



THE FALL OF ACRE IN THE 1948 PALESTINE WAR

MUSTAFA ABBASI

In studies of the 1948 war, little attention has been paid to the swift fall of one of Palestine's most storied cities, the walled and fortified seaport of Acre. This article, based on archival sources, focuses on the six months leading up to the city's conquest on 17 May 1948. Describing in detail the preparations of the city's defense, the various military and political forces involved, and the dissensions and rivalries among them, the article goes on to trace the tightening siege and mounting harassment of the city and the growing despair of its residents, the city's place in Haganah strategy, and the actual battle. Of particular interest is the role of the Druze Regiment stationed nearby. Most important, the author provides a clear understanding of why events unfolded as they did.

ACRE IS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS CITIES in the history of Palestine, its name associated with walls and fortifications that have withstood the attacks of powerful armies. In 1799, Napoleon and his army laid siege to the town but despite desperate attempts were forced to withdraw. In 1832, Ibrahim Pasha and the Egyptian army laid siege to Acre for a full six months before they could overcome the city's fierce resistance. Yet on 17 May 1948, three days after the establishment of the State of Israel, this city of walls and fortifications fell to the Haganah forces in a military operation that met with relatively little resistance.

ACRE BEFORE THE WAR

After suffering decline and stagnation under Egyptian rule (1832–40), Acre began a new chapter with its return to Ottoman rule, entering a process of slow recovery that accelerated during the reforms of the late Ottoman period and continued under the British Mandate. This was reflected in the town's demographic growth as recorded in the Mandate's three censuses: from 6,420 in the 1922 census to 8,165 in the 1931 census. In the 1946 census, the population stood at 13,560, of which 10,930 were Muslim, 2,490 were Christian, 90 were from other denominations, and 50 were Jews.¹ In other words, Acre was almost totally Arab.

MUSTAFA ABBASI, lecturer at Tel Hai Academic College, Upper Galilee, Israel, is the author of *Safad during the Mandate Period: A Social and Political Study* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 2005, in Arabic).

The city of Acre was the administrative, political, and economic center of a large district of the same name that contained 63 villages in 1922 and a total population of 55,970 in 1944.² The city was governed by families well known and established at least since late Ottoman times.³ Prominent among these were the Abu al-Huda, Sa'di, Shuqayri, and Khalifa families. Tawfiq Bey Abu al-Huda, a well-known city leader who had once been Acre's mayor, after 1948 became prime minister of Jordan.⁴ Shaykh As'ad al-Shuqayri, a senior religious figure, was a prominent local and national leader until his death in 1940.⁵ Of the Sa'di family, the most noteworthy was 'Abd al-Fatah al-Sa'di, a dignitary who served as Acre's mayor until his death in 1927.⁶ A prominent member of the Khalifa family was Husni Khalifa, Acre's last Arab mayor and, as such, the one who had to cope with the catastrophe that befell the city in 1948.⁷

When clashes began to break out in Palestine following the 29 November 1947 passage of the UN partition plan, which divided Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, the fact that Acre was included in the Arab state gave its residents confidence during the following months. The hopes of the Galilee's inhabitants also hung on the city, regarded as the region's stronghold. The confidence that Acre would somehow be able to withstand the military forces of the Yishuv, a feeling that owed much to the town's glorious past, was soon revealed to be ill-founded.

The conquest of Acre, which, after Jaffa, was the first major town *outside* the territory allotted to the Jewish state to fall to the Haganah forces, was an important event. Despite this, it has not yet been the subject of any in-depth or comprehensive research. Most sources—both Israeli⁸ and Palestinian⁹—deal with the subject at the macro level and in the wider context of the 1948 war. This study is based primarily on archival material from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the Haganah, and State of Israel archives, which contain extensive Hebrew and Arabic material that can shed new light on the subject.

ORGANIZING FOR ACRE'S DEFENSE AND FAILED ATTEMPTS AT DIALOGUE

The vote on the UN partition plan had been awaited by the Palestinian Arabs with dread, as it was well known that if the resolution passed, the country would be plunged into a full-blown crisis. On 27 November 1947, therefore, two days before the vote, the Arab Higher Committee (AHC), the highest political authority of the Arabs of Palestine, decreed the establishment of national committees in all the Arab cities and villages throughout the country. The AHC instructed the heads of public authorities to act immediately to establish these committees, even transmitting clear instructions regarding their composition, fields of operation, and functions.

In Acre, as in other Palestinian towns, the task of establishing national committees was complicated by local power struggles that often hinged on political alignments, notably in relation to Haj Amin al-Husayni, the Mufti of Jerusalem and head of the AHC, and persons or groups opposed to him. From the beginning of the Mandate, Acre's leadership had been identified with the

Palestinian opposition, and relations between the city's leaders (particularly Shaykh As'ad al-Shuqayri) and Haj Amin were habitually tense.¹⁰ The nearly month-long struggle over the composition of the Acre national committee between the oppositional camp led by the mayor, Husni Khalifa, and certain local and external forces aligned with Haj Amin¹¹ was a testament to these tense relations.

When the Acre national committee was finally established on 24 December 1947, it was the anti-Mufti opposition that prevailed. The committee, chaired by Mayor Khalifa, had twenty-six members including notables and prominent professionals of the city.¹² A military subcommittee (*al-tajna al-'askariyya*) was also formed, whose members were Ahmad 'Abdu, Musa Najami, Adib Mikha'il, and Mansur Hamid al-Masri, none of whom was from the traditional families.¹³ In addition to the Acre national committee representing the city, a thirty-three-member committee was established for the district comprising most of its *mukhtars* [heads of villages] and the heads of its well-known families.¹⁴

Immediately after its establishment, the Acre national committee asked city residents to contribute money for the war effort. At the same time, the

military subcommittee and other organizations, such as the Association for Social Reform in Acre (*jamiyat al-islah al-ijtima'i fi Akka*), began to collect funds for the construction and reinforcement of the city's fortifications. Of the some £P6,000 (Palestine pounds) collected by the military subcommittee, only £P750 were allocated for fortifications.¹⁵ Given the patent inadequacy of the sum, Acre national committee secretary Fa'iz al-Kurdi sent a request to the Arab Treasury (*bayt al-mal al-'arabi*), the financial arm of the AHC, for £P2,000 to complete the task. It took a month for the treasury's managing director to send his reply, in which he rejected the request on the grounds that

The Arab Higher Committee (AHC) denied Acre's request for funds to reinforce the city's fortifications, reflecting the AHC's tensions with the local leadership, identified with the Palestinian opposition, as well as its own apparent lack of urgency.

AHC approval was required.¹⁶ This already gives a foretaste of the lack of cooperation from the political leadership, as well as the apparent lack of a sense of urgency, despite the situation facing Palestine.

