

# “We Built This Country”

## Palestinian Citizens in Israel’s Construction Industry, 1948–73

Nimrod Ben Zeev

### Abstract

This article explores the experiences of Palestinian citizens in Israel’s construction industry in the twenty-five years following the Palestinian Nakba and the establishment of Israel. The article relies primarily on the narratives of thirteen Palestinian individuals who were construction workers, foremen, contractors, organizers, and activists, as well as their family members, interviewed by the author in October 2018. The article utilizes these narratives alongside archival and secondary sources to examine four primary issues: 1) the conditions and considerations that drove Palestinian citizens to effectively become migrant workers in the Israeli job market, specifically in the construction industry; 2) workers’ attempts and experiences of creating spaces of safety and intimacy away from home with their peers and, at times, with their employers; 3) the pressures workers felt to conceal themselves in Jewish spaces because of their racialized hyper-visibility, alongside their experiences of the social invisibility which made their exploitation possible; and 4) how workers and their communities made use of the knowledge, skills, and resources they gained in an industry into which many of them were driven through necessity, to rebuild and reimagine their own communities in the wake of catastrophe and to resist the state’s stranglehold on their development.

### Keywords

Labor; oral history; construction; political economy; race; gender and sexuality; home; citizenship; Nakba; military administration.

Who erected the buildings, paved the roads, dug and planted the earth of Israel, other than the Arabs who remained there?

– Emile Habiby, *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist* (1974)

In the decades after Israel's establishment and the Palestinian Nakba, Palestinian citizens in Israel – a newly constituted minority in their own homeland, reeling from catastrophe and living its aftermath – played a crucial role in the physical construction of the state responsible for their ongoing dispossession. Israel's initial decades were marked by massive state-directed construction, intended to house unprecedented numbers of Jewish immigrants. Many of these housing projects were built on Palestinian-owned land and the ruins of Palestinian cities, towns, and villages. Construction was a state mission of the highest order.

And yet, during the same period, the archetypal European Jewish Zionist “pioneers” (*halutzim*), the ideal subjects of the then hegemonic Labor Zionist movement, continued their gradual withdrawal from physical labor in construction, a process begun in the final years of the British Mandate. The pre-state era ideals of “Hebrew labor” (*avoda ivrit*) and “building the land” (*binyan ha-aretz*), which had made construction a contested and ideologically celebrated line of work, remained in place.<sup>1</sup> However, the task of carrying out these ideals – frequently characterized by hard physical labor, uncertain employment, and dangerous work – fell upon the state's most marginalized populations, and rapidly became racialized. First, construction drew in Mizrahi Jews (Jews from the Middle East and North Africa), who by 1957 made up roughly 40 percent of the industry's workforce. Then, it increasingly came to depend on Palestinian citizens, who were roughly twice as likely as Jewish citizens to be employed in construction by 1962, and roughly three times as likely by 1971.<sup>2</sup>

This article explores the experiences of Palestinian citizens in Israel's construction industry in the twenty-five years after 1948. The processes through which Palestinian citizens became disproportionately represented in such racialized and frequently exploitative labor, were part and parcel of their broader marginalization and exclusion: the imposition of a military administration between 1948 and 1966, which restricted their movement and employment; massive land expropriation and unequal resource allocation which curtailed possibilities of economic sustenance and development; and purposeful limitations imposed by the state on the construction and development of Palestinian localities. They both foreshadowed the exploitation of Palestinian subjects from the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the Israeli economy after the 1967 war, and resembled patterns of migrant labor exploitation in other settler-colonial contexts.<sup>3</sup> By offering Palestinian citizens “a path to survival,”<sup>4</sup> Israel's construction industry enrolled their labor in the service of the very structures that exploited and excluded them in the first place.

These structural elements form the backdrop of the present article. The article's foreground, however, is dedicated primarily to exploring what John Chalcraft, in his exploration of Syrian labor migration to Lebanon, described as “the optimism of the

story” of hegemony’s “invisible cage”: how powerful structures, because they require decision-making agency on the part of workers, always leave

a possibility – especially in the context of ceaseless structural and social change, fracture, and contradiction – that such agency [be] put to purposes other than those that [work] to reproduce the dominant form of power.<sup>5</sup>

I argue that although Palestinian citizens who worked in Israel’s construction industry often felt as though they had little alternative, workers and their communities used their place in the industry to circumvent and at times even challenge the Israeli state’s suffocating hold. Through their growing role in building the Jewish state, Palestinian citizens gained knowledge and skills in techniques, materials, and forms of spatial organization which they adapted and introduced into the reconstruction of their homes and towns. These capacities, marshalled in the service of informal arrangements and solutions, were even more instrumental given the state’s purposeful stifling of the development of Palestinian localities. Palestinians also refused the racialization and dehumanization that marked them as out-of-place and undeserving, and relegated them, at best, to Israeli society’s sidelines, hidden in plain sight. Instead, they asserted their humanity and belonging through various means, including bringing their oppression into the public eye.

To explore these experiences, this article relies on oral history interviews conducted with nineteen Palestinian men and women who are former workers, foremen, contractors, labor organizers, and their family members, primarily from the Triangle area and the Galilee.<sup>6</sup> These interviews are used alongside archival sources, newspapers, and film. Following a brief exposition about the narrators, the article examines the factors that pushed individuals into the construction industry. Then it looks at circumstances surrounding work-life – commuting, dwelling, and the relationship to family, community, and home. My analysis centers workers’ physical and emotional experiences of labor, and the multiplicity of homes – in the affective, discursive, and material dimensions of the word – that they made. These included the houses they built for others, alongside the forms of shelter and homemaking they engaged in for themselves and their communities: from establishing temporary dwellings in harsh conditions and attempting to be at home wherever work took them, to applying the skills, expertise, and income of their labor toward remaking their own homes and those of their communities.

I view Palestinian homemaking in the nascent Israeli state as a deeply political act, akin to what bell hooks has called “construction of [the] homeplace.” “In the face of the brutal harsh reality of racist oppression,” such “homeplaces,” hooks argues, “however fragile and tenuous . . . had a radical political dimension.”<sup>7</sup> hooks urges us to reevaluate African-American women’s fulfilment of the gendered roles “assigned by sexism” within the home, in light of how they expanded these roles to make the home a shelter, a place of rest, and at times the starting point for revolution. Her notion of constructing the homeplace – focused on material, affective, and intellectual care

and nurturing – defines some of the Palestinian (and at times, Palestinian *and* Jewish) homemaking practices discussed below, particularly those practiced by women. However, my emphasis is primarily on how physical acts of construction, of making homes in the material sense, intertwined with the struggle of Palestinian citizens in Israel to be *at home* in their homeland.

## **Narrators and Methodology**

The individuals I interviewed, all of whom were involved in the Israeli construction industry between 1948 and 1973, are, nonetheless, a diverse group, capturing some of the variety of Palestinian experiences shaped by the industry at the time. All but one of the narrators resided in rural locales during this period. Palestinian urban life was destroyed almost entirely during the Nakba, and the majority of Israel's remaining Palestinian population resided in villages.<sup>8</sup> Shortly after Israeli independence, the nascent state imposed a military administration upon the roughly 150,000 Palestinian citizens who were able to remain within its boundaries or return to their homes in the years following 1948 and who, for the most part, eventually became Israeli citizens. The military administration, which remained in place until 1966, introduced a permit regime and severe restrictions on Palestinian citizens' movement and employment. Palestinians in Israel thus found themselves cut off from potential markets for their agricultural produce and their labor, and struggling for economic survival.<sup>9</sup> By the mid-1950s, work in agriculture and construction, primarily in Jewish locales, were by far the most widespread forms of wage-labor among Palestinian citizens, employing mainly men.<sup>10</sup> Some narrators had lifelong careers in the construction industry, others only spent relatively short periods of time in it. Some aligned themselves with the Labor Zionist ruling elite of the period, others were and remain ardent communists. Still others sought to make their own political paths or described relatively little involvement in party politics.

Narrators also differed in their access to education. As a general rule, these differences seem to be generational. Most narrators were only able to complete primary education. Narrators who obtained a high school education did so despite prohibitive costs. High school education itself did not become compulsory or nominally "free" in Israel until 1978. Moreover, institutions of secondary education were generally geographically distant from many Palestinian locales in Israel. As a result, even individuals who obtained a high school education often worked as children to pay for high school expenses.<sup>11</sup>

My conversations with narrators produced oral histories that are, like any other oral histories, dialogic and collaborative endeavors, shaped by a range of factors: the malleability of narrators' memories and subjectivities, their self-reflexivity, the languages in which the interviews took place, my positionality vis-à-vis interviewees, and the settings and participants. These factors no doubt influenced not only the content of their narratives but also the discourses and cultural contexts upon which they drew

and within which they embedded their narratives. The processes of remembering that oral history interviews require are active processes of reconstruction. These take place within communal and even national memory and ways of remembering, impacted by events that occurred long after those being recalled, and the present in which the remembering occurs.<sup>12</sup>

The semi-structured interviews that inform this article were conducted mostly in Hebrew, in which all narrators are fluent, and which was the primary language in which most of them worked, with parts of the conversations in Arabic. However, some narrators were more comfortable conducting interviews in Arabic. Not coincidentally, the latter were also those whose working lives were conducted primarily in Arabic.

At the beginning of each interview, I discussed my research agenda with the narrators, explaining that our conversations would inform a project that examines the history of construction work and the construction industry and their roles in shaping social hierarchies in twentieth-century Palestine/Israel. Occasionally, this also entailed explaining what led me as an Israeli Jew to be interested in this history and project. Understandably, some individuals were initially more suspicious of my intentions than others. They were cautious not to sound too critical of their experiences with the state or with Jewish employers, coworkers, and management, or hesitant to report on seeking work without permits or on workplace accidents. Others sought to meet what they presumed were my expectations.<sup>13</sup> That is, as Katherine Borland has noted, narrators “adapted their narratives to account for what they think their audiences already know, what they might care about, what they might be sensitive to.”<sup>14</sup>

Most interviews were conducted as one-on-one affairs, usually in a single sitting. In instances in which other people were present during an interview, I have also incorporated their narratives. I did not originally set out to recreate or simulate a setting in which collective storytelling of life histories (what Rosemary Sayigh calls *qussas*) usually takes place.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, the dynamics of collective settings – interjections and questions of other participants, even their very presence – doubtlessly impacted the narratives people shared. Such instances of “co-narration” introduced questions I would not have thought to ask and personal and familial histories that I could not have been aware of, at times encouraging participants to share experiences they seemed otherwise hesitant to divulge. At the same time, these multi-participant settings may have also caused people to avoid certain subjects or to frame things differently than they would have one-on-one.<sup>16</sup>

Occasionally, collective settings elicited the active narration of individuals aside from the intended “interviewee.” I had originally set out to interview former workers, all of them men. Collective interview settings granted me an invaluable opportunity to hear from workers’ families, particularly their wives. This unplanned introduction of women’s narratives, although limited in number, added new dimensions to my inquiry, reshaping my perspective on how both construction work and homemaking were gendered.

## Out of Necessity

Scarcity and want were defining features of life for many of the roughly 150,000 Palestinians who remained within the new Israeli state after 1948, or successfully returned to it in the subsequent months and years. The forced migration of roughly 750,000 people, including most of the Palestinian urban elites and political leadership, left the Palestinian community that remained inside the nascent state “a poorer, more rural, less educated, and largely leaderless shadow of its former self.”<sup>17</sup> As Adel Manna has recently reminded us, having survived the Nakba and being able to remain more or less “in place,” did not mean that survival was not still the primary concern of the new Palestinian minority within Israel.<sup>18</sup>

During Israel’s first decades – the period of military administration between 1948 and 1966 and the years immediately following – the survival of Palestinians within it required struggle on many fronts: from the right to remain, to political and civil rights and access to resources, to cultural and political connections with the Arab world.<sup>19</sup> Survival also retained its barest meaning: staying alive, not going hungry, keeping a roof over your family’s head. Governmental land expropriation, discriminatory resource allocation, and restrictions on movement and thus access to markets, meant that families and communities could no longer rely on agriculture for sustenance. Employment became a necessity, but it was hard to come by locally, and work elsewhere – namely, in Jewish localities – required navigating the military administration’s permit regime.

