Colonizing Palestine

THE ZIONIST LEFT AND THE MAKING OF THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA

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To my mother and the soul of my father—for who I am . . .

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Note on Translation and Transliteration

I have striven to write this book in a format that is accessible to specialists familiar with the region and nonspecialists for whom local specificities are foreign. Extra care has been taken in the translations and transliterations of Hebrew and Arabic primary source materials and terms. For Arabic I follow the transliteration system of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (*IJMES*) and for Hebrew the romanization table of the U.S. Library of Congress. For ease of reading, letters use only the ʿayn/ʿayin (ʿ) and hamza/ʾalef (ʾ) signs and not long vowels and diacritics.

For the names of the kibbutzim and the Ha-Shomer Ha-Tsaʿir movement, I employ the English transliterations used by Hashomer Hatzair, Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, Ein Hashofet, and other institutions and not the proper transliterations, so as to make their frequent appearance more easily legible. For the names of Arabic villages, I rely on Salman Abu Sitta's *Atlas of Palestine, 1917–1966* (2010). For certain Arabic names, like Khoury or Deir Yassin, I use the common transliteration or sounds and do not abide by *IJMES* rules.

Unless noted, all translations throughout the book are my own. In the bibliography, Hebrew and Arabic article and chapter titles are all translated but not transliterated. I capitalize only the first word of titles for the sake of consistency.

Note on measurement: I keep with the land area measurement used at the time, the dunam. One dunam is equivalent to one thousand square meters, or about a quarter acre.

Preface

Olives plummeting to the ground; freshwater of the wadi glistening in long summer heat; the scent of sumac wafting through the air. Childhood in Miʾilya. Born in 1979, thirteen years after the termination of military rule, I find my start inflected by the pains of unspeakable deprivations and by the virtues of *baqaʾa,* of remaining in the home/land. We were among the fortunate to return after the initial expulsion; it could have been us expelled, I am reminded occasionally. Mitzpe Hila, a new Jewish Israeli settlement town, creeps onto our lands from the year of my birth. I inhabit a world of parallel times and spaces.

It is the Second Intifada. An isolated undergraduate student in Tel Aviv, I come across the writing of Azmi Bishara: "*Wataniyya* [national] culture is tested not only by its ability to study its own society but also by its ability to interact with other cultures" (Bishara 2002, 119). Although Jewish Israelis have long studied the Arabs in their midst, he explains, the Arabs had yet to seriously study Zionism and the Israeli society and state. The practicalities of joining the Israeli labor market have meant the shattered indigenous minority would not conceive of engaging in philosophy and social sciences—that is, if they knew of such an option. For those from whom I come, theory is a luxury. But the lightning strikes, and I am hooked. Against all odds, I convince myself I can reverse the gaze. From social work I shift to sociology and political science. The kinds of questions I ask change. The very few critical scholars with whom I learn, themselves marginalized in Israeli academia, proffer to me a set of tools for the first time to explain the violence, historical injustices, and gendered and ethno-racial hierarchies that animate my very existence. I start internally—how have Palestinian citizens in Israel perceived continued Jewish settler migration in light of the prohibition on the return of Palestinian refugees? Drowning in hegemonic knowledge production in the very discipline that should have escaped such hold becomes the genesis of my intellectual project: operationalizing my tool kit to study Zionism.

I come to wonder about those early moments in rural Palestine, when history was not yet set in stone. I learn of the leftist Zionist settlers, those who, I was told, sought peace all along. How could those irenic kibbutz settlers let their Palestinian neighbors face expulsion in 1948? I wonder. From the moment I begin my research I encounter suggestions that I explore a different subject from those who caution that mine is too daring or risky. Given the precarious tension between critical knowledge production and Israeli institutional hegemony, some justifiably believe that I may jeopardize my career chances. Kibbutz members I speak to turn away in embarrassment. To critically study the colonizer as an indigenous woman expected to write about her own "backward" society and gendered oppression, to seek to historicize the world one has come to inhabit by tracing original moments of interaction—such "permission to narrate" (Said 1984) frightens those who warn of its impossibility. To employ the Hebrew language they hoped would supplant Arabic, the mother tongue, to produce the knowledge and refuse to be the object about which knowledge is produced—to unsettle through one's unexpected presence is to play with fire.

It is the early 2010s. Joʾara, Daliyat al-Ruha, Umm al-Dafuf, al-Kafrayn, al-Rihaniyya, Abu Shusha, Sabbarin, and Umm az Zinat—these eight Palestinian villages, among the tens displaced from the same area by 1948, are inscribed on a map that stretches taller than I am and is

displayed prominently on the wall of the Kibbutz Ein Hashofet Archive. Anticipating the discursive and physical erasure of these villages from the kibbutz's repository of history and memory, I stand in bewilderment as the archivist details the history of the Palestinian villages that once neighbored the kibbutz colony but now sit emptied of life. Those questions I asked in my initial approach were mistaken. These kibbutz settlers did not merely sit by while their neighbors faced expulsion; they took part in the conquest, I learn, and anticipated the day their Arab neighbors would disappear. And yet they meticulously, but selectively, preserved this history in its convolution, hoping that the descendants of their new civilization would look back and know it was they who salvaged the degenerate Jewish people and provided refuge for those who fled the horrors of the Holocaust. I formulate my question anew: how do ideology and practice come to diverge?

It is 2014, and 160 kilometers south, Gaza is under assault. I jump from my seat at the kibbutz archive. A siren warns of imminent rocket attacks. I seek shelter with the frightened archivist, who that same day had tried to prevent me from accessing archival records, falsely accusing me of working for the Israeli nongovernmental organization Zochrot—which seeks to "promote acknowledgment and responsibility for the injustices of the Nakba"[1] (the 1948 expulsion of the vast majority of Palestinians)—and of trying to "cause a *balagan* [chaos]" through my archival research. I had pushed back with a threat to go to court to obtain the archival information needed for my work, and she had retreated. Now we stand together among the rows of archival materials that tell of her predecessors and of my ancestral sistren, waiting for the immediate end. But no end is in sight. The settler colonial wars and resistance continue.

It is 2021. Mosquitoes hover around the bright orange hue of the streetlights, signaling nightfall. I am returning to Sheikh Jarrah for my weekly stay before teaching my courses on Mount Scopus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. I pass a checkpoint, barbed wire fencing, the heavy presence of armed soldiers, settlers, Palestinian protestors, and rubble from destroyed edifices. I arrive at my place of lodging and open my computer to the unfinished pages of this book. I was not yet born in the time in which this book is set. And yet—writing of kibbutz settlers' fencing-in practices, of the techniques of appropriation, and of the systematic and yet patchwork attempt to replace an indigenous people refusing to back down and then witnessing mimetic practices firsthand eight decades later and 130 kilometers away—history is present. The Nakba continues. Some actors might be different, their practices altered, but the violence and its purpose persist.

For I inhabit a world of parallel times and spaces, yet one in which absolute binaries fail to capture the intricacies of everyday life. This is a world that has arbitrarily granted me certain mobilities and privileges, spatial and social, because of particular historical conditions and incidental citizenship classificatory decisions of the unstable state. As a Palestinian citizen in Israel, I oscillate between milieus that have undoubtedly come to shape my material circumstances and epistemological orientations. I carry with me a transgenerational haunting of the Nakba, the experience of its enduring violence, awareness of continuous efforts to geographically transform the home/land. But I also carry the habitus of *sumud* (steadfastness) through which I have adopted the dispositions to protect myself, my loved ones, and members of my society from the continuity of brutal subjugation (see Sabbagh-Khoury 2022a). I came of age in a temporality wherein encounters between Palestinian citizens and Jewish Israelis had become relatively more commonplace despite the spatial segregation that kept me distant. I learned to differentiate from an early age Judaism from Zionism: "Our problem," my sister's husband, Wakim Wakim, told me, "is not 'the Jews' but Zionist ideology." The place in which I grew up

necessitated normalized and quotidian confrontations with institutions that claimed time and again not to represent me. I was educated in Israeli universities, in Hebrew. A profound fusion of Palestinian and Israeli scholarly institutions and figures have shaped how I think and research, not to mention my ability to be present in the encroached home/land and close to its natural environment. The work I do in this book, then, is largely possible because of my situatedness in a unique nexus of sociopolitical formations and the particular skill set that resulted. That I could access Israeli archives and scholarship in Hebrew with relative ease (at that time), draw on a large body of Palestinian scholarship written in Arabic, and compile an analysis befitting the rigor of U.S. social scientific standards reflects how I have been able to move through this world. I and the other Palestinian citizens in Israel, however, are equipped with a particular phenomenological proximity to Israeli culture and politics that differs from the encounter with Zionism of Palestinian refugees and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza since the 1967 occupation. It is a mode of hierarchical sociality, a socio-spatial mobility, that has enabled me to traverse the worlds of Miʾilya, Tel Aviv, Nazareth, Haifa, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bir Zeit, and the United States, that has defined my particular situatedness. In the language of W. E. B. Du Bois (2016, 2), the "gift" of "second sight," of an acute perceptiveness of the inequalities of the social world, derives from the burden of "double consciousness." This, then, articulates my endeavors.

Such constitutive proximity has meant that I became uniquely positioned to make it my life's work to explain the animating forces behind the historical events and structures that would set Palestine on a trajectory of settler colonial division. From the beginning of this project, I sought to understand how settler colonizers become settler colonizers, how their patterned forms of ideology and action take shape, and how these processes bear on the life courses of the indigenous peoples whose social orders consequently face violent disruption. I have striven to write "reparatively" (Sedgwick 2003, 146), disposing of the paranoia that could so easily plague how one approaches the subjects as historical actors in a violent project. The goal throughout has been to uncover what animated these settlers (some refugees) to engage their minds and bodies in a colonizing project, to decipher how they made sense of their world, behaved in it, and then represented their actions. And though the Nakba serves as the traumatic backdrop that haunts this book's events, it was not the inevitable apotheosis toward which all prior action was understood to be teleologically building.

My methodological choice to use the archives of the settlers and their state reflects limitations given preexisting power relations—the dearth of Palestinian archives and voices juxtaposed to the abundance of the victor's recounting. The awareness that I might painfully, but temporarily, forfeit subaltern knowledge weighed on my attempt to rigorously probe the practices of the colonizers. Ann Stoler (2008) proposed, on the basis of her empirical work in the Dutch and French colonial archives, that those who read the colonial archive should not necessarily read against the grain in a Benjaminian sense but, rather, should read *along the archival grain*. Indeed, I take this as my fundamental historical sociological precept: to try to situate myself in the life world of my subject of research, to understand what delimited their choices and then grasp why they did what they did given the conditions within which they acted. Archival research makes this effort especially challenging. However, eschewing an overriding skepticism that the colonial archive is simply a device of deception in favor of understanding the archive as a constitutive technology of governance has greatly benefited my attempt to reconstruct the processes of settler colonization in the Jezreel Valley. Reading along the archival grain set the backdrop for my attempt to work against the concealments, gaps, and derisions of the archive and the subaltern it silences. Even so, the affective toll on my suffocating visits to the kibbutz

colony, witnessing the seemingly modern, egalitarian, and revolutionary society that emerged from rubble of the Palestinian past, was often too high to bear. Because this research was a reliving of the tragedy of displacement.

Having striven to maintain throughout this project the kind of dissociative stance that empirical research putatively demands, I am reminded, upon reflecting on my reasons for undertaking this research, of my inescapable imbrication in the social processes lived out in the stories this book recounts. The book was written in a reality in which classification according to a colonial-indigenous matrix largely determines access to resources, legitimacy as a producer of knowledge, and indeed, conditions of livability.

To write of Zionist settler colonialism as an untenured Palestinian woman in Israeli academe has exposed to me the precarities built into academic life here. Yet deciphering constitutive social interactions between settler and native to understand how an event as transformative and traumatic as the Nakba could become possible at the local level has confirmed to me that, just as alternative pathways existed in the past, so too do they remain open in the present.

While the forces of disintegration—modernization, capitalist integration, and colonialism— have torn the Palestinians asunder, we survive to bear testimony.

So grant history respite until it tells all the truth.

Acknowledgments

This project has seen numerous intellectual homes. It was first given a chance at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tel Aviv University, where Yehouda Shenhav-Shahrabani, my staunchest of guides, opened the doors to sociology for me. Within a sea of hostility, he created an island on which a different kind of thought was possible. Yehouda, my academic father, was the first Arab Jew I ever encountered and the first Jew to welcome me into his home. His critical sociological ethos continues to inspire me to strive to comprehend the undergirding logics of social action. His voice still echoes in my mind as I teach. He deserves utmost credit for his tireless advisement and unwavering support, for this book, for my vocation, and truly for my life's trajectory. Joel Beinin excitedly agreed to engage my work from across the globe in Stanford. He meticulously read and sharpened countless drafts, and without his firsthand knowledge of Hashomer Hatzair, historical expertise, nurturing spirit, patience, and epistemological rigor, I struggle to imagine how this work would have taken shape. Joel wholeheartedly accompanied me through the pains of this project. I treasure our conversations

witnessing and learning from the successes of each. To my dear sister Samera I owe the biggest debt for being there for me whenever needed, for being the soul of our extended family by maintaining its cohesion, and for being a solid anchor in the lives of all the family members with her endless giving and support. Our dearly departed Wakim Wakim inspired my political and sociological imagination and modeled a kind of political activism that engenders social change. I am thankful to my niece and close friend Lana Wakim Tuma, who has faithfully accompanied this voyage at every step with her friendship, also assisting in this project's early research.

My mother- and father-in-law Amal and Riad Khoury, my second family, are the pillars in my life. We may not choose our in-laws, but they have been for me a set of trusted parents to whom I look for love. My father-in-law's hospitable nature illuminated for me the same form of Palestinian hospitality I uncover in the book. And my mother-in-law imparts such wisdom in all her humility and affection. Their care and unconditional love as in-laws and as grandparents have made the conditions for pursuing my career and family possible. Janet Matta was my first model for being a Palestinian mother and career woman as my school principal in Miʾilya; she was among my earliest supporters.

Manhal, my partner in life and the biggest casualty of this project, reminds me every day that there is life worth living in the present. That my work becoming the third figure in our relationship has not diminished our mutual devotion is a testament to his compassion and benevolence alone. I cherish the love he exhibits to me and our children every minute of every day. I only hope he can sustain his energies for continuing to be the mainstay in our lives. Through the birth of our beloved sons, Ghadi and Rawad, was born a mother who knew the reason of her existence. How easy child-rearing has been when their intelligence, sensitivity, and inquisitiveness challenge me each day to rethink why things are the way they are in our world. The love they give me—the feeling of adoration—is my source of strength. They were born and grew up amid this project, and they have given me reason to keep going. I would do anything so that they could inherit a future devoid of hierarchy and violence. I urge them to remember their collective responsibility in whatever path they choose. I ask them to please not abandon the political, because the personal is political and the political personal, particularly for young men or women of a subordinated indigenous group. I entreat them to carry themselves with dignity, to not succumb to despair. If there is one lesson I have tried to pass down to my children, it is that the current configuration of social and political life in which we are all enmeshed was never inevitable. And because of that, the power to envision and enact alternative ways of being and knowing lies in their minds and bodies. I know they are already at work.

INTRODUCTION

At 5.00 a.m. the night watchman of Mishmar Haemek knocks on the doors: "All those bound for Juara, get up!" . . . We rush to the open square to get going. . . . The convoy begins to move and passes the guard of honor of Shomrim from the Children's Village who hail us with unfurled flags and happy songs. Another second and Mishmar Haemek has disappeared behind a hill in the turn of the road. We pass Kibbutz Hazorea, turn off the road to the left at Yokneam, and soon pass its last building. The [Arab] villagers of Rehania [al-Rihaniyya] pause in their work on the primitive threshing floors to gaze at this strange expedition and exchange questioning glances. Then some return to their tasks, while others follow with indistinct cries. One, a ferocious-looking individual with mustachios, cries out, half in anger, half in contempt: "Majnouni, majnouni!" (You lunatics!) His meaning was not clear to us. Did he regard every newcomer to this hill of desolation a mad-man, or was he hinting at the dangers which neighbors such as he presented to new settlers, dangers that only idiots could fail to perceive? But the children wave to us and we wave back. (Wilfand 1981, 62–64)

THE IMMIGRANT SETTLERS, MOSTLY OF AMERICAN AND POLISH origins, arrived at Joʾara (image 1) following some road trouble. They erected a fence, laid a road, and prepared a searchlight, "which every evening will send greetings and announce that a beacon of life has been lit in the hills of Efraim [Efrayim / Bilad al-Ruha]" (64). By nightfall the deed was done.