Notwithstanding financial difficulties and disputes, the national committee organized the Acre defense force (*hamiyat Akka*) tasked with defending the city. Because of the dearth of Arab documentation for this period, compounded by the dispersal of most of Acre's residents among the refugee camps of Lebanon and elsewhere, we have no reliable information about the size of the *hamiyat Akka* or precise data on the other forces active in the city. From Haganah sources, it appears that there were six different groups with varying levels of military training. The first consisted of local volunteers, mostly members of Acre youth clubs and scouts organizations.¹⁷ The second comprised about 50 policemen who joined the Acre defense force and took charge of maintaining internal order in the city.¹⁸ The third was composed

of about 300 volunteers from nearby villages. The fourth was made up of fighters enrolled in the Second Yarmuk Regiment of the Arab Liberation Army (ALA, *Jaysb al-inqadh*).¹⁹ The fifth was a company of 100–150 men under the command of Mahmud Safuri, a village leader who was a Mufti loyalist. The Safuri company did not station itself permanently within the city, but moved back and forth between Acre and the rural surroundings.²⁰ The sixth was a force of discharged soldiers from the Transjordanian border forces under the command of a Transjordanian officer.²¹ The sum total of the groups for which Haganah sources provide estimates (which excludes the volunteers from Acre itself, the ALA fighters, and the Transjordanians) did not exceed 450–500 men.²² These incomplete figures, even if accurate at some point, do not take into account the fact that the number of Arab volunteers fluctuated, sometimes daily; certainly, the figures do not reflect the numbers when the city fell.

The overall defense of Palestine was to be coordinated by the ALA, an all-volunteer force established by the Arab League and headquartered in Damascus. Acre and Western Galilee were included in the field of operations assigned to the ALA's Second Yarmuk Regiment, which entered Palestine on 9 January 1948 with some 330 soldiers and officers, mostly volunteers from the Syrian city of Hama; later, the regiment's forces reportedly increased to 500. The regiment comprised three companies under the orders of the Syrian officer Adib Shishakli.²³ One of these companies was sent to Acre under the command of Captain 'Adnan Murad, but on 23 January Lieutenant General Khalil Kallas was sent to the city and took over the command.²⁴ After the ALA forces entered the city, a kind of functional division was created between them and the national committee. While the national committee dealt with civilian matters, including looking after the city's residents, maintaining order, and handling contacts with the national leadership,²⁵ military matters were assigned to the commander of the ALA. According to Haganah reports, Kallas was a lean, handsome man with light-colored eyes and usually dressed in a civilian suit. He spoke Arabic, French, and English, acted forcefully but with flexibility, and the people of Acre respected and esteemed him.²⁶

Relations between the Mufti and the AHC on the one hand and the ALA (and the Arab League) on the other were generally tense throughout Palestine. In the case of Acre, this was less of an issue because, as noted above, Acre's national committee was also dominated by anti-Mufti elements. Even so, the town's leadership tended to be more conciliatory and more favorable to dialogue with the Jewish side than either the ALA or the AHC, which created problems. Moreover, there were tensions within the town affecting communication and coordination between the various Arab institutions and volunteers, and there is no evidence of coordination between the municipal committee and the district committee. Relations between the municipality and the young men of the various sports clubs were difficult.²⁷ Safuri's volunteers, identified with the Mufti, were at odds with the ALA fighters. More important, Acre paid a price for the lack of coordination and cooperation between the opposition-controlled

national committee and the Mufti's AHC, as already indicated by the latter's refusal of the funding request for Acre's fortifications.

When tensions in Palestine erupted following the passage of the UN partition plan, difficulties emerged from the geographical distribution of Arabs and Jews in the Acre region. The main road between Acre and Haifa passed through Jewish suburban settlements, which formed a barrier between the two cities, making thousands of Acre residents, especially businessmen, government officials, and employees in Haifa's oil refineries and military bases, dependent on open transport lines to reach their jobs. This led to pressure on the Acre national committee to reach some arrangement with the Jewish side. At the same time, local Jewish interests, particularly the settlements on the same road north of Acre (including Nahariya and nearby kibbutzim) were also eager for accommodation, because their access to Haifa and its Jewish suburbs could be blocked by Acre and the northern Arab villages (e.g., al-Sumayriyya, al-Zib, and al-Bassa).²⁸

Although Acre's mayor Khalifa strongly supported the initiative and tried his best to reach an agreement with the Jewish side (causing tensions and even discord with the AHC and the ALA²⁹), there is no evidence of an agreement concluded at a political level. David Koren writes that an agreement assuring movement of civilian supplies in both directions was reached but does not mention the names of the parties that made it.³⁰ It appears that the representative of Acre's bus company, Mahmud 'Abdu, had ongoing contacts with the management of the Jewish bus company of Haifa Bay and Western Galilee to assure regular transportation despite the growing disturbances. The Jewish contact for this arrangement was A. Friedman, described in Haganah sources as "one of the architects of this connection between the Jewish and Arab bus companies."³¹ This initiative, it seems, was entirely local, with neither the Haganah leadership nor the Mufti loyalists showing any interest in it. According to Gershon Gilad, the intelligence officer of the Carmeli Brigade deployed in the region, word of the contacts between the bus companies did not reach the staff command and, in his words: "In any case this was not an important factor and we were unaware of it."³²

HARASSMENT AND SIEGE

The acts of harassment and disruption of land communications in Acre were not unconnected to the general war strategy laid down by the operational division of Haganah staff headquarters and detailed in Plan Dalet, which was finalized on 10 March 1948. Section D.1 of the plan's general introduction stated as a Haganah priority "To defend against the invasion of regular and semi-regular forces by a permanent system of defense based on the protection of civilians on one hand and by blockading the main access routes of the enemy."³³ Within the framework of Plan Dalet's operating instructions for the various divisions, the commander of the Carmeli Brigade, which had been deployed to the Haifa area and Western Galilee, was explicitly required in

Section 6a (“Siege on Enemy Cities”) to impose a “siege on Acre in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the general chapter.”³⁴ These guidelines were as follows:

Siege on enemy cities will be carried out according to the following guidelines: 1. Cutting off the traffic routes leading to them by using booby traps, blowing up bridges, and a system of ambushes. 2. In case of need, by seizure of command posts along the routes to enemy cities and the entrenchment of our units at these command posts. 3. By cessation of vital services such as electricity, water, fuel, or by activating our own economic measures or by sabotage. 4. By actions from the sea against cities that received their provisions by sea, with the aim of destroying all vessels conducting these provisions and sabotaging port facilities.³⁵

As mentioned above, the disruption of land communications had already begun in March 1948, and as a result of continuing harassment Acre found itself in an ever-tightening siege, suffering from a serious lack of food and water as well as sanitary problems.

