA CAMP	51		
	1	1508	BETHLEHEM			8
	1	1601	FARA VILLAGES			23
	1	1602	QALQILIA	4		6
	1	1603	TULKARM TOWN	120		64
	1	1604	DEIR EL GHUSUN	19	13	38
	1	1605	YABAD			67
	1	1606	JENIN TOWN	41	120	625
	1	1610	BIDDIA	90	19	
	1	1611	SALFIT	50		11
	1	1612	HUWWARA	77		1
	1	1613	HAJJEH	60		
	1	1615	ANABTA	68		8
	1	1616	ARRABEH	19		
	1	1617	NABLUS TOWN	177		11
	1	1618	BOURQA	37	2	
	1	1619	JABA	27		14
	1	1620	QABATIA	26	7	442
	1	1621	SILET EL HARITHIEH			52
	1	1622	ASKAR VILLAGE			3
	1	1623	BALATA VILLAGE	22		
	1	1624	NUR SHAMS		26	
	1	1626	YAMOUN		99	
	1	1627	NABLUS II	19		
1	1650	FARA CAMP	26	6	116	
1	1651	CAMP NO I		12		
1	1652	ASKAR CAMP	161		22	
1	1653	BALATA CAMP	44		65	
1	1654	TULKARM CAMP	2		22	
1	1655	NUR SHAMS CAMP	73	16	428	
1	1656	JENIN CAMP			582	
1	1656	JENIN CAMP		502		
1	1661	JENIN FV	23			

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Appendix III

Dismembered families

The 1948 war led to a chaotic dispersal of the Palestinians. Gradually, and not always, families and village folk managed to re-cluster in refugee camps and neighborhoods. Even nuclear families were disintegrated as a consequence of the war. In the following section I discuss some episodes from the biographies of Şāleḥ and Qāsem. These episodes are, in some respects, allegories of the Palestinian refugee condition.

Şāleḥ was born in 1938 in aṭ-Ṭīreh. When we first met in 1996, he was already retired, after years of intensive labor as a construction worker. Three of his five children have acquired higher education. We met a couple of times at Şāleḥ's home, always with family members and friends participating in the talks. Twice we visited aṭ-Ṭīreh together, as his current home is close to its remnants.¹ Şāleḥ was ten years old at the start of the war, the youngest child in his family. More than once Şāleḥ attested to the fact that as the youngest child in the family he was somewhat spoilt and very attached to his mother. He left aṭ-Ṭīreh for Syria with his mother, brothers and sister on the day the village fell, whereas his father, Bashīr, decided to stay behind. More than a year after I met Şāleḥ, when I met his son Muḥammad, he tried to clarify his Bashīr's motivation (his grandfather) to stay behind at any cost.[#]

¹ On the first visit Şāleḥ's wife and one of his daughters joined us. On the second visit another daughter joined us. See a short quotation of my fieldwork diary from the first visit to aṭ-Ṭīreh's cemetery and a description of fruit picking from the second visit in chapter four.

He said -- "I shall never leave." He was experienced. He was experienced because he was a soldier in the Turkish Army. So he was experienced and knew what it meant to leave, to come back, to yearn for the land. And he said, "I shall never leave, I shall die here".

Bashīr was not the only man to make this decision following his army service. 'Alī, Abū Na'im and Qāsem , all testified that their fathers, who were recruited into the Turkish army at the beginning of the century, were reluctant to leave aṭ-Ṭīreh in 1948 because of their previous "Turkish experience of exile".

Recruitment was not the only reason for people to move about. Hilma Granqvist, the Finnish ethnographer who worked at the village of 'Artas south of Jerusalem during the late 1920s and early 1930s, mentions that of the 112 husbands in 'Artas in 1927, six were living in America and two in other places in Palestine (1950:6). Migration was undertaken for the sake of employment, but it was not common, especially in the coastal region where there was a demand for working hands during the British period. The great majority of villagers did not travel beyond their locality.

