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Both Arab and Israeli:
The Subordinate Integration of Palestinian Arabs into Israeli Society, 1948-1967

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in History

by

Arnon Yehuda Degani

2018

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Both Arab and Israeli:

The Subordinate Integration of Palestinian Citizens into Israeli Society, 1948-1967

by

Arnon Yehuda Degani

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor David N. Myers, Co-Chair

Professor Gershon Shafir, Co-Chair

The dissertation offers new insights into the daily life, political status, and worldviews of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel between 1948 and 1967. During this period, the state endowed this community with nominal citizenship while at the same time subjecting it to martial law and a wide array of discriminatory policies. My work constitutes a careful reconstruction of the daily interactions between the Palestinian Arab citizens and Israeli state organs in four realms: movement restrictions, labor unionism, health care, and political expression. The dissertation focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian encounter at the military checkpoint, in the doctor's examination

room, in the everyday tasks of the Palestinian Histadrut member, and in the worldview of the pro-Nasser café patron.

Along with newly declassified and previously inaccessible Israeli archival material, the dissertation also makes use of oral history interviews, private memoirs, and the printed press. In particular, this study disrupts the current scholarly and public discussions on the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, which pit one claim against another: either the State of Israel has consistently oppressed and persecuted the Palestinians under its control, or it has overall functioned as a model democracy. In contrast, this research concludes that until 1967, Israeli officials of different ranks largely targeted Palestinian Arab citizens for absorption into the Israeli body politic through a protracted project of “subordinate integration.” The Palestinian Arabs for their part recognized the state by engaging in civic struggles premised on their citizenship and in the hopes of being treated as equals. The net effect was that the Palestinian Arab citizens became “Arab-Israelis.”

Analytically, the dissertation situates the Israeli-Palestinian case in the context of colonial and settler-colonial histories. The dissertation demonstrates how the historical pattern of Palestinian Arab subordinate integration into Israeli society differs from the experiences of other Arab societies subject to a European colonial power. The Jewish-Palestinian relationship in Israel during the years 1948-1967 is more comparable to settler-colonial patterns, such as the ones in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. In other words, I contend that the integration of Palestinians into Israeli society is a manifestation of a settler-colonial assimilationist agenda.

The dissertation of Arnon Yehuda Degani is approved

Caroline Cole Ford

Suzanne E Slyomovics

Gershon Shafir, Committee Co-Chair

David N. Myers, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

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List of Abbreviations

AWC	Arab Workers' Congress (Mu'tamar al-'Ummal al-'Arab)
GSS	General Security Service (Sherut Bitahon Klali)
HSM	Health Service for Minorities (Sherut Refu'i le-Mi'utim)
MAKI	Communist Party of Israel (ha-Miflaga ha-Komunistit ha-Yisra'elit)
MAPAI	The Land of Israel Workers' Party (Mifleget Po'ale Erets-Yisra'el)
MAPAM	The United Workers' Party (Mifleget ha-Po'alim ha-Me'uhedet)
MG	The Military Government
MK	Member of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoL	Ministry of Labor
PLL/ILL	Palestine/Israel Labor League (Ittihad 'Ummal Filastin/Isra'il, Brit Po'ale Erets-Yisra'el/Yisra'el)

Note on Transliterations and Translations

When transliterating Arabic I follow the guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and for Hebrew, I use the Library of Congress' transliteration chart while omitting all diacritical marks for both languages. The symbol ' is used to represent the Arabic letter 'ayn and Hebrew letter 'ayin, and the symbol ' is used to represent the Arabic letter Hamza and the Hebrew Alef. For well-known places, like Acre and Nazareth, I use common English spellings. For all other name places, I am using the official Israeli transliteration used by the Central Bureau of Statistics.¹ For well-known historical figures (or for common Hebrew and Arabic names), Shimon Peres and Mahmoud Darwish for example, I have opted to use the common form of transliterations.

¹ One exception is my transcription of the village Shefa-'Amr instead of the Hebrew form, Shfar'am, which I use only when quoting Israeli officials.

Acknowledgments

I'll start at the beginning and progress from there. The road to this dissertation began with a conversation between myself and my father, Gabriel Dov Degani, in the summer of 2003. I had just been discharged from the military and could not stop mulling over my experiences and the things that I had witnessed while serving in the northern West Bank, near the city of Jenin. I was restless and constantly reflecting on the arbitrary nature of my daily actions as a soldier. I was angry at the ignorance of Israelis who seemed to have no clue about what was transpiring a few kilometers away from their malls and cafes. At this moment of my life, I was also facing a choice: I had just been accepted to study physics at Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, but my mind was somewhere else. I remember pacing and telling my dad about the things that are so wrong in "the occupation," the things that I would like to tell others and things I wanted to figure out. My father, whom I had thought only really cared about my grades in the sciences, stopped my rant and said: "then why are going to study physics?" With my father's blessing, which meant the world to me, I enrolled in the Middle East Studies Department at Ben-Gurion University.

During my first semester at BGU, I encountered scholarship and scholars who were able to scrape much of the political and historical plaque that materialized over my consciousness after 18-years in the Israeli education system and then galvanized more by three more years in the Israeli military. I owe my fundamental scholarly temperament to the following teachers: Haggai Ram, Iris Agmon, Benny Morris, Kobi Peled, Ze'ev Tzahor, Mahmoud Yazbak, Yoram Meital, Haya Bambaji-Sasportas, and Dafna Poremba. All of these scholars were also very kind to me. They gave me the time of day beyond their duties, and I thank them for that as well.

During my BA studies, I had also started dating my future wife, Bat-hen Zeron. Bat-hen is the love of my life and words cannot express my feelings towards her, and those that come close should not be written here. Bat-hen is by far the best choice I have made in my life and not a day goes by in which I am not confronted with that fact. Through many conversations with Bat-hen, I have also gained a better understanding of my arguments, and the encouragement to strive to get them into this dissertation. Thank you Bat-hen so much. Many of these conversations happened in the rented apartments we lived in as a young couple in Tel Aviv, where between walks on the beach and enjoying the night-life I also studied for my M.A.

At Tel Aviv University, I encountered mentors who fundamentally shaped me as a researcher. I am particularly indebted to Israel Gershoni and Ami Ayalon who have nurtured me as a scholar, endowed me with their advice, and supported my career. During my years in Tel Aviv, I had the honor to be Israel Gershoni's research assistant and witness a true scholar and a gentleman in action. Ami was and is always there for me, when things are going well and when things seem to collapse. Both Gershoni and Ayalon endorsed my applications to graduate school in the US – thanks for that.

I am not aware of one junior scholar in the humanities that has had a crisis-free doctoral experience. Alas, I was no exception and maybe even a particularly harsh example. Fortunately, I encountered

professors who saw through the anxieties and believed I had something to offer. Gabriel Piterberg, my second adviser, faithfully cultivated me as a scholar and introduced me to settler-colonial studies which will be sparingly referred to in this dissertation. Susan Slyomovics has given me copious amounts of time, encouragement to pursue my ideas, and many hours of teaching. Susan's standards for scholarship and mentorship are second to none, and I have not always lived up to these standards, but Susan pushed me to be my best. I am grateful to Caroline Ford for helping me become a historian with global sensibilities. I thank David Myers, my co-advisor, for helping me understand my arguments better, and also for putting me on the path, mostly through his teaching and scholarship, to problematize common understandings of Zionism. Gershon Shafir, co-adviser as well, and arguably my analytical parent, has given my work a theoretical robustness that I would have never imagined I could develop. All of these Professors, members of my doctoral committee, have talked to me as an equal, and have given me more than books to read, and comments to integrate. They have seen me, more than they probably needed to, in fragile situations and always offered a kind gesture that helped, thank you all.

Lorenzo Veracini, whom I met when he visited Los Angeles with his family in 2012, and we have since become close friends and collaborators, is practically a fifth member of the committee. Lorenzo, quite frankly, is the one that planted in my head the fundamental argument I make in this dissertation. Anyone finding flaws with this argument should, therefore, refer to him.

I have spent a decade at UCLA's Department of History, and it had become a home to me thanks to Hadley Porter, Eboni Shaw, Kamarin Takahara, Ann Major, Bibi Dhillon, Professor Steve Aron, and Karen Wilson, and Asiroh Cham. I would like to also thank faculty members of the UCLA Department of History, Professors Vinay Lal and Benjamin Madly.

Before I began this ride, I acquired several friends who have always been there for me, and I will always be there for them: Aviv Pins, Yoav Livneh, Oded Lonai, Elad Terry, Jonathan Silverman, Shai Karni, and Pavel Bolo. Idan Schwartz is not thanked at all. I want to thank my fellow academic colleagues-*cum*-friends who have become very close to me and we helped each other reach this point: Ran Levi, Lior Sternfeld, Oded Erez, Liora Halperin, Sivan Blaslev, Mary Momdijan, Nimrod Zagagi, Maayan Hillel, Andrew Jan, Seraj Assi, Murat Yildiz, Anat Mooreville, Alma Heckman, Naveena Naqvi, Jorge Arias, Jason Lustig, and Grace Ballor. Thank you all the Zérons, Katzins, and Greenbergs.

I want to thank from the bottom of my heart scholars and professionals who have helped me research this dissertation and have provided comments, ideas, and sources without which this dissertation would have certainly been poorer: Liat Kozma, Adel Manna, Maura Resnick, Ariel Handel, Yael Berda, Bat-Zion Iraqi, Abigail Jacobson, Dirk Moses, Yoram Cohen, Shlomo Sand, Muhammad Hashim, Lisa Ratz, Lena Salaymeh, Penelope Mitchell, Helena Vilensky, Yifat Arnon, and Aviad Oron. Hillel Cohen graciously shared with me his wisdom and many documents he obtained from the Israeli archives. Much gratitude also to my therapists, Ira Wohl, and Yoav Shenfeld. Throughout these years I received generous funding from the UCLA Department of History, the Palestinian American Research Center, the UCLA Nazarian Center for Israel Studies, The UCLA Alan D. Leve Center for Jewish Studies, the Doris G. Quinn Foundation, and the Kahn Chair.

We are nearing the end of this segment where I would like to return to my family. My two sisters Hili Giladi and Edna Lazar, have helped me throughout my life and now as we are overcoming together the loss of our beloved father, even more so. My two sisters are also an inspiration to me as parents, providers, and human beings. Then there are my three boys: Gilee, Doron (Oni), and Tamir. Every keystroke, every eye squint to decipher an Arabic character, every pencil bite to figure some obscure critical theorist—you are always on my mind, and you motivate me to persevere. By far, you are the best thing I produced these past nine years. Finally, I am dedicating this dissertation to Professor Hadassa Degani, also known as Imma. My mother is my heroine. She is a loving mother and grandmother. אמא, אני אוהב אותך.

Los Angeles, September 2018

Vita

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles, Department of History, MA, 2011.

Tel Aviv University, Department of Middle East & African History, MA, *summa cum laude*, 2009.

Ben-Gurion University, Department of Middle East Studies, BA, *summa cum laude*, 2006.

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

“The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 84–99, DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2014.905236.

“They Were Prepared: The Palestinian Arab Scout Movement 1920–1948,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 41, no. 2 (April 03, 2014): 200–218, DOI:10.1080/13530194.2014.884316.

BOOK CHAPTERS

“From Republic to Empire: Israel and the Palestinians since 1948,” in Veracini and Cavanaugh (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler-colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2016).

BOOK REVIEWS

“Book Review: Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Dissent in Israel/Palestine*, Pluto Press, London 2014, 248 pp.,” *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, forthcoming 2016, DOI:10.1080/13530194.2016.1140863.

CONFERENCE PAPERS AND INVITED LECTURES

“Jewish is not Hebrew: Labor Zionism and the Integration of the Palestinian Citizens”

June 2018, Association for Israel Studies (AIS).

“Comrades, not Enemies? The Histadrut and its Palestinian Arab Members”

November 2017, Middle East Studies Association conference (MESA).

“‘If I Were a Palestinian’: Zionists Transcending Their Narrative”

May 2017, in “Learning About the Other's Past: History, Education, and Curricula in Israel/ Palestine,” UCLA, Center for Near Eastern Studies.

“From Republic to Empire”

March 2017, in “The Other Settlers: Non-Anglophone Settlers and the Global History of Settler-colonialism,” UCLA, Center for Near Eastern Studies.

“Non-Statist and Bi-Nationalist Zionism as Settler-Colonial Agendas”

November 2014, Middle East Studies Association conference (MESA), Washington DC (panel organizer); November 2014, University of Maryland, Department of History.

“The Military Government and the Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel: A Colonial Formation within a Settler-Colonial Context”

January 2013, Tel Aviv University; Hebrew University Jerusalem; **May 2013**, Association for Israel Studies Conference; **October 2013**, Van-Leer Institute; **November 2014**, NYU; **May 2015**, Haifa University.

“Pro-Palestinian Zionists”

June 2014, Association for Israel Studies conference, Sde Boker, Israel.

“Colonial Agency: The Weakness of the Israeli Military Government as Power”

December 2011, MESA, Washington DC, (panel organizer).

“They Were Prepared: The Palestinian Arab Scout Movement, 1920-1948”

November 2010, MESA, San Diego; **May 2009**, Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel, Jerusalem.

Introduction

An Israeli-Palestinian

Nuseir Yassin, also known as Nas, is a young man from the Galilee town of Arraba. In 2010, at age 19, he applied and was accepted to Harvard University. After graduating, Yassin found his work in the hi-tech sector to be unsatisfying, so he decided to travel the world and log his experiences in one-minute videos posted online. Nas is a vlogger (video blogger), and a very popular one at that. Tens of millions have watched his videos that tell a short, interesting, stories about the countries he visits: Morocco, Ireland, Nigeria, Maldives, Rwanda, California, Turkey, and others. Nas is a citizen of the world, he speaks American English with a mild accent and has a community of followers from around the globe. Nevertheless, Nas' biography—a Palestinian Arab who is a citizen of Israel—is ever-present in his entertaining videos.

According to the figures of the 2015 census, Arraba is a typical Palestinian Arab town in Israel. The average monthly wage for hired employees in Arraba is 28% less than the Israeli national rate, and the number of minimum-wage earners in Arraba is 11.5% higher than the Israeli average. In the Bureau's 2016 "index of peripherality" and "social index," Arraba scored, respectively, four and two out of ten.¹ These gaps are not coincidental and are frequently mentioned in debates about the political status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel. While it seems that Nas has not experienced the harshest intersections of class and ethnicity as his parents are educated, middle-class professionals, he has, in news interviews, mentions the unique obstacles he faced as

¹ Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, "Arraba," 2015; 2016.

a member of the Palestinian Arab society in Israel.² Moreover, in more than one video, Nas touches upon his own identity and the situation he, “his people,” and his family face as Palestinian Arabs with Israeli citizenship.³

Nas’ identifies himself as “Palestinian Israeli” and a Muslim. He is a firm believer in a two-state solution based on the June 1967 borders. He recognizes Israel’s past injustices against his people, but he also declares that he decided to “move on.”⁴ Nas’ education, wealth, cultural flexibility, and extremely moderate positions have not made him immune to experiencing the mundane harassments Palestinian Arabs face in Israel. Nas talks about these experiences openly in his clips while refraining from being bitter and remaining optimistic about the inherently good nature of individuals.⁵ In one video, produced during the 2018 flare-up between Israel and Palestinian demonstrators in Gaza, Nas reaffirmed both his Israeli and Palestinian identities and refused to side with any of the belligerents, claiming that they are both in the wrong.⁶

Nas’ clips lend themselves to criticism from any number of perspectives. His life and values sit well with twenty-first-century capitalist culture based on an exotic globalized itinerary of consumption broadcasted to hundreds of millions in entertaining one-minute viral videos. Nas’ liberalism and humanism could easily be construed as naïve and completely oblivious to structural

² Jessica Steinberg, “For Israeli Arab One-Minute Video Blogger, Time is of the Essence,” *Times of Israel*, 4 March 2017, <<https://www.timesofisrael.com/for-israeli-arab-one-minute-video-blogger-time-is-of-the-essence/>>, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

³ Nusseir Yasin, “How Palestinian is Israel?,” <https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/778329668985854/>, *Nas Daily*, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

⁴ Nusseir Yasin, “Am I in Israel or Palestine?,” <<https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/846115905540563/>>, *Nas Daily*, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

⁵ Nusseir Yasin, “Jews vs. Arabs,” <<https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/977587759060043/>>; “My Mom has no Bomb,” <<https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/1111575788994572/>>, *Nas Daily*, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

⁶ Nusseir Yasin, “Israel vs. Palestine,” <<https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/1040322279453257/>>, *Nas Daily*, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

forms of global oppression, and the intersections of class, race, and gender.⁷ Moreover, Nas' positions on the issue of Israel/Palestine, what he calls "politics," have been embraced by pro-Israel commentators and condemned by pro-Palestinian writers who have accused him of "whitewashing" Israel.⁸ As an Israeli who studies the conflict, Nas' optimism about the ability of Jews and Arabs to get along seems detached from reality. On the other hand, Nuseir Yassin cannot be dismissed.

There are other Palestinian Arabs in Israel with sensibilities similar to those of Nas'. Prominent Palestinian Arabs such as Lucy Aharish, Abed L. Azab, Mira Awad, Suleiman Maswadeh, Norman Issa, Ayman Sikseck—all contribute to Hebrew Israeli culture and seem to invite the positive reactions they elicit from liberal Zionists. These public personalities represent hundreds of thousands of young Palestinian Arabs who interact daily with Israeli Jews and form professional and personal ties with them. While only a few would identify themselves as Israelis as explicitly as Nas does, most feel a part of Israeli society.⁹ That said, it cannot be denied that the community of Palestinian Arabs living in Israel, in as much as one can generalize about them, constitute a distinct group. They have a unique, culture, life circumstances, and a largely coherent set of political aspirations which cannot be categorized as mere derivatives of Palestinian nationalism. This dissertation will demonstrate that this group also has a unique history, a history which allowed for Nas and his generation of Palestinian Arabs to exist (even) in today's Israel.

⁷ Nuseir Yasin, "Nightlife in Tel Aviv," <<https://www.facebook.com/nasdaily/videos/786536021498552/>>, *Nas Daily*, accessed, 16 August 16, 2018.

⁸ Belen Fernandez, "Nas Daily: Normalising Israel a Minute at a Time," *Middle East Eye*, 18 June 2018, <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/nas-daily-normalising-israel-minute-time-1100208746>>, last accessed, 16 August 2018; Jade Saab, "We Need to Talk about Nas Daily: The Normalizing face of Privilege," 11 June 2018, <<https://jadesaab.com/we-need-to-talk-about-nas-daily-37ad93f47351>>, last accessed 16 August 2018.

⁹ Tamar Hermann, Chanan Cohen, Ella Heller, Tzipy Lazar-Shoef, *Jews and Arabs: A Conditional Partnership* (The Israeli Democracy Institute, 2017).

This dissertation challenges the current scholarly and public discussions on the Palestinian Arab minority in Israel, which pit one totalizing claim against another: either the State of Israel has consistently oppressed and persecuted the Palestinians under its control,¹⁰ or the state has overall functioned as a model for a progressive democracy which has bestowed upon its Arab citizens rights and life opportunities they could never dream of had they lived in one of the neighboring Arab states.¹¹ In contrast, my research argues that the relationship between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Arabs features, in the main, a process I describe define “subordinate integration.”

The use of “subordinate integration” to describe the main dynamic between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Arab citizens serves two purposes. First, it connotes a sort of hybrid stance between the two reigning views on the status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel. On the one hand, the Israeli state granted the Palestinian Arabs citizenship and extended basic services, and they, in turn, conferred upon the state legitimacy and even began to identify with some of its institutions. On the other hand, in all aspects of social life, culture, political representation, and even health, the Palestinian Arabs occupied, by design, subordinate positions. This subordinate status naturally fed into anti-Zionist sentiments and activism within this group.

Nevertheless, “subordinate integration” is not meant to be a mere substitute for the “incomplete integration” of a peripheral group into the dominant society. Rather, it is a liminal form of integration or integration that is just robust enough to elicit conformity from the peripheral group to the normative parameters of the dominant society’s politics. If elements within the subordinate group decide to challenge the fundamentals of the regime, they do so by largely turning

¹⁰ Ilan Pappé, *Ten Myths about Israel* (London: Verso, 2017), 80-98.

¹¹ Alan Dershowitz, *the Case for Israel* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley and Sons, 2003), 154–7; Yoram Hazoni, “Israel’s ceJewish Character Makes It More, Not Less, Democratic,” *Mariginalia Review of Books*, 23 March 2015.

to non-violent and rights-based forms of resistance. Palestinian Arabs were aware that the Jewish public and its leaders had a very limited commitment to civic equality. Nevertheless, Israel's subordinate integration succeeded in tempering Palestinian Arabs' sense of disenfranchisement and led them to accept the limitations set by the Zionist state. In other words, the two parts of the term "subordinate integration," should not be understood as existing perpetually in tension. In the Israeli case, as in many other cases of self-described liberal regimes, a measure of integration sustained the subordinate status of peripheral groups. This dissertation will show that until 1967, Israeli officials of different ranks largely targeted Palestinians for absorption into the lowest rungs of Israeli society. The Palestinian Arabs, for their part, while facing dire discrimination, believed that holding the Jewish majority to the democratic principles they espoused could lead to more substantive equality. The following will demonstrate that this type of integration is common in consolidating settler societies.

The Palestinian Arab Society in Israel

Scholarship focusing on the Palestinian Arab community has undergone dramatic shifts over the years. Initially, Israeli anthropologists and Orientalists (*mizrahanim*) focused on this community's tribal structures and customs, gender relations, religiosity, and employment patterns. Frequently these scholars had past lives in various Israeli government positions, especially in the intelligence service, which administered the lives of Palestinian Arab citizens. The general interpretative paradigms that these early researchers used were variations on modernization theory in which the entrenchment of "tradition" was seen as a hindrance to the integration of this community into Israeli society. By doing so, these scholars essentially put themselves in the service of government

policies that were premised on, and at the same time generated, the Palestinian Arabs' essential "traditionalism."¹²

Gradually, researchers began to assess Israel's treatment of its Palestinian Arab citizenry in a critical manner and identified some of the "traditional" aspects of that society as stemming from Israeli (and prior British and even Ottoman) policies. An early example is Sabri Jiryis' 1966 account of Israel's systematic oppression, discrimination, and underdevelopment of the Palestinian Arab citizens. Jiryis dedicated the first chapter of his book to the Military Government, a form of martial law that Israel enacted over its Palestinian Arab citizens.¹³ In 1979, Elia Zureik offered a more theory-driven analysis of the social conditions of the Palestinian Arabs by likening the Israeli state to a metropole and the Palestinians as a subaltern population governed by similar logic and methods to colonized dependencies.¹⁴ In 1980, Ian Lustick's *Arabs in the Jewish State* attempted to explain the political quiescence of the Palestinian Arabs in light of Israel's harsh policies. Lustick argued that behind the absence of a unified Palestinian Arab political force to oppose the state's policies was the successful Israeli administration of "control," comprised of three overlapping strategies: segmentation, dependence, and co-optation.¹⁵ To a certain extent, this dissertation will examine policies that echo the theme of "co-optation" except it traces their implementation to the earliest period and on a more granular level.

¹² Abner. Cohen, *Arab Border-Villages in Israel; a Study of Continuity and Change in Social Organization*. (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1965). See also Gil Eyal, *Hasarat ha-kesem min ha-Mizrah: toldot ha-Mizrahanut be-'idan ha-mizrahiyut* (Jerusalem: Van Leer Institute, 2005), 131–34.

¹³ Sabri Jiryis, *ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el* (Haifa, 1966) ; Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); Habib Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill al-Ihtilal al-Isra'ili mundhu 1948* (Bayrut: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyah, Markaz al-Abhath, 1972).

¹⁴ Elia Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London; Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1979).

¹⁵ Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1980).

Since the early 1980s critical analyses of the social and political conditions of the Palestinian Arabs placed greater emphasis on their acculturation into Israeli society, a trend which seems to have peaked in the 1990s.¹⁶ Sociologist Sammy Smooha's survey-based study identified concomitant processes of "Israelization" and "Palestinization" that the Palestinian Arab society had undergone. Palestinization manifested an increased self-identification as Palestinians and engaging in activities that promote it, such as voicing political support for the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and formulating a political agenda against the definition of Israel as a Jewish state. Smooha traced Israelization as a process by which the Palestinian Arabs' social life became more similar to that of Israel's Jewish population. This social change is at times accompanied by a phenomenon of Palestinian Arab individuals identifying as Israelis.

According to Smooha's research from the 1980s to the late 1990s, since the mid-1970s, Palestinian Arabs in Israel have made advances in their level of education, living standards, and practiced less restrictive forms of religious observance, all bringing them into more frequent contact with Jews. These developments, according to Smooha, have also increased the Palestinian Arabs' affinity with the dominant Israeli culture and affected among them a "declining resistance to Zionism and a significant degree of acceptance of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state." Smooha also determined that overall, Israelization was a more dominant trend than Palestinization and according to his survey from 1995, 10.3% self-identified as Palestinian or Palestinian Arabs yet more than half self-identified as Israeli in some way.¹⁷

¹⁶ Tamir Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State: The Integrative Enclave* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Rebecca L. Stein, *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008); Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

¹⁷ Sammy Smooha, *Arabs and Jews in Israel* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); Sammy Smooha, "The Advances and Limits of the Israelization of Israel's Palestinian Citizens," in *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature*, ed. Kamal Abdel-Malek and David C. Jacobson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 9–33.

Scholars have noted that Palestinization and Israelization have not been mutually exclusive phenomena. During the 1980s and 1990s, assuming a Palestinian identity served Palestinian Arab politicians as a campaign platform in Israeli elections. Politicians who took on a robust Palestinian identity did so as promoters of Israeli-Palestinian peace. For many in the emerging Palestinian Arab middle class, identifying as a Palestinian—a territorial rather than an ethnic, tribal, religious or sectarian identity—meant abandoning rural and religious lifestyles and assuming a more cosmopolitan demeanor and experiencing sexual and gender liberation. These Palestinian Arabs cultivate many personal relationships with urban Jewish Israelis and carry a distinct Israeli brand of Palestinian identification or national sentiment. Another aspect of Palestinization is a growing demand among Palestinian Arabs for collective national rights within Israel. Despite the panic that this stance causes among most Zionists, this demand almost always entails recognition of Jewish national rights.¹⁸

In 1999, Azmi Bishara, a former member of Israel’s Knesset and a prominent public intellectual, published a seminal essay in Hebrew which dissected the phenomenon of the “Arab-Israeli.” Bishara argued that Israelization was an authentic phenomenon that does not merely reflect a set of practical dispositions Palestinian Arabs assumed to navigate the Israeli environment. For example, Bishara insisted that while Palestinian Arabs used to raise the Israeli flags on Independence Day to appease the surveilling state, in the 1990s, it became a genuine gesture of celebrating one’s Israeliness. Bishara also argued that an assumption of a Palestinian identity among some in Israel, together with the adoption of an ethos of Arab “steadfastness”

¹⁸ Laurence Louer, *To Be an Arab in Israel* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Waleed Khleif and Susan Slyomovics, “Palestinian Remembrance Days and Plans: Kafr Qasim, Fact and Echo,” in *Modernism and the Middle East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 186–217; Asad Ghanem, *The Palestinian Arab Minority in Israel, 1948-2000: A Political Study* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

(*sumud*), did not negate Israelization, but was in fact, a conscious maneuver to “maintain a mental or moral balance (*izun nafshi u-musari*) or a compensation...for living an Israeli life that manifests itself in demands for partial equality in the state of Israel which was established on the ruins of the Palestinian people.”¹⁹ Whereas once the term “Arab-Israeli” correlated only with Zionist ideology, Bishara admitted that by the late 1990s it had become a lived reality. Bishara qualified the long-term stability of the Arab-Israeli, defining it as a “truncated identity” (*zehut shesu’ah*), due to the irreconcilable contradictions between Israel’s democratic and theocratic-ethnonationalist institutions. While the Arab-Israeli had come to terms with never being quite Israeli, Bishara predicted that if a unified political force among the Palestinian Arabs challenged the Zionist foundations of the state, the contradictions would unravel. The opportunity for the political realignment of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel came a year afterward.²⁰

In September of 2000, Israel’s militant ex-general and political hawk, Ariel Sharon, conducted a provocative tour to Jerusalem’s Temple Mount compound, sparking riots that soon engulfed all the Arab regions of the country. On October first, Palestinian Arab demonstrators who protested Sharon’s provocation and Israeli police clashed leaving thirteen dead. The death toll shocked the Palestinian Arab community in Israel and fractured both Arab and Jewish commitment to ethnic tolerance. The following years of the Second Intifada (2000-Ca.2005) brought the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to a new phase of violence through suicide bombings in Israel’s urban centers and that included an unprecedented degree of involvement of Arab citizens in terrorist attacks against Israeli civilian and military targets. Together with the disintegration of the chances for a

²⁰ Azmi Bishara, “ha-‘Aravi ha-Yisre’eli: ‘iyunim be-siah politi shasu’a,” in *Bein ha-ani vaha-anahnu: havnayat zehuyut ve-zehut Yisre’elit*, ed. Azmi Bisharah (Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute/Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1999), 169–91.

political settlement, the political environment in Israel/Palestine became extremely polarized. Growing Jewish intolerance toward Palestinian Arab citizens and the post-2000 escalation of the wider Israeli/Palestinian conflict lead a growing number of them in Israel to assume an exclusively Palestinian identity. The political and cultural setting that enabled the Arab-Israeli to become a lived reality progressively waned.²¹

The outbreak of the Second Intifada not only negatively affected the social status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel, but it also had an impact on the historiography of this group. Much of the post-2000 research concerning the Palestinian Arab citizens focused primarily on the state's various mechanisms of political repression, land confiscation, and the policies of the Military Government. These studies benefited from declassified military and civilian files that uncovered the policy guidelines formulated in the highest echelons of government and the operational levels of the security apparatuses.²² In terms of analysis, some scholars explained Jewish/Zionist/Israeli policies as motivated almost entirely by chauvinist nationalism and Orientalist/colonialist convictions²³ while others conceptualized the Palestinian Arabs' anti-government political activism—in particular, that of the Communist Party²⁴—to be an outright rejection of Zionism,

²¹ Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

²² Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs 1948-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, "ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i ke-manganon shelitah ba-ezrahim ha-'Aravim," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 43 (2002): 104–32; Yair Bauml, *Tsel kakhol lavan: mediniyut ha-mimsad ha-Yisre'eli u-fe'ulotav be-kerev ha-ezrahim ha-'Arvim be-Yisra'el: ha-shanim ha-me'atsvot 1958-1968* (Haifa: Pardes, 2007); Alina Korn, "Military Government, Political Control and Crime: The Case of Israeli Arabs," *Social Change*, 2000, 159–82; Alina Korn, "From Refugees to Infiltrators: Constructing Political Crime in Israel in the 1950s," *International Journal of the Sociology of Law* 31, no. 1 (March 2003): 1–22; Alina Korn, "Political Control and Crime," *Adalah's Review* 24 (2004): 23–32.

²³ Bauml, *Tsel kakhol lavan*; Gil Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006); Korn, "Military Government, Political Control and Crime: The Case of Israeli Arabs"; Korn, "From Refugees to Infiltrators: Constructing Political Crime in Israel in the 1950s."

²⁴ For a recent study which identifies the Communist Party as bringing about the accommodation of Zionism among Palestinian Arabs see Adel Manna, *Nakbah ve-hisardut: sipuram shel ha-Falestinim she-notru be-Hefah uva-Galil, 1948-1956* (Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute/Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2017).

and an expression of their incipient, anti-colonialist, Palestinian nationalism.²⁵ While this dissertation benefits immensely from the empirical findings of recently published scholarship, it also departs from many of its premises and arguments.

The anachronistic perspective that has dominated the historiography on the Palestinian Arabs in Israel is derived and re-enforced by fundamental assumptions of the wider scholarship concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the 1990s and more so after the year 2000, much of the foundational research on the conflict conceptualized Zionism and Palestinian nationalism as two, diametrically opposed, state-centered nationalist ideologies locked in a zero-sum real estate conflict. In recent years, a new consideration of Zionism,²⁶ and a close analysis of the Ottoman and early mandate era have opened the door for a more nuanced understanding of the development of the conflict.²⁷ Nevertheless, these counter-narratives have yet to replace the dominant historiography which suggests that since their appearance on the stage of history, Zionism and Palestinian nationalism demanded the entirety of Israel/Palestine as the patrimony of their respective national communities—Jews and Palestinians. Any willingness to compromise with the

²⁵ Areej Sabbagh-khoury, “Palestinians in Israel: Historical, Social and Political” (Haifa: Mada al-Karmel, 2004); Leena Dallaseh, “Nazarenes in the Turbulent Tide of Citizenships: Nazareth from 1940 to 1966” PhD diss., NYU, 2012; Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013); Ahmad H Sa’di, *Thorough Surveillance: The Genesis of Israeli Policies of Population Management, Surveillance and Political Control towards the Palestinian Minority* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2014); Maha Nassar, *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

²⁶ David N Myers, *Between Jew & Arab: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz* (Waltham, Mass.; Hanover: Brandeis University Press ; Published by University Press of New England, 2008); Noam Pianko, *Zionism and the Roads Not Taken: Rawidowicz, Kaplan, Kohn* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010); Dimitry Shumsky, “Brith Shalom’s Uniqueness Reconsidered: Hans Kohn and Autonomist Zionism,” *Jewish History* 25, no. 3–4 (July 12, 2011): 339–53.

²⁷ Abigail Jacobson, “From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem in the Transition Between Ottoman and British Rule, 1912-1920” (University of Chicago, 2006); Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2016); Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1929* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2015); Yair Wallach, “Rethinking the Yishuv: Late-Ottoman Palestine’s Jewish Communities Revisited,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 16, no. 2 (2017): 275–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2016.1246230>.

opposing side, either in regards to territory or regime structure, is considered a pragmatic maneuver incompatible with the rigid core of both warring sides.²⁸ Elsewhere I defined this type of scholarship on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as written in accordance with “the nationalism paradigm” giving rise to a teleological meta-narrative: the clash between Zionism and Palestinian nationalism is the cause of the conflict, it constitutes the conflict, and it exacerbates the conflict.²⁹

Aside from the epistemic inadequacies of the nationalism paradigm, it moreover cannot provide a suitable explanation for a key historical dynamic that the literature on Jewish-Arab relations from the 1980s and onwards identified: integration. The primary sources from the period of 1948-1967 paint a more nuanced picture than the one drawn by the post-2000 scholarship. I could not ignore evidence suggesting that the processes of integration preceded the 1970s and existed alongside the government’s policies of repression. Finally, the nationalism paradigm could not explain the simple fact that during the early years of statehood, the Israeli political system and public opinion pushed to cancel the Military Government, the most repressive institution of all, and finally succeeded in doing so in 1966.

As I encountered difficulties reconciling the primary and secondary material with the parameters of the nationalism paradigm, I was also introduced to the theoretical literature of settler-colonial studies. Settler-colonialism, I argue, is a superior explanatory framework for the demise

²⁸ Benny Morris, *Righteous Victims : A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict, 1881-1999* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Ilan. Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine : One Land, Two Peoples* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). James Gelvin’s textbook, *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), is a particularly popular disseminator of the nationalism paradigm. See also Beshara Doumani, “Palestine Versus the Palestinians? The Iron Laws and Ironies of a People Denied,” *Journal of P* XXXVI, no. 4 (2007): 49–64; Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: a Century of Radical Dissent in Israel/Palestine* (London, Pluto Press 2014).

²⁹ Arnon Y. Degani, “From Republic to Empire: Israel and the Palestinians 1948-2016,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler-colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 353–67.

of the Military Government, and the integrationist dynamic within the relationship between the State of Israel and the Palestinian Arab citizens during the two first decades. In the following paragraphs, I review the development of settler-colonial studies as a distinguishable field within the social sciences and emphasize its value for elucidating the relationship between Israel and the Palestinian Arab citizens, the topic of this research, and generally in the study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Settler-colonial Studies

The origins of settler-colonial studies are found in comparative research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s, independently from the postcolonial field. The first to turn the critical academic gaze upon settler societies happened to be empiricist historians, concerned primarily with the political history of “Western” societies, and following a tendency to employ political economy as their analytic framework. These early comparative studies identified the fundamental commonality in the history of nations born through the settlement of Europeans outside Europe: the physical liquidation of native populations or at the very least the destruction of their ways of life and methods of subsistence. Furthermore, the critical thrust of these studies had deeper implications than merely exposing the past sins of these settler societies, sins that certain representatives of these societies are at times willing to admit.

Most importantly then, the critical argument that these studies brought forth was that the destruction of an indigenous society was not merely the unfortunate side effect of the expansion of settlement but was its main enabler. In other words, the very viability of settler projects is

premised on the annihilation of native forms of land tenure and the opening up of land frontiers for European settler ownership.³⁰

The early comparative research of settler societies was groundbreaking in providing non-teleological explanations, steeped in Marxist logic, for what was indeed particular to each settler society: legal systems, political institutions, socio-economic structures, demographic makeup, and racial outlooks. They showed that contrary to settler self-conceptualization,³¹ it was not innate settler traits—racial, cultural, or religious, and others—which determined the history of the colony and later that of the settler state. Instead, these studies found the cause for the particularities of each settler history in the resiliency of the respective native population and the constraints the settlers faced from the imperial metropole. The parameters of the settler society, in other words, were found to be determined by the ability of the settlers to gain the maximum surplus from a given country's land and labor resources vis-à-vis native resistance and metropole interference.³²

The work of the late Patrick Wolfe constituted an important stage in the transition from studying settler societies comparatively to the foundation of a field premised on recognizing settler-colonialism as a discernible historical phenomenon of the modern world. Wolfe's contribution was twofold. First was his adaptation of the word "elimination" to amalgamate the

³⁰ D K Fieldhouse, *The Colonial Empires; a Comparative Survey from the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1967); Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism : The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1983); George M Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

³¹ Denoon cites Paul Baran, and Robinson and Gallagher; Fredrickson mentions Frank Tennenbaum.

³² In general, Denoon tends to credit each colony's articulation with the metropolitan empire, and later with world capital as the main factor in the particular historical trajectory for the particular settler nation. Fredrickson's *White Supremacy*, naturally, focuses more on the interaction with indigenous populations. A much later comparative study on the economic and demographic achievements of the 'Anglo World' by James Belich, also stresses native annihilation as the prerequisite for Anglo booms but, like Denoon, focuses mainly on the relationship between settlement and metropole (in the case of the US between the East Coast and trans-Appalachians states) - see, *Replenishing the Earth : the Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-world, 1783-1939* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

different policies which settlers imposed on indigenous populations. Under Wolfe's "elimination" one can find policies targeting the very physical existence of indigenous peoples (ghettoization, ethnic cleansing, and genocide) and, counter-intuitively, policies of assimilation (treaty signing, naturalization, multicultural recognition, and miscegenation). According to Wolfe, the subsuming of native identities into the settler society or the preservation of native identities as "a tile in a multicultural mosaic" provides the perfect context for the creation of liberal regimes in which indigenous land ownership is easily commoditized and becomes available for settler acquisition. At the same time, the liberalization of settler regimes, which usually occurs after the indigenous no longer pose a military threat to the settlers, trivializes native grievances as prior inhabitants of the settler-colonized land.

Wolfe's second contribution to the crystallization of the field of settler-colonial studies was his succinct articulation of the fundamental difference between settler-colonial projects and franchise or metropole colonial ones. Wolfe clarified that while settler expansion is motivated by a logic of **elimination**, colonial projects are premised on a logic of **exploitation**. The first logic pushes settlers to replace natives on their land while the latter is the motor behind imperial extraction of the surplus value of native labor "mixed" with the land.³³

The most comprehensive theoretical intervention on settler-colonial studies is Lorenzo Veracini's *Settler-colonialism: a Theoretical Overview* (2010). Veracini synthesized several decades of inquiry into the uniqueness of settler societies creating a comprehensive guide to the anatomy of the settler-colonial phenomena which fine-tuned prior commentaries while at the same

³³ Patrick Wolfe, "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001): 866–905. *See also* Idem, "Structure and Event : Settler-colonialism, Time and the Question of Genocide," in *Empire, Colony, Genocide : Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* *Empire, Colony, Genocide : Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2008), 102–132.

time suggesting new directions. Veracini largely followed Wolfe, yet perfected his assertion that settlers desire native land without the natives. Instead, he defined settler-colonialism as a form of power primarily centered on attaining “sovereignty.” Settler consolidation, according to Veracini, does not necessitate the complete disappearance of indigenous alterities nor the complete disassociation from metropolitan polities, but it does suggest that the settler has the final say in managing these relationships.³⁴

In summary, whereas colonial regimes are premised on the continual exploitation of indigenous labor by imperial entities and their emissaries, settler-colonial movements tend to avoid dependency on indigenous labor and instead aim to supersede them, to become the indigenous themselves. In other words, colonialism requires the existence of indigenous alterities while settler-colonialism, in its ideal-type form, demands their elimination. Historically, settlers indigenized by physically eliminating indigenous people through violence such as ethnic cleansing and genocide. At the same time, settler-colonialists always pursue, to some extent, forms of indigenous assimilation or, better phrased, “integration” into the settler entity.

For example, abandoning projects of forced assimilation, the United States’ Federal Government now grants certain American Indian tribes a collective status similar, though inferior, to that of the individual states, in the form of “reservations.” Within these territories, which are directly controlled by the Federal Government, the latter is the guarantor of Indian cultural, political, and legal autonomy. Congress’ 1924 Indian Citizenship Act defined all US-born Indians

³⁴ Lorenzo Veracini, *Settler-colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

as citizens, though not all have taken active steps, such as voting or applying for a passport, to assume their citizenship.³⁵

During the (settler) colonization of New Zealand, British colonists/settlers declared the extension of the Crown's rule over the island via the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty parceled the sovereignty over the territory between the British and the Māori. In recent decades, various laws passed by the New-Zealand Parliament, evoking the name of the Waitangi Treaty, created a bi-cultural apparatus and some protections against market-driven alienation of tribal lands. Nevertheless, the settler state, which inherited the *de-facto* sovereignty from the British Crown, maintains its primacy over Māori tribal entities.³⁶

Finally, in post-Apartheid South Africa, the White settlers in the early 1990s relinquished their exclusive control over the state and agreed to form a majority Black Republic under the principle of one person one vote. The end of Apartheid entailed the creation of "Truth and Reconciliation Commissions" which facilitated the relatively non-violent transition to majority Black rule, along with the assurances that the majoritarian government will not be able to redistribute wealth more equitably. In the new South Africa, "the Rainbow Nation," Whites remain economically dominant and their land possessions safe. Successive governments embarked on programs to increase Blacks' share of the country's resources, so far with little success.³⁷

All of these settler-indigenous arrangements came at the heels, and occasionally in tandem, with massive settler violence, indigenous depopulation, settler land seizures, and even destruction

³⁵ Walter L. Hixon, "Adaptation, Resistance and Representation in the Modern US Settler State," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Vercini and Edward Cavanagh (London: Routledge, 2016), 169–84.

³⁶ Felicity Barnes, "Settler Colonialism in Twentieth-Century New Zealand," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (London: Routledge, 2016), 439–56.

³⁷ Edward Cavanagh, "Settler Colonialism in South Africa: Land, Labour and Transformation, 1880–2015," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Vercini and Edward Cavanagh (London: Routledge, 2016), 291–310.

of entire indigenous groups. Indeed, despite the differences between all of these examples of consolidated settler-colonial states, fundamentally, they all feature constitutional formulations that assert the mutual belonging and ownership of both indigenous and settlers to the once-disputed territory. All of these arrangements affirm the political equality between the individuals of these groups. And in all of these cases, the decedents of the settlers, on average, are immensely better off, materially and otherwise. Ultimately, assimilation policies are usually, though not always, more palatable than violent forms of indigenous elimination, yet they achieve the same result: the suppression of indigenous sovereign capacities.

Settler-colonialism and the Study of Zionism

In recent years, scholars of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and activists in Palestinian solidarity organizations have relied more frequently on the term “settler-colonialism.” Unfortunately, much of the contemporary usage of the term does not adhere to any concrete theoretical framework, or empirical grounding, frequently picking and choosing certain catchphrases from the literature mentioned above but with little concern for its substance.³⁸ In general, these writers use settler-colonialism as a mere substitute for the term colonialism and do so to explain the wide array of illiberal and oppressive policies, physical and symbolic, which Zionists perpetrated against Palestinians from the late nineteenth century to the present.³⁹ Pro-Zionist scholars and activists

³⁸ I am referring here mainly to Patrick Wolfe’s “Invasion is a structure—not an event.” Patrick Wolfe, *Settler-colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London; New York: Cassell, 1999), 2.

³⁹ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State*; Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, “Palestinians in Palestinian Cities in Israel: A Settler-colonial Reality,” *Jadal*, no. 18 (2013): 1–17; Omar Jabary Salamanca et al., “Past is Present: Settler-colonialism in Palestine,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 1–8; Magid Shihade, “Settler-colonialism and Conflict: The Israeli State and Its Palestinian Subjects,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 2012): 108–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2012.10648828>; Ilan Pappé, “Shtetl Colonialism: First and Last Impressions of Indigeneity by Colonised Colonisers,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 1 (2012): 39–58; Nadim N Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, “Settler-Colonial Citizenship: Conceptualizing the

have picked up on this trend and enlisted their writing to attack the usage of this poorly defined settler-colonialism, but also avoiding any meaningful engagement with the theoretical scholarship.⁴⁰ I hope that this dissertation will serve a more professional and dispassionate debate on the merits of understanding the Israeli-Palestinian relationship as a case of settler-colonialism.

In the meanwhile, there have been a few exceptional studies on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which have utilized a comparative analysis of Zionism with other settler movements.⁴¹ Two of the most notable of these are by sociologists Baruch Kimmerling and Gershon Shafir. The latter identified the particular condition in turn-of-the-century Palestine as immanent to Zionist and Israeli societies. Kimmerling described the development of Zionist institutions and ideological tendencies as based on the difficulty to purchase land or to wrestle it away from Arab control.⁴² Shafir examined the dominance of Labor Zionism within the Zionist movement and found its success contingent on the land *and* labor conditions of Ottoman Palestine. Shafir focused on the pivotal shift from the first *‘Aliya’s* settlement model (“mixed plantation colony”), which exploited Arab labor, to the second Labor Zionist model (“pure settlement colony”) which relied more exclusively on Hebrew labor. According to Shafir, the cause for this shift was not a triumph of

Relationship between Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 3 (2015): 205–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.947671>.

⁴⁰ Alexander H. Joffe, “Palestinian Settler-Colonialism,” *BESA Center Perspective* No. 577, 3 September 2017, <<https://besacenter.org/perspectives-papers/palestinians-settlers-colonialism/>>, last accessed 17 August 17, 2018. Donna Robinson Divine, “Settler-colonialism,” paper given at the Association of Israel Studies Meeting 2018 in Berkeley California.

⁴¹ Thomas G Mitchell, *Native vs. Settler: Ethnic Conflict in Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, and South Africa* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000); A. Dirk Moses, “Das Römische Gespräch in a New Key: Hannah Arendt, Genocide, and the Defense of Republican Civilization,” *Journal of Modern History* 85, no. 4 (2013); Susan Slyomovics, “Who and What Is Native to Israel? On Marcel Janco’s Settler Art and Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff’s ‘Levantinism,’” *Settler-colonial Studies* 4, no. 1 (2014): 27–47, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.784238>; Shaiel Ben-Ephraim, “Do unto Others as They Have Done unto You: Explaining the Varying Tragic Outcomes of Settler-colonialism,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 3 (2015): 236–50, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.947058>.

⁴² Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: the Socio-territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies, University of California, 1983). Kimmerling was inspired by Fredrick Jackson Turner’s frontier thesis applied to the history of the United States.

ideological convictions but rather the result of the Jewish settler's inability to compete in Palestine's labor market. Competition with indigenous labor, not socialist ethnonationalism, was, therefore, the cause for the Labor movement's rise to hegemony.⁴³

Two decades after Kimmerling and Shafir identified certain "base" structures of Zionism, Gabriel Piterberg used the comparative approach to analyze the "superstructure." Piterberg exposed an allusive Zionist narrative structure appearing across texts, belles-lettres, and academic research, which is typical to settler societies. According to Piterberg, Zionist national narratives, similarly to other settler narratives, deny that the conflict with the indigenous population is pivotal to their formation as a national movement. Piterberg countered by refuting Zionists' perception of their political movement as constituting a natural, modern, outgrowth of Jewish traditions and European anti-Semitism. Avowed anti-Zionists tend to reproduce this narrative by suggesting that there is an innate essence to Zionism, albeit a negative one. This convergence between sympathetic and critical analyses of Zionism attests that the Zionist narrative attained intellectual hegemony.⁴⁴

This dissertation follows the work of Kimmerling, Shafir, and Piterberg and identifies Zionist policies as following the same logic that other European settler movements employed when facing similar dilemmas. However, whereas the latter scholars focused on Zionism's more chauvinistic aspects, this work explains policies of the early Israeli state that are more or less compatible with Wolfe's "assimilation" and what I define as "subordinate integration." Phrased differently, my research identifies the Israeli establishment's attempts to integrate the Palestinian

⁴³ Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁴⁴ Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London; New York: Verso, 2008).

Arab as citizens in a democratic society, albeit into its lowest rungs, as historically significant for our understanding of Zionism as a case of settler-colonialism.

Before addressing the dissertation's chapters, I would like to exemplify how insights from the field of settler-colonial studies elucidate what constitutes its immediate historical backdrop: the establishment and dismantling of the Israeli Military Government. The following segment is based on an article I published in 2014 in which I explained the growing opposition to the Military Government among Zionist circles, and its eventual dissolution, as congruent with settler-colonial consolidation.⁴⁵ The article was based mostly on material which related to the opinions and rationale of the Israeli leadership. Along with the dissolution of the Military Government, the gradual shift in the discourse of the Israeli political class against this form of martial law is also an important theme in this dissertation.

The Demise of the Military Government

The right to citizenship for Israel's Palestinian Arab population is enshrined in the 14 May 1948 Declaration of Independence. In the subsequent year, the Israeli government gradually extended citizenship to most Palestinian Arabs residing within Israel's post-War borders.⁴⁶ At the same time, the first Israeli governments also enacted a series of policies which emptied that citizenship of much of its meaningful content. Many of these policies were carried out under the authority of the Military Government. By September 1948, the government declared several areas of the new state with a high concentration of Palestinian Arab residents as "closed security areas," administered by

⁴⁵ Arnon Degani, "The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?," *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 92-94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.905236>.

⁴⁶ In reality, Israeli citizenship was granted only to 40% of the Palestinian Arab who resided in the state and was gradually extended to most others in the following years, see Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State*, 68-112.

the Israeli army and subject to the Emergency Regulations that Israel adopted from the British Mandate's legal code. After the borders of the state stabilized early in 1949, Israel erected the Military Government with three geographical commands: North, Central, and South (Negev). The Military Government wielded emergency-time powers to enact restrictions on civilian movement such as curfews, administrative arrests, relocation of individuals away from their place of residence, as well as many other punitive measures. Though working within legal constraints, the Military Government was all powerful. Sabri Jiryis, a Palestinian Arab activist and contemporary commentator, aptly referred to it as “a state within a state.”⁴⁷

Israeli political leaders, military personnel, and pundits all claimed that the Military Government was vital for Israel's security. Successive governments and their organic intellectuals justified its existence citing the risk of Palestinian Arab citizens joining a possible invasion by the neighboring states by virtue of their “common interests with the Arabs beyond the borders.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, the Military Government, so claimed its defenders, was a necessary measure because of Israel's porous borders and the daily incidents of Palestinian border crossings to conduct military attacks, repatriation, and, most commonly, theft or retrieval of property.⁴⁹ Israeli security and law enforcement openly suspected Palestinian Arab citizens as potentially harboring “infiltrators” and providing aid and intelligence to combatants (*fedayeen*).⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Jiryis, *ha-‘Aravim be-Yisra’el*, 21.

⁴⁸ From the 1956 Ratner commission on the Military Government, quoted in Ozacky-Lazar, “ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i ke-manganon shelitah ba-ezrahim ha-‘Aravim,” 106.

⁴⁹ For an extensive study of this period see Benny Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War* (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1993). S

⁵⁰ Ozacky-Lazar, “ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i ke-manganon shelitah ba-ezrahim ha-‘Aravim,” 106; Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs 1948-1967*, 65–94.

Less overtly, however, the Military Government served other interests. One role the Military Government performed, generally known at the time yet not officially sanctioned, was the monitoring and constraining of the non-Zionist Israeli Communist Party (*ha-Miflagah ha-Komunistit ha-Yisra'elit*, MAKI). Along with this function was the coercion, through threats and bribery, of Palestinian Arab citizens to vote for the leadership party MAPAI (Land of Israel Workers Party, *Mifleget Po'ale Erets Yisra'el*) or its subservient Arab parliamentary lists.⁵¹ Another, more sinister role had to do with a notion circulating among Israeli leaders that if a second round of war with the Arab states comes, then holding the Palestinian Arabs under a non-civilian government could facilitate the completion of the 1948 mass transfer.⁵² The Military Government also segregated cheaper Palestinian Arab laborers from the Israeli labor market and thus protected the wages of Jewish workers, many of them immigrants and refugees.⁵³ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Military Government provided the legal and administrative infrastructure for land confiscations in favor of Jewish settlements and enabled the Israeli government to constrict Palestinian Arab inhabitation and cultivation of land once held by their compatriots now living in refugee camps alongside Israel's borders.⁵⁴ As a matter of fact, Shimon Peres, Ben-Gurion's loyal deputy, admitted to this publicly.⁵⁵

As mentioned, the oppressive measures enacted by the Israeli government and the Military Government, in particular, are the very subject of inquiry in much of the recent historical

⁵¹ Jiryis, *ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 44–45; Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill 1948*, 147–59.

⁵² Bauml, *Tsel kakhol lavan*, 71–73.

⁵³ Yair Bauml, “Shi'abud ha-kalkalah ha-'Arvit le-tovat ha-migzar ha-yehudi be-Yisra'el, 1958-1967,” *Hamizrah Hehadash* 48 (2009): 101–29; Tamar Gozansky, *Ben nishul le-nitsul: sekhirim 'Arvim, matsavam u-ma'avakkehem* (Haifa: Pardes, 2014), chap. 4.

⁵⁴ Jiryis, *ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 8; Hillel Cohen, *'Aravim tovim: ha-modi'in ha-Yisre'eli v'ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el: sokhnim u-maf'ilim, meshatfim u-mordim, matarot ve-shitot* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 119–49.

⁵⁵ Jiryis, *ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 53.

scholarship on the Palestinian Arabs. These policies generally corresponded well with the label “colonialism.” While there was no body of water separating the civilian-controlled parts of Israel and the regions subject to the Military Government, many commentators on this regime—past and present, with some firmly embedded in Israel's establishment—considered it as a form of rule comparable to European imperialism.⁵⁶ The Military Government demarcated the divide within Israel between Jewish and Arab sectors, a divide similar to that between metropole and colony of the nineteenth-century empire, justifying the unequal allocation of resources and services, gaps in the income level, education and even infant mortality.⁵⁷ The Emergency Regulations themselves, the legal framework for the Military Government, were an inheritance of late British Empire attempts to quell restless colonial dependencies.⁵⁸

The Military Government was not only a Jewish injustice inflicted on Palestinian Arabs but, like all colonial regimes, it shaped the very categories of Arab and Jew. Primary sources from the time reveal the wide circulation of certain “truths” about Palestinian Arabs (referred to exclusively as “Arab” or “Arab Israel,” or in the plural “Arabs of Israel”), such as their tribal, disloyal, opportunistic, patriarchal, unruly, and corrupt character. Such imagery was rooted in a long-standing European Orientalist discourse, now re-enforced in the context of Israeli rule over a Palestinian Arab population. The Military Government itself was both a consumer and a producer of “experts” in dealing with Palestinian Arab citizens and contributed to the Israeli Orientalist

⁵⁶ See the speech given by Elimelekh Rimalt, MK from the General Zionists Party and representing the Religious National Party, MAPAM, Ahdut ha-‘Avoda, and MAKI in *Haboker*, 30 July 1959, 1, 3; Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State*, 152–84; Cohen, ‘*Aravim tovim*, 50.

⁵⁷ Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism*.

⁵⁸ See Yehouda A Shenhav and Yael Berda, “The Colonial Foundations of the State of Exception: Juxtaposing the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian Territories with Colonial Bureaucratic History,” in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, ed. Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi (Boston: Zone Books, 2009), 337–75.

discourse surrounding them.⁵⁹ In short, the Military Government, similar to colonial regimes, was premised on and reified the essential difference between the two categories occupying the two sides of the colonial divide.⁶⁰

I began this dissertation intrigued by Zionism's apparent commitment to enacting colonial-like forms of martial law over Israel's subject Arab populations. Early on, I hypothesized that the daily realities of the Jewish-Arab encounter during the time of the Military Government would prove to be a wellspring of Zionist colonial discourses on the Palestinians. With this rationale, I predicted that the six months between December 1966 to June 1967—in which Israel did not sustain (an explicit form) of martial law within its sovereign control—would prove to be an aberration. However, once I delved into the research material, I could not reconcile my hypothesis with the story that sprung from the archival documents, the daily press, and even the basic historical record. I could not deny the simple fact that by the year 1966, the military government was officially gone after years of slow dissipation.