As mentioned above, the geographic and financial inaccessibility of high school education compounded poverty in pushing children into the workforce. “Now I, as a child, there was no high school. We finished primary school. There was a military administration, we can’t leave [the village], and there was hunger. . . . So, we went to work,” Ahmad Masarwa (b. 1939), of ‘Ar‘ara in the Triangle, recalls.<sup>20</sup> Munir Qa‘war (b. 1940), of nearby Kafr Qara‘, remembers that, “Israel was just established, there were problems everywhere, and people were hungry. People don’t have [food] to eat.” Munir’s father passed away in 1951; his savings sustained the family until Munir, the eldest of four siblings, finished the eighth grade, “and after that, there is no more money. I have to go to work.”<sup>21</sup>

Work in agriculture was the most readily available source of income for school-aged Palestinians.<sup>22</sup> Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa first found work, at the age of thirteen, in Zikhron Ya‘akov, a Jewish settlement roughly twenty kilometers west of ‘Ar‘ara. Munir Qa‘war first found work, at a similar age, in agriculture in Giv‘at ‘Ada, several kilometers from Kafr Qara‘. When his family’s finances were particularly tight, Sadeq Dallasheh (b. 1954) would work alongside his mother in the fields below their village of Bu‘ayna. This, Sadeq recalls, was “the first daily wage I made in my life, I was eight or nine years old.”<sup>23</sup> Of the individuals whose narratives form the basis of this article, only Sadeq and Muhammad Abu Ahmad (b. 1943) of Nazareth graduated from high school. Both recall working in construction during high school, and Sadeq stated that he would have never been able to finance his studies, for which he had to leave

Bu'ayna and rent an apartment in 'Ilabun, without working in construction during summerbreaks.<sup>24</sup>

While not as widespread as agricultural labor, the construction sector, which faced a shortage of skilled professionals and the housing needs of massive waves of immigration, was among the first to absorb Palestinian workers. As early as October 1949, a British diplomatic report noted that, despite the dominant preference for Jewish employees, "certain Arab elements, such as skilled carpenters and others, whose services are necessary to the authorities, readily find employment in the construction of the new Jewish settlements."<sup>25</sup>

The Solel Boneh contracting company, a contracting firm first established in the early 1920s as the contracting arm of the Histadrut (the Zionist General Federation of Trade Unions) and one of the most powerful corporations in the state, was an early recruiter in the country's north. Mikhail Haddad (b. 1926) of Tarshiha, who was working in construction in Damascus when the war erupted, found work with Solel Boneh in Tarshiha just after its occupation in 1948. He was employed repairing homes whose Palestinian owners had fled or been driven out, so that they could house new Jewish immigrants.<sup>26</sup> Shawqi Khoury (b. 1931) of Fassuta had no prior experience in construction when he began working for Solel Boneh, building the new cooperative agricultural settlement (moshav) Hosen, to Tarshiha's southeast, in 1949. He remembers, however, that those with prior experience and skill were the first to be recruited. His recollections align both with Mikhail Haddad's narrative and the 1949 British diplomatic report cited above, as he notes that "in Tarshiha especially there were excellent craftsmen. . . . [T]here were carpenters, ironworkers. . . . They would be accepted straight away as expert craftsmen."<sup>27</sup>

Ibrahim Shamshum (b. 1933) of 'Araba followed in his father's footsteps when he first set out to Haifa in 1950 or 1951 hoping to find work in a concrete block factory at the age of seventeen or eighteen. Ibrahim's family had fled their hometown of Nazareth to 'Araba after the fall of Haifa in April 1948. He recalls that for roughly two years "there was no work" in 'Araba, prompting him to leave for Haifa. When I first asked Ibrahim, later a contractor and a leading figure in the 'Araba branch of the Communist Party, how he had started working in construction, he replied, "My father was a master builder" (*mu'allim 'amar*).<sup>28</sup> Whenever he explained how he learned a certain skill, Ibrahim referred back to this heritage.<sup>29</sup>

Most narrators, however, had neither family legacies nor prior experience in construction work. By the time they came to work in construction, they usually had already worked in agriculture or other physical labor.<sup>30</sup> What drew most of them to construction work was that, when there was demand for workers, wages were considerably higher than those in any other available occupation. All narrators agreed that wages in construction were higher than those offered in agriculture.<sup>31</sup> When I asked Ibrahim Zahalqa (b. 1944) of Kafr Qara' if he recalls whether many others in the village also worked in construction when he began working in 1964, he said: "Yes, many. What? There was no work, only this. . . Working at that time, say, in '64 or '65, if we had to work in agriculture it would be four [Israeli] pounds a day . . . And

in construction it was double, double and then some, more than ten pounds [a day].”<sup>32</sup>

Muhammad Abu Ahmad, who was secretary of the Construction Workers Association in the Nazareth area from 1963 to 1980, linked the availability of construction jobs to early safety problems in the industry and the widespread denigration of “Arab labor” (*avoda ‘aravit*) in Jewish Israeli culture: “People simply weren’t experts. Like I said, this idea of ‘Arab labor’ didn’t come from nothing. A significant number of these Arab workers who came to construction came because they had no other choice. You work in construction.”<sup>33</sup> Other narrators echoed Ibrahim and Muhammad’s insistence that work in construction was for many, including some who built long careers in the industry, a product of limited choices.<sup>34</sup>

Narrators’ sense of having no other choice should not be confused with self-denigration. Hurt, discrimination, and frustration surfaced even in the narratives of individuals who at first sought to portray idyllic professional relations between Palestinians and Jews. Yet, narrators never expressed shame in doing work “no one else would.” On the contrary, as Muhammad himself put it, “There’s a common saying: We the Arabs built this country. What are you [the Jews] saying? Who built this country? Who built Haifa? The kibbutzim? The hotels? We the Arabs built this country. . . . What? Doesn’t the country belong to us? Don’t we belong to the country?”<sup>35</sup>

I mentioned this formulation again when asking Muhammad about the many difficulties workers experienced under the military administration. His reply made explicit the claim’s link to Zionist discourses of citizenship as a basis of rights, even as these had moved away from “building the land” to military service: “It was prominent. We would even say it just like that, openly. We argued, ‘What, what do you have more than me? What, you went to the army? I built the country!’”<sup>36</sup> Sadeq Dallaseh drew a related parallel, describing construction work among Palestinian citizens in Israel as akin to “national service” (*sherut leumi*). “National service” is a state-supervised system of voluntary work in pre-approved civil society organizations. It is offered to some citizens as an alternative to Israel’s mandatory military conscription. Such “service” is viewed both as a means for citizens who cannot serve in the military to contribute to the (national) community, and to enjoy at least some of the rights and social and material rewards military service grants.<sup>37</sup> The vast majority of Palestinian political parties and civil society organizations in Israel have consistently opposed the participation of Palestinian youth in national service programs, which they view as vehicles for cooptation and neutralization of their civil, economic, and national demands.

Unlike Muhammad Abu Ahmad, who cast construction work as a form of republican participation by comparing it to military service, Sadeq’s comparison emphasized both the ubiquity of construction work, and its material benefits, among Palestinian men in Israel:

One thing remains [constant], it [construction] is a national service. [It is a form of national service] for an Arab. . . . How do I get to this [conclusion]? It’s [like] a national service. I want to go and study at the

university? I need some money to pay tuition. Now, where do I work? The simplest thing, whenever I want, I can find work in construction. It's always like that.<sup>38</sup>

Sadeq's mention of university tuition is hardly coincidental. Tuition support is a key material benefit given those who serve in the military or in the national service system. Construction, in Sadeq's telling, is comparable to national service for Palestinians not because of its contribution to a nation that is not their own and developed at their expense; rather, it serves a similar function as national service does for some Jewish Israelis in that it provides income that can be used to fund higher education. Greater access to higher education through tuition support has been a central point for those advocating that Palestinians join national service programs en masse. Construction work, Sadeq effectively argues, already functions similarly for some.<sup>39</sup>

The link between construction work and education as a means of social mobility appears to have been broad. Sadeq himself gained most of his experience in construction between 1970 and 1973, when he worked in the southern port of Eilat and in the Dead Sea to save up for university and later during university breaks. Before this, he had paid his way through high school by working in construction during the summers. Sadeq repeatedly mentioned his parents' emphasis on education, and its influence on him and his siblings. Their mother would meticulously inspect her children's homework each day, only to reveal to them later in life that she was in fact illiterate.<sup>40</sup> Anis Khoury (b. 1952) of Tarshiha, a career educator and former school principal, worked at Solel Boneh for several years to fund his academic studies.<sup>41</sup> And although Munir Qa'war himself left school at thirteen, he recalls that funding the education of his youngest brother – whose birth in 1953 was part of what drove Munir to seek a job – was an important motivation. Multiple narrators mentioned funding higher education for their children as the consideration behind their continued work in the construction industry. Motivations for work in construction, then, could morph from ad hoc survival to more elaborate considerations of possible futures and social advancement within an individual's lifetime.<sup>42</sup>

The experiences of Palestinian citizens who worked in Israel's construction industry during the first two and a half decades of the state shaped their attempts at homemaking (and remaking) in various ways. Dire financial need constituted an obvious material connection between the two realms. Meanwhile, rhetoric emphasizing Palestinians' crucial role in Israel's construction industry to reinforce their claims of belonging to the land, and its belonging to them, constituted an ideological and affective connection. By repurposing the state's and Zionism's idioms, Palestinians challenged their marginalization under the new state and broader Zionist attempts to cast doubt on their connection to the land. The following sections highlight how Palestinians working in the construction industry shaped other processes of homemaking engaged in by workers, their families, and their communities – the making of homes away from home and the use of expertise gained in construction work to build and refashion Palestinian homes.

## In Search of Home, In Search of Shelter

Throughout Israel's first decades, the unequal distribution of government resources and economic activity drew a relatively clear occupational map: very little work was available in the centers of Palestinian life within Israel.<sup>43</sup> Employment required workers to travel and employment sites were often too far or too dangerous to travel to and from on a daily basis. This was particularly true in construction, where in 1961, 81 percent of Palestinian employees commuted to work.<sup>44</sup> Poor infrastructure and barely existing public transportation in many Arab locales meant that the problem of Palestinian "commuters" (*mutanaqilun*) was a major preoccupation in the pages of *al-Ittihad*, the most important Arabic-language newspaper in the period, published by the Communist Party.<sup>45</sup> Palestinian citizens who were incorporated into the construction industry during the first decades of the state were forced to make multiple forms of home away from home. They transformed construction sites and fields into temporary dwellings, wrestled with the tensions and contradictions of making themselves at home in effectively segregated Jewish cities and towns, and sometimes even found surrogate families. This section explores these various forms of shelter, and the range of physical and emotional experiences they engendered: dehumanization alongside politicization, the toll of passing alongside the threat of exposure, fragile intimacies alongside alienation, isolation alongside solidarity.<sup>46</sup>

When Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa describes the sleeping arrangements in Zikhron Ya'akov, where he began working in 1952 as a thirteen year old, he refers to "reserving a room in a hotel before you go." He clarifies, "That is, you check in which cowshed your friend is sleeping." The tone of his description shifts rapidly:

I was fourteen, thirteen, fifteen – it was the first time I had the honor of getting to know headlice. You get a job, you dwell in the cowshed, you wake up at five in the morning, water the garden, collect the eggs from the coop, hitch the mule to the wagon, and that's just the yard work. Until you actually start moving to the fields, it doesn't count [as work], what counts is when you first lift the hoe until you put it down . . .

After that, that's when I started understanding what the French Revolution was about, and the exploitation, through having experienced it on your [own] body. You can't understand if you haven't been through that experience. It remains [only as] things that are said. But going through it, at [that] age... [When you're] working and you doubt you'll be paid. And what's more, you're enslaved [*meshu'abad*], you're a tool. You have to [work] from five until six, seven at night. And then you go to Tel Aviv, and there it's only construction, or gardening.<sup>47</sup>

Ahmad, a lifelong political radical, narrates his politicization at a young age as rooted in the felt experiences of exploitative labor: from the difficulty of work itself, through the unsanitary conditions of the cowshed "hotel," to the uncertainty

of payment. These physical hardships reduced Ahmad in his own words to a “tool,” not in control of his own body. Revolutionary politics, he seems to argue, can only be truly understood through experiences like these. Otherwise “it remains [only] things that are said.”