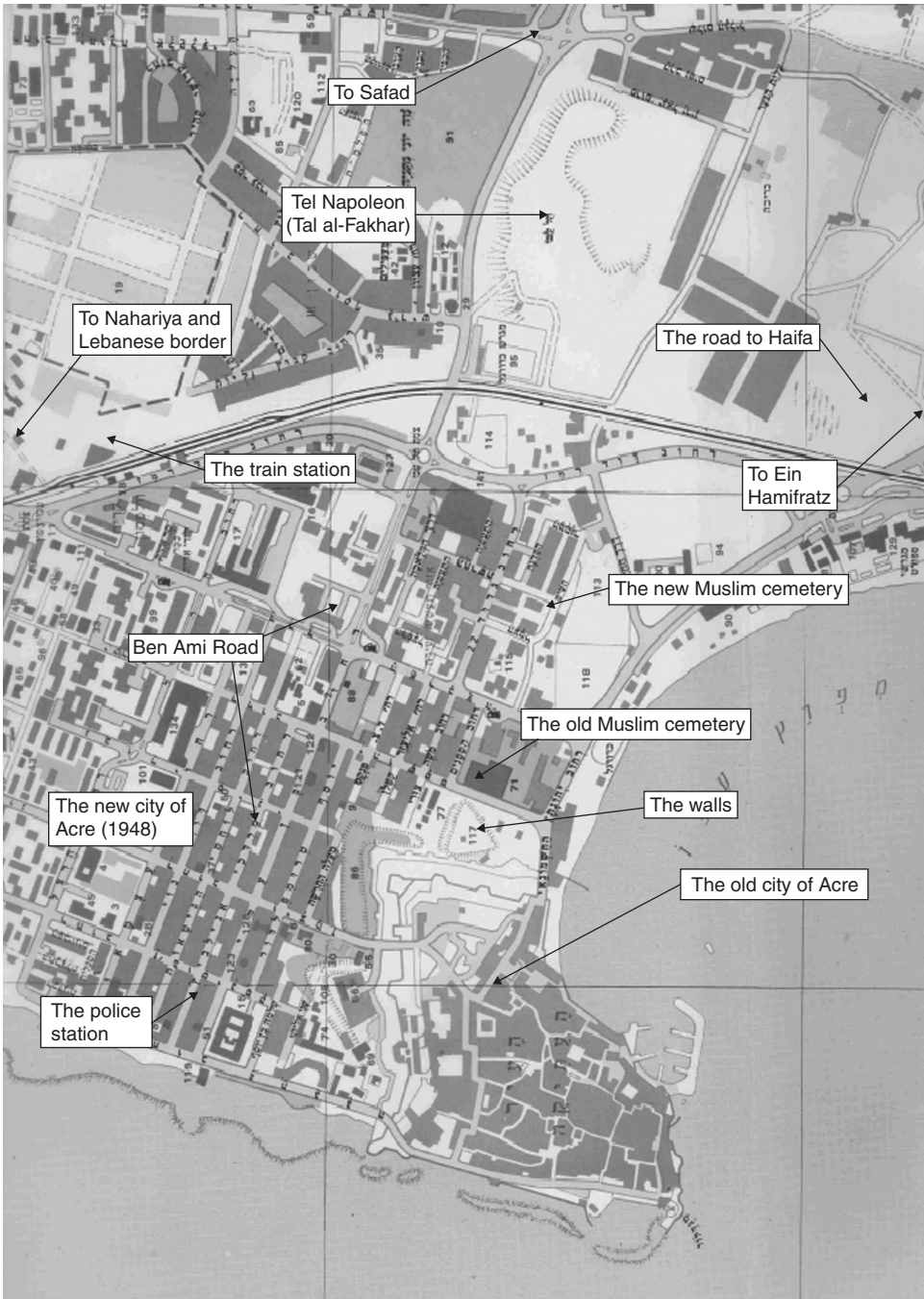
Both Jewish and Arab sources identify the Haganah’s ambush of an Arab convoy near Kiryat Motzkin on 17 March as a turning point and the beginning of what Koren calls the period of “severance and siege.” The attack killed fifteen Arabs, including the head of Haifa’s Arab defense force, Captain Muhammad Hamad al-Huneidi, and his aides.³⁶ Traffic in the area was completely halted, and the next day angry Arab mourners coming from the ambush victims’ funeral attacked a group of British soldiers and Jewish workers who had arrived to repair damage to the electricity network. Four soldiers and four workers were killed. Apparently the Arabs had not intended to harm British soldiers, and the Acre municipality expressed deep sorrow for the incident and apologized to the authorities.³⁷

After these two incidents, the Haganah escalated its attacks on land communications. Nathan Schur describes these tactics and their impact on Arab transport and food supplies to Acre as follows:

In order to block the traffic routes, Haganah units spread out over the [Acre–Nahariya] highway to the south and north of Acre. They opened fire from their cars on Arab transportation, laid ambushes along the route, and set Arab cars alight, and in this way Arab transportation was gradually halted. The Arabs tried to use sidetracks and bypasses but the Haganah saboteurs laid mines along them during the night. . . . food supplies to Acre were disrupted and this led to depression and the lowering of morale.³⁸

The second stage of “harassment” began immediately after the conquest of Haifa on 22 April, the first major town to fall under Plan Dalet after it was

THE CITY OF ACRE



launched in early April. Fearing that the Transjordanian Arab Legion and the ALA would attempt to recapture Haifa, and "to thwart the presumed intention of the Arabs of Acre and the surrounding area and the forces encamped there to begin an attack on Haifa, it was decided to harass Acre."³⁹ Additional blockades were set up. Koren notes that Yigal Yadin, the operations officer at Haganah staff headquarters, met with David Ben-Gurion immediately following the conquest of Haifa and reported the decision to increase pressure on Acre.⁴⁰ At this stage, however, "the intention was not to conquer Acre, but to show that the Jews had reached Acre,"⁴¹ within the context of safeguarding the victory in Haifa.

Meanwhile, with the fall of Haifa and Balad al-Shaykh and the nearby villages, thousands of refugees were pouring into Acre; according to Benny Morris, the city's population grew from 12,000 to 40,000 as a result of the influx.⁴² Amid the chaos, on 25 April a Palmach company under the command of Dan Lerner, backed by a company from the Haganah's Regiment 21,⁴³ set out for Kibbutz Ein Hamifratz about 2 kilometers southeast of Acre. From their new base in the kibbutz, that same evening they attacked Tel Napoleon (*Tal al-Fakhar*) just outside the city, a strategic hill overlooking the entire region and controlling the road and junction linking Safad, Acre, and Haifa. Though they seized the position without much difficulty, at dawn the next morning they were ordered to withdraw, apparently under pressure from the British still stationed in camps near Acre.⁴⁴ Indeed, the retreat was accompanied by exchanges of fire with the British, who shelled the forces on Tel Napoleon. After the retreat, the Arab forces renewed control over the hill.⁴⁵

During that same action, the Haganah attacking forces, along with members of Kibbutz Ein Hamifratz, shelled Acre with mortar fire, allowing the Palmach company to enter the industrial area and blow it up. Another force succeeded in entering the east side of the city near the walls. The impact on the city's residents was all the more devastating given the large numbers of refugees from Haifa and its environs. According to later testimony from the Jewish side, the attack of 25–26 April

made a strong impression because only a few days earlier people had come from Haifa and thought they were now secure until suddenly a day or two after they had arrived in Acre, shells began to fall on their heads. Psychologically speaking, this had a devastating effect.⁴⁶

An Arab resident of Acre wrote the following in a letter (dated 26 April 1948) to his son in Nablus:

Last night, at midnight, the Jews conducted an attack from the Tal al-Fakhar side. . . . The shells of the enemy cannon fell within the city, and this attack caused panic among the residents, most of whom have left or intend to leave. . . . The escape from Acre includes all social levels, the rich, the

middle class, and the poor. All are preparing to leave and are selling everything that can be sold. After the evacuation of Haifa and Balad al-Shaykh of all their Arab residents, the number of people in this city has risen to about 50,000 and a terrible tension prevails, with some of the refugees beginning to move northward. But after the attack of last night the desire to flee has increased among the residents of Acre themselves, and the taxi rates of hire have risen to unbelievable heights.⁴⁷

Though the Haganah forces had withdrawn from the immediate area, the city was virtually cut off from supplies and under almost total siege, its situation dire even before the British troops pulled out of the area. According to Moshe Carmel, the commander of the Carmeli Brigade, Acre "was in a state of neglect, fear, dirt and hunger, and disease and epidemic broke out because of the severe sanitary conditions. . . . the city was barely provided with a small supply [of] flour and olives."⁴⁸ The Haganah was also targeting Acre's connections by sea. As Gilad later reported, "every boat that left the harbor was blasted with fire, and I myself sat and saw how every boat was fired upon. . . . the scene resembled a duck hunt."⁴⁹