From its very beginning, the Israeli supporters of the Military Government consistently insisted, in the face of criticism, that it was a temporary security measure. While Israel's security woes did not subside until the year 1956, after the Sinai campaign, it is worth noting that inquiries into the workings of the Military Government began well before that year.⁶¹ By 1951, the

⁵⁹ Haim Hefer, "Moshlim tseva'iyim (song)," in *Revi'iyat Mo'adon ha-Te'atron, shire "ha-frere jacques,"* 1977 quoted in Shira Robinson, "Occupied Citizens in a Liberal State: Palestinians Under Military Rule and the Colonial Formation of Israeli Society, 1948-1966" PhD diss., Stanford, 2006, 154; Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 93–95; Benziman and Mansour, *Dayare mishneh: 'Arviye Yisra'el: ma'amadam ve'ha-mediniyut kelapehem* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1992); Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill; Jiryis, ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*. See also Baruch Gitlis, *ha-Moshel ha-mekho'ar: ha-emet 'al ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i* (Jerusalem: Ogdan, 1967) in which he claimed authenticity to the events of corruption and feasting depicted in the book.

⁶⁰ Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient: Expertise in Arab Affairs and the Israeli State*, 17–32; Korn, "From Refugees to Infiltrators: Constructing Political Crime in Israel in the 1950s."

⁶¹ Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War*, 419–425.

Government lifted military rule from the “mixed”⁶² towns of Acre, Haifa, Jaffa, Lydda, and Ramle, and its roster of employees was cut drastically from 1500 to 200 low-ranking soldiers who operated mainly from the three central commands and several outposts located in Palestinian Arab towns and villages. During its first decade, knowledge of corruption and general discomfort with the Military Government circulating inside the Israeli establishment resulted in inquiries as early as 1949, then more in 1950, 1951, and 1952. In December 1955, the Israeli government, bowing to pressure from the public as well as the leftist and liberal segments of its ruling coalition, appointed a public committee to examine the possibility of downscaling the Military Government's scope.⁶³

Israel's second decade saw more demonstrations, conferences, petitions and the establishment of Jewish-Arab organizations against the Military Government. This trend accompanied the Zionist leadership's abandonment of the idea of another mass transfer of Palestinian Arabs. In March 1958, Ben-Gurion appointed another commission, which recommended by majority an end to the Military Government. Ben-Gurion refused to do so but acceded to a series of “alleviations” (*hakatot*) concerning mainly movement restrictions (See Chapter 1). In the Israeli Knesset, the supporters of the Military Government fought harsh parliamentary battles in 1959, 1961, 1962, and 1963, winning each time with declining margins. In 1963, Ben-Gurion, the champion of the Military Government, retired and was replaced by Levi Eshkol, who continued to enact alleviations and in November 1965 announced his intention to end the Military Government altogether. This policy was implemented in December 1966 when some of the administrative capacities of the Military Government were handed over to both the Israeli

⁶² Except for Haifa, the mixed towns in Israel are Palestinian Arab population centers that have not been depleted entirely of their Palestinian inhabitant in 1948. The early Israeli governments housed Jewish immigrants in depopulated neighbourhoods and properties thereby creating a “mixed” population. See Daniel Monterescu and Dan Rabinowitz, “Reconfiguring the “Mixed Town”: Urban Transformations of Ethnonational Relations in Palestine and Israel,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 2 (2008), 195-226.

⁶³ Ozacky-Lazar, “ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i ke-manganon shelitah,” 115–19.

police and the covert security agency, the General Security Service (GSS). Only on October 1968 did all movement restrictions on Palestinian Arabs who were citizens of Israel officially end.⁶⁴

Shira Robinson, in her important *Citizens Strangers* (2013), identified the causes for the Military Government's demise during the 1960s as largely external to Zionism: (1) a courageous Palestinian Arab grassroots struggle, (2) mounting pressure from the international community, and (3) an Israeli sense that it had already fulfilled its role in sequestering Arab lands.⁶⁵ While all of these causes are valid, I complement Robinson's research by demonstrating that opposition to the Military Government was also mounted from Zionist parties, and argued for deploying Zionist rhetoric. The arguments made by members of the Zionist opposition to the Military Government practically cited settler-colonial theory for they identified their cause as part of a push to integrate the Palestinian Arabs.

Organized Zionist opposition to the Military Government began in the early 1950s with the Leftist MAPAM party (the Unified Workers' Party, *Miflefet po 'alim me'ohedet*). It then spread to the more hawkish yet still leftist Ahdut Ha'avoda. Toward the end of the decade, the centrist parties and the right-wing Herut voiced their objection. MAPAI (the Israeli Workers' Party, *Mifleget po 'aley Yisra'el*), the leadership party, remained supportive of the Military Government up until the very end, but research for this dissertation reveals that by 1963, the party's brass, including its head, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, understood that the end was close. An analysis of

⁶⁴ Historian Yair Bauml enumerated the immediate reasons for the persistence of the debate on the Military Government: (1) the continued pressure from leftist and centrist coalition parties; (2) new voices against the Military Government, now from within the ruling MAPAI and the Israeli security establishment; (3) a growing criticism against the Military Government in light of the Kafr Qassem massacre trials; (4) the growing economic demand for free access to Arab laborers; and (5) the Jewish realization that another mass exodus of Palestinians will not occur and that the Palestinian Arab citizens are there to stay. The two latter elements, the need for working hands and the coming to terms with the Arab citizenry, speak of liberal economic consideration, alongside the security needs, for the democratic attitude of Zionists toward the Palestinian Arabs. Yair Bauml, "ha-Mimshal ah-Tseva'i ve-tahalikh bitulo, 1948-1966," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 43 (2002): 133–56.

⁶⁵ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State*, 189–192.

the Zionist discourse critical of the Military Government shows that the dominant theme among the Zionist objections to the Military Government was a genuine and well-founded concern that the Military Government was cultivating animosity toward the state within the large Arab population. Incidentally, the Zionist argument against the Military Government often mentioned its resemblance to colonial rule.⁶⁶

For example, below is an excerpt from Yigal Allon's *A Screen of Sand*, a book he published as part of his self-fashioning as a cerebral strategist. Allon, a hawk and a decorated officer, devoted a chapter in his book to "The Arab Population and the State's Security" and wrote, unapologetically, about the "Arab problem" and the risk it posed, in his words, to the "mono-national Jewish State."⁶⁷ While Allon saw in the Palestinian Arabs a threat very similar to the way what Ben-Gurion saw, he nevertheless believed that the Arabs could come to accept the state and its dominant ideology, while integrating into its society.⁶⁸ In sharp contrast to this stated goal, Allon warned that:

...the very existence of the Military Government is after all one of the factors of the nationalistic awakening and arousal amongst the Arab population [...]. External pressure which is enforced by discriminatory laws achieves an opposite goal from its intention, as historical facts teach us as well as our current reality. Political pressure (*lahats medini*) against a national division, even if it may postpone the collision, nevertheless inspires hostile consciousness, pours content to its actions, creates longing and aspirations and does not solve the [Arab] problem but makes it worse.⁶⁹

To clarify, the Israeli leadership did not act as self-aware settler-colonialists seeking consolidation and hence opted to dismantle an ostensibly colonial institution as the Military Government was.

⁶⁶ Arnon Degani, "The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?," *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 92–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.905236>.

⁶⁷ Yigal Allon, *Masakh shel hol: Yisra'el ve-'Arav ben milhamah le-shalom* (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1959), 337,

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 324.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 329.

As any indigenous history would suggest, settler-colonialism is not a coherent ideology with fixed moral underpinnings. Rather, settler-colonialism is a phenomenon which is commensurable with a variety of political ideologies. The early Israeli Zionists that opposed the Military Government were driven by post-World War II, liberal and social-democratic notions on the integration of social peripheries and their inculcation with hegemonic values. The Israeli leadership adopted a horizon of economic, social, and to a certain extent, cultural integration. This vision was not empty of (subordinate) Arabs entirely, yet it contained an aspiration that this group would derive their political outlook primarily from their self-identification as Israeli citizens. The chapters of the dissertation examine how the sensibilities of the Israeli political leadership, and the public opinion they represented, manifested in the decisions made by the Israeli bureaucratic stratum and, in turn, how these decisions were received by Palestinian Arabs, and how they shaped their political outlook.

Methodology and Chapter Summary

This dissertation focuses on the daily life, political status, and worldviews of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel between 1948 and 1967. At its core is a careful reconstruction of the interactions between the Palestinian Arabs and Israeli state organs in four realms: movement restrictions, wage labor, health care, and political expression. Each chapter begins with a chronological reconstruction of the developments that occurred in each arena of inquiry. They then explore thematically the range of decisions, dispositions, and behaviors that Jewish-Arab encounters produced. This dissertation seeks to avoid depicting the Palestinian Arabs as mere helpless victims of the ruthless Zionist regime or downplaying the severity of Israel's policies. It represents an attempt to produce a

nuanced and complex narrative that challenges a simplistic reading of victims/victimizers or regressive/enlightened.

This dissertation's focus on the Jewish/Non-Jewish divide, unfortunately, comes at the expense of delving into the class, geography, religious, and ethnic differences that existed and continue to exist within the Palestinian Arab society in Israel. In my examination of the Israeli bureaucracy, I also make few references to the diversity of ethnic backgrounds of Jews. I am not suggesting by any means that these differences are trivial or historically insignificant. In later decades, the early difference in treatment and even wider trends of sectarianism within the Arab world would become plainly visible in Palestinian Arab politics in Israel. Nevertheless, these variations in policies toward different segments of the Palestinian Arab community did not occur outside the considerations of the wider settler-colonial agenda that I argue dominated Israeli politics until 1967. As a matter of fact, that the Israeli leadership considered some ethnic groups and religious denomination superb candidates for integration—the Druze and Circassians being prime examples—merely bolsters the dissertation's argument that Zionism, as manifested in the state of Israel and its institutions, is capable of integrating non-Jews into Israeli society.

Chapter 1 focuses on the Military Government's movement restrictions by first reconstructing them in all of their complexity, revealing their erratic and arbitrary nature. The chapter also details the various individual tactics and the collective political mobilization that eased and ultimately ended the restrictions. The chapter then compares the Military Government's movement restrictions and those that the Israeli military imposed in the Palestinian Occupied Territories since 2000. Ultimately, it argues that different logics existed behind these otherwise similar regimes of movement restrictions.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Palestinian Arab citizens' relationship with the Histadrut—

Israel's largest trade union and extra-statist executive arm of the Israeli leadership. The chapter is composed of weaving the mundane, rarely analyzed, stories that can be gleaned from the documents of the Histadrut branches in Palestinian Arab villages and towns. The chapter details the gradual process of the Histadrut changing from an organization practically premised on Jewish-Arab segregation to one that actively sought the membership of Arabs. Moreover, the chapter demonstrates how Histadrut functions in Arab locales were progressively undertaken by Palestinian Arab individuals who saw themselves as working in the interest of their own communities but also demonstrated a true commitment to this Zionist organization. Once Palestinians became members, they tended to take the Histadrut at its word and demanded that it adhere to its socialist ideals and provide them with better worker representation, educational projects, cultural activities and, perhaps most importantly, health care.

Chapter 3 examines the separate public health system created for the Arabs in Israel. The chapter details the severe gaps in Palestinian Arab accesses to health services due to the policies of Israeli governments. At the same time, the slow yet consistent penetration of health facilities in Palestinian Arab locales is addressed along with references to a growing Jewish recognition of an Arab right to such access. The constant unequal allocation of resources to Palestinians in general, and in health care in particular, did not discourage Palestinian Arab citizens from appealing for the improvement of services and facilities and finding within the Israeli establishment decision makers receptive to their complaints and needs. The chapter further demonstrates how Palestinian Arab demands for better medical services entailed an adherence to a civic discourse that recognized the state's responsibility for Arab health and quality of life.

Finally, **Chapter 4** qualifies the rest of the dissertation and focuses on the limited successes and failures of subordinate integration to produce a wholly positive sentiment among Palestinian

Arabs toward the state. The chapter delves into the ambivalent sentiments felt by Palestinians-Arab teachers, pupils, and others. The chapter also demonstrates how alongside overt political dissent against Israel and Zionism, some Palestinians expressed their anti-Israel sentiment in more intimate settings and articulated their alienation from the regime through private expressions of Arab nationalism. Nevertheless, the chapter also raises the argument that despite Palestinian Arab bitterness and the unrelenting suspicion they aroused among Jews, subordinate integration was able to cultivate hope for better days, among both Arabs and Jews.

In conclusion, the dissertation argues that the sum of Israel's policies in respect to the Palestinian Arab citizens and the Palestinian responses reflect a dominant trend of subordinate integration of the latter indigenous group into the Zionist settler society. As a result, Palestinian Arabs in Israel became a unique Palestinian constituency, distinct from the others in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Diaspora. Palestinians-Arabs who became "Israeli" were not necessarily politically docile, but their strong commitment to working within the framework of the state was premised on an implicit recognition of settler sovereignty. When indigenous people progressively—though never entirely—recognize the rights of settlers, it is hard to imagine a better example of settler-colonial consolidation.

A Note on Terminology

The Palestinians, as victims of settler-colonialism, face, among other hardships, the very dubious pleasure of fighting the denial of their existence as a people, not to mention the denial of their indigeneity. As an Israeli scholar of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I feel obligated to be cognizant of the violence and oppression that exists behind this denial. At the same time, because I am offering a critique of the nationalist discourse dominating the current research, I decided to

generally avoid referring to the group at the heart of this study as simply “Palestinians.” Instead, as I have done in this introduction when addressing this group in neutral (as can be) contexts, I will use the term “Palestinian Arabs.” I chose this term because it is sufficiently respectful to the group’s current preference to be considered Palestinians while at the same time connoting the malleability of their political identification in the past. For the sake of historical accuracy, when referring to this group in the context of the Israeli officials’ deliberations, I will often use the term “Arabs.”

Chapter 1

The Israeli Permit Regime

Sabri Jiryis' Hebrew book, *The Arabs in Israel*, published in 1966, was a powerful and systematic account of the injustices that the State of Israel committed against the Palestinian Arabs who remained within its borders. Considering the fact that the book deals with grave issues such as the state's massive confiscation of Arab land, its programmatic under-development of Arab villages and towns, and even the cold-blooded massacre its army committed in Kafr Qasim in 1956, it is therefore quite telling that the first subject which Jiryis addresses is the limitation of Arab movement under what was called by those subject to it as "the permit regime" (*nizam al-tasarih*). In the same vein, other Arab and Jewish commentators, contemporary and retrospective, devoted many pages to and saved their harshest criticism for the draconian nature of the Military Government's permit regime. With this in mind, this chapter's underlying assumption is that the permit regime and its slow unraveling lies at the heart of the constitution of Palestinian Arabs in Israel as "Arab-Israelis."

Why Constrict Movement?

Israeli political leaders, military personnel, and pundits all claimed that the military rule was vital for Israel's security. Publicly, Israeli governments and mainstream intellectuals justified the total control over the Arab citizens in case of an invasion of an enemy with whom they had "common interests."⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Military Government, so claimed its defenders, was necessary

⁷⁰ Quoted in Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, "ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i ke-manganon shelitah ba-ezrahim ha-'Aravim," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 43 (2002): 106.

because of Israel's porous borders and the daily border-crossings of Palestinian Arabs into the state to conduct military attacks, repatriation, and, most commonly, theft or retrieval of property.⁷¹ Israeli security and law enforcement openly suspected Palestinian Arab citizens as potential harborers of "infiltrators," and as possibly providing aid and intelligence to combatants (*fedayeen*).⁷²

The Military Government served other interests. One of these was the monitoring and constraining of the non-Zionist Israeli Communist Party (MAKI). Complementary to this function was the coercion of Palestinian Arab citizens to vote for the leadership party MAPAI or its subservient Arab parliamentary lists.⁷³ Another, more sinister role had to do with the Israeli anticipation of a second war with the Arab states; should that war occur, holding the Palestinian Arabs under a non-civilian government could have facilitated another mass transfer.⁷⁴ The Military Government, and in particular its movement restrictions, also segregated cheaper Palestinian Arab laborers, thereby protecting the wages of Jewish workers, many of them recently settled Mizrahi Jews.⁷⁵ Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the Military Government provided the legal and administrative infrastructure for land confiscations in favor of Jewish settlements and enabled the Israeli government to constrict Palestinian Arab settlement and cultivation of land once held by their compatriots now living in refugee camps alongside Israel's borders.⁷⁶

⁷¹ see Morris, *Israel's Border Wars, 1949-1956: Arab Infiltration, Israeli Retaliation, and the Countdown to the Suez War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁷² Ozacky-Lazar, "ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i ke-manganon shelitah" 106; Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Agencies and the Israeli Arabs 1948-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 65–94.

⁷³ Jiryis, *ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 44–45; Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill al-Ihtilal*, 147–59.

⁷⁴ Yair Bauml, *Tsel kakhol lavan: medinyut ha-mimsad ha-Yisre'eli u-fe'ulotav be-kerev ha-ezrahim ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el: ha-shanim ha-me'atsvot 1958-1968* (Haifa: Pardes, 2007), 71–73.

⁷⁵ Yair Bauml, "Shi'abud ha-kalkalah ha-'Arvit le-tovat ha-migzar ha-yehudi be-Yisra'el, 1958-1967," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 48 (2009).

⁷⁶ Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, 8; Hillel Cohen, *'Aravim tovim: ha-modi'in ha-Yisre'eli vеха-'Aravim be-Yisra'el: sokhnim u-maf'ilim, meshatfim u-mordim, matarot ve-shitot* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 119–49.

Life under the Permit Regime

Providing the legal basis for the Military Government's control over civilian movement were the Emergency Regulations that Israel inherited from the British Mandate, particularly Emergency Regulation 125. This regulation enabled army officers to declare specific geographic areas as "security zones" in which movement to and from could be restricted. By 1951, the government lifted military administration from the "mixed towns"—Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Lydda and Ramle—and remained in three areas, which became known as the Military Government – North, Central and South (Negev). These areas were declared security zones requiring a permit from an authorized body to enter and exit them. The regions of the Military Government were in turn parceled into smaller "closed areas" (*ezorim sgurim*) with varying degrees of restricted access to these sub-regions or particular villages, towns, and settlements.

The number, size, and contours of the various security zones, as well as the different restrictions placed on them, shifted periodically, making an exact geographical description of the permit regime a near impossible task. The difficulty in reconstructing the scope of the early permit regime, which began during and continued after the 1948 War, could be partially attributed to the chaos of the creation of a new state and the determination of new borders. Furthermore, the Military Government utilized the Emergency Regulations to instantly restrict movement when security tensions flared—a common occurrence until the 1956 Sinai campaign. According to the state's own account of the massacre in Kafr Qasim, the Army failed to communicate to the Arab villagers the placement of a curfew at the moment the Sinai campaign began.

In the years following its establishment, Israel was determined to keep the number of Palestinian Arabs who remained within its territory to the minimum, and the acute drive to fend

off returning refugees would have funneled resources from the creation of regular bureaucratic means to control the population already within the state.⁷⁷ From the early 1950s onwards, the state's security apparatuses routinized, generating more documents and secondary sources concerning the closed areas. The earliest reports I have been able to find specifying the borders of the three regions of the Military Government—the Negev, Central, and Galilee—are dated between July 1950 and December 1951.⁷⁸ Even so, no single source encompasses the ever-changing policies and *ad-hoc* decisions of both the high and low ranking military officers.

A military decree dated September 30, 1952, attached with a map of Military Government North [Figure 1] specified no less than 46 areas.⁷⁹ Sixteen of these areas, regions apparently with a more substantial concentration of Jews, Druze, and Circassians, were exempt from the need to obtain permits to leave the territory of MG North. The military placed a slew of confusing movement restrictions over the remaining areas. In fact, the Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs deemed the decree, in an internal memo, to be too puzzling and burdensome. According to the Advisor, Yehoshua (Josh) Palmon, the decree did not “bring into consideration the needs of the residents.” Palmon then added that the “regions are small and constitute a burden without benefits for the MG itself, and one which is not understood and [is] aggravating for the residents.” He also noted that according to the decree, residents of region 34 are allowed to reach the Nazareth area, yet their entry to regions located in-between was forbidden. Palmon concluded with a

⁷⁷ For a detailed description of the state's efforts to control the population registrar see Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel's Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2013), chap. 3.

⁷⁸ ISA GL-17099/1. Without the benefit of an IDF code map, it will be nearly impossible to decipher these early decrees.

⁷⁹ An earlier decree, not accompanied by a map, suggests that the Military Government North was divided into 9 closed areas. Unsigned, “ha-Shetah ha-natun le-mimshal Tseva'i Galil,” undated, ISA GL-17099/1.

recommendation that the decree be canceled, and a new one should be drafted promptly.⁸⁰

Palmon was apparently not the only official who found the decree problematic, and a few months afterward, Major General Meir Amit, the IDF's third in command, circulated two memos to clarify the confusion surrounding movement regulation. The memos specified that movement within the territories of Military Government North—except for the environs of Nazareth—will be “allowed practically but not legally” (*tutar ma'asit ve-lo hukit*). Amit also instructed that particular emphasis should be placed on enforcing restrictions upon entry into “abandoned” Arab villages and Jewish settlements.⁸¹ In February of 1954, a new governor for MG North issued a new decree complete with a re-division of the Galilee. In what was obviously an effort to simplify the permit regime, the number of regions decreased from 46 to 15 [Figure 2].⁸² After less than two years, the military governor of the North issued yet another decree. This December 1955 decree began with the statement: “The object of this decree is to resolve the permit problem (*le-hasdir et be'ayat ha-rishyonot*) and to determine a uniform procedure for authorizing, issuing, and denying a permit.”⁸³ It should be noted that the “permit problem” this document addressed was apparently not resolved more than seven years after the establishment of the state, six years after the end of 1948 War, several inquiries into the workings of the Military Government, and after the Israeli government announced in 1953 and 1954 rounds of reforms in the movement limitations.

This December 1955 decree detailed a cumbersome process for traveling within the

⁸⁰ Lt. Colonel Ne'eman Stavi (governor of MG north), “Tsav,” 30 September 1952; Palmon to MG Department in General Staff, 14 October 1952, ISA, GL-17099/1.

⁸¹ Major General Meir Amit to various correspondents, “Rishyonot tnu'ah ba-ezorum ha-sgurim – mimshal Tseva'i Galil,” 23 February 1953, IDFA-18/7/1956.

⁸² Lt. Colonel Avraham Cohen (governor of MG North), “Takanot hagana li-sh'at herum (1945) – tzav sgirat ezorum sgurim,” undated, ISA, GL-19077/1

⁸³ Lt. General, Mikhael Mikhael (governor of MG North), “undecipherable: Mimshal Tseva'i Tsafon – perek gimel: bitahon shetah – rishyonot tnu'ah,” 13 December 1955, ISA, GL-19077/1.

territory of the Military Government. For an Arab to move from one village located in one jurisdiction to a village located in another, they would have to receive a permit from their local military governor representative to access the other local representative's offices, and only there could they obtain permission to travel.⁸⁴ Considering the documents mentioned above, which distinguished between military law and practice, it is probable that movement within Military Government North was permissible within most of the territory. A notable exception to this was locations of abandoned Arab villages, Jewish settlements—where salaried work was more available—and certain roads that were subject to some form of restrictions.⁸⁵ Furthermore, several regions, specifically those adjacent to the borders, had more stringent limitations placed upon them. Residents of those regions apparently could not leave to visit their local representative's office without first visiting the local police station to receive a permit to do so. In principle, these Arabs had to obtain a permit to request a permit.⁸⁶

Yet another aspect of the permit regime—to be discussed more thoroughly below—is that from as early as 1952, the Israeli government announced the downscaling of some of the harshest movement restrictions through “alleviations” (*hakalot* [Hebrew], *tashilat* or *takhfifat* [Arabic]). Such large-scale alleviations—frequently timed weeks before a general election—took place in October 1953, February 1954, August 1957, August 1959, February 1962, and October 1963. Adding to the difficulty of living under the permit regime, and reconstructing its realities, is the fact that the Military Government, although ordered to do so by the Israeli High Court, did not to publish an official gazette detailing the borders of the various security zones and closed area.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Capt. Zvi Shefen, deputy military governor North General Staff, Operation, “Hakalot ve-shipurim ba-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i,” 4 October 1955, IDFA-109/782/1958, 2.

⁸⁶ In 1955, Military Government North was parceled also into 16 regions (*ezorim*) on top of the five jurisdictions. Residents of areas 1-6 were apparently subject to tougher movement restrictions. IDFA-362/172/1959

Essentially, the Military Government never informed the Arabs of the ever-changing dimensions of their cage, and thus left them to discover their travel limitations through trial and error.⁸⁷

Moving beyond the messiness of the permit regime and the difficulty of accurately describing its everchanging scope, in general, it adopted the following basic form: several regional and local Military Government representative offices opened in Arab towns and villages and were responsible for distributing travel permits into and from the various security zones. The primary destination Arabs requested permits for were the cities located outside the closed security areas. The permit would allow the individual Arab to travel to one place or another for a specific time period, a specific purpose, and also travel particular roads to get there. At the same time, several military and police units dispersed throughout the country were responsible for ensuring that Arabs, and, less frequently, Jews, had the proper permit on their person. Otherwise, they were sanctioned in one way or another.

Obtaining a permit usually entailed a visit to the regional or local Military Government representative's office, which was the main point of interaction between an Arab and the state he or she was subject to. The regional offices would be staffed by an officer, a few rank-and-file soldiers, and civilian clerks. The offices of the Military Governor in the city of Nazareth had more personnel to handle the increased load. During the 1950s, sub-representative offices opened in smaller villages and were available for two days each week. Jewish commentators on representative offices were mostly negative, and often described a scene in which Arabs would sit and wait aimlessly and in some cases, while completely exposed to "the pouring rain or sweltering

⁸⁷ Jiryis, *ha- 'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 24; Unattributed, "Security Zones Must be Gazetted," *Jerusalem Post*, December 3 1951, archived in ISA G-3834/6.

heat.”⁸⁸ Two sources describe independently how in two different districts local Arab dignitaries had taken permanent residency in the offices of the Military Government and had a problematic sway over the governor.⁸⁹ In the Negev, a Bedouin armed guard resided at the local headquarters and, according to Gitlis, personally chose which civilian would see the governor’s representative, giving precedence to his relatives and tribal allies.⁹⁰ The Military Government, with the explicit intention of strengthening the status of its Arab collaborators, issued dignitaries—mukhtars—special permits that allowed them nearly free movement in and out of the restricted areas.⁹¹

For those less connected or unwilling to bribe their way into the favors of the mukhtar, the ordeal was unpleasant.⁹² Time spent in lines was a substantial resource of what Palestinian Arab workers and small farmers needed to reach their already meager livelihoods. On top of waiting in line at the governor’s office, many Palestinian Arab workers would have to wait in another line for work allocations at the labor exchanges (see chapter 2) or, for certain types of permits, at the governor’s regional headquarters.⁹³ In certain cases, one’s request would not be even processed,

⁸⁸ Quote from a letter written by the Administrative Officer for Military Government Central to General Staff Operations and Military Government Headquarters concerning the representative office in Tayibe, “Hakalot ve-shipurim ba-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” IDFA-109/782/1958; Anton Shammass, “At Half-Mast—Myths, Symbols, and Rituals of the Emerging State: A Personal Testimony of an ‘Israeli Arab.’” in *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 218; Gitlis, *ha-Moshel ha-mekho ‘ar*, 115–19.

⁸⁹ Hillel Cohen, ‘*Aravim Tovim*, 24; Menahem Kapliyuk, “Tmunut me-ha-Meshulash ha-Yisre’eli,” *Davar*, 20 April 1953, 2.

⁹⁰ MG Negev to South Command HQ, “four-month period report on preparedness,” 24 June 1958, IDFA-225/647/1959; Gitlis, *ha-Moshel ha-mekho ‘ar: ha-emet `al ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i*, passim.

⁹¹ Operation General Staff to military governor South and Center, “Mukhtarim,” 5 June 1955, H-14, 24.

⁹² Walid Sadeq, *Goleh be-artzo: mi-Tayibe la-Knesset* (Petah Tikva: Sifrut Akhshav, 2012), 52. Hanna Abu Hanna, *Khamirat al-Rimad: Sira* (Haifa: Maktabat kul Shay’, 2004), 22; Workers of Tur’an to Minister of Defense, 24 January 1956, ISA GL-13926/1; In July of 1956, a 9-month-old girl from Baqa al-Gharbiyye died in her father’s arms while he was waiting in-front of the governor’s offices, *Al-Itihad*, 20 July 1956, p.1.

⁹³ A Military Government North document from October 1955 titled “Hakalot ve-shipurim be-mimshal tseva’i (tsafon) (Alleviations and Improvements in the Military Government (North),” suggested to the IDF General Staff that special permits be requested via letter to locals headquarters in order to prevent waiting in two lines, IDFA-109/782/1958. By 1956, this policy seems to have been mostly implemented, see note 13; Unattributed, “Lost Permit and is not Given Another,” *Al-Itihad*, 11 August 1964, translated into Hebrew in IDFA-837/483/1966, 12.

making the day an entire waste of time.⁹⁴ Asking for explanations could have easily resulted in coarse responses by the low-level officers and civilian clerks of the office. Leftist press, letters of complaint, and even official Israeli archival records report severe violence against those who protested on the scene.⁹⁵ In a memo from July 1956, the chief of staff of the head of the Military Government instructed his subordinates to improve their behavior towards the Arab civilians following many complaints and even a covert investigation by one of the staffers at Advisor on Arab Affairs Office.⁹⁶

The Israeli press in Arabic and Hebrew, not to mention the archived dossiers of several state organs, contain innumerable complaints about the decisions made by a military governor to deny a movement permit or to grant a permit that did not satisfy one's needs.⁹⁷ Occasionally, the rationale for denying a permit seemed to be completely arbitrary. Sa'id abu-Hussein, for instance, a wedding singer from the village of Bi'ineh in the Galilee, recalled several decades later that the governor, "khawaja (Mr.) Dov" did not grant him a permit to leave for a wedding in another village because he "sings for peace."⁹⁸ Arbitrariness was indeed not uncommon: Advisor Josh Palmon, the civilian godfather of the Military Government who fiercely defended its existence and policies against the accusation that it was corrupt, knew that the considerations of the governors were not

⁹⁴ MK Tawfik Tuobi at the Knesset Committee for Security and Foreign Affairs, ISA GL-13926/1; Unattributed, "mi-Ma'alale ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i ba-kfarim ah- 'Araviyim," *Kol Haam*, 4 Jan 1954, archived in ISA GL-13926/1; B. Yekutieli to Branch of the Military Government in the General Staff, "*Al-Ittihad* 20.1.1951," 25 January 1951, IDFA-6/243/1953, 29.

⁹⁵ Yosef Veshitz, "ha-'Itona'i vaha-falah (the Journalist and the peasant)," *Al Hamishmar*, 5 March 1951, archived in ISA G-3834/6; Nazareth residents to Knesset Chair, 7 July 1954, GL-13926/1; On October 1950 Joshua Palmon requested the Military Government Headquarter to investigate a dog attack instigated by an MG clerk, ISA GL-13926/1, (2) 32; Ghatis Faris to Minister of Religion, 31 August 1965, ISA GL-2383/10, 1; Sadeq: *Goleh*, 53-54; Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 212, n.62.

⁹⁶ Pinhas Amir to military governors North, Center, and South, 31 July 1956, ISA GL-17006/12, 5

⁹⁷ Already in January 1951, Josh Palmon mentioned in the Knesset the practice of sending letters of complaint to non-Military Government. See "ha-Va'adah le-'inyane hutz u-bitahon," 30 January 1951, ISA, GL-13926/1

⁹⁸ Joram Meron et al., *Agadah shel kfar: agadot kefarav shel ha-Galil u-meromav - Min Hikayat al-Makan wa-al-Zaman: Hikayat wa-Aqawil min Rubu' al-Jalil* (Giv'at havivah: merkaz ha-yehudi-'Arvi le-shalom, 2005), 22-23.

always “serious, objective and non-discriminatory.”⁹⁹

At the same time, arbitrariness did not always mean pure sadism and was occasionally due to a combination of indifference and ineptitude. Often, the constricting of movement was the result of an across-the-board yet erratic policy of suddenly issuing fewer permits, or with no explanation, not allowing civilians from one particular security area to cross into another one or to enter certain cities. An example of the fickleness of the permit regime can be seen in the decision of a local representative of the military governor in the village Jish to suddenly send certain requests to a higher authority thus prolonging significantly the time it took to issue a permit. In this particular case, the Chief of Staff of the MG Headquarters, Pinhas Amir, instructed that the low-level officer is made aware of his authority to make approvals and to be less restrictive.¹⁰⁰

In other cases, denial of a permit or the threat of denial was also used to penalize individuals who had strayed from neutral political behavior and to coerce individuals into falling in line with various government policies such as the selling of land or agreeing to land swaps as compensation to the Jewish National Fund and the state.¹⁰¹ Evidently, denial of permits was also used to force resident compliance with the directives of civilian ministries, namely, that of Labor, Education, and Health.¹⁰² For example, in 1949, *Al-Ittihad* reported that the military governor denied the entire village of Jadeidi exit permits for months until they produced an examination room for the government doctor who would visit them once a week. In another case, all inhabitants of Sheikh

⁹⁹ Joshua Palmon to the Military Government Department in the Ministry of Defense, “‘Atsumat meha’ah,” 26 February 1952, ISA GL-13926.1 (1), 56.

¹⁰⁰ Pinhas Amir of Military Government Headquarters to Military Government North, July 1956, ISA GL-13926/1 (1) 49; *See* Pinhas Amir to The Advisor of Arab Affairs in which the former simply informs the latter of a sudden decision to cut back on working permits for Nazarenes, 13 March 1952, ISA GL-13926/1.

¹⁰¹ Jiryis, *ha-‘Aravim be-Yisra’el*, 52.

¹⁰² Y. Yekutieli to Secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, “Hagbalot tnu’ah, (Movement Restrictions)” 20 September 1953, ISA GL-17099/1.

Danun village were denied exit permits in 1953 because they claimed an inability to pay municipal fees for the new school that the government had opened in their village.¹⁰³

Those who dissented or acted in a manner that displeased the military authorities were likely to be placed on the “headquarters list” (*reshimat mate*)—a blacklist—and were regularly denied permits or had their movement limited.¹⁰⁴ A large number of complaints and articles against movement restrictions came from card-carrying Communists or those suspected of affiliation with the Party. If there was any ambiguity in this matter during the first year or two after the war, as time passed, military governors made it perfectly clear that it would be harder for individuals associated in any way with MAKI to receive travel permits, either for Party gatherings and social events, one-time personal purposes, or for purposes of fulfilling daily livelihood.¹⁰⁵ The Arabic newspaper of MAPAM—an occasional member of coalition governments—reported of individuals who were denied a permit due to their association with the Zionist yet leftist party.¹⁰⁶

After 1962, an Arab who was denied a permit, whether a Communist or not, could appeal in writing to the Military Government’s regional complaints commissions staffed by an officer as chair, a representative of the Ministry of Interior, and a local Arab. The military governor would authorize the decisions of the commission. Occasionally, these commissions would show a degree

¹⁰³ Unattributed, “Min Qaryat Jadyda,” *Al-Ittihad* 1949 File, 32; Letters to the Prime Minister from Al-Ittihad Association in Umm al-Fahm, June 13 1954 and 12 September 1954; Captain Tefner to the Advisor on Arab Affairs concerning movement permits to the people of Danun and Daoud, 13 September 1953, ISA GL-13926/1 (1), 91.

¹⁰⁴ A memo detailing the procedures for following and updating these lists can be found in IDFA-362/172/1959.

¹⁰⁵ Executive of Arab Workers Congress in Nazareth to MoD, 8 December 1949, Palmon to MG Staff and Eastern Galilee governor, “Ramle,” 17 February 1950, Mustafa Faiz Yassin of the Arab Workers Congress in Arraba to MoD, March 1951, Muhammad Yusuf Shreidi of Al-Ittihad co-op in Umm al-Fahm to MoD and Minister of Trade and Industry, “Shakwa ‘ala Mu‘amalat al-Hakim al-‘Askari fi Umm al-Fahm” 5 June 1953, Yitzhak Shani MG Department in General Staff to MoD, “She’iltah 928,” ISA GL-13926/1 (1), 5-9, 45, 75, 84; Yaacov Shevet, “Issa Elias Hashma-Jaffa,” 26 June 1956, H-14, 85.

¹⁰⁶ Unattributed, “al-Hakim bi-amr Hizbuh” *al-Mirsad*, 10 May 1952, p. 1, 3; Muhammad Rustum Bastuni, “Mamnu‘ wa-ghayr Mumkin” *al-Mirsad*, 21 November 1952, p.4; Unattributed, “‘Od ‘uvdut,” *Kol Haam*, 30 November 1955, archived in ISA, GL-17099/1.

of mercy, like in the case of a Bedouin who in 1964 appealed the decision to grant him a monthly permit instead of standard yearly one, causing him an immense loss of time. The commission's verdict mentions that the appellant was "suspected of associating with infiltrators," but this had been six years beforehand and although it did not fulfill his request for a yearly permit, granted the appellant a bi-monthly one instead. In another case from the Negev, an appellant demanded a yearly permit after his monthly permit was suddenly not renewed. In this case, there is no mentioning why the appellant received only monthly permits or why this monthly permit was denied, but the commission did acknowledge in writing his "rather difficult condition" and reinstated his monthly permits. The Military Government rejected many other appeals by Bedouins because the original cloud of suspicion against the appellant was not lifted. Often the committee requested that the appellant appears in person, a request which for some reason was usually ignored, leaving the movement restriction intact.¹⁰⁷

Another option was to turn to the local mukhtar and through bribes or the implicit promise of future favor have the latter intervene on his behalf with the governor.¹⁰⁸ Membership in Brit Po'ael Yisra'el (ILL, see chapter 2), the Histadrut's Arab section, would also help, though the member occasionally paid a fee of one Israeli Pound per-license. There were also cases where a private Jewish contractor would, through his connections to the governor or a bribe to the local mukhtar, secure a stack of work licenses and would then offset his expenditures by levying a fee from his Arab workers.¹⁰⁹ Yet another way to deal with the inexplicable or "unjust" denial of a permit was to appeal to someone in the Israeli establishment, the President, Head of the Knesset,

¹⁰⁷ Head of Southern Command, "Va'adat tlunut le-ezov Mimshal Tseva'i Negev, 42-43," IDFA 263/518/1967.

¹⁰⁸ Meron, *Agadah shel kfar*, 23, 143; Sadeq, *Goleh*, 52-53.

¹⁰⁹ Memorandum of the Jewish Arab Union for Peace (Igud Yehudi-'Arvi le-shalom) to the Rosen commission, sent 30 July 1958, ISA A-8153.2; Unattributed, "Hoser 'avoda bein 'Arviye ha-Meshulash," *Al Hamishmar*, 11 October 1951, archived in ISA G-3834/6.

Prime Minister, Minister of Defense or a member of Knesset. Often this practice was not entirely futile, and even if the Military Government did not reverse its decision, its officials would supply some sort of explanation.¹¹⁰

If all the obstacles were overcome, a Palestinian Arab who received a permit to exit the security area he or she was confined to, still had to reach their destination. Generally poor, most Arabs relied on public transportation. Reports from the period reveal that the queues for the busses were excessive. One reporter claimed that workers in Nazareth resorted to waking up at 1.00am to find a decent place in line.¹¹¹ An *Al-Ittihad* article from 1959 reported that the approximately 350 workers of Umm al-Fahm were serviced by only two buses going directly to Tel Aviv.¹¹² Indicative of how the queue to the bus was a central feature of the Arab's degraded quality of life is the fact that the military authorities intervened with the civic public transportation co-ops to secure for mukhtars a special photo ID that would allow them to cut in line.¹¹³ This favor bestowed upon the collaborating dignitaries was a way to reward them but probably also served as a reminder for the general Arab public that those who co-operated with the authorities had access to a better life.

In principle, then, obtaining a permit was an ordered process that forced the Palestinian Arab to engage with the military authorities, would subject him or her to a short interrogation, and would enable them to reach their destination. In practice, a slew of factors stood in the way of the

¹¹⁰ Emile Habibi to David Ben-Gurion, 2 April 1958, Tawfik Toubi to David Ben-Gurion, 17 August 1958, Office of the Advisor of Arab Affairs to Prime Minister, 19 October 19 1958, ISA-GL13904/10.

¹¹¹ Unattributed, "Mahsor be-emtse tahbura be-Natseret, (shortage of means of transportation in Nazareth)," *Davar*, 2 September 1951, archived in ISA G-3834/6; An *Al-Ittihad* article from 1959 reports of a bus filled with workers from Shefa-'Amr to Haifa that tipped over. The report blamed the fact that the bus was filled with 70 workers while being designed to carry 30. Apparently, this was the second time such an occurrence happened within in a year see Unattributed "inqilab bas bi Shefa 'amir" *Al-Ittihad*, 3 March 1959.

¹¹² Unattributed, "Fi Umm al-Fahm," *Al-Ittihad*, 13 March 1959, p.4.

¹¹³ K. Kadish General Operation to Mr. Herzog, DAN Bus co., "Te'udat knisa lelo tor le-netsigay kfarim (certificate for no queue to village representatives)," 27 June, 1955, H-14, 26.

Palestinian Arab who wanted to reach a specific destination: long lines, erratic policies, arbitrary denials, substantiated and unsubstantiated suspicions, and bad luck. Unlike the causes, the results of not receiving a license, however, were hardly trivial.

A recurring theme in many letters of those who pleaded or complained in the press is that the MG policies left them with no means to “provide for their families.”¹¹⁴ To what degree did the Military Government sentence the Palestinian Arabs to actual hunger? It is hard to tell. One Communist interviewee from the Galilee, whose social and familial circle constantly suffered from targeted restrictions, mentioned that those who had means gave to those who needed.¹¹⁵ However, had the permit regime only caused minor disruptions to the livelihood of the Palestinian Arabs, then the “disobeying” of the permit regime would probably not have left the historical trace that it did.

Disobeying the Permit Regime

In his testimonial novella on the inner workings of Military Government Negev, *The Ugly Governor (ha-Moshel ha-mekho'ar)*, Baruch Gitlis created a dialogue between a Bedouin character and the governor character. In this dialogue, the Bedouin informs the governor that “many (of us Bedouins) do not come (to the offices of the governor) to request a permit, after all, you will not catch us.” The Bedouin then continued: “you cannot guard all the roads and waysides. And we, we cannot afford to wait...”¹¹⁶ Indeed, though many Arabs sought permits, commonly, however, they would not fully comply with its stipulations. They would either travel to places

¹¹⁴ Lutfi Butrus Zureik to the Minister of Defense, “Eilabun [Heb.],” 3 June 1953, ISA GL-13926/1 (1), 76, 82; Unattributed, “Ketsad nir’ot ‘ha-hakalot’ ba-metsi’ut (how to the ‘alleviations’ look like in reality),” 15 April 1954, *Herut*, Al-Ittihad Co-op Umm al-Fahm to the Prime Minister, 29 August 1954, ISA GL-13926/1 (2) 25, 31, 34.

¹¹⁵ Samira Khouri, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Nazareth, Israel, September 2014.

¹¹⁶ Gitlis, *ha-Moshel ha-mekho'ar*, 119–20.

where the permit would not specify, outstay the hours of the permit, or not even bother obtaining a permit, to begin with.¹¹⁷ An untitled and anonymous official report from July 1952 commissioned by the government's Committee on Arab Affairs concluded that ordinance 125 exists only *de jure* as "thousands of Arabs enter and leave [the closed security areas] without a permit." The report then quotes the number 2,000 as an estimate for the Arab workers living permanently in Israel's coastal towns without a permit. Another reality that the report reveals is that the ordeal of getting a permit would deter those with a spotty record or MAKI affiliation from even bothering to come to the offices of the Military Government. This problem, the report argued, made the movement restrictions "burdensome [only] for the weak and "decent" among the Arabs who are willing to waste a day or two waiting in line...." The report concluded that unless the budget and personnel are allocated to enforce the permit regime, Israel would be better off abolishing most of the movement restrictions altogether.¹¹⁸

Alina Korn's meticulous research on Israel's law enforcement and the Palestinian Arab citizens provides important yet partial figures regarding the reality of the permit regime. Korn's queries of Israel's criminal record database show that in the years 1949, 1950, and 1951, the number of persons convicted for disobeying the permit regime was 50, 101, and 106 respectively. In 1952, this number rose sharply to 882 (an 832% increase) and afterward remained at an average of about 1836 arrests per year until 1966. The comparatively low number of convictions between 1949 and 1951 seems to correspond with the 1952 report quoted above which attests to the relative ease with which Arabs moved about without a permit. There is also reason to believe that the sharp increase in the number of convictions was due to Israel's increased enforcement of the permit

¹¹⁷ Sadeq, *Goleh*, 52.

¹¹⁸ Unattributed, "ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i," 14 August 1952, ISA GL-13904/9, 220.

regime with additional resources, in particular, the Border Patrol corps, a para-military police force created in 1953 for purposes of patrolling large swaths of the Israeli periphery. Nevertheless, the increase in recorded permit regime infringements might also have to do with the gradual stabilization of the borders and the slow alleviation of Israel's "infiltrator" problem or perhaps the consolidation of the Military Government's legal system and bureaucratic registration procedures. If indeed after 1952 more Arabs were caught disobeying the permit regime regulations, then the number of convictions remained relatively steady—attesting to the fact that enforcement and punishment were still not enough of deterrence in the face of the Palestinian Arabs' basic necessity to get around.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, official civic and military documentation and other sources from the years after 1952 continued to suggest that a large number of Arabs left and entered security zones without a permit or infringed on the terms of the permit they held.¹²⁰

As for the other regions of the Military Government, Korn's conviction data from the years 1953-1959 suggest that the alleviations to the permit regime did not contribute to lowering the number of people who transgressed the permit regime—1960 saw an all-time peak of 3,064 Arabs convicted of movement restriction violations. If indeed the permit regime was eased to a degree where fewer Palestinian Arabs were compelled to break the military's law, this can only be gleaned from the figures of Arabs convicted permit violations *after* 1960, reaching an all-time low of 1,194 in 1966.

In my own search through the Israeli military archives, I was able to find monthly reports from Military Government Negev which contain relatively consistent numbers on arrests and trials for transgressing the various movement limitations. Making certain cautious deductions from the

¹¹⁹ Alina Korn, "Peshi'ah, Status politi va-akhifat hok: ha-mi'ut ha-'Arvi be-Yisra'el be-Tekufat ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i 1948-1966" (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 182.

¹²⁰ Galilee governor to Head of North Command, "Report April-May 1953," IDFA 64/540/1955, 3.

available information, it can be concluded that throughout the period in question, the monthly number of Negev residents caught in a certain location without a proper permit was steady and stood on a few dozen individuals per month. The steadiness in arrests and convictions could be attributed to the fact that the Negev hardly enjoyed any substantial alleviations that the two other regions began to experience from the late 1950s. Furthermore, not only were the general restrictions kept in place, a total ban on Bedouin entry into the Ashkelon and Eilat urban centers remained in place and strictly enforced up until the end of the researched period.

It is difficult to assess the number of Arabs who on a regular or daily basis infringed upon the permit regime. Snippets of information from anecdotal material do however help in reconstructing the motivation for and the risks taken when an individual set foot where he or she knew they were not allowed to be. Medical emergency, material need, and familial obligations coupled with an eagerness to avoid the humiliation of the military governor's offices were among the main reasons to exit closed regions of the Military Government without a permit.¹²¹ Family providers who for some reason or another were denied a permit for purposes of work or trade would commonly risk leaving restricted regions. Also, employment in certain work locals, such as restricted Jewish settlements and other places in Israel deemed "sensitive," would have been denied a permit to begin with. The underage could seldom get a permit and though at times would escape the confines of the security zone out of a sense of youthful adventurism, mostly took risks out of a need to support their family.¹²² The transgression of children would also incur fines which

¹²¹ Gitlis, *ha-Moshel ha-mekho'ar*, 120. PA, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Nazareth, Israel, September 2014.

¹²² Mustafa Murar remembers that children from Jaljulia would sneak into Petah Tikva and Kfar Saba to buy bread for their families. If they were caught, Murar remembered that the police would confiscate the bread and the children would return home empty handed, Mustafa Murar, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jaljulia, Israel, November 2014.

could be substituted by a few weeks of prison time served by a parent.¹²³ One such child, Ahmad Shahade, a 12-year-old boy from Umm al-Fahm who sold garlic on the wayside, was killed by a soldier from the Military Government unit who shot him in the back while he was trying to escape being caught. The soldier, Baruch Buganim, was found guilty of manslaughter and acquitted of murder—his Mizrahi temperament mentioned as an extenuating circumstance. An even more poignant example of the Israeli establishment’s coarseness and of the open-air prison in which the Arabs lived is the fact that in order to identify his son’s body in the Karkur police station, the child’s father had to apply for a permit.¹²⁴ Whoever transgressed the permit regime and entered a predominately Jewish city for purposes of wage labor or peddling, would constantly have to worry about police raids which tore Arabs away from their place of work, humiliated them in public and took them away in broad daylight.¹²⁵ Others were pulled off buses in random searches or caught in check posts erected by the military and the police. Mustafa Murar, a former teacher from the Triangle, recalled the anxiety he experienced once he and two of his friends were asked by a Jewish civilian to present their permit and one in their party apparently lost his. When asked in the interview why they had felt beholding to this particular person he replied: “all Jews were like policemen to us.”¹²⁶

Being caught without a permit usually meant a court summons and verdict from a military

¹²³ Unattributed, “Yeladim ‘Aravim niknesu (Arab Children were Fined),” *Kol Haam* 19 October 1953, Unattributed, “Yeladim niknesu,” *Al-Hamishmar*, 11 May 1953, p. 4; Unattributed, “Mishlahat Yehudit ‘Aravit,” *Kol Haam*, December 27 1953, archived in ISA GL-13926/1.

¹²⁴ Unattributed, “Hayal she-harag yeled ‘Aravi,” *Heruth*, 11 January 1952, p.6; Unattributed, “Mishpat retsah yeled,” *Haaretz*, 1 November 1951, archived in G-3834/6.

¹²⁵ Military Government Negev to Operations General Staff, “Report from-25.10.1952 to 25.11.1952 [Heb.],” IDFA 20/405/1954, 7; Unattributed, “‘Asarot ‘Aravim ne‘tsru,” *Haaretz*, 12 December 1951, archived in ISA G-3834/6; Unattributed, “Pe ‘ulut neged ‘Aravim meshotetim,” *Haaretz*, 24 October 1956, archived at ISA GL-13926/1; Unattributed, “Mishlahat yehudit ‘Arvit,” *Kol Haam*, 27 December 1953, archived in ISA GL-13926/1; Korn, “Military Government , Political Control and Crime : The Case of Israeli Arabs,” 181n41.

¹²⁶ Mustafa Murar, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jaljulia, Israel, August 2014.

tribunal (*shiput mahir*). After 1963, defendants could appeal the results of these trials. The records of these tribunals were almost entirely incinerated by the IDF, except for one box which contains court cases from irregular dates, mainly from 1951-1952 and 1959.¹²⁷ Depending on the record of the offender and the severity of the offense—a standard determined by the subjective perspective of the military alone—Arabs during the 1950s and 1960s faced fines (approx. 60%), prison time (less than 9% of the time), or a choice between the two (30%). Though most prison sentences did not exceed a month and hardly any exceeded six, the movement regime nevertheless was a key factor in associating the entire Arab population in Israel with criminality.¹²⁸

The press is filled with casual reports of ordinary Arabs who were caught disobeying the permit regime. Examples include the four Rameh peasants who harvested the closed-off olive orchards of their own village and were fined 15 Palestine pounds each, or the twelve Bedouins caught in Be'er Sheva without a permit and were then fined 30 pounds each. In the case of the Bedouin shepherd, the court took into consideration his inability to know the exact borders of the closed area and thus gave him a “light sentence” of 10 days in prison or a 40 pound fine.¹²⁹ The court protocols reveal that reduced fines were given to the elderly, the underage, and women caught without a permit or the proper one. Furthermore, the court protocols suggest that permit offenses were rather common and did not produce the harshest sentences. For example, while the records from 1951 show that a permit violation would incur a fine of 0.05-3 pounds or a few weeks in prison, hiding an “infiltrator” was punishable by a year’s prison sentence. Press accounts from later years report on fines of between 5 Israeli pounds to 50, though the fines could reach into the

¹²⁷ The box has been located by researcher Irit Ballas, I have gained permission browse the content of the box and make notes. Hereafter, Ballas box notes.

¹²⁸ Korn, “Military Government , Political Control and Crime.”

¹²⁹ See note 28.

hundreds of pounds and up to six months of mandatory prison time.¹³⁰ Considering that in 1955 the monthly salary for an Israeli worker employed in public works was between 36-55 pounds and that the wages of Arabs were significantly lower than those of Jews—one can conclude that these fines devastated an Arab family’s economic condition.¹³¹

As was mentioned, many Palestinian Arabs were not fully knowledgeable of the restrictions that they disobeyed. Well informed or not, Arabs caught without the proper permit commonly claimed ignorance of their misdeed and though in certain cases the military courts would apply leniency, seldom would they acquit on those grounds.¹³² In two court cases from 1959, the defendants, both shepherds from the Galilee, claimed that they had no idea that they entered a closed area. The first defendant claimed that his employer dropped him off at the restricted area and that he could not, due to his illiteracy, read the details of the permit he held. The second defendant claimed that he had herded in that particular spot for 11 years, frequently encountering soldiers patrolling the area and was never stopped. The two received fines/terms of 25 pounds/20 days and 15 pounds/20 days respectively.¹³³ As touched upon above, in 1965 the Be’er Sheva military judge admitted in a guilty verdict that “it is not clear how an ordinary civilian, with no knowledge of topography or maps and a compass, could know where the borders of the closed area are.” Taking this detail into consideration, the court gave a “light punishment” of 40 pounds fine or 10 days in prison.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ See Maj General Moyal, Head Military Attorney General to Chief of Staff, “Bakashat haninah (pardon request),” 4 May 1952 and 9 May 1952, IDFA 30/68/1955, 5, 6.

¹³¹ Shoshana Maryoma-Marom, “Relief Work as a Component of Social-Employment Policy in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s” PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2007, 42.

¹³² See the acquittal of a 17 year old young man because the MG failed to notify him in, unattributed, “Takdim be-mishpat ha-tseva’i (Precedent in Military Court),” *Al Hamishmar*, 7 December 1955, 3.

¹³³ Ballas box notes.

¹³⁴ Lt. Colonel Aharon Alpren, “Gzar din REDACTED ro’e mi-shevet Abu Rabi’a,” IDFA, 264/518/1967, 30.

Palestinian Arabs could occasionally make the complexity, confusion, and inconsistencies of the permit regime work for them. One example of the resourcefulness Arabs employed while taking advantage of the permit regime's clumsiness can be found in a military memo from 1956 which pointed out that Arabs who were residents of highly restricted areas in the Galilee and were caught without a permit in the Jewish towns of Afula, Rosh Pina, and Eilon (a kibbutz), could and would, at all times, simply claim that they were just on their way to the local police station to receive a permit to travel outside their restricted region.¹³⁵ Another factor that worked to the advantage of those who disobeyed the permit regime is the fact that unlike other segregative systems erected by settlers, Arabs could more easily pass as Jews.¹³⁶

Those who took a chance and left the closed security area without the proper permit also subjected themselves to the random ineptitude, kindness, or viciousness of the police officer or soldier whom they happened to encounter. An interviewee who traveled from Nazareth in the Galilee to Umm al-Fahm in the Triangle recalls that as she was walking on foot in the pouring rain, soldiers mistook her for a Jew and offered to give her a ride, which she politely refused. When she reached Umm al-Fahm, the soldiers asked her for her permit and dismissed her once she handed them an expired permit which did not even grant her access to Umm al-Fahm, to begin with. The interviewee, a high-profile MAKI activist, mentioned that she used old permits numerous times when inspected by soldiers. Two other interviewees from the Nazareth area recall that during bus inspections, Arabs would deceive the soldiers and police officers by stealthily

¹³⁵ Capt. Dvir Meir, "Tsav shinuy ve-'idkkun," IDFA, 362/172/1959.

¹³⁶ Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 42; Hanna Abu Hanna, *Mahr al-Buma: Sira* (Haifa: Maktabat kul Shay', 2004), 164–66.; In November 1952, a military report mentions Bedouins "dressed in European garb" who work without a permit in Be'er Sheva see: Military Government Negev to Operations, General Staff, "Report 25.10.1952 to 25.11.1952 [Heb.]," IDFA-20/405/1954, 7.

passing around permits from those who had them to those who did not.¹³⁷

A telling indication that the permit regime was essentially a game of chance rather than a disciplined and bureaucratic system was that it featured numerous events of extreme physical brutality and abuse of force. This was the case for shepherds from the village of Tarshiha who, if caught by the police with their herds in an allegedly forbidden area, would be subject to faux military drills and forced to stand on one leg while being slapped and beaten around. When asked about the legal sanctions that one could face if he were caught herding in forbidden areas, an interviewee in the Negev who was at the time a young shepherd smiled and told me that they would simply be beaten senselessly.¹³⁸ Considering the disruption and financial ruin that a fine, a court summoning or an arrest could bring, perhaps they considered themselves lucky.¹³⁹

The Demise of the Permit Regime

A meticulous description of the alleviations would be as difficult to produce and as uninformative as the attempt to detail the restrictions which they undid. For example, the alleviations that the government announced in August 1959, more than a decade after the establishment of the permit regime, were supposedly substantial. From then on, the residents of the majority population of the Galilee and the Triangle were allowed daytime access (4am – 8 pm)—no permit required—to several important urban centers: Acre, Haifa, Hadera, Netanya, Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Petah Tikva, Lydda, and Ramle. A critical exception to this alleviation was the zone containing the city of Nazareth and its environs—the Galilee’s largest Arab urban center

. Furthermore, to prevent the abuse of this comprehensive benefit, Arab residents were ordered to

¹³⁷ Interview with Samira Khouri and PA.

