

# Resistance and Survival in Central Galilee, July 1948–July 1951

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In November 1947, the population of the Galilee was approximately 241,000. The vast majority were Palestinian Arabs – with the number of Arab Muslims estimated about 169,000, Arab Christians about 29,000, and Druze about 10,700 – and the Jewish population about 31,790.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the 1948 war, only an estimated 100,000 Palestinians, in just 70 out of 220 Arab localities, remained in the Galilee, having survived the ethnic cleansing of Palestine.<sup>2</sup> In no other part of Palestine occupied by Israel in 1948 was so significant a portion of Palestinians (almost half) spared the experience of expulsion and exile.

Geography as well as communal affiliation was a significant element in determining who remained in the Galilee. Druze villages remained in place and no harm was inflicted on the members of this community.<sup>3</sup> As for the Christian communities in northern Palestine, it is safe to say that Israel's sensitivity toward the West and the various Christian denominations there produced a more benign policy toward them. (This was particularly true in Nazareth, a holy city for the Christian world.) As a result, most of those living in Christian localities in the Galilee were able to stay put in this part of the homeland – although there are exceptional cases, such as Iqrit and Kafr Bir'im, whose inhabitants were forced to evacuate their villages and were not allowed to return home. Muslims in the Galilee suffered from the harshest policies of ethnic cleansing. Only about one-third of the pre-1948 Muslim population survived in the Galilee; the remaining two-thirds became refugees, the majority in Lebanon and Syria.

In August 1948, Constantine Zurayk (1909–2000) published his seminal book *Ma'na al-nakba* (The Meaning of the Catastrophe).<sup>4</sup> Arab elites in Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, and Cairo read the macro picture of the catastrophe. But the Nakba held a different meaning in the eyes and minds of local leaders and inhabitants from the Galilee than it did for Zurayk and national elites. Far away from the Arab capitals, these Palestinians experienced the repercussions of the catastrophe on their kith and kin. To cope, survivors in this part of Palestine decided to cling to their homeland and face their conquerors barehanded. Knowing the limits of their power, they focused on decoding the Israeli policies at this stage of the war in the Galilee.

The challenges of resistance and survival facing the people living in rural Galilee were rarely noticed even by the urban Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem, and the resilience of many Palestinian families in the Galilee is a fascinating story still largely absent from the Nakba narrative. This essay proposes to shed light on the daily experiences of Palestinians during the later stage of the Nakba in northern Palestine. The microhistories of Majd al-Kurum and its adjacent villages during the later phase of the 1948 war and after have much to teach us about the meaning of the Nakba in the daily experiences of refugees and non-refugees in the Galilee. I rely heavily on the broader research undertaken for my recent book *Nakba and Survival* to delve into the realities of the people of Majd al-Kurum before and immediately after its surrender to the Israeli Army on 30 October 1948.<sup>5</sup> In writing *Nakba and Survival*, I interviewed dozens of eyewitnesses from Majd al-Kurum and neighboring localities. These oral testimonies are a valuable source for understanding the people's experiences, hopes, and fears during this critical period, as are the diaries of Abu Jamil – one of the few educated elders of Majd al-Kurum village – to which I was granted access by his family and which span a period of more than forty years, before and after the Nakba.<sup>6</sup> And as we shall see, the predicament of the Palestinian survivors continued long after the fall of the Galilee.<sup>7</sup>

## Microhistory versus Macro Narratives

The Zionist project of immigration from Europe into Palestine and settling on its land is not much different from other settler-colonial ventures in the Americas, Australia, South Africa, and elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> However, a few differences and specific aspects of Zionist settler-colonialism are crucial for understanding Israel's history: First, the relatively late timing of the Zionist project prevented elimination of the indigenous Palestinians by massive massacres and genocide. Second, Zionists' establishment of a national movement for the Jewish people *before* immigration to Palestine distinguishes it from other settler-colonies. Finally, the exclusivist nature of Zionism as a project only for Jews largely determined its hostile relations with the indigenous Arabs of Palestine.<sup>9</sup>