In these circumstances, Acre's inhabitants were in despair. The forces inside the city were in a defensive position and showed no initiative. The Dayr Yasin massacre on 9 April 1948 had been followed in rapid succession by the conquests of Tiberias, Haifa, West Jerusalem, Safad, and Jaffa (10 May), while the large number of wounded brought to Acre caused panic among the residents. Shaykh Salih Khnayfis, a notable from Shafa 'Amr, gave the following impressions of Acre shortly before its fall:

I went down to Acre several times, toured its streets, and learnt that in spite of all the forces concentrated in it, its inhabitants were in a state of depression. The fighters had no trust in each other, and there was a degree of alienation among them, between those who came from outside and the native residents of Acre and its surroundings. The strangers despised the people of Acre, and scorned them, while the Acre residents regarded themselves as humiliated by the people from outside who were inferior to them in education and social status.⁵⁰

These already harsh conditions were compounded by the outbreak of typhus and a number of malaria cases in the city. Haganah documents indicate that typhus had already begun to spread throughout the city from the beginning of May, contributing significantly to the residents' sense of doom. According to historian Ilan Pappé, the spread of typhus in the city was not accidental; Red Cross reports noted suspicions that the Haganah was behind the outbreak and that its men had contaminated the city's water supply, which

flowed through an open channel from the Kabri springs.⁵¹ Bayan al-Hout also mentions this claim.⁵² Without the hospital's records, however, it is impossible to determine whether the water supply was contaminated. According to the British general Angus John McNeill, the Haganah blew up the water channel to Acre on 27 April, impairing the water supply to the city and to the villages to the north,⁵³ which undoubtedly contributed to the health and sanitation crisis in the city. Whatever the cause of the outbreak, Haganah forces who participated in the attack on Acre were immunized beforehand.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, as Acre's situation deteriorated, its inhabitants were reduced to helplessly watching the course of events. Even those who might have offered assistance, such as the nearby town of Shafa 'Amr and the Druze Regiment stationed there, failed to respond to their calls of distress.

THE DRUZE REGIMENT AND THE FAILED ATTEMPT TO ASSIST ACRE

The Druze Regiment (*fawj jabal al-'arab*), comprising both regular and semiregular forces, was part of the ALA. According to Hani al-Hindi, this regiment enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy and was not directly subordinate to Shishakli but to the ALA high command.⁵⁵ The regiment had arrived in the Shafa 'Amr area at the end of March and already on 5 April its commander, Shakib Wahhab, began to direct affairs in Shafa 'Amr and some of the surrounding villages.⁵⁶

From the original list of names, it appears that the regiment was made up of 343 volunteers. It had participated in the battles of Ramat Yohanan/Husha and Kasair west of Shafa 'Amr on 16 April 1948 and according to Arab as well as Haganah sources had proved its fighting abilities compared to other ALA units.⁵⁷ Yet this regiment, stationed in Shafa 'Amr about 20 kilometers from Acre, refrained from offering assistance to the city that was in an increasing state of distress, especially after the conquest of Western Galilee in the "Ben Ami" operation on 13–14 May 1948.

It is not my intention to hold the Druze Regiment or its commander, much less the Druze leaders of the region, responsible for Acre's swift fall. Rather, the episode clarifies the degree of dissociation and disintegration that prevailed among the various Arab forces, whether among the ALA volunteers or the Palestinian fighters.⁵⁸ This account of the role played by the regimental commander Wahhab and the Druze leader of Shafa 'Amr, Shaykh Salih Khnayfis,⁵⁹ is based on the testimony of Haganah intelligence and Shaykh Salih's son, who stated that his father had connections with Mordechai Shachvich, Yehoshua Palmon, and other Haganah intelligence officers.⁶⁰ Giora Zaid of Haganah intelligence testifies that Shaykh Salih was their agent and that he had been Salih's handler.

According to Zaid, Moshe Carmel met with Haganah intelligence before the decision to conquer Acre and asked for information not only about the Arab forces there but also about the state of local society. Shaykh Salih was duly approached and dispatched to Acre to assess the situation. When he returned,

he provided a detailed description of the military layout of the Arab forces and the mood of the population in the city. As quoted by the Haganah, he reported: "The situation of the Arabs in Acre is near despair, the city is filled with refugees from Haifa and Balad al-Shaykh who have sown defeat and bitterness, and the fighting spirit of the armed forces has fallen to its lowest level."⁶¹ Zaid did not specify the date of this visit, but from the context it is obvious that it was after Haifa was conquered.

Zaid's reports also make clear that Wahhab knew about Salih's contacts with Haganah intelligence. He recounts that a delegation from the Acre national committee arrived in Shafa 'Amr after the fall of Haifa and asked Wahhab to send forces to assist in the city's defense. According to Zaid, Wahhab replied that he needed time to consult his men, but he also conferred with Salih. Salih's own account of what happened next, as it appears in the Haganah files, is as follows:

I told him [Wahhab] not to give an answer before I consulted with my Jewish friends. I contacted Mordechai Shachevich and received an order to advise Shakib [Wahhab] to send his own representatives to Acre in order to know the facts on the ground. Accordingly, Shakib sent Wakid Omar, a captain in the Druze regiment, to determine what the situation in the city was, and the weak points in its defense. I joined Omar and we traveled in his jeep to Acre.⁶²

When Omar and Salih arrived in Acre, they were received with joy by the national committee who regarded them as their "saviors and redeemers" and even sent an officer to accompany them on a tour of their forces' positions. Salih and Omar toured the positions together, including the police station and the positions and fortifications of the Old City, and at the end they climbed Napoleon Hill.⁶³ Back in Shafa 'Amr, Omar suggested that he take his company with him to Acre to strengthen the defenses and Wahhab agreed to send two companies.

Here Salih once again intervenes. That same night he went to a meeting with Haganah intelligence near the police training base west of Shafa 'Amr and told them all he knew about the city and Wahhab's intentions to send forces from the Druze Regiment. The Haganah contact, Shachevich, demanded that Salih act immediately to prevent this because the presence of the Druze, who were experienced fighters, in the "enemy positions" would severely hamper the conquest of the city. Shachevich and the other intelligence officers insisted that the Druze refrain from sending any reinforcements to the besieged city.⁶⁴

When Salih returned from the meeting, he found that the regiment's two companies were already preparing to depart. He tried to persuade Wahhab to change the orders, saying, "Here there will be greater slaughter because the Haganah will not be deterred and will attack Acre in full force."⁶⁵ Wahhab replied that he could not change the order but they agreed that Salih could catch up with the companies a few minutes after they set out and claim that

information had just been received that the Haganah intended to attack Shafa 'Amr that very night. On that basis, Wahhab would be able to recall the companies on the grounds that Shafa 'Amr's defense was of greater immediacy than the defense of Acre.⁶⁶

Acting on Haganah instructions, Salih then hurriedly spread the story among Shafa 'Amr's notables, telling the Christian mayor Jabur Jabur and the Muslim leaders that the "departure of the companies was a disaster for Shafa 'Amr because it would be attacked and there would be no one to defend us."⁶⁷ The notables promptly pursued the Druze companies, catching up with them about half way near the village of Tamrah, where they begged Wahhab to return his soldiers to their town. Wahhab duly returned with his men to Shafa 'Amr and called in his officers for a consultation. According to Salih, some of the officers had already come into contact with the Haganah and recalled the battle in Ramat Yohanan, so that when they were asked their opinion, they said that it would be best not to intervene in the battles between the Jews and Arabs. Salih added that after Wahhab heard the words of his officers he said: "I am happy that your opinion is the same as mine, and since Damascus headquarters has not sent ammunition and heavy arms, there is no reason to sacrifice Druze lives for the Muslims."⁶⁸ (Again, it is impossible to confirm whether Wahhab actually said these words; at all events, he and his fighters had already battled for Muslim areas without any such sentiments being expressed.)