After escaping Zikhron Ya‘akov, Ahmad lived in Yakum, a kibbutz on the Mediterranean coast, for a brief but formative period. He arrived at the invitation of the short-lived Pioneer Arab Youth movement (No‘ar ‘Aravi Halutzi), an initiative for Palestinian youth established by Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist Zionist movement committed, at least outwardly, to a binational vision for the fledgling state. Reaching Yakum, Ahmad and three other teens who arrived with him were given Hebrew names. Ahmad became Zvi. He and fourteen other Palestinian teens lived on the kibbutz, studying, working, and eating with their Jewish peers. Yet, Ahmad noticed that while Jewish teens studied for five hours a day and worked for three, Palestinian teens studied for three and worked for five. Supposedly it was a result of the groups’ different funding sources, but the message was clear to him: Palestinians were considered better served, and better utilized, by dedicating their time to physical labor rather than to learning.<sup>48</sup> Although he left Yakum disillusioned with the movement, Ahmad’s experiences there were crucial to his ability to navigate the next episode of his life in Tel Aviv. When he first arrived in the city to look for work, he continued presenting himself as Zvi, passing as Jewish. His ability to do so no doubt depended on the cultural and linguistic skills acquired at Yakum.<sup>49</sup>

As Zvi, Ahmad soon exchanged the cowshed “hotels” and kibbutz dormitories for a more hospitable arrangement in Ramat Gan, just outside Tel Aviv. His early experiences there were also a reminder, however, that he, like many Palestinians who were looking for work in Jewish towns at the time, was still very much a child. As he describes them, he becomes visibly emotional:

I started going from place to place. I arrived at a house. An older woman, she takes me on for work. I worked in the yard. She made me food, washed my clothes. There was a pot over a fire [in which she washed the clothes]. She looked for work for me, gave me tools.<sup>50</sup>

That living arrangement was at times more fragile, at least from Ahmad’s perspective, than he initially makes apparent. The woman’s daughter (who later became a friend) was a captain in the Israeli army: “When I was working in the garden, the daughter came, a captain, that’s real military. I was shaking, I couldn’t respond. You have to think of a situation of terror. I had no idea [what to do], I was Zvi then.” Ahmad’s fear of having his true identity exposed by an army officer was well-founded. As a Palestinian from ‘Ar‘ara, his presence and employment in Ramat Gan without a permit were unlawful under military rule. Being caught would have risked his ability to support his family financially. It could also have led to costly fines and even the imprisonment of an adult family member forced to serve a sentence on Ahmad’s behalf.<sup>51</sup>

Later, Ahmad “went and wrote a letter” to the woman who took him into her home,

Ms. Levin, telling her “who I am.”<sup>52</sup> After the 1967 war, Ms. Levin sought out Ahmad to discuss her disillusion with Zionism in the war’s wake. They remained in contact until Ms. Levin’s death. When Ahmad describes their final conversations, the impact of her attitude toward him when he was a youth is evident.

Ahmad: I was in touch with this woman until the end of her days. She has a daughter in Ma‘agan Mikhael [a kibbutz on the Mediterranean coast]. [I] came there [to meet Ms. Levin], and she told me, “Ahmad, what do you want? I’m done” [that is, I am about to die]. I tell her, “That’s your business, but my business is that I can’t forget: you making me a sandwich, washing my clothes, and looking for a job for me.” That was a home [*ze haya bayt*]. It was a refuge from the jungle.

Nimrod: It was an alternative to sleeping in the fields.

Ahmad: No! No! The attitude [*yahas*], first of all. An attitude that just wasn’t there [elsewhere].<sup>53</sup>

Ahmad was emphatic in correcting my misunderstanding. I had suggested his gratitude toward Ms. Levin was because her house offered greater physical comfort than the typically harsh alternatives. What made Ms. Levin’s house a home for Ahmad, however, was first and foremost the kindness and care she had shown him. “The jungle” was defined not only by its often-inhumane physical conditions, but also by the terror and the invisibility it forced upon Palestinian workers. Ms. Levin saw Ahmad as a full human being, deserving of her kindness, affection, and care. When he revealed his identity to her, Ms. Levin told him she had already realized he was Palestinian long before. Unlike at Yakum, he could be Ahmad with her.<sup>54</sup>

Other such living arrangements fostered various shades of fragile intimacy. At thirteen, Munir Qa‘war left agricultural work in Giv‘at ‘Ada in 1953 and set out to find work in the Tel Aviv area. In Jaffa, he found work and a home of sorts:

I went and found work there in Jaffa with some Bulgarian man. He had thirty-four sheep and he wanted someone to take them out to pasture. . . . He had a woman, and they told me, you’ll get fifty pounds a month and we’ll give you food. And the woman would, the Bulgarians, would make these red peppers filled with bulgur. . . . And we weren’t familiar with this, but I grew used to it since [laughs]. And this woman, I mean, she loved me, loved me so much. Even as a child, I mean . . . her love entered my heart. . . . I worked there, maybe for three weeks or a month [each time], before coming home. And my mom, my mom is here [in Kafr Qara‘] and she’s crying and saying, “How do you manage, son?” And I tell her, “Listen, this is what I want: to work. And that’s that.”<sup>55</sup>

Munir thus assuming an adult role by refuting his mother’s concerns, while recalling the care of the Jewish woman for whom he worked, hinting at the role

the latter fulfilled for him when he was away from home. But other aspects of the relationship seemed to make Munir somewhat uneasy as he moved between the roles of child and adult:

Munir: So, you see, back then there weren't showers like there are now. And there was a warehouse by the [house]. And when once a month I wanted to go back home, she would boil water, the woman, and bring it to me, and she would say, "Listen, I want to help you [bathe]." And I tell her, "No, I'm a big boy already, I can do it myself, even my mother doesn't help me." And I, I'm sorry, I mean, there are people who think, I mean, that this was maybe related to sex. . . . I didn't know what sex was. But I knew, when I grew up, that the woman's intention was good. Her intention wasn't, god forbid, that she would, with a child, um, something. She wanted to help me because she loved me, I mean, as a child. She loved me as a child. Because her whole behavior wasn't a behavior of, of . . .

Nimrod: It was motherly behavior?

Munir: Yes, of a mother. Of mother and child. That's what I tell them.<sup>56</sup>

Munir speaks as though the suggestion that there may have been a sexual component to his relationship with this older Jewish woman, his employer who also functioned as a surrogate mother, sullies a connection he remembers as "pure." The episode itself, meanwhile, demonstrates yet another layer of the emotional and physical vulnerability young Palestinians experienced in their attempts to provide for their families. It also shows how fraught questions of masculinity and sexuality could become for young Palestinian men working away from home.

Munir's vulnerability contrasts with common perceptions of the masculinity and sexuality of Palestinian workers engaged in physical labor in Jewish localities as essentially threatening.<sup>57</sup> Shawqi Khoury recalls working as a plasterer in Beit Oren, a kibbutz not far from Haifa.

Shawqi: I don't remember exactly how we got to Beit Oren, me and a relative. We worked as plasterers. We had a reputation as excellent plasterers. We went there, we started working in the kibbutz, and they gave us food, a place to sleep, showers, everything was fine. We worked there for some time, and they were very happy. One day they show up and say, "The work is done, go home." We went home, but there was work [still unfinished]. And I didn't know [the] reason [they told us to go]. . . . Thirty years later I meet the construction coordinator of Beit Oren at the Party [Mapai]. He was a party member. He recognized me right away, I didn't so much. [He said] "Hello! Do you remember me? I'm Sha'ul who was the construction coordinator at Kibbutz Beit Oren. Do you know why we drove you out [*girashnu*] from Beit Oren?"

Nimrod: He said, "drove you out"?!

Shawqi: Yes. I said, “I don’t know, I was still only speaking Hebrew half-and-half [at the time].” He [Sha’ul] smiles and laughs. . . . I’m not saying this to [brag], just to say what happened. . . . He [Sha’ul] told me, “Listen you were such a handsome guy, all the women in the kibbutz would look.” [Shawqi laughs] Really! After thirty years! I came to eat bread! I came to look for girls?!<sup>58</sup>

For Shawqi, this anecdote is an opportunity to boast a little about his good looks as a young man (at eighty-eight years of age, he still exudes plenty of charisma and charm). Underlying it, however, was a fear of Palestinians and Jewish Israelis forming romantic relationships and a perception of Palestinian workers as sexual threats and potential predators that needed to be “driven out.” It also places Shawqi’s concerns in stark contrast with those of his employers – he was there “to eat bread” not “to look for girls.”

This cultural fear of the sexualized Palestinian man in the Jewish city is also referenced in *I Am Ahmad*, the pathbreaking short docudrama that Ahmad Masarwa and several partners made based on Ahmad’s experiences in Tel Aviv’s construction industry. As Ahmad’s character walks behind a young Jewish couple on a Tel Aviv street – a scene which, despite the film’s generally empathetic and sympathetic approach to its protagonist, places Ahmad as a looming threat – we hear his internal monologue:

At night in a strange city, you’re alone. You know that no one [there] cares about you. That they absolutely don’t want you here. That they think you are dispensable, and that it would be best if you go somewhere [else]: to Canada, or to America. As long as you’re not here – in their streets; in their homes; in front of their women.<sup>59</sup>

When work took Palestinians to “mixed” cities such as Acre or Haifa, or even areas of Tel Aviv close to Jaffa, they could at times rent a room or an apartment, usually from Palestinian owners. If one brought enough men together, you could rent an apartment, as Shawqi Khoury recalls doing in Acre in 1955.<sup>60</sup> Ibrahim Shamsun rented a room in Jaffa with six or seven other people in the late 1950s: “There was no kitchen. We cooked in the room, we ate in the room, and we slept in the room. And early in the morning we would go to work in construction.”<sup>61</sup> When Lutf Sulayman (b. 1950) of Bu’ayna was fourteen, he worked in sewage construction in Haifa. He and others rented rooms in the homes of Palestinian families in the city’s Wadi Salib neighborhood.<sup>62</sup>

Renting an apartment or even a room was not always an option, however. In Jewish cities and towns, where most construction took place, finding property owners who would rent rooms to Arabs could be extremely difficult. Of the narrators, only one – Ahmad Masarwa – reported even having tried to do so. Through trials and tribulations, Ahmad eventually found some success and, as discussed below, eventually made a political cause of creating spaces for himself and other Palestinians in Jewish cities,

particularly Tel Aviv. Before turning to Ahmad's public struggle, however, it is important to look at what he and other workers had to endure.