While the location and timing of the Zionist settler-colonial project hindered the option of genocide or mass killing of the Palestinians, neither was integration an

option from the Zionist point of view. The growing resistance of the Palestinians to the British Mandate in the late 1930s raised a red flag among the colonizers of Palestine; it was during this period (in 1937) that a “transfer committee” was established with the knowledge and support of David Ben-Gurion.<sup>10</sup> Addressing the question of how to rid the land of the indigenous Palestinians became an urgent task. Uprooting the Palestinians from the future Jewish state was transformed from the “present absent” question into the spoken common good of the Zionist settler colonials. Thus, the plans for transfer or ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians by Israel were set ten years before the Nakba of 1948.<sup>11</sup>

Much of the historical debate on the Nakba continues to revolve around the question of whether or not Plan Dalet, drawn up in March 1948, is the key for understanding the Israeli policy of ethnic cleansing. Walid Khalidi, Ilan Pappé, and others on the Palestinian side convincingly argue that Israel had a master plan for expulsion, which was implemented during the war.<sup>12</sup> On the Zionist side, Benny Morris and others deny any plans for expulsion of the Palestinians and claim that “the birth of the Palestinian refugee problem” was an outcome of the war.<sup>13</sup> Sticking to the old questions and the positivist methodologies helps obscure much of the complexity and richness of what happened on the ground. Particularly absent from these macro accounts is the agency of the people of Palestine in their own history.<sup>14</sup>

The Zionist narrative of 1948 war relies heavily on Israeli military archives, memoirs of the victors, and official British sources. On the Arab side, archives are absent and the Palestinians left fewer written testimonies. However, some Palestinian communities who survived in parts of the homeland cherish microhistory and are happy to share their story.<sup>15</sup> Putting together oral testimonies of eyewitnesses, local diaries, the contemporary press, and other written sources enables us to give voice to those who were long silenced. The voice of marginalized survivors in the Galilee, for example, adds fresh knowledge and new insights absent from the national narratives of the urban elites.

The case study of the Nakba in the Galilee raises important questions. If the ethnic cleansing policies of Plan Dalet were implemented in this part of Palestine, how did so many escape expulsion and uprooting? Did Israel have a different policy toward Palestinians in the Galilee? If so, why? If not, what role did the inhabitants of the Galilee play in determining their lot as survivors of ethnic cleansing? Was collaboration the name of the game or were different methods of indirect and peaceful resistance to expulsion more significant? The answers to such questions could produce a new chapter about the daily experiences of Palestinians during the later stage of the Nakba in fall 1948 and beyond.

The distinct experience of Palestinians in the Galilee at the end of 1948 sheds new light on the deterministic approaches and humanizes the behavior of the survivors. The eastern Galilee, including the districts of Safad and Tiberias, was occupied in spring 1948 and very few Palestinian localities survived.<sup>16</sup> The ethnic cleansing in the abovementioned areas as well as in the Bisan district was almost complete. The same is true when the seashore area from the city of ‘Akka up to the Lebanese border is

our concern. The bulk of the about one hundred thousand Palestinian survivors north of Haifa were found in the lower Galilee and mid-upper part of it. This geographical differentiation is highly important and is telling about the complexity of the Nakba experiences even in the northern part of Palestine.

Unlike Safad, Tiberias, and Bisan, the city of Nazareth survived the Nakba after its fall in July 1948 and ended up hosting thousands of refugees from neighboring villages and cities. The peaceful surrender of this holy city and the survival of most villages in its district are in many ways unique.<sup>17</sup> However, Israeli policy changed dramatically three months later, during Operation Hiram. Ben-Gurion had promised his cabinet members on 26 September 1948 that “the Galilee will be empty of Arabs” after its occupation was complete. However, most of his cabinet members refused to give the prime minister a green light to renew the war against the Egyptian army in the south and to occupy the Upper Galilee in the north. Ben-Gurion’s plans were delayed until the end of October, at which point the Israeli army used terror and brutality on the frightened civilians, many of whom chose to leave their homes for a time under the onslaught.<sup>18</sup> However, they returned quickly to their localities and wrote an important chapter about Palestinian survival in the homeland.