It appears that after Wahhab saw how things were developing, he agreed to Salih's suggestion to arrange a meeting between him and Haganah intelligence. The meeting took place on 5 May 1948 at Shaykh Salih's home in Shafa 'Amr and was attended by Palmon, Shachevich, Amnon Yannai, and Zaid. According to Zaid,

We arrived in Shafa 'Amr on foot from Ramat Yohanan accompanied by the men of Sheikh Salih. We sat in the guest room . . . it was midnight and Shakib Wahhab entered the room dressed in the uniform of a Druze officer, well tailored on his body and wide shouldered. He was a short, stocky man of about 45. . . . After some brief words of greeting Shakib Wahhab made a speech in which he tried to cover up his emotions at this first meeting with Jews, and expressed sorrow that he was forced to fight the friends of the Druze in Palestine. Rumors [had been] spread in Syria that the Jews had maltreated the Druze and their women, said Shakib, and I as an army man organized a regiment and went out to fight for the good of my people. I came to Shafa 'Amr but under the influence of Sheikh Salih I did not act aggressively. I was forced to go out against you at the request of Qawukji [the ALA field commander] who was under strong pressure in Mishmar Ha'emek, and I prepared a small action [. . .] to relieve the pressure on his forces. Through that action I became involved in the larger battle without

finding a convenient excuse to cease contact, and so it happened that a fierce battle broke out in which I realized that the Jews were heroes and warriors. In this battle I also came to know the treacherous Muslims from the fact that some of my men were shot in the back by villagers who seemingly came to our assistance. The attitude of the headquarters in Damascus that deprived us of men and ammunition testifies to their intentions to abandon the Druze regiment.⁶⁹

According to Zaid, at the end of his speech Wahhab swore by his military honor that no Druze would ever again raise arms against the Jews. Palmon answered with high-flown blessings, and it was decided that in exchange for Wahhab not activating his forces, the Haganah would refrain from attacking Shafa 'Amr.⁷⁰

Meanwhile, Acre awaited the arrival of the reinforcements from Shafa 'Amr. When they did not come, the delegation from the Acre national committee returned to Shafa 'Amr and asked the national committee there to arrange a meeting with Wahhab. The members of the Acre committee stressed that if Acre held out, the entire Galilee could hold out and remain Arab. The Shafa 'Amr committee refused, claiming that their own safety was dear to them and that they were not prepared to send forces to Acre: "You have many men in Acre, a wall and a tel, while we are just a small village."⁷¹

Attempts by the Acre national committee to get an order from the ALA headquarters in Damascus to Wahhab were fruitless. Other delegations of Acre notables were sent to meet Emir Abdullah in Amman, Shishakli in Bint Jubayl, and the Lebanese government in Beirut to ask for assistance, but without success. The members of those delegations preferred not to return to Acre after having lost all hope of saving their city.⁷² The residents of Acre were thus left to face their destiny alone, even as Haganah forces were already preparing to launch an all-out attack on the city.

THE ATTACK ON THE CITY AND ITS CONQUEST

The decision to conquer Acre was hastened by the success of Operation Ben Ami of 13–14 May. During that operation, the integrated forces of the Carmeli Brigade, personally led by Moshe Carmel, conquered by land and sea the villages north of Acre—including al-Sumayriyya (which was totally destroyed), al-Zib, and al-Bassa.⁷³ They also seized control of the vital route between Acre and Lebanon, cutting the city off from its Arab hinterland. No less important, the operation created territorial contiguity between the Jewish settlements in the Nahariya bloc and northward to the Lebanese border.⁷⁴ Finally, it captured the strategic stronghold Napoleon Hill (for good, this time), from which the Haganah promptly began round-the-clock harassment of Acre, with the result, according to Carmel, that the city's residents "have asked for the intervention of the Red Cross because of their difficult military, economic, and health situation."

In a telegram to Yadin, the Haganah operations officer, Carmel wrote: "The Ben Ami operation ended after 29 hours, with its objectives achieved. . . . In fact, the Western Galilee is in our hands, all the Arabs have fled from the villages."⁷⁵

In accordance with Plan Dalet, the Haganah had sought to "purify" Western Galilee of Arabs and to create Jewish territorial contiguity from the Bay of Haifa in the south to the Lebanese border in the north. After Ben Ami, this goal had been largely accomplished: Western Galilee up to the Lebanese border, which had been included in the Arab state under the UN partition plan, was now entirely in Jewish hands—except for Acre. A 1960 colloquy on "the reconstruction of the conquest of Acre," in which some of the officers who had taken part in the battle and others in senior military positions at the time participated,⁷⁶ confirms the Haganah's key motivation in taking Western Galilee before Acre itself: the need first to secure (i.e., "take a stand on") the borders of the state, and in so doing block the way of a potential Arab invasion from the north at the end of the Mandate. This was the first priority; Acre could wait. According to Gilad:

There was an explicit order by the high command in view of May 15 to take a stand on the borders, and in order not to lose strength on the way, they did not take care of Acre. . . . it is true that the intention was that after this stand it would be necessary to deal with Acre. Perhaps there was no worked out plan and that it was done quicker than we thought . . . apparently after it became clear that there were not many forces and no great opposition the matter was resolved by itself.⁷⁷

For Acre, the result of Operation Ben Ami was that after almost two months of partial siege and nonstop harassment, it was now under total siege and being shelled from Tal al-Fakhar. It was now clear that the city's fall was only a matter of time. In Moshe Carmel's words, "With our control over Napoleon Hill in the Ben Ami operation and all Western Galilee to the north of Acre, the city of Acre is now surrounded on all sides . . . with no possibility of escape."⁷⁸

During Operation Ben Ami, Carmel and the other officers had noted that the Arab forces stationed in Acre had been unable even to delay the Haganah troop convoy passing right by their concentrations en route to Western Galilee or in any way hinder the capture of Tal al-Fakhar. Their observation of the palpable weakness of the Arab forces in the city was an additional factor contributing to the decision to move ahead with the conquest in a "lightning strike."⁷⁹

The powerlessness of the Arab forces against the attack is hardly surprising. What at one time may have reached (according to Haganah sources mentioned earlier) up to 500 or more men enrolled in Acre's combined defense forces had dwindled dramatically (though it is far from certain that they ever reached the Haganah figures). Moreover, the forces that remained continued to be riven by internal disputes, especially between supporters and opponents of the mufti, resulting in dissension and lack of cohesion even as the threat to the city grew larger.