Multiple narrators reported living on-site during construction – making them effectively the first residents of the homes they were building. Despite finding a job with Solel Boneh, in the years immediately following 1948, Shawqi Khoury also took on work privately. In 1955, he worked in the northern cooperative settlement 'Avdon with fifteen other men from Fassuta. Since none had a permit to work there, they risked the journey to 'Avdon only once every two weeks, riding in the back of a truck covered in a canvas sheet, like cargo. Living conditions at the 'Avdon site evolved as work progressed:

You asked where we would eat? Where we would sleep? . . . Eating, I organized my people from Fassuta. Each one would bring food. We took bulgur, we took lentils, we took all sorts of things. And I told them: guys, instead of each one cooking, I'll cook, I know how. I would cook for fifteen people. We made a wooden table, and they [the workers] would come like soldiers in the army: each one would take his portion. . . . We would sleep under the open sky . . . in the field, on the same site. Until you build one house, place the roof tiles, and go inside. . . . To shower, we would stand on a rock, open the hose, and shower like that. That's how it was. It was like that in several places, and then it started to get better.<sup>63</sup>

Shawqi remembers the living space he and his peers created in 'Avdon positively. The invocation of a military-style order also indicates the decidedly masculine models through which he recalled their time there. However, the relative freedom experienced in a remote fledgling settlement was difficult to obtain in a Jewish urban context. There, matters of class and racism encroached on workers' attempts to use the worksite as a temporary home. The invisibility forced upon Palestinian workers in these contexts was qualitatively different from that which Shawqi and his peers employed on the back of the truck to and from 'Avdon. No longer a tactic to evade the military administration and its regulations, invisibility was the product of broader social pressures requiring Palestinian workers, as racialized and therefore hyper-visible subjects, to "disappear" at the end of the workday, reappearing only once the next shift began.<sup>64</sup>

When Ibrahim Zahalqa first worked in construction at the age of twenty, he was employed as a plasterer in a complex of sixteen-story buildings in northern Tel Aviv. Ibrahim describes the living arrangements there:

I would sleep on-site, but the person we worked for there, he would say, "Look, the people who live here in Neve Avivim, these are aristocratic people. I mean, these are big people and they have a lot of money, and they want to live where even looking won't disturb them. And [while] you're sleeping here, we don't want you to go outside so that they will see you. [If] you sleep here, stay in the rooms or go somewhere where

they can't see you." It was really like that. . . . Before, there were Druze [workers] there, and they [the neighbors] saw them and made sure they were driven out.<sup>65</sup>

The fate of the Druze workers made it clear to Ibrahim and his colleagues that they should do as their employer and the neighbors demanded. They made themselves, as best they could, invisible. Of course, such "invisibility" could only have been tenuous at best. Throughout the day, their work was extremely visible, audible, and otherwise an assault on the senses, as anyone who has lived close to a massive construction project will attest. The neighbors in Neve Avivim were willing to accept the presence of Palestinians only during working hours. Otherwise, they wanted Ibrahim and his coworkers to be hidden in plain sight.<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, the "Palestinianization" of construction work in Israel arguably was (and remains) dependent on Palestinian workers' invisibility: physically, legally, and culturally. Meanwhile, the products and processes of their work, even their own physical presences in Israel's essentially segregated landscapes, were often hyper-visible. Accordingly, some sought to overturn this regime of invisibility, engaging in what Timothy Pachirat calls "the politics of sight": "organized, concerted attempts to make visible what is hidden and to breach, literally or figuratively, zones of confinement in order to bring about social and political transformation."<sup>67</sup>

In the early 1960s, Ahmad Masarwa enlisted such "politics of sight" to launch a public campaign that would make visible workers like himself and their work. He enlisted private individuals, the controversial Hebrew weekly *ha-'Olam ha-Ze* (This World), and even, with several partners, made *I Am Ahmad*. Ahmad's campaign and the film focused on two types of homes Palestinian construction workers tried to make for themselves in the Jewish city: The first, the encampment, was often the bleakest and most physically harsh, hardly deserving of the moniker "home" at all; the second, renting an apartment or a room in a "Jewish" environment, made the underlying racialization driving Palestinian exclusion perhaps most apparent.

During our conversation, Ahmad recalls taking journalists from *Ha-'Olam Ha-Ze* to workers' encampments in the area by Wadi al-Musrara/the Ayalon River (where Highway 20 runs today), which separated Tel Aviv from its easternmost neighborhoods.<sup>68</sup> The newspaper, known for its penchant for the shocking and an anti-establishment editorial line, published a story, "A Jungle in the Heart of the City," accompanied by photographs of the encampments. In it, the newspaper's co-editor Shalom Cohen, a leftist Iraqi Jew who was a fierce critic of Israel's Labor Zionist leadership, painted a shocking picture. The workers lived "in conditions fit for animals. . . in the foul-smelling Wadi Musrara." Their beds were made, by "spreading rags on the ground; placing a blanket over the rags; under their head they place their work clothes. In the winter? They place rusted tins over the blanket."<sup>69</sup>

Each of the nine workers sharing a cramped, scorching tin shack in one part of the encampment, Cohen learned, paid seven pounds a month in rent – or a total of sixty-three pounds per shack. Cohen also mentions an industrial cowshed whose owner

realized that Arab tenants paid much better than raising cows and began charging tenants twenty or thirty pounds a month. This arrangement was deemed illegal for fear of spreading disease and terminated. The workers relocated to the adjacent fields.

The captions that accompanied the photographs in the article (figures 1–3) mapped the geography of the encampment onto the spatial division of a contemporary middle-class home, complete with guest room, dining room, bedroom, kitchen, and hallway. They thus explicitly drew a comparison to the kinds of spaces *ha-'Olam ha-Ze's* readers likely inhabited and where they likely read the article. Cohen's choice to narrate the readers' visual tour in this sarcastic manner no doubt intended to throw the severity of the living conditions of Palestinian workers into stark relief.

Cohen's article not only emphasized the harsh conditions of the “tin-neighborhoods” (*shkhunot pahim*) he visited, but also differentiated their genesis from workers' encampments elsewhere. Unlike elsewhere, Cohen argued, the forces creating Tel Aviv's encampments were not economic, but rooted in a culture of racial segregation:



Figure 1. “The Guestroom.” Caption: “The guestroom is a few beds in a field of thorns. The Arab workers sit on the torn mattresses after work, receiving their friends who come visit them from the other end of the field. During work hours they leave a teenager here to guard their belongings.” “Jungel be-Lev ha-‘Ir” [A Jungle in the Heart of the City], *ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, 24 July 1963.

Tel Aviv's jungle is unlike any other. . . . Those who live there are not starving unemployed. Rather, they are workers who do not earn badly, who work more or less regularly, and who are in professions for which there is demand. They could certainly afford to rent a decent room. But they can't. . . . No one will rent to them, because they are Arabs. Part of the force of thousands who work in the hard, physical jobs in Tel Aviv and its surroundings.<sup>70</sup>



Figure 2. “The Dining Room.” Caption: “The dining room of the members of the Galilean ‘Arab al-Sawa’ed tribe is simply furnished: some empty sacks are used as chairs. In the center: the morning newspaper fills the role of the table. The workers cooked the food over a fire in the ‘kitchen’ adjacent to the dining room. After the meal they will move to the bedrooms – a long line of iron beds, which cover about a quarter of the thicket of thorns.” “Jungel be-Lev ha-‘Ir” [A Jungle in the Heart of the City], *ha-Olam ha-Ze*, 24 July 1963.

Cohen relates stories of workers being rejected by property owners once they were revealed to be Arab and neighbors trying to prevent Palestinian renters physically from moving in, with “children and mothers” shouting abuse at them. *I Am Ahmad* also highlights such scenarios. In one scene, Ahmad and a friend, Mahmud, look for a room to rent in Tel Aviv. We are told that they are rejected in six of seven apartments they visited. Approaching the seventh, Mahmud suggests they present themselves with the Mizrahi-sounding Hebrew names Avraham Mizrahi and Yosef Malul of the Lakhish region.<sup>71</sup> Ahmad refuses and walks away, while Mahmud enters the apartment. A shot

of Mahmud's arm opening a window from the inside suggests that, as Avraham, he may have been able to rent it.<sup>72</sup>

Following the 1963 article in *ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, Ahmad Masarwa's public campaign seemed to have gained some traction. Government officials discussed the question of establishing a government-run company to build accommodations for Palestinian workers in Jewish cities and officially decided to do so in January 1965.<sup>73</sup> However, by 25 February 1967, when Shalom Cohen dedicated his regular column to the film *I Am Ahmad*, the government's initiative had dissipated. "Perhaps because the problem was almost completely solved," Cohen writes, "not by building cheap accommodations but by the recession." "The first to be hurt," he clarifies, "were the scores of Arab workers, concentrated mostly in construction. Due to lack of work, they went back to their villages and stayed there."<sup>74</sup>

The 1967 war generated conditions even more conducive to concealment. Shortly after the war, the Israeli construction industry began absorbing Palestinian subjects from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as workers. These rapidly eclipsed Palestinians with Israeli citizenship in their share of the industry's workforce. Their exploitation within the construction industry, and in the Israeli labor market in general, took place on an even greater scale, its concealment abetted by even greater degrees of physical, political, and social separation and new forms of racialization.<sup>75</sup>

West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians lacked citizenship and the social rights and protections that Palestinian citizens in Israel had gradually won over the previous decades. In one of the tragedies of twentieth-century Palestinian history, just as Palestinians in Israel were gradually relieved of the restrictions of Israel's internal military administration, West Bank and Gaza Palestinians were placed under a new form of military rule. Their relationship with the Israeli labor market was shaped, with even greater intensity, by the same dynamics that shaped Palestinian citizens' participation in the Israeli labor market in the period covered here: land expropriation, de-development, restrictions on movement, and employment.<sup>76</sup> Jewish Israeli public opinion perceived non-citizen Palestinians as several degrees more foreign and



Figure 3. "The Hallway." Caption: "The hallway between the different residential areas is the bridge of stones and planks across the foul-smelling wadi." "Jungel be-Lev ha-'Ir" [A Jungle in the Heart of the City], *ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, 24 July 1963.

threatening than Palestinian citizens of the state. “Israeli Arabs” (or “the Arabs of Israel”), as the official terminology of the state came to refer to Palestinian citizens, remained targets of suspicion and discrimination, to be sure, but Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip were more foreign and more suspicious still.<sup>77</sup>

Ahmad’s campaign was as personal as it was political. Like several of the other narrators, he spent a considerable part of his life as a political and public figure. Unlike most of them, however, Ahmad’s political and social circles were often centered in Tel Aviv and around figures on the Jewish radical left.<sup>78</sup> The names

he mentioned in our conversations were a veritable who’s who of radical Jewish politics and culture in 1960s Tel Aviv. I understand his attempts to fight not only for Palestinian workers’ visibility and rights, but specifically for spaces for them *in* the Jewish city, as tied to his own sense of belonging to Tel Aviv. At one point during our first conversation, he stated, “I’m a Tel Avivian” (*ani Tel Avivi*).<sup>79</sup>

Of the rich textual and audio-visual archive his activism generated, one apparently inconsequential item embodies this personal-political nexus of Ahmad’s homemaking efforts best. On the bottom of an inside page of a December 1967 issue of *ha-‘Olam ha-Ze*, a small nondescript ad (figure 4) reads in Hebrew: “Arab youth. Works and studies in Tel Aviv. Looking for a room. Call during work hours for Ahmad Masarwa, Tel. No. 33264, Tel Aviv.” I asked Ahmad about the ad, which he had not mentioned in our conversations, during a phone call. He explained: “I was tired of being rejected by apartment owners. I thought that being explicit might be the best option, just saying it – ‘Arab youth’ – and seeing what happens.”<sup>80</sup>

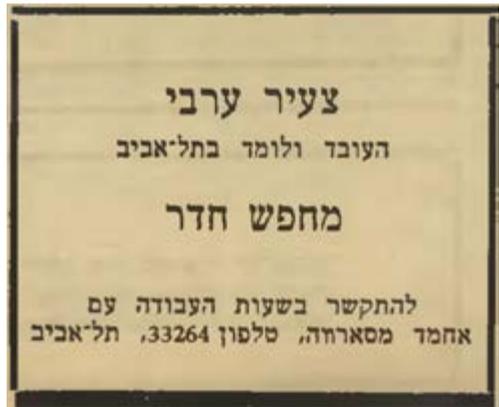


Figure 4. “Arab youth working and studying in Tel Aviv looking for room,” published in *Ha-‘Olam ha-Ze*, 20 December 1967.

## Remaking the Home

The fragility of Palestinian existence within Israel during these decades meant that homes away from home could often appear as though hanging on a thread. At the same time, uncertainty and grief in the wake of catastrophe and the host of restrictive policies limiting Palestinian citizens’ ability to build, work, and move, meant that they also needed to make their own homes and communities anew. This remaking was in part a matter of building better lives and better opportunities for themselves and their families. This often included education, as discussed above, but it was also a material process of physical building and rebuilding in the face of poverty and state restrictions.

As part of a broader strategy of “Judaization,” Israeli state policy, enacted by the military administration and the planning organs of the Ministry of the Interior, actively sought to limit Palestinian construction that could expand villages’ built areas onto lands expropriated by the state.<sup>81</sup> An effective ban on such expansion, which annulled previous British planning legislation, was instituted in 1955 by the Regional Planning Committee for the Northern District and then expanded in January 1957. Later that year, the Regional Planning Committee partnered with the military administration to author new local plans for Palestinian localities. These plans defined areas for high-density and low-density construction of dwellings, all within the scope of the existing built areas. The plans were intended to further – and it was hoped, more effectively – curtail villages’ territorial “expansion,” and to encourage internal migration to urban centers as village centers became oversaturated. Moreover, until the late 1960s, most Palestinian localities had no state-recognized local council (*mo’atza mekomit*) and accordingly no locally devised construction town-planning, nor the ability to grant permits for construction.<sup>82</sup>

These policies in fact achieved the intended overcrowding of Palestinian towns and villages. However, they did not prevent Palestinian citizens from building both within the localities’ built areas and beyond them. To the extent that construction permits were granted in Palestinian localities, they intentionally did not meet the population’s needs. The result, rather than being the hoped-for migration of younger Palestinians to urban centers, however, was the emergence of unpermitted, self-constructed homes both within and beyond the village centers, characterized by a distinct architecture.