The people of the Galilee were not partners to the rivalry between the Husaynis, the king of Jordan, and the Egyptians. Far from Jerusalem and Gaza, the centers of national political activity, the Palestinians in northern Palestine were leaderless on the national stage. This vacuum was filled by tribal, communal, and other local leaderships that took initiatives to survive under Israeli control. Druze, Bedouin, and other tribal leaders (the Zu‘bi clan in villages east of ‘Afula, for example) initiated mutually beneficial relationships with the victors.<sup>19</sup> The communists in Nazareth and Haifa, led by Tawfiq Tubi, Emil Habibi, and Fu‘ad Nassar, became survivors and collaborators with Israel of a unique kind in the fall of 1948, supporting annexation of the Galilee to Israel and initiating the integration of their National Liberation League (‘Usubat al-Taharrur al-Watani) into the Israeli Communist Party (Maki).<sup>20</sup> The people of Majd al-Kurum would later turn to other survivors in the Galilee – such as the people of Nazareth, their Druze neighbors, and the communists – to learn lessons and methods of peaceful resistance. First, though, they had to survive themselves.

## **Surviving Operation Hiram against All Odds**

After declaring the second truce on 19 July 1948, a pocket of about sixty Arab villages in the middle and upper Galilee was left outside Israel’s control. The so-called Galilee pocket stretched from the village of ‘Ilabun in the southeast to Majd al-Kurum in the west. This pocket was besieged by Israeli forces from three sides, maintaining open and direct access to Lebanon only in the north. The fall of this region to the Israeli army was only a matter of time. Unlike the Jordanian and the Egyptian armies in the south, the Lebanese and Syrian armies played no serious role in defending the Galilee against the Israeli army after July 1948.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the Palestinians who lived in the

“pocket” area enjoyed a state of autonomy led by elders of the villages in cooperation with officers of the Jaysh al-Inqadh.<sup>22</sup>

The village of Majd al-Kurum, located eighteen kilometers east of ‘Akka, on the main road to Safad, became an active frontline in the 1948 war from mid-July until the end of October. The Israeli forces transformed the occupied village of al-Birwa into a military base from which they launched several attacks on the western outskirts of Majd al-Kurum. The people of this village were supported by volunteers from the neighboring villages as well as soldiers from Jaysh al-Inqadh. Some volunteers were Palestinians from the Galilee and elsewhere, and others came from as far as Iraq. Cooperation between local Palestinians and Arab volunteers enabled administration of a normal life during the hundred days of the second truce period (19 July–29 October 1948).<sup>23</sup>

During the three months of the second truce, Palestinians in the Galilee experienced daily life in different ways. Nazareth was the only Arab city to survive the war under Israeli occupation and its inhabitants were managing their way back toward a kind of normal life.<sup>24</sup> The municipality and other communal institutions collaborated with Israeli authorities in administering daily life for the local population. The news from Nazareth about a “return to normality” bred hopes of a similar future elsewhere in the Galilee. However, the realities in ‘Akka and the western Galilee were more disturbing. Arab villages along the coastal area of the western Galilee up to the Lebanese border were uprooted and their inhabitants joined the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees.<sup>25</sup>

When Israel launched Operation Hiram to conclude the occupation of the upper Galilee, the Israeli army made special effort to uproot the remaining villagers. Despite these efforts, only about half of the population left home, while the other half survived in situ. The survival of about half the Palestinian population in upper Galilee, given the brutally harsh policy that included fourteen massacres in this tiny region within a week, is remarkable.<sup>26</sup> In no other case during the 1948 war was the desire of the commander (Ben-Gurion) to seize the land vacant of its people made more explicit than in the upper Galilee. From where, then, did the people find the strength to resist the renewed efforts toward ethnic cleansing? How did the inhabitants of this area calculate their steps? Is there a lesson to be learned from the experiences of these indigenous people who found creative methods to resist expulsion and remain in the Galilee?