A few days after the fall of Haifa on 23 April, Amin Izz al-Din, the commander of the Arab defense force there (*bamiyat Haifa*), and his deputy Yunis Naffa'

What at one time may have reached up to 500 or more men enrolled in Acre's combined defense forces had dwindled dramatically to as little as 50 men on the eve of the Haganah attack.

had arrived in Acre with 35 of their men.⁸⁰ Both Izz al-Din and Naffa' were loyalists of the Mufti. Haganah sources indicate that as soon as Izz al-Din entered Acre, he took over the command of the city and began publishing notices and issuing orders. He tried to reduce the panic that had spread among the residents and improve the morale of the defense forces. 'Arif al-'Arif mentions that on 11 May, Khalil Kallas, commander of the ALA forces in the city, withdrew after having transferred his command to Izz al-Din a few days earlier. Thus, Kallas and his men left Acre and relocated to other bases in Upper Galilee before the Haganah attack. Whereas Rashid Haj Ibrahim, head of the Haifa national committee, notes that Acre had 136 armed defenders on the eve of the final assault,⁸¹ 'Arif asserts that by that time only 50 fighters remained.⁸²

Whatever the actual number of Arab fighters left in the city, there is no doubt about their dispirited state as well as that of the general population. The commander of the Haganah forces holding Tel Napoleon repeatedly stressed that, in his estimation, he was "riding high over the city and the Arabs in Acre were not showing any offensive initiative."⁸³ Furthermore, the British left the arena and no longer served as a "hindrance factor" and the Transjordanian legionary forces "made no move."⁸⁴ The consensus within Haganah intelligence was that the city could not withstand an attack. Indeed, the city's conditions led one member of Haganah intelligence in Nahariya to comment: "If at this moment 50 armed Jews were to arrive in Acre they would conquer it without any difficulty."⁸⁵

On 16 May, just before the final assault, the staff headquarters of the Carmeli Brigade issued the operating orders to Regiment 22, which was already on site waiting:

We have the city of Acre under siege for the fourth day. Yesterday the men of Acre received a reinforcement of 50 fighters, and according to previous information they had 100 fighters, some of which have already fled. . . . The objective is to attack the city with the aim of killing the men and destroying property by burning and to subdue the city.

The city will be attacked by two companies from the north and northeast. One company will constitute the holding force with arms support. One company will carry out the diversion from the south of the city. The reserve company will be stationed at Ein Hamifratz, and when the order is given the forces will go out on attack.⁸⁶

Four companies belonging to the Carmeli Brigade's Regiment 22, which was under the command of Avraham Peled, participated in the attack. The

companies were under the command of Olik Kuperstock (Nahshon), Pina Ratzki, Baruch Vandov, and Valek.⁸⁷ Approximately 400–500 men took part in the city's conquest.

According to the company commanders, the forces did not have enough time to draw up a precise plan for every aspect of the operation. It seems that Peled spread out a map and divided Acre into two parts, one on each side of the main road through the city (now called the Ben Ami Road) that began in the east and continued westward to the seacoast. Peled ordered Kuperstock's company to advance from south of the road and Ratzki's company to move from the north. One of the other two companies would hold Tel Napoleon and the other would carry out a diversion from the south. A fifth company would remain in Ein Hamifratz, where the military headquarters during the operation were located, as a reserve. Before the companies set out from Ein Hamifratz, Peled assembled the commanders in the staff room of the headquarters, and said, "My friends, you must conquer the city. I am depending on you."⁸⁸

According to Carmel, on the evening of 16 May, just as the offensive against Acre was to be launched, he received a message from general staff headquarters asking him to reconsider the attack in view of his limited forces and suggesting that he delay while in the meantime tightening the siege. Carmel ignored the suggestion and asked the commanders of the forces to "move immediately" and to keep to the schedule.⁸⁹ The motto of the operation was "For Gush Etzion,"⁹⁰ the bloc of colonies in what is now the West Bank that had finally surrendered to the Transjordanian Arab Legion after a long siege just days before, on 14 May.

The advancing forces set out during the night of 16–17 May and were provided cover by Davidka mortars set up near the new Muslim cemetery and in the grove north of Tel Napoleon. According to one description:

We are entering the main road and advancing with dimmed lights towards Acre . . . sporadic shots are heard from the city . . . and only when we enter the Muslim cemetery opposite the train station do the enemy guards open fire. . . the Davidka is set up, we put in the shell and light it . . . and wait till suddenly a mighty roar is heard within the city, the first shell reached its target and blew up. The drivers of the armored cars hug each other, take out a bottle of cognac and drink to their health. At the same time a platoon advances towards a large coffeehouse at the crossroad and transfers explosives to it. The sappers are busy preparing to blow it up and another Davidka shell also explodes in the city, while the armored corps celebrate with another glass of brandy.⁹¹

Stadler, the vice commander of one of the companies, recalls that Peled had indicated with a gesture the direction of the attack to his men, who advanced rapidly.

After conquering the first houses beyond the [new] cemetery . . . I set up the headquarters of the company in one of the houses and two platoons, one under Yehoshua Brenner and the other under Sergeant Rami Zimmer, continued to advance into the city. On the way, the distance between the platoons increased. The platoon to the left took control over the train station and began to conquer one house after another. On my right the company of Ratzki was operating, and the enemy began to leave the houses one by one and to retreat towards the police station and the jailhouse. The third company was held up by the opposition of the city defenders and was delayed in the cemetery on the east side.⁹²

It appears that the regiment met little serious opposition. The small number of Arab fighters holed up in the houses sniped at the attacking forces and caused some losses, but they acted from isolated positions without contact and fire cover between them. The attacking forces advanced quickly and in the afternoon of 17 May they reached a position opposite the police station. This large building, which had been used by the British as their main base in the city, was one of many fortified police stations they had built throughout Palestine during the 1936–39 Arab Revolt, and as such was constructed like a fortress with loopholes for firing in all directions. According to Peled's testimony, the Arab defenders continued to fire from the building's towers, causing him to call in the reserve company to break their resistance and prepare for the final onslaught. In his account, the "Fiat" unit was quickly transferred to the frontlines and took up a stand sixty meters from the police station, firing at the loophole from which the Arabs had been firing a machine gun. A shell struck the loophole and silenced the machine gun.⁹³ After a brief battle, the company took control of the police building and raised the Israeli flag. According to Carmel, the battle for the police station determined the fate of the city. Its capture symbolized control over the new city and the conclusion of the first stage of the conquest. The second stage entailed breaking into the Old City, but night fell before this could be accomplished.⁹⁴

Carmel also relates that during the advance into the new section of the city a number of prisoners were captured by his forces and brought to him in the isolated shed at the edge of Ein Hamifratz that served as his headquarters. He says that the captured men were confused, terrified, and showed signs of servility in the hope that this would save their lives. He added that on that same day he hastily wrote a letter to Acre's Arab notables. The letter, which was immediately translated into Arabic, was handed to one of the captured men who was sent back to the Old City to deliver it. The contents of the letter are as follows:

To the Notables of the City of Acre,
Large forces of the Haganah have surrounded your city on all sides, and Haganah controls all the roads into the city. No one

can exit or enter the city. All of the new section of Acre is in our hands. Continued opposition will cost you a very large number of victims. It is in your hands to save the city and its residents. Raise a white flag, stop the firing, and surrender. . . . If you continue to oppose us and do not surrender within half an hour, we shall destroy you to the last man and completely.⁹⁵

At the same time, loudspeakers inside the city were used to call on the Arab residents to surrender:

Arabs who wish to live will have a life of honor under the rule of the Haganah. You have a few minutes to make the big decision, to fall for no reason or to live. . . . Come out to meet the Haganah forces with a white flag in your hands. . . . Arabs with their poor wives and children are now under a barrage of fire that is not aimed at them, but it is not possible to avoid hurting them.⁹⁶

Later in the evening of 17 May, a Latin priest and two Arab citizens emerged from the Old City holding a white flag. They asked for a cease-fire. The regiment commander Peled contacted Carmel, who dictated the conditions for surrender, which included four articles:

1. Delivery of all arms, ammunition, and explosives, and all other weapons of war that are found in the city into the hands of our forces.
2. Extradition of all the fighters to be found in the city into the hands of our forces to be held as captives.
3. Control of our forces over the city and its orders will be mandatory on all residents.
4. Non-combatant residents will be under the protection of our forces.⁹⁷