IMAGE 1. "Outlook of Joʾara from afar," n.d. (likely 1936).
Source: Ein Hashofet Archive photographic collection.

So is the morning of July 5, 1937, reported to have proceeded, when Zionist settlers set out from Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek and other nearby kibbutzim to claim the hilltop of Joʾara for a new Jewish colony, to be named Ein Hashofet, on the margins of the fertile Jezreel Valley of northern Palestine. This story encapsulates the dynamics of conquest by Zionist settlers in mid-

1930s Palestine, at a moment of imperial violence and settler colonial becoming. Did such events presage the eventual violent displacement and dispossession of about half the Palestinian Arabs from Palestine in 1948, the *nakba* (catastrophe)? Was this displacement, and those in the preceding years, inevitable?

It was not a given that the Zionist settlers who set out to colonize the Joʾara hilltop, and countless others like them across historical Palestine, would engage in the labor of forceful transformation that culminated in the formation of the Jewish nation-state. They arrived in the wake of historical processes to seek the colonization of Palestine as an answer to the problems wrought by European modernity.

Political Zionism—a polyvalent term—arose as a movement in late nineteenth-century Europe as one among many proposed solutions to the Jewish Question—antisemitic exclusion and violence in Europe.[1] Political Zionism consisted of various ideological movements united by the belief that the Jewish Question could be solved only by establishing Jewish national sovereignty outside Europe. Little else was agreed on. In its early stages, the movement was composed mainly of European Jews, and from the 1880s forward, some began settling agricultural colonies in Greater Syria's Palestine region. Before the fin de siècle there was no certainty that Zionists would push for mass settlement in the Levant, controlled at the time by the Ottoman Empire, or for a state-building project to actualize its goals. Ultimately, the allure of settling in a land that held much religious symbology rendered Palestine (Erets Yisraʾel, for them, or "Land of Israel") the chosen land for this syncretic movement.

Zionism was one among several reactions to the marginalization and persecution of Jewry (see Brossat and Klingberg 2017). It was never the sole response, and in its early decades was marginal and even unpopular. Like many of the political projects of European modernity, Zionism was formed through antagonisms and contradictions: Jewish national liberation would entail, ultimately, violence against Palestine's indigenous Arabs. In their early organizing, Zionist settlers became aware of, and adjusted their strategies and goals in response to, the presence of an indigenous population in Palestine. This book begins in the 1930s, at which point many of the Zionist project's contours had crystalized—spatial segregation, efforts to exclude Palestinian Arabs from the land and labor markets, and collusion between Zionist settlement and the British Empire. It centers the analysis, not as is common, solely on the experiences and ideologies of European Zionist settlers, but on the dynamics of their interactions with the indigenous Palestinians.

It does so through a historical sociology of the colonization practices of three kibbutzim (collectivist settler colonies)—Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet—of Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist-Zionist settlement movement that established dozens of colonies before 1948. I examine their relations with the neighboring Palestinian villages on the margins of the Jezreel Valley / Marj Ibn ʿAmer (Plain of Esdraelon) in the frontier region called Bilad al-Ruha (Arabic for Land of the Winds) or Ramat Menashe (in Hebrew, Menashe Heights) during the years 1936–1956.[2] The area in which settlers established these colonies was already populated, mainly by agricultural producers. Bilad al-Ruha witnessed a collision among Zionist settlers, indigenous Palestinians, and British imperialists over resources and complex economic, social, and political interactions.

I trace the shifting settler colonial logics and practices that shaped Zionist incursion into and conquest of indigenous lands, the dialectical nature of colonization, and the ways indigenous agency shaped the outcomes of struggles over land. In so doing, I emphasize the uneven, interactive processes on a frontier of Zionist colonial settlement, the historical contingencies that

undergirded colonization, and the transformed social order conjured by kibbutz settlers that now appears naturalized.

SETTLER COLONIAL FRONTIER

Frederick Jackson Turner's (1893) thesis popularized the understanding of the American frontier as a zone of free land available for settlement. It is a key text in understanding the impetus of a settler colonial society to expand, its supremacist civilizing logics, and its moral claims to progress and developmentalism. Deconstructing the ways ideologies of supremacy subtend and enable displacement, dispossession, and eradication of indigenous peoples requires a critical reading of Turner's theory of the frontier. "Free land" is so only in the imaginations of settlers who, with greater power, ignore the material rights and desires, indeed the very humanity, of indigenous peoples. There remains a powerful force of denial, not only in the U.S. context about which Turner wrote but also in states established by settler colonialism spanning the globe, of the deleterious consequences of the dispossession of indigenous peoples, their replacement by settler colonists, and the political regimes the colonists established.

Turner's theory of the frontier offers a useful analytic paradigm for the study of the practices of Zionist settlement—of logics of entitlement to claim space deemed open, to continually expand settlement, and to disregard indigenous will. The Zionist frontier instantiated a particular intertwining of settler colonialism with the reification of nationhood as an institutionalized cultural and political form (Brubaker 1996), which preceded the founding of a Jewish nation-state (Elkins and Pederson 2005). The distinctive nature of the frontier in Palestine reveals the foundations of the eventual Israeli Jewish nation-state in a violent process of encroachment of indigenous lands and their redistribution, accompanied by dispossession and symbolic degradation. In Palestine, it is especially urgent to assess the historical relationship between ideology and practice on the frontier because of its relatively recent (in historical terms) colonization and the trenchant displays of anti-Palestinian violence in the unresolved, asymmetrical conflict.

Palestinian scholars of comparative settler colonialism have long juxtaposed Palestine to other cases in which immigrant settlers set out to permanently settle an inhabited place (e.g., Abu-Lughod and Abu-Laban 1974; Hilal 1976; Jabbour 1970; Sayegh 1965; Said 1979b). Comparison in these works aims, not to equate, but to illuminate convergences and divergences in explaining how and why settler colonization comes about. Baruch Kimmerling (1983, 1–7), among the most prominent of Israeli scholars to juxtapose Israel with other settler cases and to theorize Israel as a settler society, argues that the differences between U.S. and Israeli societies, individualist and collectivist, respectively, resulted from "high frontierity" in the former because of the availability of inexpensive or "free land" and "low frontierity" in the latter because, before 1948, Palestine had a Palestinian majority and land prices were high. Despite the utility of his distinction, Kimmerling's discussion of frontierity fails to address the violent elimination of the indigenous populations in both cases. He takes for granted the term *free land*. But these lands became free only after the ethnic cleansing and eventual decimation of indigenous populations in North America and after the displacement of the peasants through aggressive land purchase in Palestine and the expulsion of the majority of the Palestinian population during the 1948 Nakba (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d).

Indeed, we need not look far for a clearer comparative understanding. Take the words of Zeʾev Jabotinsky, the leader of the right-wing Revisionist Zionists until his death in 1940. In a dispute with the "compromisers" (i.e., leftists), Jabotinsky drew a parallel in 1923 between two settler

colonial cases, the United States and Erets Yisraʾel (which is noteworthy because both leftist Zionists of the time and today's Zionist discourse reject the colonial dimension proffered so transparently here):

> Another point which had no effect at all was whether or not there existed a suspicion that the settler wished to remove the inhabitant from his land. The vast areas of the U.S. never contained more than one or two million Indians. The inhabitants fought the white settlers not out of fear that they might be expropriated, but simply because there has never been an indigenous inhabitant anywhere or at any time who has ever accepted the settlement of others in his country. Any native people—it's all the same whether they are civilized or savage—views their country as their national home, of which they will always be the complete masters. They will not voluntarily allow, not only a new master, but even a new partner. And so it is for the Arabs. Compromisers in our midst attempt to convince us that the Arabs are some kind of fools who can be tricked by a softened formulation of our goals, or a tribe of money grubbers who will abandon their birth right to Palestine for cultural and economic gains. I flatly reject this assessment of the Palestinian Arabs. Culturally they are 500 years behind us, spiritually they do not have our endurance or our strength of will, but this exhausts all of the internal differences. We can talk as much as we want about our good intentions; but they understand as well as we what is not good for them. They look upon Palestine with the same instinctive love and true fervor that any Aztec looked upon his Mexico or any Sioux looked upon his prairie. To think that the Arabs will voluntarily consent to the realization of Zionism in return for the cultural and economic benefits we can bestow on them is infantile. This childish fantasy of our "Arabo-philes" comes from some kind of contempt for the Arab people, of some kind of unfounded view of this race as a rabble ready to be bribed in order to sell out their homeland for a railroad network. (Jabotinsky [1923] 1937)

Despite his supremacist views, Jabotinsky makes a forthright argument about the nature of the colonial frontier that, in its comparison to other cases of colonization, gets at the heart of the matter more explicitly than does Kimmerling's argument. In fact, he acknowledges the indigeneity of Palestinians. It will be important to keep Jabotinsky's clarity in mind as we encounter the discourse of the Zionist Left.

Although I frame it differently, I too draw on the theory of the frontier to articulate moments of encounter—unequal social and material relations that ensue on an asymmetrical terrain pitting settler against native, and ways the nature of the frontier shapes social relations of the settler colonial society. The theory of low frontierity is imprecise, emphasizing legal purchase of land—a prominent theme in Zionist historiography that denies violence and dispossession. Instead, I adopt Wolfe's (2016b, 1) argument that the "frontier is a way of talking about the historical process of territorial invasion—a cumulative depredation through which outsiders recurrently advance on natives in order to take their place." Such cumulative depredations at the microlevel, as revealed through close examination of colonization processes in the rural frontier, have captured less attention in historical and sociological scholarship than have the study of urban spaces, elites, and the economic, legal, and procedural features of land tenure[3] and scholarship focusing primarily on protostate and state practices. For this reason, I am attentive to the constitutive processes of settler accumulation, indigenous dispossession, and resistance in the usually overlooked rural areas where pockets of Zionist presence gradually coalesced into a contiguous sovereignty.

Therefore, I rethink the frontier in two ways. First, through a careful, detailed reconstruction of particular events of encroachment and displacement, I suggest a distinct settler colonial history of land purchase and the legitimation of Zionist sovereignty over territory. Second, I explain this history through a contrapuntal examination of the relations between colonizer and colonized under imperial rule (Said 1993). Doing so helps better historicize both the Palestinians who would ultimately become displaced and the Zionist settlers who would come to establish a settler colonial sociopolitical order in Palestine under British auspices.

Hashomer Hatzair, the movement I consider most closely, professed an ideology of "Zionism, socialism, and the brotherhood/fraternity of peoples" (Zayit 2002; *brotherhood/fraternity of peoples* was its term for internationalism). At the same time, this movement played a prominent role in the settler colonial project. Its first colony in Palestine was settled around 1919, and four

colonies banded together in 1927 to form Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi, the federation of colonies that would oversee the formation of dozens of additional colonies (Margalit 1971, 97; Beinin 1990, 26). Hashomer Hatzair was central to turning large portions of Palestinian land in the frontier into sovereign Jewish territory. In its time, it represented an oppositional position within the labor Zionist movement, because it often defied the values and practices of the dominant Histadrut labor federation and associated political factions. Yet the movement constituted an active settlement force that accomplished a shared Zionist goal—it established the conditions for Jewish national sovereignty in Palestine. Consequently, its members became enmeshed in moral and political dilemmas regarding violent divergences between its ideology and practice. I center this movement because it was among the most significant instantiations of the conquests of land and labor that defined twentieth-century Zionism (Shafir 1993). *Kibush ha-karka* (conquest of the land) and *kibush ha-ʿavoda* (conquest of labor), alongside *geʿulat ha-karka* (redeeming the land), were Zionist organizing principles for asserting control and eventually sovereignty over Palestinian territory and the labor market. (The terminology used to describe the first step of Zionist colonization was *ʿaliya ʿal ha-karka* [ascent to the land]). The labor settlement movement was the larger framework of labor Zionism, of which Hashomer Hatzair represented the left wing.

Furthermore, methodologically disaggregating Zionism into its constituent submovements illuminates the patterned process of settler colonialism at the microlevel without losing sight of how discrete actions coalesced into the larger project.

The book asks, Through what practices and ideologies did implanting leftist colonies emerge as a viable strategy of land occupation and establishing semisovereignty in the rural frontier of Palestine? How did these colonies come to absorb lands long held by the indigenous Palestinian population? And how did a left-wing socialist movement such as Hashomer Hatzair reconcile the apparent contradiction between its professed revolutionary commitments and its central role in dispossessing natives during the protracted colonization of Palestine before, during, and following the 1948 war?

The Zionist Left has deeply sculpted Jewish Israelis' self-understandings and promotions of Zionist Jewish history as a liberatory and revolutionary project. The kibbutz colony came to constitute a crucial pillar of settler colonial action. As small, collectivist communities with a high degree of ideological commitment, the kibbutzim provide fertile ground for researching the local implications of colonization, how such practices were enacted and perceived among divided stakeholders, and the debates that constituted an integral part of transforming the sociopolitical order of the frontier.

Still, in considering the role of the rural colonies, it would be a mistake to overemphasize the settlers' role in establishing the semisovereignty that would culminate in the State of Israel. To do so would be to adopt the fallacy that Zionist action alone was responsible for state making. British imperial rule (1917–1948), as quasi-mother empire, enabled and protected Jewish immigration, Zionist land acquisition, and settlement. The British administration (its bureaucracies, military power, and governance practices), in consultation with the other Great Powers that established the Palestine Mandate after the British conquest of the area during World War I, constituted the foundation on which social (inter)action between Zionists and Palestinians ensued. I build on Lockman's (1996, 8) "relational paradigm" to explain the asymmetries of settler colonial interaction with indigenous Palestinians not as an inevitability but as an outcome to be understood. At the same time, adopting a relational paradigm risks dislodging such interactions from the broader imperial field of power that conditioned the possibilities of political

transformation. So although the chapters that follow center on the implications of material and symbolic processes at the scale of settler-indigenous relations, it is not my intention to isolate these processes from the imperial political structures.

This book hinges on two fulcrums. First is an examination of settlement practices—that is, the material practices of dispossession and expulsion (chapters 1–2) and the way the colonization context shaped relations (chapters 3–4). Second is an examination of enduring settler representations of the practices of the past—that is, active practices of political reconstruction. Whereas the investigation of relations between colonizer and colonized ends with the destruction of all the Palestinian villages examined in this study and the transfer of a considerable part of their lands into the hands of the kibbutzim, my scrutiny of representations and memory in the kibbutzim examines the characteristic patterns of representation of the Palestinian surroundings (chapter 5) and the discussions and deliberations about memory and the past as they appeared in the 1970s and 1980s (chapter 6). Put simply, the book has two purposes: to examine the material practices of dispossession and expulsion and to interpret the subsequent meaning-making practices. I use settler colonial archives to trace one factor among many others in Zionist aggrandizement before, during, and following the Nakba of 1948.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SETTLER COLONIALISM

At its outset, Zionism commonly identified itself as a colonial project, albeit one of a special type. Its leaders from across the political spectrum proudly identified with European colonial movements and often looked to European projects for practical inspiration (see, e.g., Reichman and Hasson 1984; Shafir 1999). Describing Zionist settlement actions as colonization was common in the decades before 1948 (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d). However, Zionist colonization reached its peak just as decolonization began elsewhere (R. Khalidi 2020), rendering the political viability of the project precarious and prompting internal redefinitions and a distancing from the earlier vocabulary. Common refutations of Zionism as a form of colonialism assert that Zionism never intended to exploit local labor and was thus not a colonial movement and that, in the absence of a metropolitan sponsor, Zionism cannot be compared to European colonial movements (see Penslar 2007). Others claim that, given Jewish connections to Erets Yisraʾel and the near continuous presence of Jewry in Palestine even following exile from the homeland, the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century efforts to attain national sovereignty represented return, not colonization.

Like some other settler colonial projects (the United States, South Africa, Algeria), the Zionist movement has always emphasized its exceptionalism, and this is reflected in the production of academic knowledge about its history (classically, Eisenstadt 1967). However, comparison is a vital element of my analysis, not to argue for absolute equation of Zionism or the State of Israel with other settler colonial histories, but to trace patterned ways of doing and thinking and its relationship to other cases termed *settler colonial* (see Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d).