¹³⁸ Sheikh Yousef, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Segev Shalom, Israel, September 2014.

¹³⁹ Jamil Shahade, “ha-Ezrah ha-‘Arvi ne’nak tahat ‘ol ha-kipuah,” *Al Hamishmar*, 6 October 1955, 2.

use specific roads when traveling to the permitted cities. Practically, by 1959, many Arabs already had year-long permits, but now, officially, most residents of the Galilee and all those of the Triangle now received “collective permits” like their Jewish counterparts who were residents of these areas. Nevertheless, there were still many limitations on free Arab movement. For instance, for the residents of the Triangle, entry into the nearby Jewish town of Kfar Saba, a commercial and employment center, was still subject to a permit.¹⁴⁰

The alleviations of October 1963, brought upon by the rise of Levi Eshkol to the prime ministership, widened the number of Galilee and Triangle residents exempt from the need to carry any permits to approximately 120,000, and in January 1966, this alleviation reached the Negev and the residents of the city of Nazareth.¹⁴¹ From the often contradictory information found in official archives and secondary sources, it could be generalized that the alleviations pertained to the length of permit validity, the ease at which permits could be obtained, the number of work-permits distributed, and the increasing length of the list of places which did not require permits. The first groups which experienced relief were, in a clear divide and conquer maneuver, were the Druze, and the Circassians. The government granted the two communities, whose sons served in the military, more significant exemptions from movement restrictions earlier on, and freed them altogether from the need to carry a permit in 1963.¹⁴²

Sabri Jiryis, who obviously had no intention to underestimate the severity of the permit regime, admits that the alleviations from the year 1957 and on, meant a positive change in the daily reality for many Arabs. At the same time, while the Military Government eased its grip on the movement of most Arab citizens, it increased its usage of warrants that targeted the movement of

¹⁴⁰ S. Angel, “Hakalot ha-tnu‘ah,” *Davar*, 14 August 1959, 1.

¹⁴¹ Military correspondent, “Hakalot ba-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” *Davar*, 19 January 1966, 2.

¹⁴² Unattributed, “7 hakalot ba-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” *Davar*, 21 February 1962, 1.

individual Arabs deemed worthy of close monitoring. These warrants frequently included a stipulation that the individual whose movement was restricted appear and sign his name in the local police station at least twice a day.¹⁴³

A tangible example of the change in the permit regime can be found in the monthly statistics produced by the Military Government Negev command. The reports, summarized in table 1, indicate that with time, the Bedouins' exited the closed region of the Military Government with greater ease as the reports state a steady growth in the number of permits the military issued.

Table 1: Exit Permits Issued by Military Government Negev

Sample Month	September 1952	September 1960	September 1961	September 1964	Increase %, 1952-1964 (adjusted to population growth)
Temporary Exit Permits	100	2970	3620	287	74 %
Permanent Exit Permits	65	83	95	5269	4825 %
Total	165	3053	3715	5556	1945 %

Furthermore, the table suggests that somewhere in 1962, the Military Government issued more yearly “permanent” permits—initially only granted to sheikhs and other privileged individuals—than “temporary” ones.

Despite the concrete effects of the alleviations, the Arab responses to them were expectedly ambivalent. The persistent need for a permit, the continual restrictions placed on entering certain locals, and the curfew hour still placed upon all residents of the Military Government would have

¹⁴³ Jiryis, *ha- 'Aravim be-Yisra'el*, 33.

remained a humiliating burden. Furthermore, with every round of alleviations, it became more obvious that the “security needs,” which the government claimed necessitated the restrictions, were patently false. Nevertheless, Arab activists credited themselves and their struggle for bringing about these real albeit small changes.¹⁴⁴

The demise of the Military Government in December 1966 did not end the Emergency Regulations and the parceling of closed security areas. However, from this date, all movement restrictions placed upon Arab citizens of Israel were upheld by the Israeli police and according to Yair Baumel, were actually enforced more efficiently causing a large measure of frustration among the Arabs in Israel.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, after the MG was canceled, the number of people under personal movement restrictions drastically decreased because there were no more governors who sanction people for petty insubordination. Shmuel Toledano, the Advisor on Arab Affairs, wanted to make that fact public to show that the closing of the MG made a difference. The military’s top leadership refused to do so for fear that it would prove that many of the MG’s past restrictions were arbitrary.¹⁴⁶ In June 1967, the Military Government was re-instated for two weeks and only in November of 1968 were all collective movement restrictions upon Arab citizens lifted. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to the actions of Arabs and their Jewish allies which facilitated the developments discussed above.

Resistance to the Permit Regime

¹⁴⁴ Unattributed, “Yajib Ilgh’a al-Hukm al-‘Askari Ilgha’an Tamman wa ‘Ajilan” *Al-Ittihad*, 9 July 1956, .1; Unattributed, “Hal Ghayyarat Zawba’at al-Takhfifat fi Jawhar al-Hukm al ‘Askari Shay,” *Al-Ittihad*, 28 August 1959, 2; Unattributed, “al-Takhfifat al-Ashkolyya al-Muqtarha Munawarat al-Hukm al-‘Askari wa Siyasat al-Idtihad,” *Al-Ittihad*, 1 October 1963, 1.

¹⁴⁵ Yair Baumel, “ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i ve-tahalikh bitulo,” 155–56; Operation to Chief of Staff, “Doh bitahon ezori,” 8 January 1967, IDFA-67/117/1970, 91.

¹⁴⁶ Operations to Chief of Staff, 19 January 1967, IDFA-67/117/1970, 86.

On Monday, December 14, 1953, Amin ‘Abdallah and Sa‘id Hayder, menial workers from the Nazareth-adjacent village of Yafa who were denied exit permits for months on end, seated themselves in front of the permit offices of the Military Government, in a building known as the Moskoviyya. The two demanded to be reissued a permit. ‘Abdallah also brought, for all to see, his wife, four boys, and other dependents. From here on the details of the versions begin to differ. According to the Arabic-language Communist newspaper *Al-Ittihad*, on that Monday, the governor acceded to granting permits to the two workers if they would quietly come to the offices the following day, but according to other news sources, the governor made no such concession. In any case, the next day ‘Abdallah and Haydar came back accompanied by more workers demanding a permit. This time, the governor and the forces at his disposal were less tolerant, arresting the protesters and forcefully dispersing the crowds that gathered at the scene. The police arrested Amin, and according to *Al-Ittihad*, they also beat and severely injured him. In response, MAKI activists prompted a strike of all commercial activity and held a large rally condemning the Military Government and the permit regime. The next day, more Arab workers came to stage a sit-in at the Moskoviyya demanding a permit, and it seems that a scuffle occurred between them and a military police soldier who in turn fired shots into the air. The police arrested three of the four. The Military Government’s forceful reaction was accompanied by the summoning of the “collaborative” Arab dignitaries and asking them to exert their influence in cooling the atmosphere. On Thursday, the Communists organized a successful commerce strike joined by non-MAKI shop owners and factory workers. During these days MAKI activists sent petitions to Israeli officials and published declarations condemning the Military Government and the permit

regime.¹⁴⁷

To fully reconstruct these events a few contextual remarks are needed. Concerning Nazareth's heroes of the day, 'Abdallah and Haydar, they were indeed unemployed and in genuine need of work permits. The authenticity of their protest must have contributed to their potency. At the same time, it is probable, as mentioned in the Hebrew *Haaretz*, that the two were MAKI activists and that the Party conspired to disguise their political maneuver as the struggle of ordinary workers. Planned or not, this MAKI agitation came at a time when the Military Government cut back drastically on exit permits for work purposes, exacerbating the city's unemployment problem and bringing it to this boiling point.¹⁴⁸ Therefore, the Hebrew press admitted that although MAKI initiated the events, they were largely supported by the rest of the population, even ardent anti-Communist Arabs.

As quickly as they started, the demonstrations against the Military Government and the permit regime quieted down, and although a few months later the government announced a round of alleviations, it is hard to assess the extent to which these protests factored into this decision. Incidentally, Amin 'Abdallah's problems were not solved as his name appears in a petition sent by Communists later in 1954 as someone who is still repeatedly denied exit permits.¹⁴⁹ In any case, significant changes to the permit regime in Nazareth continued for more than a decade in the future. Nevertheless, this sit-in and others following seem to have been a method for the Arab citizens to exert some form of will upon the Military Government. These occurrences in late 1953 in Nazareth

¹⁴⁷ See, Unattributed "Toshave Natseret mafginim," *Al Hamishmar*, 17 December 1953, .2; Unattributed, "Shvita Klalit be-Natseret," 18 December 1953, 1, Unattributed, "'Atsuma be-drishah le-tnu'ah hofshit," *Al Hamishmar* 20 December 1953, 1; Unattributed, "ha-Shvita be-Natseret nikhshela," *Maariv*, 17 December 1953, 4, Mordechai Tanenbaum, "Shalosh yeri'ot ba-avir," *Maariv*, 22 December 1953,.2; Unattributed, "Natseret," *Davar*, 16 December 1953, 4; Unattributed, "MAKI irgena shvita be-Natseret," *Davar*, 18 December 1953, 10; Unattributed, "ha-Komunistim irgenu shvita be-Natseret," *Hazofe*, 18 December 1953, 8.

¹⁴⁸ M. Ben-Shahar, "Nasteret: dud roteah," *Herut*, August 13 1953, 2.

¹⁴⁹ Nazarene Petition to Knesset Chair, 21 July 1954, ISA GL-13926/1 (3), 34.

prove that the permit regime was not beyond reproach and, no less important, caused what was arguably a very divided and brittle community to momentarily unite.

However inspiring and heroic, the sit-ins were ultimately a most basic act of civil disobedience which instead of challenging the Military Government's ultimate control of movement, embraced it. In hindsight, the sit-in questioned neither the permit regime itself nor the Military Government's authority, not to mention the sovereignty of the Jewish state. Furthermore, despite their potential to transform small-scale grievances into mass protests, I have only been able to trace a few other cases of sit-ins at the offices of the Military Governor, and those did not conjure mass support like the case mentioned above.¹⁵⁰ As the years progressed, the Arab resistance to the permit regime did grow larger in scale, but it was subsumed into the organized political activity against the entire apparatus of the Military Government.

In the winter of 1955-1956, a large-scale Arab wave of demonstrations exposed the weaknesses of the permit regime again. What instigated the Arab show of force was the closing off of almost 2,000,000 dunams of land for military training grounds. The overwhelming majority of these lands were located in the Negev, yet the most painful sequestering of land was in the Western Galilee, particularly in a 68,000 dunam plot near the large village of Sakhnin known as "Area 9."¹⁵¹

The Arabs in Israel, particularly in affected villages in the Western Galilee, saw the state's sequestering of land for training purposes as a step on the way to turning it over into Jewish hands. Indeed significant portions of Area 9 were eventually allotted for the Jewish settlements, including the town of Karmiel. The archival evidence inconclusively shows that Israeli civil and military

¹⁵⁰ See unattributed, "le-Ahar ha-shvita," *Kol Haam*, archives in ISA GL-13926/1 (3), 45; Unattributed, "Tkhuna raba," *Kol Haam*, 2 February 1957, archived in ISA GL-17099/3.

¹⁵¹ Amiram Oren and Raphael Regev, *Erets be-haki: karka u-bitahon be-Yisra'el* (Jerusalem: Karmel, 2008), 45–48.

authorities foresaw the eventual confiscation of some of these territories from the get-go.¹⁵² Publicly, however, state officials, including Ben-Gurion himself, insisted that the sequestering of land was merely for the army's training needs.¹⁵³ Coincidentally, the decision to close off of these areas also occurred at a time when the public criticism of the Military Government coerced the MAPAI government into appointing an inquiry committee on the workings of the Military Government.

In this context, the head of the Military Government Branch in the IDF's Central Command issued at the beginning of February a detailed order on how to implement the closing off of the regions. The order specified various steps to achieve this goal, including meetings with heads of villages to inform about the exact borders of the closed area, announcing that all those working in fields and quarries in the area will be entitled to a permit, and to promise that permits will be readily available. The order was explicitly drawn to alleviate the "commotion within the Arab public" and to "prevent various political elements" from taking advantage of the closing off of areas.¹⁵⁴ It failed. The reaction to the closing off of pasture and agricultural land was, expectedly, outrage.

One form of protest against the closure of land was the organized rallying of Arabs in public demonstrations. Initially, in January 1956, the two leftist parties, MAPAM and MAKI, cooperated in the organization of a convention in Nazareth. By early February, they were

¹⁵² Maj. M. Sternberg, Headquarters of the IDF Advocate General, "Hafikhat hahzakat TSAHAHL be-shithe imunim le-hezka hukit (Turning IDF hold over training areas to legal hold)," ISA GL-19077/1; Mordechai Allon, Department for the Development of the Galilee to The Advisor of Arab Affairs (Palmon), "Shetakh imunim 9," March 14 1956, ISA, GL-19077/3.

¹⁵³ Unattributed "Va'adat ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i," *Davar*, 16 February 1956, 2; Unattribute, "ha-Shtahim ba-Galil," *Davar*, 11 March 1956, archived in ISA GL-19077/3; Yehezkel Kadmi, "Shtahim sgurim'—ma mashma'utam?," *Herut*, 7 February 1956, 2; According to *The Jerusalem Post* the majority of the closed off area were state-owned, see "Closed Areas' Mainly Jewish," 15 March 1956, archived in 19077/3.

¹⁵⁴ Col. Mishael Shaham, Head of Military Government Branch, "Shitat sgira shithe imunim," February 1956, ISA GL-19077/3.

exchanging blows via their mouthpieces in Arabic and Hebrew. The Zionist MAPAM accused MAKI of diverting the wide-based movement to abolish the Military Government into “nationalist” territory by directly going against the policy of the “Judaification of the Galilee.” MAPAM then organized its own Jewish-Arab convention in Haifa.¹⁵⁵ MAKI, in turn, declared MAPAM’s convention as a betrayal of its own Arab supporters. The two conventions did eventually take place, the attendance in Nazareth suffering from a blockade on the city placed by the Military Government. The MAKI convention naturally pushed the envelope; its speakers demanding an end to Jewish settlement policies and the return of the refugees.¹⁵⁶

Another form of protest came directly from the peasant constituency. As soon as the government announced the closure, Arab villagers forwarded their written protests signed by dignitaries and rank-and-file peasants. The petitions were a common and traditional means for rural Arabs to express their grievances in front of the sovereign. These petitions, however, expressed an added sense of outrage and urgency.¹⁵⁷ One petition, archived in files of the Advisor, explicitly stated the peasants of the village Fassuta:

...[we] will not agree to receive permits to enter agricultural lands which are allegedly needed for military training[,] since these lands are our patrimony and if the government would like to use them for military maneuvers, all it must do is inform on the dates, and we shall refrain to enter them. Undoubtedly, these fake maneuvers will not last more than ten days.¹⁵⁸

This petition reflects a reality of large numbers of villagers unwilling to cooperate with the

¹⁵⁵ Unattributed “Mahar yipatah,” *Al Hamishmar*, 3 February 1956, archived at ISA, GL-17099/3.

¹⁵⁶ See *Al-Ittihad*, 14 February 1956, 2.

¹⁵⁷ See translated petitions from the villages of Rame (29/12/1955), Sakhnin (23/12/1955), Sakhnin, Arraba, Deir Hana, (24/12/1955), Bu‘eine and Deir al-Asad (30/12/1955), ISA GL-17099/1; see also petitions from Deir al-Asad (6/1/1956), Arab al-Su‘ad (6/1/1956), Umm al-Fahm (16/1/1956), Kafr Yasif (18/1/1956), Deir Hana (21/1/1956), Fassuta (31/1/1956), Shefa ‘Amer municipality (9/2/1956), Hurfeish (12/2/1956), Bu‘eine and Deir al-Asad (4/3/1956), ISA GL-17099/3.

¹⁵⁸ Petition written for the Military Governor North by the mukhtar of Fassuta and signed by 17 dignitaries, 31 January 1956, ISA GL-19077/3.

authorities on what they correctly perceived as a way to deny them access to land. An Arab informer reported that after the closure was announced in a meeting between the military governor and several of the Galilee mukhtars, the latter apparently convened in a Sakhnin mosque where the imam made “inciting” remarks, calling for non-cooperation and collective actions of demonstrations. According to this informant, the speeches invoked the Great Arab Revolt against the British in 1936 and even the 1948 War against “the Jews.”¹⁵⁹ The mukhtars’ widespread refusal to cooperate with the closure of territories was accompanied by the rank-and-file villagers entering the closed territories *en-masse* without a permit. Only a few individuals participating in these 300-1000 strong demonstrations of disobedience were arrested and fined hundreds of Pounds. Solidarity strikes for those who were arrested soon followed in Bi’ina and Deir al-Asad.

The Hebrew press reacted with alarm to these developments. *Haaretz* quoted governmental sources claiming that “a hidden hand incited [the villagers] to passive (*pasivit*) resistance.”¹⁶⁰ *Maariv* reported on the semi-nomadic ‘Arab al-Sua’id which acted in a minor “mutiny” and refused to exit their dwellings in area 9.¹⁶¹ An earlier op-ed in the establishment *Davar* found it concerning that the two conventions mentioned above had a large peasant constituency which normally did not care about the grand ideologies of the sponsoring parties.¹⁶² Even MAPAM, which declared its objection to the closures and to the Military Government in general, circulated a pamphlet warning the “Arab public from being led by provocations of adventurous elements.”¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ Letter to the Israeli Chief of Staff, February 1956, ISA GL-17099/2.

¹⁶⁰ Unattributed, “Va’adat ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” *Haaretz*, 2 February 1956, archived in ISA, GL-17099/3.

¹⁶¹ “Shevet bedu’i ba-Galil,” *Maariv*, 4 April 1956, archived at ISA, GL-17099/3.

¹⁶² K. Menahem, “Shne kinnusim ‘Arviyim,” *Davar*, 17 February 1956, 9.3; *see also* Unattributed, “‘Aravim musatim palshu le-shetah sagur,” *Haaretz*, 7 March 1956, archived in ISA GL-17099/3.

¹⁶³ Unattributed, “ha-Toshavim ha-‘Arvim nikra’im lo le-higarar aharay provokatsyot,” *Al Hamishmar*, archived in ISA GL-17099/3.

The MAPAM mouthpiece also condemned “various political factions which push the Arab public into acts of desperation and passive resistance.”¹⁶⁴ A common concern in the Hebrew press was that the villagers had been incited by MAKI and unknown nationalist elements.¹⁶⁵

MAKI indeed encouraged and valorized the resistance of the villagers, yet there is no evidence that it directly orchestrated them nor did I find any direct Communist credit taking.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, a delegation of mukhtars to the Knesset strongly denied affiliation with the party. In this meeting, the mukhtars explained their refusal to apply for permits for fear that this would count as a waiver of their claim but emphasized that in no way were they against the military conducting exercises in those territories from time to time. Early on, the government and military decided, as an act of appeasement, to supply licenses for three months at a time, rather than the standard one month. Eventually, a *modus vivendi*, probably similar to the one that transpired before the official closing of the territories, emerged between the villagers and the army. When the Israeli government finally did go on to settle the area intensively, the Arab backlash led to the igniting of the events of the first Land Day in 1976; a milestone in the relationship between the state and its Arab citizens.

MAKI, its various organs, and its supporters offered the most organized and consistent opposition to the permit regime itself, the Military Government, and, in general, discriminatory policies. Currently, there is a tendency to interpret the actions of Palestinian Arab members of MAKI as constituting an embryonic form of the full-blown Palestinian national sentiment espoused by today’s Palestinian Arab political elite living within Israel.¹⁶⁷ Contrary to this outlook,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Unattributed, “MAKI mamridah ‘Arvie Kfar Rame,” *Hatzofeh*, 4 February 1956

¹⁶⁶ Hana Ibrahim, “al-Haq la Yamut,” *Al-Ittihad*, 6 April 1956; “Sura,” *Al-Ittihad*, 20 March 1956; “li-Nfashil Mu’marat Salab Aradi al-Shaghur,” *Al-Ittihad*, 10 April 1956, all archived at ISA, GL-17099/3.

¹⁶⁷ Dallasheh, “Nazarenes in the Turbulent Tide of Citizenships: Nazareth from 1940 to 1966.”; Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State*.

historian Adel Manna claims that MAKI campaigning and maneuvering during Israel's first years were an essential component for containing the most radical anti-Israeli sentiment within a party tolerable by the MAPAI establishment.¹⁶⁸ Closer inspection of MAKI's dealings with the permit regime reveals that on this issue as well, it would be misleading to characterize this group's actions as unrelenting opposition to Zionism or to the state created in its name.

MAKI members of parliament, for instance, did not refrain from employing a most common means to deal with the decisions of the governor and wrote letters and appeals for leniency to various military and civilian bodies. These pleads did not challenge the state's authority, and they would seldom denounce the Military Government or the permit regime.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, in addition to the complacent appeals, MAKI Knesset members also employed more forceful means of expressing their opposition to the Military Government and the permit regime.

Current scholarship points at the events surrounding May Day celebrations and Independence Day of 1958 as the turning point in Arab politics in Israel. According to this scholarship, the protests and activities against the Military Government, which the Communist Party took a leading part in, eventually lead to its demise. Indeed the 1958 protests not only proved to the Israeli leadership that the Military Government did not prevent the country-wide Arab political activism but actually galvanized it.

The focal point of the 1958 demonstrations was a call to boycott the celebrations of the state's first decade of independence which coincided with that year's May Day. Later during the year, the Arab picketers were joined by Zionist leftist protestors. Nevertheless, according to

¹⁶⁸ Adel Manna, "Behirot ve-hitnahagot politit shel sorde ha-Nakbah be-Yisra'el," in *The Military Government: Economy, Knowledge, and Memory*, ed. Benny Nuriely, n.d.

¹⁶⁹ B. Yekutueli to Military Government Branch, "Tlunut haver ha-Knesset Toubi," 6 February 1951, archived in ISA GL-13926.1 (1), 82, 85.

Robinson, the veteran Palestinian activists largely abandoned their authentic Palestinian nationalism and “narrowed their demands and focus on a more limited campaign to end the most visible expressions of segregation...”¹⁷⁰ They did so, according to Robinson, “to enlist the support of Jewish liberals.”¹⁷¹

Whatever practical considerations were in the minds of the Palestinian Arabs who bravely contested the harsh segregation they faced, whether in the form of a petition, demonstration, or civil disobedience—we can conclude that the main forms of resistance to the Military Government demonstrated the Arab population's acceptance of the state's ultimate control over them. It seems that the permit regime, among other measures, channeled the Palestinian Arab political grievances towards a demand for equality within the existing framework of the state, the Zionist settler state.

The limited scope of MAKI's resistance to the permit regime was also mirrored in the state's patterns of constricting Communist movement during the years of the Military Government. Even though Israeli security officials constantly referred to Communists as an insidious element, there was no comprehensive policy to deny all of them from movement and ability to work. Furthermore, when a Communist was denied a permit, the military authority usually had an excuse ready at hand to prove that complaints issued by Communists were not automatically dismissed. Indeed, had there been a policy of complete constriction of all Communists' movement, one would assume that the latter would not have bothered to write so many letters of complaint and that the military authorities would not have bothered answering any of them.¹⁷² Though no source of comfort for those who lost employment opportunities, the enclosure that the permit regime placed on the Communists was not airtight.

¹⁷⁰ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 189.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Unattributed, “I'ataql wa-Ihtijaj,” *Al-Ittihad*, 3 December 1950, 1.

The Israeli security establishment and the officers of the Military Government tended not to admit in writing that political affiliation determined this or that permit denial—after all, the Military Government was still bound by a legal framework, and Israel’s laws officially accepted the Communist platform as tolerable political discourse. In fact, in several cases, officials in the Military Government apparatus insisted that a denial of a permit request was due to reasonable “security considerations” and not because of political affiliation.¹⁷³ A reasonable security risk could be, of course, any form of public stance against the Military Government and its policies, and this was MAKI's official stand. Furthermore, officers, when asked by the Advisor on Arab Affairs why a particular individual was denied a permit, would usually find some excuse and then made sure to label the complaint as emanating from Communists in order to dismiss its veracity.¹⁷⁴ The permit regime, among other policies, did not scare all Arabs from becoming Communists or associating with the Party, but it gave such a decision a potential price.

Ultimately, as much as the Israeli leadership was concerned with the Communist Party and other Arab-nationalist political formations, they also realized that the Military Government in general, and its movement restrictions in particular, were highly inefficient methods for solving these challenges. Moments of brief collaborations between ordinarily docile citizens and troublesome agitators drove home the point that broad movement restrictions do more harm than good. As the 1950s turned into the 1960s, more and more Zionist Israelis in positions of power—from left and right—expressed this view both in public and behind closed doors. Official protocols from the summer of 1963, when Levi Eshkol replaced Ben-Gurion as Prime Minister, revealed that Israeli leadership understood that military rule and movement restrictions counter the Zionist

¹⁷³ Emmanuel Mor, Head of Military Government Branch to The Advisor of Arab Affairs, 12 April 1951, Lt. Yehoshua Ben-Tzion, the Military Government Branch to The Advisor of Arab Affairs, undated, ISA GL-13926/1

¹⁷⁴ Verbin, military governor Center to Military Government Branch, 4 April 1951, ISA GL-13926/1.

interest.¹⁷⁵

Movement restrictions proved to be particularly counter-productive in the case of one, young, Palestinian Arab Communist activist and promising poet, Mahmoud Darwish. Contrary to his reputation as a resistance poet, Darwish, through the Alliance of the Israeli Communist Youth (*Brit ha-No'ar Hakomnisti ha-Yisra'eli, Ittihad al-Shabiba al-Shiyu'i al-Isra'ili*), formed close friendships with Jewish Israelis and even sustained intimate relationships with young Jewish women.¹⁷⁶ Darwish was also willing to find common grounds with Zionist writers and poets.¹⁷⁷ With a talent for writing romantic love letters in Hebrew as well as revolutionary poetry in Arabic, Darwish faced incessant harassment from the Israeli authorities, even after the abolition of the Military Government. Eventually, in 1970, after having enough of being a prisoner in his own home, Darwish gave up, left Israel, and became the Palestinian national movement's poet laureate—his words inspiring the anti-Zionism of hundreds of millions.

Analysis: Movement Restrictions as a Means to Absorb the Arab Community

It is tempting to equate the movement restriction of the permit regime with those enforced by the Israeli Army for the past decade-and-a-half over the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Legal scholar and sociologist Yael Berda argued for the persistence of Israeli movement restrictions as a legal legacy stemming from the British Mandate's Emergency Regulations inscribed into the Israeli legal system. According to this view, what best explains the perseverance of movement

¹⁷⁵ Arnon Degani, "The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?," *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 84–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.905236>.

¹⁷⁶ Shlomo Sand, *the Invention of the Jewish People* (London, New York: Verso, 2009), 6–9; Ibtisam Mara'ana, *Sajil ana arbi* (Write Down, I am an Arab), Canada, 2014.

¹⁷⁷ Maha Nassar, *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017), 177.

restriction within Israel is its colonial nature which has been predetermined and is also the underlining cause for the antagonistic relationship between the Israeli colonizer and the Palestinian colonized.¹⁷⁸

Berda's analysis of the Military Government bureaucracy as "colonial" bears merit. In fact, Zionist and MAKI voices critical of the Military Government frequently stated that the behavior of the Military Governments' clerks was reminiscent of Mandatory times. However, while a colonial paradigm provides a suitable context for many of the policies and personal actions of Military Government clerks, it does not account for the fact that Israel abolished the first Military Government and its movement restriction. The explanation for Israel's changing movement regimes must be found elsewhere.

Contrary to Berda, critical geographer Ariel Handel concluded that despite their similarities, the permit regime and the post-2000 restrictions in the West Bank are fundamentally different. According to Handel, Israel's control over Arab movement between the years 1948-1966 was "inclusive" while the post-2000 network of blockades and checkpoints is "exclusionary." According to Handel, states tend to employ **inclusive** control of movement within the context of what Foucault defined as bio-political power which is fixated on adjusting the minutest human acts and behaviors to create a self-disciplining subject who has a high sense of identification with the sovereign. By contrast, the **exclusionary** movement regime which Israel employs in the Occupied Territories presumes and produces an antagonistic relationship between the state and the subject population, which is considered an existential threat and is largely unneeded for labor

¹⁷⁸ Yael Berda, *ha-Birokratya shel ha-Kibush: mishtar hetere ha-tenu'ah ba-Gada ha-Ma'Arvit, 2000-2006* (Jerusalem: Van-Leer Institute, 2012); Doron Halutz, "ha-Britim hethilu?," *Haaretz weekend supplemental*, published on-line 23 April 2015, <[haaretz](#)> last accessed 11/29/2015.

purposes, yet it cannot be forcibly liquidated or removed.¹⁷⁹ The distinction between the two movement regimes is analytic, and the two differ in three overlapping parameters, but these are differences of degree, not of kind:

(1) Movement/Restriction: An inclusive regime tends to allow movement and only restrict it in cases where the subject's behavior needs correcting. In contrast, an exclusionary regime bans movement wholesale for entire villages, cities, and even districts.¹⁸⁰

(2) Surveillance/Control: An inclusive regime will feature a more substantial degree of surveillance which is defined as the documentation, registration, and retention of information about the movement of individual bodies within a sovereign territory. An exclusionary regime will feature a lesser degree of surveillance in comparison to "control" and more physical means to stop movement such as barricades, fences, roadblocks, border crossings, and police patrols.¹⁸¹

(3) Predictability/Uncertainty: This third parameter has to do with the ability of the individual to master the rules and the expected behaviors which would allow them to move about in the most uninterrupted manner. In general, an inclusionary regime which produces self-disciplining subjects will demonstrate a high level of clarity on what type of movement is permissible and what is not. In contrast, in the exclusionary regime, there are many variables: will the road be open? Does one possess the right permit? Will the soldier in the roadblock be considerate?¹⁸²

According to Handel, the early to mid-2000s movement restrictions in the West Bank—in which a distance of a few kilometers took hours to cross, in which Israeli soldiers constantly harassed Palestinian civilians, and which became a realm of movement uncertainty—turned out to be highly effective in keeping Palestinian movement confined to small land cells. At the same time, a salient Palestinian response to restrictions came in the form of organized violence against

¹⁷⁹ Ariel Handel, "Exclusionary Surveillance and Spatial Uncertainty in the Occupied Palestinian Territories," in *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine*, ed. Elia Zureik, David Lyon, and Yasmeen Abu-Laban (Routledge, 2011), 262–66.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 268.

¹⁸² Ariel Handel, "Shelitah ba-merhav be-emtsa'ut ha-merhav: i-vada'ut ke-tekhnoiyat shelitah," *Teorya u-Bikoret*, 31 (2007): 101-125.

the Israeli army and civilians. This form of resistance further sharpened the resentment between the warring communities. In contrast, Handel claims that the Military Government's control over movement, what I call the permit regime, was more "lenient" in the three parameters mentioned above. *Relatively speaking* it allowed movement, monitored it and elucidated as to how to avoid being denied movement.

Although I generally accept Handel's assertions, this chapter has painted a more complex picture than his. It has shown that the permit regime, particularly during the early years, featured a high degree of what Handel himself would define as methods of exclusionary surveillance and control of movement. Nevertheless, as time passed, the permit regime allowed for more free flow, featured more surveillance at the expense of control, and became easier to decipher. For as long as it existed, it was never benign, and by no means did its termination end all forms of discrimination, but the permit regime progressively became more and more inclusive to the point where it eventually dissipated. The Arab population reciprocated by maintaining, in general, forms of resistance to the permit regime which did not challenge fundamental Zionist ideals. Thus, this chapter and Handel's findings offer an alternative to the view that Israel's tendency to administer Arab populations via military rule is linear, seamless, and self-explanatory. The earlier Military Government and the later, post-1967, Israeli military occupation—at least from the movement control aspect—featured a different ratio of exclusionary and inclusionary policies.

The concepts of inclusivity and exclusion can also aid in fine-tuning the applicability of the colonial paradigm for Israel's relationship with the Palestinian Arab under its control. While colonial regimes have an interest in cultivating a general spirit of submissiveness among the colonized, they are ultimately premised on the essential difference and hierarchy between the colonized and the colonizer. Under these circumstances, the total "inclusion" of the colonized

population to the point of turning them into self-disciplining subjects of a liberal hegemon is neither seriously pursued nor considered possible. On the other hand, settler-colonial regimes generally have a reduced propensity for sustaining subservient subjects under a state of perpetual inferiority and a higher will and interest in making these populations disappear. A protracted level of indigenous inclusion under the aegis of liberal and democratic mechanisms, defined in the theoretical literature as “assimilation,” is a common practice among all cases of settler-colonialism. The gradual move from more exclusionary movement control practices to more inclusionary ones indicates a settler-colonial aspect to the relationship between Israel and its Arab citizens. Apparently, in order to assess the applicability of the settler-colonial paradigm for Israel during the 1950s-1960s, other facets of the relationship between the state and the Arab citizens, besides movement control, need to be brought into light. The following chapters will do just that.

Conclusion

The segregative measures which the state of Israel imposed on the Palestinian Arabs residing within its borders were cruel. The permit regime burdened a population in a state of shock and fear which had just gone through a harsh inter-ethnic war and barely avoided the fate of becoming stateless refugees. Despite their severity, the segregative measures which the state of Israel enacted upon the Palestinian Arabs residing within its borders were not airtight nor were they permanent. Despite its propensity for sweeping and arbitrary policies, the efficacy of the permit regime also depended on its ability to allow some movement, particularly for those who had an un-speckled record. As time passed, the permit regime increasingly became one of movement surveillance rather than one of movement control. The Military Government gradually placed restrictions on those that “deserved” them and merely held ability to constrict movement as a threat over the

majority of the Palestinian Arab population. Furthermore, although arbitrariness probably fulfilled the personal fetishes of this or that officer or petty soldier, it also served as the counterpoint to more lenient policies of later years. As the 1950s rolled into the 1960s, the top Israeli leadership realized that the Military Government and its permit regime galvanized the Arab public and helped them transcend the social fissures that the state worked hard to cultivate. At the same time, the Palestinian Arab political leadership made sure that its contestation of the permit regime remained within the confines of a discourse based on equal citizenship. This move tactically helped in recruiting the sympathy of Zionists, but it also dampened the claim of a Palestinian Arab collective right over the territory upon which the state was created. The permit regime and in particular the process of its demise constitute a narrative of Arab inclusion.

Figure 1: Map of Military Government North, signed 30 September 1952, ISA GL-10977/1.

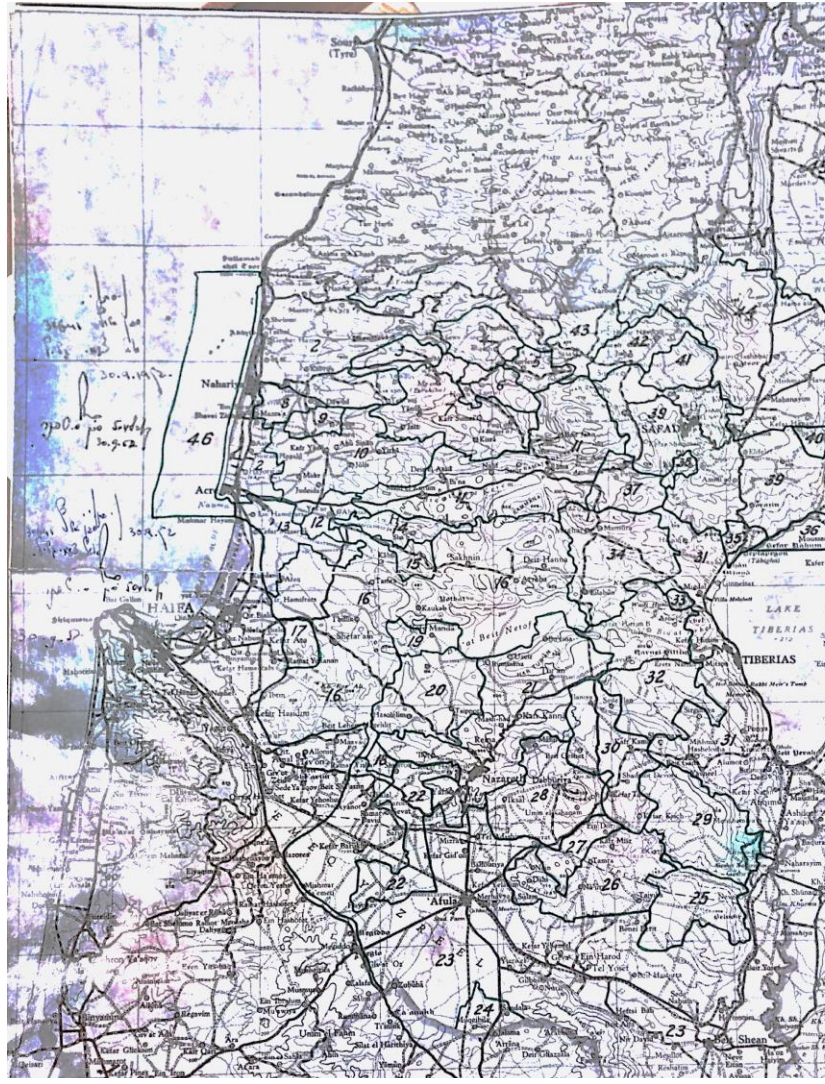
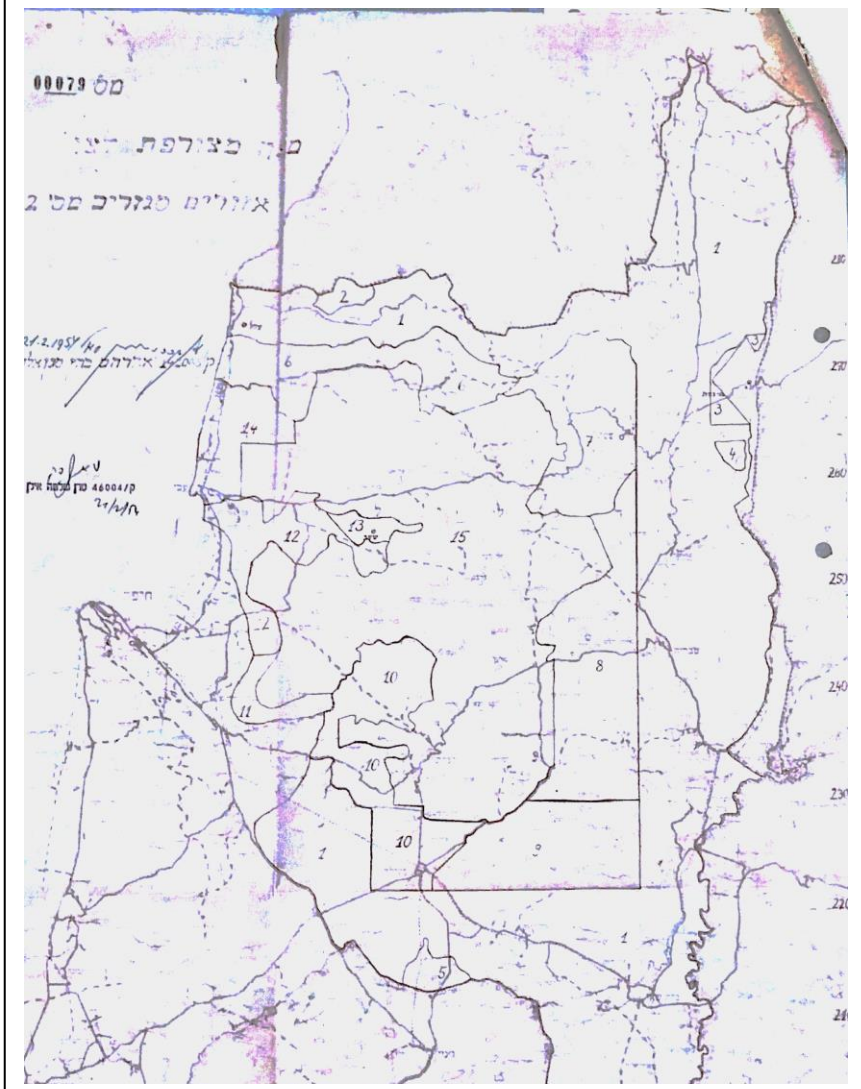


Figure 2: Map of Military Government North, signed 21 February 1954, ISA GL-10977/1.



Chapter 2

The Histadrut: The Zionist Settler Spearhead

Introduction: A Hebrew is not a Jew

In 1952, Elias Saba, a Palestinian Arab citizen of Israel wrote a letter, in beautiful Hebrew script (see image 1) to “comrade Zilberstein” of the Histadrut. Saba complained that he was denied Histadrut membership. He protested that “the Histadrut is the General Federation of the *Hebrew* workers and not that of the Jewish workers,” and also that “Jewish and Hebrew are two distinct terms.” Saba was a member of the Israel Labor League (the Histadrut-controlled separate Arab worker’s union—ILL), and he enlisted his biography to establish that he was, in fact, a Hebrew, dedicated to raising “a new Hebrew generation” of pupils. Saba claimed that even though he was a Christian, he was, in fact, a Hebrew worker, with a Hebrew education, and a student in the Hebrew University. Saba then warned that no Arab would be able to properly educate Jewish children “when he discovers that the very institution that he adheres to discriminates against him and gives him the feeling that he is a stranger in a foreign land and prevents him from feeling that he is truly an Israeli citizen.”¹ He concluded the letter with a critical comment on the Histadrut’s politics of patronage:

This [would not be] the first case that a non-Jew entered the Histadrut and I too could have pulled my own strings, but I believe that I should be accepted as a right and not by any good grace.²

I have not been able to identify if the Histadrut granted Saba’s request, but it most likely did not.

Around the same time as Saba wrote his letter, Eliyahu Agassi, head of the Histadrut’s Arab

¹ Elias Saba to Zilberstein, 12 November 1952, Lavon IV 219 193 pt.2, 40-41

² Ibid.

Department, circulated a harsh memo restricting the granting of such individual requests and criticizing past occurrences for weakening the standing of the ILL.³ In any case, Saba continued to be a Histadrut loyalist, and a decade later he became a high school principal in the village of Rameh.⁴ Saba's devotion to the Histadrut and its ideals is abnormally strong, but it is not unconditional as it contained a not-so-veiled threat. The letter also ties Saba's standing in the Histadrut to his feelings as an Israeli citizen. Saba's letter, one of the thousands that Palestinian Arabs citizens sent to Histadrut bureaucrats, might not be emblematic, but it is indicative.

The following chapter delves into the history of the Histadrut, its policies concerning Palestinian Arab work and workers, and the relationship it forged, via its functionaries, with individual Palestinian Arab members. The chapter will show that the Histadrut employed policies and engaged in discourses that Palestinian Arabs found appealing. The Histadrut itself functioned as almost another executive arm of the government and aided its goals in areas such as absorption of Jewish immigrants, settlement projects, industrial development, and many others. This chapter will demonstrate how the Histadrut also took upon itself a large share of the project of Palestinian Arab subordinate integration. The Histadrut's role in the integration of the Palestinian Arabs into Israeli society is particularly fascinating when one considers its attitude towards Arabs before the creation of the state, which is where I will turn to now

Labor Zionism

The second Zionist 'Aliya, which began in 1904, produced the leadership and institutions that would lead the entire Zionist movement for over the next half a century. The ideology and praxis

³ Eliyahu Agassi to Central Tax Bureau, "Matan pinkasay zihuy le- 'Aravim," 17 June 1952, Lavon IV 219 193 pt.2, 26.

⁴ Yigal Lev, "Gar'in ha-emet she-ba-pri," *Maariv*, 20 August 1959, 5.

they formulated and continually reformulated are commonly referred to by scholars as “Labor Zionism.” The canonical scholarly narratives on Zionism and the Yishuv (the pre-1948 Zionist settlement in Palestine) tended to characterize Labor Zionist ideology as a unique mixture of Socialist/Marxist convictions with an ethno-nationalist outlook; both were strong ideological currents in the Eastern European countries of origin of most of the second ‘Aliya settlers. According to this narrative, the unfolding realities of the conflict led to the natural overpowering of the nationalist sentiment over the socialist ideals.⁵ The problem with this narrative, as Gabriel Piterberg perceptively pointed out, is that it largely replicated Zionists’ own ideological understanding of their movement as containing an essential Jewish-national core that was only marginally susceptible to the local, Palestinian, inputs.⁶

As mentioned in the introduction, sociologist Gershon Shafir offered an alternative to the Zionist historiography. Shafir avoided focusing on the internal ideological dynamics between socialism and nationalism and grounded his explanation in the circumstances of Jewish settlement in Palestine which featured a large reservoir of cheap Arab labor.⁷ The ideology and institutions of Labor Zionism allowed for the Jewish settlers to gain a foothold in Palestine’s highly competitive labor market by creating essentially a color bar that excluded the Arabs from certain sectors. The Labor Zionist movement also instigated campaigns to pressure employers to favor Jewish labor. A recent study on the Histadrut during the Mandate years by Shaul Duke largely

⁵ Anita Shapira, *Land and Power : The Zionist Resort to Force, 1881-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 53–82; Yosef. Gorni, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948 : A Study of Ideology* (Oxford [Oxfordshire]; New York: Clarendon Press ; Oxford University Press, 1987), 26–77; Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel : Nationalism, Socialism, and the making of the Jewish State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 1–74.

⁶ Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London: Verso, 2008), 51–88.

⁷ Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*; Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882-1914* (Berkeley, UC Press, 1983).

concur with Shafir's analysis supplanting it with a bottom-up analysis of the Zionist settlement in Palestine. According to Duke, the Histadrut excluded Arabs from membership and conducted campaigns to purge entire sectors from Arab workers because it was susceptible to the demands of its rank-and-file who were already established in Palestine. In other words, the Histadrut's hostile attitude towards the Arab worker during the Mandate years did not just originate in the calculated strategy of its leadership, but also from the basic material interest of the Jewish members who voted the leadership in.⁸

The Histadrut is commonly known as a labor union, but it was in fact much more than that; it was an umbrella organization of leftist and moderate Zionist parties. *ha-Histadrut* (in Hebrew "The Organization") supplanted the Yishuv with a state-like body which proved to be rather efficient in managing capital donated from bourgeois Jews around the world to the Yishuv, and shaping a settler society capable of militarily defeating the relatively strong indigenous community. The exclusion of Arabs from the Histadrut, part of the doctrine of the "Conquest of Labor" or "Hebrew Labor," was undeniably a central aspect of Labor Zionism's historical importance. Furthermore, ethnic segregation also foreshadowed the Zionist inclination to displace as many Palestinians as possible when circumstances would enable this in 1948, and the following years.

Indeed Labor Zionism's chauvinist, segregationist, and even militant aspects provided concrete advantages for Jewish settlement in Palestine. This chapter, however, will focus on a different feature that the strong Labor movement and the Histadrut supplanted Zionism with. First, this chapter will show how leftist thought and practice incorporated into Zionism, contained a

⁸ Shaul A. Duke, *The Stratifying Trade Union: The Case of Ethnic and Gender Inequality in Palestine, 1920-1948* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 83–127.

promise for eventual equality and harmony across the Jewish-Arab divide. By clinging to variants of socialist internationalism, Zionists could envision a future in Palestine where their own status as newcomers and the Arabs' indigeneity would become superseded by class solidarity. To be more explicit, Labor Zionist visions of future Jewish-Arab proletarian solidarity constituted, *inter alia*, a settler-colonial assimilationist discourse. The chapter will show that after 1948, Labor Zionists had a markedly stronger practical commitment to the ideal of Jewish-Arab worker unity. Nowhere is this shift in Labor Zionism more evident than in the post-1948 policies of the Histadrut towards the Arab citizens of Israel. In what follows, I will argue that after 1948, Labor Zionists consciously sought to integrate Arabs into the Histadrut and succeeded in obtaining a support base among them. These successes meant that the Histadrut maintained its important role in the consolidation of Zionism as a settler-colonial movement.

Labor Zionism's Assimilationist Discourse and Policies until 1948

From early on, leftist Zionists believed that socialism would have a role in assuaging indigenous resistance to Zionism. In 1906, Ber Dov Borochoy, one of Labor Zionism's most revered intellectual gurus, explicitly foresaw in his formulations of Zionist socialism that "the local population of Erets-Yisra'el will soon assimilate economically and culturally to the Jews."⁹ As the decades progressed, Borochoy's vision of future Zionist-Arab co-existence under the aegis of socialism was severely impeded by Labor Zionist's pursuit of "Hebrew Labor" and the intensifying conflict between the Yishuv and the Palestinian national movement. Nevertheless, there were other inclusive aspects to Labor Zionism despite the predominance of the segregationist and militant

⁹ Ber Dov Borochoy, "ha-Platforma shelanu," quoted in Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 42.

practices. Zachary Lockman's seminal study on the topic shows that throughout the pre-state period, there were currents within Labor Zionism that continually sought to forge alliances with Palestinian Arabs based on worker solidarity.

However, the first practical steps for Arab-Jewish worker cooperation began in 1925, five years after the establishment of the Histadrut in 1920. The Histadrut's work among Palestine's Arab population amounted to a few joint labor struggles in workplaces that employed members of both national communities. In 1930, the Histadrut opened the "Department of Arab Affairs" and a few months later established the Palestine Labor League (*Ittihad 'Ummal Filastin, Brit Po'ale Erets-Yisra'el*, hereafter PLL) a Histadrut sponsored workers union open (only) to Arab membership. The PLL was active mainly in the city of Haifa and was highly susceptible to the erratic political conditions of Mandate Palestine. During times of economic growth and political tranquility, Arabs joined the PLL in considerable numbers. In January 1937, Eliyahu Agassi, head of the Arab Department (who later in life will reject requests like the one Saba made in 1951), reported that during the PLL's first years, the organization made "contact" with 2,500 workers, issued 1,100 member cards, organized thirteen trade unions, and led several strikes.¹⁰ According to Agassi's report, following the 1936 Palestinian anti-British and anti-Zionist uprising, only 15 Arabs remained loyal to the PLL, and several dozens remained within its orbit in one way or another. During the years of the Second World War, the PLL experienced short-lived growth in membership and geographic reach, but by the beginning of the 1948 War, the PLL existed only in Haifa and functioned more like an Arab work contractor for the Histadrut's own operations than an actual labor union.

¹⁰ Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 246.

Deborah Bernstein, who also wrote extensively on Jewish-Arab working class relations during the Mandate, joined Lockman in characterizing the PLL as a largely failed Histadrut initiative. Both scholars also agree that the imperative of “Hebrew Labor” was the dominant agenda of the Zionist Labor Movement and thus the Histadrut’s actions to organize Arab labor were a result of their own interests and pragmatism. Both, although Bernstein more so, downplay the historical importance of Labor Zionists’ avowed belief in Jewish-Arab solidarity when explaining the Histadrut’s continual yet inconsistent support for the PLL. One impetus for PLL activity was the need to improve working conditions in certain sectors dominated by lower wage-earning Arab workers in order to make them more appealing for the Jewish workers with their higher living standards. Lockman and Bernstein provided another comprehensive explanation for the Histadrut’s PLL activity, citing it as a means to counter the burgeoning Palestinian Arab labor movement, embodied in the growth of the Palestinian Arab Workers Society (PAWS) and Palestinian Arab Communist activity. Despite the mostly self-serving basis for the efforts of the PLL, both scholars ultimately admit that slogans of Arab-Jewish worker solidarity indeed reflected genuine currents within the Labor Zionist movement.

Throughout the Mandate period, the more leftist segments of the Labor Zionism, represented by Po‘ale Tzion Smol, Hashomer Hatzair, and then MAPAM, consistently pushed for a more inclusive Histadrut and more proactive pursuit of joint Jewish-Arab worker action. Those who took on this political stance within the Labor movement were often committed Marxists, but they were also avid Zionists who believed that sustainable Jewish settlement in Palestine required the consent of the Palestinian Arab worker. According to Lockman, whatever little the Histadrut did to forge alliances with Arabs, it was largely because of the left exerting political pressure on the MAPAI leadership. In fact, between the Labor Zionists who wanted to see the Histadrut push

for more Jewish-Arab labor cooperation and those that saw the Histadrut as the champion of Hebrew Labor, the main contention was whether Jewish-Arab solidarity was a future goal, albeit one of many, or a prerequisite for achieving all Zionist goals.

The degree of pervasiveness of Jewish-Arab worker cooperation in Labor Zionist discourse is apparent from the internal debates within the Histadrut between Ben-Gurion, the Secretary-General, and more leftist segments of the Labor movement. In 1924, at the Histadrut's second conference in Ein Harod, Ben-Gurion, in fact, referred to the Arab worker as the reason why Zionism should not attempt to find common grounds with the Palestinian national movement in its current condition:

The fate of the Jewish worker is linked with the fate of the Arab worker. Together we will rise, or together we will fall....We must seek agreement and understanding with the Arab people only through the Arab worker (and not the nationalist elite), and only an alliance of Jewish and Arab workers will establish and maintain an alliance of the Jewish and Arab peoples in Palestine.¹¹

My point is that the sentiment Ben-Gurion expressed here should not be interpreted as concrete proof that Zionist intentions in Palestine were overall socialist and peaceful or, conversely, that Zionist appeals for peaceful coexistence were a cynical excuse to avoid recognizing the Palestinian national leadership. My argument is that whatever was on Ben-Gurion and other labor Zionists' minds when they expressed Arab-Jewish worker solidarity, it obviously fulfilled the function of endowing Labor Zionism with a tenable path to move forward and settle in an overall hostile environment. A settler tendency to imagine indigenous people progressively morphing into a constituency more amenable for absorption, is very common in settler-colonial cases.

The debate on the amount of resources the Histadrut should allocate to cultivate an alliance with the Palestinian Arab worker became a central one in the organization when Ben-Gurion and

¹¹ David Ben-Gurion, quoted in Lockman, 77.

Meir Ya'ari, secretary of Hashomer Hatzair, engaged in a debate at the 1937 Histadrut Convention. The debate, titled "the political dispute in the Histadrut," produced texts that touched upon some of the most fundamental dilemmas Zionism faced. One of the points of contention between Ben-Gurion and Ya'ari was the issue of the Labor movement's attempts to find allies among the Arabs in Palestine. In his address, Ya'ari attacked Ben-Gurion's policies of seeking the support of the imperialist British at the expense of promoting alliances with Arab workers. In particular, Ya'ari accused Ben-Gurion of wasting the last 18 years since the Balfour declaration by neglecting the Labor Zionist mission of disseminating socialist ideology among the Arabs. Ya'ari called out his MAPAI counterpart for talking a good game in front of "the global worker's movement" about "the common interest" between the Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine yet doing little to promote this agenda. Ya'ari continued:

If we managed to organize 300 Arab workers (under the PLL—AD), why couldn't we have organized within a few years 3,000 workers with (worker class) consciousness that could have become a more powerful political force than that of the Mufti? An Arab intelligentsia will be found which would want to place itself at the service of the interests of the Arab worker and peasant (*falah*). Is it not a fact that in recent days Arab villages came to our settlements and declared that they want to get rid of the yoke of the Mufti and the terrorists and sign a peace agreement with us? They did this in life-threatening conditions and despite the menace hovering over them. They could have become socialists and stood up against the forces who rule the Arab people today. This is our innermost realization (*hakaratenu ha-'amuka*) concerning both the Arab peasant and the Arab worker...¹²

Ben-Gurion's retort to Ya'ari's accusations was firm but mostly claimed that these were based on misquotes and biased interpretations of MAPAI's political stances. On the issue of the Histadrut's mission of cultivating working class consciousness among Arabs, Ben-Gurion did not "refute for a moment the possibility of an alliance between [the Zionists] and an Arab party, a workers' party and even a non-worker party..." Rather, Ben-Gurion concurred with Hashomer Hatzair's vision

¹² Meir Ya'ari, *ba-Ma'avak le-'amal meshuhrrar: mivhar devarim bi-she'elot ha-Histadrut u-tenu'at ha-po'alim* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1972), 70–71.

for a future “Hebrew state” which would have “no national oppression and full rights, civil and national, for all” because he added: “there are different kinds of states—we, the workers, strive for a socialist state, that does not enslave, does not oppress, and has no regime of one nation ruling another.” However, unlike his more leftist counterpart, Ben-Gurion “doubt[ed] whether **socialist ideology alone** would be sufficient to ensure the alliance of that Arab party with us...” Along with well-founded doubts about socialism’s ability to bridge the chasm between the Yishuv and the Arabs, Ben-Gurion also did not have much faith that “an Arab socialist party would arise solely due to [Labor Zionist] propaganda and [Labor Zionist] **political** needs.”¹³ Ben Gurion’s own words suggest that MAPAI’s more lukewarm attitude towards Histadrut-Arab cooperation were not a matter of principle but rather grounded in a pessimistic, some would say realistic, interpretation of the political circumstances of Mandate Palestine. After 1948, as the balance of power between Jews and Arabs drastically changed, so did the Histadrut’s ability and motivation to recruit Arabs into its ranks.

The Histadrut and the Palestinian Arab Citizens

1948 presented the Histadrut with an entirely new political reality. One of the questions debated among its leadership was the future status of the Arabs who would become citizens of Israel. By and large, the Histadrut’s vision for the Arabs in the Jewish state, as articulated in high-level meetings during the 1948 War, was consistent with the above mentioned Labor Zionist vision and foresaw the future integration of Arabs as equal members in the organization. During the Histadrut’s Seventh Convention, which convened right after the War, the status of the Palestinian

¹³ David Ben-Gurion, “be-‘Ikvot ha-vikuah,” *The Histadrut 35th convention, 1937*, <http://benyehuda.org/ben_gurion/maaraxa22.html>, ‘last’ accessed 30 August 2018, emphases in original.