The priest and his companions asked for time to consult and went back into the Old City. Meanwhile preparations continued in regiment headquarters for the final assault and conquest of the Old City. A naval vessel was also brought into action and fired on the Old City with a heavy machine gun (Maklia'm). Some time after midnight on 18 May, the priest returned with representatives of the Arab population with the message that they were ready to sign the surrender agreement.⁹⁸

At dawn on 18 May, the Arabs opened the huge iron gate in the fortified walls and units of the Carmeli Brigade entered the Old City. Leaflets were distributed everywhere announcing Haganah orders that all weapons must be brought to the city center and turned over and that anyone found with a weapon in his house after 10 A.M. would be shot. On that same day they began to organize the city government. Carmel described the scene when he entered the city with his forces:

The streets were deserted and dirty, the faces of the Arabs in the city seemed fearful, exhausted, deprived of sleep . . .

barefoot boys and old men . . . carried arms on their shoulders and deposited them calmly, but with embarrassment and shame.⁹⁹

Finally, on 18 May at 1:40 P.M., the surrender agreement was signed.¹⁰⁰ The seven Arab signatories of the agreement were Albert Rouk; Ahmad Effendi 'Abdu, a member of the municipality; Mithkal Jarar and Ahmad Idilbi, members of the national committee; Ahmad Ajluni; Shaykh Musa Effendi al-Tabari; and 'Abd al-Rahman Othman. Acre was now officially in the hands of the four-day old Israeli government. The soldiers of the brigade received orders to return to their bases and to prepare for the next operations. Now that Acre was conquered, there was territorial contiguity under Jewish control from Haifa to Rosh Hanikra, including full control over the coastal road.¹⁰¹

With this, a new chapter began in the history of Acre. Of the city's some 13,400 Arab residents, only about 3,000 remained, including the refugees from the surrounding villages.¹⁰² After the conquest, the notables, dignitaries, and religious and political leaders who had not already left the city did so, leaving those who remained without a social elite and political leadership in the difficult times ahead. For almost two decades, Acre's beleaguered Arab community, like the rest of Israel's Arab minority, was subject to a harsh military rule, which was lifted only in 1966.

Yair Paz, who has researched the destruction of Arab cities and neighborhoods after the 1948 war, notes that at a certain stage toward the end of 1948 the possibility was raised of transferring all the Arabs of Acre who had remained in the city to another place in order to distance them from the front lines.¹⁰³ This proposal was not carried out, however. Paz also notes that there were some who wanted to destroy Acre, or at least open "breathing spaces" in the older parts, as the Zionists had done in Jaffa, Tiberias, Haifa, and Safad. But luckily, most of the houses in Acre were preserved and the city was saved from this bitter fate suffered by other Palestinian Arab cities, mainly because of the presence of many Crusader ruins from medieval times.

ENDNOTES

1. *Supplement to Survey of Palestine, Compiled for the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine*, vol. 3, *A Survey of Palestine* (Government Printer, Jerusalem, June 1947; reprinted with permission, Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), p. 12.

2. "Rural Settled Population by Religion and Sub-District," Tables 9 and 10, 1944, Public Records Office, Colonial Office 821/19, p. 260.

3. According to Haganah sources in Acre, there were strong and well-rooted clans that had resided there for centuries.

History of Haganah Archives [HHA], File No. 60/100, "Acre," p. 1. This file contains three groups of material that describe the battle: "Battle over Acre," "Acre," and "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre." In this article, all three have been used under the same file number but with different titles.

4. Ya'qub Ala'udat, *Min a'lam al-fikr wa al-adab fi filastin* (Jerusalem: Dar al-Israa, 1992), p. 15.

5. Ya'akov Shimoni, *Palestinian Arabs* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1947), p. 236. 'Adil Manna', *A'lam filastin fi*

awakbir al-'abd al-'utbmani (1800-1918) (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1997), pp. 225-28.

6. Mustafa Abbasi, "Families of Arab Notables in Acre at the End of Ottoman Rule and During the Mandate Period: Continuation or Change?" *Catbedra* 130 (2008), pp. 52-74; *al-Karmil*, 17 April 1929.

7. Abbasi, "Families of Arab Notables," p. 68.

8. See, for example, Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 107-9; David Koren, *Western Galilee in the War of Independence* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1988), pp. 116-25; Nathan Schur, *History of Acre* (Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishing House, 1990), pp. 322-28.

9. See, for example, Nafiz Nazzal, *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee 1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978); 'Arif al-'Arif, *Nakbat filastin wa al-firdaws al-mafqud*, vol. 2, pp. 416-25; Bayan al-Hout, *al-Qiyadat wa al-mu'assasat al-siyasiya fi filastin 1917-1948* (Acre: Dar al-Aswar, 1984), pp. 636-37.

10. Yosef Vashits, *The Arabs in the Land of Israel* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Hakibbutz Ha'artzi Hashomer Hatzair, 1947), p. 249; Abbasi, "Families of Arab Notables," pp. 59-60.

11. From Mashur Barakat to Shaykh Hasan Abu Sa'ud, National Committee of Acre, 14 January 1948, State of Israel Archives [SIA], File No. Peh-351/7.

12. From Musa Najmi to Haj Amin al-Husayni, National Committee of Acre, 9 January 1948, SIA, File No. Peh-351/7. In addition to Husni Khalifa, Acre's national committee comprised the lawyer Fa'iz Kurdi and Musa Najmi as secretaries, Mahmud al-Amin, Ahmad al-'Akki, Ahmad Shuqayri (Shaykh As'ad's son who in 1964 became the first head of the PLO), 'Abd al-Rahman Mukhtar, Muhammad Shibil, Khalil Fada, 'Abd al-Salam Khurshid, Nasuh al-Sa'di, Ahmad 'Abdu, Raja Sa'id Ahmad Idilbi, Hana Bulis, Ahmad Baradi', Ilias Tubi, Ahmad 'Afifi, Haj Mustafa Istiti, Ihsan al-Jarah, Hasan Habib, 'Abd al-Latif Abu Rakabi, Nadim Kablawi, Adib Mikha'il, Mansur Hamid, and 'Abd al-Mutalib Fidda. See also 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin*, which mentions some of the names on p. 417.

13. Schur, *History of Acre*, p. 322. Schur is not precise in listing some of the names of the committee members.

14. Notices of the establishment of the committees in the two sectors were sent to the AHC, both to Haj Amin and to Shaykh Hasan Effendi Abu Sa'ud, a member. From Kamil al-Qadi to Shaykh Hasan Abu Sa'ud, National Committee of Acre, 17 January 1948, SIA, File No. Peh-351/7.

15. Pamphlet for the erection of fortifications for the defense of the city of Acre, SIA, File No. Peh-3223/14. In connection with the construction of the fortifications, Schur also mentions the contributions of rich businessmen of Acre. Schur, *History of Acre*, p. 322.

16. From Fa'iz Kurdi to the Managing Director of the Arab Treasury House, National Committee of Acre, 26 December 1947 and From the Managing Director of the Arab Treasury House to Fa'iz Kurdi, 24 January 1948, both in SIA, File No. Peh-351/7.

17. HHA, File No. 60/100, "Acre," p. 2.

18. "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 3.

19. HHA, File No. 60/100, "Acre," p. 1; "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 34.

20. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 2.

21. "Battle over Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.