Going back to Bashīr's story, whereas Bashīr managed to stay in Palestine, his wife and children moved about like most refugees in the months following their uprooting from the village. A sum of money they had taken with them during the flight enabled them

to rent a flat in Syria, where they registered as refugees with UNRWA. UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) was established in 1950 to assist the Palestinian refugees. In the early 1950s, Bashīr's wife stole across the border by foot back into Palestine, now Israel, to find her husband.² Their youngest son Şāleḥ accompanied her on this dangerous trip. When the parents met, they had contradictory opinions about what they should do next. Bashīr was trying to arrange certificates for his family to join him in Israel, whereas his wife felt obliged to go back to the other children in Syria and was no longer willing to linger. Israel enabled a limited number of Palestinians to return, based on an arrangement defined as "family unification". However, if a family had children above the age of eighteen, they were not granted a return permission. Hence, Şāleḥ's mother was hesitant about her husband's plan.

Şāleḥ himself was a bone of contention between his parents. Every morning Bashīr would take Şāleḥ to graze the sheep, fearing his wife would abduct the child while he was away. Years later, when Şāleḥ's mother came to visit him, she claimed that at the time she tried to persuade Şāleḥ to come back during the day so that they could leave, but he did not, and so she went back to Syria alone. Şāleḥ, then a boy of twelve, was left behind with his father.³ Forty years elapsed before Şāleḥ managed to arrange the appropriate

² Israel termed these attempts to return "infiltrations." Thousands of refugees who tried to return during the years that followed the war were either shot or expelled if caught crossing the border.

³ The father and the son were indeed very lonely. They had no family at all and no woman to take care of the house or cook for them. Şāleḥ married very young in order to overcome this state of affairs.

papers for his mother to come for a visit from Syria. Muḥammad, Ṣāleḥ's son, gave the following account of this visit:[#]

I'll tell you the story regarding the circumstances in which my dad met his mother. He met her at our place in Rantiyyeh.⁴ She traveled to Jordan and we made her [a document] with which she had to pass through The [Occupied] Territories and into the State of Israel and she met her son. I have to tell you -- ever since then, he has been transformed.... Dad...dad was an active man. A working man. A builder [working in construction]. A strong man. Ever since then, dad has gone downhill. Getting weaker. Mentally, he is not in a good state. Now, on every holiday, on every party, on every wedding, anything, he cries. Listen, perhaps it is the little child who is weeping....

He feels he's been betrayed-- cast on his own to confront life, and this is fierce. I must tell you a scenario I still see with my eyes.⁵ When he met his mother, they stood for almost half an hour, one facing the other, a few meters between them. They did not speak. And then she called him and he refused. And let us say-- after the trauma of meeting, when they began to speak, they started to converse. The interesting thing was that it seemed as if time had stopped for forty years. I am speaking about the 1980s. As if time had stopped for forty years and he began to speak of things regarding the time he had left her.... They spoke of things in a

⁴ Rantiyyeh is a pseudonym for the Arab village where Ṣāleḥ lives.

⁵ Although he uses the word scenario, Muḥammad is describing a real encounter that happened ten years before. The word scenario has entered the Arabic language and is widely used in the last few years.

language I could not understand.⁶ “Why did you leave me?” [He said] and she told him “Do you remember I sent you to so and so and you said you would come and your father arrived, and I...” Stories. And they began. Stories started. Like a child who is fighting with his father [but it was] with his mother. They began fighting. I thought my father was going to respect his mother; he was a well-established man, with a family, thank God, with children. Nothing lacking in today’s terms. He had a house and everything. But it wasn’t so and he was angry with her. “Why did you do this to me? Why did you go? Why did you leave me behind?” and then she said “Your brother had tuberculosis and I had to go back to Syria”.

Şāleḥ himself did not describe this visit to me, but he mentioned it on one occasion while we were having breakfast.⁷ He said that shortly after his mother arrived, he received a letter from the Prime Minister’s office saying he should come to St. Luke’s in Haifa with his mother for an investigation.⁸ He decided to go on his own as his mother was old, could not hear very well, and was tired from the long trip she had undertaken from Syria to Palestine/Israel. When he arrived he was scolded for not bringing her along. He said to them that if they wished, they could come to see her in his home. A few days later, a man showed up at his house without prior notice when it was crowded with guests and asked

⁶ Obviously, by language he means something beyond the Arabic words.

⁷ Perhaps Şāleḥ chose this timing, when the tape recorder was not on.