Arab citizens was hardly mentioned. One Jewish speaker who did raise the issue was MAPAM's Yitzhak Yitzhaki, who lamented the horrible situation of the Arab peasant and worker following the War, and accused the Histadrut of perpetrating "a scam and deceit" against "the laboring Arab yishuv." These words were met with jeering from the crowd.¹⁴ In the following years, expressions of an integrationist sentiment by top Histadrut operatives was usually followed by a statement insisting that this integration be gradual because of this or that inadequacy of the Arab worker. Histadrut policies reflected these inconsistent statements.

An excellent example of the Histadrut's ambivalence in both rhetoric and policy is found in a key document uncovered by Sarah Osazky-Lazar, who has conducted extensive research on this topic and time-period. Elyahu Agassi composed this paper in September 1949 and titled it: "Proposed Plan of Action for the Arab Department and the PLL." The plan contained the following "foundational assumption" (*hanahat ha-av*): in order to prevent the "minorities" who remained in the state from harming it, all should be done to "absorb" them "organically and constructively (*klitah organit konstruktivit*) on the basis of equality in rights and duties in the social, religious, political, economic and cultural arena." Agassi, explained that only a regime such as this can "give the slightest of chances for a moral and spiritual development in the Arabs' outlook upon themselves and us, only it (this type of regime) can pry an opening, possibly that of a needle's eye, for a relationship of true peace and beneficial exchange between them and us." This was Agassi's outlook on the path forward for the state's treatment of the Palestinian Arabs, which if extended to the Histadrut meant that the latter should open its gates to Arab members. Here, however, Agassi qualified his integrationist convictions by offering to welcome the Arabs into the Histadrut in

¹⁴ Quoted in Sarah Ozacky-Lazar, "me-Histadrut 'Ivrit le-Histadrut Yisre'elit: hishtalvutam shel 'Aravim ba-'irgun, 1948-1966," *Iyunim Bitkumat Israel* 10 (2000): 391.

phases and for the time being sustain the separate framework of the PLL—which per Agassi would continue to remain autonomous under the Histadrut’s Arab Department. The PLL, in turn, would be the “catalyzer, guide, caregiver, advocate, and cultivator ... while safeguarding [the Arabs] from possible deviations.”¹⁵

During the first few years after 1948, the Histadrut conducted its activities among the Arabs almost exclusively under the Department of Arab Affairs and the PLL. In 1949 the latter changed its name from the Palestine Labor League to the Israeli Labor League (hereafter ILL) and its Hebrew and Arabic title from the “Union of Workers in Palestine” to the “Union of Workers in Israel” (*Ittihad ‘Ummal Isra’il, Brit Po‘ale Yisra’el*). In October 1952, the Histadrut Council voted on admitting Arabs into the Histadrut’s trade union organization (*ha-irgun ha-miktso ‘i; al-tanzim al-mihani*) while it rejected proposal’s by MAPAM and MAKI representatives to grant Arabs full membership. The Histadrut delayed the formal implementation of this decision until May 1953, and even then, reports show that this decision was carried out selectively. According to some accounts, the incorporation of the Arabs into the trade union brought with it the closing of the ILL, however, in reality, the usage of its name persisted years after when referring to Histadrut branches and activity in Arab villages.

On the ground, during the first years and up to a decade after the creation of the state, the Histadrut largely carried on with its policies of exclusion from the pre-state era. One reason was the perseverance of the ideology of “Hebrew Labor” which continued to correspond with the material interests of the rank-and-file Histadrut members. The latter, who could vote, influenced the MAPAI leadership to limit the degree of Arab worker protection. The exclusion of the Arabs from the Histadrut continued to concur with other Zionist and state interests. Firstly, the large-

¹⁵ Ibid., 392.

scale settlement drive did not crest in 1948 but rather intensified due to the massive influx of Mizrahi Jews. The state, MAPAI, and the Histadrut led a central role in absorbing the Mizrahi Jews who arrived as refugees by channeling them into the unskilled manual labor market. Another state imperative was the quick settlement of land cleared from Arabs, an effort that the Labor movement enthusiastically donated its resources to. In those early years, when employment was scarce, local Histadrut unions excluded Arabs, even ILL members, from accessing most of its “employment bureaus.” The government stepped in and created segregated employment bureaus where it rationed some work for Arabs. Limiting access to employment forced the Arabs into the black labor pool where they were extremely susceptible to exploitation. Furthermore, whereas during the Mandate years, Hebrew Labor activists limited themselves to picketing and boycotts when pressuring employers to replace their Arab workers with Jewish ones, after 1948, the Histadrut members felt at liberty to organize posses and remove, sometimes forcefully, “unorganized” Arab workers.¹⁶

Arab labor exclusion complemented the movement restrictions policy enacted by the Military Government.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the drive to protect the Jewish worker after 1948 was so strong that it revealed contradictions within the Israeli establishment of the time. The archival documentation shows that occasionally, officials from the MG, a body that was essentially devoted to the segregation of Arabs and Jews, demanded that the government do more to allocate employment for Arabs. At the same time, Jewish Histadrut members and Ministry of Labor

¹⁶ Y. Blatman of the office of the Advisor of Arab Affairs to President Chambers, “Horadat po‘alim bilti me’organim,” ISA GL-17022/6. The latter dossier is titled “Horadat ‘ovdim ‘Arvim (removal of Arab workers)” and contains dozens of newspaper clippings and letters of complaints reporting on worker removal from the job site.

¹⁷ Michael Shalev, *Labour and the Political Economy in Israel* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 46–50.

officials wanted the MG to issue fewer travel permits for Arab laborers.¹⁸ Ironically, the MG authorities expressed deep concern over Arab unemployment and the Histadrut's removal of Arabs from their places of work for it caused "security tensions."¹⁹ The archives also reveal that in several cases, the Histadrut completely relinquished whatever principles it maintained on worker solidarity and agreed to the firing of Arabs who were due paying ILL/Histadrut members so that they could be replaced with Jewish workers.²⁰

If the creation of the state of Israel brought any noteworthy changes to Labor Zionism on the issue of Jewish-Arab solidarity those were mostly on the declarative level. For example, the Histadrut exhibited discursive repositioning on the issue of wage equality. During the early post-Mandate years, the Histadrut gradually adopted a principle of equal pay for equal work among Arabs and Jews—an anathema to MAPAI political thought during the years of the Mandate. In December 1950, a *Davar* op-ed addressed the topic in a manner that reflected the MAPAI way of thinking on the issue vis-à-vis that of MAPAM. In defense of a different paygrade between Arabs and Jews, the author invoked a difference in the respective groups' lifestyle and culture. The author also expressed a typically colonial mindset by suggesting that before the Arab labor activists can rightfully demand equal wages with the Jews, they should make sure that Arabs employed in the Nazareth municipality are paid the same as their Jewish counterparts in other municipalities. Despite the overall reactionary message of the op-ed, the author was careful to differentiate between the status of the Arabs in Israel as citizens and their status during the Mandate as subjects.

¹⁸ Shalom Cohen, Ministry of Labor to Shalom Rashba, Haifa, 11 July 1950, ISA G-6178/14, 34-35.

¹⁹ Col. Mikhael Mikhael, military governor North to Ministry of Labor, Department of the Arab Worker, "Avtala – tsisa bithonit," 2 February 1956, ISA GL-17021/12, 60; Emmanuel Mor, Operations Military Government Branch to Shalom Cohen, Ministry of Labor, "Avoda," 28 June 1951, IDFA-6/243/1953, 9

²⁰ Y. Harborger to G. Meirson, Minister of Labor, 23 July 1950, Yaacov Cohen, Histadrut Arab Department to Y. 'Eilam Ministry of Labor, 10 June 1953, Labor Committee of the Quarry Workers, Sakhnin to Ministry of Labor and Histadrut Executive Committee, 14 August 1956, ISA GL-6178/14, 25, 59, 107.

In Israel, he wrote, “there is a foundation to the notion that with time the (pay) gap will decrease until it eventually disappears.”²¹ In late 1951, the Histadrut’s Executive Committee decided to equalize salaries for Arabs in “mixed” places, and then in early 1952, the government decided to pay Arab laborers equally for public works. Years later, internal memos prove that this policy was not strictly enforced. Arab workers protested and held strikes while invoking the principled stand that the Histadrut and the government officially endorsed.²²

According to political scientist Michael Shalev, a change in the Histadrut’s attitude occurred in the late 1950s when the Israeli economy moved from substantial unemployment to excess demand. When the Arab menial laborer no longer posed a major threat to his now more discriminating Jewish laborer, the Histadrut largely abandoned the role of the protector of Jewish labor. Incidentally, that is when the MG’s most significant alleviations occurred. According to Shalev and others, Much of the Histadrut’s activities directed at the Arab population were dedicated to cultivating a generation of activists that will “identify politically with the state” and MAPAI.²³

Acting as an intermediary between the Palestinian Arabs, the state, and MAPAI, the Histadrut backed a significant “cultural” project. The Histadrut founded an Arabic-language publishing house, sponsored an Arab youth movement, organized Jewish-Arab events, subsidized evening courses, and more. From the protocols of the Arab Department’s committee, a body

²¹ A. MSh., “ha-Sakhar la-‘oved ha-‘Arvi, *Davar*, 5 December 1950, p. 2.

²² Y. Habushi, Ministry of Labor to Office of the Advisor of Arab Affairs, “Durshay ‘avoda ‘Arvim,” 5 February 1952, ISA GL-17021/12, 20; Sh. Cohen, Ministry of Labor to Ma’atz, “Tosefet sakhar la-po‘alim ha-‘Arvim,” 13 November 1951, Secretary of the Employment Exchange in Nazareth to Shalom Cohen, Ministry of Labor, “Ujur al-‘Ummal al-‘Arabi,” 12 November 1951, Reuven Barakat, Histadrut Arab Department to B. Manki, Even va-Sid, 30 October 1951, AWC Nazareth to Shalom Cohen, Ministry of Labor, 15 November 1951, Secretary of the General Labor Exchange in Nazareth to Habushi, Ministry of Labor, “Ujur al-‘Ummal al-‘Arabi al-‘Amilin bi-al-Turuq,” 20 November 1951, ISA G-6178/18, 21 (23), 24, 26, 30

²³ Shalev, *Labor and Political Economy*, 50–57.

representing various coalition members in the Histadrut, the “cultural activity” had three purposes: (1) “Formulating” and “instilling” an “Arab-Israeli consciousness,” (2) cultivating a “worker-‘histadruty’” consciousness, and (3) elevating Arab artistic and literary exposure.²⁴ The Histadrut was also active in forming a “Women’s Movement” centered on clubs and open to non-members. These clubs were gathering places for women to gain Arabic literacy, learn Hebrew, hear lectures, and participate in professional courses, mainly sewing.

During the early years, the most egregious form of discrimination against Arab Histadrut members was the fact that they could not vote for the Histadrut’s governing body—The Convention (*ha-Ve’ida*). In 1956, the appointment of MAPAI’s Pinhas Lavon as general secretary finally brought to the Histadrut’s leadership a Zionist politician who had consistently shown commitment to the integration. Lavon and others from MAPAI, together with the leftist faction of the Labor Zionist movement, constituted a voice that publicly expressed disdain for the Histadrut’s treatment of Arabs and pushed for their equal membership. In August 1959, this faction succeeded in passing a bylaw for equal Arab membership at the Histadrut’s General Council. The last Histadrut convention with no Arab input was held in 1960 when members ratified the Council’s decision to include Arabs as equal members.

In following years the Histadrut gradually integrated Arab workers into its institutions, including the Arab Department, albeit in a haphazard manner. Firstly, the Arabs themselves did not join the Histadrut *en-masse* as was expected. Secondly, the Histadrut denied Arab villagers the right to form independent local worker councils, leaving their representation in Jewish locales. In the Haifa worker’s council, there was both an Arab secretary and a Jewish one, each entrusted with their respective affairs. Nevertheless, in October of 1965, Arab Histadrut members made use of

²⁴ Protocol of the Histadrut Arab Department [Heb.], 21 December 1966, ISA GL-17022/5, 77.

their franchise and voted in droves, reaching a 90% participation rate, much higher than the 77.6% country-wide rate. When the Tenth Convention formed in January 1966, it enacted a mostly symbolic but remarkable name change for the Histadrut. The Histadrut omitted from its long-form name the term “Hebrew” (*ivriyim*) to become the “The General Federation of Workers in Israel.” After that, Arab Histadrut members continued to fight for their status within the organization, particularly in achieving proportional representation in both its elected bodies and appointed positions.

In 1986, after the Histadrut lost much of its status within the Israeli economy and politics, it eliminated the Arab Department.²⁵ By then, MAPAI and Labor Zionism also lost their hegemony; the Histadrut no longer benefitted from the support of the state, and could not afford to bankroll its non-union functions, including the cultural project. As a union, the Histadrut mainly benefitted workers in the governmental sector and large industries while turning its back on workers in smaller factories and those independently employed—sectors with a higher proportion of Arabs. Reminiscent of its early exclusionary methods, the Histadrut had very little to do or say with the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, who had by then become a source of cheap and exploitable labor in Israel.

In the remainder of the chapter, I will focus the Histadrut’s policies among the Arab citizens of Israel between the years 1948 and 1967, particularly in how they manifested on the local level. I begin with the Histadrut’s early post-1948 maneuvers against the competition from an independent Arab labor organization. I then follow with a discussion on the various tactics that the Histadrut employed to gain Arab support, and finally, I elaborate on the nature of that Arab support for the Histadrut.

²⁵ Ozacky-Lazar, “me-Histadrut ‘Ivrit le-Histadrut Yisre’elit” 412–15.

Early Consolidation: The Competition with the Arab Workers' Congress

Michael Shalev offered a compelling explanation for why the Histadrut gradually opened its ranks to Arab members, claiming that this change is rooted in the political and material interests of Israel's ruling elite. Yair Baumel and Sarah Oszacky-Lazar emphasize the Histadrut Jewish integrationists, Pinhas Lavon, Michael Assaf, and Abba Hushi, who found the discrimination offensive and for whom the slow reform did not lessen but rather highlighted the fact that Arabs were denied full membership.²⁶ Here I would like to point out another factor that prompted the Histadrut to open its ranks: the stiff competition from the Arab Workers Congress (AWC), an independent labor union all but officially affiliated with MAKI.²⁷

According to Tamar Gozansky, a former Communist Party MK and an independent scholar, the Congress relentlessly fought for the interests of Arab workers and Jewish-Arab labor solidarity in general. These struggles included several strikes against private and public sector employers. Historian Leena Dallasheh added to Gozansky's assessment that the Congress was more than a labor union for "it identified itself with the interests of the people, as a democratic voice and as a guardian of their rights."²⁸

The Israeli MAPAI establishment, in the government and the Histadrut, seemed to have feared just that. In June of 1950, Michael Assaf, one of the most devoted activists of the Histadrut and an avid integrationist within MAPAI, wrote an op-ed criticizing the government's performance

²⁶ Yair Baumel, *Tsel kakhol lavan: medinyut ha-mimsad ha-Yisre'eli u-fe'ulotav be-kerev ha-ezrahim ha-'Arvim be-Yisra'el: ha-shanim ha-me'atsvot 1958-1968* (Haifa: Pardes, 2007), 116–29.

²⁷ Yehushah Habushi, "li-Ba'ayat ha-t'asuka ve-hasdarat halukat 'avoda bekrev 'Arvie Yisra'el," ISA GL-17021.21, 42.

²⁸ Tamar Gozansky, *Ben nishul le-nitsul: sekhirim 'Arvim, matsavam u-ma'avakkehem* (Haifa, Pardes, 2014), 50–70; Leena Dallasheh, "Nazarenes in the Turbulent Tide of Citizenships: Nazareth from 1940 to 1966" PhD diss., NYU, 2012, 89.

in helping the Histadrut make gains among the Arab citizens. Published in the Histadrut/MAPAI mouthpiece, *Davar*, the article blasted the Israeli government's lack of "aid and coordination" with the Arab Department in its campaign against the AWC which had become "the battery of Arab social and political opposition." In particular, Assaf complained that the governmental Arab employment exchanges (the Histadrut would not allow Arab ILL members in its exchanges) were not allocating enough work to ILL members. Assaf was so adamant in his opinion that he personally sent the then Minister of Labor, Golda Meyerson, a clipping of his article with a note saying that its content falls within her realm of responsibilities. The circulation of the note prompted Pinhas Harborger, the person-in-charge of Arab affairs in the Ministry of Labor, to write to his boss, Minister Meyerson, a revealing five-page letter in defense of his office's actions and with much criticism against the Histadrut inefficiencies.

The letter, written in a most indignant tone, listed a litany of all the rule-bending, as well as acts of pure political corruption that the Ministry and he himself had committed to bolstering the Histadrut's status among the Arabs. Harborger apologized for writing the Minister such an informal letter but felt he had to do so for "there is no possibility to publish such things publicly in a manner that will harm the common interest, of both the Histadrut and the government." Things such as: fixing government employment bids in favor of the ILL; the firing of Arab Communists from governmental public works and replacing them with ILL members; hiring Arab government clerks only on the condition they sign up with the ILL; working with the MG to deny travel permit requests from Congress members and giving them freely to ILL members; and even sabotaging, for the benefit of the ILL, a Congress worker strike in the Nazareth tobacco factory. Harborger

then gave examples of how the Histadrut missed many opportunities to bolster the ILL's numbers and to fight the Congress in various Arab locales.²⁹

Regardless of who was right in this bizarre exchange of accusations between the government and Histadrut over who had done more for the success of the ILL, it proves that the earliest Zionist concerns for the organization of the Arab workers in Israel did not stem from genuine sentiments of worker solidarity. Nevertheless, it does, in fact, suggest that the main impetus for signing Arabs into the PLL/ILL was to counter the Congress, an organization that emphatically did stand for workers' rights. Under these circumstances, the Histadrut via the ILL was obliged to appear to be concerned as well with the welfare of the Arab worker.

The central battleground between the ILL and the AWC was Nazareth, the most politically active Palestinian Arab locale in Israel. Nazareth was the only Arab urban center not significantly depopulated during the 1948 War, and some of its Mandate-era Palestinian institutions were left in place, namely the municipality. Nazareth also became the center of MAKI and AWC activity and the Arab opposition to the government's policies, particularly those of the Military Government. Despite its mostly adversarial stance towards the Histadrut, during the Mandate, the Histadrut and the AWC collaborated in a major dispute on behalf of Arab and Jewish workers who worked for the British military.³⁰ Furthermore, after 1948, the two organizations jointly ran an employment bureau in Nazareth and together submitted demands for bettering the conditions of Arab workers and even occasionally collaborated in a few strikes.³¹

²⁹ Harborger to Meirson, 23 July 1950, ISA GL-6178/14, 25.

³⁰ Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 335–39.

³¹ Y. Habushi, MoL to Tesler, Ma'ats, "Hufsha le-po'alim zmaniyim," 16 June 1952, ISA G-6178/14, 44; Unattributed, "Hatslaha li-shvitat po'ale ha-binyan ha-'Aravim be-kfar ha-horesh," *Kol Haam*, 2 March 1952, 2.

In 1949, when the two labor unions in Nazareth were roughly the same size of 1300-1400 members, the Communists extended their hand to Labor Zionists to create a joint worker's representation organization. In a Hebrew article published in the Communist mouthpiece, MK Tawfiq Tubi accused the Histadrut of rejecting initiatives for worker unity and instead, escalating its "war" against the AWC.³² In contrast, to flip Congress members over to the ILL, the Histadrut, as written above, would stop at nothing, not even sabotaging the Congress' strikes.³³ A major achievement for the ILL came in November of 1951, when the smaller, Catholic-oriented, Nazarene Workers' Association (*Rabitat al-'Ummal al-Nasiriyya*) merged with the Histadrut affiliated organization, adding, according to *Davar*, another 2,000 Arab workers to its existing membership roster of 10,000.³⁴ Despite the massive backing the Histadrut received from the government and the MG, the AWC nevertheless had its own victories, and in the years 1950-1951, at least 210 ILL members quit this Histadrut organization to join the Communist-affiliated union.³⁵

Despite its ability to hold the line against the Histadrut's encroachment, the beginning-of-the-end for the AWC began over a strike it conducted on behalf of the Nazareth municipality workers in late 1952. Confounding the situation was the fact that the municipal clerk's union was affiliated with the ILL, while the municipality sanitation workers were unionized under the AWC. In October of that year, contract renewal negotiations between the municipality and the two unions reached a dead end. At the same time, the AWC managed to poach 17 members of the ILL's municipal clerk's union. The AWC took a more militant approach than the ILL and decided to

³² Tawfik Toubi, "ha-Po'el ha-'Aravi yilahem le-ihud ha-tnu'ah ha-miktsu'it," *Kol Haam*, 2 November 1949, 4.

³³ Dallahseh, "Nazarenes in the Turbulent Tide of Citizenships," 75-79.

³⁴ Unattributed, "Hitmazgu shne irgune po'alim 'Aravim be-Yisra'el," *Davar*, 19 Novemebr 1951, 1.

³⁵ While the Tobacco workers' strike was taking place in Nazareth in September 1949, the Histadrut opened an ILL branch in the nearby village of Sulam and managed to flip en bloc almost 50 workers from the AWC, *see* letter from worker to Secretary of AWC in Nazareth, in Lavon IV 219 470, 8.

strike until the municipality met their demands: (1) hiring the sanitation workers as monthly rather than hourly workers and (2) equalizing the municipal clerk's conditions to those of state government clerks. The strike apparently did pressure the municipality into acceding to the clerk's demands, but it preferred to sign a contract—a day after the AWC strike commenced—with the ILL rather than the AWC. Regarding the demands of the sanitation workers—all of whom were unionized under the AWC—the municipality did not budge.

Even though the contract signed with the ILL included the clerk's registered with the AWC, the latter's local leadership refused to release its clerks from the strike and added a demand that the municipality recognizes the Congress as the sole representative of all municipal workers. The municipality responded with termination letters—implemented later in the month—and then hired strikebreakers, approved by the Military Government.

During the months of October-December of 1952, what initially began as a standard labor dispute concerning working conditions, turned into a violent political battle between the AWC and the ILL, which also involved the government and the Military Government. As Dallasheh noted, the AWC and MAKI tied the strike to larger political struggles in Nazareth, primarily, the demand to conduct elections and to replace the mayor and council. The municipality, in turn, distributed leaflets, signed by the representative of the Ministry of Labor, against the strikers and the AWC, claiming they were not true advocates of the municipal workers but instead motivated by a Communist political agenda. According to the Hebrew press, the strike was nothing but an attempt by the Communists to make political gains at the expense of the ILL. Christian groups, the prominent Arab anti-Communist force in Nazareth, also published leaflets against the strike. The police used brutal force in AWC demonstrations against the municipality, turning them into riots. Communist threats against the strikebreakers apparently necessitated on the job police escorts.

One strike-breaker was stabbed by a mob allegedly led by the secretary of the AWC in Nazareth, Mun'im Jarrjura—who was arrested, along with ten or eleven other strikers—for no less than “attempted murder.”³⁶

Within the Histadrut, opinions were split between functionaries of MAPAI and MAPAM. The latter demanded, in public, that the ILL show more solidarity with the striking workers, and not accept their termination and replacement. Eventually, however, the Histadrut adopted the majority MAPAI line and opted not to intervene on behalf of the laid-off workers unless individuals “personally approached” the Histadrut.³⁷ Practically, the Histadrut’s stance meant that if the strikers wanted assistance, they needed to leave the Congress, and indeed a few days later, the workers sent their union leaders a collective defection letter. According to MAPAM’s *Al Hamishmar*, the workers copied their letter to the military governor and stated that “the Congress exploited the strike for the political objectives of the Communist party, and not for the workers benefit.”³⁸

It is hard to determine whether the strike was, as the Communist press described it, a “heroic” testament to the laboring masses’ support for the AWC or whether, per the Zionist press, it had turned the Nazareth public opinion against the Communists.³⁹ Regardless, there were already signs that the AWC was singing its swan song. As mentioned, for years MAKI itself wished to unify Jewish and Arab workers in a single organization, suggesting that Communist Palestinian Arabs did not perceive the Congress’ independent status as an ideological imperative. On the other

³⁶ Eventually, they were charged with “rioting” (*hitpar'ut*) and sentenced for 3-6 months, see Dallasheh, “Nazarenes,” 102; Unattributed, “ha-Shovtim be-Natseret nitb'aim le-din 'al nisayon le-retsah,” *Al Hamishmar*, 3 November, 1952, 4.

³⁷ Unattributed, “ha-Histadrut ve-hashvita be-Natseret,” *Davar*, 2 December, 1952, 3.

³⁸ Unattributed, “Po'alim be-Natseret ozvim et ha-Kongres,” *Al Hamishmar*, 7 December 1952, 4.

³⁹ Unattributed, “Hakark' nishmetet mitahat ragley MAKI be-Natseret,” *Maariv*, 21 November 1952, 2.

hand, within the Histadrut, there were elements, particularly MAPAM party members, pushing to incorporate Arabs into the Histadrut as equals. This pressure resulted in the 1952 decision to enroll Arabs as members of its labor union organ, the “professional organization.” As the decision to allow Arabs into the trade union unfolded, Arab and Jewish commentators lamented the fact that partial membership perpetuated Arab workers’ inferior status in a manner contradicting basic principles of working-class solidarity. Nevertheless, even Salim Qasim, secretary general of the AWC, received with resignation the Histadrut’s condition that those wishing to join its trade union leave the AWC. After a year of regular membership loss, the AWC resolved to dissolve and to continue to fight for its agenda from within the Histadrut.⁴⁰

I shall return to the Nazareth municipality shortly, but here I would like to dwell on the meaning of the Histadrut’s victory over the AWC. The Labor Zionist leaderships’ decision to open the Histadrut’s trade union function to Arabs was hardly a testament to their strong commitment to internationalism. Nevertheless, the very objective of gaining Arab support at the expense of another rival organization proves that Histadrut leaders felt compelled to offer something to attract Arab members and that the decision to join the Histadrut had a voluntary aspect to it. The next segments of the chapter will illustrate that along with the slow shift away from an exclusively “Hebrew” organization in its constitution, the Histadrut’s policies on the local level were aimed at eliciting Arab support for this quintessential Zionist body. Despite the Histadrut’s coordination with the Military Government and the rest of the Israeli establishment, it was not a mere front for the Israeli security apparatus for it provided its members with certain benefits. Indeed some of these were even awarded in the name worker solidarity.

⁴⁰ [Unattributed, “Degel ha-Kongres le-MAKI,” *Kol Haam*, 26 July 1953, 1;](#) [Unattributed, “Kongres ha-Po’alim ha-‘Aravim” hehlit ‘al siyum pe‘ulato,” *Al Hamishmar*, 26 July 1953, 1,3.](#)

The Histadrut and the Arabs: Patrons and Comrades

It is generally believed in Israeli lore that the Histadrut was (and what's left of it still is) a body rife with corruption, but with the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, as other scholars have already suggested, the Histadrut cultivated an even more overt relationship of patronage and favoritism. Leveraging its immense influence over the labor market, and in particular, the Arab labor market which was subject to military rule, the Histadrut determined the employment status and working conditions of thousands of Palestinian Arabs. As mentioned, the Histadrut's own policies after 1948, perpetuated its mission from the days of the Yishuv to advantage Jewish workers vis-à-vis their Arab counterparts. And although the Histadrut's own archives tell of many cases where Arab Department personnel intervened for this or that worker, these were frequently considerations on behalf of an individual or a group that the Histadrut saw a narrow political interest in supporting.

In late 1952, for instance, several workers from the village of Baqa al-Gharbiyya appealed to the Histadrut's Arab Department (and not the ILL secretariat) with the subject line "monthly salary." Apparently, these workers were not members of the ILL but were contracted in a local "employment exchange" (*lishkat 'avoda*) that happened to be administered by the Histadrut and not the government. In these almost identical letters, the workers—a clerk, a school guard, a tax collector, and a nurse, all employed by the local council—claimed that their current salaries could not support their large families (one reaching 11 dependents) and they are need a raise. The documentation shows that the Histadrut obliged and coordinated with the local council to approve pay increases for several of these workers. The tone of the internal Histadrut correspondences

suggests that the decision to intervene for the benefit of this or that worker was a matter of individual interest, not principle.⁴¹

The strongest lever that the Histadrut used to gain Arab support was its intimate working relations with the Military Government, a body that explicitly cultivated “traditional” Arab leadership. The two bodies mutually reinforced each other’s position to encourage or coerce the Palestinian Arabs to do their bidding. The MG gave members of the ILL more travel permits, and its representatives had much better access to public work.⁴² Gozansky and Dallahseh added that MAPAI functionaries among the Arabs threatened workers with termination and even deportation if they would not join the ILL. In Tayibe for instance, the Military Government granted the local secretary of the ILL exit permits to distribute at his discretion among the villagers.⁴³ On the other hand, the Military Government frequently requested the Histadrut officials’ to help those in the governor’s favor, such as a landowner in Jaljulia applying for a Histadrut loan, or 23 young applicants to the Histadrut’s professional school in Nazareth.⁴⁴ Generally, and as mentioned previously, the MG treated membership in the ILL as a way to vet individuals and to exonerate

⁴¹ Muhammad unclear to Namir, 23 November 1952, Eliyahu Agassi to Yefet, 4 December 1952, Muhammad abu Mukh to David Ayun “Talib Tahiya Ratib,” Ibrahim Rashid Safa to Davud Ayun, 22 December 1952, Unclear to David Ayun, “al-Ratib al-Shahri,” 17 December 1952, Lavon IV 219 105, 3, 6, 7, 9.

⁴² Ramzi Khouri (member of the AWC Executive and Secretary of MAKI in the Western Galilee), “Mikhtav galuy el Sar ha-Bitahon ve-el da‘at ha-kahal ha-Yisre’elit,” undated, Lt. Colonel Emmanuel Mor to Advisor of Arab Affaires, 8 April 1952, First Lt. Yehoshua Ben-Zion, Military Government Branch to Advisor of Arab Affaires, 8 April 1952, Mustafa Faiz Yassin of the Arab Workers Congress in Arraba to MoD, March 1951, Lt. Colonel Ne‘eman Stavi, military governor North to Palmon, Advisor on Arab Affaires, “Tlunut po‘alim me-‘ilabun,” 15 October 1952, ISA GL-13926.1, 16, 43-45, 66.

⁴³ Name unclear, Secretary of ILL in Tayibe and Qalansawe, “Taqrir Shahri li-Shahr Nisan al-Rabi’,” 4 May 1957, Name unclear, Secretary of ILL in Tayibe and Qalansawe, “Taqrir Sanawi ‘an ‘Am 1956.” 14 March 1957, IV 219 197, 7, 38-41.

⁴⁴ K. Kadish, Branch of the Military Government to Histadrut Arab Department, “Hagdalat halva’a le-Muhammad Isma’il ‘Issa – Jaljulia,” 9 June 1955, Lavon IV 219 188, 7; First Lt. Eliyahu Yaffe, Military Government Central to Elyahu Agassi, “Shlihat ne‘arim le-bihs ha-miktso‘i be-Natseret,” 5 June 1955, Elyahu Yosef to Y. Habushi, MoL, “Mu‘amadim ‘Arvim le-beit hasefer ha-miktso‘i be-Natseret,” 29 June 1955, Lavon IV 219 105, 49, 54.

them from public association with “unwanted elements.” Indeed, for many, membership in the ILL was the safest way to secure their livelihood.

A closer look at the documentation of the time reveals that the Histadrut’s support among Arabs was also founded on its ability to influence spheres far more important than material benefits. The Histadrut wielded such great influence because of the precarious circumstances Palestinian Arabs faced right after the 1948 War. Most vulnerable of these were the Palestinian Arab refugees residing outside Israel’s borders, and internally displaced people who lacked legal status and documentation.⁴⁵ If the heads of the Histadrut were indeed playing the game of using favors to buy the loyalty of certain “key persons” in Arab communities, then certain favors could have gained them top-notch loyalty.

For a few years after the 1948 War, Israel reluctantly agreed, as it was facing the third denial of its membership application to the UN, to repatriate and grant citizenship to an estimated 15,000 Palestinian Arab refugees with first degree relatives who remained in Israel. According to Shira Robinson, between the years 1948-1952 Israel probably granted most requests to repatriate to Israel first-degree relatives, and an estimated 4,000 Palestinians returned under this policy.⁴⁶ The queue was long, but some managed to get to the front of the line.

In July of 1949, Josh Palmon, who favored a policy of allowing the selective return of “friendly” Arabs,⁴⁷ notified the Histadrut’s Arab Department that the government would be “willing to discuss and approve the entry of your members into Israel” according to “a list you

⁴⁵ Internally displaced people (IDP) are Palestinian Arabs who left or were made to leave their home in Mandatory Palestine during the 1948 War, but who remained within the area that became the State of Israel. IDPs in Israel are referred to in Hebrew as present absentees, *nohakhim nifkadim*.

⁴⁶ Robinson, “Occupied Citizens in a Liberal State,” 128.

⁴⁷ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 81.

submit” and provided that these members are still “outside the borders of the state.”⁴⁸ In the following months, the Histadrut’s Yona Shulman supplied two lists with names of people the Arab Department wished to grant entry to Israel. There were two categories on the lists: PLL members who fled during the War, and relatives of PLL members who could not be included in the family reunification scheme—fathers, mothers, siblings, uncles, and in-laws. In total, the list contained the names of nearly 330 men, women, and children.⁴⁹ Thus far, I have been able to positively identify from the list only one 20-year old man whose cousin appealed for his return and has definitively entered Israel. In what seems like a payoff of Palmon’s support for selective return, that man returned with his family to the town he was born in and began working right away as a prominent Histadrut activist and an important local figure dedicated to Jewish-Arab “coexistence.” Reading between the lines of his obituary written in Hebrew it is obvious that he was a kingmaker who delivered the Arab vote in municipal politics.⁵⁰

The Histadrut helped with another acute problem many Palestinian Arabs faced. Palestinian Arabs who managed to cross the border back into Israel after initially leaving the country to avoid the hostilities still faced the risk of becoming refugees. Many Arabs in Israel had no, or merely provisional, legal status in the new state. In the years 1949-1950, the state and its organs carefully navigated the conflicting interests of keeping the number of Arabs in the state at the lowest possible on the one hand and gaining international legitimacy on the other. One measure that the Israeli government took was to distribute tens of thousands of provisional identification

⁴⁸ Yehoshua Palmon to The Histadrut Executive Committee, 27 July 1949, ISA GL-17103/28, 2; A copy of the memo was sent to the Israeli Police headquarters.

⁴⁹ Y. Shulman, the Histadrut Arab Department to Palmon, “Hahzarat krove mishpahah,” 15 September 1949, ISA GL-17103/28, 4-9.

⁵⁰ Due to my concern that revealing the name of this person may result in embarrassment to his family’s standing, I decided not to reveal his identity.

documents issued by the military and titled Temporary Residence Permit (TRP). These permits required renewals for time periods allotted by the issuing officer. The military authorities could revoke the TRP without contestation, allowing for the swift deportation of the holder. Holders of TRPs were also denied government rations during a time of government-enacted austerity measures. Shira Robinson, who has poignantly detailed the vulnerability of TRP holders, concluded that this measure “produced a new class of thousands of Palestinians, largely Muslims, whose future legal status depended on their willingness to satisfy the whims of local Jewish military governors, police officers, and intelligence operatives.”⁵¹

As was the case with refugees, the Histadrut came to the aid of some of its members or perhaps those that were willing to become members. In August 1951, for instance, an Acre resident, accompanied by Amnon Lin of the Histadrut and Salim Jubran of the ILL, registered himself and his wife as legal citizens. It later turned out that his real wife “infiltrated” from Lebanon and the woman who attended the registration was actually his cousin’s wife. When Josh Palmon heard of this, he sent a firm letter to the Histadrut’s Department of Arab Affairs and warned that if no steps would be taken to prevent this from happening again, “we will have to reconsider [our faith in] the recommendations of the ILL, its representatives and activists.”⁵² Evidence of a wide-scale intervention of the Histadrut regarding the obtaining of a civic ID can be found in existence of two standard typed forms found in a dossier taken from the ILL/PLL Nazareth branch. The forms read as follows and convey the important privileges ILL/PLL members had access to:

⁵¹ Robinson, *Citizens Strangers*, 88.

⁵² Palmon to Barakat, the Histadrut Arab Department, “Muhammad Ibrahim Sha‘aban,” 22 February 1952, ISA GL-17021.20, 60.

Israel Labor League Nazareth.

Subject: ID for members and relatives of PLL members.

To the Galilee Military Governor.

Mr./Ms.....PLL member branch in.....present in the country since.....[unclear]
ID.....registered/not registered certificate..... certificate registration date.....

We request that you consider the details above to help him obtain a civil identification certificate

In Camaraderie

Israel Labor League Nazareth.

Subject: recommendation for exchange of certificate.

To the Galilee Military Governor.

I hereby request that you consider the attached details and help comrade.....[obtaining] a civil identification certificate because he is a member/relative of a member of the PLL in the Nazareth area.

In Camaraderie

The same dossier contains many hand-written notes in Arabic and English requesting repatriation and civic identity cards on behalf of individuals.⁵³

Despite the close coordination between the Military Government and MAPAI, there was some daylight between the Histadrut and the other government organs. The Histadrut was after all a tent that was home to MAPAM and later even MAKI—opposition parties that openly and actively resisted the Military Government, its policies and other forms of discrimination. In 1950, for instance, the secretaries of the PLL held a convention in Nazareth and in their concluding statement called for the end of the Military Government. This, in turn, prompted Josh Palmon to write the Arab Department an angry letter demanding they restrain the PLL. Reuven Burstein (Barakat) answered defiantly by invoking the PLL’s independence and stating that the Arab Department did not find the declaration to be “dangerous to the wellbeing of the state.”⁵⁴ In April

⁵³ Original forms archived in Lavon IV 219 465, 5.

⁵⁴ R. Burstein, the Histadrut Arab Department to Palmon, 25 April 1950, ISA GL-17021/20, 44.

of 1952, the last year the organization existed as a separate entity, the newly named ILL repeated its demand to end the Military Government.⁵⁵ In later years, speakers in Histadrut events continued to criticize the Military Government and even called for its termination.⁵⁶ According to Salem Jubran, an Arab intellectual who joined MAKI in 1962 and voiced moderate criticism of the Israeli establishment, the Histadrut “did not persecute like the Military Government, did not ignore and deny the existence of the Arabs like the government, and did not humiliate as MAPAI did.”⁵⁷

According to several primary and secondary sources, one of the most desired benefits that Arabs expected when joining the Histadrut was participation in its sick fund, Kupat Holim Klalit, which in turn provided access to medical facilities and health insurance.⁵⁸ The rate of penetration of Kupat Holim’s facilities into Arab locales mirrored the overall slow and rocky process of Arab integration into the rest of the Histadrut’s institutions. I focus more closely on this body in chapter three but here it is important to note that Histadrut functionaries recognized that poor medical service to its members was counterproductive to its efforts in recruiting Arabs.

Indeed, there was more to the Histadrut than serving as an organization for disbursing favors for individual Arabs on behalf of the Israeli establishment. Returning to the Nazareth municipality workers, after their 1953 strike, the Histadrut was now their sole representative and had to prove that it could achieve more for the workers than the AWC could. The Histadrut was

⁵⁵ Unattributed, “be-Shule asefa ahat shel Brit Po‘ale Erets Yisra’el,” *Kol Haam*, 20 May 29152, archived in ISA GL-17021/20, 65.

⁵⁶ Maj. Name unclear, military governor representative in the Western Galilee, “Asefat ha-Histadrut be-1 be-may 1963 be-Natseret,” 3 May 1963, Maj. ‘A. Feinstein, military governor representative in the Eastern Galilee and Nazareth, “Hagigat ha-1 be-may mi-ta’am ha-Histadrut,” 5 May 1961, Maj. ‘A. Feinstein, military governor representative in the Eastern Galilee and Nazareth, “Duh ‘al ha-hagiga le-regel yovel ha-40 la-Histadrut,” 3 January 1961, IDFA 884/483/1966, 16, 25, 36; Maj. ‘A. Feinstein, military governor representative in the Eastern Galilee and Nazareth, “Asefat ‘ovde ha-dahak Natseret,” 5 September 1960, IDFA 920/483/1966, 31.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Bauml, *Tsel kakhol lavan*, 117.

⁵⁸ Qahwaji, *al-‘Arab fi Zill*, 130–32.

now in charge of dealing with the mayor regarding the implementation of signed agreements and negotiating the return to work of some of the striking clerks and sanitation workers. The Histadrut also fought to increase the level of severance compensation the city would dispense to the 20 workers who remained unemployed. In June of 1953, after months of incessant written demands, the Histadrut turned to an arbitration process under the Ministry of Labor and largely won, but the municipality only partially implemented the agreement. In the following year, the Histadrut continued to fight the municipality to raise the municipal clerks' salary according to the countrywide clerk salary charts.⁵⁹

By the end of 1954, the Histadrut had to threaten the municipality of Nazareth with another strike. In November of 1954, a meeting of the Nazareth sanitation workers took place to discuss the steps they should take to receive a salary raise that would put them on par with fellow municipal sanitation workers in the rest of the country. The attendants of the meeting chose to declare a warning strike that would be followed by a general strike, should the municipality not budge. Striking was in the consensus, except for one worker who is recorded in the minutes as agreeing to accept the majority's decision. An unnamed Histadrut official who also attended the meeting then took over and told the workers that the Histadrut would do all it could to achieve the legitimate demands that the workers raised, "in all friendly (*wadiyya*) means," and should that fail, they would go on a strike that would hopefully not "harm any of the workers." The representative then went on to demand that the workers faithfully defer to the Histadrut in all manners concerning the strike

⁵⁹ A. Vertheim, MoL to Mayor of Nazareth and Yaacov Cohen, Histadrut Arab Department, "Maskanotenu benoge'a le-tvi'ot ha-vetek la-'ovdim," 22 May 1953, IV 219 308, 33.

and the negotiations, and then threatened membership and privilege removal from workers who disobeyed instructions or broke the strike. The workers then signed the minutes of the meeting.⁶⁰

Early in December 1954, George Sa‘ad, the local secretary of the labor union, did, in fact, send the municipality a threatening letter.⁶¹ The mayor responded with incredulity to the “violent language” that the Histadrut official used and then added, striking a conciliatory tone, that the municipality is interested in sincere negotiations to “reach an agreement that will preserve the rights of the workers.”⁶² The mayor seems to have been genuine about his willingness to negotiate. In a later sanitation workers meeting, they agreed to postpone the warning strike by two days and enumerated the successes the negotiations had yielded thus far which included (1) a gradual pay increase, (2) shoes and clothing stipends, and (3) annual paid vacation days. Eventually, the municipality managed to avoid a full-blown strike, and as soon it signed an agreement with the Histadrut, two municipal workers decided to celebrate their achievements and requested in writing—via the Histadrut’s local branch—the yearly vacation they were now entitled to.⁶³

To summarize this section of the chapter, it is fair to conclude that whatever employment opportunities the Histadrut could grant the Palestinian Arabs before 1948, after the creation of the state, the Histadrut could offer its members even more opportunities, but also denied them to non-members. Other than employment, the Histadrut provided tangible economic advantages to its Arab affiliates, especially in the agricultural sector: farmers insurance, loans, cooperative schemes, and more. These benefits and advantages were often granted based on personal favoritism and

⁶⁰ Minutes of meeting of sanitation workers in the Nazareth municipality, “Ijtima‘ ‘am li-‘Ummal al-Tanzifat fi Baladyyat al-Nasira,” 10 December 1954, Lavon IV 219 308 2, 33-34.

⁶¹ George Sa‘ad to Mayor of Nazareth, “‘Ummal al-Tanzifat,” 26 November 1954, Lavon IV 219 308 2, 31.

⁶² Amin Jarjura, Mayor of Nazareth to Secretary of the Labor Organization, 23 December 1954, Lavon IV 219 308 2, 36.

⁶³ Fa‘iz Abu Lashin and Muhammad Habiballah to Mayor of Nazareth, “Ijaza Sanawayya,” 1 January 1955, Lavon IV 219 308 2, 37.

familial affiliation, but not always. Indeed, the Histadrut, at certain moments, did constitute a framework for worker unionization and peasant cooperation.⁶⁴ Notwithstanding the discrimination of its Palestinian Arab members, the Histadrut was the more benevolent arm of the Israeli establishment. As the following segment will show, the diversity of methods with which the Histadrut distributed benefits among the Arab citizens of Israel was answered with diverse forms of Arab support for this ostensibly Zionist organization.

Being an Arab member of the Histadrut

The Arab citizens of Israel recognized that the Israeli government, the Military Government, and the Histadrut—all three—were MAPAI-dominated organs, working in obvious consort. For that reason, the Communist Party openly discredited those that joined the Histadrut's ranks. In March of 1950 for instance, the Communist *Kol Haam* blasted the recently convened ILL convention for essentially being a MAPAI gathering for the Arabs. The article also took a harsh stance against the organization's unelected "wheelers and dealers" (*'askanim*) who promoted factionalism and failed to raise in their convention the key problems faced by Arab workers—accessibility to work and equal wages to Jews. Members of the ILL, the editorial claimed, are "mostly forced" to join the organization due to "threats of losing their place of work or as a condition to get one." It should be noted that the MAKI line was not to dismantle the organization but rather to open its gates for the Arabs.⁶⁵ Furthermore, in December of 1959, when the Histadrut convention finally declared that Arabs would become equal members, the Communists Party's Arabic weekly took credit for this reform through it qualified its satisfaction with the demand that now the Histadrut must openly

⁶⁴ Elyahu Yosef to Development Administration (*reshut hapituah*), "Pitsuyim le-po'alim 'Arvim," 20 July 1955, Lavon IV 219 188, 20.

⁶⁵ Unattributed, "'Al ha-perek (editorial): be-shule ve'idat Brit Po'ale Erets Yisra'el," *Kol Haam*, 22 March 1950, 1.

call for the cancellation of the Military Government and abandon its traditionally discriminatory policies.⁶⁶

Another critical voice against the Histadrut is that of Habib Qahwaji, a founding member of Al-Ard, a group that went further than the Communists in their opposition to the regime until the government exiled them (See chapter 4). Writing from Beirut in the early 1970s, Qahwaji explained that the main reason only 30% of the Arabs became Histadrut members, compared to the 80% of the Jews, was that the dominant party in this organization, and especially in its Arab Department, was MAPAI. Other reasons were the Histadrut's neglect of the rights of the Arab worker, and the inferior quality of the services, such as the Sick Fund (Kupat Holim, see chapter 3) it provided its Arab members. Qahwaji also claimed that support for the Histadrut among Arab communities stemmed mainly from opportunism and fear of the Military Government.⁶⁷

Indeed, self-interest was an obvious motivator to support this Zionist organization. Nevertheless, there were many ways for Arabs to cooperate, some would say collaborate, with the Histadrut. While the innermost feelings of Arab PLL/ILL operatives and later on Arab Histadrut members are not easily accessible, their public pronouncements and private correspondences reveal an array of sentiments felt by Arabs in their interactions with the Histadrut. These attitudes can be roughly divided into three: (1) obsequiousness, (2) bureaucratic obedience, and (3) conditional support. These three types of behavior existed on a spectrum of sorts. A statement at one end of the spectrum, one that profusely exalted the Histadrut for its contributions to the Arab worker, attested next to nothing about the level of actual commitment an individual Palestinian Arab had for this organization. At the other end, statements of support mixed with disappointment

⁶⁶ GSS, "ha-Mi'utim be-Yisra'el: leket mitokh ha-'itonot," 4 January 1960, archived in IDFA 920/483/1966, 44.

⁶⁷ Qahwaji, *al'Arab fi Zill*, 135–36.

from the Histadrut's unequal treatment of Arabs would suggest a more sincere belief in the organization's mission. Between these two poles, there existed the Histadrut's Arab functionaries who, alongside their personal thoughts on Labor Zionism, were probably more concerned with keeping both their superiors in the Arab Department and the members of their local ILL branch content. I shall now turn to some examples of these three overlapping ways Arabs positively related to the Histadrut and then discuss their meaning.

During the Mandate period, some of the few Arabs that worked for the Histadrut displayed an uncanny belief in the promise of Labor Zionism, to the point where even their Jewish Histadrut superiors felt uncomfortable.⁶⁸ Naturally, the tactics the Histadrut employed after 1948, and its association with MAPAI and the Israeli establishment created an atmosphere suitable for continued acts of Arab obsequiousness. This attitude was manifested in the excessive flattery found in routine correspondences with Histadrut officials, such as an unsolicited greeting sent from an Arab teacher to Elyahu Agassi on Israel's Independence Day ending with the salutation "long live the Jewish people and long live the independent and free Israel."⁶⁹ Wedding invitations sent to top Arab Department cadre, mostly answered by polite refusals, are also a common find in the archive.⁷⁰ In her memoir, Nuzhat Katzav, the Jewish head of the Women's Movement, expressed her disapproval of "a tradition of hosting" with her Arab female recruits.⁷¹ Some went further than

⁶⁸ Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 92–93.

⁶⁹ Letter to Elyahu Agassi, 5 May 1957, Lavon IV 219 192 א, 35.

⁷⁰ Wedding invitations archived in Lavon IV 219 197, 48 and Lavon IV 219 192 א, 41.

⁷¹ Nuzhat Katsav, *Senuniyot ha-shalom: 'im ha-nashim ha-'Arviyot veva-Druziyot be-Yisra'el* (Or Yehuda: Ma'ariv, 1998), 92.

offering meals and sought to be on the Histadrut's good side by volunteering information on political activists opposing MAPAI, the Histadrut, and government policies.⁷²

Enthusiastic Arab supporters of the Histadrut would express their opinion openly despite the Communists' and nationalists' accusations of opportunism and even collaboration. The Histadrut sponsored an array of Arabic publications and provided Arab writers a platform to praise the Histadrut and MAPAI.⁷³ In one example from Qalansawe, a local villager submitted an article to the Histadrut's Department of Arab Affairs, for publication in *Al-Yawm* titled "The Snow has Melted, and the Garbage Appeared Under it." The article lambasted the local Communist activists, for denouncing all their detractors as "collaborators" with the MG, for sowing divisions in the village, and for hijacking the workers' struggle. All of these apparently lead to their local club being completely deserted.⁷⁴

Many letters and petitions written by Arabs to Histadrut officials contained such sycophantic platitudes, but not all Arabs were willing or thought it useful to play this game. Occupying a separate stance than those who expressed an opportunistic blind faith in the Histadrut and those who considered it as an inseparable part of the oppressive mechanisms of the state, were Arabs, namely supporters of MAPAM, who believed in the Histadrut's mission yet hoped it would do more to live up to it. The arrows of criticism launched by MAPAM's Arabic daily targeted MAPAI-driven policies but not the organization in its entirety.⁷⁵ The harsh tone that Arab Histadrut members voiced suggests they had hoped to make a difference.

⁷² Report from Jaljulia written in Hebrew, 5 July 1956, Lavon IV 219 188, 34; Report from Tayibe written in Arabic, 30 June 1960, Lavon ISA GL-2118/3, 148.

⁷³ These publications were also opened to criticism of MAPAI policies, *see* chapters three and four.

⁷⁴ Sa'id abd al-Qadir to chief editor, *Al-Yawm*, "Zab al-Thalj," undated, Lavon IV 219 99, 2.

⁷⁵ Unattributed, "Kun Sahib Lisan wa la Takun Sahib Af'al," *Al-Mirsad*, 21 May 1959, 4.

For example, a resident of the village of Qalansawe wrote a letter to the Arab Department expressing his disappointment with the Histadrut's "collaboration" with the local reactionary element in the village, and for its neglect of the working young. The Histadrut, the writer lamented, favored those who in the past submitted to Mandate authorities and even supported violence against the Yishuv in 1948. Despite the denunciation of the Histadrut's current patronage tactics, the letter was fully aware and supportive of its goals to elicit the "loyalty" of the Arab citizens and to "integrate" (*damj*) them into the Israeli society. To achieve this goal of "Jewish Arab fraternity," the "Histadruty" youth in the village should form the local council and fulfill Histadrut functions and not the "sheikhs."⁷⁶

A shared theme in these criticisms of the Histadrut's policies is a reference to an idealized form of Labor Zionism's vision of integration. Although this vision was never close to implementation, it nevertheless had persisted since the Histadrut's inception in the 1920s. In his letter mentioned at the top of the chapter, Elias Saba went even further than integration and defined the category of "Hebrew" as one that could potentially assimilate Arabs of different faiths and Jews. Saba was most likely a uniquely committed Histadrut Arab activist who seems to have been fully swept away by its lofty ideals. Other Arab Histadrut functionaries had a more realistic grasp of the potential for a Jewish Arab joint worker struggle.

An example of more levelheaded support for the Histadrut is exemplified by its "key men:" various functionaries working for the organization at local and state-wide capacities. A prominent example is George Sa'ad, the once secretary of the ILL and later the tenacious secretary of the Nazareth labor union who was also a MAPAI party member. Sa'ad, who operated in the politically charged region of Nazareth, towed the party line and stuck with the Histadrut and MAPAI (later

⁷⁶ Mustafa Khatib to comrade David 'Ayun, 29 November 1953, Lavon IV 219 99, 5-6.

Labor) until he retired in the early 1980s. Sa'ad was no stranger to the pressures that the Histadrut applied to Arab workers to join their organization. In 1949, he allegedly blackmailed a worker in the Nazareth Tobacco Company by threatening to rip his ID card if he did not leave the AWS and joined the ILL.⁷⁷ However, even this Histadrut loyalist was not afraid to speak his mind in public about the imperative of granting Arabs full membership in the Histadrut.⁷⁸ Attesting to his attentiveness to the feelings of the community he served, Sa'ad is mentioned in a military report as someone who has repeatedly disapproved of the presence of Nazarene Military Government representative in local Histadrut events.⁷⁹

Whether fueled by pure opportunism or by sincere unionism, the activities that the Histadrut initiated in Arab locales required people on the ground. An analysis of the documentation produced by the Arab functionaries of the Histadrut reveals a mundane and bureaucratic day to day that did not necessitate constant affirmation of loyalty or deep belief in the Histadrut's utopian visions. The monthly reports sent from the branches to the Arab department show that the local secretaries were responsible for enacting and implementing most of the Histadrut functions in Arab villages and towns. The first item on the monthly reports was usually related to the employment status among the Histadrut members and generally in the village. The local secretary was in charge of the placement of members in Histadrut-affiliated workplaces, and the allocation of workers to private employees who had signed agreements with the Histadrut. The secretary also dealt with the military governor and took care of movement permits for the daily workers who were members and, for a fee, for those who were not. Through the reports, the local secretaries revealed

⁷⁷ Translated letter from Abdallah Khamis to Secretary of PLL, 21 September 1949, ISA G-6178/20, 10.

⁷⁸ Ozacky-Lazar, "me-Histadrut 'Ivrit," 390, 400.

⁷⁹ Maj. 'A. Feinstein, military governor representative in the Eastern Galilee and Nazareth, "ha-Mesiba le-pe'ile ha-Histadrut be-Natseret," 16 February 1961, IDFA 884/483/1966, 28.

themselves to be more than just cogs in the machine. They appeared to be quite independent in their actions to alleviate unemployment, advocating for workers vis-à-vis their employers, and in mediating labor disputes.⁸⁰

For example, in November 1955, the Tayibe secretary of the ILL did quite a bit for both the Histadrut members of his branch and for the interests of his bosses in Tel Aviv. To offset the loss of employment due to the end of the agricultural season, he arranged with the military governor 25 more permits for daily work in Tel Aviv. When he received the permits, he noticed that they contained restrictions: work was only permissible in Jaffa, the permit limited the stay outside the village during the weekend, and travel was allowed only through the Jewish town of Kfar Saba. The secretary then appealed to the officer and had those restrictions removed. During that same month, the secretary collected on behalf of the villagers money owed for labor by the “nearby kibbutz,” arranged the payment of compensation to the remaining family of a worker who died, and began collecting testimonies and preparing lists against a Jewish contractor who failed to contribute to his workers’ insurance fund.⁸¹

Not all the functions of the local ILL branch were directly related to the material benefit of workers or of a faction of members in the village. In every monthly report, secretaries would specify the invited lectures, movie screenings, and field trips they had organized for the whole village, not just Histadrut members (See chapter 4). Some of the content of the cultural activities

⁸⁰ Secretary of the Kafr Yasif Histadrut Branch, “Taqrir Shahri,” 31 July 1957, Lavon IV 219 192, 48; Secretary of the Kafr Qasim Histadrut Branch, “Taqrir Shahri,” 2 February 1957, Lavon IV 219 210 8, 24.