## **The Power of Weakness**

Six villages along the main road between ‘Akka and Safad control the border line between the upper and lower Galilee. Majd al-Kurum, on the western side of the Shaghur valley, dominates the hills overlooking the sea, while al-Rama on the eastern side controls a strategic intersection between lower and upper Galilee. In the middle, between al-Rama and Majd al-Kurum, four villages – Bi‘na, Dayr al-Asad, Nahf, and Sajur – constituted a strong chain of Palestinian presence. Until 1948, there were no

Zionist settlements in the area. In Operation Hiram, the Israeli army made special efforts to uproot the indigenous inhabitants of this part of the Galilee.<sup>27</sup> However, all six villages stayed put and most of their inhabitants remained, withstanding massacres, intimidation, and expulsion operations. Though Ben-Gurion had promised his cabinet members the conquest of the Galilee empty of its indigenous Arab population, the experiences of the leadership of Nazareth, the Druze, and the communists encouraged the people of upper Galilee to stick to their homes and not to leave easily. At this stage of the war, they had no illusions that their leave would be temporary.

The contradicting “messages” of the Israeli army on the one hand, and the local leadership on the other, further complicated the situation. The volunteers of Jaysh al-Inqadh came to evacuate the village of Majd al-Kurum on the evening of 29 October 1948. They informed the villagers of evacuation orders to Lebanon and urged them to stay put. The Iraqi officer was very clear in spelling out his advice: If you have friends among the Jews or the Druze, contact them tonight and try to reach an agreement of surrender. Unsurprisingly, the village elders followed the advice of the Iraqi officer. Three went to the Druze village of Yarka and, through the mediation of the elders of the Ma‘di family, they reached a surrender agreement with the Jewish soldiers in al-Birwa. (Members of the Ma‘di family from Yarka were mentioned as mediators of similar surrender agreements in several other villages as well.)

The next morning (30 October) a few notables of the village and a few children met with Israeli soldiers several miles west of Majd al-Kurum and led them peacefully into the spring courtyard.<sup>28</sup> That afternoon, a unit of Israel’s Golani Brigade approached the village from the east.<sup>29</sup> When the Golani Brigade soldiers started shelling the center of the village, they encountered fire from the Israeli unit that had accepted its surrender. After realizing that it was friendly fire, the exchange quickly ended. The elders of Majd al-Kurum realized that by acting quickly they had spared their village a massacre similar to the one the Golani perpetrated in ‘Ilabun that same day.<sup>30</sup> However, the events of 30 October did not serve as the final word of the Israeli army. The massacre planned for that day was delayed but not cancelled, taking place a week later.

In the massacres that took place in these villages, Israeli soldiers entered each village and ordered all men to convene in a courtyard in the village center. Then, an officer gave orders to shoot three or four young men to terrify the locals. Next, inhabitants were ordered to leave within half an hour.<sup>31</sup> The soldiers watched the villagers start their march into exile before moving to the next village. The consistent pattern of the soldiers’ behavior is the best indication that they followed orders from above. The case of al-Rama, on the eastern side of the Shaghur valley, supports the theory of orders from above. The inhabitants (a mix of Christians and Druze) were convened by the soldiers, but no massacre occurred. The soldiers allowed the Druze of the village to stay in their homes because the Druze community’s leaders had reached agreements with the Israeli leadership.<sup>32</sup> As for the Christians, they were ordered to depart immediately for Lebanon. The families spent two days climbing the steep mountain north of the village, in the direction of Lebanon. Druze neighbors in the villages of Bayt Jann and al-Baqi‘a, meanwhile, slowed the march toward Lebanon

and contacted community notables in Yarka. The expulsion orders were overturned and the Christians of al-Rama went back to their homes.