Using *settler colonialism* does not refute Jewish religious and historical connections to what they term Erets Yisraʾel. Rather, it is a diagnostic analytic category that describes dynamic encounters between settlers and natives and the processes through which territorial and demographic orders have been transformed to favor Zionist settlers at the expense of indigenous Palestinians, becoming routinized as structures through which settlers are prioritized over the indigenous, often in ways that further entrench denial of indigenous sovereignty. Recent social scientific and historical scholarship has coalesced around an understanding of settler colonialism as a sequence of events wherein immigrant settlers make permanent claims to territory that,

generally, is inhabited by a native population (of course, debates abound regarding the mechanisms, logics, and structures of settler colonialism and the utility of the analytic).[4] Through incursion, appropriation, redistribution, exploitation, extermination, erasure, and violence, settlers remake the sociopolitical order of the settler colony. The transformation of demography and territory, accompanied by a rejection of indigenous claims to territory and politics, leads to various outcomes: dispossession, displacement, forced labor, ethnic cleansing, or genocide.

Settler colonialism is not a singular theory but an analytic framework that enables the examination of numerous cases (e.g., the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Algeria, South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya). The main issue at the heart of analyzing settler colonialism, in contrast to administrative or extractive colonialisms, is its focus on practices of *permanent* settlement and possession of land and the subsequent institutionalization of social hierarchies that take on symbolic and material forms (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d). For instance, it is dispossession, some believe, that fundamentally structures the relationship between immigrant settlers and the indigenous (see Coulthard 2014a; Nichols 2020).

The work of the anthropologist Patrick Wolfe (1999, 2006, 2008, 2016a, 2016b) has become increasingly popular among scholars who seek to explain—using comparative methods—that settler colonialism across a range of temporalities and geographies is constitutively *eliminatory*, even when not necessarily genocidal. By this, Wolfe means that agents of settler colonization seek the elimination of natives from desired space, whether through assimilation, displacement, or liquidation. Wolfe's oft-cited framing of settler colonial incursion as "a structure and not an event" (2006, 388) prompts us to consider how discrete practices and events take on enduring structural forms. Still, settler colonialism *is* a sequence of events (processes) and can be analyzed at the level of everyday life on the frontier. A structural elimination paradigm can potentially distract us from the contingent contours of colonization. A relational tracing of settlers' settlement practices *and of indigenous resistance*—what Kauanui (2016) usefully terms "enduring indigeneity"—directs us to the contingent nature of the *process* of settler colonization that restores the place of the indigenous to its history. Indeed, a common reticence to settler colonialism as an analytic framework involves the risks of simplistic teleology, of further eliding indigenous agency, and of reinscribing the indigenous as passive objects. Recentering *process* rather than *structure* brings back indigenous agency. This book demonstrates that focusing on the settler side of settler colonialism and on process preserves the role of the indigenous as subjects who shape the contours of colonization as long as we attend to the dialectical nature of settler colonization.

The interpretative framework of settler colonialism for analyzing the conflict between Zionists and Palestinians consolidated among Palestinian intellectuals in the 1960s and 1970s, years before this term took hold in international academic discussions.[5] Framing the roots of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict, and explaining Zionist Israeli society, in terms of settler colonialism is relatively novel, and still quite marginal, in institutionalized Israeli academic discourse. This is despite the important role of Israeli sociology and critical history in analyzing Zionist settler colonialism in the late twentieth century (e.g., Kimmerling 1983; Ram 1993).[6] Slightly before the turn of the century, further (mostly North American–based) scholarship began rethinking the Zionist movement and the history of the conflict in terms of settler colonialism (e.g., Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Elkins and Pedersen 2005; Lockman 1996; Shafir 1989). That Wolfe (2006) incorporated the case of Zionism in his comparative framework of settler colonialism also lent great credence to the analytic paradigm, even if the way subsequent scholarship effaced earlier

theorizing by Palestinians highlights the racialized diffusion and production of legitimate knowledge (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d).

Much of this scholarship compares the practices of European Zionist settlers with those of other European settlers, highlighting the violence of dispossession and replacement. The Zionist project entailed the relocation of immigrant settlers from Europe to a territory populated by natives, the accumulation of native land and resources, and the marginalization of natives. The project was initially based on land acquisition, a process accelerated by Britain's conquest of Palestine from the Ottomans and its subsequent incorporation of the responsibility to facilitate the founding of a Jewish national home in its 1922 League of Nations Mandate based on the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Land acquisition, however, was a violent process that encountered the resistance of the largely peasant Palestinian farmers. The Zionist project was shaped at every moment by the nature of British concessions and constraints and by Palestinian resistance. Researchers who applied the settler colonial paradigm to the Zionist project marked two main alternatives to a metropolitan sponsor—the worldwide Zionist movement and its philanthropic channels and the British Empire as quasi-political patron. The settler colonial approach challenges conventional perspectives that conceive of the conflict between Zionists and Palestinians as merely one between two national movements, or between two incommensurate cultures or religions, instead foregrounding the interactions between the two sides in the context of a settler colonial frontier (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d). The two sides were not structurally equal; British imperialism gave a proverbial leg up to Zionist settler colonialism (R. Khalidi 2020).

Zionism shared practices and logics with other settler colonial cases. It developed in a world system in which European domination and superiority—enacted through formal and informal imperialism, international law, and global political economy—was largely a given. But Zionism, like other instances of settler colonialism, was historically particular, even if not altogether exceptional. Zionist settlers encountered a society with more class differentiation and more complex forms of land ownership compared with previous settler colonial projects (Hijazi 2015; Greenstein 1995; Khalaf 1991, 1997). Zionism's effort to institutionalize a national state came late to the world-historical stage; by 1948, the Global South had begun struggling to decolonize (Ahmad 2006, 301). Zionism is also unique in the simultaneous fusion of its colonial project with nation formation (Elkins and Pederson 2005), the almost immediate indigenous resistance, and both the Palestinians and the Zionists formulating identities as national groups. Settler colonial projects typically included the establishment of modern state powers, land enclosure, and export-oriented commodity production. Palestine had already partially been incorporated into such processes when the Zionist movement launched its settlement project. And last, although Zionist aspirations for a political homeland for the Jews predated the Holocaust, the Nazi genocide of European Jewry was another distinctive feature that affected the contours and perceptions of the settler colonial project in Palestine (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d). Other cases of settlers who experienced persecution and discrimination exist (e.g., a stream of religious settlers to the United States), but in no other case were the settlers subject to genocide (Wolfe 2016a). Zionism's solution to the Jewish Question prevailed among world Jewry only after the Holocaust and the response of Western powers to the Jewish refugee problem largely rendered alternative political options nonviable. All these characteristics shaped the settler-native encounters and their ultimate consequences.

Although Kimmerling avoided explicit use of *settler colonialism*, his work on Zionism and its role in shaping Israeli society centered on the question of settlement, as evidenced in his 1983 monograph *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics* and his

2004 book *Mehagrim, mityashvim, yelidim* (Immigrants, settlers, natives). At the heart of Kimmerling's (1983) discussion is the land market and its uniqueness in the case of Palestine. He proposed distinguishing three components in land takeover: ownership, presence, and sovereignty. Ownership and presence substituted for sovereignty before the inception of the State of Israel. These distinctions allow him to describe the role that creating facts on the ground played in the absence of national-territorial sovereignty. By means of the 1948 war, the Zionist movement proceeded from actions in the land market (ownership and presence) to political means to achieve sovereignty. Kimmerling's flexible distinctions are helpful in examining the period before 1948. Still, these distinctions do not correspond to stages but are, rather, interlocking components of the colonization process that can be found in different configurations.

Kimmerling (1983, 21) relies on a definition of sovereignty as the exclusive authority practiced by a state over a delimited territory: "Sovereignty as a concept in international law is conditioned by founding a recognized state." This definition differs from that often used in sociological literature, which defines sovereignty as the capability of a sovereign agent to enable or inhibit life (Foucault 1997). According to the traditional definition, one can speak of Israel's sovereignty only after the founding of the state in 1948 and the international recognition of its exclusive authority to control its area on the basis of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, the Partition Plan. In fact, the British Mandatory authority, the legal sovereign in Palestine from 1922 to 1948, did recognize a form of Zionist sovereignty in some limited spaces. The Zionist movement constituted a "gradated" sovereignty (Stoler 2006, 139). It established communities with a high degree of autonomy alongside institutions that gradually instituted territorial and political continuity. The Mandate recognized the Yishuv (the Jewish colony in Palestine) as a political organization with control over certain resources, institutions, and enforcement capacities. Kimmerling offers a useful analytic triad, which provides a schema for examining settlement practices and state formation, but my analysis diverges from his in considering the role of colonies in instituting semisovereignty. Moreover, whereas the classical sociological theory of the state centers the ways a state is constituted by claims to a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence (Weber 1978, 54), I examine the claims to legitimate violence made by organized settlements that precede a state's inception.

The rethinking of the concept of sovereignty entails rejecting the myth that 1948, the year of Israel's creation, or even 1967, is the ground zero for analysis of the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. I consider multiple institutional meanings of sovereignty—such as settler colonial semisovereignty nested within British imperial rule—thereby viewing sovereignty as partial and crosscutting. For example, we can find instantiations of sovereignty in the removal of Palestinian land cultivators—abetted by the British—in line with settlers' desire for exclusive Jewish employment. Israeli sovereignty was not formed at a single moment in 1948; the 1948 moment created a new legal framework for continued accumulation through dispossession. In this regard, the creation of the Palestinian refugee population was not the result of the heat of battle alone. As important as the 1948 settler colonial war was in contributing to Palestinian dispossession, 1948 is situated amid multiple processes and is but a fulcrum between two eras. This analysis takes 1948 and the momentous transformations that preceded it as "sequences of occurrences that result[ed] in durable transformations of structure" (Sewell 1996, 878). Zionist settler colonialism was constituted by a gradual accumulation of informational, economic, and military capitals; territorial fortifications; and organizational preparedness. This is especially true for the settlement program of erasure and replacement. By 1948, approximately 70 Palestinian villages

had been erased from the map (Kanaana 2000), mostly through purchases that enabled the establishment of rural colonies; by 1949, 130 new Jewish settlements had been established (Yahav 2007, 13).

Shafir's (1989) *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882–1914* analyzed Zionism as a settler colonial project relying on two formative features: conquest of land (*kibush ha-karka*) and conquest of labor (*kibush ha-ʿavoda*). Shafir showed that the roots of the conflict lie in practices of territorial and economic control by the Zionist movement on the ground, made possible by the integration of the Middle East into the modern world economy and penetration of European capital into Palestine, mainly through the creation of a land market and a new class of land buyers (see also Owen 1993; Alff 2020). Shafir's materialist history argues it was not mere ideology that motivated the shift in Zionist settlement strategy to favor racially segmented separation and exclusion but, rather, interactions on the ground between settlers and the indigenous Palestinians, particularly in the context of late-Ottoman land and labor conditions. Shafir's groundbreaking analysis of the tensions among contending interests within the colonizing group explains the option to favor cooperative settlement over capitalist settlement. Yet his work marginalizes the persisting violence, coercion, and indigenous resistance (Lockman 2012; Sabbagh-Khoury 2022d).

Nahla Abdo's (1992) pioneering research on race and colonialism and the generative works of Lockman (1996) and Shalev (1992) also addressed the issue of labor. Together with Shafir's, this scholarship helped shift scholarly attention from purely economic (transactional) and legal analyses of purchase (e.g., Avneri 1982; Adler 1988; Granovsky 1949) to showing how the control of land and labor became inextricable from claims to territorial belonging.

Much of the comparative scholarship on settler colonialism situates its structural imbrication with the rise of global capitalism and liberalism, concurrent with the violence and inequalities of racialized labor exploitation, surplus extraction, and accumulation (we can trace this trend back to Marx 1906, 838–848). Socialism and colonialism, exemplified by Zionism, make for a rarer pairing (although see Memmi's [2003] "Portrait of the Colonizer"). However, despite the self-professed socialist nature of the kibbutz settlers, we may trace the processual accumulations of landed and political capitals *by dispossession* of the Zionist Left in terms of privatization. Palestine had already partially undergone a transformation from precapitalist to capitalist in the Ottoman period and then the British Mandate (Owen 1993; Abdo 1991). However, on the rural frontier, where the kibbutzim sought territory, the settlers interacted with the *fallahin* (largely tenant farmers with usufruct whose status and modes of land tenure are explained in chapter 1) in economically transformative ways.

For instance, some socialist kibbutzim enclosed the remaining commons through their purchase and seizure of Arab *mushaʿa* (communal) agricultural land. When the majority of fallahin were expelled from their land, often with British assistance, they effectively lost a crucial part of their means of production—noncommodified land. In this way, the kibbutz may have formulated a socialist agricultural political economy within the boundaries of its newly enclosed property, yet the process that created this bounded entity resembled prototypical capitalist primitive accumulation. This socialism had material repercussions—the creation of a labor force, highly organized production, and high levels of investment in capital goods and infrastructure—that enabled the production of marketable goods on previously marginal lands. However, the outcome of this accumulation was not for the benefit of private individuals but for the (exclusively Jewish) collective Yishuv. The Jewish National Fund (Keren kayemet le-yisrael), a key Zionist land-acquisition organization, for instance, did not sell lands it

accumulated on the private market, where they could have become available to non-Jews.

In this distinctive mode of Zionist colonization, socialism and colonialism became interwoven. Principles and practices of Hebrew labor and productivization (some inspired by A. D. Gordon's socialist-Zionist thought) made productive labor the basis for just Jewish sovereignty over Palestine (see, e.g., Gordon 1997). The socialism of the leftist settlers held that land belongs to those who work it. The settlers worked to purchase land (largely through private philanthropic capital) and then to nationalize it, often through coercive and violent means that pushed Palestinians into an uneven labor market. Socialist-Zionist practices, like liberalism, colonization, and slavery, "innovate[d] new means and forms of subjection, administration, and governance" (Lowe 2015, 3). Consequently, Jewish liberation and redemption emerged out of the dispossession and displacement of Palestinians.

Already in the early 1900s, factions among kibbutz settlers were producing the cleavages that would determine access to political rights. The socialist immigrant settlers opposed a capitalist order that pitted producer against exploiter, but they were largely unconcerned with the labor conditions of the Arab peasants, the transformations in production, and the subjugated lifeways their incursions would induce. Kibbutz settlers conceived of their ultimate right of belonging in Palestine, and then to the State of Israel, through a developmentalist logic that resonated with Lockean thought and the British and European imperial perception of Palestine (Wolfe 2016a, 217; Bhandar 2018; Bunton 2020). Such an assumption elides the uneven settler colonial power in a project premised on violence and social closure. In these ways, socialism (as a particular historical formation here, not a universal term) was constitutive of Zionist settler colonialism.

I am not arguing that socialism is a singular ideology that contradicts the practices of these leftist Zionists. Rather, I consider Hashomer Hatzair's socialism as a "category of practice" (Brubaker 1996, 7) and discuss how its adherents' participation in and benefiting from the expulsion (and in some cases proletarianization) of their onetime neighbors—the mostly agricultural peasants who held usufruct until Zionist purchase—could be synthesized with their own avowedly revolutionary project of a classless society and freedom from exploitation.

My analytic adoption of settler colonialism stems from the compelling comparative literature discussed here. Yet the understanding of settler colonialism that undergirds my central critical point in this book—comprehensively illuminating the constitutive elements of violence as Palestine became a frontier society—is not meant to be deterministic, predictive, or reductive or a simplistic model complete with a monolithic account of power. Rather, I use settler colonialism as a framework that opens up the possibility of considering the assemblages, contradictions, ambivalences, and contingencies through which the past has been shaped by various competing social and political actors.

My method is a historical political sociology that attempts to delineate how, at every step, events could have gone differently. Examining socialist-Zionist colonies shows the variety of objective possibilities, alongside the entrenchment of relations of asymmetry through processes of attempted territorial and demographic replacement. The Zionist project of displacement of Palestinians developed dialectally through interaction with the indigenous within the framework of the British imperial field. This acknowledgment informs my interpretive sociological capacity to read the settler colonial archive and to locate in its silences, fissures, and open proclamations the contestations through which the outcomes of settler colonization were all but ensured (see also Sabbagh-Khoury 2022c).