Workers, their families, and their communities pooled their resources and the experience, skills, and knowledge workers had gained largely through construction work in the Jewish sector, to craft their own homes. Unable to pay for hired labor, work was done voluntarily by members of the community, thus bridging the technical and material gaps between “traditional” practices of communal building – of the sort captured in a photograph from the Matson Collection (figure 5) – and the housing emergency in which the Palestinian citizens in Israel found themselves.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps the epitome of such communal construction efforts was the moment of casting the concrete for a new home’s roof. Even narrators who did not invoke communal construction methods otherwise almost invariably referred to such practices when I presented them with a copy of the chapter discussing construction workers’ songs from ‘Ali al-Khalili’s *Aghani al-‘amal wa-l-‘umal fi Filastin* (Songs of Work and Workers in Palestine). No one recalled the sort of elaborately crafted songs that Khalili discusses from the construction sites they worked on (“No one had the time to sing!” Lutf Sulayman remarked). However, all narrators paused when they read the first line of the limekiln song *Wali’ al-atun* (Fire Up the Kiln). “We say *wali’ al-baton*” (fire up/pour the concrete), Ibrahim Zahalqa said, “So that people don’t tire, everyone starts saying [Ibrahim chants]: *wali’ al-baton wali’; wali’ al-baton wali’.*”<sup>84</sup> Shawqi Khoury also immediately recalled the chant: “This one I know!” he exclaimed, and began singing. He then remembered how both men and women would carry buckets of concrete up ladders to pour it (although when he built his house in Fassuta in

1955, he points out, “There were enough men, so we didn’t have women” working). Ahmad Masarwa, too, began singing, “The workers [here] wouldn’t take wages . . . the neighbors, the workers would come and when we would cast the roof, they would say, *wali‘ al-baton, wali‘*.”<sup>85</sup>



Figure 5. Stereograph of communal building practices in early twentieth-century Palestine. Photographer unknown, “Building Stone House in Village in Hill Country,” Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019694942/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019694942/) (accessed 22 September 2020).

While such practices invoked a connection to traditional building practices, including the involvement of multiple generations of men and women, narrators also described workers utilizing their expertise in newly acquired professions – formwork, ironwork, electrical work, plumbing, and more. In describing the process, Muhammad Abu Ahmad of Nazareth again shows his penchant, perhaps cultivated through years in the Histadrut, for subverting and laying claim to Zionist tropes. He recalls a representative of the Histadrut’s Culture Department who invoked mutual assistance (*‘ezra hadadit*) as a uniquely Zionist organizational principle. Muhammad responded:

I told him, listen, for us [Palestinians] this mutual assistance was natural. With you, it’s planned. You used your brains [to figure out] what is good for the society in Israel. . . . But for us, it’s natural. He said, “How do you mean?” I said that when someone wants to build a house in our

neighborhood, the people from the neighborhood who do excavations come and do the excavation for the foundations for free. When they're done, everyone who is a formworker comes. . . . Then the ironworker comes. . . . Casting [concrete], everyone comes, everyone gathers: "There's a concrete pouring at Nimrod's, *yalla*, everyone come!" Everyone comes and helps during the concrete casting. When the concrete's done, who's a plasterer in the neighborhood? The plasterer and two others come, in two, three days they finish the plastering – volunteers. Same thing for an electrician, plumbing, carpentry. He asked me, "Is it really like that?" I said, "What do you think, that the Israeli state built our houses? You the Jews had your houses built for you; we built our own. That's *'ezra hadadit*."<sup>86</sup>

This pooling of skills introduced new construction techniques and materials, as well as new spatial arrangements and architectural forms to Palestinian homes within Israel. Studies of post-1948 Palestinian architecture have examined these changes and given the new forms various names: Yosef Jabareen and Hakam Dbiat's "post-traumatic architecture," Yael Allweil's "*sumud* (steadfastness) architecture," and Abed Badran's "crush and transform."<sup>87</sup> They document the same material and spatial shifts that workers and their families described to me in conversations: a move away from stone construction to reinforced concrete and the increased division of the home into spaces defined according to function in place of the "traditional" single-space home.

Where workers' testimonies diverge from architectural scholarship is in their ability to animate and claim the agency that drove these adaptations, which otherwise appear to be driven primarily by abstract concepts and forces, or forever awaiting their absent planners and architects.<sup>88</sup> Ibrahim Shamshum holds great pride in his record of construction in 'Araba and in the architectural and technical innovations he introduced to its built environment, starting with his own home:

When we travelled to the city, we became aware of the developments in construction, and we wanted to implement them in our town. For example, if I was building a house, building a beautiful house in Haifa, or in Tel Aviv, or in Jerusalem, I wanted to have a beautiful house here as well. I mean, I, when I built my house, for the first time I thought that the boy should have a room, the girl should have a room, [there should be] a parlor, a bedroom, a kitchen, a bathroom. Before, there wasn't that [kind of construction in 'Araba], very, very little.<sup>89</sup>

Ibrahim repeatedly referred to the expertise he and others gained while working in Tel Aviv and elsewhere as *khibra*, knowledge learned through experience. When he brought this expertise with him back to 'Araba, its application was not limited to introducing internal divisions, whereas homes had until then frequently been constructed around one shared space, but also to technical aspects of the work. "We learned to make concrete bands, how to make columns, how to cast a roof," he explains:

I was one of the first to have such a house and I transmitted the knowledge that I learned to our town. I mean, I'm not an engineer, but I have more experience than an engineer in building houses, in homes. I've seen many very beautiful things when I was working in construction, and I carried many things in my head [*naqalt be-rasi ktir shaghlal*] which we [then] used in 'Araba.<sup>90</sup>

Ibrahim portrays his role, and that of others like him, in changing 'Araba's built landscape as actively and purposefully transmitting innovations "carried" between segregated locations. Although Ibrahim emphasizes the ideas he "carried in his head," which could be understood as an abstract intellectual contribution, these cannot be separated from the embodied skills and capacities he and others acquired and transmitted.

And yet, particularly because the process of building a home relied upon communal support and collective skills, knowledge, and workforce, construction required another resource that poverty and the military administration rendered invaluable: time. Construction workers with relatively stable jobs that allowed them to be home every day found themselves working a "second shift" on a regular basis. "When we started working for Solel Boneh," Shawqi Khoury says, "you would work a regular eight hours. After eight hours, I would go back [home] and help people build for another five or six."<sup>91</sup> For these workers, the first shift of the day was as a salaried worker, often on one of the massive housing projects the Israeli state carried out to house Jewish immigrants during the decades after 1948. The second began after returning home. It was dedicated to building homes and communities anew in the wake of the Nakba and in the face of ongoing dispossession and marginalization.

Unlike the first shift, which saw Palestinian men working in an almost entirely masculinized construction industry, the second shift fostered the defiance of these increasingly rigid gendered boundaries. Palestinian women were integral to the (re) construction work carried during on the second shift. And although many women at the time were not employed in salaried work, they were engaged in multiple forms of unpaid labor both in and outside the home: It was their second shift, too.<sup>92</sup>

William Andraos (b. 1943), from Tarshiha, began working for Solel Boneh in 1960. Our conversation took place in the presence of his wife, their daughter-in-law, and Anis and Layla Khoury, who introduced me to William. This format, between an interview and a family gathering, seemed less than ideal, but the dynamic between the Andraos couple, known as Abu Jamil and Umm Jamil, produced some of the most fascinating narratives in which I took part. After Abu Jamil described how difficult work was and decried the waning of his physical strength, Umm Jamil interjected:

Umm Jamil: Listen, after work, after four, he would come back home, when we were building the house here. . . . After he would come back, at four thirty, I would cook, he would eat, drink a cup of coffee, and then start working [again]. Everything by hand. I helped him.

Abu Jamil: We built this building, me and my wife.

Umm Jamil: This whole building, this house, he built.<sup>93</sup>

While Abu Jamil sought to share the credit for building their home, Umm Jamil seemed hesitant to emphasize her role. Our conversation then moved onto the specifics of the construction of the Andraos home, from details regarding the flooring, to the amount of time certain tasks took. Anis and Layla also interjected occasionally, explaining, “This was how things were done,” that is, cooperatively and voluntarily, in contrast to how they perceived commercial construction in Tarshiha now. Then Anis, who had worked under Abu Jamil at Solel Boneh in the late 1960s, brought the conversation back to the Andraos couple’s joint work. This time, with both Anis and Abu Jamil gently insisting on discussing the construction process as one in which the Andraos couple shared, Umm Jamil was more forthcoming about her experience. As she spoke, she increasingly underscored how her role in their home’s construction defied the otherwise distinct gendering of construction work:

Anis Khoury: He and his wife [built the house].

Abu Jamil: Me and my wife.

Umm Jamil: I’m his assistant [Umm Jamil uses the term *‘ozer*, the Hebrew word for a male assistant].

Nimrod: That’s really interesting. Tell me what you did when you were building the house together.

Umm Jamil: I did every task . . . In our roof we have this beam . . .

Abu Jamil: A hanging beam . . .

Umm Jamil: Over on that side it used to be very high, so I would dress up like that [like a male worker], with pants and everything, and I would go like this with my stomach [Umm Jamil mimics dragging herself on her stomach] and grab it [the beam] from above, and after that he would do the formwork.

Nimrod: So, you did everything? You were assistant form maker, assistant ironworker [I continued using the male gendered term for assistant]?

Umm Jamil: I did more than a young man! [Umm Jamil laughs] I had to!

Abu Jamil: I would tell her, “Make this for me.” . . . She would make the sand, the gravel, sand, and cement. I would mix it, she starts handing it to me, and I would cast the pillars. Me and her. Me and her . . .

Umm Jamil: The kids were [about] ten years old, the little one was still

little, the other was older. I would give them a small bucket and tell them, “Help me. Do like this [Umm Jamil mimics pouring sand]. Once you’ve done ten each, I’ll give you a popsicle.”<sup>94</sup>

Umm Jamil’s initial use of the masculine-gendered Hebrew term for assistant, *‘ozer*, could be understood as a slip of the tongue, or as reflective of the perceived improbability of gendering the role female. However, understanding her use of the term as a “mistake” itself seems improbable once her description turns to her physical experience of the work – wearing a male worker’s clothing, crawling on her stomach to grab the ceiling beam – and culminates in the claim that she “did more than a young man!” Rather, Umm Jamil’s gender reversal in the narration reflects her keen and playful awareness of how she and Abu Jamil had defied the gendered division of labor.

Her description of how their children also participated in the construction allows her to segue into clarifying that for her, too, building the house was a second shift job. Already a mother of three when they began construction, she recalls doing housework during the day (“all by hand . . . hard tasks”), making dinner, and “then, after four . . . *‘ozer banyan*” (assistant builder – Umm Jamil laughs, having invoked the reversal again).<sup>95</sup> Thus, it was not only the skills Abu Jamil learned at Solel Boneh or the help of other community members that allowed the Andraos family to build their home despite meagre means. Umm Jamil and Abu Jamil’s temporary suspension of the gendering of construction as masculine labor, and Umm Jamil’s willingness to take on physical tasks she herself saw as masculine, was crucial.