In Majd al-Kurum, the massacre began on 5 November 1948, the pretext for this war crime being that not all weapons had been delivered to the Israeli army according to the previous week's agreement. The elders of the village denied the charge and witnessed helplessly the execution of five young men within a few hours. A larger massacre was averted when a security officer named Haim Urbach from Nahariya arrived. Urbach had mediated the village's surrender agreement at the end of October, along with the Druze notables from Yarka. The exact circumstances of Urbach's arrival are not known, though eyewitness accounts seem to indicate that he was contacted by the villagers of Majd al-Kurum.<sup>33</sup>

News of the massacre in Majd al-Kurum reached the United Nations (UN) observers who visited the village on 9 November. The Israeli army representative who accompanied the UN observers on a tour dismissed the massacre as rumors spread by the villagers. The villagers exhumed the fresh graves to let the UN observers see with their own eyes the victims' wounds. According to locals' testimony, the UN team took photographs of the victims' wounds.<sup>34</sup> This incident proves the courage that many Palestinians showed in this period, not only in remaining in their homes and villages, but in challenging the representative of the Israeli military and his untruths, even going so far as digging up their recently deceased relatives and neighbors. Even at this late stage of the war, however, and despite the intervention of the UN, no Israeli soldier was prosecuted, let alone convicted and punished, for war crimes.

In the aftermath of the massacre, dozens of young men fled to the mountains, fearing execution. However, most of the inhabitants of Majd al-Kurum decided to remain in their homes. In mid-December 1948, the Israeli authorities began to register the inhabitants in order to prevent the return of refugees to the area. According to that census, more than 1,800 people were counted and registered, receiving registration receipts, in Majd al-Kurum. On 9 and 14 January 1949, however, before the Israeli authorities had delivered identity cards to residents of the upper Galilee and on the eve of the first elections in Israel, the Israeli army expelled 535 people from the village.<sup>35</sup>

The excuse for this delayed expulsion, according to military documents, was that those expelled were refugees who had returned illegally from Lebanon. However, documents from the High Court of Justice in 1951 negated the army's claims.<sup>36</sup> Dozens of those expelled in January 1949 refused to accept the fate of living in refugee camps and crossed the border, often multiple times, to return to their homes. In July 1951, on the eve of the second elections in Israel, dozens of these villagers turned to the High Court and asked for its support in putting an end to the cycle of return and expulsion. They had received Israeli identity card numbers, documented by the registration receipts they had received, and therefore, they argued, they had the right to stay and even to participate in the elections. Indeed, the court heard the arguments put forward by the army and by the people of Majd al-Kurum and decided in favor of the latter. Despite having been denied identity cards, the court accepted the registration receipts as proof of being present in the village before the "unlawful expulsion."<sup>37</sup>

My family was one of the many that benefitted from the court decision. After experiencing life in ‘Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp in South Lebanon for two and a half years, my father decided to bring his family back home. During the years of exile, he had crossed the border a number of times and spent weeks at home in Majd al-Kurum with his mother. His mother and sisters helped hide him and gathered some money for him and his brother in the refugee camp. Ultimately, he decided to bring his family back home after the court decided in favor of the returnees. The refusal of hundreds of people from Majd al-Kurum and the neighboring villages to comply with the army’s expulsion orders is a striking example of resilience and survival against all odds.

## Epilogue

July 1951 was an eventful month in the history of Israel and its neighbors. On 16 July 1951, the Lebanese prime minister Riyad al-Sulh (1894–1951) was assassinated on his way back to Beirut after a short visit to Jordan. Less than a week later, on 20 July, King ‘Abdallah, the founder of modern Jordan, was assassinated in Jerusalem. The two leaders were accused of betraying the Palestinians by conducting secret negotiations to reach peace agreements with Israel. Six decades later, very few of the villagers I interviewed mentioned these two traumatic events of macro historical value. Many more recalled Israel’s second parliamentary elections on 30 July 1951, remembering it as the first time they took part in Israeli elections for the Knesset.<sup>38</sup> The elections were an opportunity for some to exchange their extended family vote for identity cards that could allow their continued presence and survival in the Galilee. Collaborators with the ruling labor (Mapai) party approached elders of families and promised citizenship for infiltrators if they vote “correctly.” Thus, dozens of people without citizenship earned the identity cards so crucial to their survival in the aftermath of the 1951 and 1955 Knesset elections.<sup>39</sup>