HASHOMER HATZAIR AND MAPAM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Two key features informed the origins of political Zionist movements in Europe: first, social closure led some European Jews to seek out a national-colonial solution to their social exclusion and, especially in the Russian Empire, violent oppression and, second, a national-colonial habitus emerged in Europe and shaped Zionist thinkers and actors. Therefore, Zionist thought and action cannot be understood in purely nationalist terms. Zionism is anchored in the array of historical political options available to its adherents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, socialism, liberalism, and fascism (Bishara 1996). As Raz-Krakotzkin (2011, 60) writes, "Zionism was not merely a case study, being neither an exemplary instance of a national project nor of colonial conflict. Rather it represented an articulation of all the major categories of modernity." Nation was tethered to colonialism in this European context, and many Zionists adopted national-colonial views on territorial conquest.

Beginning in the late 1880s, and especially in the 1920s following the Bolshevik victory in Russia and the revolutionary wave that swept Europe after World War I, Jewish youth in Europe were exposed to socialist ideas and attempts to put Marxian theory into practice. This worldview was nurtured in Hashomer Hatzair, a youth movement first organized in 1913 in Galicia, Austria-Hungary, for young adults ages eighteen to twenty and that spread across Europe and North America in the subsequent two decades. This movement, like non-Jewish scouting groups of the time, aimed to unite fervent youth energy and channel it toward political economic change. The movement primarily developed in Galicia and Poland, where Zionist activity proliferated (Margalit 1971). Eastern European Zionists generally belonged to families of high socioeconomic status. Some were assimilated (i.e., they practiced few daily religious traditions), but others were educated in religious schools. In this setting, Yiddish, German, Polish, and Hebrew were common languages, as demonstrated by the vast number of publications the movement produced in all four languages. Like other Zionist organizations, Hashomer Hatzair initially organized against assimilation, engaging in what they termed a national revival. The movement was equally focused on physical and intellectual training. It sought to be the place where young Jews' world views could be collectively formed, where their consciousnesses could be revived. Members commonly studied great works of literature (Ibsen, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, and Spengler), as well as Zionist writings (by theoreticians like Martin Buber, Yosef Haim Brenner, and especially Ber Borochov). Movement members were also well versed in the works of Marx, Engels, Adler, Kautsky, and Lenin (Zayit 1993).

In the 1920s, movement leaders had fully crystallized their socialist-Zionist ideology—especially the principle of self-realization (*hagshama atzmit*) through migration to Palestine. Then the movement set out its primary goal: to facilitate the settler migration of European Jewry to Palestine to help establish a Jewish labor commonwealth. To do so, European Jewish youth would train for migration and agricultural labor in Europe before migrating to Palestine and joining a *garʿin* (nucleus). Each nucleus was assigned rural agricultural space on which to establish a collectivist colony, generally on land purchased by the Jewish National Fund or Palestine Land Development Company. Funding sources varied.

At its peak, before World War II, Hashomer Hatzair had over twenty-five thousand members in about three hundred branches worldwide. We cannot know exactly how many of these members settled in Palestine. Still, the movement's rural settlement of "pioneers" (*halutsim*), alongside the efforts of some other settlement movements, was an outlier from migratory patterns as a whole, because most European Jews who settled in Palestine before 1948 did so in cities (Alroey 2014). Hashomer Hatzair's immigrant settlers established dozens of small colonies across Palestine (image 2 depicts those settled between 1927 and 1952). Although members of

all the kibbutz movements combined never exceeded 7 percent of the population of the Yishuv, the strategic colonizing labor of Hashomer Hatzair's network on the rural frontier, alongside that of other settlement movements, constituted the rural territorial base of the Zionist project.

By 1926, with the beginnings of the kibbutz network established in Palestine, movement leaders discussed founding a national kibbutz movement—Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi—as a comprehensive network for communication and support. The founding assembly took place April 1, 1927, in Haifa. Out of this assembly emerged a twofold platform: (1) the founding of the "Hebrew national home in Erets Yisraʾel" on the basis of a productive and self-sustaining economy and (2) social (class) revolution. This was the core of Hashomer Hatzair's phased theory of progress (Zayit 1993, 271). The two phases were to be mutually conditioned: the social revolution—abolition of class differentiation and exploitation—required completing the construction of a national Jewish homeland, and the fulfillment of Zionism would be possible only through the social revolution.

A central issue was the movement's view of communism and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In 1927, Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi both rejected the Socialist and the Communist Internationals and criticized the latter's attitude toward the Jewish Question and Zionism. Yet it continued to support the Soviet revolution. Critics of the movement claimed that its ideological collectivism, a version of democratic centralism, created totalitarian control and oppressed individual liberty.[7] Zayit (1993, 272), however, emphasizes that the principle of ideological collectivism caused the movement to "show much consideration of minority views and to seek a common denominator to differing positions. Hence, constant ideological tension results in the inability to make clear decisions. . . . Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi as a political entity has stood out in its elegant ideological formulations, a tendency towards didactic education on political issues, and the lack of tactical flexibility."
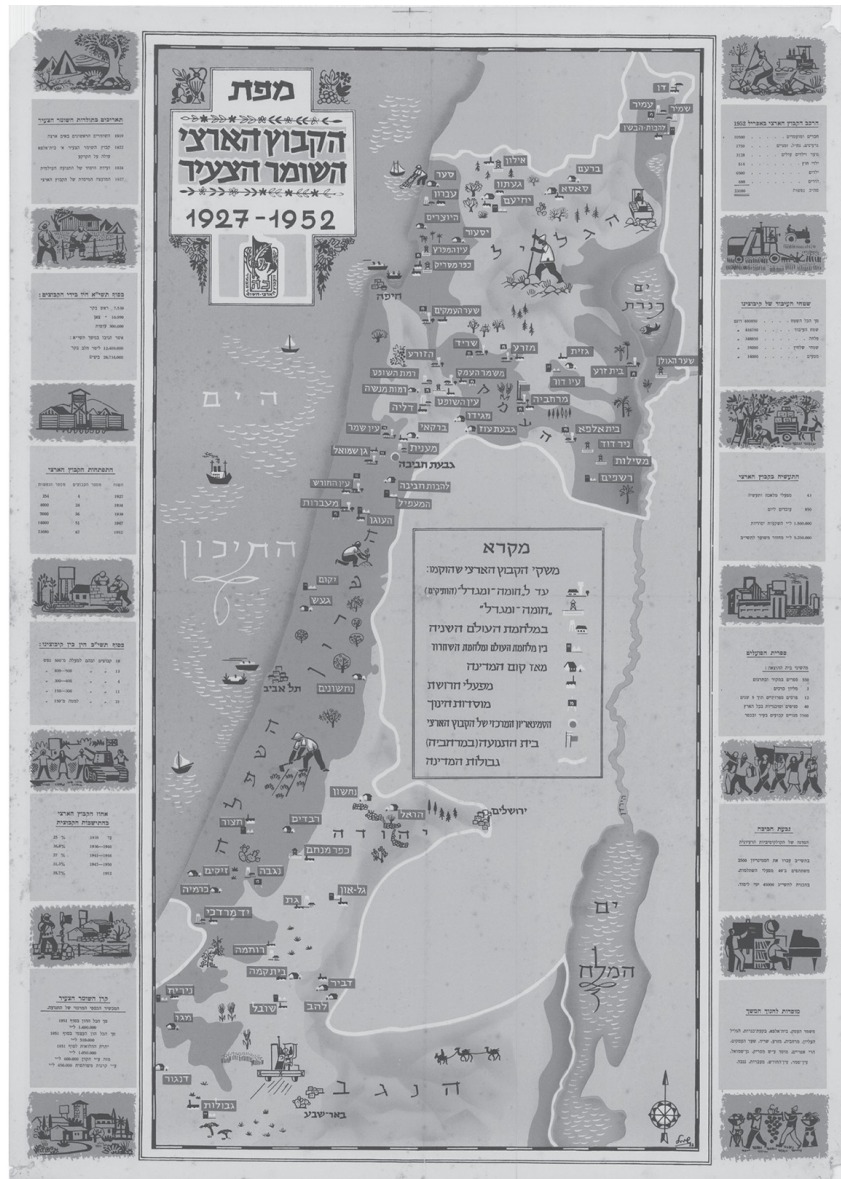
IMAGE 2. Historical map of the kibbutz colonies settled by the Hashomer Hatzair movement between 1927 and 1952. The map depicts the spread of dozens of colonies across Palestine.
Source: Central Zionist Archives, KRA/1675

In 1946, Hashomer Hatzair and its youth wing joined with the Socialist League, its urban ally, to create Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party (Beinin 1990, 26). That year, the movement comprised ten thousand members. About two-thirds belonged to Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi; the rest were members of the Socialist League. During World War II, a leftist faction consolidated within Hashomer Hatzair, led by veteran kibbutz settlers including Yaʿakov Riftin, Elʿazar Peri, Mordechai Oren, and Aharon Cohen. They promoted the Soviet camp. Hashomer Hatzair leaders Meir Yaʿari and Yaʿakov Hazan were not enamored of the leftist faction's desire to bring the movement closer to the global communist movement; they were ever aware of their kibbutzim depending economically on maintaining good relations with the majority of the labor movement, bourgeois Zionists, and eventually, the State of Israel's institutions. However, until the mid-1950s, many members of Hashomer Hatzair strongly professed a pro-Soviet orientation.

The distinctive contribution of Hashomer Hatzair to the labor Zionist settlement movement was its commitment to political cooperation of Arabs and Jews (Beinin 1990). In 1940, Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi organized an intensive Arabic language course for the movement's cadres, aiming to establish an Arab section to nurture relations with progressive elements among the Arab population. Under the leadership of Aharon Cohen, the Arab section became the organizational center of the activity of the United Workers' Party (Mifleget hapoʾalim hameʾuḥedet; MAPAM) among the Arab population after Israel's inception.

Party Politics in the Zionist Left: From Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party to MAPAM

MAPAM (the United Workers' Party) was founded in January 1948 by the unification of three leftist factions of the labor Zionist movement, all of whom opposed the dominant status of MAPAI (Mifleget poʿalei [erets] yisraʾel; the (Land of) Israel Workers' Party, precursor of the Israeli Labor Party) in the Yishuv and within the Histadrut (Federation of the Jewish Workers of the Land of Israel). Each of MAPAM's factions—Ha-Tnuʿa Le-Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda (Movement for the Unity of Labor), Hashomer Hatzair Workers' Party, and Left Poʿalei Tzion (Workers of Zion)—brought a unique social foundation and political approach to the united party, differing on interpretations of Marxism, Zionism, and the Arab Question—the existence and future of the Arab population of Palestine. These differences were largely disregarded to strengthen leftist opposition to MAPAI on the eve of the founding of the State of Israel (Beinin 1990; see also Elmaliach 2020).

Importantly, Hashomer Hatzair opposed the partition of Palestine until a rather late stage and instead advocated a political solution aimed at one binational state (more on this later). The group embraced a global vision of interrelations of all peoples along economic, social, and political lines. It aspired to integrate ideology and education and to preserve these values in the political frameworks that emerged from its youth movement. Educational activity thus continued to be an active element of Hashomer Hatzair, both as an independent Zionist movement and as a faction within MAPAM.

Le-Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda, in contrast, focused on national and state issues and prioritized "security questions" (Tzur 2000). This movement had emerged from a 1944 split in MAPAI, after which it became a party in its own right. The main reason for this split was Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda's (correct) suspicion that David Ben-Gurion aimed to partition the Land of Israel (*halukat ha-aretz*) to establish a Jewish state as soon as World War II ended (Beinin 1990, 26). Despite Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda's affinity for the USSR during the war years, it did not accept the Leninist principles of party organization and did not aspire for recognition as a communist party, as did the leftist faction of Hashomer Hatzair. Like most currents in the labor Zionist movement, Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda did not acknowledge the national rights of the Palestinian people. It supported establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. Yitzhak Tabenkin, the leader of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meʾuhad —Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda's kibbutz movement—also supported transferring the Arab population out of Palestine (as did, though not usually publicly, Ben-Gurion and other Zionist leaders) (Beinin 1990, 26). Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda opposed Arabs joining the Histadrut and later opposed Arab membership in MAPAM (Beinin 1990). Among other reasons, this led to a split in MAPAM in 1954. Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meʾuhad played a central role in building the military force of the labor Zionist movement, the Haganah, and especially its elite unit, the Palmach. Many of the Palmach's prominent figures, among them Israel Galili and Yigal Allon, came from Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda (Beinin 1990; Halamish 2014).

Binationalism and the Position of Hashomer Hatzair on the Arab Question during the 1930s and 1940s

The binational solution to the question of the future regime in Palestine first appeared among the ideological principles of the movement adopted at Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi's founding assembly in 1927 and was confirmed at its general assembly in 1933 (Zayit 1993). These principles were not meant to serve as the platform of a political party (which did not yet exist). Rather, they were intended as the basis for a settlement movement in Palestine and an educational youth movement in the Diaspora. Hashomer Hatzair was not yet prepared to propose a program for achieving a future binational society. Their fear of being identified with the binationalist ideas of what they believed to be the bourgeois Brit Shalom group caused Hashomer Hatzair members to formulate their goals cautiously and keep their distance from what they regarded as Zionist minimalism. In the early 1930s, Hashomer Hatzair proclaimed its political definition of binationalism: "As a political guarantee for the fulfillment of Zionism; we aspire to a state regime based on political, social and economic equality, a regime whereby one nation will not rule the other" (Zayit 1993, 276). This formulation served Zionist objectives when Jewish settlers were a relatively small population in Palestine.

Until the 1936–1939 Great Arab Revolt, there was no change in the movement's attitude toward the Arab Question—the capacious term for articulating what to do with the indigenous Arab community in Palestine. At that point Hashomer Hatzair called "to move (political) action over to the Arab population and consolidate a 'positive' plan for an agreement between the two peoples. Organizing rural and urban Arab workers was strongly emphasized" (Zayit 1993, 278). After the outbreak of the revolt, Hashomer Hatzair held two opposing ideas, common to the labor Zionist movement: political moderation,[8] championed by Ha-Poʿel Ha-Tzaʿir (Young Worker, an early socialist Zionist party), and class activism, advocated by Ahdut Ha-ʿAvodah (the party established by David Ben-Gurion in 1919 whose name differs slightly from the group that split from MAPAI in 1944). Hashomer Hatzair forged an ideological combination of the two approaches but did not suggest an alternative political strategy. Thus, "at times its conception of the Arab question seemed anachronistic and even dogmatic" (Zayit 1993, 278). Throughout the movement's settlement period, its settlers arrived to an inhabited place and faced the indigenous Palestinians' refusal of foreign incursion. Although elimination of native existence was not Hashomer Hatzair's avowed goal, it took a crucial role in this project.

Hashomer Hatzair did not support the Biltmore Program, establishing a Jewish commonwealth at the end of World War II and adopted in New York in 1942.[9] Most Zionists understood that the immediate founding of a Jewish state, when Jews constituted less than one-third of the population of Mandate Palestine, would be possible only by partitioning the country. Like Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda, Hashomer Hatzair opposed partition. Binationalism, they argued, would make partition unnecessary and generate the conditions for fulfilling a Jewish majority. The group wished to postpone the decision on the future of Palestine and to transfer the mandate to international trusteeship, in the hope that the USSR's growth as a world power would positively affect the future of the country. Thus, for Hashomer Hatzair, binationalism was a means to fulfill Zionism while simultaneously enabling the expression of its internationalism and commitment to socialism.

To be sure, Hashomer Hatzair maintained a vague commitment to the idea of binationalism. Different leaders in the movement articulated the principle of binationalism differently, leading to an incoherent principle. Some interpret Hashomer Hatzair's demand for a binational state, neither exclusively Jewish nor Arab, as one element of the Zionist movement's partial

recognition of Palestinian national rights (e.g., Beinin 1990).Yet according to Zayit (1993, 276), Hashomer Hatzair recognized the Arab national movement "while denying the existence of such a movement in the present, and being willing to recognize such a movement if and when it comes into being, given that it would be a popular and progressive movement and recognize the Zionist revival project." This perspective underlines the movement's hierarchical view of national legitimacy: Hashomer Hatzair did not recognize Palestinian Arab nationalism—even *after* the Great Revolt, when one would have to be willfully blind to deny the national movement —and it would recognize Palestinian Arab nationalism only if Arabs recognized the Zionist project.