⁸¹ The Histadrut Department of Arab Affaires, “Leket yedi’ot ms 6,” December 1955, archived in ISA GL-17098/21, 1-2. Another example, in February of 1958, upon the termination of workers from the Histadrut’s Solel Bone company, the local ILL secretary of the large village of Shefa-‘Amr contacted the Ministry of Labor and arranged the allocation of 300 work-days among these workers resulting in an overall work situation that was “OK” (*la ba’as bihi*). At the same time, the same secretary requested that the Histadrut do more to provide employment for the villagers in order to “strengthen the position of our branch. See secretary of Shefa-‘Amr to Ibrahim Harun, “Taqrir al-Far‘ al-Shahri,” 21 March 1958, Lavon IV 219 187 8, 21.

carried an obvious political message—like organizing a field trip to a military exposition. Other events were more benign, such as Arab film screenings, or educational lectures on new agricultural methods. Much of the secretaries' time was spent on coordinating these cultural activities in Arab locales. They also sent separate, more detailed, reports on proceedings of these events, specifying the attendance, the quality of the activity or lecture, and suggestions on how to improve or whether to keep sponsoring it. In their reports, ILL secretaries did not shy away from pointing out when an event or trip was not received well. For example, in a report written to the Arab Department on a lecture in the village of Jish about the citizens' rights pertaining to the National Insurance Institute (*bituah le'umi*), the secretary stated that “it was clear that the respectable lecturer was not native in the Arabic language...as was clear for the attendees that his knowledge of the (insurance) law was quite superficial for he couldn't answer some of the questions he faced...”⁸²

In a similar fashion to the local ILL/Histadrut secretaries, the local secretaries of the Women's Movement appear to have been empowered to conduct their clubs according to the demands of their community. The Movement, in a typical allocation of gender roles, intentionally avoided “political” issues and focused on culture, education, and professional training. Nevertheless, the correspondences going back and forth between the local clubs and their Histadrut superiors appear to have been sent by dedicated women who truly believed in the benefits that the club offered their communities.⁸³

In the village of Kafr Qasim, the local ILL secretary took a central role in the state's attempts to appease the surviving victims and the families of those massacred by the Israeli border patrol police in October of 1956. For instance, the MG supplied the local ILL secretary with five

⁸² Hana 'Ilm, secretary of the Jish Branch, “Taqrir hawl al Muhadara allati Ulqayat bitarikh 25/9/1956,” 26 September 1956, Lavon IV 219 200, 67.

⁸³ Head of the women's club branch to “Azizati al-Ghaliyya Nuzhat,” undated Lavon IV 219 174 8, 21.

exit permits for him to disperse among relatives of victims of the massacre seeking work in the Jewish town of Petah Tikva. In a more autonomous capacity, the secretary also corresponded and then traveled to the Netanya branch of the National Insurance Institute of Israel to inquire about compensation for some of the injured and victim's families. He then took it upon himself, probably since he could travel freely, to help one family with the bureaucracy of getting a death certificate and issuing the proper financial documents for a widow to receive some compensation for her husband's murder. He also invited all the families of the relatives of the victims for the 40-day memorial service in the ILL office.⁸⁴

There is no doubt that accepting the position of ILL secretary constituted an exchange of loyalty to a Zionist institution in return for local political power and access to certain privileges. In several locations, appeals were sent to the Histadrut protesting the inadequacy of the current secretary usually because he was unpopular, an opportunist, or did not adhere to values of the organization.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, while the secretaries were required to be loyal, in order to fulfill their job properly, they were also required to be attentive to the needs and concerns of their community. In implementing Histadrut policies, they reported on their successes and failures, monitored and informed on local political, economic, social conditions, and made suggestions to improve these functions. In summary, Arab allegiance to the Histadrut was sometimes just part of the job.

Conclusion

⁸⁴ Secretary of the Kafr Qasim Histadrut Branch, "Taqrir shahri," 2 February 1957, Secretary of the Kafr Qasim Histadrut Branch, "Taqrir shahri," 20 August 1958, Secretary of the Kafr Qasim Histadrut Branch, "Taqrir sanawi," 15 March 1957, Lavon IV 219 210 8 pt.1, 24, 51.

⁸⁵ Petition of workers from 'Ara to Elyahu Agassi, undated, IV 219 210 8 pt. 1, 12.

In the Histadrut's yearly almanac for the year 1968, the Arabs seemed to have remained somewhat separated from the rest of the membership by being allotted a separate chapter entitled simply "Arabs." According to the almanac, the organization's "Arab activities" included 46 clubs, 27 women's clubs, and 45 Kupat Holim clinics serving 95 locations. Moreover, the Histadrut sponsored among the Arab citizens 40 "Hapoel" (The Laborer) sports clubs, 18 local chapters of ha-No'ar ha-'Oved youth movement, eight "Mish'an" homes for the elderly, 120 co-ops, and 6,000 contributors to the agricultural insurance "Fallah Fund." The Almanac also indicated stagnation in membership numbers from 101,753 (32.56% of all the Arab population) in 1966 to 103,353 (31.85%) in 1967 but then in 1968, perhaps partly due to Israel's staggering victory in the recent War, that number jumped to around 120,000. The almanac mentioned that there were some non-members associated with the Histadrut but "because the Arab village was primarily based on 'Hamula-type' agriculture, it was very hard to reach all the workers on family plots."⁸⁶

A comparison between these numbers and the resources the Histadrut invested among the Jewish population, not to mention the overall social gaps between Jewish and Arab workers that persist until today, provides a context for making the argument that the Histadrut, all in all, has changed little from its days of "Hebrew Labor." However, a comparison between the Histadrut's total activities among the Arabs in Israel in 1968 with the figures from the year 1949, more so with the figures during the time of the Mandate, prove that the Histadrut indeed did make significant steps to integrate Arabs into its fold. After all, the Histadrut even changed its very name explicitly for the purpose of Arab inclusion. This chapter, however, has steered away from making definitive statements on which of these contexts is more important historically.

⁸⁶ The Histadrut Executive Committee, "Shnaton ha-Histadrut: perek yud alef, "'Aravim'," in Slutzky Yehuda (ed.), *Leket mekorot le-targil ba-Hug le-limude 'avoda*, part 2, 161.

For all of the historical legacy of Labor Zionism's policies in 20th century Palestine, the activities of the Histadrut among the Palestinian Arabs in Israel and the plurality of forms of Arab engagement with the Histadrut, suggest that there was more to the Histadrut than the segregation and subjugation of the Arab worker. The fact remains that some Palestinian Arabs, their motivations diverse and not easily accessible, genuinely believed that the Histadrut had the potential to uplift the Arab citizenry and to serve as a vehicle for positive integration into Israeli society and culture. Those Arabs who did not buy into that rhetoric could at least take comfort in the substantial benefits the Histadrut disbursed among nominally loyal members. In any case, had the Histadrut offered advantages solely to the Jewish worker there would not have been these forms of Arab buy-in into the organization. Labor Zionist discourse always contained the eventuality of this buy-in. This often-ignored aspect of Labor Zionism is as innate as the "Conquest of Labor," and the kibbutz.

Chapter 3

From Doctors to Clinics: The Israeli Health System

Introduction: The Evacuation of Zakariyya

The Palestinian Arab village of Zakariyya, located in the Jerusalem corridor, was occupied by Israeli forces in October of 1948. Following occupation, only 200 out of its 1200 inhabitants remained to suffer from food shortage, isolation, and multiple robberies from roving bands of Arab refugees.¹ According to Benny Morris, in January 1950, Ben-Gurion sat with other top Israeli leaders and sealed the fate of the village. Ben-Gurion decided to transfer its inhabitants and settle Jewish immigrants, (hereafter ‘oleh singular, ‘olim plural) on their lands. Ben-Gurion conditioned this removal upon the approval of the Zakariyyans. In June of 1950, after this approval was allegedly granted, the government proceeded. Some of the villagers were housed in Ramle, others took compensation and joined the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank—the numbers are unclear.² Today, the only testament to Zakariyya and its inhabitants is the empty mosque standing in Zekharya, a moshav founded by ‘olim from Iraqi Kurdistan.

There is a public health angle to the story of the depopulation and supersession of Zakariyya. In January and February of 1950, soon after the decision to remove the inhabitants was finalized and several months prior to its implementation, the Ministry of Health’s Jerusalem bureau sent two medical missions to the village. The reports from these missions portray a bleak reality of a traumatized and isolated population inflicted with lice, trachoma, scabies, malaria, and several venereal diseases. The first report, opened with this disturbing description:

¹ Unattributed, “[Shodedim be-kfar Zekarya.](#)” *Herut*, 28 February 1950; 4; unattributed, “[Mistanenim hazru le-kfar Zekarya.](#)” *Maariv*, 3 May 1950, 3; unattributed, “[Shuv Zekarya.](#)” *Al Hamishmar*, 8 March 1950, 2.

² Benny Morris, *Ledata shel be‘ayat ha-plitim ha-falestinim*, 1947-1949 (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1991), 334–35.

The general impression of the village is most miserable; poverty lurks behind every window and door. The villagers wear very meager clothing and the children seem famished (asked for bread from the visitors).³

The second report painted a similar picture:

We have found all the inhabitants of the place extremely dirty, their bodies as well as their clothes. They were all lice-ridden, almost without exception. This filth (*zohema*) is partially a result of the “natural” neglect of the inhabitants and partly because of lack of soap due to the war.⁴

The reports were authored with the knowledge that the government had plans to remove these villagers although the first one tiptoed around any mentioning of removal: “Knowing that there are **political issues** (*she‘elot mediniyot*) concerning this village I must state as a doctor that [the] living conditions are inhuman... and a principled decision on the fate of the village...should not be delayed” (my emphasis).⁵ The second report explicitly endorsed the removal of the villagers as the best course of action from a public health perspective.

The two reports also contain details of the medical measures needed to treat and diagnose this beleaguered community, but moreover, they reveal something other than medical concern emanating from professional public health officials. The content and context of the doctor’s assessments ring all too familiar with common settler-colonial tropes that conceptualize indigenous communities as wretched and put forward arguments for the removal of the indigenous “for their own good.” At the same time, it would be reductive to claim that the doctors’ worldview simply reflected a Zionist appetite for Palestinian land. Indeed, there is yet another way of understanding the medical mission to Zakariyya.

³ Dr. Y Suriano, “Duh ‘al bikur be-Kfar Zakariya be-2.1.1950,” undated, ISA G-155/9, 39.

⁴ Dr. Y Suriano, “Duh ‘al matsav ha-bri’ut be-Kfar Zakariya,” 14 February 1950, ISA-G 155/9, 36.

⁵ See note 2.

The push to treat the Arabs of Zakariyya was not solely a medical matter and not merely a case of collaboration between the medical establishment and Zionism. This is suggested in the concluding remarks of Dr. Suriano:

...(3) The dirt and filth are so psychologically “rooted” in this village that it will be hard for the villagers to change their life habits and customs. It is preferable, therefore, to insert for once a fundamental change in all the life areas and habits of the people.

(4) by transferring [the villagers] to a different place, the (Jerusalem) health bureau will have the necessary control (*shilton*), authority (*otoritah*), and the practical ability to attain the rehabilitation of the village.”⁶

The reports by the Jerusalem health bureau assume that the state and its organs should have responsibility and authority over this Arab community. The first report by the bureau even contained an emphatic demand that the political cadre take responsibility for the lives of these villagers: “...it’s about time to decide for once and for all if the Arabs in the village will remain questionable citizens devoid of support from the government or whether they be recognized as citizens endowed with rights.”⁷ The government doctor behind these exchanges was Dr. Yosef (Giuseppe) Suriano, a Jerusalem Sephardi who joined the Haganah and served in the medical corps during the 1948 War. Here Suriano expressed a desire to not only gain control over the remaining inhabitants of Zakariyya but also to change their constitution.

In this chapter, I contend that Soriano’s attitude was emblematic of the state’s medical establishment which overall contributed to the integration of the Palestinian Arabs as citizens of Israel. The chapter will demonstrate how the extension of medical services was motivated by an integrationist agenda and had also succeeded in doing so during the 1950s and 1960s. This chapter walks a fine line. On the one hand, it details the medical services that the Jewish state and other

⁶ See note 3.

⁷ See note 2.

Zionist bodies provided the Arabs who remained within the state's borders, while, on the other hand, it makes great efforts to avoid reproducing Israel's public relations trope of treating "its minorities" favorably. "Fortunately," this task can be easily achieved by merely pointing out that the largely separate medical system the state erected for the Palestinian Arabs was significantly inferior to the one accessible to Jews and that the Israeli medical establishment was generally complacent with the gaps between the accessibility to health care and susceptibility to disease among the Arab population and the Jewish population. In fact, much of this chapter will demonstrate this disparity between the access to health care for the Arab population and the Jewish population. Nevertheless, the chapter will also show that despite the continuing disparity between Jewish and Palestinian Arab access to modern health care, the latter's responses to the quality and availability of these services reveal a strong desire among the Arab population to engage in a discourse that recognized the authority of the state and its Zionist institutions.

My interpretation of the history of the early Israeli health system is mindful of the literature on European medical projects in the colonized world. In a vein similar to the descriptions in this chapter, this scholarship was devoted mainly to uncovering the quantitative and qualitative disparity between services that the colonial state provided native subjects and those it provided its officials serving in the colony (not to mention the citizens living in the metropole). Along with inequitable colonial policies, much of the rhetoric of Israeli policymakers presented in this chapter is also similar to that found in historical cases of modern franchise colonialism. Historians of medical projects in Asia and Africa, who dedicated their work to find what is singularly "colonial" in colonial medicine, have uncovered how European medicine in Africa and Asia bolstered the colonial projects of those countries by (1) providing a backdrop for claims of *mission civilisatrice* and (2) constructing a colonized subject, such as the "African," as knowable and thus governable.

A common phenomenon that these studies document is the condescending attitude that colonial doctors reserved for the native population they treated. When addressing causes for illnesses these doctors tended to emphasize native culture and customs rather than biological pathogens, an attitude consistent with their colonial worldview—that of the existence of an essential difference and hierarchy between the colonizer and colonized.⁸ As will be shown below, Israeli doctors had similar outlooks.

Notwithstanding the similarities, the early Israeli medical system and the context in which it existed does not fit the mold created by much of the research on historical colonial medical systems. Most obviously, medical sciences in the middle of the twentieth century have significantly developed from the mid-nineteenth century, and although one can claim that medical knowledge is still implicated in power relations, many of the medical myths colonists propagated about their subjects were no longer prevalent in Israel of 1948. More importantly, however, contrary to the medical projects in the colonized world which reinforced policies based on the racial and cultural difference and hierarchy, the Hebrew and Arabic discourses surrounding health care in Israel, as this chapter will show, ultimately solidified notions of Jewish and Arab civic equality. Elsewhere I have claimed that the advancement of civic equality between Jews and Arabs in Israel is congruent with historical patterns of settler-colonial consolidation.⁹ The extension of medical services could thus be considered a case study of modern medical policies within a settler-colonial context.

⁸ See Shula Marks, “What Is Colonial about Colonial Medicine? And What Has Happened to Imperialism and Health?,” *Social History of Medicine: The Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine* 10, no. 2 (1997): 205–19, <https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/10.2.205>; Waltraud Ernst, “Beyond East and West. from the History of Colonial Medicine to a Social History of Medicine(s) in South Asia,” *Social History of Medicine* 20, no. 3 (2007): 505–24, <https://doi.org/10.1093/shm/hkm077>.

⁹ Arnon Degani, “The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?,” *Settler-colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2014): 84–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.905236>.

To supplement my differentiation between colonial and settler-colonial medicine, I propose an analytical distinction between two forms of medicine which the Israeli government supplied to its Arab citizens. On the one hand, there was the state organized medical services that were essentially provisional. This type of “*ad-hoc* medicine” included medical campaigns of vaccination and treatment of so-called endemic diseases, in particular, trachoma, ringworm, and tuberculosis. At the other end of the spectrum were projects of “permanent medicine,” the public hospitals, gradually made more available for Arabs, and permanent primary care clinics that the government, the Histadrut and other Zionist sick funds opened in Palestinian Arab locales. In between “*ad-hoc*” and “permanent” facilities were the nominally regular yet not permanent incursions of medical and public health personnel into Arab towns, villages, and remote Bedouin camps. While reviewing the archival material I collected for this chapter, I noticed that instances of “*ad-hoc* medicine” were accompanied by language premised on colonial hierarchies, whereas documents referring to permanent medicine tended to evince conceptualizations of Arab-Jewish civic equality—typical of settler-colonial assimilationist discourses. As the years progressed, the latter, “permanent,” type of medicine became the dominant concern for both Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

The chapter looks at the health system Israel erected for those who became its Arab citizens from both chronological and thematic approaches. It begins with a short and general survey of the Israeli health system and the two health systems that existed under preceding modern regimes, the Ottoman Empire (ca. 1876-1917) and the British Mandate (1917-1948), and then briefly detail the development and expansion of the Israeli health system in the Arab sector. The second segment of the chapter focuses more closely on the years 1949-1950, the height of *ad-hoc* medicine in Israel. These were the first two full years of state’s existence, and arguably chaotic times, when the health

services offered to Arab women, men, and children were of the poorest quality. The chapter then focuses on the worldviews of various key actors in the health system—doctors, administrators, and military governors—some determined its policies, and others worked at points of friction with Arab patients. Following the segment on Jewish attitudes toward Arab health, the chapter then presents Arabs’ own interpretation of the services they received—their quality and their availability—and some examples of how they negotiated with Israeli health functionaries for better health care access. This segment shows that regardless of political tendencies and background, the Arab citizens demanded that the government and other institutions treat them the same as Jewish citizens. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of Israeli and Zionist medical policies as an arena for Arab integration into Israeli society.

Arabs on the Ottoman, British, and Israeli Medical Periphery

At the turn of the twentieth century in Ottoman Palestine, government health services were limited to a few municipal medical offices with a doctor on a government retainer. While the government maintained two hospitals in Jerusalem and Nablus, Protestant and Catholic missions operated fifteen hospitals in the cities of Palestine. By the end of Ottoman rule, the Jewish community—countering Missionary efforts—boasted nine hospitals funded by various Jewish foundations and philanthropists. The most prominent of these organizations was the Hadassah Women’s Zionist Organization of America which had, since the 1910s, constructed health facilities, sponsored health campaigns, and provided medical examinations to women, infants, and children—mostly, but not exclusively, for Jews. Jewish private doctors in those times tended to practice within Jewish locales, and those that treated Arab patients did so on an individual basis, usually at the latter’s

initiatives. This segregation of public health articulated a real social gap between Jews and Arabs in Palestine, a gap which would persevere during subsequent regimes.¹⁰

The state apparatus run by British Mandatory authorities did little to affect the disparities between Jewish and Arab health access.¹¹ Upon its official establishment in 1920, the Mandate's Government Department of Health (GDH) defined its remit as to supplement existing voluntary medical institutions and ensure hospital accommodation for those with infectious and mental diseases. As for providing general public health services and preventative care, the Department of Health's prime directives explicitly called for frugality and deprioritized the local residents of the Mandate vis-à-vis the colonial administration personnel:

c) **To limit, as far as possible**, the hospital accommodation provided by the Administration for general diseases to the requirements of Government officers and employees, members of the Police Force, prisoners, medico-legal cases and accidents, and the very poor.

d) To provide hospitals, or to aid Municipalities to provide hospitals, for the needs of the general population in areas **where no** provision or inadequate provision is made by voluntary organizations (my emphases AD).¹²

Subsequent to these directives, during the early years of the Mandate, the British government left most of the general medical and surgical care of the public, both Palestinian Arabs and Jews, to private practitioners and non-governmental or charitable medical institutions.

In accordance with these guidelines, the British invested much of their resources in *ad-hoc* health projects such as anti-malarial and vaccination campaigns, ophthalmic treatment, and isolation of patients with infectious diseases. The mandate also improved drinking water

¹⁰ Nira Reiss, *The Health Care of the Arabs in Israel* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 12–16; Shifra. Shvarts, *Kupat-Holim ha-Klalit: 'itsuvah ve-hitpathutah ke-gorem ha-merkazi be-sherute-bri'ut be-Erets-Yisra'el, 1911-1937* (Kiryat Sedeh-Boker: Ben Gurion University, 1997), 19–20.

¹¹ See Mohammed Karkarah, "Development of Public Health Services to the Palestinians Under the British Mandate 1918-1948" (University of Haifa, 1992).

¹² Peel Palestine Royal Commission, *Report* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1937), 310.

monitoring and food inspections. Along with these measures, the British allocated some resources for permanent health institutions such as 38 clinics for maternity and infant care, government school medical services, and mental hospitals. Between the years 1925-1944, the ratio of sick beds in Palestine provided by the government rose from 14 to 33 percent, servicing Arabs and Jews to the ratio of about 6.5:1. By 1944, hospitals opened in Jerusalem (154 beds), Haifa (163), Nablus (73), Jaffa (83), Be'er Sheva (8,) Gaza (28), and Safad (36). By 1944, British health authorities also opened 20 outpatient clinics in various cities and towns and 19 "once-a-week" village clinics.

Despite the fact that the Mandate authorities opened more and more public health facilities and steadily (though not consistently) increased its budget, the GHD's Public Health Ordinance of 1940 maintained that the government supply health services to the poor and primarily to "where insufficient voluntary hospital accommodations exist."¹³ The 1946 Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry's report concluded at the end of the chapter on "Health Services" that the government was heavily dependent on the 20 Christian Mission hospitals to maintain Arab public health.¹⁴ According to the 1946 report, there were many harsh deficiencies in the Mandate's health system such as having only two doctors to service the 94,000 residents in the Nablus area. In the Ramallah area, 63 villages were serviced by one government Health Bureau clerk, without the help of a nurse.¹⁵ In the south, the government employed one doctor in Be'er Sheva for a population of roughly 100,000.¹⁶ According to historian Anat Mooreville, Palestine was known in world medical circles for its high rates of eye diseases such as trachoma and conjunctivitis, becoming in 1931 the

¹³ Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, *Report to the United States Government and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom* (United States Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 618.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 632-633; Reiss, *The Health Care of the Arabs in Israel*, 20-21, 24.

¹⁵ Karkarah, "Development of Public Health Services to the Palestinians Under the British Mandate 1918-1948," 54.

¹⁶ Reiss, *The Health Care of the Arabs in Israel*, 21.

unfortunate world leader in preventable blindness.¹⁷ Another striking statistic that evinces profound disparities between Jewish and Arab access to modern medical services was the number of doctors coming from the respective communities and the number of Jewish and Arab patients receiving modern hospitalization and outpatient services. In 1946, the doctor gap between Jews and Arabs stood at approximately 9:1, (2625 to 291) and in 1944, the Jews, despite being less than half of the total population, were hospitalized 11% more than Arabs and received 365% more doctor visits as outpatients.¹⁸

As the Mandate years saw the transformation of the Yishuv from a dependent utopian experiment in Jewish settlement to a virtual state to be, they also saw the rise of an impressive, though fragmented, medical system sponsored and administrated by Zionist organizations, the Yishuv's executive bodies, and the Zionist sick funds—the *kupot holim* (*kupat holim* singular). Scholars point out that the blueprint for the sick funds can be found in Bismarckian welfare policies intended to gain working-class loyalty to the state. In Ottoman times, roots of the funds are dated to Second 'Aliya workers who during the 1910s formed three regional worker organizations that also granted due-paying members subsidized medical treatment and medicine. Late in the decade, these organizations dissolved and reconstituted under the control of the main parties within the Second Aliya labor movement, Ahdut Ha'avoda, and Hashomer Hatzair, to form sick funds which competed for members, and forced a form of political identification on those seeking subsidized medical assistance. Then, in the years 1920-1921, while the Histadrut formed as the umbrella organization for all parties within the Zionist labor movement—the partisan funds merged to a

¹⁷ Anat Mooreville, "Oculists in the Orient: A History of Trachoma, Zionism, and Global Health, 1882-1973" PhD Diss., UCLA, 2015, 112–116, doi:10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

¹⁸ Anglo American Committee of Inquiry, *Report*, 620.

single fund—Kupat Holim Klalit shel ha-‘Ovdim ha-‘Ivriyim be-Erets Yisra’el (The General Sick Fund of the Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel)—Hereafter Kupat Holim Klalit or just Klalit.

After about decade, other sick funds created by other political tendencies within the Yishuv began to emerge. More centrist settlers, particularly those from the First ‘Aliya moshavot, formed Kupat Holim ‘Amamit (popular), and the revisionist right had their Kupat Holim Leumit (national). By 1948, membership in these three funds accounted for around 96% of all insured Jewish settlers: Klalit providing services to 80.9% of the population, Leumit to 10.2%, and ‘Amamit to 5%. Klalit boasted its own hospitals and a network of clinics and health centers; the others mostly reimbursed payment to private practitioners. Despite its dominance, and more so after the creation of the state, Klalit could not remain solvent by relying on the fees paid by Histadrut members and was continuously kept afloat by the Yishuv’s executive bodies and Jewish Zionist philanthropy. Nevertheless, Klalit as a Histadrut organ was a powerful actor in Zionist politics. In its very first year, Histadrut Chairman, David Ben-Gurion, sanctioned a settler group that he deemed wayward by denying it Klalit services and claiming that “Kupat Holim [Klalit] is the one institution which grants the Histadrut any actual power.”¹⁹

By nature of the Yishuv and its institutions, Arabs, by and large, could not become members in the funds. This is why, in 1948, the Israeli government assumed responsibility for administering health services for the Arabs. The Israeli Ministry of Health inherited most of the institutions of the Mandate which included several hospitals and regional “health bureaus” (*lishkot bri’ut*), entities charged with sanitation, inoculation, and anti-malarial campaigns. The doctors staffing these bureaus also operated clinics and also conducted visits in remote locations. These clinics offered Arabs with primary care for a supposedly affordable fee. As the years passed the

¹⁹ Shvarts, *Kupat-Holim ha-Klalit*, 1–73. Quote in p. 72.

Ministry of Health transferred the responsibility for some of these clinics to the few existing Arab local councils, continuing to partially fund while allowing the autonomous Jewish health organizations and private practices to continue servicing the Jews, albeit now with more regulation and support.

Alongside the routine medical services for the Arab population, gradually, the Zionist “sick funds,” or Kupot Holim, particularly that of the Histadrut—Kupat Holim Klalit—made some inroads into Arab towns and villages. From 1949 to 1967, Klalit’s presence in exclusively Arab towns and villages grew from one to forty-three facilities, and the number of Arab members grew from 32,000 in 1956 to 100,581 in 1966. The latter figure represented 32.2% of the total Arab population in the state. The combined number of Arab members in two other sick funds, Kupat Holim Leumit and Kupat Holim ‘Amamit in 1967 was 7642, totaling only about 2.3% of the Arab population. An astounding two-thirds of all Arab citizens, compared to 15% of the Jews, had no insurance and would theoretically make use of government clinics or have to bear the full costs of private practitioners.²⁰ If an uninsured citizen, Arab or Jew, could not afford hospitalization, support could be sought from the Ministry of Welfare. In cases of poor Bedouins of the Negev, who were not even monitored by the state’s welfare services, hospital personnel would consult the military governor in order to ascertain a patient’s inability to pay for hospitalization.²¹ A thorough yet unsigned report from the year 1966, archived in the files of the Advisor on Arab Affairs, ends with a peculiar estimation that the percentage of Arabs receiving health services was “90%.”²²

²⁰ Merkaz Kupat Holim, *Kupat Holim le-ve‘idata ha-shminnit* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Po‘el ha-Tsa‘ir, 1968), 17.

²¹ Dr. Ben Assa to military governor South, 8 December 1958, GL-13904/9, 105, 106; Maj. Pinhas Amir, military governor South to Military Government Branch, “Merkaze bri’ut,” 5 January 1950, IDFA-617/72/1970, 15.

²² Single document, January 1966 and List of medical services available to Arab citizens, archived in, GL-17020/15, 93, 107.

More concrete health statistics from the period reveal clear discrimination in allocating health services between Jews and Arabs. To begin with, in official government or Kupat Holim Klalit publications of the time, data and graphs frequently referred to the Arabs as a separate part of the population. This was the case in the first article in a collection published by Kupat Holim Klalit's research department titled "The Development of the Health Services and Conditions in Israel 1956-1965." Diagram 1—"Increase of Health Activities"—represented a measurement compiled by aggregating three health statistics: (1) Total hospital beds (2) Infants registered in Mother and Child clinics, and (3) Visits per person in a clinic. The research amalgamated this data into two columns, one titled "Jewish population" and the other "Total population." Interestingly, according to this diagram, it would seem that in the time period 1956-65, the increase in "health activities" was slightly higher among the non-Jewish population. This, however, will be the only health statistics in which Arabs seem to have fared better than Jews.²³

The first chapter of the government-issued almanac, *The Health System in Israel, 1948-1968*, surveyed the spread of major infectious diseases and clearly showed that Jews were less likely to contract typhoid and to contract and die of whooping cough. Other diagrams depicting contractions and deaths from diphtheria, measles, syphilis, gonorrhea, and salmonella show that the Arabs were simply not counted during the early years of the state's inception. Arabs or "minorities" are also mentioned to be more prone to contracting diseases such as meningitis and ringworm. The almanac described many other illnesses as common among "primitive" and "uneducated" populations which were code for both Palestinian Arabs and Mizrahis. One statistic which the state did collect careful data on from as early as 1951 was the birth and infant mortality

²³ G. Kallner, I. Kanev, and N. Strulovici (eds), *Statistika bri'utit u-vitalit* (Tel Aviv: General Federation of Labor in Israel, 1968), p. 8.

rates. Concerning this latter statistic, the disparities were tragically large and grew even larger until the year 1957 when they peaked at approximately 67 deaths per 1000 births for Arabs compared to 33 for the Jews.²⁴ According to a comprehensive medical statistics report sent to the Advisor on Arab Affairs, the rate of infant mortality for the year 1964 decreased significantly to 38, though this was still 63% higher than the 24 in the Jewish sector.²⁵ The government clearly considered this gap tolerable and reasonable as suggested by the fact that next to this statistic, the author of the report decided it would be relevant to place the infant mortality rate in Egypt, which apparently stood at 134.²⁶

The Early Years of the Israeli Public Health System, 1948-1950

At the end of October of 1948, the Israeli army embarked on Operation Hiram, the final offensive to conquer the entirety of the Galilee. The advancement of the Israeli forces during this offensive would drive out approximately 30,000 Palestinian Arabs from their homes in a military maneuver accompanied by several acts of atrocities.²⁷ Nevertheless, about a month before the operation began—before the state would gain, claim, partially depopulate, and then annex much territory beyond the 1947 UN Partition Plan—officials in Israel’s Ministry of Health and the army concluded that the responsibility for the health of the Arab civilians within these acquired territories should not be in military hands but rather under Israeli civilian authority.²⁸

²⁴ Uzi Ben, Roni Veksler and Shraga Haber, *Ma ‘arekhet ha-beri`ut be-Yisra’el, 1948-1968* (Jerusalem: State of Israel, 1968), 13–21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁶ *See* note 21.

²⁷ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

²⁸ A. Katzanelson, General Manager of the Ministry of Health to Ministry of Minorities, “Zikaron dvarim”, October 17 1948, ISA G-154/15.

Whereas this principled Israeli decision to assume civic responsibility for the health of the Arab citizens suggests a concrete drive to incorporate the Arabs as citizens of the fledgling state, the early implementation of this decision would suggest very little commitment to this decision. The following is a more detailed look at the first two years of the Israeli health system for the Arab citizens; before the Israeli government constructed dozens of permanent clinics and the Zionist sick funds made serious efforts to recruit Arab members.

The initial health care services for the Arab population were conducted almost entirely under the auspices of the Israeli Ministry of Health Service for Minorities (*Sherut Refu'i le-Mi'utim*, hereafter HSM), headed by Dr. Alexander Malchi, a prominent physician in the Yishuv, an expert in bacteriology and tropic diseases.²⁹ The primary services under the HSM's responsibility were: (1) the administration of existing mandate regime hospitals and clinics, (2) opening up new clinics, (3) ensuring that Palestinian Arabs were inoculated against infectious diseases, and (4) coordinating subsidies for individual Arab hospitalization. The archival material from those years tells a story of budgetary limitations and understaffing which constricted the HSM's ability to take on these assignments efficiently and successfully.

The 1948 War constituted, to a large extent, a combination of a revolution and a civil war, carrying in its wake the destruction of infrastructure and population displacement on a large scale. Among the fleeing Palestinian urbanites were the doctors and other medical personnel who serviced the Arab population during the Mandate years. The loss of property, livelihood, and land immediately resulted in a destitute population which, coupled with the constriction of movement, became medically vulnerable—especially in the villages.³⁰ In Acre, for example, Israeli forces

²⁹ Yael Levy, *Rof'eya shel erets Yisra'el, 1799-1948* (Zikhron Yaacov: Itay Bahar, 2012), 285.

³⁰ The city of Acre suffered from the typhoid plague caused by running out of chlorine and its inundation with refugees. The disease caused the deaths of dozens, particularly children and even held back the IDF takeover of the

encountered a severe typhoid outbreak which ravaged the city and was caused by a shortage of chlorine.³¹ Near the front lines of the Galilee, the Israeli army operated a “Medical Service” (*sherut refu’i*) for its own soldiers which occasionally helped Arab civilians in need but only on a case-by-case basis.³² As the battles raged and the Israeli military enacted movement restrictions, the Arab villages of the Galilee did not receive any regular medical and sanitation services.³³ The villages of the Triangle, annexed to Israel months later in May 1949, fared better for they were not entangled in battles and subject to a siege.³⁴

The first reports of official HSM medical personnel, particularly those visiting rural areas, depicted a complete breakdown of the Mandate’s unimpressive system of clinics, on which the Arabs were most dependent. Arabs in cities such as Nazareth, Ramle, Jaffa, and Haifa were somewhat better off for they still had access to Christian missionary medical institutions, Jewish medical facilities, and privately practicing physicians. The HSM reimbursed the military for the expenditures of a clinic operating in the southern coastal town of Majdal, although the clinic closed a few months after the forcible transfer of the town’s Arab population of 2,600 to the Gaza Strip in June 1950. In Ramle, the HSM outsourced health services using the local Kupat Holim Klalit branch. Archival reports on the medical situation in the Negev during the latter part of 1948 are

city in May 1948. See A. Malchi, “Doh ‘al mahalat tifus ha-me‘ayim be ‘Akko,” ISA G-154/15, 87; unattributed, “Magefat ha-tifus be-‘Akko mitpashetet ve-holekhet,” *Maariv*, 5 May 1948, 1; unattributed, “ha-Hagana eyna koveshet et ‘Akko biglal sakanat tifus,” *Ha-Tsofeh*, 17 May 1948, 4; unattributed, “Kri’at ‘ezra shel ‘Arvie ‘Akko,” *Hamashkif*, 16 May 1948, 3; Dr. A. Malchi, “Sheurt refu’i le-mi‘utim,” undated, ISA GL-17020/14.

³¹ Dr. M. Mish‘alani, Public Health Department Acre to Senior Medical Officer, Haifa, “Doh refu’i shnati,” 25 January 1949, ISA G-156/1.

³² Dr. A. Tzangen, district physician and Dr. M. Barzel sanitation engineer, “Skira ‘al ha-matzav ba-kfarim ha-‘arvyim ba-Galil ha-Ma ‘Aravi,” 14 December 1948, ISA G-156/1.

³³ Moshe Aram, Ministry of Minorities to Dr. Katzanelson, 17 September 1948; Dr. Steinberg, IDF liaison officer to the International Red Cross to Dr. Katzanelson, “Sherute bri’ut la- ‘Arvim be-shetah ha-medinah,” 19 October 1948, Dr. A. Malchi, head of HSM to General Manager of the Ministry of Health, “Doh,” 12 December 1948, ISA G-154/15; M. Barzel Sanitation Engineer to Regional Health Bureau ISA G-155/9.

³⁴ A. Malchi to General Manager of the Ministry of Health, “Sherut refu’i le-mi‘utim–ezor tikhon,” 18 May 1949, ISA G-157/1.

harder to find, yet judging from the reports from the early months of 1949, we can deduce that conditions were not good.³⁵ Doctor Koslovski, in a report summarizing his first few months as head of the Negev mobile clinic, stated that “children, of course, survive only if they are the fittest...a considerable number of cases [of] children [are] neglected and badly nourished.”³⁶

These years, 1948-1951. were also the years of the “Massive ‘Aliyah” (*ha-‘aliyah ha-hamonit*), which saw the near doubling of the state’s population with the influx of around 650,000 immigrants, most of them impoverished Jews from the now inhospitable Arab countries and the European killing fields. Initially, the Israeli Ministry of Health took on the direct responsibility of administering health services to both the Jewish immigrants and the remaining Palestinian Arab populations. Whereas the “absorption” (*klita*) of incoming Jews was significantly assisted by the Zionist sick funds and the Hadassah Medical Organization, health services for the Arabs relied primarily on the structures Israel inherited from the Mandate. While deficiencies can be found in the level of access to basic medical services for both constituencies, it is clear that Jewish newcomers were given more resources and were probably medically better off. In material terms, the bare budget allocated in 1948-1949 to the Health Service for the ‘Oleh (*Sherut Refu’i la-‘Oleh*) was 700,000 pounds while the parallel budget for the Health Service for Minorities was most 30,000.³⁷ To reiterate, in addition to the state’s efforts in the realm of health services, the ‘olim received medical attention from the Hadassah Medical Organization, the American Jewish Joint

³⁵ P. Shneerson, “Duh mi-bikur P. Shneerson be-Be’er Sheva vebe-Majdal be-9 ve-10 le-merts, 1949,” undated, ISA GL-17117/46.

³⁶ Dr. H. Koslovski to Ministry of Health, “Final Summary of Work of Field Ambulance Unit in the Negev Area (English in original),” 6 August 1948, ISA G-155/15, 40.

³⁷ The figure of 30,000 pounds is based on a HSM budgetary estimate for the years 1950-195 archived in ISA G-154/16, 32; ISA G-154/15, 15; Shifra Shvarts, *Kupat holim, Histadrut, memshalah : mahalakhim be-‘itsuvah shel ma‘arekhet ha-beriyut be-Yisra’el, 1947-1960* (Be’er Sheva: Ben Gurion University, 2001), 154.

Distribution Committee, and, primarily, from the Yishuv's largest medical institution—the Histadrut's sick fund, Kupat Holim Klalit.³⁸

As the HSM was forming in October and November of 1948, the new Israeli Ministry of Health embarked on large-scale vaccination campaigns against smallpox and typhoid epidemics which broke out in the Western Galilee and the Negev. In the mid-months of 1949, the Ministry of Health and the HSM embarked on another large inoculation campaign against typhoid, incorporating the newly annexed Triangle. The campaign made use of hundreds of signs and thousands of pamphlets in Arabic which called upon the civilians to receive subsidized immunization shots with private doctors, the local Ministry of Health bureaus, local clinics, and the temporary vaccination station created especially for this campaign. Although final reports tally tens of thousands of vaccinations satisfactorily administered during May-July 1949, the campaign itself apparently suffered from many delays and inefficiencies that would characterize the health care the state provided the Arab citizens.³⁹ In Umm al-Fahm, for instance, serums for vaccinations were distributed but not administered because there was simply no local resident that could take on this assignment.⁴⁰

Another arena the HSM operated in was the Arab schools, where it conducted medical examinations and treatment, administered vaccinations, and distributed nutritional aid in the form of fish oil and milk. In Jewish schools, regular health services were operated by the Hadassah Medical Organization and the Kupat Holim Klalit; in contrast, the Arab schools, with their separate

³⁸ Ibid., 162–92.

³⁹ Dr. Sh. Berman to HSM, “Seruv ha-personel ha-Shvaytsi be-hisun neged tifus ha-me‘ayim,” 19 May 1949, Dr. Berman to Malchi, 9 June 1949, ISA G-155/17, 21, 22; Joseph Munayer, Orderly (*sanitar*), “Duh shel pe‘ulat ha-harkavah neged tifus 14.8.49–2.9.49, 4 September 1949; ISA G-154/16, 104; Joseph Munayer, Orderly to Dr. Malchi, “Pe‘ilut ha-harkavah neged ab‘abu‘ut ve-hazrka neged tifus,” 3 August 1949, ISA G-157/2, 63; See note 26.

⁴⁰ Dr. Elizur to Dr. Malchi, “Harkavah ve-Hazrakah le-kfarim ha-‘Arviyyim (sic),” 17 June 1949, ISA, G-157/2, 45.

departments in both Ministry of Education and Health enjoyed no such regular arrangement. In late 1949, only 11 of 97 Arab government schools had a permanent nurse, and a doctor occasionally visited another 18.⁴¹ In official correspondences, personnel from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Military Government frequently complained to the HSM that the schools had no nurse and were not visited regularly by a doctor.⁴²

The heads of the Israeli Ministry of Health considered trachoma and ringworm as the most pressing non-emergency problems to be addressed among Arab children.⁴³ In Nazareth alone, a report from April 1949 prepared by the head of the Health Bureau, Dr. Michael A. Shammass, diagnosed 1306 trachoma-infected schoolchildren out of a total 4175 (31%) in all the institutions in the city. In the public schools alone, the rate was 900 out of 1690, a staggering 53% of the pupils.⁴⁴ In Haifa and Acre, trachoma infection rates were also around 30%, while the schools in the villages of the north fared better at around 10%. As for ringworm cases, a sample examination from May 1950 in an Acre school diagnosed 41 pupils out of 49 with the disease. A few infected Arab children, like their Jewish (mainly Mizrahi) counterparts, were treated with X-ray radiation; however, unlike the Mizrahim, the government did not embark on a wide-scale and systematic program to eradicate the disease among the Arabs.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Dr. A. Malchi, "Sherut refu'i shel bate sefer (sic) ha-mi'utim, ISA G-156/16, 71.

⁴² Military Government representative in Tayibe to Dr. Malchi, "Bdikat ha-talmidim be-bate ha-sefer," 5 January 1950, ISA G-157/1, 218; Dr. Y Meir, MoH to Ministry of Education, "Bate sefer 'Arviyim," 16 August 1950, ISA G-154/16, 52; Dr. Yaacov Menashe to MoH, 9 October 1950, Sh. Moskovitz to Y. Benor, MoE, "Sherut refu'i lebtihis ha-'Arviyim," 30 March 1951, Dr. Sever, Health Bureau Afula to Dr. Tautstein, MoH, "Hashgaha ve-tipul refu'iyim be-bate hasefer be-Naseret," 1 April 1952, ISA G-156/16, 137, 146, 143.

⁴³ Dr. P. Noak to Dr. T. Grushka. 26 January 1949, Chief Doctor, Health Bureau Haifa to Chief MoH, 16 January 1949, ISA G-156/16, 3, 4.

⁴⁴ Dr. M. A. Shammass, "School Medical Service – Nazareth Town," 9 April 1949, ISA G-156/16, 16.

⁴⁵ Dr. Y. Tautshtein, MoH to Ms. Fedrski, Hadassah Medical Organization, "Gazetz bein yalde bate ha-sefer ha-'Arviyim be-Yafo," 4 September 1950, Dr. P. Noak to Akko Municipality, "Tipul be-yalde beit ha-sefer ha-'Arvi ha-negu'im begazetz," 24 May 1950, ISA G-156/16, 166, 167; Dr. Y. Elisha to Dr. Malchi, 6 December 1949, ISA G-157/2, 92.

As for the availability of general medical services for the Arab population, the picture is varied. As mentioned, medical services in Nazareth, the only remaining predominantly Palestinian Arab city in Israel, were relatively intact. The French and Scottish Missions continued to operate hospitals in the city. The Histadrut maintained a clinic for members of its Arab section, the ILL. The Arab Workers Congress, a labor union affiliated with the Communist Party, operated a small sick fund which provided its members with the services of a medical orderly and subsidized treatment with some of the town's remaining doctors. Multiple requests from the Congress to the Ministry of Health to supplement their sick fund as it did for other Zionist sick funds, were met with outright refusal citing the small size of the local Nazarene institution.⁴⁶ Instead of propping up the Communist sick fund, the Ministry of Health opened a clinic within its Nazareth health bureau and a temporary hospital to address a smallpox epidemic.

The rural areas, where the overwhelming majority of remaining Arabs dwelled, had little regular access to medical personnel. This inaccessibility cannot be ascribed solely to geography since the distances of the main Arab rural concentrations to Jewish settlements with clinics was not great at all. Ultimately, what isolated many of the Arabs living in the regions of the Military Government from proper medical care were the harsh movement restrictions discussed in the previous chapter. In those early years, the Military Government also did not allow free movement of Jewish doctors into the villages within regions designated as closed off. Even Dr. Malchi was required to renew his permit on a monthly basis to enter these closed off areas.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Secretary, AWC to Minister of Health, "Ezra le-kupah ha-shayekhet le-Knogres ha-Po'alim ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el," 22 June 1950, Y. Ben Zvi to AWC, "Tmikha be-kupat holim shelakhem," ISA G-155/7, 51, 52, 53, 154.

⁴⁷ A. Malchi to the National Committee of Kupat Holim 'Amamit, "Tipul refu'i be- 'Aravim," 27 February 1949, Dr. Margalit, Kupat Holim 'Amamit and Dr. A. Malchi, "Zikhron Dvarim," 14 February 1949; Maj. [unclear], Military Government, "Rishyonot knisa le-Stahim muhzakim," 19 January 1950; Yehoshua (Josh) Palmon to Ministry of Health, "Rishyonot knisa la-shtahim ha-Muhzakim," 26 January 1950; Malchi to Military Government Branch, "Rishyonot knisva li-shtahim Muhzakim," 6 February 1950; Maj. Y. Lavi, Military Government Branch to

In early 1949, mobile clinics were the HSM's solution for the Arab population's lack of access to significant medical care. These mobile clinics were ambulances staffed by a doctor, nurse, and driver, and filled with non-emergency medical equipment and medications. Initially, the Israeli government did not even bear the full cost of running these clinics. In May of 1949, the International Committee of the Red Cross agreed to fund the vehicles, nurses, medication and one of two doctors for mobile clinics branded No. 3 and No. 4, operating in the Eastern Galilee. This arrangement between the Red Cross and the Israeli Ministry of Health was initially supposed to last for five months but was extended to a year. Clinic No. 2 operated in the Western Galilee and clinic No. 1 operated in the Negev from late March 1949. The latter was funded by the Jewish medical philanthropy organization of Hadassah and the London-based, "Jewish Society for Human Services" which abruptly ceased to exist in late August 1949 forcing the government to take over and directly fund these services.⁴⁸

The mobile clinics would arrive one day each week in small villages and twice per week in larger ones. The medical unit would then unload the equipment in an abandoned apartment or, in some cases, the living room of a willing villager. Most of these improvised clinics did not have a waiting room thus forcing patients to wait outside exposed to the elements. In the case of the Negev, the examinations would take place in a tent, and the unit would be accompanied by a soldier from the Military Government "for security purposes." The Jewish doctors of the mobile clinics

Alexander Malchi, "Ha'rakhat rishayon knisah li-shtahim muhzakim 'avur Dr Aleksander Malchi," 14 February 1950, ISA G-154/15.

⁴⁸ Comite International de la Croix-Rouge, "Agrement (Entre le Ministere de la Sante de l'Etat d'Israel et la Delegation en Israel du Comite International de la Croix-Rouge)," 28 March 1949, Charlotte Johnson of the American Red Cross to Dr Levontin, President of Magen David Adom Israel, "Two Mobile Clinics" 28 January 1950, ISA G-155/17; Malchi to Dr. Meir, General Manager of the Ministry of Health, "Hithaslut ha-aguda ha-yehudit le-sherut enoshi (!)," 23 August 1949, ISA G-155/15.

complained that the treatment they offered was basic due to a shortage of medical instruments and medications, although treatment dispensed by mobile clinics was free of charge.

The monthly forms that the doctors sent to their superiors contained rubrics dividing the patient population into Christians and Muslims, and into three categories of disease: “eyes, malaria, and other.” Accordingly, the “mobile doctors” reported primarily on eye diseases, namely trachoma, and conjunctivitis, but also on skin conditions, and digestive diseases. In some villages in the North, particularly those populated by internally displaced Palestinian refugees, doctors reported malnutrition. As mentioned, the medical and nutritional situation in the South was reported to be dire as well.⁴⁹

Often, these mobile clinics and their services existed only on paper. Clinics 3 and 4, for instance, were supposed to be deployed in early April 1949 but the mechanical condition of the vehicles donated by the Red Cross made them unavailable until May, causing the staff to remain more-or-less idle in Nazareth for a few weeks.⁵⁰ In the summer of 1950, clinic no. 3 has its own “health” concerns: in July the vehicle’s suspension broke and then several flat tires put it out of service for the better part of September through the middle of November of that year. Clinic no. 4, on rainy days, apparently could not reach the village of Deir Hana.⁵¹ Rain in the Negev would also limit the mobility of clinic no. 1, which also suffered from frequent vehicle breakdowns.⁵² Clinic

⁴⁹ Dr. Sh. Berman to HSM, “Duh ‘avoda refu’it ‘im ha-mirpa’a hanayedet mispar 8 (4) lehodesh april-may 1949,” 20 July 1949, Dr. Sh. Berman to HSM, “Duh ‘al ha-‘avoda ha-refu’it be-hodesh yuli 1949, 14 August 1949, Dr. Elkana to Dr. Sever, “Hazmanat trufut,” 17 August 1950, 155/17, 27, 31, 126; *See* Dr. H. Koslovski to Ministry of Health, “Final Summary of Work of Field Ambulance Unit in the Negev Area (English in original),” 6 August 1948, ISA G-155/15, 40.

⁵⁰ Dr. Peretz Yekutieli, Director of Epidemiology, Ministry of Health to Malchi, “Sherut mirpa’ot nayadot mehoz Natseret,” 11 April 1949, ISA GL-155/7.

⁵¹ Dr. A. Sever to Dr. Shammas, “‘Ezra refu’it le-kfarim,” 31 December 1950, ISA GL-155/17.

⁵² Dr. H. Koslovski, Mobile Ambulance Unit Be’er Sheva to Mr. Mordechai Puniansky, Transport Section, Magen David Adom, 18 September 1949, Dr. H. Koslovski to Dr. Malchi, 27 September 1949, Dr. H. Koslovski, Medical Office Be’er Sheva to Director of Public Health, “Monthly Report December 1949,” 6 January 1950, ISA G-155/15 54, 55, 64.

no. 2 was decommissioned for approximately eight months between September 1949 and June 1950 because the health bureau of Acre used the vehicle to replace an ambulance that had previously broken down.⁵³ There is an internal memo attesting to the overall condition of HSM funding and to the general scarcity of goods in Israel at that time, reporting on two employees of the Ministry of Health's Afula bureau who spent an entire day in Haifa searching for tires "wherever possible, even on the black market" without success.⁵⁴

In the Triangle, the government took a somewhat different approach to administering health care for the rural Arab population. In June 1949, less than a month after the annexation of this sliver of land populated by 35,000 villagers, the HSM contracted four doctors and gave them almost-exclusive access to the Arab population. In preparation, the military governor of the Triangle confiscated houses to be used as permanent clinics, evicting the refugee dwellers. Similar to the arrangement in the Galilee, the doctors would only visit the villages once to twice a week.⁵⁵ Like the situation in the other regions, winter weather conditions and the lack of adequate transportation prevented doctors from seeing patients.⁵⁶ For almost a year, the absence of proper transportation for a doctor was the main reason why a permanent government clinic did not open in the Triangle. Finally, in January 1951, such a clinic was opened and staffed by Dr. Elkana, who previously headed a mobile clinic in the Galilee.⁵⁷

⁵³ Dr. Malchi to Ministry of Health, Haifa, "Shirut refu'i ba-Galil ha-Ma 'Aravi," 17 May 1950, ISA GL-155/16.

⁵⁴ Dr. Elkana to Dr. Meir, "Te'anati neged Dr A. Malchi," 20 July 1950; Secretary of the Afula Offices to Dr. Malchi, "Siha telfonit," 6 September 1950, ISA GL-155/17.

⁵⁵ Capt. G. Levitsky to Malchi, "Bate bri'ut," 30 September 1949, Ahmad Fatsh, "Risalat al-Muthallath al-Shamali," *Al-Yawm*, 14 July 1950, archived in .ISA G-157/1, 56, 102; Baqa al-Gharbiyye representative, Military Government Central, "Sidure keva le-ezore 'Ara ve-Umm al-Fahem – Baka al-Garbiya, 28 December 1949, ISA G-157/2, 95.

⁵⁶ 'A. Kupilevich, "ba-Yeshuv ha-'Arvi: sherute ha-bri'ut ba-Meshulash," *Davar*, 3 July 1950, archived in, ISA G-157/1, 107; Dr. A. Malchi to Dr. Rappaport, "Mirpa'ut kafriyot," 27 July 1949, Dr. Rappaport to Dr. Malchi, 1 May 1950, Dr. A Malchi to Military Government Branch, Jaffa, "Sherut refu'i be-ezor ha-tikhon," ISA 157/2, 48, 53, 95, 96, 104.

⁵⁷ Dr. A. Malchi to Office of Vehicle Licensing, "Dr D. Elkana," 28 February 1950, ISA G-157/1, 74.

Unlike the Galilee, doctors in the Triangle charged Arab patients fees for treatment and medications unless they were equipped with a “note” (*pitka*) from the military governor designating their inability to pay. In return for servicing the destitute who could not pay any amount, the Ministry of Health compensated the doctors with a regular lump sum every month.⁵⁸ The fee for a visit was 0.35-0.5 pounds, a sum which a *Davar* reporter claimed prevented the residents of the Triangle from seeking medical assistance except in “the most extreme cases.” Kamel Tibi, a reporter for *Al-Yawm*, accused a contractor of the HSM in Tira, Tayibe, and Qalansaweh by the name of Dr. Fogel, for not exempting poor Arab patients from payment. This accusation was repeated by the Tayibe military governor representative who complained in a letter to Dr. Malchi about Fogel’s habit of charging poor patients too much.⁵⁹ In a correspondence between Fogel and Malchi, the accused doctor seems to admit that she did not wholly comply with the arrangement made with HSM. Nevertheless, in a long letter defending herself, she revealed that the problems in administering proper medical health to the Arabs living in rural areas did not begin and end with her “gentlemen’s agreement” to treat poor Arabs free-of-charge. According to Dr. Fogel:

These prices cannot be borne [by any of the villagers] and many do not come to me or do so when it is too late, when the boy is already blind or needs to be buried in the evening, or the woman dies from hemorrhage before going to a doctor, as has happened five days ago in Tira.⁶⁰

On top of the faulty routine medicine services of the HSM clinics, emergency care and hospitalizations for Arabs were also significantly lacking. An official report of the Health Ministry

⁵⁸ Dr. A. Malchi and Dr. Y. Bihovsky, “Zikhron dvarim,” 24 May 1949, Representative for Tayibe, Military Government Central to Dr. Fogel, 23 June 1950, ISA G-157/1, 9, 246.

⁵⁹ Representative for Tayibe, Military Government Central to Malchi, “Dr fogel,” 28 May 1950, ISA G-157/1, 231.

⁶⁰ Dr. Fogel to Dr. Malchi, 25 August 1950, ISA G-157/1, 247.

stated that all the government hospitals were to “receive patients without any national, religious or sectarian discrimination.”⁶¹ According to that same report, however, during the first half of 1950, out of the 56,356 individuals admitted to all the hospitals in Israel (including Missionary institutions), only 2204 were Arabs, roughly 4% of the population, constituting an under-representation rate of about 300%.⁶² No figure can convey the difficulty caused by the bureaucracy of the permit regime, the unwelcome attitude in hospitals, the long distances without proper means of transportation, and the financial impact medical bills left on the patients. In the Negev, for example, the Hadassah Medical Organization, which operated a medical center in Be’er Sheva, only allowed Bedouins a two-day hospitalization and forwarded the long-term patients to Tel Aviv where they were admitted reluctantly.⁶³ Other government hospital administrators also expressed explicit discontent with the fact that HSM doctors sent them Arab patients.⁶⁴ Here again, Dr. Fogel paints a troubling picture:

...while I have been working for 1½ years I cannot obtain an official letter which would instruct me where I should send the [serious] patients. The last time I had a child with typhoid...I received a telephone message to send the sick child to Sarfand. But what do we have in Sarfand? What hospital do we have there? (Probably the military’s medical center, AD) How can I send the sick child there? For all these questions only god has answers...

...when someone comes to get a permit to send to a hospital a child who has polio, the military governor responds: ‘I will not give a permit to Hasan Qasem to travel [and] despite my (Fogel) caprice (*kaprizah*) the child will die.’ After long arguments, the child was eventually sent anyways to the French hospital (in Nazareth–AD). He was there for 10 days since there was nothing more to pay with. Then we needed to do electricity (electrical

⁶¹ A survey on the past and present of “health and welfare (bri’ut ve-sa’ad)” of the Arab citizens, undated, archived in, 154/16, 92.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Shifra Shvarts *et al.*, “The Government of Israel and the Health Care of the Negev Bedouin under Military Government, 1948-1966.” *Medical History* 47, no. 1 (2003): 50, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0025727300000077>.

⁶⁴ [Name unclear], Head of Haifa Government Hospital to Dr. Malchi, “Holim meha-Meshulash ha-‘Arvi,” 31 October 1949, ISA G-157/1, 56; Dr. Rappaport to Dr. Malchi, yz be-Adar tshi (Hebrew date), ISA G-157/2, 105; Dr. Y. Zayde, Head of Rothschild Municipal Hospital to Haifa Health Bureau, “Tashlum hole huts be-beit ha-holim ha-‘ironi Rotshild,” 28 April 1950; ISA G-155/18, 140; Dr. Daniel Bruner, Head of General Government Hospital Jaffa to the military governor Tayibe, 13 February 1950, ISA G-154/15, 171.

stimulation, AD). I barely managed to get a permit for a 10-month-old to do it in Kupat Holim in Kfar Saba. We had to receive permission from the [Kupa] administration, from the doctor, the head paramedic and after all was organized the father again did not obtain a permit to travel with the child, and the mother was pregnant so she could not travel in these god awful roads and so after 5 cycles the treatment was stopped and the boy remained crippled.

...a pregnant woman with a hematoma that lasted for 3 days...was transported in a commercial truck for 35 kilometers, reaching Dajani hospital (in Jaffa), where they tell her there is no room. And then, thanks to the personal connections I had with the French hospital for 25 years—they bring her there, and she gives birth...⁶⁵.