In my parents’ memory, the importance of July 1951 is related to the family’s return to Majd al-Kurum after two and a half years of exile. Few people dared to share their memories of the Nakba with their children during the 1950s, and even later. My father was different, and in 1958 he told his ten-year-old son bits and pieces of the village ordeal during and after the Nakba. My father was proud to tell the story’s “happy ending” of return from south Lebanon, and from an early age I grasped the significance of growing up at home in Majd al-Kurum and not in a refugee camp in south Lebanon. Fulfilling the right of return was a courageous decision in light of the fact that Israeli soldiers shot dead at the borders thousands of Palestinians seeking to return surreptitiously to their homes, and I remember feeling doubly lucky while hearing, time and again, the family’s story of return by sea.

My mother was also active in telling her part of the family story. She was surprised when one day my father asked her urgently to prepare to go back to Majd al-Kurum.<sup>40</sup> “Can’t you see that I am pregnant and will not be able to walk dozens of miles in the mountains like you,” she told him. “I do,” he replied, “and you are not going to walk



at all.” Indeed, a car transported my parents and their three-and-a-half-year-old child from ‘Ayn al-Hilwa refugee camp to Tyre. From that city’s tiny harbor, fishermen transported the Palestinian refugee families in their boats to Shavei Zion (Returnees of Zion) north of ‘Akka.<sup>41</sup> And from there, my family found its way back home and my mother gave birth to her second child (Muhammad) at home on 14 October 1951.

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### Endnotes

- 1 In addition to Jewish and Arab inhabitants, a few thousand Circassian Muslims and Armenian Christians lived in the Galilee, mostly in Arab localities. For further information on the Galilee’s population in 1947, see Adel Manna, *Nakba and Survival* [Hebrew] (Tel-Aviv: The Jerusalem Van Leer Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2017), 86.
- 2 Some of the uprooted villagers – mainly refugees from villages such as Iqrit, Kafr Bir‘im, al-Birwa, al-Damun, al-Ghabisiyya, and other depopulated localities – were allowed to stay and were designated “present absentees” according to the Israeli legal system.
- 3 The same is true of the tiny communities of Circassians (in the villages of Kafr Kama and al-Rihaniyya) and Armenians.
- 4 Constantine Zurayq, *Ma‘na al-nakba* (Beirut: Dar al-‘ilm lil-malayin, 1948). The first edition of the book was published in August 1948, and second edition in October.
- 5 Adel Manna, *Nakba wa baqa’: hikayat Filastiniyyin dhalu fi Haifa wa al-Jalil (1948–1956)* [Nakba and Survival: The Story of the Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, (1948–1956)] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2016). The Hebrew edition (*Nakba ve-hisardut*) was published the following year by the Van Leer Institute and Hakibbutz Hameuchad.
- 6 I am very grateful to Abu Jamil’s family, who allowed me to photocopy the two volumes of diaries. Abu Jamil, or Muhammad Haydar, was born at the beginning of the twentieth century and started writing his diaries after the birth of his elder son, Jamil, in the mid-1920s.
- 7 Expulsion of Palestinians from the Galilee continued on a low scale through the early 1950s. At the end of October 1956, the inhabitants of two villages (Kirad al-Baqqara and Kirad al-Ghannameh) in the Huleh Valley were uprooted and expelled to Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere.
- 8 Nadim N. Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khouri, “Settler-Colonial Citizenship: Conceptualizing the Relationship between Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 3 (2015): 205–25.
- 9 The exclusivist nature of Zionism became clearer in the ideology of the second wave of immigration (‘*aliya*), which stressed the concepts of conquest of land (*kivush ha’adama*) and conquest of labor (*kivush ha’avuda*). Ben-Gurion and other prominent leaders of Israel in 1948 were members of this group.
- 10 A transfer committee led by Yosef Weitz and supported by Ben-Gurion started discussing methods of expelling Arabs from the future Jewish state immediately after the Peel Commission’s report in 1937. In a new biography of Ben-Gurion, Israeli historian Tom Segev confirms Ben-Gurion’s support for transfer. See Tom Segev, *Medinah be-khol mehir: sipur hayav shel David Ben-Gurion* [David Ben-Gurion: A State at All Costs] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2018).