Hashomer Hatzair maintained political partnerships, especially with the Ihud society, a small circle of intellectuals led by Martin Buber, Yehuda Magnes, Haim Kalvarisky, and Ernst Simon. Ihud, Hashomer Hatzair, and members of other parties came together as the Jewish-Arab League for Rapprochement and Cooperation. Hashomer Hatzair had difficulty operationalizing the binational idea; it had not yet developed a strategy for its realization. Moreover, the movement found itself subject to a profound tension, committed as it was to both revolutionary socialist internationalism and Zionism. The contradictory demands of these two commitments led to periodic crises, and each time the majority of movement members favored its commitment to Zionism. Beinin (1990, 28) emphasizes that the contradiction between these two commitments does not mean that movement members were loyal only to one of them. Therefore, one should not underestimate the importance of this contradiction or the value of attempts to come to terms with it dialectically. The establishment of MAPAM was preconditioned by Ahdut Ha-ʿAvoda's demand that Hashomer Hatzair surrender its binational program. In any case, once the Soviet Union, the UN General Assembly, and the communists to their left embraced partition in 1947, it became acceptable for Hashomer Hatzair to do so as well.

Prior studies provide a vital background for understanding the Hashomer Hatzair movement and its practices (e.g., Halamish 2009b; Amitai 1998; Tzur 1998; Zayit 1985, 2002). But in their preoccupation with its ideological origins, political platform, and internal debates, they overlook Hashomer Hatzair's role as a colonizing force. Consequently, the existing scholarly literature does not question the situatedness of internal movement politics in the structural transformations of the Zionist settler colonial project. Explanations of colonization practices, especially in regard to the surrounding Palestinian villages, remains limited in scope and often concealed (see, however, the discussion of Kibbutz Sasa and Kibbutz Lahav in Beinin 1990). The dominant trend in the literature assumes that ideals—the abolition of hierarchies, brotherhood of nations (internationalism), or binationalism—played a key role in shaping the patterns of settlement and relations with local inhabitants. Consequently, this body of work views the tensions between settlement practices and ideology either as a contradiction or deviation from the principles of socialism or as the expression of tensions between principles of particularism versus universalism, nation versus class, and socialism versus Zionism (Banbaji and Hever 2014; Sternhell 1995). It disconnects ideological debates from the material practices of settlement and the forced removal of the fallahin; it is paradigmatic of the settler colonial disavowal I trace among kibbutz settlers themselves.

In contrast, I address settler colonial practices and relationships without presuming a normative tension, and I suspend general ideological questions until after analyzing the local practices of colonization on their own terms. This alternative interpretative framework examines the kibbutzim first and foremost as colonial settlements active in rural processes of territorialization, one that places their relations with their surroundings within the paradigm of

conquest of the land. As Shapira and Wiskind-Elper (1995, 29), labor Zionist historians, noted nearly three decades ago,

> It goes without saying that it is legitimate to analyze a society from the outside: the Jewish Yishuv could be examined within the framework of colonialist movements that existed in the Western world since the sixteenth century. The situation of a nation of immigrants settling in a land with "natives" who wish to preserve their exclusive right to that strip of land makes Palestine comparable to North America or Australia or to the Russian colonization of Central Asia. Use of that model is both legitimate and desirable.[10]

I combine an empirically grounded internal perspective—relying on kibbutz archives and the texts and written testimonies they contain from the point of view of the settler colonizers—with an external critical sociological perspective focusing on settlers' relations with the Palestinians. As noted earlier, this is not a fully integrated history: it does not comprehensively address the history of Palestinian villages before or following encounter, and it does not use testimonies of the indigenous (except in limited cases). The documents include rare testimonies *about* Palestinians. I mainly examine the colonization processes and interactions between settlers and natives from the point of view of the settler colonizers, not the natives. This is, naturally, a partial perspective. Precisely for this reason, to compensate for this limitation, I seek to execute a double move: reconstruct the settler colonial practices and relationships and then reassess attributions of political meaning through representations and memory.

SYSTEMIC ISSUES IN ISRAELI SCHOLARLY LITERATURE ON THE ZIONIST LEFT

Considerable research has examined the Zionist Left and its ideological contradictions.[11] I do not discuss them all. Rather, through identifying some important examples, I detail how much of the Israeli scholarly literature on the topic is confined within a schema that overlooks the settler colonial structure of the Zionist project.

Previous scholarly discussions of the Zionist Left's perception of the Arab Question—the existence and future of the Arab population of Palestine—explore the limited perspective of ideological deliberations among submovements (e.g., Amitai 1988; Gorny 1977). Amitai (1988) describes the contradictions in MAPAM's political ideology (recall that Hashomer Hatzair cofounded MAPAM in January 1948). He details the movement's positions on the creation of and solution to the Palestinian refugee problem, the question of the Arab minority in Israel, and the question of so-called abandoned lands. The lack of attention to Hashomer Hatzair before it became part of MAPAM—that is, in local colonization and replacement of the indigenous population—leads to the conclusion that MAPAM resolved its ideological dissonance between Zionism, socialism, and the brotherhood of peoples by claiming that expulsion of Palestinians was committed solely during warfare and was therefore justifiable. Anchoring the discussion in 1948 excludes the preceding colonization practices and the connection between those colonization processes and the uprooting of Palestinians.

Another strain of the literature addresses the ideological and epistemological orientations of the left flank of the Zionist movement and its role in shaping Israeli society and state institutions.[12] Margalit (1969, 1971), for instance, examines the history of Hashomer Hatzair between 1913 and 1935, describing its socialist ideology as "revolutionary." He emphasizes the movement's historical support of Jewish-Arab partnership and discusses its opposition to the partition of Palestine until the 1947 UN Partition Plan was adopted. Halamish (2009a, 2009b) stresses the tensions around the movement's view of the Partition Plan, arguing that, for Hashomer Hatzair, Jewish settlement outweighed the desire for Jewish sovereignty. This factor,

she says, was the basis for the movement's binationalist orientation until 1947.

Accentuating the commitment to settlement over support for national territorial sovereignty entirely disregards the displacement of the Palestinian villages, a matter of great importance for the kibbutzim, because they were generally established near Palestinian villages. Centering the debates over the contradictions between socialism and nationalism elides the settler colonial nature of the Zionist Left. In contrast, I move beyond internal ideological debates within Hashomer Hatzair. Although I do not ignore its official institutional representations of its actions and I do consider the role of ideology, I emphasize the relations between the kibbutzim and the Palestinian inhabitants of the area where they settled and the sociological mechanisms by which settler colonizers made sense of their worlds and acted in them.

I problematize these representations of the Zionist Left that adopt the characteristic disavowal of violence committed through encroachment, dispossession, and displacement. Socialist Zionism, I argue, cannot be so simply severed from the Zionist Right and Far Right that became dominant in the 1970s with Menachem Begin's rise to power. Despite its leftist communitarian logics and ostensible willingness first to cohabitate in a binational polity and then to partition the territory, it was the Zionist Left that pioneered the violence of settler colonization.

To be sure, there were and are differences between the Zionist Left and Right, some of which I identify throughout this book. I do not reduce the left-right division in Israel to political economic terms but, rather, identify how both were (and still are) imbricated in processes of colonial becoming. Ideological commitments varied among the various currents of the Zionist movement, but the common denominator was the logic of legitimating accumulation of land by purchase and the concurrent denial of Palestinian rights to land and their attachments to it. One way I recenter leftist Zionism in the settler colonial process is by attending to settlers' self-identification in relation to their practices. This includes attention to their qualified anti-imperialist worldview, which they largely understood to exclude their own actions, and their class-liberationist ideology, which in practice did not encompass the Palestinians. Labor Zionists were concerned about the exploitation of fallahin by effendis (property holders) because this was an obstruction to the settlement project. They did not believe that the settlement movement exploited Palestinians, because it opposed hiring them as workers. Thereby, an economistic understanding of exploitation allied to a rejection of a national movement that they understood as led by landed effendis justified labor Zionism.

The 1948 war was certainly a watershed moment in the history of colonization and realization of formal Zionist sovereignty. For the Zionist Left, 1948 became a symbol of strength and the redemption of the Jewish nation. For remnants of this Zionist Left, the 1967 occupation of further Palestinian land stands out as the decisive error—an overreach resulting in the apotheosis of Zionist hubris. Today, because much of the nearly impotent Zionist Left defines its political activism in relation to the question of settlement in the 1967 Occupied Palestinian Territories, the foundational losses before and during 1948 remain largely off limits (Shenhav 2012).[13] For these Israelis, the relation between the settler colonial question (dispossession) and the national question is disconnected. Yet understanding their inextricability reveals the uneven relations with the Palestinians in which the Zionist Left is implicated.

Therefore, I center the role of 1948 throughout this book in discussing the Zionist Left's views about the legitimacy of settler colonial violence. The 1948 mass displacement of Palestinians fundamentally transformed the Zionist project from colonization of land by purchase to colonization by warfare, ethnic cleansing, and mass dispossession. Paradoxically, the Zionist Left has widely rejected the indigeneity of the Palestinians and the legitimacy of resistance to

colonization, whereas the Right, particularly Revisionist figures like Jabotinsky, has subtly reinforced the status of the Arabs as natives, anticipating indigenous resistance to colonization. Despite the Zionist Left's condemnation of (most) post-1967 settlement, the Right's recognition of the linkage between 1948 and 1967 challenges the regimes of legitimation of both wings of the Zionist movement by underscoring the foundational violence that constitutes settler colonialism.

THEMES

Four major themes guide this book. First is the structural nature of settler colonialism and its mechanisms of transformation. I attend to the process of settlement by considering its implications for the indigenous Palestinians, appraising both economic (the availability of land, ownership rights, purchase, and territorialization) and political dimensions. I examine the extent to which Zionist settler colonization involved internal tensions and conflicts, the nature of these confrontations, and their lasting effects. I assess how settler colonialism results in the differential balance of power that favors the supremacy of settlers. Examining the process through which the Israeli state was constituted and the emergence of a structure of dispossession risks the "entrapment" of indigeneity as only that which can be rendered by the discursive regime of academic knowledge production (Smith 2014). Although not escaping this entrapment fully, a genealogy of settler sovereignty reveals the contingent nature of colonization, rather than its permanence, and challenges the inscription of Palestinians in Zionist literature as passive agents of history.

A key element of settler colonialism is how it is iteratively and inconsistently lived, enacted, and embodied by those implicated in its formation. Here, I seek to develop a theory of settler colonial conquest of land as a social field in which agents compete over access and claims to various forms of capital (Bourdieu 1994).[14] The field of settler colonial land conquest entails material and symbolic practices. In contrast to methodologically individualist analysis, I argue that patterned dispositions cumulatively developed in the kibbutzim and informed the actions of settlers in the field. Young European Jews who participated in socialist-Zionist movements, like Hashomer Hatzair, first subjected themselves to the ideological interpellation of socialist Zionism (in Althusser's [1970] sense of the term), which they carried with them to Palestine. Settlers' politico-national capital in the settler colonial field was informed by the European context and by the movement's cognitive mechanisms of mobilization. But this capital also became cumulatively concretized as Zionist settlers collectively engaged in colonization practices, encountered the indigenous Palestinians and participated in their dispossession, and constructed the infrastructure for a settler colonial society. The attainment of political capital legitimated colonization practices for the first and subsequent kibbutz generations. This, during and after the 1948 war, enabled some of the kibbutz settlers (such as the so-called Arab experts) to participate in military intelligence operations and in post-1948 military rule and population management of Israel's Palestinian Arab citizens (on this, see Jiryis 1976; Robinson 2013; and Nuriely 2019).

Second, settler colonialism is not limited to settlement processes. The frontier is a site of multiple forms of social relations between the settlers and their indigenous neighbors. The diverse and abundant literature that developed in kibbutz society emphasizes that, before 1948, kibbutz members and the Arabs maintained good neighborly relations. I ask whether such representations elide the colonial structures in place. I do not seek to refute the claims of settlers; rather, I aim to analyze their practices, ideological commitments, and subsequent representations

of the past. Most scholarship on this topic does not critically reconstruct the settler colonial practices of the leftist Zionists as one contour in a wider settler colonial project. I seek to avoid the entrapment of responding to Zionist claims about the existence of Palestinians in Palestine or of the Palestinians as a national group. A comprehensive reconstruction of Palestinian life on the frontier is more difficult to achieve, given the lack of a rich archival record of rural peasant life. I strive to dislodge the assumptions in the record using the discursive work of the Zionist settlers themselves. Here I am especially careful to historicize the kind of society Zionism encountered. It will be crucial to keep in mind that Palestinian society was not a singular, coherent entity but rather a fragmented assemblage stratified by class, urban-rural divisions, and allegiances (R. Khalidi 1991; Khalaf 1991). A Palestinian national movement had already been forming since the late 1910s or early 1920s, before many of the events in this book began. That movement, however, was largely concentrated in the cities. In the countryside, local solidarities, patron-client relations, and the effects of urban factional rivalries (e.g., the rivalry of the Husayni and Nashashibi families) sometimes reinforced the national movement and sometimes undermined its unity. I seek to contextualize Zionist incursions in this history of fragmentation.

Third, I examine the dialectical tensions between socialist ideology and colonization practices. I analyze the extent to which the values of socialist Zionism, including the brotherhood of peoples and binationalism, were central in shaping colonization practices. Just as the "European colonizer of the nineteenth century both preached . . . Enlightenment humanism at the colonized and at the same time denied it in practice" (Chakrabarty 2000, 4), so too the socialist Zionists were inconsistent in bridging ideologies of universal equality and practice. I examine the ways Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim were distinct in their practices but also how the techniques of colonial relations were derived from, inspired by, or extracted out of legacies of European domination. Such a line of questioning does not equate historical situations but instead explores the relations and linkages. I offer a critique of the normative historical developmentalism that undergirds socialist-Zionist colonization and its adherence to a civilizational paradigm of modernity: the reduction of all Jewish history to a single history of progress to which some (Zionists) would arrive earlier than others (Palestinians) (Chakrabarty 2000). Additionally, I complicate the roles of perpetrator and victim, showing how such subject positions are not static identities or mutually exclusive. For example, the figural New Jew of Zionism was not made simply through a negation of the purportedly weak European Jew (*shlilat ha-golah,* or "negation of exile"; see Raz-Krakotzkin 2017; Bishara 1996). Rather, it was constituted through the colonial appropriation of Palestinian belonging. The book transposes the Jewish Question to the Palestinian Question: the putative emancipation of the former through settler colonial sovereignty in a land occupied by the latter did not solve, but rather deepened, crises of racialized exclusion and insecurity.

Fourth, I seek a new way of understanding the inextricability of what Palestinians generally call the Nakba and what Jewish Israelis call the War of Independence. I do so by examining watershed moments against the background of the colonization process that ensued before 1948. I determine whether the war was a dramatic rupture point or whether practices and processes before 1948 align with the events of 1948 themselves, and those that followed, as one enduring thread. Many Zionists point to 1948 as the origin of the conflict with Palestinians; yet 1948 constitutes the continuation of a longer colonization process. The British Empire was an incubator for the Jewish colonies that enabled their territorial expansion, despite sometimes sharp political contention (Jabbour 1970, 38–39). This history is eliminated in Zionist discourse and much Israeli scholarly literature, which focuses on the mechanism of land purchase, the

heroic practices of settlement, and the putatively anti-colonial moment of British devolution to Zionists. In the imaginary of the Zionist Left, the figural pioneers' labor ensured refuge for the Jewish people and restored the fallen land from its abusive, rootless, peripatetic Arabs and the injurious British.

I look to how representations of the Palestinian Arab surroundings in general, and the 1948 events in particular, took shape in the kibbutz colonies, asking how settlers explained the uprooting of their neighbors and their own roles in the rupture of 1948. I resist the inclination to align with the common claim that the 1948 events—and, indeed, the violence enacted on Palestinians—were forgotten or pushed to the fringes of consciousness, instead distinguishing between official, institutionalized memory and the memory of individual kibbutz settlers. In this way, this book addresses the Zionist Left by historicizing its ideology and practice. I find that leftist Zionist self-perception was constituted through active disavowal, justification, apologetics, and unsettling hauntings that sustain the settler colonial present. The key problem is not the absence of knowledge but the presence of a colonial episteme empowered by physical, discursive, and epistemological displacements.