Fogel goes on to list several propositions to improve the poor standard of health care by powerfully embedding her argument in the condition of the Palestinian village as a “prison:”

Notify me once and for all to what hospital I should send the patients from my area and explain to the hospitals that Tayibe is a giant prison of thousands which has no mail, no telephone, and no permission to exit...⁶⁶

Despite these failings, which continued decades into the future, the archival documentation tallying HSM overall activities indicates a rapid increase in doctor appointments and the expansion of services. For example, a report from January of 1949 claimed that 1720 patients visited the HSM clinics, then in February, that number grew to 4021, to 7584 in March, and in April of that year, it rose to 11068.⁶⁷

This trend continued as the years passed and Arab accessibility to modern medical services improved. Using the very basic GIS application provided by Google Maps, I created a graphic display superimposed over the map of Israel to depict the gradual increase in the number of permanent medical facilities accessible to Arab citizens, among them dozens of mother and child

⁶⁵ Dr. Fogel to Dr. Malchi, 25 August 1950, ISA G-157/1, 247.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ A. Malchi, “Duh le-hodesh Yanuar 1949,” undated; “Duh le-hodesh Februar,” 8 May 1949; “Duh le-hodesh Merts,” 23 May 1949; “Duh le-April 1949,” undated, ISA G-154/15.

centers which provided vaccinations and other preventative care.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, digital thumbtacks placed on a computer-generated map cannot efficiently relay the poor conditions of many of these clinics, their short working hours, and that frequently there was simply no doctor or nurse available or willing to staff them.⁶⁹

Jews on the Arab Right to Healthcare

The separate health care apparatus that the state created specifically for the Arabs was indeed deficient compared to the one already in place for the Jewish community and even relative to the services offered incoming Jewish 'olim. A professional justification of the gaps between Jewish and Arab access to health can be found in an August 1949 budget proposal composed by Dr. Yosef Meir, the former head of Kupat Holim Klalit and the director general of the Ministry of Health.

According to Meir, the de-facto Minister of Health:

Due to the low [living] standard of the Arabs, a full-time doctor and paramedic for every 4-5 thousand people will suffice. Apropos: there are many civilized countries which do not have a better ratio than 4-5 thousand people per doctor in villages.⁷⁰

He then added that

Since the Arab is not spoiled (*mefunak*) and a walk or a donkey ride are not a strain [for them], we can combine 3-5 villages and build there a medical center.⁷¹

⁶⁸ The map can be accessed online at <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkxyN4Se_S_3hMt6nHf8SYjKx9IJsw>.

⁶⁹ Dr. D. Meni, MoH to K. Kadish, Military Government Branch, "Rofe 'avur ha-Bedu'im ba-Negev," 21 October 1956, Dr. D. Meni, MoH to K. Kadish, Military Government Branch, "Tipul refu'i bein ha-Bedu'im ba-Negev," [date unclear], K. Kadish, Military Government Branch to Office of the Advisor on Arab Affairs, "Sherut refu'i la-Bedu'im ba-Negev," 19 August 1956 IDFA-617/72/1970, 30,33,41; Dr. G. Shhade, Head of Minority Affairs, MoH to Mr. N. Bekler, MoH, "Hayahsim 'im kupat holim Klalit vеха-mahlaka ha-'Arvit ba-Histadrut," 21 December 1960, GL-17020/14, 146.

⁷⁰ Y. Meir to Minister of Health and Minister of Finance, "Ezra refu'it la- 'Aravim," 14 August 1949, ISA G-154/15.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Meir's attitude resembles that of colonial medical officials who justified tight-fisted policies because they perceived their indigenous subjects as being in less of need or want for medical services compared to Europeans. Contrary to this outlook, others in the medical system invoked the humanity and equal citizenship of the Arabs as a guiding principle for policy. According to the head of the HSM, Dr. Malchi—a separate service for the Arabs was a result of the horrid Arab living conditions—a situation the state inherited from the earlier regime and the disruptions of the 1948 War. In an internal Ministry of Health report, Malchi concluded with a principled “objection to splitting medical services into sectors (*sektorim*)” and described his “goal” as the eventual disintegration of the HSM and the creation of a “singular medical service for all of [the country's] residents” (underline in original).⁷²

Higher officials in the Israeli medical system indeed tended to speak of the inequities as temporary and envisioned a growing penetration of permanent medicine into Arab villages and towns. This vision of an eventual unitary health system, propagated by Malchi and others in the government and the Ministry of Health, was not just a testament to their humanism, their faith in democracy, or their professional medical ethics. As bureaucrats in charge of a public health system, undoubtedly holding to contemporary notions of civilization and primitiveness, they were concerned that the Arab concentrations could become a source for the outbreak of infectious diseases.⁷³ Another Israeli interest in providing health care public relations, particularly during the early years when Israel's diplomatic standing and recognition of its borders were in flux.⁷⁴

⁷² Dr. Alexander Malchi, “Duh menahel ha-mahlaka,” undated, ISA GL-17020/14, 10 *see also* unattributed survey titled “Pe‘ulut Misrad ha-Bri’ut bekerev ha-mi‘utim,” undated, ISA GL-17020/14, 58.

⁷³ Shifra Shvarts et al., “The Government of Israel and the Health Care of the Negev Bedouin,” 50.

⁷⁴ The Department of International Institutions, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to MoD, Military Government and MoH, Dr. Malchi, “Pe‘ulut ha-memshala be-shetah siyu‘a ve Shikum shel ha-ukhlusiya ha-‘Arvit,” ISA G-154/15, 60.

Nevertheless, besides crude Zionist self-interest, the government and its functionaries' claims of responsibility for Arab health were implicated in broader sovereign claims over territory and populous. Embedded within the desire for better health conditions for the Arabs was also a strong sense of statism or *mamlakhtiut* (which translates roughly to “sovereignty”).

An example for how Israeli officials understood health care as a pillar of Israeli sovereignty can be detected in their attitude and interactions with the International Committee for the Red Cross—an international organization with no obligation to the state and its agenda, and whose local delegate was an Arab named Dr. Fasel. In 1949, the Galilee operations of the Red Cross mobile clinics were a source of anxiety for the Israeli civic and military authorities who did their best to limit this organization's autonomy and actions.⁷⁵ In the early months of the year, when war was still being waged and the borders still undetermined, Dr. Fritz Noack, the interim director general of the Ministry of Health, was instructed by officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to demand that the mobile clinics, donated by the Red Cross to service the Arab villagers of the Galilee, be staffed by Israelis. The memo then stipulated that if the Red Cross does not compromise on the issue of personnel, then the Ministry of Health cannot accept a “diktat” by the Red Cross concerning the location and functions of these clinics which must be determined by Israel.⁷⁶ Apparently, Dr. Malchi tried and failed to have the symbol of the Red Cross removed from the sides of the vehicles it donated.⁷⁷ One particular concern for the Military Government was the Red Cross' work in the disputed demilitarized zone on the Syrian border. After the Red Cross finished

⁷⁵ Military governor in the Eastern Galilee to Staff of Military Government, “Mistanenim be-ambulansim,” 21 July 1949, Capt. Y. Lavi, Military Government Headquarters to Dr. Malchi, “ha-Shetah ha-meforaz,” 1 March 1950, ISA G-155/17, 34,68 ,69, 75; Arye Rakti, Kupat Holim Klalit to Dr. Y. Meir, MoH, “Ezra refu'it lekfarim 'Arviyim,” 7 July 1949, ISA G-154/15, 119; Unattributed, “Tawzi',” *Al-Ittihad*, date unknown, archived in Ittihad 1949, 55.

⁷⁶ The Department for International Institutions, MFA to Dr. Noak, MoH “Mirpa'ut nayadot shel ha-Tslav ha-Adom ba-Galil,” 8 March 1949, ISA G-154/15, 64.

⁷⁷ Dr P. Fasel, Comité International de la Croix-Rouge, Delegation en Israel to Director General MoH, 18 August 1949, ISA G-155/17, 34.

its mission in the Galilee, the army demanded that all medical treatment for the residents of this area be administered in Israel and by Israeli doctors.⁷⁸

Medical services for the Arabs were also understood in professional and public discourse as a means to establish the state's presence in the midst of Arab population concentrations and thereby to elicit wider approval for its institutions.⁷⁹ In other words, providing health care to Arabs was often tied to a notion of duty that the state bares toward its Arab citizens and an assumed expectation of reciprocal loyalty from the latter. In 1949, Dr. Noack ordered that all village clinics be equipped with a sign in Hebrew and Arabic which read "The State of Israel." Dr. Shlomo Berman, head of mobile clinic no. 3, complained months later that a Hebrew sign was not placed in any of the Galilee's mobile clinics.⁸⁰ Two former Military Government officers, who served terms as governors in all three regions, emphasized in an interview that making sure the health needs of the population were met was an important part of what they considered their primary mission: to "incorporate" (*le-shalev*) the Arabs into Israeli life.⁸¹ Conversely, in the case of the Sarahin—a group of 1000-2000 Bedouins who resided in the central Negev without Israeli citizenship—Military Government officials refused requests by health officials to vaccinate them against smallpox fearing that "any treatment will create permanent realities" such as Israeli residency and citizenship.⁸² In 1959, after members of this Bedouin group killed a young and

⁷⁸ Capt. Arye Fridlander to MoH, "Tipul refu'i dahuf le-'Arve ha-ezor ha-meforaz," 15 October 1950, ISA G-154/16, 83.

⁷⁹ Sh. Bar Haim, Israel Broadcast Administration, Department of Arab Broadcasts to MoH, Arab Department, "Shidur 'al pe'ulut misrad ha-bri'ut ba-sektur ha-'Arvi be-Yisra'el," 4 August 1949, ISA G-154/15, 135.

⁸⁰ Dr. Noack to Director General, MoH, "Shlatim la-mirpa'ot ha-kafriyut," 22 March 1949, ISA G-154/15, 77; Afula Regional Health Bureau to Minority Department, MoH "Ktovet 'Ivrit 'al ha-ambulansim," 17 May 1949, ISA G-155/17, 13.

⁸¹ Pinhas Amir, interviewd by Arnon Degani, Ramat Hasharon, Israel, April 2014; Benyamin (Benny) Lubtakin, interviewd by Arnon Degani, Tel Aviv, Israel, May 2015.

⁸² Col. Mishael Shaham, Head of Military Government Branch to Dr. Yaffe, Deputy Director General MoH, 7 May 1959, Dr. Y. Yaffe, Deputy Director, MoH to General Staff, Operations, Military Government, 26 April 1959, Dr.

promising IDF officer, they were mostly expelled to the Sinai and partially absorbed in Israeli tribes.⁸³

The expansion of medical treatment for Arabs was also an example of a modern state gaining the means to collect information about subject minority populations. One primary concern for the Israeli state functionaries of the time was to keep a record of the size of the Arab population, a concern which translated into incessant demands by the HSM, the Central Bureau of Statistics, and the Military Government that doctors faithfully and constantly report births and deaths.⁸⁴

Yet another factor for the extension of medical services for the Arabs is tied to the structure of the Israeli public health system and its reliance on sick funds to administer primary care and cover the costs of treatment in government-run hospitals. These medical organizations were affiliated with political camps or interest groups vying for influence and funds deriving from their membership. As early as 1949, a decade before significant construction of Klalit clinics occurred in Arab villages, Histadrut operatives in the Galilee expressed in internal memos their wish to expand their sick fund's reach into the Arab population to counter missionary and Communist influence.⁸⁵ Later on, internal Histadrut/Kupat Holim Klalit correspondences show that to poach

A. Matan, MoH to Dr. Yaffe, D. Director, MoH, "Shivte Bedu'im lelo pikuah refu'i," undated, Lt. Col. Pinhas Amir, military governor Negev to General Staff, Operations, Military Government, "Shivte Bedu'im lelo pikuah refu'i –pniya misrad ha-bri'ut, 12 April 1959, IDFA-617/72/1970, 4, 5, 6, 7.

⁸³ Ofri Shuval, "Bishnat 1959 nirtsah yair peled, mefaked sayeret tsanhanim, aval mi ratsah et ritshav?," 16 September 2010, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/misc/1.1221635>, last accessed 7 September 7, 2018 .

⁸⁴ Lt. Col. [Name unclear], Deputy Commander, Military Government to regional governors and Dr. Malchi, "Statistika shel leidut ve-mitot," May 1949, Dr. Malchi to the Central Bureau of Statistics, "Hoda'ot leida ve-ptira," 7 August 1949, ISA G-154/15, 108, 138; Dr. Y. Meir, "Hozer ms 414," 13 April 1950, ISA G-154/16, 13; A. Malchi to Government Doctor, Nazareth, "Te'udut leida," 14 September 1950, ISA G-155/7, 63; Dr. M. Brand, Petah Tikva Regional Health Bureau to Director of HSM, "Hoda'ot leida ve-tmuta shel lo Yehudim," 8 April 1950, ISA G-4264/6, 23.

⁸⁵ Aharon Cohen to R. Burstein, 5 September 1950, [Name unclear] to Agassi, 17 September 1950, Y. Halutzi, Merkaz Kupat Holim to regional directors, "Zekhuyut haverim – 'Aravim," 21 February 1951, [Name unclear] to Agassi, 22 January 1952, IV 219 199 א, 143, 144, 150, 157; Arye Rakti, Kupat Holim Klalit, Galilee Region to Merkaz Kupat Holim, "Ezra le-yeshuvim 'Arviyim," 5 February 1949, Arye Rakti, Kupat Holim Klalit to Dr. Y. Meir, MoH, "Ezra refu'it le-kfarim 'Arviyim," 7 July 1949, ISA G-154/15, 114, 119.

Arab members from other kupot and to retain these members were vital goals which merited expansion and improvement in service.⁸⁶ In May 1965, a concerned major Shmuel Gal'on, the Military Government representative in the Western Galilee and most likely a political supporter of a Labor Zionism, wrote to his superiors that a right-winged affiliated Kupat Holim Leumit clinic recently opened in Hurfeish, and was drawing many members. Gal'on pointed out that past requests that villagers had made to open a Kupat Holim Klalit clinic had fallen on deaf ears and caused disgruntlement toward the Histadrut which should be notified about this situation.⁸⁷

The contradictory ideologies and discourses which steered the decisions of the higher-ups also concerned the doctors who directly treated the Arab population. These doctors were at the forefront of Israel's *ad hoc* medicine and their attitudes toward the Palestinian Arabs they treated often disregarded the state interest and were more informed by their own ethical makeup, personal biases, and egos. Doctors Berman and Daniel Elkana, who headed mobile clinics in the Galilee, wrote numerous complaints to their superiors blaming Arab villages and their local leaders for failing to secure a clean room for examination and for treating medical personnel with disrespect and hostility. Both doctors even appealed to the military authorities and penalized the villagers by

⁸⁶ Yaacov (probably) Cohen to Comrade Tabachnik, 17 January 1962, D. Tabachnik to Head of Local Council, I'blin, "Mirpa'at kupah be-yeshuvkhem," undated, Shlomo Hannan, Arab Department coordinator in the Western Galilee to Comrade David Tabachnik, Histadrut Arab Department, "Ptihat mirpa'a helkit al kupah be-kfar julis," 13 March 1962, D. Tabachnik to Sh. Greik, Merkaz Kupat Holim, "Mirpa'at kupah be-Kfar Kara'," 29 March 1962, IV 219 2Yaacov Cohen, Arab Department to Natan Shalom, Central Tax Bureau, the Histadrut, 12 April 1962, D. Tabachnik to Sh. Hannan, coordinator of the Histadrut Arab Department in Akko, "Tlunatu shel ha-haver saleh Ahmad Ibrahim al 'Ali mi-Kfar Kabul," 2 July 1962, Lavon IV 219 286 א, 35, 36, 51, 55, 61, 96; D. Tabachnik to Comrade Sh.Greikh, Merkaz Kupat Holim, "Ezra refu'it le-Kfar Mujar," 23 September 1958, Lavon IV 219 199 א, 152.

⁸⁷ Capt. Shmuel Galon, representative of the Western Galilee to the deputy governor North, "Mirpa'ut be-kfarim," 21 May 1965, IDFA-40/483/1966, 28.

denying them visits.⁸⁸ Dr. Daniel Elkana, in particular, complained about the disrespectful attitude of the villagers of Jish, Mughar, Kafr Kanna, Sakhnin, ‘Ilabun, and Tur‘an.⁸⁹

In the case of Elkana (see figure 4], it would be hard to pin his behavior on a generic Zionist attitude towards “Orientals” or Arabs as he was a member the Sephardi community, commonly celebrated by scholars as having an intimate fluency in the local culture. Perhaps it was this very fluency in the Palestinian urban culture which explains Elkana’s condescension toward the Arab peasantry. In a hand-written memo, Elkana complained that administering examinations and handing out medications free-of-charge created an atmosphere of contempt for the government doctor “among the *falahim*.” Charging a payment from the peasants for medication, Elkana reasoned, would improve their attitudes, eliminate unnecessary examinations, and reduce incessant peasant demands to receive a hypodermic shot even when there was no medical need for one. In a letter to the Association of Government Doctors in which he requested a pay increase, Elkana emphasized that his knowledge of Arabic should be considered a medical specialty, for it offsets the “peasants’ ignorance and complacency” with their own disease symptoms.⁹⁰ Elkana’s bigotry seems to have not been limited to Arabs as he had been reported to be insensitive, strict and even mean-spirited by the staff and patients in his previous assignment to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee’s camp for Yemenite refugees. Elkana was fired from that position indicating that what was not good enough for Yemenite Jews, was apparently just fine for Arabs.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Dr Sh. Berman, mobile clinic four to HSM, “ha-Mirpa’a be-Kfar Jish,” 5 October 1949, ISA G-156/1 pt.3, 3.

⁸⁹ Dr. Daniel Elkana, mobile clinic no. 3 to military governor, Nazareth “ha-Yahas be-Gush Halav el hashrut harfu’i,” 29 June 1960, Dr. Elkana Regional Physician, Afula, “Tluna hozeret ‘al-hayas ha-‘oyen be-Gush Halav,” 3 August 1950, ISA G-155/17, 102, 135, 136, *See also* 21, 23, 40, 52, 53, 56, 66, 180.

⁹⁰ Dr. Elkana to Dr. Malchi, “ha-Derug vaha-Shibuts,” May 1950, ISA G-155/17, 215.

⁹¹ Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman, *Yehude Teiman: historia, hevra, tarbut*, Vol. 3 (Ra’anana: Open University, 2008), 370-371.

Another motivation for individual Jewish doctors to provide medical services to Arabs was a financial one. In February 1949, a meeting took place between Dr. Malchi, Dr. Newman of the Ministry of Health, and Dr. Margalit – a representative for the doctors of Kupat Holim Amamit. The latter reported on the loss of income by Amamit’s doctors, many of whom worked part-time for the sick fund and supplemented their income with the private “Arab practice.” Maragalit suggested three solutions: (1) Allow free movement of Arabs into the moshavot, (2) Allow Amamit doctors free movement into the restricted area to treat Arabs, and (3) Open government clinics in the Arabs village and employ doctors “who previously treated this Arab population.” Malchi favored the third option, and Dr. Newman agreed, stating that this “would benefit the doctors whose financial standing was severely hurt.”⁹²

Conversely, other doctors of the mobile clinic services had a more positive view of their own work and the population they served. Dr. Henry Kozlovsky of mobile clinic no. 1 operating in the Negev, reported more than once to HSM director Malchi about the positive responses from the Bedouin population under his medical attention and displayed a sense of optimism about Bedouin willingness to learn from the medical staff. Furthermore, Koslovski, unlike Elkana, constantly prodded his superiors for more funding—not for himself—but to improve the level of medical aid he could administer.⁹³ Doctor Hans May, of mobile clinic 2, also conveyed in his correspondences genuine concern for the health of the villagers and even true compassion for the

⁹² Dr. Margalit, Kupat Holim ‘Amamit and Dr. A. Malchi, “Zikhron dvarim,” 14 February 1949, Organization of ‘Amamit Physicians to MoH, 17 February 1949, Dr. Malchi to Dr. Margalit, Kupat Holim ‘Amamit, “Tipul refu’i be- ‘Aravim,” 27 February 1949, ISA G-154/15, 49, 54, 58; Dr. Freedman to Dr. Margalit, 28 May 1949, Dr. Y. Feedman to Dr. Malchi, 13 June 1949, ISA G-157/2, 34, 42.

⁹³ Dr. Henry Koslovski, mobile ambulance unit to Dr. Malchi, “Operations, Be’er sheva & Area,” 20 March 1949, Dr. H. Koslovski to military governor Be’er sheva, 11 April 1949, Dr. H. Koslovski to Dr. Malchi, “Monthly Report,” 15 April 1949, Dr. H. Koslovski, mobile ambulance unit Be’er Sheva to MoH, “Medical Report April 15th – May 1st,” ISA G-155/15 9, 21, 22, 28 *See* also Lt. Col. Basil Herman, military governor Negev to MoD, Military Government Department, “Sherut refu’i le-Bedu’im,” 18 December 1952, ISA GL-17117/46, 5.

internally displaced people, “sent off by the authorities” and now living in squalid conditions in other villages.⁹⁴ Such sympathy was also voiced in Dr. Fogel’s letter, mentioned above, where she described the Arab villagers as “poor people whose land has been taken from them, who were not allowed to work, and who were left to the mercy of people with the mindset of vultures that govern as they wish (the military governors? the mukhtars?).”⁹⁵

Another Jewish doctor who showed true concern for the Arab population he serviced was Dr. Binyamin Ben-Assa who treated the Bedouin population in the Negev between the years 1954 and 1965 under the Ministry of Health. A son of a doctor himself, Ben-Assa (Van-Esso) was born in 1917 in Holland. He was raised in a Zionist environment and managed to escape Nazi-occupied Europe to join the Dutch Army in exile in Britain after World War II, Ben-Assa remained an enlisted doctor for the Dutch forces in Jakarta, where he treated servicemen and the local population. In 1950, when the Dutch withdrew from Indonesia, Ben-Assa, his wife Martha and his son Uri settled in Israel. After a few years as an anesthesiologist in Haifa, Ben-Assa moved to Be’er Sheva. According to his short memoir, he “wanted to be a pioneer” and treating the Negev Bedouins “attracted” him greatly.⁹⁶

During his nine-year tenure as the government doctor for the Bedouins in the Negev, Ben-Assa, accompanied by Rahel Sde-Hen, a Morocco-born nurse, was in charge of three permanent Ministry of Health clinics, conducted visits to distant Bedouin encampments, and administered vaccination and anti-tuberculosis campaigns. Martha Ben-Assa, a pediatrician who occasionally accompanied her husband and helped him, described the inadequate conditions under which her

⁹⁴ Dr. Hans May, mobile ambulance unit to Dr. Malchi, 1 June 1950, Dr. May, mobile ambulance unit, “Duh ‘avodat ha-ambulans be-mahoz akko,” 6 October 1950, ISA G-155/16 26-27, 53.

⁹⁵ Dr. Fogel to Dr. Malchi, 25 August 1950, ISA G-157/1, 247.

⁹⁶ Benyamin Ben-Assa, *Sipura shel mishpahtenu*, 40.

husband worked and boasted about moderate achievements in overall Bedouin health.⁹⁷ Ben-Assa himself pushed for larger budgets to be allocated for this sector and the opening of more facilities. In official documentation, Ben-Assa is revealed as an advocate for the well-being of the Bedouins on broader issues. Early on, in a meeting with officials in the Ministry of Health, Ben-Assa pushed aggressively for the training of sanitation inspectors and nurses among the Bedouins. He also wanted to force “those miserable” Negev kibbutzim members to allow Bedouins to enter their communities so that they can learn modern agricultural methods from them.⁹⁸ In a letter to Moshe Dayan, who as Minister of Agriculture coveted Bedouin lands and pushed for their sedentarization, Ben-Assa complained:

I must point out that the Bedouin are residents of the southern district under the supervision of the Military Government. They have problems in agriculture, water management, work, medicine, security and more. Since when do the Bedouin and their problems belong solely to the Ministry of Agriculture? It would be highly desirable to establish a high-level committee of experts that can deal seriously with these problems with the active and ongoing cooperation of the Bedouin themselves. Up until now, no one has asked them what they want. ...⁹⁹

Ben-Assa is an excellent example of genuine Israeli establishment concern for the wellbeing of the Arab citizens. As a matter of fact, Ben-Assa’s compassionate outlook on Palestinian Arabs, in general, can be gleaned from his decision to donate an “Albert Schweitzer Award” he received from the Dutch government to the Palestinian refugees in the West Bank. Nevertheless, his medical work with the Bedouins was given well within a context of state management of a marginalized group perceived as less deserving and less in need of permanent medical services. Concomitantly, Ben-Assa’s medical career like that of many in his generation was grounded in notions of *mission civilisatrice*, and typical European condescension. Ben-Assa

⁹⁷ Marth Ben-Assa, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jerusalem, Israel, January 2015.

⁹⁸ Unattributed, “Duh pgisha bein Mr Jonson ‘im Dr Ben Assa,” 19 May 1955, IDFA-617/72/1970, 79.

⁹⁹ Shvartz, et al, 59.

himself, reminiscing upon his service in Indonesia, mentioned in his memoir that “with time I learned to appreciate the Chinese, smart and industrious people,” who were unlike “the Indonesians” who “did not like to work hard, preferred sleeping, [and] most were poor and frequently sick.”¹⁰⁰ Martha Ben-Assa herself admits that the medical service her husband gave was associated with the state and the Military Government which the Bedouins “hated” and that much of the deference and affection that Ben-Assa received from the Bedouins went away once they understood that he had no significant pull with the governor. In a *Davar* profile piece with the suggestive title, “Medicine Comes to the Desert” (*ha-Refu’ah ba’ah la-midbar*), Ben-Assa’s work among the Bedouins is portrayed as an act of benevolence to ameliorate their primitive existence. Together with the textual descriptions ridiculing the medical ignorance of the Bedouins, the article featured a photograph of Ben-Assa talking and pointing his finger at a Bedouin woman holding a toddler with the caption: “‘take better care of the child’—the finger says... (See figure 2).”¹⁰¹

It cannot be determined whether Ben-Assa’s personal attitude matched the tenor of the article, but retrospectively, Martha Ben-Assa admits that perhaps there was a measure of fantasy in their romantic understanding of the Bedouins’ lifestyle.¹⁰² Ben-Assa himself, as much as he cared for the community he treated, according to his own memoir from 1973, also worked very closely with three military governors “without whose help,” he wrote, “one could not work at all.” He then added that the governors “ruled the Bedouins in a positive paternalistic manner and helped them with every issue: agriculture, employment, food, and medicine.”¹⁰³ Without suggesting that Ben-Assa’s positive assessment of the Military Government should be taken at face value, it was

¹⁰⁰ Ben-Assa, *Sipura*, 35.

¹⁰¹ H. Ben Omer, “ha-Refu’ah ba’ah la-midbar,” *Davar*, 2 September 1955, 24.

¹⁰² Martha Ben-Assa, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jerusalem, Israel, January 2015.

¹⁰³ Ben-Assa, *Sipura*, 43.

probably based on many instances in which governors intervened for the benefit of the Bedouins in the Negev and Palestinian Arabs in other regions.¹⁰⁴ The governors had no particular interest in having the people under their control suffer from ailments and, in fact, lack of medical facilities in areas of concentrated Arab populations created pressure on permit offices which would have made their job much harder.¹⁰⁵

As mentioned in the introduction to the chapter, it is tempting to examine the actions of the Israeli government, the Ministry of Health and doctors such as Ben-Assa solely through the critical lenses of post-colonial studies which tend to interpret Western medical projects as part of a justificatory mechanism for conquest and exploitation.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, modern health services, while exemplifying the extraordinary advancements in science were also part and parcel of the human ability to enslave, oppress, and even exterminate. Undoubtedly, the Israeli medical arena formulated conceptions of Arab primitiveness, government benevolence, and notions of Arab ingratitude—all key discursive justifications for the Military Government and for colonial regimes in general. Nevertheless, as much as the Israeli medical services for the Arabs were inadequate; they did include moments of humanity and care.

¹⁰⁴ Capt. G. Levitsky to Malchi, “bate bri’ut,” 30 September 1949, ISA G-157/1, 56; military governor Ramle-Lod to Dr. Younes, Merkaz Kupat Holim, Rehovot, 13 May 1949, ISA G-155/9, 50; Military governor Eastern Galilee to Dr. Malchi, 22 April 1949, ISA G-156/16, 17; Sh. Barkai, Deputy Commander of the Military Government to Dr. Malchi, “Tipul refu’i be-ezor ha-tikhon,” 17 June 1949, Lt. Col. ‘A. Markovski, deputy military governor Central to Dr. Malchi, “Bri’ut be-Emek ‘Iron, 12 August 1949, Baqa al-Gharbiyye representative, Military Government Central, “Sidure keva le-ezore ‘Ara ve-Umm al-Fahem – Baka al-Grabiya, 28 December 1949, Lt. Col. Y. Verbin, military governor Central to MoH, “Matsav habri’ut be-Baka,” 6 January 1952, ISA G-157/2, 44, 72, 95, 196; Lt. Col. Mikhael Hanegbi military governor Negev, “Ezra refu’it la-beduim,” 31 January 1951, Capt. Moshe Bar On, Military Government Negev to Director General, MoH, 31 July 1951, GL-17117/46, 2, 3; Mikhael Levi, Military Government North to District Physician Tverya, “Mirpa’a be-majdal krum,” 6 September 1955, IDFA-334/483/1966, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Dr. B. Newman to Dr. H. Sheba, “Tlunat ‘Arvie Baka al-Garbiya,” 26 September 1951, 157/1, 186.

¹⁰⁶ Megan. Vaughan, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Power and African Illness* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991); Patricia M Lorcin, “Imperialism, Colonial Identity, and Race in Algeria, 1830-1870. The Role of the French Medical Corps.,” *ISIS* 90, no. 4 (1999): 652–79, <https://doi.org/10.1086/384506>.

The administration of the Zionist health services to the country's Arab citizens was clearly entangled in conflicting discourses, and it is difficult to quantify the relative proportions of each of these narratives. Nevertheless, the Israeli reaction to two separate measles outbreaks—the first in 1950 the latter in 1964—might indicate a shift in how Israeli leaders and public opinion regarded Arabs' right to health. In the beginning of 1950, MAKI Member of Knesset Tawfik Toubi raised several consecutive parliamentary questions directed at the Minister of Health concerning the general “medical neglect” (*ihamal tibi*) in the Arab villages and in particular the deaths of Arab children and infants from the villages of Bi'ina, Deir al-Asad, and Nahaf from measles. In his questions (*she'iltot*), Toubi inquired whether the government was even aware of the number and identity of the dead. In the Minister of Health's reply, Moshe Shapira detailed the services provided to the Arab sector and insisted that these particular villages have adequate and free access to a doctor in the neighboring communities of Majd al-Krum and Rameh. Shapira then mentioned the

unfortunate fact that Arabs refrain from bringing their children to a doctor in cases of rubella [sic] (*ademet*) because of superstitions and prefer to take the advice of ‘witch doctors,’ who cause great medical damage to the Arab population in villages which have yet to reach a level where they can distinguish between true medicine and witchery.¹⁰⁷

Contrary to the Minister's claims about the Arab villagers' disinterest in modern medicine, the mukhtars, imams, and about a hundred residents of Bi'ina and Deir al-Asad petitioned Shapira himself and protested the fact that a government doctor had not visited them since the measles outbreak which took the lives of five babies. The villagers also complained that to reach a doctor they must travel far, first to obtain a travel permit from the military governor, and only then to Acre to see the doctor. Furthermore, the petitioners lamented that the expenses they incurred for doctor visits were unbearable. They concluded with a straightforward demand that two clinics be

¹⁰⁷ Moshe Shapira, Minister of Health to Knesset Chair, 29 March 1950, ISA G-156/1-pt.4, 36.

erected in their villages. The ministry denied their request in an official letter which also stated that prevention of measles outbreaks requires treatment administered at homes and not by doctors.¹⁰⁸

Almost a decade and a half later, in 1964, moderate improvements in Arab accessibility to health care made little difference in an additional measles outbreak. This outbreak, however, received much more coverage in the press, and thus reverberated in the offices of the Ministry of Health and in the wider political system. In the month of January of 1964, during a particularly harsh winter, which even brought with it snow to the Galilee, at least twenty-six infants died in the Druze villages of Kisra, Sami'e, Yanuh, and Beit Jann. Advisor of Arab Affairs, Rehav'am Amir, visited the villages two weeks afterward, while emergency medical crews were still treating measles patients, and wrote a serious report to the Prime Minister. Amir implored Eshkol to take action stating that "we cannot avoid the conclusion that the medical treatment, even [the one administered] yesterday, was still rather meager and too late."¹⁰⁹

At the very end of that same month, the Vice Minister of Health, Yitzhak Refael, gave the Ministry's version of the event in response to demands for information raised by MAKI MK, Esther Vilenska. Refael's account questioned the actual number of infant deaths from measles and pointed to the fact that others had died from other illnesses and mentioned deaths from the disease in Kibbutz Migdal ha-'Emek. The vice Minister also allocated responsibility to the "fatalistic (*fatalistic*) attitude" of Druze parents who in some cases did not bother to notify the health authorities of their children's deaths. Although Refael's entire address was meant to deflect

¹⁰⁸ Petition from residents of Deir al-Asad and Bi'ina to Minister of Health, "Talb Ijad Markaz Sihi fi qaRyatay al-Bi'na wa Deir al-Asad," 29 January 1950, Y. Gan Zvi, MoH to mukhtar of Bi'ina, 19 March 1950, G-156/1-pt.1 13, 14, 21.

¹⁰⁹ Rehavam Amir, PM Advisor of Arab Affairs to the Prime Minister, 31 January 1964, ISA G-17020.15, 15.

responsibility and downplay the severity of the outbreak, in his concluding remarks, he admitted that “the residents of the neglected villages undoubtedly deserve better treatment and to enjoy the fruits of the State of Israel.”¹¹⁰

The Ministry of Health also commissioned an investigation committee composed of three doctors who were top functionaries in the Ministry of Health, a representative from the office of the Advisor on Arab Affairs and Dr. Nadim Qassim, a Druze doctor from the village of Rameh, who worked in the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. The committee criticized the doctors of the Acre regional health bureau who only undertook medical action following a radio news report that children were dying in the village, while nonetheless absolving these doctors of any severe negligence. As a matter of fact, as during the previous outbreak in 1950, the committee partially blamed the village itself and its mukhtars who bickered among themselves about who would host the doctors sent to treat the sick and who failed to report on the deaths of infants as soon as they occurred.

Nevertheless, the committee did find the state negligent in the infrastructure for the “minority” villages of the Western Galilee. A major factor in the high number of deaths caused by this otherwise manageable disease was the fact that Kisra and Yanuh had only one access road which was blocked for a week during a severe snow storm (see fig 5.). In Yanuh, the parents of the children who died were even insured by Kupat Holim Klalit, but they too could not reach the clinic located in the village of Tarshiha, five kilometers away from their village. Another factor the committee pointed out was the absence of telephones in all Arab villages in the Western Galilee. The committee explicitly noted the fact that essentially many of the smaller and more

¹¹⁰ Yizhak Refael, Deputy Minister of Health, “ha-Hatsevet be-kfare ha-Druzim,” 29 January 1964, ISA G-17020.15, 48.

secluded villages in the Galilee did not have adequate access to a doctor and cited budgetary inability of the government and Ministry of Health to erect more clinics. The committee's sixth and last suggestion was to enact a universal health insurance law for all Israeli citizens.¹¹¹

During the following year, correspondences and press reports show that indeed some of the committee's findings were taken to heart. The office of the Prime Minister's Advisor on Arab Affairs implored the Ministry of Health to increase its budget for services to the "minorities," and the Minister of Labor Yigal Alon allocated workdays for the paving of roads to Kisra and Sum'e. Furthermore, the military "donated" soldiers from the Druze unit to help, "emergency" government clinics and mother and child stations were erected temporarily in Kisra, Yanuh, Jit, and Sum'e.¹¹²

The difference between the attitudes and reaction of Israeli health officials and the Jewish public over the two measles outbreak—in 1950 and then in 1964 – is indicative of a growing Zionist understanding that the state needs to ensure better medical access for non-Jews on a permanent basis. Nowadays, in Israel, arguments for the betterment of the social conditions in Druze villages always mention the fact that their sons' serve in the Israeli military. In 1964 however, this was not the case, and although a change in Jewish attitude did not mean a quick change in Arab health conditions, nevertheless, by the year 1967, state functionaries, the Histadrut, and Jewish public opinion, all seem to have recognized an Arab civic right to receive public health services. The next segment will show that the modest advances in Zionist commitment to Arab

¹¹¹ State of Israel, Ministry of Health, "Din ve-Heshbon shel ha-va'ada be-'inyan magefat ha-hatsevet be-kfare ha-Galil ha-Ma 'Aravi," Winter 1963-64, archive in ISA GL-17021/10.

¹¹² Dr. Meni, Head of Preventative Services, Ministry of Health to Dr Yaffe, "Pituah sherute bri'ut ve tavru'ah be-kfare ha-mi'utim," 13 November 1964, Correspondent in the Western Galilee, "Allon mavtiah kvish le-Sami' ve-Kisra, *Haaretz*, 6 February 1964, archived in ISA G-17021/10, 54; 36-40.

permanent medical care, occurred together with clear and vigorous Arab demands as citizens of the state and as members of the Histadrut.

Arab Demands and Complaints

Between the years 1948 and 1967, Arabs in Israel worked continuously for the betterment of their own access to medical services. Within the archived documents of the Israeli Ministry of Health, there are countless petitions and letters imploring the government and its organs to serve Arab communities with more and better doctors, nurses and medical clinics. Frequently, these requests were made in the form of a demand and with the apparent awareness that health care in the new state was not distributed equally between Arabs and Jews.

In the previous section, I mentioned Dr. Elkana who frequently entered disputes with the communities he serviced—both Arab and Jewish. In the case of his falling out with the villagers of Jish (Gush Halav) and its surrounding villages, their “hostility” could be partially attributed to the fact that the introduction of the mobile clinics actually constituted a downgrade in access to medical help compared to existing conditions. This is because since 1945 the Jish villagers had maintained a small yet permanent medical clinic that remained open until 1949, staffed by Dr. Perel. Initially, both mobile and permanent clinics operated in tandem, but then in August of 1949, the government suddenly closed the latter. The villagers of Jish and their neighbors from Hurfeish, Rihaniyya, and their new refugee neighbors from the recently-depopulated Bir‘am, protested the abrupt closing of the local clinic in a letter to the Minister of Health. The letter, written in a noticeably unapologetic tone for those early post-1948 years, declared that their expectations from the State of Israel had not only gone unfulfilled but that closing the British Mandate clinic was an

“injustice.”¹¹³ The government did not re-open the clinic, and after that Dr. Elkana continued to report “a hostile attitude” by the villagers.¹¹⁴

When demanding better medical services, Arabs did not confront a state that was monolithic in its policies and attitudes. As mentioned, military governors, who had their own agenda, wanted the civic authorities construct medical facilities for their subjects. In the summer of 1951, “dignitaries” of the Triangle sent a letter via the military governor to the Minister of Health filled with platitudes reflecting the imbalance of power between the petitioners and the petitioned. Nevertheless, the petition, marked with the seal of the Military Government, referred to medical care as a service “democratic governments” give their citizens, and the petitioners were frank about the inadequacy of the current government doctor whom they described as being “more like a nurse.” The petitions lamented that the latter was only available for two days a week and even on those days he would take his time in the mornings and ignored the suffering of the patients waiting outside his door. By the time they sent the third petition via the military governor, the villagers explicitly criticized the fact that their complaints were ignored and pointed out that “hope is disappearing from [their] hearts.”¹¹⁵

These petitions resulted in an inquiry ordered by the general manager of the Ministry of Health, Dr. Haim Sheba. The inquiry, in turn, produced a report authored by Dr. B. Newman who found no wrongdoing with the doctor’s performance and only admitted to the fact that since he has to visit the villages of ‘Ara and Umm al-Fahm during the week, it was reasonable that he be only

¹¹³ Residents of Jish, Rehaniya, and Hurfeish to Minister of Health, “Da’ira al-siha li-qarya al-Jish qada’ Safd liwa’ al-Jalil al-sharqi” ISA G-155/17, 40.

¹¹⁴ Dr. Elkana Regional Physician, Afula, “Tluna hozeret ‘al ha-yahas ha-‘oyen be-Gush Halav,” 3 August 1950, ISA G-155/17, 136.

¹¹⁵ Petition from residents of Baqa al-Gharbiyye to Minister of Health, “Talb Ta’yyin Tabibi Da’im li-al-Qarya,” 26 August 1951, ISA G-157/1, 194.

available in Baqa for two days a week. The report mentioned two possible reasons for the villagers' disgruntlement, the first being that the doctor during the Mandate period frequented the village daily as a private practitioner. Dr. Newman suggested another possible reason for the complaints: "perhaps this dissatisfaction is caused by the military governor who obviously would not like to issue many permits...for doctor visitations."¹¹⁶ Whether in this instance the Military Government and the dignitaries might have played a positive role in expanding medical services to Arab locale, the Communists, in their public demands for better health care, generally viewed the Military Government as part of the problem.

Consistent with its unrelenting opposition to the Military Government, the Communist newspaper *Al-Ittihad* explicitly linked the issue of poor Arab access to health services with the movement restrictions imposed on them. For example, in a short article titled "Typhoid does not need a Permit!," MK Emile Habibi, contrasted the severity with which the Israeli authorities limited the movement of Arab citizens to their neglect of Arab health, and in particular a typhoid epidemic in Nazareth and the surrounding villages. Habibi then went on to demand that the Ministry of Health combat the typhoid epidemic with the same tenacity as the Acre military governor combated the "democratic forces" in his district.¹¹⁷ On many other occasions, the Communists reported on other shortfalls of the health services and constantly demanded better medical infrastructure, such as better roads to make emergency health care more accessible.¹¹⁸

Supposedly on the opposite end of the political spectrum to *Al-Ittihad*, the Histadrut's *Al Yawm* expectedly reported faithfully on all the incremental improvements in medical services for

¹¹⁶ Dr. B Newman to Dr. H Sheba, "Tlunut 'Arvie Baka-al-Garbiya," 26 September 1951, ISA G-157/1, 196.

¹¹⁷ Unattributed, "al-Tafo'id la Yahtaj ila Tasrih Tajauwwl" *Al-Ittihad*, in *Ittihad* 1949, 58.

¹¹⁸ Unattributed, "Ahali Daliyat al-Karmil Yutalibun bi-Fath Markaz Is'af fi Qaryatihim," *Al-Ittihad*, unattributed, "risalat 'ilabuwn," *Al-Ittihad* *Ittihad* 1949; Unattributed, "Hhathihi Qadaya Umm al-Fahm: ma Mawqifkum Hiyalaha," *Al-Ittihad*, 3 March 1959, 3.

the Arab population; every clinic, every vaccination campaign, and every occasion of food distribution was all covered in flattery to the government and the ruling party.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Histadrut was not in complete harmony with the government, and *Al-Yawm*'s coverage of the latter's medical services occasionally contained a healthy dose of criticism for its inadequacies. Furthermore, while criticism in *Al-Yawm* tended to be more implicit and deferential, its pages would occasionally include much less polite Arab voices. One such voice was that of Kamel Tibi, a key Histadrut operative and father of the renowned serving MK (and certified gynecologist), Ahmad Tibi. In June of 1950, in a segment titled "The Pulpit" (*al-minbar*), Tibi wrote an article which not only detailed the inadequate medical and sanitation conditions in the Triangle but also questioned whether the Ministry of Health was even aware of these conditions. Tibi defiantly asked if the government was aware that not a single government doctor was regularly stationed in the Triangle, that emergency care was practically nonexistent, that there were no sanitation and food inspection services, no facilities to quarantine tuberculosis patients, that there was an acute shortage of midwives in the southern villages (leading to the deaths of two mothers), and that there was no financial assistance to those hospitalized in the government hospitals. Tibi then stated that the only thing that the Ministry seems to be preoccupied with was registering the number of births and deaths in the region. He signed off with "we are waiting, and we will wait."¹²⁰

Both publications, *Al-Ittihad* and *Al-Yawm*, also saw eye to eye in 1964 when covering the measles epidemic in the Druze villages of the Western Galilee mentioned above. Unsurprisingly, the Communist newspaper used harsher language, making use of the term "criminal negligence" (*ihamal ajrami*) and pointing out the obvious fact that "national discrimination" (*tamyyiz qawmi*)

¹¹⁹ See, for instance, unattributed, "Barid al-Qurra' Tashih Khabar," *Al-Yawm*, 9 May 1950, archived in ISA G-157/1, 84.

¹²⁰ Kamel al-Tibi, "Hal Ta'lam Da'ira al-Siha," *Al-Yawm*, 16 June 1950, ISA G-157/1, 113.

played a part in the events. Nevertheless, both newspapers laid the blame squarely on the government and emphasized that the lack of infrastructure in the villages was at the heart of the avoidable tragic results of the outbreak.¹²¹

Improvements in health accessibility were not just a result of the pressure that government opposition forces applied. Such is the case with Fares Hamdan, an MK of the MAPAI subsidiary list, The Agriculture and Progress Party. Hamdan was a wealthy land-owner from Baqa al-Gharbiyye and the epitome of the so-called dignitary class (*nikhbadim* [Heb], *khwajat* [Arabic]) who openly supported the early Israeli regime and served as a middleman between the authorities and individual subjects.¹²² Hamdan was the man behind the construction in the years 1957-1958 of 'Health Centers' (*merkazim refu'iyim*) in the Triangle, funded by money obtained from the Muslim Waqf, the local Arab councils in the Triangle and the Ministry of Health (in that order).¹²³ The initiative came to Hamdan years before, in November 1952, when he apparently contacted government officials and suggested that since the Triangle area is populated exclusively by Muslims, he could arrange for Waqf funds to be used to erect a hospital in this area. Hamdan reportedly claimed in front of a government official that the creation of these centers would raise the status of the state in the eyes of the Arab constituents, and he promised to make sure that the opening of this center would be covered even in the Jordanian press. Hamdan also stated that he was offering his help because he "understands the times," and "has always given the Jews fair treatment." Hamdan claimed that, unlike other Arab "dignitaries," he has no selfish purpose behind

¹²¹ Unattributed, "Al-Ma'sa allati Rawwa'at Qura Kisra, wa-Yanuh, wa-kafr Sami'," *Al-Yawm*, January 31 1964, p. 3; Shafiq Adib Mansur, "Waqfa 'ala Nakbat al-Muthalath al-Durzi," *Al-Yawm*, February 4 1964, p. 4; Unattributed, "al-Mas'uliyya al-'amma Tqa'u 'ala al-Hukuma allati Tnhaj Siyasat al-Tamyyiz," *Al-Ittihad*, January 31 1964, p.1,6; Unattributed, "Iqamt Wizarat al-Siha Lajna Tuhaqqaq fi Nakbat al-Hisba," *Al-Ittihad*, February 4 1964, p.4.

¹²² Cohen, *Good Arabs*, 137–38.

¹²³ Gideon Weigart, "Arab Minority: First Health Center for Little Triangle," *Jerusalem Post*, archived in ISA GL-17035/17.

his actions yet erecting a medical facility, he admitted, would prove beneficial on election day. Hamdan is no exemplar of a progressive parliamentarian, and his brand of politics represented an Israeli interest to cultivate factions and allegiances in the Palestinian Arab population based on kin, denomination, and religious identity. Nevertheless, even a MAPAI agent such as Hamdan felt the need to show that he was in tune with the demands and needs of his electorate. The health centers testify that the Palestinian Arab constituency in Israel did have levers they could employ to improve their lot.¹²⁴

As time passed, Arab frustration about inadequate health care would be diverted from the government to the Histadrut as more Arabs became members in Kupat Holim Klalit. As mentioned in the previous chapter, membership in the Histadrut was not always motivated by ideological zeal rather it involved taking a pragmatic stance which stifled radical energies within the Arab communities and diverted them to struggles for reform. Patients of the Klalit, as due paying members of the Histadrut, tended to complain more as customers and less as a subaltern ethnic minority. Even Habib Qahwaji, deported in 1968, echoes this sentiment in an anecdote of an exchange he had with patients in a Klalit clinic waiting-hall in Nazareth:

[Patient]: Sigh...one of us will die before he sees a doctor.

I said: Since when have you been waiting?

He answered: For two hours, and my turn has yet to come. (He was 45 in line).

I said: When was the last time you were here?

He answered: Two months ago, I would be better off if I go to a private doctor as my blood has boiled from waiting...¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Unknown writer, "Siha 'im Fares Hamdan," 18 November 1952, archive in ISA GL-17118/35.

¹²⁵ Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill*, 1948, 132.

Other letters of complaint to the government, Histadrut officials, and the press tell similar stories of endless lines, lack of specialist doctors, improper behavior by doctors and staff, and poorly equipped pharmacies.

Indeed, membership in Kupat Holim Klalit did not mean access to excellent medical service. Consequently, as they did with the Ministry of Health, Arab members of the Histadrut actively demanded that this quintessential Zionist organization serve their communities better.¹²⁶ Unlike letters and petitions addressed to the government, the letters Palestinian Arab Histadrut members wrote reflected the measure of leverage they possessed as many complaints contained threats to leave.¹²⁷ For example, in a petition sent from teachers of a school in the Druze village Daliyat al-Karmel, these Histadrut members demanded longer clinic hours and visitations from specialists or else “we will immediately hand in our membership in this institution.”¹²⁸ In another example, Arab workers from Mghar employed in the Israeli waterworks company and registered in the Histadrut, reclaimed the health tax deducted from their salaries and transferred the sum to their accounts in Kupat Holim Leumit. They reportedly did this not because they were supporters of the right winged Herut but because Leumit erected a clinic in their village while Klalit did not.¹²⁹

In one case, Histadrut officials seemed to be so concerned with appeasing their members that they were willing to forgo the organization’s principles concerning gender equality and commitment to social progress. In 1961, the residents of Majd al-Krum and neighboring Bi‘ina

¹²⁶ Residents of Shefa-‘Amr to Avraham Aharon, “Wad‘ Kupat Holim fi al-Balada,” 10 November 1957, Lavon IV 219 199 n, 144; ISA G-160/6, 1.

¹²⁷ Residents of Tur‘an to Dr. Yoels, “Hoser dea’got bri’ut ba-makum,” [date unclear] 1951, Fendi Qasem to Minister of Health, “Bakasha rutsim Kupat Holim be-kfar shelanu,” 25 September 1952, ISA G-160/6, 32; HA IV 219 286 n, 103, 36, 38, 39.

¹²⁸ Petition signed by residents Daliyat al Karmil to Mr. Eliyahu Barrak, “Sherute KUPAH be-kfarenu,” 26 February 1962, Lavon IV 219 286, 73.

¹²⁹ A. Harush to Agassi, 18 December 1957, Lavon IV 219 199, 151.

and Deir al-Asad demanded in several letters that the local male nurse be replaced with a female one on account of their “tradition.”¹³⁰ A local Histadrut employee warned his superiors that the excuse used by the Klalit, that there are no nurses available, is unacceptable and that the current situation has led to some members falling behind on their dues. In this case, the Histadrut did not follow its ideals of gender equality or its commitment to Arab “modernization,” and in an internal Histadrut memo an official stated: “we can no longer face the pressure from residents in places where Kupat Holim clinics have opened and that are employing male nurses.” The memo also ordered the hiring of female nurses in Arab villages instead of male ones “wherever possible.”¹³¹

One last example for a Palestinian Arab response to Zionist health care contains many of the themes discussed in this chapter and points to the interconnectedness of Israeli public health care and the issue of Arab identification with the state and its hegemonic institutions. On the first day of September 1958, David Tabachnik of the Histadrut’s Arab Department gave a speech at the opening ceremony of a Kupat Holim clinic in Kafr Yasif. Following congratulatory remarks, Tabachnik spoke of the “solidarity” (*solidariut*), “common destiny” and “mutual responsibility” (*arvut hadadit*) between the Arab and Jewish worker who “are paving the way, for a better life, more whole—a life of peace, fraternity and the building of the state of Israel.”¹³² Tabachnick also emphasized Kupat Holim’s dual role of promoting the Histadrut and the state but then mentioned—quite condescendingly—his hope that “the existence of...the clinic...will be a factor

¹³⁰ Petition from Histadrut members in Majd al-Krum, “ha-Ah be-mirpa’at Majd al Krum (translated from Arabic),” 6 January 1961, D. Tabachnik to Sh. Greik, Merkaz Kupat Holim, “mirpa’at Majd al Krum,” 6 June 1961, Lavon IV 219 286 □ pt. 2, 39, 43..

¹³¹ D. Tabachnik to Sh. Greik, Merkaz Kupat Holim, “Sikume pgishatenu me-yom 2.6.61,” 5 June 1961, Lavon IV 219 286 □ Pt. 2, 41.

¹³² D. Tabachnik, “Ne’um ha-haver Tabachnik be-hagigat KOH Kfar Yasif,” 4 January 1958, Lavon IV 219 192, 56.

to prevent filth (*zuhema*) and promote cleanliness on the street, in the [rest?] room, and in the home.”

Archived in the Histadrut’s Lavon institute, next to this speech transcript, is a short message, unsigned, undated, and forwarded to the ‘administration of Kupat Holim in the Western Galilee’ with the subject line “hooliganism” (*biryonut*). The message contains what seems to be Kafr Yasif’s response to Tabachnik and the Histadrut:

I regret to inform you about the awful incident which occurred in our village Kafr Yasif. Someone smeared cow dung on the Israeli national flag [raised next to] Kupat Holim.¹³³

What can be learned from this subaltern resistance which took the form of vandalism in Kafr Yasif (a future focal point of nationalism among the Arabs in Israel)? The vandal, an anonymous protester, for whatever reason, expressed his anger or contempt toward a prominent Zionist institution and the State of Israel itself and at the same time, amplified the association of health care, the Histadrut, and the state. If the incident indicates that not all Arabs were “bought” by the provision of health care, then it also suggests that others were willing to become part of the Israeli social landscape in exchange for proper public services. Within a decade, approximately 57% of the villagers in Kfar Yasif had joined Kupat Holim Klalit.¹³⁴

Conclusion

The practitioners of medicine in Israel, and the members of the bureaucratic apparatus that coordinated them, particularly *ad-hoc* public health campaigns, frequently dispersed assertions of Arab primitivism and complacency with a lower standard of living. This is a typical colonial

¹³³ Anonymous to Kupat Holim, Western Galilee, “Biryonut,” undated, Lavon IV 219 192, 57.

¹³⁴ “Kfare ha-mi’utim she-kayamim ba-hem sherute refu’ah ‘al yede mosad refu’i mukar,” archived in ISA GL-17020/15, 107.

studies trope which, on the face things, corresponds well with the Israeli social hierarchy. Indeed, the Orientalist, colonial-type sensibilities which permeated the Zionist movement through the decades have already been extensively researched and undoubtedly can be applied to the way medical services were distributed during Israel's first years. Nevertheless, it is evident that in the medical realm, as in others, "colonialism" was not the only structure at play between the state and its Palestinian Arab citizens.

The extension of public health to Palestinian Arab citizens—notwithstanding the unequal manner in which it was implemented—had historical implications for the molding of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel into a distinct political constituency. On the whole, the medical administrators and practitioners within the state and Kupat Holim Klalit did not take part in the destruction of Arab villages and the displacement of Arabs. If anything, the expansion of the medical services to Arab communities was premised on a collective Israeli understanding—shared by many, though not all—that the Arabs that are here to stay. The inclusive aspects of the Israeli health system came even more to the fore as the Ministry of Health gradually handed responsibilities in the Arab sector to the Kupot Holim. Under these conditions, Palestinian Arab health essentially became a type of market which marginalized somewhat ethnic distinctions as the only factor in determining policy. At the same time, it is important to stress that the conceptualization of the Arabs as rights-bearing citizens and as rights-bearing members—is wholly congruent with settler-colonial processes of indigenous elimination.

As for the Arab share in the story of the Israeli health system—their submission to it and the demands they raised for better medical services—was based on decisions borne of pragmatism. Those decisions say little about the depth of identification the individual Palestinian Arab had with these institutions and the regime that propped them up. Nevertheless, pragmatism aside, when

Arabs submitted their bodies to doctors and nurses bearing a Star of David on their uniform, and more so when they demanded that Zionist institutions expand their services, they took their citizenship and—regarding the Kupot Holim—their membership seriously. Arabs taking on these positions conferred a degree of legitimacy upon the state, the Histadrut, and other Zionist institutions. In the final analysis, despite the fact that modern medicine in Israel merged well with colonial tendencies and legacies which existed within Zionism, it ultimately contributed its share in a settler-colonial integrationist agenda. It did so by providing tangible rewards for Arab usage of a civic discourse which diverted intellectual and political energies away from making claims as members of an indigenous national group.