- 11 Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of Transfer in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1992). See also Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007).
- 12 See: Walid Khalidi, “Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 4–33; and Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing*.
- 13 See the back and forth “Debate on the 1948 Exodus” between Benny Morris, Nur Masalha, and Norman Finkelstein in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 21, nos. 1 and 2 (Autumn 1991 and Winter 1992).
- 14 See the early works of Nafez Nazzari (*The Palestinian Exodus from Galilee* [Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1978]) and Rosemary Sayigh (*Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries, a People’s History* [London: Zed, 1979]) on the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The story of the Nakba survivors in Israel was largely untold by both sides of the conflict divide. Many in the Arab world until 1967 perceived these survivors as collaborators with the Jewish state.
- 15 Indeed, activists and students of history in several villages in the Galilee published accounts of local history of their localities in Arabic. See for example the works of Ilyas Surur on the village of ‘Ilabun and the book of ‘Isa ‘Awna on ‘Arab al-Subayh: Ilyas Surur, *‘Ilabun: tarikh wa dhikrayat* [‘Ilabun: History and Memories] (Nazareth: Matba‘at wa Offset al-Hakim, 1997) and *Nakba fi ‘Ilabun: al-sabt 30/10/1948* [Catastrophe in ‘Ilabun: Saturday, 30/10/1948] (‘Ilabun: Majlis ‘Ilabun, 1998); ‘Isa ‘Awna, *‘Arab al-Subayh: tarikh wa riwaya* [‘Arab al-Subayh: History and Narrative] (self-published, 2006). See also Rochelle Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).
- 16 In Safad district, for example, out of seventy-four Arab localities, only four small, geographically dispersed villages survived: Jish (Christian, mostly Maronite); al-Rihaniyya (Circassian); Tuba al-Zanghariyya (Bedouin); and the tiny ‘Akbara (refugees from Qaditha). Mustafa Abbasi has published several works on the fate of the Tiberias, Nazareth, and Safad villages in Arabic, Hebrew, and English.
- 17 A week after the horrific exodus of Lydda and Ramla on 11–12 July 1948, the Israeli army behaved differently in Nazareth. The city’s mayor, Yusuf al-Fahum, and other notables were invited to sign a surrender agreement on 16 July, which promised the people of Nazareth peace and equality. For further reading on this topic see Manna, *Nakba wa baqa’*, 74–82.
- 18 The newly built Israeli air force was used to bomb Arab villages. In the tragic case of Tarshiha, ten members of one family were killed or injured. But the main purpose of the aerial bombardment was to increase fear and intimidation among the civilian Palestinians.
- 19 On the behavior of the Druze community in 1948, see: Laila Parsons, *The Druze between Palestine and Israel, 1947–1949* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000); and Kais Firro, *The Druzes in the Jewish State: A Brief History* (Leiden: Brill, 1999).
- 20 For more details on the political transformation of the communists in the second half of 1948, see chapter 3, “al-Shiyu‘iyyun al-‘Arab ma bayna al-nakba wa al-istiqlal” (Arab Communists between Nakba and Independence) in Adel Manna, *Nakba and Survival* [*Nakba wa baqa’*], 145–196.
- 21 Matthew Hughes, “Lebanon’s Armed Forces and the Arab-Israeli War, 1948–49,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no. 2 (Winter 2005): 24–41.
- 22 This volunteer army, usually translated as the Arab Salvation Army or Arab Liberation Army, was led by Fawzi al-Qawuqji from Syria. See Laila Parson, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016).
- 23 Dr. Khaled Farhat (1927–2012) had vivid memories about the daily life in Majd al-Kurum during that period. He was the secretary of the local committee which administered life in the village until late October 1948. Author interview, Orlando and Jerusalem, 2008.
- 24 Manna, *Nakba wa baqa’*, 74–83.
- 25 The exception to the complete ethnic cleansing in the northern seashore area was