JEZREEL VALLEY

My primary research questions and focus on colonization processes cast doubt on the common choice of 1948 as year zero of the conflict. Examining the validity of Kimmerling's assumptions about the varying weight of ownership, presence, and sovereignty requires a time frame in which the status of the different components varies, enabling focused comparison of different points in time within a narrow spatial context.[15] The Jezreel Valley is fitting for this analysis because of its centrality in the early Zionist accumulation of territory.

The area is one of the most fertile in all of historical Palestine, and much of it became privately owned by absentee Arabs living in Beirut by the late nineteenth century, therefore rendering it ripe for what I call colonization by purchase. In much of Zionist discourse, the Jezreel Valley is taken as paradigmatic of the processes of redeeming the land (ge'ulat ha-karka) and conquest (kibush ha-karka); the kibbutz settlers in that area are depicted as the most dynamic of pioneers, whose colonies would provide a firm territorial base for future Zionist settlement. The area was not an empty desert or a terra nullius. Like other lowland areas, it was malaria ridden and insecure. Nevertheless, it contained Palestinian villages and villagers, most of whom were forager or pastoralist peasants whose livelihoods depended on the land, and who were relatively disempowered within the Palestinian social structure. I do not consider the kibbutzim of the Jezreel Valley representative of the entire Zionist movement, and my findings are not statistically generalizable. Rather, I extract from the kibbutzim of this region a pattern of sociopolitical action.

This book focuses on three kibbutzim in the dense settlement frontier on the fringes of the valley. They constitute three instantiations of colonization conditions and practices. They shared similar ideological convictions despite the settlers' varying origins. And they were surrounded by a cluster of Palestinian villages, the vast majority of which would ultimately become displaced. The kibbutzim developed a form of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). They were highly reticulated in dense networks in which their practices became mimetic, their resources and personnel shared, and their strategies informed by directives from umbrella associations (such as Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi).

Mishmar ha-Emek was the first kibbutz in this region, founded in 1926. It was crucial to Hashomer Hatzair and played a key role in formulating the movement's ideological vision

(Beinin 1995). A significant number of MAPAM leaders came from this kibbutz, and it was formative in establishing norms and institutions for neighboring kibbutzim to draw on in subsequent settlement. This kibbutz was also involved in one of the most decisive confrontations between Arabs and Zionists before Israel's founding, the April 1948 battle of Mishmar ha-Emek (referred to by Palestinians as the battle of Abu Shusha), one month before the inception of the new state (Ezov 2013).

The second, neighboring kibbutz, Hazorea, was founded by German Jewish members of the Werkleute youth movement in late 1935 on the lands of Qira (Qira wa Qamun, the Arab village). Originally, this movement was not aligned with other Zionist settlement movements. But it turned to settlement in Palestine after Hitler's rise to power. The movement's leader, Hermann Menachem Gerson, settled and lived on this kibbutz. Another kibbutz settler, Eliʿezer Beʾeri, became a key figure in MAPAM's Arab section in the 1950s.

The third kibbutz in this study, Ein Hashofet, was founded mostly by Hashomer Hatzair settlers from the United States and Poland in 1937 on lands of the Palestinian village of Joʾara. The site eventually became a central military base of the Palmach leading up to 1948.

Despite my reliance on the standard, institutional archival sources (discussed later), I devote considerable attention to the resistance of Palestinians before 1948. I examine responses to settlement and the practical transformations that prompted such responses alongside the ways such actions shaped subsequent settler practices. The most significant instance of resistance to colonization was the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, a series of insurgencies that the Mandate authorities considered a civil insurrection. The revolt ensued when, nationwide, rural and urban groups of Palestinians, aroused by the restrictions of British imperial rule and increasing Jewish immigration after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, rebelled against British soldiers, police, officials, and Jewish settlements (Swedenburg 2003). Some also revolted against predatory Arab land owners. Counterinsurgency measures by the Mandate authorities included brutality, collective punishment of Palestinian villages, destruction of Palestinian property in urban and rural localities, house demolitions, systematic vandalism, looting, reprisals, collective fines, forced labor, imprisonment, and British occupations of villages (Hughes 2009). Often, civilians who did not take part in fighting were punished. Entire villages were destroyed. Rashid Khalidi (2020) estimates that 10 percent of the Arab adult male population was killed, maimed, imprisoned, or exiled as a result of the massive deployment of British force against the uprising. The revolt was particularly intense in and around the Jezreel Valley (Anderson 2013). In this period, the British army rather than the civil high commissioner came to rule over the Mandate's territory, using statutory martial law through a series of Orders in Council and Emergency Regulations (Hughes 2009).[16] The second phase of the revolt, from 1937 to 1939, in which many fallahin participated in armed struggle (often against the interests of the elite land-owning class and the Arab Higher Committee), began after the Palestinian Arab leadership rejected Lord Peel's Palestine partition plan, which proposed establishing a Jewish state on 17 percent of the territory and expelling over two hundred thousand Arabs to secure a Jewish majority on that territory (R. Khalidi 2020). The plan represented the paradigmatic erasure of Palestinian self-determination by acceding, at least partially, to the goal of Zionist state making. By 1939, the British had suppressed the insurrection. Almost the entire Palestinian nationalist leadership was exiled. This uprising had a decisive effect on British policy (limiting subsequent Jewish immigration and land purchases), on the kibbutz settlement movement, and on the fragmented Palestinian society.

Because of the intensity and gravity of the revolt and its consequences for the ensuing period,

I center my analysis on two decades, from the initial outbreak of the Great Arab Revolt in 1936 through the early years of the Israeli state in the mid-1950s. This is a critical conjuncture—with the intensification of Jewish immigration and land purchases—that exposes the contingencies of colonialism and resistance. This period is not a rigid demarcation, of course. Still, this time frame allows me to identify and highlight iterative and quotidian actions and relationship patterns rather than episodic dramatic moments. Most importantly, instead of focusing on a time when massive direct physical violence was exerted (1948), the broader time frame enables me to examine other forms of conflict and different modes of individual and collective violence.

METHODOLOGY

Rather than basing my analysis on official documents of the state and its institutions, I examine the local archives of the kibbutzim, looking especially to the sources produced by or about its original settlers. These paint a more complicated picture of fissures and ambivalences. Concentrating on three collectivist communities enables me to distinguish the relationships and processes that are not as visible in macropolitical accounts focused on battles and war maneuvers, diplomacy, elite decisions and planning, or demographic and geographic transformations.

The main body of evidence I analyze comes from the extensive archives of the three kibbutzim—Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet. As I began to concentrate my archival research on these three colonies, I also visited numerous other archives of Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim, reviewed troves of files collated from other kibbutzim by the Ein Hashofet archivist Ofra Brill, analyzed archival materials from Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meʾuhad kibbutzim (the companion federation of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi), and conducted further archival data collection at the local and national archives of the movement (especially the Yad Yaari Research and Documentation Center and the Pinhas Lavon Institute for Labor Movement Research). I also draw on documents in the Haganah Historical Archives, the Israel State Archives, and the Central Zionist Archives. These archives contain relevant historical accounts of land purchase, political organizing, institutional planning, and relations between the colonies and other Zionist institutions. This triangulation method enabled me to produce a historical sociology (Paige 1999) of the relations between socialist-Zionist settlers and the indigenous Palestinians with a more nomothetic character.

Hashomer Hatzair formed a central archive as early as 1937 at Kibbutz Merhavia, another of its member colonies; the earliest discrete archive for each kibbutz colony was officially founded in 1968. Kibbutzim preserved materials from the early decades of the twentieth century as they developed. As I began collecting materials, I found a great wealth of local archival sources that were used sparingly, if at all, in existing research. The archives contain rare, synchronically produced materials, such as protocols of *sihot kibbutz* (kibbutz assembly discussions), internal interview files, photographs, and correspondence, and many memoirs, eulogies, and books that the kibbutzim produced on their own initiative relating to their histories. All three kibbutzim published regular local newsletters: *Yediʿot mishmar ha-emek*, *Yediʿot kibbutz ein hashofet*, and Hazorea's *Ba-shaʿar*, and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi published *Al ha-mishmar*, its political organ. From these different modes of textual production, I assembled an overall picture using sources based on recall and reconstruction in hindsight (through the 1970s–1990s) and materials produced at the time of events.

Each kibbutz community was careful to document and narrate crucial historical moments and figures, alongside quotidian interactions and the texture of life in the colonies. Such

consciousness and archival practice were carried over from Jewish communal life in Europe and constituted a key form of informational capital in the Yishuv (Bourdieu 1994). I note two features of this informational capital: first, Zionist reconnaissance to gather information on Palestinians and, second, movement action archived to ensure that achievements would later be recognized and properly attributed. Building Jewish colonies in the populated frontier entailed gathering information about Palestinian villages in preparation for land purchase. About half (around forty) the kibbutzim of Hashomer Hatzair were established before 1948 near Palestinian villages or directly on land where Arab villages had previously been. The local archives of the kibbutzim operating before 1948 thus produced, classified, and administered information about the indigenous people.[17] The story of the kibbutzim in these archives is inherently intertwined with stories of the local indigenous populations.

These early settlers were aware that the history they documented would become a resource for articulating their national origin story (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022c). Such awareness is made clear by the sheer volume of amateur documentation and professionally collected material in the archives. Today, many kibbutzim of Hashomer Hatzair continue to maintain these local archives, allowing outside researchers to draw on their resources. The investment of the Zionist Left in archiving its origins derives from settlers' engagement in "classification struggles" (Bourdieu 2018) over their self-perceived leading role in the Zionist revolution and their monumental contributions to the new nation-state.

The social history and political life of these settlers and their colonies in Palestine is well documented, especially compared with Palestinian society on the frontier. The Palestinian population on the frontier was poorer and less educated than the urban population. According to the 1931 census, the literacy rate among Palestinians was 22 percent (likely lower in the rural population), compared with 86 percent among the Jewish population (R. Khalidi 1991, 14). In addition to this rural element of Palestinian society having been largely occluded from recorded history, the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 and their fear of political harassment from Israeli military forces led to the obliteration of already-rare sources of Palestinian history (Swedenburg 1989). The destruction or concealment of archival sources was repeated again following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The relative scarcity of Palestinian sources from the rural frontier thus renders the kibbutz archives significant, despite their selective documentation practices.[18]

My work differs from existing scholarship, not because it is based on Palestinian testimonies, archives, or oral histories, but in its treatment of kibbutzim as not separate entities with isolated histories but as elements of a relational history nested within a wider social context. I turn the gaze of the kibbutzim outward toward the relations with their Arab neighbors. Scholars have rarely interrogated the process of the constitution of Zionist sovereignty through the local practices of land accumulation and dispossession. I thus intend to explicate the material and symbolic practices of settler colonialism, reversing the intention of the kibbutzim's historiography and memory production and subverting the gaze of colonial reconnaissance documentation. I take inspiration from Stoler's (2008) methodology of reading *along* the archival grain, as well as earlier thinking about reading *against* the archival grain, to assess the affective order of settler colonialism, considering how perception and practice temporally emerged. The sources are not solely objects of study but also subjects that produce knowledge. I am not presupposing the "grand narrative of colonialism" (50) that Stoler critiques or haphazardly selecting moments to buttress a straightforward plot of domination. Instead, I allow contestation and complexity to emerge from the sources.

Relying on the settler colonial archives, although generative, poses some serious limitations. I first attempted to overcome these limitations with interpretive interviews with Palestinian refugees who had once lived in the areas I discuss. In the end, I did not include these interviews here. I decided to center the emic meaning making through thick description, understanding how the Zionist project operated, how settlers acted, and how ideas and representations functioned vis-à-vis practice. The only way, in this stage, I could preserve historical depth was to prioritize the settler colonial archive.

It is therefore important to note that the history of relations from the perspective of Palestinians from the villages looks very different from the one produced by the kibbutz settlers. According to my Palestinian interlocutors from Bilad al-Ruha, because they were not originally fully conscious of Zionist aspirations to establish exclusive Jewish sovereignty in Palestine, they did not formulate a political strategy for navigating their relations with the Jewish settler colonizers or for fending off the eventual taking of their lands. Rather, in some places, especially in relatively stable periods, they perceived the settlers as neighbors. Palestinians acted according to their tradition of hospitality and care (some, likely, also according to economic interest), not out of naivety or immediate distrust. These cultural traditions were later exploited by the settler colonists, who were grounded in a different cultural background. Finally, drawing on this examination, I found that relations between Palestinian and Zionist settlers on the frontier directly affected, at times, the collective behavior of Palestinians during the Nakba (e.g., fleeing for safety with intention to return). This behavior had ramifications for the collapse and disintegration of Palestinian society in 1948.

NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Terminology is not neutral, and it poses special challenges in this case, not least because this work addresses an ongoing conflict in which opposing parties attribute—with differential power—disparate names and meanings to places, events, and history. In some instances, I note two different appellations of places or events. Other times, I situate terms in their historical context, describing the political attribution of meaning. Even terms used without question in the research literature become problematic here. For instance, settler accounts in following chapters describe relations with the surrounding Arab villages as "neighborly." Studying the archival material prompted a different understanding of these relations; I thus endeavor to rethink the nature of social interactions that derived from the spatial proximity of the colonies to Palestinian villages. The colonization process mediated the way the settlers perceived their surroundings and interactions. Neighborly relations are thus an open question requiring investigation.

The terminology around settlement is even more confounding, considering the challenges of translation. Sometimes I adopted the terms of the settlers themselves, such as ʿaliya ʿal ha-karka, which for the members of the kibbutz marked a lofty beginning, embodying the exalted meanings of their action. Instead of giving up the term, I place it in context. When examining its realization in the context of the interaction with the indigenous population, the meaning of such a concept can be reversed and the ascent can be interpreted for the indigenous as a forceful pushing out. Other times I had to choose English words not present in the original linguistic register. The Hebrew language has no precise words for colonizers or colonized. The kibbutz settlers would not have described themselves in any meaningful form approximating *colonizer*, even if such a word did exist in Hebrew. They called themselves *haver kibbutz* (kibbutz member), *mityashev* (settler, though this label carries a positive connotation), or *haluts* (pioneer). The appellation reserved for post-1967 Jewish settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,

mitnahalim (settlers, from the root "to inherit"), is not used in Hebrew literature to describe the kibbutz settlers of the mid-twentieth century. In English, I therefore use *kibbutz settler*, *immigrant settler*, and in certain contexts, *colonizer*. I use these as subject positions whose meanings derive from relational status, not essential characteristics. I avoid homogenizing the conflicting parties as figural Jews and Arabs or Palestinians, disaggregating actors (e.g., large estate owners and peasants). I use the terminology of indigenous fallahin for the Palestinian producer population as an analytic move to describe the conflict between settler colonial immigrants and the indigenous population who were perceived by themselves, by the British, and by the Zionist settlers as those who were there when Zionists arrived. In the archival source materials, the indigenous inhabitants were often called Arabs, rarely Palestinians. I use *Arabs* when the term was used by kibbutz settlers.

The labels for labor and ownership statuses of the Palestinian inhabitants of Palestine, especially in the rural frontier, are complex, especially because of variations across English, Arabic, and Hebrew. Moreover, new categories of possession were invented during the period this book covers, and discrepancies among self-identifications intensified amid developments in privatized land tenure in Ottoman society and the change that occurred in the transition from Ottoman to British rule. Primary sources often use multiple terminologies, further obfuscating status. Generally speaking, Palestinians who lived in the villages discussed in this book were peasants. Some held leases on the lands on which they lived and worked. Others were equivalent to sharecroppers in a contractual relation with landowners, to whom they paid a percentage of their crops or earnings. These land tenants are termed in Arabic *mustajir*, and in Hebrew *aris*. The Arabic term *fallah* (plural *fallahin*), which some translate as peasant and others agricultural laborer, has come to signify nearly the entire class of Palestinian agricultural laborers, regardless of their ownership status. I use this terminology when discussing the Palestinian peasants in general.