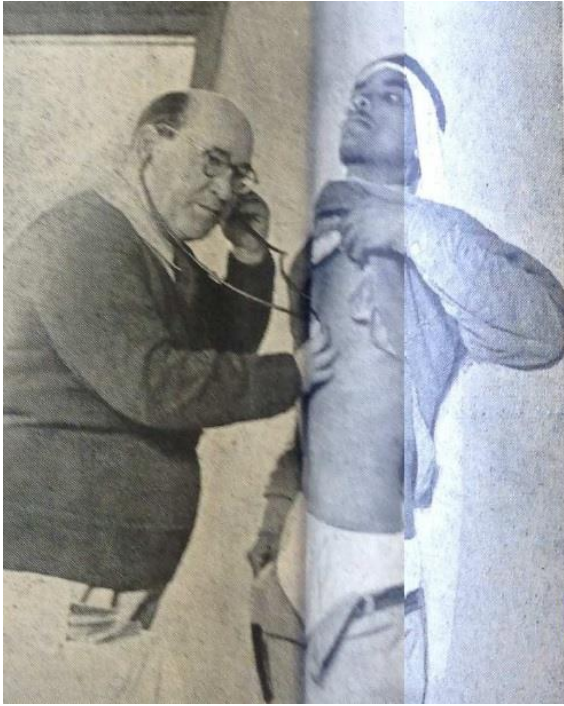


Figure 4: "Dr. Daniel Elkana the government doctor in the Tayibe region examines one of the inhabitants," in, Ya'ir Kotler and Beno Rothenberg (photography), "Military Government in the Triangle [Heb.]," *Bamahane*, 20 March 1952, 133-134.



„שמרי יותר טוב על הילד“ – אומרת האצבע...

Figure 5: In H. Ben Omer, "Medicine Comes to the Desert [Heb.]," *Davar*, 2 September 1955, 24.



Figure 7: Dr. Ben-Assa with a Bedouin, undated, Martha Ben-Assa's private collection.



Figure 6: The road from Sumei to Kisra, 12 February 1964, in "Final Report of the Inquiry Committee on the Measles Outbreak in the Villages of the Western Galilee [Heb.]," ISA GL-19021/10.



Figure 8: Dr. Ben-Assa vaccinating a small child in a Bedouin tent, undated, Martha Ben-Assa's private collection.

Chapter 4

Hearts and Minds

Hope

In his seminal study on the colonial condition as witnessed in Algeria, Albert Memmi argued that instead of being surprised by the outbreak of colonial rebellions “we should be surprised that they are not more frequent and more violent.” Native quietism, according to Memmi, should not be attributed merely to the elaborate mechanisms of colonial rule—divide and conquer, co-optation, and pure oppression—but was also to the natives’ internal doubts, one of them being: “the long maintained **hope** that the almighty power of the colonizer might bear the fruit of infinite goodness.”¹ The transformation of the Algerian elite from advocating assimilation into the French nation to becoming the fathers of the Algerian nation, entailed the complete abandonment of this “hope.”² In this following chapter, I argue that key to understanding the dynamic of subordinate integration under a settler-colonial regime is that the latter cultivates within the consciousness of both settlers and indigenous people a sense of hope and its derivative affects and effects.

Hope as a defined emotion has appeared in Thomas Aquinas’ writing as a uniquely human trait and a force that “is directed to a future aim that is hard but not impossible to attain.”³ Scholars have identified the close link between modern iterations of “hope” and utopian visions of Marxism and liberation theology.⁴ Settler-colonial narrative forms are particularly invested in utopian and

¹ Albert. Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), 171. *My emphasis.*

² Salah el Din El Tayeb, “The Europeanized Algerians and the Emancipation of Algeria,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 22, no. 2 (1986): 206–35.

³ Quoted in John Cartwright, “From Aquinas to Zwelethemba: A Brief History of Hope,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592, no. March (2004): 170, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203262017>.

⁴ Ruth Levitas, “Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia,” in *Not yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, ed. Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (New York: Verso, 1997), 65–79.

future-looking narratives for they are premised on ever-changing and improving status quos: exogenous political entities recede, the very constitution of the settler as a sovereign is established, the settler becomes indigenous, and the land blossoms with his toil (and emptied form indigenous presence).⁵ Hope in the Zionist context was an extremely important affect to be sustained because it faced less than optimal conditions in its early decades. The very anthem of the first Zionist congress, and later the state of Israel, is titled *ha-Tikva*, the Hope.

Settler utopias have of course been quite dystopian for indigenous people. Karl Hardy has argued in his article “Unsettling Hope” that as an affect, hope can politicize utopian future visions for indigenous people as well as settlers. Hardy however also mentioned that indigenous adaptations of utopia and their activist embrace of hope often articulate into cooperation and reconciliation with the non-indigenous, with the settlers. Hardy thus brings into question whether utopian indigenous visions can even transcend settler-colonial formations. In any case, the embrace of hope under settler-colonialism by both settlers and indigenous people postpones physical violence even if their respective utopian visions are incompatible.⁶ A settler-colonial relationship which features little physical violence, therefore, is a hallmark of a relationship close to settler-colonial consolidation.

The previous chapters depicted how the young state and the Histadrut enacted policies that funneled much of the Arab political energies into pursuing an agenda centered on their status as citizens. Through this process, which I titled subordinate integration, the Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel became Arab-Israelis. Whereas the previous chapters focused on policies that

⁵ Lorenzo. Veracini, *Settler-colonialism: A Theoretical Overview* (Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 96–104.

⁶ Karl Hardy, “Unsettling Hope : Contemporary Indigenous Politics,” *Spaces of Utopia: An Electronic Journal* 2nd series, no. 1 (2012): 123–36.

contributed indirectly, sometimes intentionally and sometimes inadvertently, to the dynamic of integration, this chapter's focus will be on policies explicitly targeting hearts and minds of the Palestinian Arabs and evaluate their efficacy. This chapter delves into the emotional aspects of Palestinian Arab life in Israel. The objects of inquiry in this chapter—emotions, feelings, sentiments, and the ever elusive “identity”—do not lend themselves easily to concrete and quantifiable conclusions. Nevertheless, I will reconstruct the range of emotions that Israelis hoped to cultivate among the Palestinian Arabs and make some assertions about their success, while showing that while efforts to instill “deep loyalty” were only marginally successful, the early Israeli regime did, in fact, instill among Palestinian Arabs a hope for better days.

The Question of Loyalty

In the 1950s and 1960s, and till today, the internal Israeli Zionist discourse on the Palestinian Arab citizens are saturated with the word “loyalty,” *ne'emanut*, as in “loyalty to the state.” An example for this occurring in the highest of leadership forums can be found in the protocols of a July 1963 between Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and his Department for Arab Affairs consisting of MAPAI's top “Arabists.” Uri Lubrani, Eshkol's chief of staff and until recently the Advisor on Arab Affairs, opened the meeting with the following remarks:

My basic assumption, which can be debated, but that has been the assumption that has guided our policies throughout these years, is that, potentially, the loyalty to the state of every Arab citizen is questionable. The question has always been, how to neutralize the hostility (*sitnah*) that exists among the Arabs so that we can continue our work.⁷

⁷ Levi Eshkol, Uri Lubrani, and others, “Hitya'atsut 'im ha-mahlaka le-'inyane 'Aravim,” 23 July 1963, ISA A-7921/1, 24-25.

Lubrani then gave the general outline of the government's policies to "neutralize the hostility": preventing the rise of an independent Arab leadership through co-optation of potentially nationalist leaders, bribing heads of families, and sowing sectarian divisions, and sanctioning those who "cause trouble." Lubrani also voiced his concern for the recent alleviations in the Military Government's restriction which have "blunted its teeth" to the point of putting in question the sustainability of the, supposedly effective, carrots and sticks policies.⁸

After hearing Lubrani's review, Eshkol, seemingly irritable, took control over the meeting and raised the fundamental question:

Is there anyone here that thinks that this is not our eternal lot (?), (that we have to wait until there is peace with the Arab (states), that things will stay as they are (?), or, should we make the effort (?), and there is a way, and there is a chance for the Arabs to become more "loyal" (*loyalim*) (?), or is there no chance and basis for this?⁹

Eshkol faced different answers from the participants. Lubrani opined that if Eshkol was "hoping for 'and the wolf should live with the lamb' – there is no hope." Instead, Lubrani stated that the loyalty that could be expected from the Arabs was, at most, a passive anticipation for an outside force to come and "destroy" (*yaharos*) Israel.¹⁰

Contrary to Lubrani pessimism, Eshkol believed that more could and should be done to cultivate a positive Arab sentiment toward the state: "Do we see in them fundamental haters, no chance, we should not take care of them; or do we say: there is some chance, whatever we do it is vital that a *modus vivendi* be created." Eshkol suggested that more government resources be allocated for infrastructure that would benefit this part of the population and also toward absorbing

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, 29.

¹⁰ Ibid, 30.

the Arab intelligentsia into the government apparatus. The end result, Eshkol prophesized, would be that “Shfar‘am might not become Petah Tikva, but something must be done.”¹¹

This exchange between Eshkol and Lubrani is emblematic of the fundamental contention between Zionists over Palestinian Arabs’ political status in Israel. Of course, in the margins of the Zionist movement, there were those that necessitated immediate civic and even national equality, and there were those that had no qualms with ongoing Jewish privilege and supremacy, or conversely, another Arab exodus. But within MAPAI, the debate, in essence, was between two positions. According to the first, the Arabs in Israel have yet to prove their loyalty to the state so they should not expect to be given rights and service as equal citizens—and, according to the second, for Arabs to become loyal to the state, they should be given rights and services as equal citizens. The obvious difference between these two outlooks, between Lubrani and Eshkol, is that the former considered the Palestinian Arabs as mostly confined to a set of antagonistic dispositions toward the state while the latter approach found their character as more malleable. Envisioning indigenous people as stagnant is immanent to the logic of colonialism and their metamorphosis into something else is a vital settler-colonial narrative form. Nevertheless, the gap between these two positions was not very wide. Eshkol’s statement about Shfar‘am not becoming Petah Tikva (the latter means in Hebrew incidentally, meaning opening of hope) was not just a comment about the physical characteristics of the two respective towns but also a statement on the denizens of Shefra‘am, who will never become like those of Petah Tikva. Lubrani, on the other hand, in that same exchange mentioned above, was asked by Eshkol why, considering Arab **dis**loyalty, should the state, to begin with, give the Palestinian Arabs any rights at all? Lubrani answered: “you can’t do otherwise (*einkha yakhol aheret*).” The key difference between Zionists was, therefore, one of

¹¹ Ibid, 34.

emphasis. Eshkol had hope—hope that the Palestinian Arabs will develop sentiments of loyalty deeper than what Lubrani thought could be attained. Within less than a year Lubrani was sent to political exile in diplomacy and Eshkol closed the Military Government.

The Palestinian Arab Answer

The historical record from the years 1948-1967 clearly suggests that the Palestinian Arabs were overwhelmingly loyal by the narrow definition supplied by Lubrani and even more than that. There were indeed those who actively collaborated with Israel's enemies, as well as those who assumed an Israeli identity, fully at peace with their inaccessibility to the privileges that state endowed to Jews. Mostly, however, the Palestinian Arabs adopted political behaviors ranging from engagement and cooperation with the Israeli establishment to more oppositional activism against discrimination.

One concrete example for their underlining “loyalty” was a sort of test that the short-tenured Minister of Defense, Pinhas Lavon, administered to the Palestinian Arabs. In July of 1954, Lavon ordered the pre-conscription registration of all male Arabs between the ages 18-20. The newspapers and internal military memoranda reported of the Palestinian Arab youth's overwhelming enthusiasm to register and eventually become drafted. The total number that registered was more than 5,000, amounting to 90% of the cohort and a few hundred more than the expected figure. By the end of the year, the government withdrew its plan to conscript the Arabs, probably in fear of the potential ensuing demands for equality. Without a doubt, the Palestinian Arabs passed the test with flying colors.¹²

¹² Randall S. Geller, “Defense Minister Pinhas Lavon and the Arab Draft That Never Was,” *Israel Studies* 19, no. 1 (April 2014): 1–23; Adel Manna, *Nakbah ve-hisardut: sipuram shel ha-Falestinim she-notru be-Hefah uba-Galil, 1948-1956* (Tel Aviv: Vem Leer Institue, 2017), 272–75.

The other Palestinian Arab position on how to relate to the state, its institutions, and its Jewish majority—the more oppositional stance—manifested primarily by voicing support for the Communist Party (MAKI) or activism within it. MAKI’s actual positions were analyzed extensively by recent scholars and are worth mentioning. According to Shira Robinson, “Palestinian party leaders” had to compromise their Palestinian nationalist agenda on “sovereignty, land, and refugees,” in order to maneuver between the Israeli laws, the changing positions of the Soviet Union, the Jewish Communists unwillingness to confront Zionism, and the emerging realities of the state of Israel.¹³ Adel Manna went a step further and described “MAKI’s Arab leaders” as “partners to some of the main components of the Zionist policy, at least until the Elections of 1955.” According to Manna they

Contributed to the effacement of the Palestinian national identity, and came to the aid of the regime in cultivating the identity of “the Arabs of Israel.” Also, they took upon themselves a monopoly over the representation of the [Palestinian Arabs’] interest and limited their struggle to the prevention of discrimination to exclusively civic avenues. They did not undermine the ideology of the state, did not oppose unlimited Jewish ‘Aliya, and Zionist settlement, and did not defy the symbols of the state, namely the flag and anthem. They practically recognized the Zionist’s conceptualization of partition by recognizing Israel as a Jewish state. Arabs who attempted to challenge these conventions were defined (by MAKI) as ultra-nationalists (*le’umanim*) and (dangerously) adventurous...¹⁴

There arises a question, if the most popular and organized Arab opposition to Zionist policies came from MAKI, which arguably pursued a downsized Palestinian nationalism (Robinson) or even collaborated with Zionism (Manna), why, as demonstrated in chapters 1 and 2, did the government and Zionist establishment go to great lengths to constrict the Palestinian Arab Communists? What

¹³ Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 63–67.

¹⁴ Manna, *Nakbah ve-hisardut*, 288.

was the source of the anxiety that MAKI's stance caused for those in the hallways of government and the military?

The answer is multifaceted. As in other settler regimes, the demand for Jewish-Arab equality was subversive to the established order. For one, many Zionists, whether they admitted it or not, felt that the mere demand for civic equality in the state of Israel constituted an attack on the essence of the Zionist project. Another cause for the establishment's hostility toward the Arab Communists, was that immediate equality, as demanded by MAKI, would end the use of un-democratic methods and institutions, such as the Military Government, that many within the leadership deemed necessary to make the Zionist movements' achievements permanent, especially in the field of Jewish settlement. Finally, another reason, alluded to in the exchange between Lubrani and Eshkol, is that many Israeli officials and generally the Jewish public opinion had always known that underneath the thin veneer of recognition of Jewish nationhood and the legitimacy of the state, Communists and other oppositional Arabs did not even try hard to conceal their anti-Israeli nationalist sentiment. The next segment focuses on Israeli attempts to shape Palestinian Arab hearts and minds, and directly approach the problem of loyalty.

Mass Education

The research on the development of the Israeli education system for the Palestinian Arab sector reveals a pattern similar to the one identified in the previous chapter dealing with the health care system. As in health care, the Arab education system suffered from deep disparities that improved at a glacial pace as the years progressed. The inequalities manifested themselves in the physical conditions of Arab schools, the level of Arab teacher compensation, and in access to secondary education. Contemporary critics of the government claimed that the Israeli education system was

continuing the Mandate government's "policy of producing ignorance" (*siyasat al-tajhil*).¹⁵ According to secondary sources, significant improvements in the statistics of Arab education, compared to the education system available to Jews, only came in the 1970s. For example, in the school year 1954-55, only 63 percent of Arab children aged 5-15 were enrolled in school, while the Jewish ratio of school attendance stood at 91.4. In the school year 1966-67, these figures rose to 78.3% and 97.8%, respectively. In 1952, when the overall Arab population in the state was around 15%, a mere 0.7% of Arabs attended high school, which increased to 3.2% in 1969.¹⁶ In terms of budget, the differences between funding in the Jewish and Arab educational sectors stemmed from several sources of institutional discrimination, including grants from the Ministry of Education, and the fact that Jewish schools were located in well-off municipalities, as well as by grants from the Ministry of the Interior, the Jewish National Fund, and the Jewish Agency.¹⁷

However, unlike the case of health care, in which the state waited until 1994 to enshrine in law its universal obligation to health insurance, the right to universal elementary education was enacted into law in the September 1949 Obligatory Education Law. The legislation required all Israeli parents to send their children from ages 5 to 14 to a primary education institution from kindergarten to the eighth grade. This marked a significant change in approach from the Mandate era when the government consciously avoided what officials perceived as the mistake of colonial rule in India and Egypt: avoiding the creation of too large a reservoir of secondary educated natives prone to nationalist activism.¹⁸ The Mandate's governmental educational system thus limited itself

¹⁵ Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill al-Ihtilal al-Isra'ili mundhu* 1948; Tamim Mahmud Mansour, *al-Ams la Yamut* (Tira: Matba'at al-Tira, 2006); Majid Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control: The Case of the Arabs in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 165.

¹⁶ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 152.

¹⁷ Elia Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1979), 151.

¹⁸ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 103-5.

mainly to supporting non-compulsory fourth to fifth-grade elementary education, which was gender segregated, confined mostly to cities and towns, and scarce in rural locales.¹⁹ The Israeli governments, in contrast, ran an education system for its Palestinian Arab citizens unprecedented in its scope.

Despite budgetary discrimination, within a matter of years, the Israeli regime placed Palestinian Arab children in government schools in record numbers. For example, in the late Mandate school year of 1944-45, the percentage of Arab pupils in both government and private schools out of the total Arab population was roughly 8.5%. In the Israeli school year of 1959-60, the number of Arab pupils as a share of the Arab population rose to roughly 19%.²⁰ Within the first three school years, Arab female attendance in schools rose from 20% to 34%.²¹ Despite the overall expansion of education, many Arabs did not send their children to school. Children, boys, and girls provided farm and household labor and even contributed wages to their families. Some parents found it objectionable to send their daughters into co-ed classes. Initially, the state, as a matter of policy, did not enforce Arab attendance in schools.²² In subsequent years, Palestinian Arab educators and other sources frequently reported on pupils missing school to work in cattle herding and fruit picking.²³ In the Negev and among the semi-nomadic Bedouins of the Galilee,

¹⁹ Hilary Falb-Kalisman, "Schooling the State: Educators in Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan: C. 1890-c. 1960" (University of California Berkeley, 2015), 49–56.

²⁰ This rough assessment is based on figures found in Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment and Control*, 51, 87.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 47–52.

²² Benor, "ha-Hinukh ha-'Arvi be-Yisra'el," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 3, no.1 (1951): 1.

²³ David Nahum to Minister of Agriculture, Yigal Allon, 12 December 1965, Principal of the Suw'ad al-Samaniyya school to Head of the Arab Department in the Ministry of Education, 10 September 1964, ISA GL17668/3

the government failed to enforce pupil attendance to the extent that it was compelled to close schools in these areas.²⁴

Nevertheless, as early as 1950, the Ministry of Education coordinated, with the help of the Military Government, a state-wide campaign for school registration reaching many small villages in the Arab Galilee hinterland.²⁵ By the end of 1950-51 school year, the Ministry of Education held detailed lists of registered pupils from the majority of Arab villages.²⁶ Correspondence between Ministry of Education officials with Arab principals in the Triangle and the Galilee suggest a sincere concern for truancy in the early 1950s. Correspondence on the subject of truancy from the 1960s contains the names of individual absent pupils rather than addressing a mass-scale phenomenon as was the case in earlier years.²⁷ The mere scale of the Israel Arab education system suggests that whatever Israeli designs for Arab feelings were, these feelings were intended to be shared, eventually, by every Palestinian Arab, boy, and girl.

Curricula and Punishment

Until the late 1960s, most of the material used by teachers in language, geography, and history classes for Arabs had been used during the days of the Mandate. These texts were composed with the explicit agenda of attenuating Palestinian Arab national sentiment, and thus Israeli officials found them adequate, despite their pedagogical inferiority. For example, the history textbook used

²⁴ Sh. Shalmon to Office of Advisor on Arab Affairs, "Haʿalat hok hinukh hova le-gabei ha-beduwim," 5 November 1959, Office of Advise for Arab Affairs to Sh. Shalmon, "Haʿalat hok hinuch hova le-gabe beduwim ba-Negev," 27 October 1959, ISA GL17688/3, pt.2, 94-95.

²⁵ Shmuel Bendor to the Municipality of Ramle, Lydda, Acre, 3 May 1950, Yosef Benor to Israel Broadcast Service, the Arab Department, 27 April 1950, Yosef Benor to all military governors, 12 May 1950, ISA- GL-17688/3; "Zikhron dvarim ve-hahlatot mi-pgishat ha-moshlim ha-tsvai'yim 'im mefaked ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva'i," 31 January 1950, IDFA-81/68/1955.

²⁶ Unknown, "Doh mispari rishoni 'al ha-rishum le-mosdot le-hinukh yessodi," 6 July 1950, ISA GL-17688/3

²⁷ Ra'if Zu'obi to the Mayor of Nazareth, 17 November 1964, ISA GL17668/3.

by the British, *Ta'arikh Filastin* (1923), discussed the Balfour Declaration in mostly positive terms, while in a later book from 1944 it was completely omitted.²⁸ Nevertheless, even with the Mandate era books, the Israeli government felt compelled to omit and censor content that could produce hostility towards the Jewish state.

Throughout the time period of the 1950s and 60s, but particularly during the early years, the Ministry of Education banned textbooks, re-wrote chapters, and constantly monitored the curriculum to make sure it contained no content that could convey Arab national sentiment. For example, in a high school Arab history book, *al-Asr al-Hadir* (The Current Times), inherited from the Mandate period, the Israeli Ministry of Education omitted an entire chapter dealing with anti-Ottoman insurrection during World War I.²⁹ Mustafa Murar, a teacher from Jaljulia, recalls that the government censored lessons dealing with potentially volatile topics, such as the relations of the Prophet with the Banu Isra'il tribes and others Islamic teachings mentioning land cultivation.³⁰ According to Shira Robinson, in the mid-1950s, Israel banned poems from Arabic language lessons that contained the word "homeland" (*watan*).³¹ In Habib Qahwaji's assessment of the Israeli curriculum, he conceded that it made sense for Israel to ban books about modern Arab history but pointed out that the Arab students were also denied exposure to the great Arab cultural legacies for allegedly having a "destructive" influence. According to Qahwaji, the ministry denied materials from Arab pupils including the works of Abu al-'Ala' al-Ma'arri (D. 1057), the work of

²⁸ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 123.

²⁹ Hana Shemesh, "Shaping the Past in History Textbooks in Arab Schools in Israel (1948-2008)" PhD diss., Hebrew University, 2009, 225. Y.L. Benor et al, "Zikhron dvarim ms 2," 24 November 1957, ISA GL-1616/5, 2; In 1966, the Ministry of Education found a solution for Galilee Bedouin's children and sent them to the school in the village of Tarshiha, *See* ISA GL-17016/33, 3.

³⁰ Mustafa Murar, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jaljulia, Israel, November 2014.

³¹ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 140.

Al-Jahiz (D. 869), the eighth-century collection of *Kalila wa-Dimna*, *Alf Layla wa-Layla*, and other classics.³²

Yehuda Leib Benor (Blum), the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Education and one of the most permanent careerists in the field of Arab education, openly admitted in 1951 that the education system is mostly preoccupied with one goal, “loyalty to the state,” and has yet to develop positive means to attain this goal.³³ Government censorship and banning material that could foment anti-Israeli sentiment was clearly an indication that the type of loyalty that officials in the Ministry were hoping to attain was mostly the “neutralize the hostility” type that Lubrani stood for. Research on the Israeli curriculum during this time is scarce because there were, in fact, no new Israeli books that the Ministry of Education published rather teachers had to write booklets which I have been unable to locate. According to the secondary literature, the Ministry of Education introduced in the Arab schools a similar history curriculum to the one in Jewish schools but apparently cut by half the number of hours dedicated to Jewish and Zionist history and added hours for classic Arabic history.³⁴ According to Al-Haj, the main values that the state tried to inculcate Palestinian Arab pupils with, were certain religious principles and their obligations and rights as citizens of Israel. The former emphasis, religion, highlighted differences among Arabs, while the latter, citizenship, suggested a commonality with the Jews. Furthermore, through Hebrew and History classes, Arabs were introduced to the array of Zionism’s historical justification and some Zionist culture such as the poetry of Bialik.³⁵

³² Qahwaji, *al-‘Arab fi Zill*, 247–48.

³³ Benor, “ha-Hinukh,” 1–2.

³⁴ Shemesh, “Shaping the Past in History Textbooks,” 82–93; Majid Al-Haj, “Multiculturalism in Deeply Divided Societies: The Israeli Case,” *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 26, no. 2 (2002): 174–76, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767\(01\)00048-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0147-1767(01)00048-7).

³⁵ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 121; Sami Khalil Mari, *Arab Education in Israel* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1978), 71–73.

The paucity of positive components of the Israeli-Arab identity stemmed naturally and fundamentally from Zionism's meager reservoir of symbols and narratives that could conceivably strike a chord with Palestinian Arab schoolchildren. It appears that the scarcity of positive educational goals led previous scholars who had addressed the Arab school system in Israel, such as Majid al-Haj, Hillel Cohen, and Ahmad Sa'di, to focus on Israeli educational policies designed to prevent the dissemination of Arab national sentiment. According to these scholars, the heads of the Arab education system in Israel, unable to create a curriculum with substantial positive national and Zionist content, worked hard at what they could do—surveilling teachers and students, censoring educational material, and sanctioning transgressions.

The government, via the Military Government and the Israeli secret police, the General Security Service (GSS), conducted strong-armed policies targeting mainly educators. Within this scheme, the military governor, and in later years the Ministry of Education, followed the recommendations of the security bodies when accepting candidates for teaching seminaries, hiring and firing teachers, threatening them with termination, or transfers to distant schools.³⁶ According to Al Haj, at the end of every school year, the Ministry of Education would send letters to a large number of Arab teachers informing them that their employment was not secure for the next year. In 1953 and 1954, around 300 Arab teachers out of roughly 800 received this notice.³⁷ The government's ability to control the employment of teachers extended beyond the public education system and affected the hiring policies of the private Christian schools.³⁸

³⁶ Qahwaji, *al-'Arab fi Zill*, 218–19. Y. Sarid, Y. L. Benor, Sh. Dibon, A. Lobrani and Sh. Shalmon, "Zikharon Dvarim," 6 April 1960, ISA GL-1616/7, 14; Mustafa Murar, *Awraq al-Hilwani: Sira wa-Masira Dhatiya* (Shefa-Amr: Almashreq, 2010), 498.

³⁷ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 162–7.

³⁸ Y.L Ben-Or, "Zikhron dvarim," 15 July 1958, ISA GL-1616/5, 141.

Israeli censorship, surveillance, and sanctions against teachers and students have been discussed previously by several scholars, some of whom experienced these policies firsthand. One area in which the education authorities coerced the very bodies of Palestinian Arabs to worship the state in an environment saturated with Zionist symbols were the Israeli Independence Day celebrations, known as “Independence Holiday” (*‘Id al-Istiqlal*). Testimonies and contemporary reports of independence celebrations in Arab schools reveal many country-wide common themes. In preparation, Arab municipalities and schools would ubiquitously hang Israeli flags, images of the state’s Menorah emblem, and even construct victory arches. Schools and local councils staged elaborate ceremonies which included sports competitions, traditional Palestinian dancing, poetry contests, and speeches by Jewish and Arab officials. Pupils would prepare exhibits lauding the state’s investments in the Arab sector. The military governor would also host a reception and invited Arab school personnel.³⁹

Palestinian testimonials report on implicit and explicit pressure to participate actively in the celebrations. For example, one teacher stated that the school principal ordered them to attend the governor’s reception. Another remembered how teachers and students spent the better part of the month beautifying the school for the celebrations.⁴⁰ Mustafa Murar mentioned in an interview that principals would fire teachers who did not participate in these preparatory activities.⁴¹ Expectedly, the Israeli coercion to celebrate induced harsh feelings.

Some Palestinian Arab recollections from these annual events reflect a bitterness caused by coercion. As Sadeq puts it: “We shrugged our shoulders, grit our teeth, but eventually, we

³⁹ Prinipal of Tayibe elementary school to Shmuel Shalmon, “‘Id al-Istiqlal,” 9 May 1954, ISA GL-17669/8, 21.

⁴⁰ Hannah Shemesh, “Sipuram shel morim ‘Arvim ba-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” n.d., 7.

⁴¹ Murar, *Awraq al-Hilwani*, 520.

marched like disciplined soldiers in two rows of flag bearers...”⁴² In 1991 memoir essay, Anton Shammas recalled how his school principal affixed a large Star of David above a stage erected for a pageant on the occasion of the school’s first anniversary, for the benefit of the Jewish inspector who came to witness the event. The Star hung loosely above the stage, scaring the participants and the spectators that it might fall on them. Shammas saw this Star of David as a metaphor for Israeli policies intended to shape the Arab citizens’ feelings toward the state:

I sometimes wonder whether we were not seared by that Star, whether it wasn’t a branding iron after all—a branding iron to all the Arabs that were left...And when you brand someone, you are actually telling him two equally painful things: first, that he belongs to you, that he must abide by your laws, wander only in the regions that you had put under his disposal...; second, you’re telling him that this searing of the skin is just a searing of the skin—you are not after his heart.⁴³

Along with the humiliation of being seared like livestock Shammas recalls he felt a sense of indifference: “You see, we had the flags in our hands... there was an utter rift between the signified and the signifier, those flags did not signify a single thing. They were meant by the state to be utterly void of any symbolic meaning and were cynically used as mere decorative objects, completely detached from their statism...”⁴⁴ Other Arabs who reflected upon their experiences, contemporaneously or retrospectively, conveyed emotions that ranged between Shammas’ stoicism and Sadeq’s conquered rage. Mustafa Murar likened the coercion to the conditioning that an addictive drug produces in an addict. I have not been able to find any Arab voices that admit an intimate feeling of identification with the Jewish state or happiness during its yearly celebrations. One exception is the experience of Adel Manna who admits that he was quite happy to celebrate

⁴² Walid Sadeq, *Goleh be-artso: mi-Tayibe la-Keneset* (Petah Tikvah: Sifrut Akhshav, 2012), 56.

⁴³ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 180–81.

⁴⁴ Sadeq, *Goleh be-artso*, 57.

Israeli independence until the fourth grade, when his father told him that Independence Holiday should be called *'id al-istihlal*, “Occupation Holiday,” and then proceeded to tell him about the recent history of his family, village, and people.⁴⁵

I shall return later to issues concerning independence celebrations, but for now, I would like to present what recent scholarship has made of Israel’s coerced loyalty. Shira Robinson and Ahmad Sa’di largely adopted Shammās’ retrospective assessment and concluded that Israel and its leaders were not interested in transforming the innermost consciousness of the Palestinian Arab citizens by cultivating an intimate identification with the state. Rather, both Robinson and Sa’di claim that the state preferred to impose on the Palestinians a loyalty based on the carrots it offered to those who profusely sang its praise, and the sticks for those who conspicuously refused to do so, or, worse, transgressed permissible political speech. Both scholars admit that an impetus to capture the Palestinians “hearts” was circulating in the Israeli establishment but was mostly abandoned in the 1960s.⁴⁶ According to Robinson, the Israelis relinquished any attempts to make the Arabs “truly loyal” because of the leadership’s decision to base the nascent Israeli national ethos on Jewish military prowess and its aversion to pursuing policies that could ultimately jeopardize “Jewish privilege.”⁴⁷ As Robinson phrases it: “it was just the shell of their loyalty that, by the mid-1950s, most Jewish officials demanded, not its substance.”⁴⁸ This assessment corresponds well

⁴⁵ Manna, *Nakbah ve-hisardut*, 9–10.

⁴⁶ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State*; Ahmad H Sa’di, *Thorough Surveillance: The Genesis of Israeli Policies of Population Management, Surveillance and Political Control towards the Palestinian Minority* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 119–149.

⁴⁷ Anton Shammās, “At Half-Mast—Myths, Symbols, and Rituals of the Emerging State: A Personal Testimony of an ‘Israeli Arab,’” in *New Perspectives on Israeli History: The Early Years of the State*, ed. Laurence J. Silberstein (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 219.

⁴⁸ Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 134–43.

with the limited resources Israel invested in the Palestinian Arab education system that could create a nominally inclusive Israeli narrative.

However, the scholarship thus far has not taken a holistic consideration of the Israeli policies and the Palestinian Arab reactions. As it turns out, Israeli education officials were well aware and concerned about the limited effectiveness of their education system to “penetrate” the shell of loyalty. They were aware of this because many Palestinian Arab pupils and most teachers refused to present “loyalty.” For some in the Israeli establishment and public opinion, acts of dissent were proof of the Arabs’ inherent hostility, but for others, it was reason to avoid heavy-handedness, adhere to democratic practices, and reform policies in hopes of improving Palestinian Arab sentiments.

For example, Walid Sadeq’s recollections during his days as a pupil shed some light on how exactly the state imposed loyalty or rather failed to do so. Sadeq tells a story of how his Egyptian-born Jewish teacher tried to teach the Israeli national anthem, Hatikva. As soon as the Palestinian Arab pupils heard the melody, Sadeq writes, they “mutinied” with some of them pulling small fire-crackers from their pockets and throwing them on the floor to create a cacophony of explosion sounds and laughter. The teacher then lost his nerve, screamed, and threatened to bring the military governor. Sadeq claims that these incidents recurred whenever the teacher tried to convey material from the Israeli-Jewish-Zionist cannon, such as the poetry of Bialik and Mishna chapters. Another method for Sadeq’s colleagues to “piss off” (*le-‘atsben*) their Jewish teachers was to write “anti-Jewish” remarks on the blackboard. Once, they apparently crossed a red line and soldiers from the Military Government intervened, interrogated the class, found the perpetrator, and suspended him from school. The students did not take this sitting down and conducted a protest strike against MG intervention in the school. According to Sadeq, the protest

worked and from then on the school administration avoided involving the army in school disciplinary affairs.⁴⁹

Sadeq's anecdotes of political resistance in the classroom and the half-measured sanctions against the perpetrators appear to have been common. Archival documents reveal that Arab pupils' temptation to protest the many state symbols found in their classroom was often stronger than the fear of punishment. Hillel Cohen uncovered periodic General Security Service (GSS) reports sent to the Ministry of Education's security officer under the title "nationalistic activities and expressions by teachers and students." The GSS took note of explicit support for militant actions against Israel but also more vague yet harsh expressions against the state, against "the Jews," and against Arab collaborators. Cohen brought examples from these GSS documents that included reports of pupils and teachers who had defiled the photographs of Israeli presidents, Theodore Herzl, and the Israeli flag.⁵⁰ In any case, the periodical nature of the reports attested to a mundane reality of "disloyalty" in Arab classrooms, a reality that the state and its security apparatus, despite some efforts, could not change.⁵¹

The archival evidence suggests that the Israeli civic and military establishment was not only unable to restrict all anti-Israeli political speech in classrooms, it was also, to a certain extent, *unwilling* to do so. Notwithstanding the overt and covert steps taken against certain teachers and students, decision makers within the education system apparently lacked the will to pursue each and every case of perceived incitement against the state. One manifestation of the government's limited motivation in enforcing a ban on anti-Israeli speech and protests was the lack of a coherent

⁴⁹ Al Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control*, 163; Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 139.

⁵⁰ Sadeq, *Goleh be-artzo*, 55–56; N. Saigh, Beit Safafa Headmaster to Meir Shamay, 18 October 1959, ISA GL-1616/7, 100, 124.

⁵¹ Cohen, *'Aravim tovim: ha-modi'in ha-Yisre'eli v'ha-'Aravim be-Yisra'el: sokhnim u-maf'ilim, meshatfim u-mordim, matarot ve-shitot* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 168–72.

policy against this phenomenon. Although there are plenty of reports of punitive measures taken against students and teachers,⁵² there appears to be no clear and systematic protocol to deal with those who exhibited politically seditious behavior in schools. In all likelihood, this question remained open for decades. In July of 1960, for instance, the Ministry of Education's legal adviser composed a thorough legal opinion concerned with the steps that should be taken against pupils who "incited" against the state by denigrating its leaders and praising "its enemies." The adviser, Ruth Ratner, explained that the Israeli education system lacked the legal foundation to permanently expel a student for expressing hostile political opinions. This is because the law clearly stated that all citizens were "entitled" (*zaka'im*) to free elementary education but it did not state when that entitlement is invalidated. Ratner raised the possibility of suspension until the student met certain conditions but then admitted that requiring that a student "stop inciting" would be laughable. Ratner also mentioned that doing nothing is also not an option. Consequently, she suggested either allowing corporal punishment in classes or amending the education laws or even the criminal code to outlaw forms of speech.⁵³ In response to this legal opinion, Gideon Hausner, the government's top legal authority, opined that temporary suspensions might be the best legal recourse—though not necessarily the best pedagogic one—and that any amendments to the criminal law should be avoided. Hausner also strictly rejected the notion of reintroducing corporal punishment in Israeli schools.⁵⁴

⁵² Unattributed, "Bihs be-'Ein M'ahel veva-mo'atsa ha-mekomit (translated from Arabic)," *Al-Itihad* December 25, IDFA 263/518/1967; Sadeq, *Goleh be-artzo: mi-Tayibe la-Knesset*, 56.

⁵³ R. Satner to Deputy Director Benor, "Nekitat tse'adim neged talmidim be-bihs be-yishuvei ha-mi'utim ha-'oskim be-hasata neged ha-medina u-be-divrei bela neged manhigeiha ve/o be-divrei shevah le-oyvehah, kegon Jamal abu Natser," 11 July 1960, ISA GL-1616/7, 39.

⁵⁴ G. Hausner to Deputy Director, MoE, "Nekitat tse'adim neged talmidim be-bihs be-yishuve ha-mi'utim ha-'oskim be-hasata neged ha-medina u-be-divrei bela neged manhigeiha ve/o be-divrei shevah le-oyveiha, kegon Jamal Abdel Natser," 18 August 1960, ISA GL-1616/7, 6.

Regarding threats and sanctions against teachers, here too, the government and security apparatus did not establish a coherent process for firing or transferring them.⁵⁵ In 1960 for instance, Yanni Yanni, the head of the Kafr Yasif local council, found himself at odds with the Ministry of Education and the GSS over the hiring of three teachers. Yanni apparently disregarded the objections of the Ministry, went ahead, and hired at least one of the three, Butrus Dalla, despite the fact that the latter had allegedly made “incendiary remarks against the state” in public and that his file in the GSS was “loaded” (*amus*). Months later, Yehuda Benor, the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Education, expressed in a frustrated memo how legal impediments made it impossible for the Ministry to fire this teacher. The archival trail ends there yet Butrus Dalla appears to have remained employed as a teacher, and eventually even became a principal.⁵⁶ Education scholar Hana Shemesh who conducted interview-based research of Arab teachers exposed the pressure teachers felt to comply with the curricula and avoid expressing any form of non-MAPAI politics. Shemesh’s interviewees report of their termination or the constant fear of being fired, transferred to a distant school, or being denied promotion. Emblematic of the atmosphere of snitching and surveillance are three separate testimonies of teachers who confessed that they dared to read *Al-Ittihad*, the Communist newspaper, secretly. Nevertheless, another teacher made a point of saying that he “was not afraid” to read *Al-Ittihad* in public, and “participated in demonstrations against the Military Government.” Another teacher interviewed by Shemesh reported that his appointment to teach in high school was suspended but later approved after Israeli officials intervened on his behalf. MAPAM and MAKI representatives in the Arab Teachers Union openly condemned the

⁵⁵ See, for instance, Y. Sarid, Y. L. Benor, Sh. Dibon, A. Lobrani and Sh. Shalmon, “Zikharon dvarim,” 6 April 1960, ISA GL-1616/7, 14.

⁵⁶ Y. L. Benor, “Mishlahat mi-Kfar Yasif,” 31 August 1963, ISA GL1616/7, 21; Y. L. Benor to D. R. Rinot, “Pkudat ha-hinukh 1933,” 10 November 1960, GL-1616/8, 61-62.

threats to teachers facing termination, and occasionally the Union would intervene on a teacher's behalf. In other cases, the firing of a teacher would provoke demonstrations from the local community.⁵⁷

In sum, the Israeli government did not assume Stasi-like standards to deal with political dissent in the classrooms. Although of little comfort for Arab teachers who lived in fear for their livelihood and those that lost it altogether, the Israeli government apparently did not descend with all its force upon dissenting speech in the schools. There are probably several reasons for holding back, one of which could be complacency. Yehuda Benor, who held a more aggressive stance in the Ministry of Education, conceded that the government could not completely uproot feelings of Arab nationalism.⁵⁸ Shmuel Shalmon, the head of the Department for Arab Education and Culture in the Ministry of Education, also thought that there was only so much the Ministry could do to prevent teachers and pupils expressing negative sentiments. As a matter of fact, from Shalmon's point of view, the situation was not very acute and did not necessitate severe measures. In 1955, Shalmon concluded that the few cases that had been reported in the press about acts of "disrespect" toward the state were few and not representative of the overall loyalty professed by the Arab teachers in Israel.⁵⁹ In May of 1958, the same Shalmon told a *Maariv* reporter that he was not in the business of "raising Zionists." "I deal with Arabs," Shalmon told the reporter, and "all I ask to obtain from them is an objective loyalty (*ne'emanut obyektivit*) to the present facts in the state." According to Shalmon, some groups within the Arab population were "grinding their teeth (*horkim*

⁵⁷ Hana Shemesh, "Sipuram shel ha-morim"; Sa'di, *Thorough Surveillance*, 128, George Sa'ad to Eliyahu Barak, 10 August 1955, Lavon IV 219 411, 17; Riad 'Abushi, Secretary of the Arab Teachers Union in Nazareth to ILL Secretary, "Piture morim," 6 July 1952, Lavon IV 219 346, 10.

⁵⁸ Y. L. Benor, "Reshimot le-skirot ha-sar 'al ha-hinuh ha-'Arvi," ISA GL-1616/8, 97.

⁵⁹ Sh. Shalmon, "Misrad ha-Hinuh veba-tarbut skira 'al ha-hinukh ha-'ravi be-Yisra'el sof shnat 1954," 7 April 1955, ISA GL-1616/9, 48-49.

shen), rebelling outwardly and behind closed doors.” Yet some “adapted to the situation, others have gone as far as to reconcile (*hashlama*) with the state, and not a small number have reached a general identification (*hizdahut*) with it.”⁶⁰ In 1960, Shalmon wrote another report in which he explicitly reinforced his previous assessments that the schools are generally “a source for comfort” for Arab-Jewish relations and that the “Arab population in Israel is not necessarily not loyal to the state.”⁶¹

Perhaps Shalmon was merely more optimistic than Benor, more hopeful, and less willing to see his life’s work as a completely failed endeavor. In any case, Shalmon, Benor, and other Israeli decision makers, all faced a dilemma—should they nominally allow Arabs to express their genuine political sentiments in hopes that they if they choose to identify with the state, they will do so of their free will, or should the government actively and forcefully try to curb anti-Israel sentiment. This dilemma came to the fore on the issue of school celebrations on Israeli Independence Day.

In April of 1950, the head of the Military Government sent his regional governors explicit instructions on how to conduct celebrations in the territories under their control. The order opened with: “we have a special interest that this year’s Independence Day will be celebrated and felt within the Arab population...” The order also stipulated that the governors instruct the village mukhtars to buy and raise Israeli flags and the Israeli emblem above “all public and central buildings in the village.” The governors were also ordered to make sure that “special (public) prayers be said for the sake of the state and the president.”⁶² In a protocol meeting on the topic of

⁶⁰ Uri Oren, “Kfar Kasem hogeg et ha-‘asor,” *Maariv*, 16 May 1958, 16.

⁶¹ Sh. Shalmon, “Skira al ha-mahlaka le-hinuh ve-le-tarbut le- ‘Aravim ve-pe‘uloteiha,” 2 March 1960, GL-1616/8, 9-10.

⁶² Capt. Y. Lavi to military governors, “Yom ha-‘Atsma‘ut,” 9 April 1950, IDFA 81/68/1955, 30.

Independence Day celebrations from the same month, one of the officers is quoted saying: “the problem is respect, there has to be celebratory respect (*kavod hagigi*).”⁶³

Despite clear evidence of attempts at coercion, it is worth noting that the intention to press the Arabs to celebrate Israeli Independence Day coexisted in tandem with the Israeli sensibility against such forced displays of loyalty. The two top bureaucrats in Arab education, Shmuel Shalmon, and Yehuda Benor, were, at least philosophically, firmly against forcing Arabs to celebrate Israeli Independence lavishly. In 1951, in an essay he published in the Israeli Oriental Society’s journal, Benor stressed that the most important guideline for the Ministry of Education concerning the Arabs is “not to impose over schools, teachers, and students, any Israeli national activity.” Benor also declared that the Ministry “did not want, would not want [to participate] in a lie” and then claimed that if there had been any encouragement to enact elaborate national ceremonies, this was done “without our knowledge or against our will.”⁶⁴ Benor’s caveat was apparently based on his personal experience, for in that same year, he also sent a firm complaint to Emanuel Mor of the Military Government against liberties the latter had taken in organizing sports competitions for the occasion of Independence Day. Benor warned Mor that the Arab villagers’ true view of the MG is, “not unjustifiably,” that of “ridicule and contempt.”⁶⁵ Similarly to Benor, Shmuel Shalmon expressed in an interview to *Maariv* that the Military Government occasionally interfered in his mission to instill loyalty among Arabs, yet as far as he and the Ministry were concerned, “no force (was used) here whatsoever!”⁶⁶ Two years later, in an internal Ministry of Education report, Shalmon maintained that the Ministry of Education gave no

⁶³ Unattributed, “Zikharon dvarim vеха-hlatot me-pgishat ha-moshlim ha-tseva’iyim im ha-mefaked,” 11 April 1950, IDFA 81/68/1955, 26.

⁶⁴ Benor, “ha-Hinukh,” 8.

⁶⁵ Y. L. Benor to Head of MG Branch, “Inyane hinuh ba-meshulash,” 13 May 1951, ISA GL-17717/20, 10.

⁶⁶ Oren, “Kfar Kasem hogeg et ha-‘asor.”

instructions or encouragement to create spectacular Independence Day displays for the anniversary events on the first decade of the state's existence. According to Shalmon, the Arab schools orchestrated wondrous exhibitions and celebrations filled with "many symbols of identification" with the state of their own volition.

Guidelines composed in late 1951 by the "Independence Day Committee," and circulated to the regional military governors, exposed a paradox within Arab celebrations of Israeli Independence in particular, and, more broadly, within policies aimed at eliciting loyalty from the Arab citizens. The guidelines began with the stipulation that "under no circumstance should the holiday be forced upon [the Arabs]." However, a few lines later, the governors were then ordered to "use their influence and the necessary tact (*takt*)" to make sure the Arabs conduct the celebration in a proper manner.⁶⁷ Another example of the contradictory approaches to Arab Independence Day celebrations are the words of Josh Palmon in the meeting with military personnel in 1950 where he said that "[t]he fundamental rule should be that the Arabs do what they want to do. This is a good thing for us so we'd know who is happy and who is not." Then Palmon added that "if there are happy celebrations (*smahot*) or eye pleasing gatherings these should have wide distribution (so we should) invite reporters and photographers."⁶⁸

On the one hand, Israeli officials seemed to be aware, and even concerned, by a gap between the celebratory behavior and the internal feelings of the Arab citizens. This concern is evident in the many Israeli press reports and intelligence memoranda covering the celebrations and comments about the "air of festivity," the "mood," and "the happiness felt on the faces" of Arab

⁶⁷Lt. Col. Emmanuel Mor to MG Headquarters, "Hagigot Yom ha-'Azma'ut," 28 February 1951, IDFA 81/68/1955, 1; See also Benor, "ha-Hinukh" 8.

⁶⁸"Zikharon dvarim veva-hlatot me-pgishat ha-moshlim ha-tseva'iyim im ha-mefaked", 11 April 1950, IDFA 81/68/1955, 26.

participants or, conversely, their “chilled” gestures, and “decreased levels of enthusiasm.”⁶⁹ On the other hand, this desire to see authentic Arab appreciation for the state seems to have created among Arabs a sense of compulsion or at least motivation to feign emotions for the benefit the government’s informants and others in-charge of organizing these celebrations—mukhtars, school administrators, and local politicians.

It is difficult to provide a definitive explanation for the discrepancy between Benor and Shalmon’s insistence that Independence Day celebrations were not forced upon the Arabs and the many testimonies of Arab educators that prove the complete opposite. Benor and Shalmon both alluded to the fact that it was the Military Government rather than the Ministry of Education that pushed Independence celebrations upon the Arabs. But this explanation can only be partially true as several interviews with past Palestinian Arab educators put the blame squarely on the civilian regional school inspectors who pressured the Arab principals, who in turn ordered the Arab teachers to create grandiose gestures of loyalty. It is, of course, quite probable that the watchful eye of the Military Government and its ability to overrule hiring decisions created a general atmosphere of coercion. Several of Hana Shemesh’s interviewees indeed claimed that when the MG was lifted, the pressure they felt significantly decreased. In general, as has happened in the case of movement restrictions, the sanctions imposed by the state upon educators became less arbitrary, although the GSS remained involved in teacher hiring well into the 1990s. Moreover, in

⁶⁹ Ya‘abets, military governor Ramle-Lod, “Doh hagigat Yom ha-‘Azma’ut be-arim Ramle-Lod,” 23 May 1949, military governor, Eastern Galilee and Nazareth, “Doh shel yom ha-‘azma’ut be-Natseret,” 10 May 1949, Unknown author, “Yom ha-‘azma’ut be-migdal-gad,” undated, Capt. M. Laniado, Military Governor of Jaffa, “Doh ‘al Hagigat Yom ha-‘Azma’ut be-yafo,” 6 May 1949, military governor, Western Galilee and Haifa Region, “Hagigot Yom ha-‘Azma’ut ba-Galil ha-Ma‘ravi ou-be-‘Akko,” 8 May 1949, Sh. Mubriki to military governor, Western Galilee, 5 May 1949, IDFA-841/721/1972, 46-51, 54; Military Government Negev, “Doh bitahon hodshi – 1 April – 31 April 1961,” 4 May 1961, IDFA-31/586/1964, 37; R. N., “ha-‘Atsma’ut vеха-mi‘utim,” *Haaretz*, 11 May 1951, archived at ISA G-3834/6, 37 see also in Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 128.

the 1970s, Israeli education authorities felt increasingly uncomfortable with lavish celebrations, and Arab educators began commemorating Israeli Independence Day more modestly.⁷⁰

In any case, the general picture that arises from the Israeli classrooms and the proceedings of the Independence Day celebrations in schools, all involving inspectors, teachers, and pupils, is one of government coercion of “loyal” behavior and suppression of “disloyal” speech. At the same time, there was clear recognition among Israeli officials that under current circumstances, Arab aversion to the state and its symbols is to be expected and that it is impossible to eradicate this phenomenon altogether. Both Benor and Shalmon insights suggest a keen awareness, among some, that the coercive instilling of loyalty is impossible and probably counter-productive. In the final analysis, Israeli officials were not entirely inspired by the Orientalist notions that Arab subject populations respond well to repression and apparently also understood that forcing acts of loyalty is not desirable. This Israeli attitude made sense since acerbic anti-Israel political sentiments, although strong, apparently remained mostly in the realm of thoughts and did not translate into corresponding actions. It, therefore, did not necessitate a totalitarian-style crackdown on speech.

Extra-curricular Activity

The Israeli state, the Ministry of Education, and the Histadrut reached beyond classrooms in their attempt to shape the consciousness of the Israeli citizenry, the Arabs included. In 1954, the Israeli government created the Administration of Information, *Minhal ha-Hasbara* (hereafter Hasbara Administration) and placed it within the Office of the Prime Minister, and under the management of Zalman Aran, a minister without a portfolio. A year later, Aran became the Minister of Education, and the Administration moved to his Ministry. According to Aran, the Administration

⁷⁰ Ibid., 186.

was not to conduct “propaganda” but rather supply citizens with accurate information about government policies for the purpose of “encouraging [them] to solidify [their] faith in the burgeoning state.”⁷¹ The Administration organized lectures, hikes, courses, documentary production, and newsreels. All of these activities, Aran insisted, were based on “statist” (*mamlakhtit*) considerations and not partisan ones.⁷²

Administration activities within Arab communities were sparse until 1958. Then, coinciding with the state’s decade celebrations, the Ministry of Education established the Unit for Hasbara for the Minorities (*Yehidat ha-Hasbarah le-Mi‘utim*) and in Arabic “the Unit for Guidance and Enlightenment” (*Qism al-Irshad wa-al-Tanwir*) and greatly increased the scope and frequency of hasbara activities among the Arabs. The Unit collaborated extensively with the Histadrut (see chapter 3), and also Zionist philanthropic funds, local Arab councils, and even Jewish municipalities. Within its wide range of activities the Unit supported lectures in Arabic by Jewish and Arab speakers on various topics including “state development projects,” “illegal building,” “the activities of the Ministry of Labor,” “(the cultivation) of fruit-bearing trees,” “co-ops,” “labor laws,” “soil preservation,” “the duties of parents towards their children,” and “traditions of the Middle East.”⁷³ Along with one time lectures, the Unit also offered courses, symposia, and classes (*hugim*) such as civics, folk dancing, drama, creative writing, literacy aid, Hebrew, physical education, and Jewish/Arab understanding. The Unit also organized field trips for sightseeing, Jewish-Arab activities, cultural venues, and factory tours. Movie screenings were a particularly popular activity sponsored by the Unit. Finally, beginning with the decade celebrations, the Unit

⁷¹ Zalman Aran, “Minhal ha-Hasbara,” *Davar*, 9 July 1954, 3.

⁷² Unattributed, “Aran: pe‘ulut Minhal ha-Hasbara einan ba‘alot gavan miflagti,” *Zmanim*, 25 January 1955, 2.

⁷³ Kamel Mansour, coordinator of hasbara activities for minorities in the north to Meir Jarrah, 28 October 1958, and December 18 1958, IDFA-863/483/1966, 44, 46.

took it upon itself to organize all Independence Day celebrations in rural areas. The activities of the Unit were intended to persuade Arab communities of the overall positive intentions of the state and, again, to cultivate loyalty. The newsreels produced by the Hasbara Administration follow the standard format of the time which included a detailing of the economic, diplomatic, cultural, and military achievements of the state. The reels narrated in Arabic placed an added emphasis on state investments in the Arab sector and events bringing Jews and Arabs together.⁷⁴ According to a 1961 budgetary request signed by Meir Jarrah, the head of the Unit, in the year 1956-57 the number of Hasbara Administration activities among Arabs was 138, in 38 villages, with 11,040 participants. Three years later, under the Unit, these numbers grew to 1,456 activities, 87 locales, and (the unlikely number of) 401,207 participants.⁷⁵

If in the schools, the Ministry of Education exercised strict, if not ultimate, control over unwanted speech, within the activities of the Hasbara Unit there seems to have been more openness. While much of the knowledge produced by the Unit was refined propaganda, apparently not all of its activities were a complete sham. For instance, a series of reports authored by Meir Jarrah about different cycles of a 3-day “Course for Educated Arabs” reveal an atmosphere receptive to genuine criticism of the government and its policies. Teachers, government workers, and clerks participated in the course, and activities included lectures, discussions, field trips, and being hosted by Jewish families. Reports on the questions and comments at the end of each lecture often referenced explicit criticism directed towards government policies. One of the lecturers was Shmuel Shalmon, the head of the Arab Department in the Ministry of Education. At the end of

⁷⁴ See newsreels uploaded to YouTube by the Israel State Archives: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IAzu82m5nTw&t=47s>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyDrWjPdA9w>, youtube, last accessed 7/17/18.

⁷⁵ Meir Jarrah, “Skira Klalit ‘al pe‘ulot ha-hasbara be-kerev ha-‘Aravim ba-aretz,” ISA GL-17006/12, 58.

Shalmon's talk, the participants raised several complaints about the inadequacies of the education system he headed and specific complaints about the government's weak enforcement of anti-truancy laws were raised. In another lecture by a top official of the Arab education system, the course participants asked about the inadequacy of teacher training, of the books used in schools, and many other acute problems in the Arab education system. Uri Lubrani, the PM Advisor on Arab Affairs, mentioned earlier in this chapter, gave a particularly tense lecture a few months after he had made harsh comments on the numerous incidents of anti-Israeli speech among Arabs and the government's intention to punish the transgressors. Following Lubrani's talk, the Arab participants were not afraid to comment about the government's infringements on Arab democratic rights, and some expressed sincere doubt about the scale and severity of the expression of the anti-Israeli sentiment mentioned by the speaker. One participant also educated Lubrani that negative sentiment among Arabs does not mean "throwing the Jews into the sea" and that if Israel had granted its Arab citizens all their democratic rights and treated them well, there would not have been negative feelings."⁷⁶

Another type of activity that various factions within the ruling establishment sponsored in an attempt to create a favorable view of the state were meetings between young Arabs and Jews for the purpose of "cultural acquaintance," or "mutual understanding." The Office of the PM Advisor on Arab Affairs sponsored a summer camp in 1964 for Arab, and Tel Aviv high school students; the latter majored in "Oriental studies" (*mizrahanut*) and many were destined to take positions in the Israeli intelligence apparatus. Testimonials authored by the participants and published in an internal booklet reveal clichéd patterns of Orientalist culture surrounding these meetings. For example, one Jewish student expressed her satisfaction from the opportunity to

⁷⁶ Meir Jarah to Zvi Zinger, "Kurs 'Aravim maskilim," 27 January 1961, ISA GL-17006/12, 127.