Narrators frequently described the emergence of these homemaking practices primarily in terms of financial necessity. However, in its defiance of state policies that sought to curtail Palestinian construction, building homes in the second shift was already a political act. This was made amply clear when the state stepped in via its military administration and actively targeted Palestinian construction for demolition. In such instances, construction workers’ skills could place them at the frontline of opposition to the state. Ibrahim Shamsun, recalls one such event in ‘Araba that almost cost him his life:

One day, in 1957, they [the military administration] destroyed a house here in ‘Araba, saying that it was built without a permit. And we wanted to build it, my friends and me. The entire party [Communist Party members in ‘Araba] and I were able to gather the whole village and we decided to help them build it [the house]. That same day we started building it again, we built it that same day, and when we started casting the concrete, the police, the military police came and they beat me nearly to death. To the point that my mother was told that day, “Ibrahim is dead.”<sup>96</sup>

While this was the worst beating Ibrahim suffered during his many years of activism, it was not his first time being arrested for challenging policies he viewed as unjust.<sup>97</sup> Nor was it the last time the military administration tried to curtail his building activities in ‘Araba. In 1964, the administration prevented him from completing the

construction of his own house, he says, for a period of “a whole year, twelve months.” Finally, Ibrahim called forty or so of his “groups of comrades” (*jama ‘at rifaqi*). “We cast the roof in four hours,” he laughs.<sup>98</sup>



Figure 6. Ibrahim Shamshum and friends gathering around a cement mixer during the construction of Ibrahim’s house, 1965. Photo courtesy of the Shamshum family.

## Conclusion

The incorporation of many Palestinian men into Israel’s nascent construction industry was overdetermined by an array of historical events and processes stemming from the Nakba and the subsequent policies of the Israeli state. Economic distress, land expropriation, restrictions on employment and movement, and curtailment of educational and professional prospects all left Palestinians with little choice as to employment. The construction industry’s absorption of so many Palestinian men eager to find work was part of the industry’s racialization, whereby physical labor gradually became dominated first by Mizrahi Jews and then by Palestinian Arabs, as Jews of European origins moved into managerial positions and professionalized occupations.

Unsurprisingly, then, the history of this incorporation from the perspective of Palestinian construction workers is one of dangerous and difficult work, harsh living conditions, and child and teenage labor. It is also a history of their encounter with their

own racialization – of being cast as a threat, sexually and otherwise; being forced to hide in plain sight; and experiencing the dangers and humiliations of segregation. At the same time, however, narratives of workers and their families surface other facets of this history. A history of personal and communal ingenuity, of relationships built, and of remarkable capacities to adapt – materially, culturally, and socially – not merely to survive harsh conditions borne of oppression, but to challenge, change, and overcome them. Not only refusing to let go of home and homeland, but constantly finding new ways to remake and reclaim it.

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## Epigraph

Emile Habiby, *The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist*, trans. Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Trevor LeGassick (New York: Interlink, 2001), 81.

## Endnotes

1 Both of these ideas were central to the Labor Zionist vision that dominated the Zionist movement during the period of British rule in Palestine, between 1918 and 1948. “Hebrew labor,” according to which Jews in Palestine were meant to engage in all forms of labor, particularly labor considered manual and productive, was considered a crucial component in the creation of a “new Jew” – able-bodied, masculine, and wholly antithetical to the frail “diaspora Jew.” It also had a more concrete economic role, buttressing the creation of a separate, independent Jewish economy and the foundations of a state. The related

ideal of “building the land,” of physically transforming Palestine into a Jewish homeland through construction, was equally important. Multiple works have discussed these ideals; Lockman and Bernstein, in particular, devote attention to the competition and attempts at cooperation between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the construction and construction materials industry. See: Eric Zakim, *To Build and Be Built: Landscape, Literature, and the Construction of Zionist Identity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany, NY: SUNY

- Press, 2000); Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor, and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); and Anita Shapira, *Ha-Ma'avak ha nikhzav: 'avoda Ivrit, 1929–1939* [Futile Struggle: The Jewish Labor Controversy, 1929–1939] (Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1977).
- 2 For the data regarding the percentage of Mizrahi Jews (classified under the heading of “Asian and African born”) in different industries, see Central Bureau of Statistics, *Labor Force Surveys (1957)* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1959), 40, cited in K. J. Mann, J. H. Abramson, A. Nitzan, and Ruth Goldberg, “Epidemiology of Disabling Work Injuries in Israel,” *Archives of Environmental Health* 9, no. 4 (1964): 511. There is some confusion regarding the statistics for Palestinian citizens in the Israeli workforce. In his seminal *The Arabs in Israel*, Sabri Jiryis presents data based on the *Statistical Abstract of Israel*. For most years, Jiryis calculates the number of Palestinians in the labor force based strictly on data provided in the *Abstract* (by deducting the number of Jews in the labor force from the overall labor force, since no separate statistics are given for Palestinians). However, for 1962, there is a considerable gap between the number Jiryis provides and the results of this calculation. Accordingly, the percentage of Palestinian workforce employed in construction and public works in Jiryis’s calculation for 1962 is 19.1 percent, while a calculation according to the data in the 1963 *Abstract* shows it to be 16.2 percent. Jiryis’s figure for the percentage of Jews in the labor force employed in construction for 1962 (8.9 percent) is, however, more accurate than the rounded-up figure of 9 percent provided in the *Abstract*. See: Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 304–5; and Central Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Abstract of Israel 1963* (Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, 1963), 498–501. For the intra-Jewish division of labor that placed Mizrahi Jewish immigrants at the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder, see: Aziza Khazzoom, *Shifting Ethnic Boundaries and Inequality in Israel: Or, How the Polish Peddler Became a German Intellectual* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008); and Deborah Bernstein and Shlomo Swirski, “The Rapid Economic Development of Israel and the Emergence of the Ethnic Division of Labour,” *British Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 1 (1982): 64–85.
  - 3 Leila Farsakh, *Palestinian Labour Migration to Israel: Labour, Land, and Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2005); Juval Portugali, *Implicate Relations: Society and Space in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1993); and Harold Wolpe, “Capitalism and Cheap Labour-Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid,” *Economy and Society* 1, no. 4 (1 November 1972): 425–56.
  - 4 Raja Khalidi, *The Arab Economy in Israel: The Dynamics of a Region’s Development* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 145.
  - 5 John Chalcraft, *The Invisible Cage: Syrian Migrant Workers in Lebanon* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 231–32.
  - 6 Following the mass forced migration of Palestinians from 1947 to 1949, the Galilee (seized by Israeli armed forces during the 1947–49 war) and the Triangle (also known as the Little Triangle, annexed in May 1949 according to Israel’s armistice agreement with Jordan) were home to the vast majority of Palestinians who became citizens of Israel. Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 38–40, 84–85. Oral history is an essential tool for incorporating non-elite narratives into historical scholarship, its value coming both from the experiences conveyed and the manners in which they are conveyed – what Rosemary Sayigh referred to as a contribution “both substantive and stylistic.” This has been particularly true in the case of twentieth century Palestinian history and historiography. See, for example: Palestinian Oral History Archive, online at [libraries.aub.edu.lb](http://libraries.aub.edu.lb) (accessed 26 August 2019); al-Nakba’s Oral History Project, online at [www.palestineremembered.com/OralHistory](http://www.palestineremembered.com/OralHistory) (accessed 26 August 2019); Rochelle Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Ahmad H. Sa’di and Lila Abu-Lughod, eds., *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory* (New

- York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinian Camp Women as Tellers of History," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 2 (Winter 1998): 42–58.
- 7 See bell hooks, "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance," in *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2015). For a discussion of theoretical approaches to the home and its relationship to racialization, see Helen Ngo, *The Habits of Racism: A Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017), chapter 3.
  - 8 Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 30–33; Ilan Pappé, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 25–27. Muhammad Abu Ahmad was the only narrator who lived in Nazareth, the only remaining Arab town within Israel after the Nakba. However, narrators who were teens or young adults before the Mandate's end spent periods of time in Haifa and even Beirut and Damascus, returning to rural towns and villages in 1948 as a direct result of the upheaval of the Nakba. Author interviews with Mikhail Haddad, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018, and Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018. On rural–urban migration during the Mandate, see: Na'ama Ben Ze'ev, "I Came Naïve from the Village": On Palestinian Urbanism and Ruralism in Haifa under the British Mandate," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 2 (2020): 264–81; Na'ama Ben Ze'ev, "Sites of Assimilation into Urban Life: Rural Migrants' Clubs in Haifa under the Mandate, 1939–1948," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42, no. 1 (2014): 114–33; Charles Anderson, "From Petition to Confrontation: The Palestinian National Movement and the Rise of Mass Politics, 1929–1939" (PhD diss., New York University, 2013), 532–549; and Mahmoud Yazbak, "From Poverty to Revolt: Economic Factors in the Outbreak of the 1936 Rebellion in Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 3 (July 2000): 93–113.
  - 9 On the experiences of Palestinian citizens in Israel, and the state's mechanisms of control in these initial decades, see: Lana Tatour, "Citizenship as Domination: Settler Colonialism and the Making of Palestinian Citizenship in Israel," *Arab Studies Journal* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2019): 8–39; Adel Manna', *Nakba ve-hisardut: sipuram shel ha-Palestinim she-notru be-Haifa uva-Galil, 1948–1956* [Nakba and Survival: The Story of the Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and Galilee, 1948–1956] (Tel Aviv: Van Leer Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2017); Leena Dallahseh, "Troubled Waters: Citizenship and Colonial Zionism in Nazareth," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 47, no. 3 (August 2015): 467–87; Arnon Yehuda Degani, "The Decline and Fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948–1966: A Case of Settler-Colonial Consolidation?" *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 84–99; Yael Berda, "Colonial Legacy and Administrative Memory: The Legal Construction of Citizenship in India, Israel, and Cyprus" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2014); Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*; and Jiryis, *Arabs in Israel*.
  - 10 Jiryis, *Arabs in Israel*, 304–5.
  - 11 Majid al-Haj's 1995 study of the Arab education system in Israel remains the most comprehensive, and elucidates Palestinian citizens' limited access to education, particularly secondary education, well into the 1970s. However, it offers little data on the proportion of students that continued on to secondary education (beginning with the ninth grade) during the period of the military administration or immediately after. Majid al-Haj, *Education, Empowerment, and Control: The Case of the Arabs in Israel* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995). Documents and reports in the files of the government Committee for the Employment and Vocational Training Problems of Arab Youth, appointed by the Ministry of Labor in 1961, include some useful information. It appears that as of 1960, roughly 70 percent of Arab children completed the eighth grade, with some children forced to leave school as early as the fifth grade. A letter from the Ministry of Education claims that 44 percent of Arab students who completed the eighth grade in the 1958–59 school year continued onto secondary school the following year. However, the committee's eventual report places this figure at less than 30 percent. See Mahmoud Abbasi, "Matzav ha-no'ar ha-'Aravi be-Yisrael" [The State of Arab Youth in Israel], undated; Eliezer Shmueli, Ministry of Education and Culture, to A. Meron, Department of Youth and Vocational Education, Ministry of Labor,