The contrast of experiences, points of view, and memories is most strongly expressed in designating the events of 1948. As a Palestinian researcher, my use of the appellation Nakba (catastrophe) for the events of 1948 is natural and obvious: it encapsulates affective dimensions of pain and loss in a watershed political event. My usage reflects contemporary parlance and does not signify a catastrophe inflicted by nature, as may otherwise be implied by the Arabic term. The kibbutz settlers speak instead of the War of Independence. Hence, it is not necessarily beneficial for this work to ask how the kibbutz settlers remembered the Nakba, because this formulation is premised on a fundamental dissensus, or incommensurability in political understanding (Rancière 1999). Saying that kibbutz settlers remember the Nakba in one form or another does not capture their consciousness and memory or their positionality vis-à-vis the Palestinian catastrophe. Moreover, as I detail, discussion in the kibbutzim focused not on the fate of the Palestinian inhabitants or the Palestinian tragedy but on settlers' own deliberations, morality, and self-image. To designate a capacious consideration of contradictory perspectives and experiences, and without resorting to the terminology of war to describe the violent events (Jawad 2006a), I refer to it as simply 1948 or the 1948 events.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

The book consists of three pairs of interrelated yet discrete chapters: two chapters adumbrate the colonization process (chapters 1–2), two detail the relations maintained by the kibbutz settlers with their Arab surroundings (chapters 3–4), and two explicate the representations and settler colonial memory processes pertaining to the Palestinian surroundings and the 1948 events in the

kibbutzim (chapters 5–6).

Chapter 1 establishes the empirical infrastructure for the rest of the book. It describes colonization in the Jezreel Valley from the founding of Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek until the early 1950s and reviews the foundation of the kibbutzim and the history of the major Arab villages in their surroundings. I outline the changes that enabled the concentration of land in the hands of a small group of landowners, most of whom lived in cities or outside Palestine. Although the commodification of land weakened the peasant cultivators' hold on the land, the process itself did not lead to their immediate deracination.

Chapter 2 focuses on the fate of the Palestinian village Qira in the case of Kibbutz Hazorea and three Palestinian villages, Joʾara, Umm al-Dafuf, and Daliyat al-Ruha, in the case of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet. In Qira colonization was protracted, entailing appropriation, replacement, and final uprooting in March 1948. Joʾara's inhabitants were forced to leave between 1937 and 1945; in their place, Kibbutz Ein Hashofet was established. The chapter discusses the strategic implications of settlers occupying land, the role of cultivation practices in areas whose ownership was contested, the organized fencing in of territory, and the variegated modes of resistance by Palestinian cultivators that manifest the extent to which eviction and settlement became a collective political problem, rather than one that could be easily indemnified through individual reparations as the settlers claimed.

Chapter 3 maps the colonial frontier as a locus of meaningful relations and interactions between settlers and the indigenous population. Contrary to much of the literature on Zionist-Palestinian neighborly relations that mythologizes and romanticizes early modes of cohabitation, I propose an alternative framework. Focusing on festive occasions and ceremonial encounters obfuscates the conditions that structured interactions. Most kibbutz settlers had few interactions with their surroundings. Encounters with their Arab neighbors relied on the strategic mediation of a small cadre of those who specialized in Arab relations. Incursions and trespassing, especially in the first years of settlement, attested to the incommensurability of cultivation modes and understandings of ownership and usufruct between settlers and the indigenous population.

Chapter 4 explores relations of kibbutzim with their surroundings during the confrontations of 1948. The Arab relations experts integrated security and settlement activities that would be vital to Zionist triumph in 1948. The knowledge they collected served as a significant military intelligence resource in the battles between Zionist militias and Arab armies. Rather than the military aspects of the war—that story is well established elsewhere—I focus on the issues that guide the previous chapters: property, the uprooting of inhabitants, and the looting and appropriation of villages' property after their inhabitants were forced to leave. The previous putatively neighborly relationships and the ideology to which kibbutz settlers adhered did not make a significant difference in how settlers acted in wartime.

Chapters 5–6 trace what Stoler (2010, 7) calls the "affective grid of colonial politics," or the way bodies and minds are conscripted, often ambivalently, into fulfilling projects of domination. These chapters contest the common argument about erasure of the memory of local Palestinian landscape and villages decimated after 1948. In contrast to official Israeli state representations of the past, traces of the Palestinian villages' former existence have not disappeared from the kibbutzim. On the contrary, the villages were, and remain, a pivotal piece of the representation of the past and settler colonial memory.

In Chapter 5, I distinguish five models settlers used to represent the Palestinian surroundings: (1) contrasting the purportedly progressive settler society with underdeveloped, backward villages, which allowed settlers to shroud the effects of their kibbutzim in a discourse of

progress, civility, nurturing, and development; (2) representing local inhabitants as lacking deep or legitimate ties to the land; (3) depicting neighborly relations from a position of supremacy that underestimated conflicts with the local inhabitants and presented them as the result of external incitement; (4) asymmetrically representing the national collective by perceiving as an obvious fact the kibbutz's belonging to the Jewish Israeli collective-in-the-making, whereas the villages were seen as unbounded to each other and therefore unbefitting as national subjects; and (5) reducing the national conflict to the issue of economic reparations and denying the collective implications to Palestinian society of land purchase and settlement. I draw out the fissures, ambivalences, and contradictions within the settler colonial memory to show that indigenous Arabs existed in the kibbutz consciousness and to depict how invested the settlers were in shaping recollections of the past that continue to legitimate dispossession and appropriation.

Chapter 6 examines the variations in the representations of the events of 1948 in the three kibbutzim. The chapter opens with examples of public official representations of 1948, those in kibbutz books, children's games, and newsletters. I review debates in the kibbutzim over what took place at the kibbutz and in its vicinity in 1948. The struggle over shaping memory unfolded among contemporaries and between different generations.

My overall objective is to place the kibbutz movement squarely in the colonizing of Palestine and shift our understanding of the Zionist movement from its origins in Europe to its interactions with indigenous Palestinians. I do so by explicating how those involved in the settler colonial process that first constructed semisovereignty under British imperial rule—the labor Zionist settler movement, not the Zionist Right who have led the project in recent decades—configured the social and political relations of settler colonization that would set a path dependency of hierarchization and violence. The book delineates the roots of a settler colonial nation-state premised on replacement, dispossession, and symbolic degradation. To counter the socialist settlers' historical developmentalism, which deemed the Arabs uncivilized and in need of uplifting, we must pay attention to the rich and complex lifeways of Palestinian culture, not to fetishize a before but to consistently unthink the discursive diminution of Palestinian existence.

To study settler colonialism risks essentializing indigenous people, reproducing the very structures we may seek to dismantle. I hope, however, that in learning to attend to the dialectical practices of colonization, we come to understand settler colonization as a contingent process and not a totalizing structure that determines all social action. I also hope that this study of Zionism, alongside the growing scholarship on the legacies, residues, and enduring structures of global settler colonialism, will open up future venues for decolonizing the lives of those documented here and those born into the now-normalized structures that preserve precarity for all, albeit unevenly so. I mean this not simply as a metaphor to decolonize discourse or literature or the sociological imagination but, rather, as a practical and material demand to transform the conditions of domination and the regime of settler supremacy (clearly instantiated in the Israeli state apparatus's ongoing territorial expropriation and expansion) that have become only more entrenched today. I also attend to knowledge production, culture, and epistemic processes, not to distance us from the material conditions of colonization, but to grasp the ways colonization is enacted and reproduced. My methodological orientation strives to undo the epistemic violence that has historically mediated our understandings of Palestinian life upon the arrival of Zionist colonizers.

To condense the thrust of this book into one overarching goal, I attend to the beginnings of the apparatus of Jewish Israeli privileges and supremacy whose legacies endure today. To do so I return to the process by which social hierarchies were first established on the settler colonial

rural frontier. Decolonization is not simply ideational, nor is it a metaphor (Tuck and Yang 2012). It is a practical process of land reclamation, restitution, and healing. But decolonization entails first knowing how settler colonization came about, given what alternatives, and with what consequences. Such a praxis of recovery, within the bounds of enduring settler colonialism, can elicit the conditions for demanding transformation—not a reforming of what already is or a reorganization of societal boundaries encircling a crisis long disavowed but a total transformation—of the way we come to know and the sociality by which we come to cohabitate. That is, to articulate the historicity of relations molded through power is to illuminate not simply that the past has shaped the present but that until we reckon with the foundational losses of settler colonialism, a different form of sociality will be sequestered to utopia.

PEOPLE, LAND, AND PROPERTY: SETTLER COLONIAL PROCESS IN BILAD AL-RUHA

How does one navigate the history of a place shaped by colonization and elimination? This chapter offers an empirical basis for conceptualizing territorial transformation and population replacement. As following chapters show, representations cannot be dissociated from processes on the ground. And yet, to explicate the implications of representational discourses around land and memory, one must first understand the divergent systems of knowledge that assign symbolic values and meanings to space and place.

The names and geographic scopes of the locations discussed in this chapter are not shared by all parties involved: Emek Yizraʿel in Hebrew but Marj Ibn ʿAmr in Arabic. Here, I use the English name, Jezreel Valley. A smaller area neighboring the western margins of the valley is called Ramot Menashe (Hebrew), Bilad al-Ruha (Arabic),[1] and the Plain of Manasseh (English), which are not entirely geographically congruent. The gap is even greater regarding epistemologies of the colonization process, such as land ownership and legal regimes of possession.

Because I explore the matrix of settler colonial practices of the kibbutzim, the Palestinian villages and their history receive only secondary attention, primarily regarding the basic variables of land, natural resources, and demographic makeup. Although there were other important resources, and eventually the kibbutz economy would include nonagricultural branches, during the early stages of colonization, land, water, and human presence were the entities that drove conflict. I cannot approximate the phenomenological texture of everyday life in the villages, yet even this modest discussion of Palestinian villages illuminates the implications of the colonization processes that preceded the constitution of Israeli sovereignty in 1948. It offers a challenge to the conventional historiography—or foundational myth—of the 1948 war as unexplainedly abrupt or merely a reaction to Arab hostility after partition by presenting the gradual incursions of colonization into vivid Palestinian life.

Both Palestinian and Israeli research have broadly surveyed colonization in the region until the 1948 war. Most of this significant work is quantitative, summarizing the number of dunams (an Ottoman unit of measurement, approximately one thousand square meters) sold, the number of settlers, or the number of pre-1948 refugees. There are occasional references to dispossession operations and their ramifications for Palestinian society in general.[2] Whereas in Zionist historiography land purchase is regarded as a legitimate act that unequivocally establishes ownership, Palestinian studies tend to view purchase as dispossession, in which the rights of the Palestinians cultivating the land were violated. But beyond the important debate over the *significance* of purchase and settlement and their implications for the Zionist settlers and the Palestinian indigenous, the actual meso- and microlevel processes of purchase and sale and the interactions that ensued have received less sociological attention.

Palestinian accounts largely contest the *legitimacy* of the acts, noting that the nominal landowners, mostly absentees, did not have full claims to the land and that the Palestinian

cultivators, largely tenants, had customary claims to the land owing to their extended use over time, concrete ties to the land, and community presence on the ground. Zionist and Israeli perspectives tend to emphasize the *legality* of the sales authorizing claims to the land, legitimating Jewish settler sovereignty tied to the conceptual metanarrative of Zionism (often including a direct appeal to the history of anti-Jewish persecution and Jewish escape). Violence is often understood to have begun to play a central role in settlement only during the 1948 war itself. In both cases, perceiving the processes under way before 1948 as primarily economic transactions and describing them in terms of the availability of land, its price, the measure of its liquidity, and so forth, dominates.

Divergent understandings of land ownership led to conflicts between the Zionist land-purchase entities and Jewish settlers, on one hand, and the Palestinian cultivators, on the other. Palestinians challenged the conception of land as naturally and inevitably owned and possessed by settlers claiming return. In surveying the legal transformation, I deconstruct the colonial metanarrative and putative legality of the laws that, essentially, disabled indigenous sovereignty through the empowerment of Zionist settlers from Europe, who were marked as racially superior and buttressed by the power of the imperial Mandate system. This critical examination of colonization demonstrates a linkage between the colonization process and the removal of local inhabitants, not merely on the dimension of economy and property but also on a collective community one. Transferring property de facto involved individual and collective confrontations between settlers and the indigenous population in which violence was routinely deployed. The assumption that forceful and violent elements were introduced only in 1948, or only during periodic earlier clashes (1929, 1936–1939), obscures the cardinal role that violence played in the colonization process and establishment of Zionist control of the land. Local violence and conflict ensued well before the 1948 war, which was the culmination of a long-term process.

MODES OF LAND TENURE AND CONTROL

Analyzing the modes of ownership of Palestinian land and the legal definitions, first instituted by transformations in Ottoman land tenure regulations and followed by British modifications, is vital for understanding the colonization processes and the eventual transfer of control over land. Legal arrangements dictated the scope of purchase power of rural lands, but de facto practices often intervened. Generally, the kibbutzim did not stumble upon uninhabited land on which they could establish a colony but instead navigated contentious conditions of resistance and opposition.

Changes in land ownership were enabled by legal reforms under two successive sovereign regimes, the Ottomans and then the British Empire (Bunton 1999). These changes were linked to social and economic power relations within local societies, particularly the privatization and concentration of land in the hands of large estate owners (al-Hazmawi 1998; Manna 2003; Yazbak 2000; Khalaf 1997). Only a small number of owners were local. Most were urban notables, not rural elites; many lived outside Palestine, some even in Europe. Palestine, as a region of Greater Syria, underwent a protracted process of primitive accumulation, in which peasants were dispossessed from their means of production through the concentration of land in the hands of Levantine purchasers (Alff 2019). Through subsequent changes to land tenure, the colonial law of Mandate Palestine came to be an amalgamation of the Ottoman legal regime, imported concepts, British law, and reformations to facilitate settler colonization (Forman and Kedar 2003).

From 1839 to 1876, the Ottoman Tanzimat period reformed taxation, land ownership laws,

and public administration. The 1858 Land Code stemmed from the Ottoman state's desire to increase its tax base, bring new land into cultivation, and enhance its revenues. The law defined the rights of usage and ownership of land throughout the empire and, although this was not the original intention, it ultimately helped enshrine a system of private property (see Cuno 1993). New laws wrought significant agrarian changes throughout the empire, because reforms led to the concentration of much land in the hands of a limited number of large landowners. The widespread practice of cultivators registering some or all of their lands in the names of urban notables or rural village elders reinforced the power of the elite class. Furthermore, as the Ottoman Empire began to instate *tabu* (ownership) registration to establish who was liable for taxes, wealthy owners began to exploit farmers' ignorance and lack of access to registration institutions to register lands, which until then had been held by the farmers themselves, in their own names. Until this point, ownership of these lands was based on a firm but not institutionalized relationship in which the cultivators recognized their status as tenants who labored on behalf of the landlords. By the late nineteenth century, three forms of land tenure were specific to the Palestine region:

Collective-rural ownership, or *mushaʿa*. Under this system, Palestinian localities, mostly organized in village units, would register land as joint property of the entire community. When considering land for cultivation (unlike areas dedicated to public use), the area was divided into plots that would be rotated periodically among the different farming families. Land was sorted according to quality, and each family was allocated several plots of differing kinds. In many subregions during the latter half of the nineteenth century, villagers registered *mushaʿa* lands in their possession under the names of village elders to evade taxation, an outcome of the Ottoman Tanzimat reforms. This increased the power of the village elders at the expense of the actual farmers cultivating the land (El-Eini 2006). The *mushaʿa* system preserved jointly owned property; it withdrew a large portion of Palestine's lands from the cycle of sales and purchases in the market, thus contributing to the delay or prevention of territorial transactions with the Zionist movement. The Peel Commission (1937) reported that the Arabs regarded this method as a safeguard against land transfer from Arab to Zionist hands. For most of the Mandate period, the British authorities promoted the privatization of *mushaʿa* lands but hesitated to impose sweeping measures for fear of Palestinian opposition. The Palestinian national leadership opposed the British Mandate's encouragement of parcellation, or turning *mushaʿa* lands into small private plots and registering them in the cadastral survey. The leadership referred to *mushaʿa* as an important national asset that should not be harmed. Nonetheless, the amount of *mushaʿa* land in the country gradually diminished. At the end of the nineteenth century, most agricultural land in Palestine fell under joint village ownership, but by 1923, 56 percent of Arab villages (753 villages) adhered to the collective village ownership system (Kimmerling 1973, 13). *Mushaʿa* registration fell to 46 percent in 1930 and 40 percent in 1940 (Khalaf 1997, 97). Impoverished farmers could not purchase *mushaʿa* land and register it in their own name. Consequently, as the percentage of *mushaʿa* land sank, the power of large landowners over small farmers increased.