⁸ The *shin-beit*, the Israeli intelligence service, is part of the Prime-Minister’s Office.

to speak to the old woman alone. He did, and Şāleḥ commented that it was a disgraceful situation.

The Israeli policy of taking over Arab land is a source of tension between family members who stayed within Israel's borders and those who found themselves outside. The Israel Land Authority (*Minhal Meqarqe 'ei Israel*) applied constant pressure on the Palestinian internal refugees to sign over ownership of the family's land in return for compensation. The state offered small sums of money that if one were lucky, could buy half a *dūnum* of land in an existing Arab village-- very little indeed for the many *dūnum* one was expected to part with but sometimes the only chance for these families to own a house. Many were obliged to comply and as the land deeds were mostly under the name of one's father, they often surrendered not only their own share of the land but also that of their brothers and sisters in exile.

Şāleḥ and his son Muḥammad told me on two separate occasions of an unpleasant verbal exchange between Şāleḥ and an administrator from the Israel Land Authority, the body in charge of the state's land appropriation. Şāleḥ's encounter with the administrator discloses the kind of pressure exerted over the Arab citizens of Israel. Şāleḥ received an invitation from this agency, inviting him to its offices in Haifa. He showed up and as he had expected, he was asked to "sell" his rights over his family's land to the State. He tried to converse with the administrator in the hope of receiving a fair sum or land in exchange, corresponding to the value of what he owned. When he realized there would be no fair

transaction, he said he was not willing to sign the document that the administrator set in front of him. The administrator grew angry and cursed Şāleḥ, saying -- “Are you waiting for Aḥmad Shuqeirī to give you land?” (Aḥmad Shuqeirī-- the first head of The Palestine Liberation Organization beginning in 1964). Şāleḥ summed up the story by saying -- “Now I still have my father’s and mother’s land.” Later, all his land was confiscated by the State. However, Şāleḥ said he was happy for not having betrayed his family.

A year after I met Şāleḥ, a young Ṭīrawī from Haifa referred me to Qāsem, a family member who was known to have many stories about the village. I called him up and arranged to come to his home, which is situated on the southern outskirts of Haifa, near the beach. When I met Qāsem, I could not help noting a similarity between him and Sāleḥ, although it was difficult to pinpoint where the resemblance lay. Was it in the strong attachment to their wives, the solitude of their homes amidst strangers or a deep and hidden sorrow in their speech? Soon, the similarity in their biographies became apparent.

Qāsem was born in aṭ-Ṭīreh in 1933. During the first Jewish attack on some of the houses in the northern neighborhood of aṭ-Ṭīreh, early in the war of 1948, Qāsem’s parents were wounded and approximately fifteen of their neighbors who were kin were killed.⁹ Nevertheless, the family did not split up and remained in the village until the very

⁹ Qāsem thought, perhaps because of its violent and sporadic nature, that the *Etsel*, a Jewish right wing military organization active until the establishment of the state, executed the attack. However, when I asked Yig’al Fried, at the time an associate of the *Hagana* in the area, whether this was possible, he said it must have been the *Hagana*. The *Etsel* was not active in that area.

last day.¹⁰ On the night that the village fell, between the 15th and the 16th of July 1948, Qāsem's two older brothers who were of fighting age (some years older than Qāsem) escaped for fear of Israeli revenge. His parents and his younger brother and sister hid in 'Arāq ash-Sheikh,¹¹ a large cave on the mountain east of at-Ṭireh. The next morning, when they realized the village had been captured, they came out of the cave with their hands up to surrender. A stray bullet hit his younger brother in the abdomen while he was walking five meters behind Qāsem, and he died on the next day. All the remaining villagers were gathered by the Israeli Army in the village-square and classified. The young men were taken to prison to be interrogated and the old men, women and children were loaded on buses and abandoned near the border. The buses took Qāsem's father, who was an elderly man, his mother and his sister, to the border.