- 19 September 1961; and “Dua’h ha-va’ada l-va’ayot ta’asuka ve-hakhshara miktzo’it le-no’ar ‘Aravi” [Report of the Committee for the Employment and Vocational Training Problems of Arab Youth], 30 November 1961, in Israel State Archives (ISA), ha-Va’ada le-Va’ayot Ta’asuka ve-Hakhshara Miktzo’it le-No’ar ‘Aravi (Committee for the Occupational and Professional Training Problems of Arab Youth), Records of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, GL-2/61713 (ISA-moital-moital-0010bbt). Among Palestinian women she interviewed in Lebanese camps, Rosemary Sayigh identified a similar educational difference between those born before 1942 and those born after. See Sayigh, “Palestinian Camp Women,” 43.
- 12 On the theoretical underpinnings of oral history, see Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London: Routledge, 2016).
- 13 For example, Na’im ‘Issa and ‘Abd al-Rahman Sarsour from Kafr Qasim, whose narratives are not analyzed in this article as they focus more on work in the nearby stone quarries, opened their conversation with me by half-asking, half-stating, “So you want to know about the massacre?”—referring to the October 1956 massacre of forty-eight Kafr Qasim residents by Israeli border police. When I clarified that, while I was also interested in their recollections and experiences of the massacre, I was hoping that our conversation would focus on their memories of work in the town’s and other area quarries, both were somewhat surprised. A researcher coming to the Kafr Qasim Senior Citizens Center to ask residents about their memories of the 1950s and 1960s, they seem to have assumed, was most probably there to hear about the town’s infamous tragedy. Author interview with Na’im ‘Issa and ‘Abd al-Rahman Sarsour, Kafr Qasim, 18 October 2018.
- 14 Katherine Borland, “Co-Narration, Intersubjectivity, and the Listener in Family Storytelling,” *Journal of American Folklore* 130, no. 518 (2017): 444.
- 15 Sayigh, “Palestinian Camp Women,” 42–44.
- 16 Borland, “Co-Narration.”
- 17 Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 30.
- 18 Manna’, *Nakba ve-hisardut*. Manna’'s book was published in Arabic by the Institute of Palestine Studies in 2016 as *Nakba wa baqa’ : hikayat Filastiniyyin zalamu fi Haifa wa-l-Jalil*. An English translation is forthcoming.
- 19 See: Maha Nassar, *Brothers Apart: Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Arab World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017); Dallaseh, “Troubled Waters”; Manna, *Nakba and Survival*; and Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*. An older body of scholarship deals primarily with the economic realities of Palestinians in Israel, including during the state’s first decades: Aziz Haidar, *On the Margins: The Arab Population in the Israeli Economy* (London: Hurst, 1995); Noah Lewin-Epstein and Moshe Semyonov, *The Arab Minority in Israel’s Economy: Patterns of Ethnic Inequality* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993); and Khalidi, *Palestinian Economy*.
- 20 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018.
- 21 Author interview with Munir Qa’war, Kafr Qara’, 13 October 2018.
- 22 During Israel’s first decade, the percentage of Palestinians employed in agriculture was around or above 50 percent; this decreased in the second decade to around 40 percent and, by the early 1970s, to just over 20 percent. See: Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, *Arab Minority*, 47–51; Khalidi, *Arab Economy*, 113–25; and Jiryis, *Arabs in Israel*.
- 23 Author interviews with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ara’ara, 10 October 2018, and Sadeq Dallaseh, 19 October 2018.
- 24 Author interviews with Sadeq Dallaseh, Bu’ayna, 19 October 2018, and Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018.
- 25 Alexander Knox Helm to Ernest Bevin, 31 October 1949, the National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA) FO (Foreign Office) 371/75268. Knox Helm’s observation hints at what multiple works have since established: that during Israel’s first decade, Zionist institutions and leadership, now at the helm of a state apparatus, were for the first time able to successfully implement the policy of Hebrew labor that labor Zionists had pursued since the final years of Ottoman rule. Khalidi, *Arab Economy*, 34–49, 145; Michael Shalev, *Labour and the Political Economy in Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 34–42; Zeev Rosenhek, “The Political Dynamics of a Segmented Labour Market: Palestinian Citizens, Palestinians from the Occupied Territories and Migrant Workers in Israel,” *Acta Sociologica* 46, no. 3 (September 2003): 234–38; and Zachary Lockman, “Land, Labor and the Logic of Zionism: A Critical

- Engagement with Gershon Shafir,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (January 2012): 28.
- 26 Author interview with Mikhail Haddad, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018. Mikhail’s story, poignant as it may be, was not unique. Palestinians elsewhere were also employed in renovating and even demolishing the homes of their neighbors-turned-refugees to make way for new Jewish immigrants. Andrew Ross presents the narrative of Jiryis Sakas of Kafir Yassif, whose father, an experienced builder and quarry owner, worked in demolition and construction for Solel Boneh in his hometown of al-Birwa, only a few years after he and his family were driven from it. Andrew Ross, *Stone Men: The Palestinians Who Built Israel* (London: Verso, 2019), 41–45.
- 27 Author interview with Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 28 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018.
- 29 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018.
- 30 Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, for example, mentions working in gardening for a period of time. Interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar‘ara, 10 October 2018.
- 31 Muhammad Abu Ahmad, who was secretary of the Construction Workers Association in the Nazareth area from 1963 to 1980, mentioned agriculture’s seasonality as another reason why construction was preferred. However, as Bernstein and Swirski, and some narrators I interviewed, note, employment in construction was hardly stable and could easily be considered “seasonal,” if for different reasons. Author interview with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018; and Bernstein and Swirski, “Rapid Economic Development,” 72–73.
- 32 Author interview with Ibrahim Zahalqa, Kafir Qara’, 7 October 2018.
- 33 Author interview with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018.
- 34 Author interviews with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar‘ara, 10 October 2018, and Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 35 Author interview with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018. In his seminal 1974 novel *The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist* (New York: Interlink, 2001), Emile Habiby expresses a similar sentiment (see epigraph to this article).
- 36 Author interview with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018. On the ethno-nationalist republican citizenship model in the Yishuv and Israel, see Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled, *Being Israeli: The Dynamics of Multiple Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). On historical cycles of “militarization” and the social and political “convertibility” of military service, see Yagil Levy, “Social Convertibility and Militarism: Evaluations of the Development of Military-Society Relations in Israel in the Early 2000s,” *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 31, no. 1 (Summer 2003), 73–80.
- 37 The national service system was introduced in 1971 to allow religious Jewish women to perform service other than Israel’s mandatory military conscription. Palestinian citizens in Israel are legally required to serve in the military; however, the state has refrained from conscripting the vast majority of its Palestinian citizens (aside from Druze men), and only a small number typically volunteer for service. At least since the late 1980s, various political parties and organizations have advocated that Palestinian citizens be required or permitted to volunteer for national service. Both right-wing and liberal groups have promoted such proposals, typically arguing, according to their political orientation, that certain rights should be conditional upon such service or that Palestinian citizens should not be blocked from the rights and material advantages it provides. See: Suhad Daher-Nashif, “Trapped Escape: Young Palestinian Women and the Israeli National-Civic Service,” *Arab Studies Journal* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 34–58; Rhoda Kanaaneh, *Surrounded: Palestinian Soldiers in the Israeli Military* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); and Moshe Sherer, “National Service in Israel: Motivations, Volunteer Characteristics, and Levels of Content,” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (March 2004): 94–95.
- 38 Author interview with Sadeq Dallashah, Bu‘ayna, 19 October 2018.
- 39 Kanaaneh, *Surrounded*, 32–34; Janaan Bsoul, “Ha-Sherut ha-Leumi Hu Kli le-’Iluf ‘Aravim Tze’irim” [National Service Is a Tool for Taming Young Arabs], *TheMarker*, 26 November 2015, online at [www.themarker.com/career/1.2784783](http://www.themarker.com/career/1.2784783) (accessed 23 August 2019). Palestinian poet and playwright Ayman Kamel Agbaria recently

- drew a similar parallel: explaining that after high school and before going to university he worked in construction, Agbaria joked, “Construction work is like a year of public service for us.” Vered Lee, “The Palestinian Poet Who Refuses to Be the Court Jester of Israeli Literature,” *Haaretz*, 6 February 2020, online at (haaretz.com) bit.ly/2IqJBVh (accessed 1 April 2020). I thank Orit Bashkin for calling this interview to my attention.
- 40 Author interview with Sadeq Dallasheh, Bu’ayna, 19 October 2018.
- 41 Informal conversation with Anis and Layla Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 42 Author interview with Munir Qa’war, Kafr Qara’, 13 October 2018.
- 43 See Haidar, *On the Margins*, chapter 5.
- 44 Haidar, *On the Margins*, 94.
- 45 See, for example: *al-Ittihad*, 17 January 1963, 2; *al-Ittihad*, 27 March 1964, 5; and *al-Ittihad*, 22 May 1964, 6. See also: Haidar, *On the Margins*, 110–12; Khalidi, *Arab Economy*, 141–45; and Naama Blatman-Thomas, “Commuting for Rights: Circular Mobilities and Regional Identities of Palestinians in a Jewish-Israeli Town,” *Geoforum* 78 (January 2017): 22–32.
- 46 Housing for migrant laborers, and its effects on social, cultural, political and gender issues, is an issue that arises in multiple colonial and post-colonial contexts. See: Jane Bristol-Rhys, “Socio-Spatial Boundaries in Abu Dhabi,” in *Migrant Labor in the Persian Gulf*, ed. Mehran Kamrava and Zahra Babar (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 59–84; Julie Greene, *The Canal Builders: Making America’s Empire at the Panama Canal* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009); Luise White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990); and Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (London: Verso, 2006).
- 47 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018.
- 48 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018. On the Pioneer Arab Youth, including interviews with Ahmad and other participants in the movement, see Ayelet Bechar, “When Arabs Were Invited to Live the Zionist Dream,” *Haaretz*, 26 July 2019, online at (haaretz.com) bit.ly/33XBcRH (accessed 24 August 2019).
- 49 Adopting a Hebrew-sounding name in order to pass as Jewish, particularly in the workplace, remains a practice among Palestinians working in Jewish locales in Israel/Palestine. See, for example, Andreas Hackl, “Immersive Invisibility in the Settler-Colonial City: The Conditional Inclusion of Palestinians in Tel Aviv,” *American Ethnologist* 45, no. 3 (2018): 346. For other works which explore questions of passing in Israel/Palestine, see: Judit Druks, “Passing As . . . in *Arab Labor* by Sayed Kashua on Israeli TV,” *Third Text* (18 March 2020); Liora Sion, “Passing as Hybrid: Arab-Palestinian Teachers in Jewish Schools,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 14 (December 2014): 2636–52; Orna Sasson-Levy and Avi Shoshana, “‘Passing’ as (Non) Ethnic: The Israeli Version of Acting White,” *Sociological Inquiry* 83, no. 3 (2013): 448–72; Gil Hochberg, “To Be or Not to Be an Israeli Arab: Sayed Kashua and the Prospect of Minority Speech-Acts,” *Comparative Literature* 62, no. 1 (2010): 68–88; and Carol Bardenstein, “Cross/Cast: Passing in Israeli and Palestinian Cinema,” in *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture*, eds. Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005): 99–125.
- 50 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018.
- 51 Robinson, *Citizen Strangers*, 42–45.
- 52 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018.
- 53 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar’ara, 10 October 2018.
- 54 In this sense, Ms. Levin had provided Ahmad with a “homeplace” as hooks defines it – a humanizing place of nurture, care, and rest. See hooks, “Homeplace.”
- 55 Author interview with Munir Qa’war, Kafr Qara’, 13 October 2018.
- 56 Author interview with Munir Qa’war, Kafr Qara’, 13 October 2018.
- 57 A considerable body of scholarship has investigated perceptions of the racialized “other” and the “native” as a sexual threat in colonial and settler colonial contexts. See, for example: Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women’s Campaign against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); Jock McCulloch, *Black Peril, White Virtue: Sexual Crime in Southern Rhodesia, 1902–1935* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and*

- the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); and Anna Clark, *Desire: A History of European Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- 58 Author interview with Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 59 *Ani Ahmad* [I Am Ahmad], directed by Avshalom Katz, 1966. Concern over Palestinian men in Jewish spaces dates back to the Mandate and is amply represented in Israeli film and literature. See: Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001); and Yochai Oppenheimer, *Me'ever la-Gader: Yitzug ha-'Aravim ba-Siporet ha-'Ivrit u-ha-Yisraelit (1906–2005)* [Barriers: The Representation of the Arab in Hebrew and Israeli Fiction, 1906–2005] (Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 2008).
- 60 Author interview with Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018. A report on youth between ages twelve and seventeen in Nazareth, authored as part of the work of the government's Committee for the Employment and Vocational Training Problems of Arab Youth in late 1961, and dealing primarily with young teenagers employed in coffee shops, restaurants, and retail locations, mentions instances of up to fifteen teenagers sharing a room in Haifa during the winter months, when sleeping outside became no longer possible. "Skira 'al Matzav ha-No'ar be-Natzrat, Gilim [*sic*] 12–17" [Overview of the State of Youth in Nazareth, Ages 12–17], undated, ISA-moital-moital-0010bbt [RG 2/GL-2/61713].
- 61 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, 'Araba, 12 October 2018.
- 62 Author interview with Lutf Sulayman, Bu'ayna, 19 October 2018.
- 63 Author interview with Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 64 Helen Ngo notes that both Frantz Fanon and George Yancy's theorization of the hyper-visibility of racialized bodies, particularly those of Black men, is "usually bound with associations of danger and violence," resulting in an alienation from one's own body. Without facilely equating experiences of blackness in the colonial metropole or the United States and Palestinianness in Israel/Palestine, it is nonetheless important, in my view, to acknowledge their similarities and draw upon the critical insights of scholars of race who focus on blackness. Ngo, *Habits of Racism*, chapter 2; George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008); and Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 2008).
- 65 Author interview with Ibrahim Zahalqa, Kafr Qara', 7 October 2018.
- 66 I borrow the term "hidden in plain sight" from Timothy Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011). On "immersive invisibility," which primarily middle-class Palestinian citizens experience and practice in contemporary Tel Aviv, see Hackl, "Immersive Invisibility."
- 67 Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds*, 23. "Invisible labor/work" has for some time now been the object of considerable study. Originally applied in the 1980s to describe unpaid work carried out primarily by women and not recognized as labor, the concept has since expanded to encompass unrecognized emotional and habitual components of labor, so-called "virtual" and production labor carried out remotely and hidden from consumers, the purposeful erasure of workers' racial/ethnic identities in certain industries, physically sequestered forms of work, and more. The concept's expanding scope has been accompanied by attempts to better define it as an analytic category. Erin Hatton suggests that invisible work/labor be defined as "labor that is economically devalued through three intersecting sociological mechanisms . . . cultural, legal, and spatial mechanisms of invisibility – which operate in different ways and to different degrees." Palestinian citizens' work in Israel's construction industry clearly demonstrates the intersectional and mutually constitutive workings of all three mechanisms. See: Erin Hatton, "Mechanisms of Invisibility: Rethinking the Concept of Invisible Work," *Work, Employment, and Society* 31, no. 2 (2017): 336–51; Marion G. Crain, Winifred R. Poster, and Miriam A. Cherry, eds., *Invisible Labor: Hidden Work in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016); Jill Esbenshade, "The 'Crisis' over Day Labor: The Politics of Visibility and Public Space," *WorkingUSA* 3, no. 6 (March–April 2000): 27–70; Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of