22. Whereas Arab sources provide estimates for the number of fighters on the eve of the battle (see below), they do not appear to provide any for the forces assembled as the city prepared for its defense.

23. Rescue Army, IDF and Defense Ministry Archives (IDFDMA), File No. 648/25/922, pp. 44-46; Hani al-Hindi, *Jaysb al-inqadb* (Beirut: Dar al-Quds, 1974), p. 54. (Shishakli became the strong man of the Syrian regime in February 1949, officially becoming president in 1953 until he was deposed the following year.)

24. Hindi, *Jaysb al-inqadb*, p. 54. Avraham Sela notes that Shishakli dismissed Murad and appointed Kallas, placing at his disposal two companies of volunteers from Hama. Avraham Sela, "The Rescue Army in the Galilee in the 1948 War" in Alon Kadish, ed., *The War of*

Independence 1948-1949: Reconsidered [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2004), p. 218. In the absence of ALA documents, however, it is difficult to determine the cause of the change in command.

25. Constitution for the Establishment of National Committees [in Hebrew], 8 December 1947, SIA, File No. Peh-320/11; al-Hout, *Qiyadat*, p. 598.

26. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.

27. 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin*, p. 417. 'Arif speaks especially about the dispute with the club of Usama bin Zaid.

28. According to Schur (*History of Acre*, p. 322), these settlements were sometimes forced to receive supplies by sea.

29. Sela, "The Rescue Army," p. 218.

30. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 61.

31. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.

32. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.

33. Plan Dalet, 16 March 1948, IDFDMA, File No. 93/49/6127, p. 2.

34. Carmeli, Plan Dalet, IDFDMA, File No. 93/49/6127, p. 2.

35. Plan Dalet, IDFDMA, File No. 93/49/6127, p. 4.

36. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 70; 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin*, pp. 418-19; Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, *Al-difa' 'an haifa wa-qadiyat filastin: Mudhakkarat Rasbid al-Haj Ibrahim 1891-1953* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2005), pp. 89-90.

37. Mustafa Abbasi, "The General and the Village: The 1948 War and its Aftermath Seen from the Sidelines," *Israel Affairs* 13, no. 1 (Jan. 2007), p. 31; Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 71.

38. Schur, *History of Acre*, p. 322.

39. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 3.

40. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 209.

41. "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 5.

42. Morris, *Birth*, p. 107.

43. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 109. Regiment 21, which was part of the Carmeli Brigade regiments, was deployed during the period under discussion in the city of Haifa and the surrounding area (Mount Carmel, Zevulun Valley) toward Acre and Western Galilee. For further details about the brigade's structure, see Zadok Eshel, *The Carmeli Brigade in the War of Independence* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1973), p. 14.

44. Among these camps were Camp of St. Jean, Sidney Smith Camp, and Farm Labour Camp.

45. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 151; "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 4.

46. "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 5.

47. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 6. The letter was addressed to Munir Effendi Nur, supervisor of the Police Station in Nablus.

48. Moshe Carmel, *Battles of the North* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1949), p. 151.

49. "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 5.

50. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.

51. Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: One World, 2006), p. 100.

52. Hout, *al-Qiyadat*, p. 637.

53. General McNeill was, until 1926, the commander of the gendarmerie forces in Palestine and later managed a horse-breeding farm near Nahariya. He remained on his estate near Kfar Mazra'a after the British withdrew from Palestine until August 1949 because of the illness of his wife Lilian. He left a diary rich in description of the developments in the region of Acre and Nahariya. For further details, see Abbasi, "The General," pp. 24-54.

54. A day after Acre's conquest, a military doctor named Dagoni who accompanied the Zionist forces visited, among other places, a hospital run by the Lebanese Red Cross in the new area of Acre where he saw many people sick with typhus. He also saw such patients in one of the monasteries; "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, pp. 20-21.

55. Hindi, *Jaysh al-inqadb*, p. 55.

56. For further details about the Druze regiment, see Rescue Army, IDFDMA, File No. 648/25/922, pp. 67-94.

57. Shimon Avivi, *Copper Plate: Israeli Policy toward the Druze, 1948-1967* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2007), pp. 58-59; Laila Parsons, *The Druze between Palestine and Israel, 1947-1949* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 55-75; Laila Parsons, "The Druze and the Birth of Israel" in Eugene L. Rogan and Avi Shlaim, eds., *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 60-78.

58. Schur, *History of Acre*, p. 323.
Schur also hints at the communal tensions between the Muslim residents of Acre and the Druze commander.
59. Shaykh Salih Khnayfis (1913–2002) was regarded as one of the most prominent leaders of the Druze community after the establishment of the State of Israel. He served as a member of the Knesset from 1951 to 1959.
60. Shukri 'Arraf, *Lamasat wafaa* (Mi'ilya: The Center of Rural Research, 2007), p. 326.
61. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, pp. 5–7.
62. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 8.
63. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 8.
64. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, pp. 8–9.
65. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 9.
66. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 9.
67. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 9.
68. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 10.
69. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, pp. 10–11.
70. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 11.
71. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 12.
72. 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin*, pp. 422–23.
73. For the capture of al-Sumayriyya, al-Zib, and al-Bassa, see Nazzal, *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee 1948*, pp. 52–59.
74. Diary of "Ehud" Activities, 13 May 1948, IDFMA, File No. 3/49/5947; Eshel, *Carmeli Brigade*, pp. 157–73.
75. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 122.
Nazzal, *The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee 1948*, pp. 52–58.
76. Among those who participated in the review colloquy were Lt. General Galili; Avraham Peled, the regiment commander; Gershon Gilad, the intelligence officer of the Carmeli Brigade; A. Avnun, a commander in Regiment 21; Dr. Dagoni, doctor; and B. A. Stadler, deputy commander of Company B in Regiment 22.
77. "Review Colloquy on the Conquest of Acre," 9 June 1960, HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 11.
78. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 152.
79. "Battle over Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.
80. Sela, "Rescue Army," p. 217.
81. Al-Haj Ibrahim, *Al-difa' 'an baifa*, p. 128.
82. 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin* pp. 421–23; Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 125.
83. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 9.
84. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 9.
85. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.
86. "Battle over Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 17; Carmel, *Battles of the North*, pp. 153–54.
87. On the structure of the companies and their command, see "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, pp. 16–17.
88. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 1.
89. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 153.
90. According to another source, the slogan was "We shall avenge the sacred blood of Gush Etzion." See "Regiment 22 of the Carmeli Brigade in the War of Independence," Conference of the Veterans of the Haifa Regiment, October 1988, p. 29.
91. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 14.
92. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 18.
93. "Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 20.
94. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 154.
95. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 159.
96. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, pp. 156–57.
97. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 161.
98. According to 'Arif, the representatives were Ahmad Idilbi, Ahmad 'Abdu, Ahmad 'Ajluni, Mithkal Jarah, Shaykh Musa al-Tabari, and Dr. Na'im Mkatrin. 'Arif, *Nakbat filastin*, p. 424.
99. Carmel, *Battles of the North*, p. 162.
100. Koren, *Western Galilee*, p. 125.
101. "Battle over Acre," HHA, File No. 60/100, p. 3.
102. According to the data of the military government, the number of Arab residents in Acre in 1951 stood at 4,000, including approximately 1,000 refugees from the surrounding villages. Military Government of Galilee, September 1951, IDFMA, File No. 674/66/263.
103. Yair Paz, "Preservation of the Architectural Heritage in Abandoned Neighborhoods after the War of Independence," *Cathedra* 88 (1998), p. 123.