Qāsem and five other youngsters were made to stay in the village and serve the soldiers stationed there -- fetching water from the spring, washing the dishes and attending to the soldiers' needs. Two weeks later, the young men were taken and imprisoned in Haifa, but when a Red Cross delegation was about to visit their jail, the army decided to set them free for fear the Red Cross might file a complaint regarding the imprisonment of children. He found himself with the five other Ṭirawī youths alone in Haifa. They were afraid to cross the border to join their families and so they lived together in a small room

¹⁰ Qāsem's family decision to stay together was unlike most of at-Ṭireh's families, who split when the women and children were evacuated by the Jordanian Legion in April 1948.

¹¹ Also known as 'Arāq ash-Sheikh Suleiman. See Abū Rāshed, 1993:27 for explanation and 32 for photograph. Also see von Mülinen, 1908:157 for a description and 159 for photograph.

in Wādī Nisnās, a neighborhood in which many of Haifa's remaining Arab residents were placed by the Israeli administration. Destitute and often hungry, they desperately took any job they could and were paid half price because they were children. Ever since then, these boys have remained Qāsem's closest friends and their children are the closest friends of Qāsem's children.

In 1951 Qāsem's mother crossed the border illegally to visit her two sons. Only when she arrived did she discover that her younger son had died three years before, shortly after he was shot. She stayed with Qāsem for four months and then, together, they stole across the border to the West Bank. Qāsem stayed in al-'Askar refugee camp with his family for a few months, but due to the harsh conditions in the camp he decided to go back to Israel. He went back alone, for he was the only one with an Israeli Identity Card. He drifted among shelters, huts and half-ruined houses he found in the vicinity of aṭ-Ṭīreh.

Being on his own complicated his marriage arrangements, since one's parents usually do the match-making. When Qāsem wanted to get married and had accumulated enough money, he sent his friends, the youths from the village who were left behind to serve the Israeli army, to inquire whether Suheila's father, whom he had known from Haifa, was willing to give her to him. Having thought he had insulted him a couple of years earlier, when the father "offered" his daughter to him, Qāsem was sure his proposal would be rejected. However, the father gave his consent. In 1957, Suheila and Qāsem

got married and bought a small house a few kilometers away from at-Ṭireh. Years later, when their neighborhood was being evacuated in order to develop a recreation area near the beach, Qāsem decided not to move again, no matter what the consequences, and renovated the house without permission. The state filed a suit against him and the trial cost him a great deal of money, since he had to pay both for the lawyer and the fines imposed on him following the trial. Nevertheless, he still lives in the house, one of the few remaining houses near Haifa's southern beach.

Until 1967, it was difficult for Qāsem to maintain contact with his family in the West Bank refugee camp, then under Jordanian rule. He and his family went several times to the Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem to see each other, but as they were not granted official permission to meet there, they simply joined the crowd and sneaked into the meeting area, sometimes being caught.¹² Qāsem remembered vividly and recounted one of these meetings:[#]

There was [in front of me], my oldest brother and the one younger than him and my mother. One brother I knew, but the other I hadn't seen for many many years. I couldn't recognize him. When I reached them, he hugged me and since I didn't recognize him, I wanted to push him away, to grab hold of my other brother, the one I could recognize. I was upset he was holding me so tight so I pushed him and

¹² The Mandelbaum passage between East and West Jerusalem between 1949 and 1967 served mainly pilgrims and diplomats.

shouted at him -- “what do you want from me?” And as I pushed him and distanced him from myself, I caught sight of a scar he had under his eye and all of a sudden I remembered this was my big brother. I hugged him and we started to cry.

Qāsem summed up his life-story, saying: “What can I say-- we had a story that can make a movie. My life, as it has been up till now, makes up a movie.” His biography, Qāsem felt, was detached from what regular lives are usually about, or should be about.

The Palestinian film *Ustura*, a 1998 documentary directed by the Nazareth based Palestinian Nizār Ḥasan, tells the story of a dismembered family from the village of Şaffūriyyeh. The meaning of the Arabic word *ustura* is “fable”, and in the introduction to the premier screening, Nizār Ḥasan explicitly implored the audience to understand it as an allegory. Indeed, a set of idioms, a unique discourse, unites the narratives of the Nakba generation. Each biography that was recorded from the refugees of aṭ-Ṭīreh, Ijzim and ‘Ein Ḥawḍ stands separately and yet they are also united by themes that make them parables of one another.

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