- California Press, 2012); and Arlene Kaplan Daniels, "Invisible Work," *Social Problems* 34, no. 5 (December 1987): 403–15.
- 68 Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, 'Ar'ara, 10 October 2018.
- 69 "Jungel be-Lev ha-'Ir" [A Jungle in the Heart of the City], *ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, 24 July 1963, 10–11. The article does not credit a writer, but Shalom Cohen revealed his authorship in a later column. See Shalom Cohen, "Kor'e Yakar" [Dear Reader], *ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, 15 February 1967, 2.
- 70 "Jungel be-Lev ha-'Ir," 10–11.
- 71 From the mid-1950s until the early 1960s, the Israeli government undertook a mass project of settling primarily Mizrahi Jews in the Lakhish region. See Smadar Sharon, "*Kakh kovshim moledet*": *tikhnun u-yishuv hevel Lakhish be-shnot ha-hamishim* ["And Thus a Homeland is Conquered": Planning and Settlement in 1950s Lakhish Region] (Haifa: Pardes Hotza'a la-Or, 2017).
- 72 The practice of passing as Jewish is highlighted elsewhere in the film, when Ahmad Sabr Masarwa, the narrator, relates the story of another Palestinian worker, Jamal, who after being beaten by Jewish coworkers at a factory, started presenting himself as Yitzhak and wearing a Star of David necklace. Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, as noted above, presented himself as Zvi for a prolonged period as a teenager. Ahmad's refusal to "pass" in the film, in contrast to his real-life experiences, calls attention to the sense of loss that accompanies passing, despite the social, economic, and political gains it offers. See Allyson Hobbs, *A Chosen Exile: A History of Racial Passing in American Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
- 73 *Ha-Olam ha-Ze*, 13 January 1965, 26.
- 74 Cohen, "Kor'e Yakar." What Cohen describes in the article, Palestinian workers being the first to be hurt by the recession, seems to have been part of a broader discriminatory phenomenon. Several narrators mentioned events when Palestinian workers were singled out as "the first to go" at times when project managers decided to fire workers due to financial conditions. Author interviews with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018, and Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 75 Farsakh, *Palestinian Labour Migration*; and Portugali, *Implicate Relations*.
- 76 Yael Berda, *Living Emergency: Israel's Permit Regime in the Occupied West Bank* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017); Sara M. Roy, *The Gaza Strip: The Political Economy of De-Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2016); Farsakh, *Palestinian Labour Migration*; and Portugali, *Implicate Relations*.
- 77 On the term "Israeli Arabs," see Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 43–44.
- 78 Early on Ahmad was involved with Uri Avneri and Shalom Cohen's *ha-'Olam ha-Ze – Koah Hadash* (This World – A New Force) party, which fielded candidates for the Israeli Knesset in 1965 and 1969, and with the Socialist Organization in Israel (more commonly known by the name of its monthly publication, *Matzpen*), an organization founded in 1962 by former members of the Communist party pushed out due to their criticism of the Soviet Union. Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, 'Ar'ara, 10 October 2018.
- 79 Today, Ahmad refuses a politics of separation in Israel/Palestine, using a Yiddish expression to drive the point further still: "I don't believe in a matter of Arabs and Jews, and not in two states. It's all – you don't know Yiddish do you? It's all *kalle kanyes* [someone with no skill or knowledge]. Because you can't separate. If you ask me, my whole being used to be the friends in Tel Aviv. [When people] ask my wife how I look so well, she says, 'It's because of his friends.'" Author interview with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, 'Ar'ara, 10 October 2018.
- 80 *Ha-'Olam ha-Ze*, 20 December 1967, 4; author communication with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, 6 February 2019.
- 81 Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Ghazi Falah, "Israeli 'Judaization' Policy in the Galilee," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 69–85.
- 82 Yair Bäuml, "Israel's Military Rule over Its Palestinian Citizens (1948–1968): Shaping the Israeli Segregation System," in *Israel and its Palestinian Citizens: Ethnic Privileges in the Jewish State*, ed. Nadim N. Rouhana and Sahar S. Huneidi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 118; Yosef Jabareen

- and Hakam Dbiat, *Adrikhalut ve-orientalizm ba-aretz* [Architecture and Orientalism in the Country] (Haifa: ha-Merkaz le-Heker ha-'Ir ve-ha-Ezor, 2014), 261; Yair Bäuml, *Tzel kahol lavan: mediniyut ha-mimsad ha-Isra'eli u-pe'ulotav be-kerev ha-ezrahim ha-'Aravim be-Israel: ha-shanim ha-me'atzvot, 1958–1968* [A Blue and White Shadow: The Israeli Establishment's Policy and Actions among Its Arab Citizens: The Formative Years, 1958–1968] (Haifa: Pardes, 2007), 142–45; and Rassem Khamaisi, *Mi-tikhnun magbil le-tikhnun mefateah ba-yishuvim ha-'Aravi'im be-Israel* [From Restrictive Planning to Developmental Planning in Arab Localities in Israel] (Jerusalem: Floersheimer Institute for Policy Studies, 1993), 8–12.
- 83 For studies of “traditional” Palestinian construction methods and house types, see: Ron Fuchs, “The Palestinian Arab House and the Islamic ‘Primitive Hut,’” *Muqarnas* 15 (1998): 157–77; and Tawfiq Canaan, *The Palestinian Arab House: Its Architecture and Its Folklore* (Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press, 1933). Recent works call particular attention to the reliance on self-construction among Palestinian citizens in Israel following the Nakba. See: Abed Badran, *Space Design, Making and Tectonics in Palestinian Architecture in Israel: Impacts of the Israeli Project* (PhD diss., Cardiff University, 2017); Yael Allweil, *Homeland: Zionism as Housing Regime, 1860–2011* (New York: Routledge, 2017), especially chapter 7; and Jabareen and Dbiat, *Adrikhalut*, especially chapter 6.
- 84 ‘Ali al-Khalili, *Aghani al-'amal wa-l-'umal fi-Filastin* [Songs of Labor and Laborers in Palestine] (Beirut: Dar Ibn Khaldun, 1980), 88–89; author interviews with Ibrahim Zahalqa, Kafir Qara', 7 October 2018, and Lutf Sulayman, Bu'ayna, 19 October 2018. Basma Fahoum has called my attention to another variation of this song, *Wali' al-babur*. This iteration was sung by children in anticipation of the starting of any kind of engine or gas stove/burner (*babur*). “*Wali' . . .*” thus sits at a sung juncture between carbon-hungry systems – limekilns, motor engines, stoves, and concrete.
- 85 Author interviews with Ahmad Yusuf Masarwa, ‘Ar'ara, 10 October 2018; Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018; and Sadeq Dallahseh, Bu'ayna, 19 October 2018.
- 86 Author interview with Muhammad Abu Ahmad, Nazareth, 20 October 2018.
- 87 For the single-space village house, see: Allweil, *Homeland*, 88–92; Jabareen and Dbiat, *Adrikhalut*, 246–53; and Fuchs, “Palestinian Arab House,” 158–62. For new “types” of architecture which emerged in Palestinian villages in Israel in the wake of 1948, see: Badran, *Space Design*, 389–419; Allweil, *Homeland*, 208–13; and Jabareen and Dbiat, *Adrikhalut*, 288–300. Of the three works, only Jabareen and Dbiat's mentions the preponderance of “skilled local manpower in the construction industry,” listed among the “advantages” of what they term the “post-traumatic model” of Palestinian housing.
- 88 In this sense, these narratives allow us to follow Farha Ghannam's suggestion to examine modern built environments as the product not only of “planners and political figures,” but also of what she calls, following Michel de Certeau, “the ordinary practitioners of the city.” Although Ghannam's research focuses on the Cairene metropolis and on forced migrations driven by development economics, there are notable similarities in the practices and perceptions of what constitutes “modern” housing among the residents of the northeastern Cairo neighborhood of al-Zawiya al-Hamra and the individuals I interviewed. Farha Ghannam, *Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).
- 89 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018.
- 90 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018.
- 91 Author interview with Shawqi Khoury, Tarshiha, 21 October 2018.
- 92 Arlie Hochschild originally developed the concept of the second shift to describe how American women remained responsible for most labor at home (child-rearing, care, and other forms of “housework”) despite their dramatic incorporation into the U.S. workforce. Hochschild observed that many women found themselves working two “shifts” on a daily basis – one as salaried employees, the second at home. The Palestinian case shows the rise of similarly institutionalized second shifts, driven by discrimination, in different historical circumstances and in different forms. Arlie Russel Hochschild, *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*, with Anne Machung, 3rd ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 2012 [1989]).

- 93 Author interview with Abu Jamil and Umm Jamil Andraos, Tarshiha, 22 October 2018.
- 94 Author interview with Abu Jamil and Umm Jamil Andraos, Tarshiha, 22 October 2018.
- 95 Author interview with Abu Jamil and Umm Jamil Andraos, Tarshiha, 22 October 2018.
- 96 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018. The intensity of the military’s violence that day received considerable coverage from the Arabic and Hebrew Communist press in particular. On 2 July 1957, a day after the events, both *al-Ittihad* and *Kol ha-‘Am* (Voice of the People) reported what had taken place in ‘Araba on their front pages and *al-Ittihad* stated that the police behaved with “intense brutality that evoked the dreadful memory of Kafr Qasim.” “Asalat dima’ al-qarawiyin al-‘Arab fi ‘udwan athim bashi’: al-i-‘tida’ yashmal al-nisa’ wa-l-‘ajaza fi ‘Araba wayusib thalatha bi-jirah khatira” [The Blood of the Arab Villagers Flowed in Criminal Ugly Aggression: The Assault Engulfed Women and the Weak in ‘Araba and Caused Severe Injuries to Three], *al-Ittihad*, 2 July 1957, 1; and “Hitpar‘ut akhzarit shel ha-mishtara hatzva’it neged toshvei kfar ‘Araba” [A Vicious Rampage by the Military Policy against the Residents of ‘Araba Village], *Kol Ha-‘Am*, 2 July 1957, 1. The Hebrew daily *Ma‘ariv*, meanwhile, reported on the police’s dispatch to ‘Araba, following “several warnings,” without mention of violence or arrests. “Shotrim huz’aku la-kfar ‘Araba” [Police Called to ‘Araba Village], *Ma‘ariv*, 2 July 1957, 3.
- 97 He and several other Communist Party members in ‘Araba were arrested multiple times for organizing a protest against the “education tax” which the state levied solely on Palestinian citizens. Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018; *Kol ha-‘Am*, 11 October 1955, 2. For more on the “education tax,” see al-Haj, *Education*, 62–64.
- 98 Author interview with Ibrahim Shamshum, ‘Araba, 12 October 2018.