“learn about the mentality (*mentaliyut*) of the Arabs.”⁷⁷ In the same vein, an Arab student from Shefa-‘Amr described the course as a utopian ingathering of the two peoples of “this beloved land.”⁷⁸ Another Arab student from the village of Mughar wrote that the week-long seminar ended with brave hugs and tears.⁷⁹ A more dependable assessment can be found in a private letter to the Advisor’s Office written by Eliezer Shmueli of the Ministry of Education. The latter had a negative assessment of one of the meetings he attended and stated that the “freedom of expression given to Arab pupils was very limited” and that when the one student from “Shfar‘am” spoke the truth in his heart it had at least been sincere.⁸⁰ As a high schooler, Ehud Toledano, a world-renowned historian of the Ottoman Empire and one of the leading figures in Israeli academia, participated in this summer camp. Toledano, with the benefit of hindsight and the sensibilities of a critical historian, concedes that the meetings did not transcend the skewed power-balance between Arabs and Jews brought together into the same space by the government office in charge of the Military Government. Nevertheless, considering the institutionalized segregation between Arab and Jewish youngsters, Toledano insisted that the meetings “did something.” That something could very well have been the hope that is inspired by encountering the humanity of the mythological other.⁸¹

Another Jewish-Arab social forum, organized by the Histadrut, was the “Jewish-Arab Student Circle (*hug*)” at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The Circle initiated mutual field trips, lectures, and seminars. As in the case of the Jewish-Arab high school meetings, it is hard to assess the impact these student activities had solely based on the Arab participants writing to

⁷⁷ Maya Weinberger, “Halom u-metzi‘ut,” in GL-17031/10, 20.

⁷⁸ ‘A. Abud, “al-Muhim al-Yahudi al-‘Arabi al-Mushtarak fi ‘Akka,” GL-17031/10, 21.

⁷⁹ Na‘im ‘Araida, “*Bereshit*,” ISA GL-17031/10, 26.

⁸⁰ Eliezer Shmueli, MoE to Moshe Ben-Haim, Prime Minister’s Office, 9 October 1966, ISA GL-17031/10, 36.

⁸¹ Ehud Toledano, interviewd by Arnon Degani, Tel Aviv, Israel, July 2018.

Histadrut officials and their contributions to Histadrut publications.⁸² The Circle's appeal to Arab students might have stemmed from the fact that it provided another avenue for favors in employment in the government/Histadrut sectors.⁸³ Nevertheless, the Circle also demonstrated, at least in its platform, a degree of attentiveness to the political distress of the Palestinian Arab citizenry by including in the preamble to its platform a clear demand to abolish the Military Government.⁸⁴ The effort to attract Arab students into Labor Zionist circles seems to have been only partially successful. In 1960, the Arab student body at the Hebrew University elected a majority of representatives from the Al-Ard group. This Arab cohort also produced prominent members of the cadre of Palestinian/Arab nationalists, such as Sabri Jiryis, Muhammad Mi'ari, and Anis Kardoush. Nevertheless, as stated in the introduction to this dissertation, both their strong political opposition to the government and their anti-Zionist sentiments did not preclude their "Israelization."

Israelization as a product of Jewish-Arab interaction and contradictory sentiments can be found in the converging memories of three very different Palestinian Arabs from their time spent on kibbutzim. MAPAM, specifically Hashomer Hatzair and its kibbutzim, took the lead in the initiative to host organized Arab groups for mutual understanding. The undeclared purpose of this initiative was labor exploitation. The first such experiment by MAPAM was in 1951 in Sha'ar ha-'Amakim, and its apparent success led to other Arab groups, "nuclei" (*gar'inim*), forming in other Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim. These sporadic initiatives were the basis for the creation in 1954 of a MAPAM youth movement, the Arab Youth Pioneer Organization (*al-Shabiba al-'Arabiyya al-*

⁸² Yihye Abdul Rahman and Younes Mazen, "untitled essays," *Tzomet* vol. 3, 12-15 found in Lavon IV 219 276, 3-5.

⁸³ Micha Lindenstrauss to Yaacov Cohen of the Histadrut Arab Department, 19 October 1959, Lavon IV 219 276, 7.

⁸⁴ "Mats'a ha-Hug ha-yehudi-'Arvi," Lavon IV 219 276, 10.

Tala'iyya). At its peak, in the years 1959-1960, the movement boasted 45 branches and 1,800 members. The movement tried to conduct educational activities in the branches that would bring Arabs into the MAPAM ideological and political orbit, but work in the kibbutzim proved to be more or less the only thing that drew the youth to the Organization. In the 1960s the Organization disintegrated yet Arab youth continued to work in kibbutzim, often as purely hired work with hardly any of their time devoted to educational or ideological activities.

Walid Sadeq of Tayibe, who became a MAPAM party member, recalled the discrimination he experienced while working on a kibbutz, such as inferior conditions compared to the Jewish “outside kids” (*yalde ha-huts*, non-member children and youths sent to the kibbutz for various reasons). According to Sadeq, the kibbutz he worked on, Gan Shmuel, gave those kids better housing and labor duties similar to those of the rest of the kibbutzniks, whereas the Arabs were relegated to cleaning chores. In reminiscing about his time in the kibbutz, Sadeq suddenly conjured a memory of two kibbutzniks carrying a heavy cooking pot and then shouting: “hey, you (Arabs), come take this pot to the kitchen. It’s too heavy for us.” Other bitter memories that the kibbutz left with Sadeq had to do with the hypocrisy of kibbutz members who eagerly recited slogans for the fraternity between nations, socialism, and the cancellation to the MG, and yet were complacent if not supportive of land confiscations for the benefit of the kibbutz movement.⁸⁵

Tamim Mahmud Mansour whose political affiliations, unlike Sadeq, included association with the Communists and later nationalist circles, recounts experiences in his memoir similar to his more politically moderate counterpart. Working in kibbutzim, Mansour also took stock of the fact that the land he tilled had in fact once been owned by Arabs. During his summers in kibbutzim, Mansour claimed that MAPAM did not seriously attempt to tie the Arabs

⁸⁵ Sadeq, *Goleh be-artso*, 91–94.

intellectually to the party because they were considered merely workers.⁸⁶ In Kibbutz Ein Shemer, Mansour recalled how he and his fellow Arab volunteers were housed in inferior wooden structures with no ventilation and poor infrastructure. Mansour also remembered that the kibbutz prevented the workers from associating with the young kibbutznicks and when the Arabs asked why they were answered: “you will corrupt their character.”⁸⁷

Despite encountering the Labor movement’s segregationist tendencies in the kibbutzim, its elitism, and its culpability in the Zionist land grab, both Sadeq and Mansour describe the kibbutz as a liberating experience—liberation from the spatial constraints of the Military Government but also from those of the rural and conservative societies they both came from.⁸⁸ According to a white paper authored by the Shiloah Institute in the 1970s, many young Arabs applied to work in kibbutzim not out of ideology but “because of the opportunity to leave the framework of the village” and to meet “on equal footing” with Jewish youth, boys and girls and to work. According to this source, work in a kibbutz was also a reprieve from the suffocating restriction of the Military Government.⁸⁹ The memoirs of the Palestinian Arabs largely confirm this assessment.

Concerning the relationship between Jews and Arabs in the kibbutz, Sadeq, who tied his political fortunes to MAPAM, reported that “good social ties” were formed. In contrast, Mansour, who early on severed ties with Labor Zionists, had a less positive assessment of the inter-ethnic contacts within the kibbutz.⁹⁰ According to the latter, the Arabs only “semi-integrated” with the kibbutznicks because of the latter’s rugged mannerisms. Nevertheless, even Mansour admits that

⁸⁶ Mansour, *al-Ams la Yamut* (Tira: Matba'at al-Tira, 2006), 88.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁸⁹ Yehoshafat Netzer and Tamar Raz, *Tnu'at ha-No'ar ha-Halutsi be-yozmat MAPAM* (Tel Aviv: Shiloah Institute for Middle East and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1976), 10.

⁹⁰ Sadeq, *Goleh be-artzo*, 90.

the relations between Jews and Arabs transcended work because of the communal spaces in the kibbutz. Mansour mentioned the dining hall and sitting around the same tables, and even the communal bathrooms, and the measure of gender equality of the kibbutz as leaving a positive impact on him and his Palestinian Arab colleagues.⁹¹

Jiryis Tanus, a son of Mughar, who never pursued any official political tendencies, oppositionary or otherwise, favorably recalled his own summer on a kibbutz. In his one summer on Mizra‘, Tanus felt like he was “in heaven.”⁹² Tanus recalled individual characters in the kibbutz, such as their Hebrew instructor and guide, as being very welcoming. Some of Tanus’ descriptions seem too idyllic. In his memory, he virtually became a kibbutz member with almost nothing separating his group and the kibbutz members. Other descriptions correspond with those of Mansour, specifically the table manners he had absorbed while dining together with the kibbutzniks and the thrill of freely associating with young women. Tanus himself described how he formed a romantic relationship with a girl his age and how the kibbutz members did not mind at all and even actively approved of the relationship.⁹³ Tanus’ memories are by far the most positive of the three, but even he felt a sense of injustice and hypocrisy when he encountered recently arrived Polish ‘olim in the kibbutz. Tanus wrote how offended he felt when he realized that these foreigners, who did not even speak Hebrew, received Israeli citizenship as soon as they came. Tanus understood then and there that Zionist ‘Aliya served the purpose of denying Arabs the ability to return to their homes and this left him with mixed feelings: he “loved” the Jews but they also “stole his rights.”⁹⁴

⁹¹ Mansour, *al-Ams la Yamut*, 87–88.

⁹² Jiryis Tanus, *Min al-Dhakira: Sira Jil Kuntu Ahd Abna’hi*, 107.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

What can be made of these programs intended to convince the Arab population to come to terms with the state by conducting *hasbarah* initiatives and introducing them to representatives of the Israeli political and cultural elites? Obviously, the wider context—Military Government, internally displaced refugees, land confiscations, discrimination, and many more issues—would not facilitate a wholehearted Arab embracing of these initiatives. The “consumers” of these programs were often young and educated, and could have easily discerned the contradictions between the official line Israel tried to sell them and the bleak reality they faced on a daily basis. But the encounters were also civilian in their nature; they presented a friendlier Israeli face, and also possible membership in Israeli society. In other words, the Jewish-Arab civilian encounter, which the state itself promoted, did, in fact, contribute to a mutual “de-demonization” of the other side. It gave hope.

The Specter of Nasser

As mentioned, the officials entrusted with cultivating Arab loyalty had to overcome the ill will left by Israel’s own policies. As the years progressed, some of these policies, movement restrictions, for instance, changed for the better, but in other areas, such as land confiscations, the state’s appetite actually grew. This reality was certainly not conducive to the cultivation of Arab identification with the state and its Jewish leadership. What made things worse for the “cultivators of loyalty” was that the Arabs in Israel were also wooed by a cohesive anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist ideology embodied in the charismatic persona of Egyptian President Gamal Abd al-Nasser.

The July 1952 revolution in Egypt ushered in a new political era to the Middle East that was dominated by the Nasserite brand of Arab nationalism. Although it was grafted upon a shared language, old symbols, and an organically formed modern national sentiment, Egypt’s Arab

nationalism of the 1950s had a particular modern anti-imperial hue. Nasser positioned his Pan-Arabism as the only remedy for the vestiges of imperialism and colonialism in the region that had prevented the progress and freedom of the Arab peoples. Alongside elements of European presence in Egypt, Nasser's discourse conceptualized Zionism as a prominent colonial residue in the heart of the Arab land. The Egyptian regime associated Zionism and Israel with colonialism based on the perception of European Jews as being exogenous to the region, and the actual ties between Israel and colonial powers culminating in 1956 with the Israeli-British-French military campaign against in the Sinai. As for Nasser's military intentions against Israel, there were some interpretations, from within Israel, that he did not intend to annihilate the state altogether. Nevertheless, Nasser's own declarations and statements made by official Egyptian organs justifiably created existential concerns in Israeli society.

The 1956 Sinai War propelled Nasser to messianic levels of adoration among Arabs and other non-aligned nations. Nasser's popularity was carried by his oratorical abilities and the magnitude of his character. Until 1967, Nasser's status among Arab peoples seemed to have had more peaks than lows, and even during those, Nasser remained the most revered leader in the Arab world and beyond. The Nasserite agenda and culture were delivered to tens of millions in the Middle East and the non-aligned world via shortwave radio emanating from the Radio and Television Building in Cairo. Tens of millions tuned in to hear Nasser's speeches on the *Sawt al-Arab*, "the Voice of the Arabs" radio station. This phenomenon did not pass over the Arabs in Israel. They were not deaf to this phenomenon.

From the mid-1950s on, Jewish invocations of the Arab citizen's adoration of Nasser were a form of shorthand to argue for their general untrustworthiness. The earliest examples of this are from reports in the Hebrew press from mid-1956, months before the Sinai campaign that thrust

Nasser to his peak popularity. These reports mentioned that in police arrests of Arabs from the Triangle, the police found posters of Nasser along with those of the Mufti and even Hitler, as if it was a closely linked chain of leadership.⁹⁵ In the following years, expressions of admirations for Nasser became the dominant theme in informant reports to the security apparatus, as well as part of the general public discourse on Arab loyalty.⁹⁶

If the reports are to be believed, then Arabs expressed their support for Gamal Abd al-Nasser in public rather freely.⁹⁷ Intelligence reports and memoirs frequently refer to Arabs publicly tuning in to *Sawt al-'Arab* and to Egyptian television.⁹⁸ Owning a radio, particularly in the rural areas, was not common and sometimes a transistor would be placed in a café for many to hear. One such report which circulated within the ranks of the Israeli police in July of 1962, told of the “atmosphere” (*hilkhe roah*) on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the July Revolution. The report listed five large villages in the northern Triangle whose residents huddled around the few available television sets to witness the military parade and cheer “long live” when Nasser’s image appeared on the screen.⁹⁹

Nasser’s popularity was a top concern for Israeli educators. In schools, after 1956, reports of the political mischief of Arab schoolchildren frequently involved invocations of Nasser. For example, in an Arab school in Haifa in 1957, a Jewish teacher found on the seventh-grade

⁹⁵ Unattributed, “Tmunot ‘yedidim’ etsel ‘atsure ha-‘otser,” *Ha-Boker*, 6 April 1956, Unattributed, “Tmunat ha-Mofti ve-Natser be-bate ‘atsure Umm al-Fahem,” *Yedioth Ahronot*, 5 April 1956, Unattributed, “Umm al-Fahem—em ha-poranut,” *Ha-Boker*, 5 April 1956, archived in ISA GL-17015/19, 76.

⁹⁶ Informant report, 14 February 1961, archived in IDFA-875/483/1966, 27.

⁹⁷ Z. Yoeli, “‘Al shlihe Natser bi-Yerushalaim,” *Davar*, 29, February 1960, 2; ISA-GL-19077.3, 25; Cohen, *‘Aravim tovim*, 157, 160.

⁹⁸ See for instance, L.TS, “Hitya‘atsut ‘im ha-mahlaka le-‘inyanei ‘Aravim”, 23 July 1963, ISA A-7921/1, 38; Y. Hananel, “Maskanot ha-va‘ada le-‘inyan ha-Mimshal ha-Tseva’i,” *She ‘arim*, 19 March 1955, archived in ISA GL-13905/8, 29; Y. Habushi to General Manager MoL, “‘Avtala tsisa bithonit,” 12 February 1956, ISA G-6178/14, 94.

⁹⁹ Cohen, *‘Aravim tovim*, 183; ISA GL-1616/9, 2; ‘A. Novosalsky, Israeli Police, “Hilkhe ruah – yom ha-hafikha ha-10 be-Mitsraim,” 29 July 1962, archived in H11, 89.

blackboard the words “Nasser,” and underneath that “Ben-Gurion,” and underneath that “down with” (*she-yipol*).¹⁰⁰ A 1960 survey prepared by Benor, reported that the cry “long live Abdel Nasser” was commonly heard among pupils along with ripping up the Israeli flag, and writing graffiti against the leadership.¹⁰¹ Benor also seemed to have developed the habit of listening to the Cairo-based station and commenting on inaccuracies that made their way into Hebrew translations of the President’s speeches.¹⁰²

In the late 1950s, Israeli concerns over Nasser’s stature among Arab citizens escalated due to the emergence of political formations which took on Arab nationalist stances. This phenomenon began emerging in 1958, a year that saw the Nasserite unification of Egypt and Syria, a partial Arab boycott of the state’s decade celebrations, and massive anti-government May Day demonstrations in Nazareth. Due to the limited appeal of Communist discourse among several nationalist leaning community leaders, Communist activists created a new political coalition of Communist and nationalist activists—the Popular Front. Despite the Front’s novelty, its official demands mirrored those of MAKI’s Arab section.¹⁰³ Then, in 1959, the year Nasser cracked down on Egyptian Communists, tensions between the two wings of the Front became unsustainable. The nationalists quit the Front to establish Al-Ard, “The Land,” an avowedly Arab nationalist entity. The Israeli security establishment and public discourse considered Al-Ard to be even more hostile

¹⁰⁰ Y. L. Benor to General Inspector, “Mr Hasan Farahat, menahel beit hasefer ha-‘Arvi be-Hayfa,” 4 March 1957, ISA GL-1616/9, 2; Y. Kravits, Israeli Police, “Ali Sa’id Warhibi,” 24 March 1960, archived in H11, 32; Cohen, 172.

¹⁰¹ M. Shamai to Y. L. Benor, “Skira al ha-hinuh ha-‘Arvi ha-yesodi,” 31 August 1960, ISA GL-1616/7, 12; Y. Kravits, Israeli Police, “Ali Said Warhibi,” 24 March 1960, archived in H11, 32.

¹⁰² Benor to Director, MFA, 1 April 1958, ISA G-1616/8, 20, 17.

¹⁰³ Leena Dallasheh, “Political Mobilization of Palestinians in Israel: The Al-Ard Movement,” in, *Displaced at Home: Ethnicity and Gender among Palestinians in Israel*, ed. Rhoda Ann Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2010), 32–36.

than MAKI and a fully-grown fifth column.¹⁰⁴ A depiction of how the Israeli mainstream viewed Al-Ard can be seen in a caricature featured in the establishment *Davar* newspaper in which Nasser is charming from behind the border a snake—named “Al-Ard”—crawling out of the ground [Figure 9]. Al-Ard indeed followed Nasserist ideals by supporting the “liberation, unification, and socialist movement in the Arab World,” yet much of their activist efforts were aimed against concrete Israeli domestic policies such as the Military Government and land confiscations. Al-Ard also advocated for the inalienable rights of the “Arab-Palestinian people” and stressed their independent interests within the large Arab nation.¹⁰⁵ Even the Arab Communists in Israel criticized this group for not joining forces with progressive Jews in their struggle.¹⁰⁶

Their association with Nasserism notwithstanding, Al-Ard and its activists trod a fine line between, on the one hand, taking political stances against every contemporaneous Zionist tenet, and, on the other hand, avoiding an explicit call for the demise of Israel.¹⁰⁷ As a matter of fact, in an interview with *Yedioth Ahronoth*’s Natan Baron, a hard-right Israeli journalist, Mansour Kardoush, the leader of the Al-Ard group, made a genuine attempt to win sympathy with the readers of the Hebrew daily. Kardoush is quoted by Baron as making moderate statements of opposition to the Military Government, demanding civic equality, and yet distinguishing between “the State” and “the government.” Kardoush’s most hardline statements were aimed at the injustice committed by the government in confiscating Arab lands for the purposes of Jewish settlement, all the while insisting that these are “their and their ancestors’ lands.” When the topic of the interview reached Nasser, Kardoush willingly admitted his support for the Egyptian President but qualified

¹⁰⁴ M.D. (editorial), “Davar hayom: hova kfula,” *Davar* 13 November 1964, in IDFA-837483/1966, 17.

¹⁰⁵ [Unclear] Military Government Nazareth, “Kvutsat Al-Ard,” 25 November 1964, IDFA-837/483/1966, 43.

¹⁰⁶ See survey of Arab press in IDFA-837/483/1966, 9.

¹⁰⁷ Dallasheh, “Political Mobilization of Palestinians in Israel: The Al-Ard Movement.”

it, perhaps disingenuously, by claiming he merely favored the Nasser agenda in internal Arab power dynamics but did not necessarily embrace his stance against Israel.¹⁰⁸ In late 1965, after it had narrowed its ability to publish a newspaper and form a civic association, the government effectively outlawed the Al-Ard agenda. According to historian Leena Dallashe, due to fear of the state's surveillance apparatus, Al-Ard never gained a wide following among the Palestinian Arabs in Israel. At the same time, Al-Ard never engaged in political violence, nor did it incite others to do so. Neither did their activists substantially coordinate their activities with foreign agents.¹⁰⁹ However, the story of Nasserism in Israel did not begin and end with Al-Ard.

Even though large numbers of Arabs in Israel did not stand behind Al-Ard and its platform, all the resources available for this research clearly demonstrate that the Arab citizens of Israel identified very strongly with Gamal Abd al-Nasser. Historical sociologist Hunaida Ghanim, who carefully examined the Palestinian Arabs' post-Nakba national culture, argued that Nasser became a "secularized God." In an interview for Ghanim, Salem Jubran (1941-2011), who joined the Communist party in 1962 but was also associated with the Histadrut, said of Nasser:

Nasser for me was three-quarters of a God...every spark of hope in the Arab world, like the Nasser Revolution [sic] and the nationalization of the Suez Canal, was a source for comfort in our home, comfort more important than bread. Meaning, it was easier for us to live without bread if we could rejoice from national triumphs [...] When my father bought a radio, it was a grand celebration: we wanted to hear Nasser's speeches, to listen to the hero who instigated the Revolution in Egypt.¹¹⁰

In an interview I conducted with Mustafa Murar, a writer from Jaljulia, I shared the highlights from the intelligence reports I cited above and asked him "who would be the people that

¹⁰⁸ Natan Baron, "Einenu oyve Medinat Yisra'el, aval admoteinu hen admoteinu," *Yedioth Ahronot*, 5 January 1962, 11.

¹⁰⁹ Dallasheh, "Political Mobilization."

¹¹⁰ Hunaida Ghanim, *Livnot et ha-umah mehadash: intelektualim Falestinim be-Yisra'el*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 2009), 81.

would shout ‘long live Nasser!’ in the cafes?” to which Murar replied with a smile: “Everyone shouted.”¹¹¹

As a matter of fact, the adoration of Nasser among Arabs in Israel was so widespread that the members of the intelligentsia who participated in one of the Hasbara courses mentioned above did not bother to hide their feelings even in a forum that was actually convened by the Israeli government. In 1961, following a lecture surveying the political situation in the Middle East, the participants apparently felt comfortable enough to object to the lecturer’s bias against the United Arab Republic and corrected some of his statements on its poor conditions and the level of tyranny offered by Nasser. One of the participants flatly said: “I did not understand the purpose of (this) lecture. If the intention is propaganda (*ta’amula*), it would have been better to say true and honest things. Occasionally I’m asked, what broadcast do I listen to and I answer Egyptian broadcasts...it would be a lie to say that when we hear about a good deed being done in the Arab states, it does not make us (the Arabs in Israel) happy.”¹¹²

The backdrop for the Arab support for Nasser in Israel shifted and became particularly acute in May of 1967, with the escalation of regional tensions and the bombastic Egyptian threats to destroy Israel. In that year, Tamim Mansour, a teacher working in Kfar Qassim, recalled that he was glued to his transistor radio. In his words, the “Arab Palestinian memory was drenched in the blood of the wounded, the dead, the dispersed, from the fall of Palestine and the 1956 War” and he had “dreamed that the summer would erase the painful Palestinian road.”¹¹³ Walid Sadeq wrote

¹¹¹ Mustafa Murar, interviewed by Arnon Degani, Jaljulia, Israel, November 2014.

¹¹² Jarrah to Zvi Zinder, ISA GL-17006/12, 130.

¹¹³ Mansour, *al-Ams la Yamut*, 170–71.

that during “the waiting period” before the War, television set owners in Tira, charged admission to watch the Egyptian military parades.¹¹⁴

The Arab adoration for Nasser in Israel was comprehensive, and it fueled an anti-Zionist discourse which included a program to destroy Israel. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that a maximalist Nasserist political vision consumed the consciousness of all those who held Nasser in high regard. Indeed, many Arabs in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s were able to express, on the one hand, an adoration for Nasser and his revolutionary regime, while, at the same time, continuing to utilize the few avenues of social mobility and integration offered by the state and Zionist institutions. Walid Sadeq, for instance, who narrated his own life story as a quest to find common grounds with Zionist Jews, also recalled how Nasser uplifted the spirits of his generation, and his own as well. Despite the collapse of Pan-Arabism and the mistakes the Egyptian leader made, Sadeq wrote in Hebrew, “looking back at the bottom line, Nasser was and remained the number one leader.”¹¹⁵ Jiryis Tanus, a former teacher still active in Jewish-Arab “coexistence” circles, recalled amid many “sweet” memories of his time spent in the kibbutz, how the arrival of Abd al-Nasser on the world stage coincided with and inspired his coming of age. Tanus felt that Nasser’s promises to the Arabs made him feel he was “no longer an orphan,” and drew a parallel between how the Eastern Block equipped Egypt with the finest weaponry, and how Abd al-Nasser “equipped” him with a “higher meaning” (*al-ma ‘una al- ‘aliya*) and self-confidence.¹¹⁶

Significantly, the 1959 Nasser-USSR spat proved that, in times of trial, the devoted Arab cadre of MAKI genuinely placed its ideological loyalty in Marxist Leninism above the nationalist inclination of the rank and file. When the USSR sided with Iraq’s Abd al-Karim Qasim at the

¹¹⁴ Sadeq, *Goleh be-artso*, 114–15.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹⁶ Tanus, *Min al-Dhakira*, 123.

expense of support for Nasser, the Arab Communists in Israel officially aligned with Moscow and downgraded their positive assessment of the Egyptian pan-Arab leader. The MAKI criticism of Nasser reached a point where they considered the Egyptian leader a tool of Imperialism. For example, in March 1959, *Al-Ittihad* published a commentary blaming the United Arab Republic's (UAR) broadcasts for collaborating with the Western Imperialists' plots to overthrow Qasim.¹¹⁷ Later that month, *Al-Ittihad* published articles accusing Nasser of inadvertently colluding with Ben-Gurion, and implored the UAR to stop "serving the imperialists against the Arabs" and choose the "nationalist route."¹¹⁸ In another example, from August 1959, *Al-Ittihad* conveyed for its reader's consideration the opinion in the Lebanese *Alakhbar* which referred to Nasser as "the Arab Ben-Gurion."¹¹⁹ Tamim Mansour from the Triangle remembered his encounter with the young Communist poet Mahmud Darwish, who repeated in his ears the Party's attacks on Nasser claiming that he was "bourgeois, nationalistic, flashy (*mundaf'a*), reckless, [and] subservient to the United States."¹²⁰

The Communist turn against Nasser was short lived. The political damage of going against Nasser cost MAKI half of its electoral strength in 1959. After 1961, when the USSR and Nasser mended their relations, the tension within MAKI between Jewish and Arab members grew. Ultimately, the organic affinity with Arab nationalism and the growing hostility between Israel and Nasser led to the splitting of MAKI along national, Jewish-Arab lines. The Arab splinter,

¹¹⁷ Unattributed, "The Broadcasts of Cairo and Damascus Serves Who?," *AlIttihad*, 10 March 1959, 1 (16).

¹¹⁸ Unattributed, "Ben-Gurion Yastafid min al-Khilafat bayna al-Jumhuwriyyatayn al 'Arabiyyatayn li-I'dad Mughamara Jadida Did al-Jumhuriyya al Muttahida", "Tariqan amam Qadat al-Jumhuriyyah al Muttahida: ima al 'Awuda ila al-Tariq al-Watani wa ima Khidmat al-Musta'mirin A'da' al-'Arab" *Al-Ittihad*, 20 March 1959

¹¹⁹ Unattributed, "A'tham Da'a'm al-Jabha al-Sha'baiyya," *Al-Ittihad*, 8 August 1959, p.2, (p.42).

¹²⁰ Mansour, *al-Ams*, 98.

RAKAH, in Hebrew *Reshimah Komunistit Hadasha*, came closer to pure Arab nationalist positions while maintaining a thin recognition of Jewish collective rights to the land.¹²¹

Before jumping to the conclusion that support for Nasser meant all-out hostility toward Israel, it is important to bear in mind that the putatively Zionist Party MAPAM took advantage of the UAR-USSR rift and encouraged its Arab members to openly sympathize with Nasser and even offered formulations, primarily for its Arab supporters, which conceptualized the latter's movement as compatible with the Party's vision.¹²² In 1961, Nissim Rejwan noted this hypocrisy in an article he wrote for the *Jerusalem Post* in which he pointed out how MAMPAM's Hebrew organ attacked the Communists for their anti-Zionist stance and its Arabic organ, *Almirsad*, attacked the Communists for being anti-Nasserist. According to Rejwan, MAPAM thought it could reconcile its own Jewish ethnonationalism with the one offered by Nasserism on the basis of their philosophical similarity. However unreasonable the idea that a Zionist party could be the political home of Nasserist Arabs, the fact is that in the 1959 Knesset elections, MAPAM increased the number of its Arab voters by 120 percent.¹²³

In May of 1967, in the period preceding the Six Day War, the Arabs in Israel faced the Nasser/loyalty dilemma head-on. After May 15, when Egyptian forces entered the demilitarized Sinai, the pro-Egyptian sentiment among Arabs in Israel could be gleaned even from the pages of the government/Histadrut Arabic organ, *Al-Yawm*. During the weeks before the War, *Al-Yawm* published columns by Arab authors who professed their complete loyalty to the state along with

¹²¹ Eli. Rekhess, *ha-Mi 'ut ha-'Arvi be-Yisra'el: ben Komunizm le-le'umiyut 'Arvit, 1965-1991* (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad, 1993), 35–37.

¹²² See Mikhael Assaf, "Lenohakh kvutsat Al-Ard," *Davar*, 5 February 1960, in LAVON IV 219 273, 4; Joel Beinin, *Was the red flag flying there? Marxist politics and the Arab-Israeli conflict in Egypt and Israel, 1948-1965* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1990), 212-223.

¹²³ Nissim Rejwan, *Outsider in the Promised Land: An Iraqi Jew in Israel* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 74–75.

reports of Arab local councils that enacted resolutions in support of the state and placing the village resources at the disposal of the military. Despite these declarations of fidelity, it is easy to detect a different atmosphere on the Arab street. For instance, a few of these proclamations of fidelity to the state there was a warning for the villagers not to “get carried away by rumors,” most likely of imminent Israeli defeat.¹²⁴ The Kafr Qasim local council added to its declaration of loyalty its “contempt for those [spreading] poisonous (probably Nasserist) propaganda (*al-di‘ayat al-masmuma*).” The council also requested that the villagers refrain from conducting “suspicious meetings,” and that the owners of cafes—“especially those with television sets”— “maintain order” in their place of establishment or face sanctions.¹²⁵ Obviously, many Palestinian Arabs in Israel embraced in their heart of hearts the prospect of Nasser fulfilling his vision to vanquish the State of Israel.

However, in contrast to the political sentiment that might have dominated the intimate wishes of the Arab public, RAKAH, the most radical Arab oppositionary body allowed by the state to operate, offered its supporters a positive alternative that tried to weave a thread between Arab nationalism and the embrace of Israeli citizenship. In its coverage and commentary, *Al-Ittihad* sided mainly with Egypt, placing most of the responsibility for the escalation on the Israeli government and its imperialist agenda. But in early June, as the war drew closer, the newspaper attenuated its criticism of Israel and called on both sides to refrain from instigating military action. *Al-Ittihad* columnists also fended off accusations of Arab disloyalty. Juhayna, Emil Habibi pen name, wrote an article on June 2, 1967, entitled “Loyalty,” blaming the Israeli security

¹²⁴ Unattributed, “Fi al-Taiba,” *Al-Yawm*, 23 May 1967, 1; unattributed, “Wul’a al-Muwatanun al-‘Arab,” *Al-Yawm*, 31 May 1967, 4; unattributed, “al-Majalis al-Mahaliya,” 1 June 1967, 3 1967

¹²⁵ Unattributed, “Tadamun al-Muwatinuwn al-‘Arab ma’a al-Dawla wa Mu‘azarathum laha,” *Al-Yawm*, 30 May 1967, 3. See also a memo written by Hashim Nashif, the headmaster of the elementary school, to the parents of the community, ISA GL-17016.42, 15.

establishment, “the black hand,” for spreading rumors and sowing anxiety among the Arab citizens. Habibi also reminded his readers of the Arab Communists’ consistent struggle for Jewish-Arab fraternity and regional peace. On June 6, the day after the Israeli air force determined the course of the war by annihilating the Egyptian air force, the *Al-Ittihad* editorial repeated its call for de-escalation and denounced the accusations of disloyalty. Noticeably, in the two latter articles, Habibi used the term “Arabs of Israel” (*‘Arab Isra’il*) to denote the Palestinian Arab community in Israel rather than the more common expression found in *Al-Ittihad* of “Arabs in Israel.”¹²⁶

The adoration of Nasser among the Palestinian Arabs in Israel was strong, but the 1967 War was yet another test of loyalty that the Palestinian Arabs in Israel passed. Indeed the love that the Palestinian Arabs felt for Nasser validated to a certain extent Lubrani’s poor assessment of their loyalty to Israel as being contingent rather than organic. Nevertheless, considering all the other evidence in this chapter and the also the rest of the dissertation, it seems conceivable to flip Lubrani’s statement about the loyalty of the Palestinian Arabs to the state. The Palestinian Arabs decided to refrain from actively attacking the state because they trusted Nasser would do so eventually, yet it is probably equally true that they decided to adore Nasser precisely because they knew they would do nothing to bring about the demise of the state by themselves.

Conclusion

June 1967 constituted a watershed moment that would change the Middle East and in particular the status of Israel within it. The Israeli archives contain several dossiers containing letters and postcards sent in the wake of the 1967 War by Israeli citizens and filled with congratulatory

¹²⁶ Juhayyna, “al- Wul’a,” *Al-Ittihad*, 2 June 1967, p.5; Editorial, “al-Jumhuwr al-‘Arabi al-Isra’ili laysa Asir walakin jjsr lil-salam,” *Alltihad*, 6 June 1967, p.1 (p. 20). .

salutations on the occasion of the state's battlefield victories against the Arab armies in the recent war. Both Arab and Jewish citizens sent letters, and a comparison between the two sets of letters reveals striking differences. The content and tone of the Arab and Jewish letters exemplify the particular quality of loyalty Arab citizens felt towards the state by the end of its second decade.

Among the Arab letters, some were composed by representatives of local governments, heads of schools, and members of local religious councils—people whose status and livelihood depended to some extent on the goodwill of the government and the ruling party. Some letters were sent from citizens identifying as Druze, a community that by 1967 the state had in many ways detached from the rest of the Palestinian Arabs citizens. Yet some letters came from private citizens, Muslims, and Christians, who seemed to have had no apparent predisposition to rejoice in Israel's victory.

Many of these letters, though not all, contain a peculiar linguistic theme—the usage of the formal second person plural, *vous*, to refer to the addressee. In several letters, the Arab citizens also used the possessive second person form and referred in their writing to “your military, (*jyshkum*)” and “your government (*hokomatikum*).” Not all letters were written in this over-deferential and distant tone, yet all writers conveyed an over-the-top enthusiasm, happiness, and even love for the state and its leadership, as was common in correspondences between Arab citizens and Israeli officials, and before that, between Palestinian Arabs and Mandate authorities. For instance, a resident of Nazareth sent Moshe Dayan a contribution of 200 Israeli Pounds, with a note congratulating the military's early successes, wishing a full victory to the IDF, and hoping that all soldiers return home safely.¹²⁷ Another letter from Nazareth elaborated at length about the sender's emotion of “cheerfulness” (*ibtihaj*) upon the Israeli smiting of the Arab armies, and then

¹²⁷ Omar Haj Yihye to Moshe Dayan, 8 June 1967, ISA GL-17054/3, 31.

went on to venerate in several paragraphs the government, the military, and the fighting soldiers.¹²⁸ Another citizen from Sakhnin sent a letter to the Prime Minister “on behalf of the [Christian] Orthodox community in the village” to congratulate the “valiant” (*basil*) army and the Jewish people upon their “dazzling” (*bahira*) victories.¹²⁹ Quite a few letters contained a generalized hope for Israeli-Arab peace and one villager from the Triangle village of Barta‘a wished that the state’s borders would eventually extend from the Nile to the Euphrates.¹³⁰

In stark contrast, Jewish citizens opened their letters with a brief acknowledgement of the great military achievement, and then—almost without exception—moved to some critical commentary or analysis about why Israel has won (usually because of God’s grace), what should be done from this point, offers of suggestions of what to name the war, and various complaints including one from a citizen who wanted to know why “we beat 3 states in 6 days yet it takes us more than two years to establish Israeli television broadcasts.”¹³¹

Unsurprisingly, the juxtaposition of the Arab and Jewish letters demonstrates that Jewish and Arab citizens related very differently to the state. Nevertheless, it would be simplistic to interpret these differences between Jewish and Arab letters as a mere reflection of the sincerity of the former as compared to the opportunism of the latter. A more nuanced interpretation of the sentiment expressed in the letters, with the benefit of hindsight and exposure to the materials composing this entire research, is that Arabs who wanted to express their sense of loyalty toward the state, a desire which seems to have been genuine to some extent, felt like they could only do so as humble subjects rather than as citizens with a sense of entitlement to rights and services.

¹²⁸ Amin Ibrahim Harbaji to the Advisor of Arab Affairs, 12 June 1967, ISA GL-17054/3, 39

¹²⁹ Hasib ‘Abud to the Prime Minister, 27 June 1967, ISA GL-17054/3, 42.

¹³⁰ Yousef ‘Abbas to the Prime Minister, 8 June 1967, ISA GL-17054/3, 96.

¹³¹ Unclear to the Prime Minister, 25 July 1967, ISA G-6302/7, 100.

Conversely, Arabs who had a sense of Israeli civic entitlement, who demanded that the government live up to its promises, would not be prone to send these obsequious letters. This latter group was no less, and perhaps even more, loyal than those who lavished compliments for the state and its leadership. After all, the very activism of the oppositional Palestinian Arabs assumed their possession of hope.

The overwhelming majority of the Arabs in Israel inhabited the spectrum between these two positions—cooperation and opposition—and all were in some form or another Arab-Israelis. The development of this Israeliness should be credited, to some extent, to the Israeli state's (and also the Histadrut's) investment in mass educational and cultural projects. These efforts to formulate an "Arab-Israeliness" could not, and were not designed to offset entirely the bitterness caused by history, unfulfilled promises of equal citizenship, and the various forms of state hostility. The scarcity of official Israeli symbols and narratives that Arabs could genuinely identify with created a vacuum that Arabs filled with sentiments of, to be blunt, hatred toward the state. This hatred manifested in the adoration of its most threatening external enemy—Nasser. Personnel within the Israeli security/educational apparatus were well aware of the widespread anti-Israeli sentiment yet refrained from cracking down on all expressions of Arab disloyalty. The government's measure of tolerance to casual anti-Israeli expressions was not due to any major commitment to freedom of speech. Rather it was an astute willingness to look the other way in order to cultivate hope for better days.

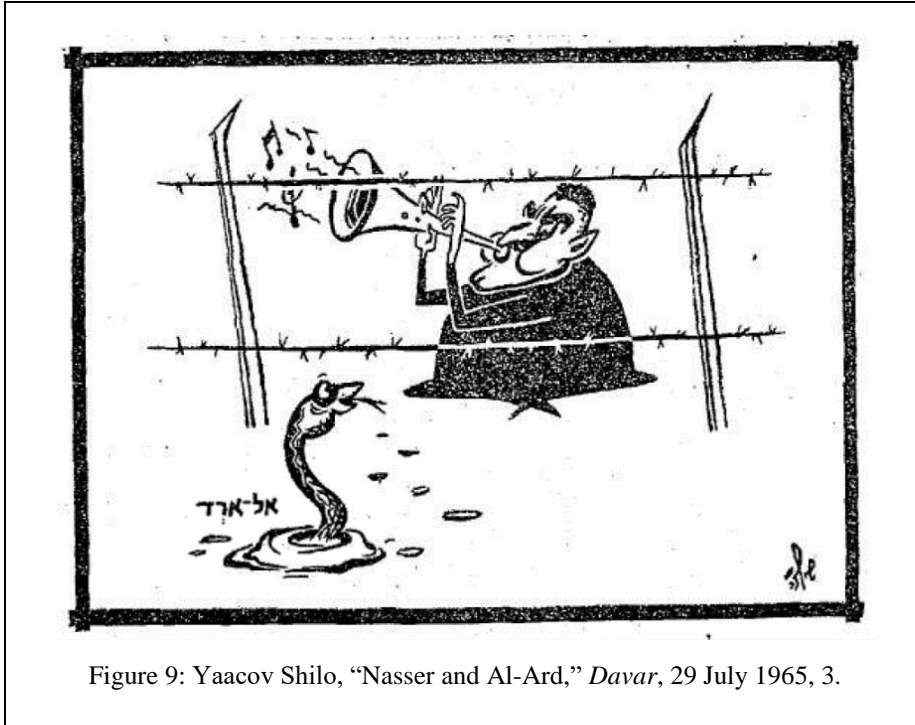


Figure 9: Yaacov Shilo, "Nasser and Al-Ard," *Davar*, 29 July 1965, 3.

Conclusion and Epilogue

This dissertation has joined previous research on the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel and their process of integration into Israeli society. Through this process, the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel have become a unique Palestinian constituency distinct from the Palestinians in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and the Diaspora. Whereas previous research has focused more closely on the array of coercive measures that the State imposed over the Palestinian Arabs, this dissertation argued that coercion was effective because it was accompanied by policies that Palestinian Arabs voluntarily engaged with. Furthermore, across the Jewish political arena—the leadership, the bureaucratic class, and public opinion—there was a growing disaffection with the most coercive institution, the Military Government. Thus, the dissertation offers a novel perspective on the beginnings of this process of integration during the state's and how this process manifested in the daily interactions between Palestinian Arabs and various Israeli organs. The integration of Palestinian Arabs into Israeli society was not a linear process nor was it equally experienced among all classes, ethnic groups, and religious sects. Nevertheless, this dissertation suggests that between the years 1948-1967, Israeli officials of different ranks largely targeted the Palestinians who remained within its borders for absorption into the Israeli body politic, albeit in a subordinate status. The Palestinians, by and large, decided to adhere to the parameters set by the Israeli regime, conducting their political struggles as Israeli citizens and not as an aggrieved indigenous population. As a result, by the year 1967, the Palestinian Arabs who remained within the territory of the State of Israel became Arab-Israelis.

Chapter 1 demonstrates how the slow dissipation of the Military Government and specifically its intricate regime of movement restrictions facilitated this process of integration.

Chapters 2-4 detailed how key Israeli civilian institutions and organs—the powerful Histadrut, the various health care providers, and educational institutions—came into closer contact with the Arab citizens. Emissaries of the Israeli establishment made inroads to Palestinian Arab society despite the structural discriminations and widespread individual anti-Arab biases among the Israeli bureaucratic class. The dissertation demonstrated that the civic encounters between Arabs and Jews were ultimately conducive to integration. In the context of the Jewish-Arab civic encounter in Israel, Arab demands for equality were considered by the Israeli establishment as exaggerated yet nominally legitimate. In many areas, the state offered tangible gains when Palestinian Arabs reciprocated by making demands that included a recognition of the state and its organs' legitimacy. This reciprocal relationship eroded the Military Government, opened the Histadrut to Arabs, and improved Arab access to health care. The one realm in which Palestinian Arabs allowed themselves to reject the legitimacy of the state was confined to their internal political sentiment. The State and its security apparatus could live with that.

In addition to providing a new narrative of Palestinian Arab subordinate integration into Israeli society, the dissertation also makes a wider argument about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It seeks to conceptualize the years 1948-1967 as a period when the conflict between Zionists and a certain Palestinians constituency predominantly featured patterns of settler-colonial consolidation. The introduction and chapter 1, show how the dismantling of the Military Government and its movement restrictions was understood by contemporaneous Israelis and Arabs, as well as by later observers, as the dismantling of colonial mechanisms of control for the purposes of Arab inclusion into the Israeli body politic. In chapter 2, I focused on the relationship between the Histadrut and the Arab citizens and put forward the argument that Labor Zionism constituted a unique settler-colonial ideology that benefitted from Socialism's capacity to recast

indigenous people as fellow workers. Chapter 3, like chapter 1, describes how the nature of the Israeli medical system gradually moved away from patterns typically seen in colonial cases. In tandem, the chapter demonstrates how the health of indigenous populations served as a site for a settler-colonial discourse that elicited from both settlers and indigenous people assertions about Israel's responsibility for the lives and wellbeing of the Palestinian Arab citizens. Lastly, in chapter 4, I focused on the limits of subordinate integration in producing complete indigenous acquiescence with the settler state.

Between the years 1948–1967, the settler-colonial impulses of Zionism had succeeded in turning the Palestinian Arabs in Israel into a group primarily pursuing a political agenda centered on their status as Israeli citizens. Definitive assertions about the level of permanency of Israel's settler-colonial consolidation within its sovereign borders are beyond the scope of my dissertation. Future research may conclude that Israeli settler consolidation vis-à-vis the Arab-Israelis did not extinguish all of the embers of indigenous resistance awaiting better fire conditions. By cautiously extending the insights from this work to the later period, I would like to offer some tentative thoughts on the present flammable situation.

Elsewhere I have referred to the Israeli regime during the period of 1948-1967 as “The first Israeli Republic.”¹ I used this term to denote the fact that universal citizenship within its borders, while hardly a reality to be taken at face value, constituted a fundamental factor in the overall character of the regime and a major determinant in the relationship between the State and the Palestinian Arabs. Six months after the cancellation of the Military Government, the Six Day War broke out and, in June 1967, this political entity effectively ceased to exist. The settler-colonial

¹ Arnon Y. Degani, “From Republic to Empire: Israel and the Palestinians 1948-2016,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler-colonialism*, ed. Lorenzo Veracini and Edward Cavanagh (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 353–67.

dynamic between Jewish Israelis and Arab-Israelis did not come to a stop in 1967 but that year certainly marks the inception point for other forms of interaction that would come to materialize between the state of Israel and the various Palestinian indigenous constituencies under its control.

The 1967 War created shockwaves that tilted the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in different directions. One immediate consequence of Israel's overwhelming victory over the three Arab states was a fundamental shift in the political imagination of the Palestinians in all of their dispersed communities. Out of the ruins of Pan-Arabism, a new, more confident, independent, and militant Palestinian national movement arose. This change was felt differently in the disparate constituencies of the Palestinian people, but gradually, all had to come to terms with the possibility of never defeating Israel in conventional warfare. The unlikelihood of a military victory over Israel brought the Palestinian leaders to appeal gradually for a compromise with Zionism, initially temporary and then long-term. In 1988, Yassir Arafat's, (symbolic) declaration of independence entailed recognizing Israel's pre-1967 borders and could be considered a moment in a settler-colonial history when the indigenous people expressed their willingness to forfeit some of their patrimony in exchange for the end of hostilities and recognition of their sovereignty over a portion of the disputed land. Naturally, the tectonic shifts in the Palestinian national movement impacted the Arab-Israelis, but the methods of Israeli control and settlement of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were no less important an influence on their status.

Since 1967, Israel's underlining political reality, although ever-changing, remained within the following contours: it controls the West Bank and Gaza Strip and all of the civilian residents of these areas. I have titled the time period after June 1967, as the beginning of the "First Israeli Empire." Other than denoting the fact that in 1967 Israel established itself as the dominant military power in the region, the term "empire" also refers to the fact that since 1967, there exists unequal

political status among all of Israel's subjects. Gradually, this hierarchy turned into the regime's central characteristic. This shift "from republic to empire" constituted a historical turning point in the conflict when settler-colonial formations began retreating and a set of recognizably **colonial** dynamics took hold between the state and the multiple indigenous Palestinian constituencies under its sovereign control.

The rise of a colonial dynamic within Israel's larger borders featured military repression, the exploitation of labor, and extraction of capital from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). With no Israeli intention of absorbing them as citizens, the Palestinians labored in the booming Israeli urban centers as menial workers who would return at dusk to their homes in squalid refugee camps; they had their muscles examined by construction contractors on the roadsides; were harassed by military authorities; and—with mounting acts of resistance—endured collective punishment such as mass arrests, curfews, and house demolitions. As any casual reader of modern imperialism will note, these are ideal conditions for the rise of a native resistance movement. Such a movement indeed developed in the OPT and instigated a popular uprising in the form of the First Intifada in 1987. In Israel, the political rise of the Right, the decline of the Histadrut, and the gradual replacing of the socialist Zionist discourse with the messianic religious one, all negatively influenced the settler-colonial "gains," detailed in the dissertation.

In some ways, the settlement project in the OPT is similar to the project Israel had embarked on during the 1950s and 1960s yet, in stark contrast, there was no Israeli plan or intention, except partially in Eastern Jerusalem, to integrate the Palestinian civilians neighboring post-1967 settlements. As a matter of fact, this new settler project hardly bothered even to feign congruity with democratic principles, and the type of Zionism propagated by the right-winged cultural elite was more ethno-religious than the brand sported by Labor Zionism. The tendency by

pro-Palestinian pundits to perceive the settlement project in the West Bank as quintessentially “settler-colonial” is problematic, because the post-1967 settlers that moved into the West Bank or Gaza Strip seem unable, under current circumstances, to formulate a practical plan to clear the Territory from Palestinians. Also, their political identity is as dedicated Israeli citizens who demand the full protection of the Israeli state and the assertion of its sovereignty. Occasionally, the relationship between the government and the settlers is tense, but on the whole, the settler’s political motivation mirrors that of the state: to extend Israel’s borders without any intention, except in the very margins, of creating a new, sovereign, settler entity. The post-1967 settlement drive served to deepen Israeli colonial control over the OPT. Instead of referring to these settlers as “settler-colonial” perhaps a better phrasing would be “colonial-settlers” or just “colonists.”

The gradual post-1967 transformation of the OPT into the center of a Palestinian anti-colonial movement and the rise of the religious Right in Israel did not bode well for the relationship between the State and its Arab citizens. Scholars point to 1976 and the Land Day (*Yawm al-Ard*) events, leaving six citizens killed by Israeli security forces, as the turning point in the Palestinization of the Arabs in Israel. As stated in the introduction, Palestinization and Israelization were not mutually exclusive trends, and in the 1990s, when Israel seemed headed towards decolonization of the OPT, the relationship between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs was actually at a high point. Then in September 2000, when the Oslo process hit a dead end, Ariel Sharon’s visit to the Temple Mount sparked demonstrations in the Territories and Israel. The Israeli crackdown, leaving in its wake dead and wounded on both sides of the 1967 border, opened a new and dark chapter in the Jewish-Arab relations in Israel.

The Second—more violent—Intifada that broke out in 2000, was a series of tit-for-tat military actions. The Palestinians carried out deadly terrorist attacks at the heart of Israel’s civilian

life. Occasionally, Arabs in Israel aided these attacks. Israel, in retaliation, discarded any semblance of respect for Palestinian sovereignty and reinforced its military presence throughout the Occupied Territories. Lorenzo Veracini, following James Belich, described these events as the “recolonization” of the Territories.”² Jewish settlement in the West Bank continued to grow, and dozens of army checkpoints and barricades suffocated Palestinian freedom of movement within the Strip and the West Bank. The violent recolonization of the Territories widened the Manichean divide between occupiers and occupied, further making it hard for Arab-Israelis to reconcile their Palestinian nationalism with their Israeli citizenship.

Since the year 2005, Israel had reconfigured its control over the Gaza Strip, evacuating all Jewish settlements and turning Gaza effectively into a Palestinian Bantustan, internally run by HAMAS (The largest Islamist faction of the Palestinian national movement). HAMAS and successive Israeli governments have reached a *détente* occasionally punctured by rounds of violence in which Israel inflicts a very high human price from the Gazans without much political gain. HAMAS, in turn, has developed the ability to send Israelis into bomb shelters for a few weeks at a time. For Israelis, maintaining a colonial form of rule over a belligerent population, judging from successive election results, seems to be more or less agreeable. Ordinary Palestinians, who live under a multi-layered colonial regime which occasionally kills them by the hundreds, are less content. “Arab-Israeli” solidarity with the Palestinian victims of these rounds of violence and anti-Arab sentiments among Israelis corroded the civic (and civil) discourse in Israel. The fact that Palestinian Arabs occupy the lowest rungs of Israeli society, that Israeli governments continuously

² Lorenzo Veracini, “The Other Shift: Settler-colonialism, Israel, and the Occupation,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42, no. 2 (2013): 26–42.

discriminate in allocations of funds and services, together with the widespread individual prejudices of Jewish Israelis are also unhelpful.

And yet, despite the horrendous sites of the second Intifada, and the growing polarization within Israeli society, the legacies of the high settler period were not obliterated, to say the least. For instance, in 2006-2007, four civil-society Palestinian organizations issued “vision documents” to offer a way forward for advancing the political status of the Palestinians in Israel. Many commentators from various backgrounds and political leanings considered these documents as a sign that the Palestinian Arab elite had abandoned any willingness to coexist with Zionism. Upon closer examination, however, three of the four documents, although making substantial use of the indigeneity discourse, all contain implicit recognition of the collective national rights of the Jews in the territory of Palestine. The most radical of these documents, issued by Mada al-Carmel, recognized the collective rights of only the “Israeli Jewish People” and not of world Jewry. Therefore, the first three could conceivably be congruent with the non-statist forms of Zionism, and the fourth is compatible, at the very least, with the type of scenario of settler-colonial consolidation that transpired in South Africa. Scholars have also observed that “rank and file” Palestinians in Israel are even agreeable, within certain limits, to live in an Israel remaining a “Jewish and Democratic” state. In any case, the vision documents, despite being considered seditious by most Jewish Israelis, reveal that decades of colonial ascendance did not completely erase Israel’s settler-colonial “gains.”

Nevertheless, since 2000, the relationship between Israel and its Arab citizens seems unable to hit rock bottom. The current Israeli Knesset, elected in March of 2015, began its tenure on a particularly bad note. On Election Day, Benjamin Netanyahu, in a viral video, attempted to sow panic among his supporters and warned that “Arab voters are heading to the polling stations

in droves,” while being bussed by “Left-wing NGOs.” Experts claim this announcement was critical to his landslide victory. Other than being a blatant lie, Netanyahu’s statement also represents a strong Israeli perception that Arab citizenship in Israel fundamentally lacks legitimacy. Three years later, while the first lines of this concluding chapter were being written, the Israeli Knesset debated and passed the “Nation-State Law,” a Basic Law and the culmination of a years-long push by right-wing parliamentarians to tip the “Jewish-Democratic State,” more towards “Jewish.” The Law’s clauses include generic references determining the anthem, flag, day of rest, and the official standing of the Jewish calendar, but other clauses are more substantive and politically potent. The Law’s detractors call it the formalization of Apartheid and the official end of Israeli democracy. There is truth to these passionate claims but, here, I would like to point out, rather dispassionately, to how this law represents the poor state that Zionism is in as a settler-colonial movement.

The Law has a discernible anti-settler-colonial (or pro-colonial) thrust. Clause number four declares Hebrew to be the only official language in the state and the Arabic language as having a “special status.” This demotion of the language of the native will do little to turn those that speak it feel more amenable to the state and the ideology that created it. Furthermore, the first three clauses of the Law establish that the state and the land it has been established on as the exclusive national patrimony and expression of self-determination for the “Jewish People,” and notably only for the Jewish people. Together with clauses five and six, which discuss Israel’s commitment to world Jewry, the Nation-State Law, while seemingly representing classic Zionist creed, not only dismisses Palestinian sovereign claims to Palestine but also dilutes the sovereignty of Jewish citizens over Erets Israel. It substantially elevates the state’s commitment to the Diaspora Jews at the expense of those who live in it, *both* settler and indigenous residents. Ultimately, relinquishing

sovereignty to exogenous entities, As Lorenzo Veracini wrote, “is not how a healthily indigenizing settler colonial collective positions itself.”³

Israel’s withdrawal in the last decades from a settler-colonial agenda certainly represents a triumph of certain values that have always existed in Zionism such as Jewish ethnonationalism, and a religious infatuation with the land of the Bible. But these values were not bound to consume all others. The crux of the argument in this dissertation has been that the regime created by Zionism in the years 1948-1967 proved to be a suitable political environment for Palestinian integration into the Zionist settler society. One of the fundamental features of this regime was citizenship, *de jure*, for all subjects. In 1967, Israelis created a new regime premised on hierarchical access to political influence. Understanding the wisdom behind the shift is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but the contrast between these two Israeli regimes has hopefully been demonstrated clearly.

Considering the contrast between the two Israeli regimes, it is tempting to conclude that the first one is preferable to the later one and to construe this entire dissertation as an argument for Zionism to revert to more settler-colonial patterns. From a basic humanist grounding, settler-colonialism cannot be considered a morally preferable form of power in any constellation. Nevertheless, the fact is, colonial empires have all but disappeared, leaving behind fractured indigenous societies, exposed to an unfavorable global economic system. Though hardly worse off than the natives, colonial settlers who clung to their colonial identities, as has happened in Algeria, Kenya, and Indonesia, found themselves compelled to leave their homes and settle in their respective European metropole, places where many of them never set foot in. On the other hand, settler-colonial states and their societies have thrived and, moreover, exhibited various degrees of

³ Ibid., 36.

remorse for the sins they committed against indigenous people in the past, and even enacted policies, on a small scale, to amend the inequities of the present. It would be hard to argue against Israel taking such steps, despite the fact that they are, in fact, very much contained within a settler-colonial logic. Anti-Zionist activists in the West (frequently the settler-colonial West), together with the most progressive elements of Palestinian civil society, both advocating for a “one democratic state,” seem to agree that this is the right way forward.

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