- the village of al-Mazra‘a, where a high-ranking British officer lived and administered a farm.
- 26 These massacres occurred in ‘Ilabun, ‘Arab al-Mawasi, Kufr ‘Anan, Mirun, Safsaf, Jish, Sa‘sa‘, Hula, Saliha, Sha‘b, Tarshiha, Majd al-Kurum, Nahf, Bi‘na, and Dayr al-Asad.
  - 27 A detailed account of what happened in other villages of the Shaghur valley during Operation Hiram is narrated in Manna, *Nakba wa baqa‘*, 97–144.
  - 28 This account is a summary of several eyewitness testimonies (Abu Jamil, Muhammad Kan‘an, and Muhammad Ziho). Later, I found documents in the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archives that fully support these testimonies and anchor them in an exact timeline of events.
  - 29 A few eyewitnesses from the Zurayq family (from ‘Ilabun) were forced to join this force after the massacre of twelve young men and the expulsion of all inhabitants of the village.
  - 30 The soldiers made no secret of their intentions while driving their military vehicles from ‘Ilabun to al-Rama and from there to the eastern outskirts of Majd al-Kurum.
  - 31 This was the experience of Nahf, Bi‘na, and Dayr al-Asad. The inhabitants of these villages did not go all the way to Lebanon but rather returned to their homes after staying one or two days in the mountains.
  - 32 According to the account of Elias Srouji, an Israeli soldier told the villagers: “Our friends, the Druze, have been with us from the beginning, and everybody else is an enemy.” Elias Srouji, “The Fall of a Galilean Village during the 1948 Palestine War: An Eyewitness Account,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33, no. 2 (Winter 2004): 71–80, quote at 75.
  - 33 Abu Jamil and other eyewitnesses mentioned that an Israeli officer arrived in the village on 4 November and spoke to its *mukhtars* about the failure to collect and deliver weapons. The officer warned that he would “arrive tomorrow to collect the arms and punish those who did not follow the surrender agreement.”
  - 34 Zvi Rabinovitch, an intelligence officer from Haifa who operated under the alias “Khawaja Ghazal,” acknowledged that he confiscated the camera from the UN team after leaving the graveyard. Author interview, 16 May 1998, Haifa.
  - 35 The elections were on 25 January. Palestinians in Nazareth and its district as well as inhabitants of the Western Galilee villages were invited to take part in the democratic process. However, the newly occupied Palestinians in upper Galilee were not allowed to vote.
  - 36 For details on the High Court of Justice’s deliberations in 1951, see Manna, *Nakba wa baqa‘*, 326–33.
  - 37 See the language used in Salem Ahmed Kiwaan v. Minister of Defense and Others, H CJ 155/53, online at [versa.cardozo.yu.edu/opinions/kiwaan-v-minister-defense](https://versa.cardozo.yu.edu/opinions/kiwaan-v-minister-defense) (accessed 24 June 2019). Unlike the official Zionist narrative in the 1950s, the High Court judges in Jerusalem did not shy away from terms such as “occupation” and “expulsion.”
  - 38 The Arab residents of the lower and western Galilee were allowed to participate in the first parliamentary elections on 25 January 1949, but the survivors of Operation Hiram were not.
  - 39 For further details about such deals during the 1951 and 1955 elections see Manna, *Nakba wa baqa‘*, 364–70, 374–78.
  - 40 The diaries of Abu Jamil were helpful in indicating that the return of our family from south Lebanon took place in mid-July 1951.
  - 41 Accounts of return to the Galilee by sea are largely unknown and rarely documented.