Privately owned, or mulk*, lands*. *Mulk* land was close to full private property; it could be purchased and sold by its owners. Some lands were cultivated by tenants who leased or subleased land or by hired workers who considered them as the property of the estate owners. Large estate owners were sometimes willing to sell lands because of their unprofitability and the possibility of receiving a large lump sum. Small estate owners, in contrast, often sold land owing to economic duress (Khalaf 1997).

Lands of the Muslim waqf. Two classifications of waqf existed in Palestine: waqf *khayri*, or

lands donated to charitable Islamic religious institutions for the benefit of the public and managed by the Supreme Muslim Council, an organization established by the British, and waqf *ahli*, whose income belonged to the donor's family and descendants. Registering lands as waqf prevented their sale: it both dismantled familial property and thwarted governors' attempts to take over private lands. Waqf lands usually consisted of small plots; their totality was estimated at about one hundred thousand dunams, though some believe this to be an overestimation (Shafir 1989; Kimmerling 1973).

Miri *lands*. *Miri* lands were considered state property, but the farmers cultivating them understood their relation to the land as one of effective ownership (Alff 2020, 31; Doumani 1995). As long as the land was tilled, it was not very different from privately owned land (*mulk*). In practice, the tenant had full usufruct over the land, including the right of inheritance and mortgage. Use of *miri* lands was subject to two limitations: First was the commitment to constant cultivation, because the law stipulated that *miri* land left fallow for three years would revert to the state. This law was not enforced during the British Mandate, which reduced the amount of purchasable land. Second, these lands could not be transferred to waqf status.

In addition, there were lands under direct state ownership whose status was a subject of controversy. Some were *jiftlik* lands, owned by the Ottoman state, whose ownership subsequently passed to the British Mandatory government. Other lands were owned by the state because they were abandoned (*mawat*), without heirs (*miri* land), or uncultivated for three or more years (*mahlul*).

Privatization of Land: Constituting the Basis for Zionist Land Purchase

From the 1870s on, as the Middle East became more integrated into the world economy, merchants and the wealthy often became loan sharks. The land and its crops served as collateral for loans offered to small-scale farmers, or fallahin, both owners and tenants. The concentration of lands in the hands of wealthy urbanites, mostly Lebanese and Syrian families, was accelerated by the impoverishment of fallahin by the burdens of taxation, high interest on loans, and heavy debt. Owners were forced to sell their small land plots to invest in new equipment, sustain their families, or repay loans (Khalaf 1997). Often, farmers could not pay their debts, sometimes causing entire villages and large plots of lands to be transferred to loan sharks (Yazbak 2000).

When the British took over, they found not a stable land tenure regime of privately owned farmland but instead swaths of lands concentrated in large estates that were worked by tenant farmers (on large estates, see Stein 1984, 223–224). The British Mandate authorities wished to firmly establish a regime of private property. In addition to privatization of land, the most significant change was the creation of a class of absentee landlords known as effendis. These changes were also manifested in the Jezreel Valley area.

According to the British census of November 1931, Palestine's population numbered 1,035,821, of whom 944,423 were Arabs (categorized as Christians, Muslims, and "others") and 91,398 were Jews. More than 440,000 Palestinians were supported by cultivation: 70,526 were categorized as farmers (65 percent), 32,539 as farmworkers, and 5,311 as recipients of agricultural rents. The other 331,319 were dependents. Of the farmers, about 56,000 were fallahin cultivating land they owned and 14,000 (20 percent) were tenants (Stein 1980, 68).

The Zionist movement made two primary demands of the British Mandatory government: first, that the government transfer categories of abandoned lands to Jewish hands and, second, that the government allocate land for Jewish settlement from lands held by the government. Palestinians regarded the claim to government ownership of abandoned lands as a violation of

the status quo and as an opening for increasing Jewish ownership in Palestine (Abu Sitta 2010, 50). Some claimed their own legal rights to these lands or demanded at least a commitment that the Mandate government not transfer them to Jews, who amounted to around 12 percent of the population in 1922.[3]

At the onset of the British Mandate, the extent of land under government control appeared large: two million to three million dunams of fallow land, most of which could be improved, and about one million dunams of state-owned land, most of which was inherited from the Ottoman state. Much of this land, though, was cultivated by Palestinians. Through concessions and changes in land tenure, the British government began to facilitate Jewish purchase of land. However, government land alone could not constitute the foundation for creating Jewish sovereignty in Palestine.

By creating the legal infrastructure for private land ownership, the British Mandate established the framework for institutionalizing ownership in the hands of organized Jewish settlers. In Palestine, as in other settler colonies, privatization of land through legal methods and property laws was a crucial tool for dispossession. Until the latter years of the Ottoman period, noncitizen Jews could not purchase land (although some found ways to circumvent restrictions). The British Mandate removed such legal restrictions and recognized the legitimacy of land purchase by the Jewish National Fund (JNF)—established in Basel, Switzerland, at the Fifth Zionist Congress in 1901 to nationalize land in Palestine—and other Zionist organizations and private individuals. The 1939 British White Paper, in response to Palestinian resistance and imperial interests in stability, limited land sales to Jews, although sales continued and were regarded as legal. The British commitment to the establishment of a national home for the Jews usually superseded their commitment to protecting the civil and religious rights of the Palestinians (Shamir 2000). The British Mandate government lacked personnel skilled in enforcing an agrarian policy that would benefit the fallahin. Moreover, as reflected in articles of the Mandate that expressly committed the British government to establishing a Jewish national home, a principle first expressed in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, there was tension in the government's commitment to protecting the weaker population. Such conditions offered an opening for intervention by the Zionist movement in arranging land transfers (Stein 1984). The de facto takeover procedures became permanently institutionalized, although they were not usually rooted in written or oral agreements. For my purposes, the point is that land tenant status differed from actual land ownership in the payment of tenant fees collected from the land tenant (Adler 1988). Until the legal changes introduced by the British Mandate, land tenants were no different from fallahin who had purchased land outright, other than in the rent they paid to the landowner.

The British government in Palestine codified a legal distinction between a land tenant who held an explicit agreement with the owner of the land cultivated and a farmworker who did not cultivate land independently but was hired to do the work. Legal protection was provided only to land tenants, a small portion of the fallahin who made their living in farmwork; no law protected veteran land cultivators and farmworkers (Stein 1980). The British created this distinction between farmworkers and tenants in response to Arab claims of peasant dispossession due to Zionist land acquisition; with this distinction, the British could claim to offer protection to certain peasants but not others.

In the 1920s and 1930s, as prices of agricultural products declined and costs of production rose, problems over repayment of loans proliferated. The fallahin continued to take loans from private entities, because government aid sources were lacking, and their debts grew (Yazbak 2000). In the early 1930s, with the global economic crisis and local recession, owners of small

plots of land increasingly sold them out of economic necessity. When Arab buyers purchased land from small Arab landowners, they officially became landless. But fallahin were not dispossessed or uprooted; they continued to cultivate the land. Tenancy agreements ensured their access to the land (Khalaf 1997). The new landowners wanted the tenants to remain on the land and working, because they were usually the most capable farmworkers in the area (Yazbak 2000). Tenancy thus became an important component in rural Palestinian society; about 10 percent of Palestinian inhabitants were considered land tenants.

Most of the land purchased by the Zionist movement was sold by large Arab landowners, not fallahin. Between 1878 and 1936, only 9.4 percent of the 681,978 dunams for which information is available was sold to Jews by fallahin. More than three-quarters of this land was sold by large estate owners, and much of that land had been purchased by the sellers shortly before they sold it off. Ottoman effendis, most of them non-Palestinian, sold about 52.6 percent of the land purchased by Zionist organizations. About 25 percent of lands purchased by Jews were sold by Palestinian large-estate owners (Shafir 1989, 41). Another estimate (presented to the Peel Commission in 1937) declared that 25 percent of all land purchased by Jews had been owned by fallahin. Although this estimate was likely exaggerated (Yazbak 2000), it nonetheless reflects the impoverished condition of the fallahin. After 1933, sales of land to the Zionist movement by all sellers decreased considerably, likely because of increasing Arab awareness of the implications of selling Palestinian land to Jews.

Creating a Landless Fallahin Class and Increased Palestinian Resistance

Following land purchases by the Zionist movement, a larger class of landless fallahin formed, some of whom had been registered landowners but all of whom had lost the land on which they had lived and worked for decades. These newly dispossessed fallahin joined others who lost their land because of inability to pay taxes or debt (Anderson 2013), as well as land-farming Bedouins who, willingly or not, were transferred to different parts of the territory. This uprooted sector showed the Palestinian population that such a fate might befall any *fallah*. Thus began a process that made the struggle for land, and the conflict itself, relevant to the farming majority of Palestinian society. Fallahin were among the first group of Palestinian society to clash with the Zionist settlers and were at the cutting edge of resistance against the Zionist project (W. Khalidi 2006; Halperin 2015), not just for ideological or national concerns but out of material struggle. This process started long before the British Mandate, such as in 1910–1911, when the struggle against Zionist settlement reached a turning point as collective organized resistance strengthened with the realization of the contours of the project (Beska 2014).

Unlike the Ottoman Empire, which restricted land purchase by Jews, the British Mandate stipulated in Article 6 that "the Administration of Palestine, while ensuring that the rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced, shall facilitate Jewish immigration under suitable conditions and shall encourage, in co-operation with the Jewish agency referred to in Article 4, close settlement by Jews on the land, including State lands and waste lands not required for public purposes" ("The Palestine Mandate" 1922). Palestinian Arabs argued this article was contradictory, because the mere purchase of land by the Zionist movement entailed collective damage to their interests.

Alongside the British Empire's favoring of the creation of a national home for the Jews in Palestine and denying indigenous sovereignty in its Mandate, its own interests and imperial modernizing approach (Bunton 1999) constitute an important element for understanding land policy in Palestine. The empire wished to preserve its strategic presence in the Middle East at

minimal cost for British taxpayers. The British supported Jewish investments in Palestine by facilitating the purchase of land and Jewish immigration (according to absorptive capacity). But this increased the number of landless fallahin, and their displacement caused financial and political burdens for the empire, a problem the Arab national movement raised from the late 1920s (Stein 1980).

Changes in Mandate-era land-registration laws began with the Land Transfer Ordinance of 1920–1921. Its purpose was to (1) reduce land speculation, (2) ensure that an individual or group could cultivate the land, and (3) ensure the rights of owners of small plots of land and land tenants to cultivate the land they held. To achieve these goals, the law stipulated that *agreement* by the district governor was required for every act of land transfer. This ordinance was the earliest legislative act of the civil British administration; it sought to link landowners and tenants to their land and stabilize social relations in rural areas of the territory (Stein 1980). At the same time, the ordinance enabled companies (the JNF, among others) to purchase lands and register them officially. It also abolished the unwritten procedures regarding claims of land tenants and all forms of ownership not based on documentation. Estates whose borders did not align with their official registration or that were not registered in their owners' names were subject to legal action by a special judicial entity (Adler 1988).[4] The implementation of private land ownership, which effectively made land liquid for purchase by Zionist institutions who evacuated the land of its tenants, brought about the formation of a tenant class stripped of any cultivation rights.

In the 1920s, the British Mandate set several precedents for tenants' legal protection. However, such protection was granted to only a very small percentage of the farming population, who received payment for evacuating tended land (Stein 1980). In 1929, the Ordinance for the Protection of Cultivators changed the clause in the Land Transfer Ordinance from 1920–1921 that required land sellers to provide tenants with alternative land to compensate for the dispossessed land; sellers could now make financial payment instead that would suffice for the livelihood of the tenant and his family (Adler 1988). From August 1928, when the draft of the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance was published until the law's enactment in June 1929, the Zionist Organization, the sponsor of the JNF, introduced amendments to the proposed law. The British government was not familiar with details of the land sale process. This, in addition to Britain's declared support for establishing a Jewish national home, enabled Zionist organizations to continue unlimited land purchases by paying displaced tenants reparations.

To minimize damages, the British initiated legislation to protect land-tenancy rights: the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance of 1933 and its various amendments. They would point to this legislation when Palestinians protested the treatment of land tenants. But sufficient protection was not possible by legislation alone because transfer of land ownership became indirect and difficult to supervise. The British, for their part, were not interested in investing resources in implementing regulations, preferring to overlook the situation on the ground, and Zionist lobbying sought to weaken or remove protections for Palestinian fallahin.

The Peel Commission plan (1937) for partition stimulated Zionist land purchases (Stein 1984, 202–207). In 1936–1939, the Zionist movement grew increasingly aware of the possible realization of a Jewish state. The Zionist leadership thus began to purchase more land and establish Jewish-controlled areas in case of an eventual partition (Stein 1984, 202). Still, the percentage of the total area of purchased land remained low. The Peel Commission report endorsed Palestinian transfer alongside partition as the only solution to territorial conflict (Morris 2007, 40–44). In response to the Peel Commission, factions of the Zionist leadership, including Ben-Gurion, more seriously considered options to transfer the indigenous population from the

parts of Palestine designated for the potential Jewish state. The transfers were not novel but had been long proposed in Zionist political thought (see Pappé 2006; Masalha 1992). For many leaders in the Zionist settlement movement, such as Yosef Weitz of the JNF,[5] transfer remained on the agenda until 1948, when Plan D—the Haganah High Command's prestatehood general plan for a military offensive—initiated a forced population redistribution (W. Khalidi [1961] 1988). This concept of transfer would shape the contours of displacement in the Jezreel Valley in 1948.

Uprooting Palestinian Villages in the Jezreel Valley

To summarize, by the last third of the nineteenth century (and likely much earlier), *miri* land was generally transferred as though it were private property, but tenants retained usufruct. It was not until the British arrived in Palestine that private land began to be treated as in the West, which was a big boost to the Zionist project. This involved considerable resistance by Palestinian tenant farmers, including in the Jezreel Valley.

The valley contained many Arab villages whose inhabitants had different geographic origins. The majority were cultivators, some officially owning land and others working in sharecropping arrangements. The Turkmen origins of eight villages in this area of ʿArab al-Turkman—Abu Zureiq, Abu Shusha, al-Mansi (also called ʿArab Baniha), al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa, Lydd el-ʿAwadin, al-Naghnaghiyya, and ʿAyn al-Masi (also called ʿArab al-Fuqara[6]) —are important for understanding how the Zionists who settled in this region perceived the residents. The Turkmen originated in central Asia. Some supposedly came to Palestine as warriors to participate in the battles against the crusaders. Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din (Saladin) housed many of the Turkmen and Kurds along the coast and inland of Greater Syria (which included most of Palestine). The Egyptian sultan Baybars and other Mamluk rulers did the same. Other Turkmen came to Palestine following the Ottoman conquest in 1517. Palestinian scholars note that, over the years, the Turkmen assimilated with the Arabs (al-Dabbagh 2006a; al-Khatib 1987).[7] The Zionist settlers drew on this history to argue that the fallahin were not deeply rooted in the land.

In the mid-nineteenth century, new land tenure legislation, increased security, and new access to markets made land investment in the region increasingly attractive. With land tenure changes and the gradual capitalist marketization of the land market (Alff 2019; Zuʾbi 1984; Khalaf 1997), investors began purchasing fertile lands in Palestine; they later sold the land when they identified better investment opportunities. The stratification of Palestinians in the rural frontier by labor and ownership statuses, within a broader imperial field of power, would later become a defining feature of the Nakba.

In 1869, the Ottoman government sold the land of the villages of Jenjar, al-ʿAfula, al-Fula, Khnayfis, Tall al-Shumam, Tall Nur, Maʿalul, Samuna, Kefar ʿAtta, Jidda, Bayt Lahm, Umm al-ʿAmad, Tabʾun, Qasqas, and al-Shaykh Brek. Nineteen *qirats* went to Habib Bustrus and Nicolas Sursuq, 3.5 *qirats* to Tuwaini, and 2.5 *qirats* to Mata Farah, all wealthy Beiruti merchants.[8] Sursuq subsequently purchased Bustrus's share and other land until he possessed most of the area (al-Dabbagh 2006a, 51). In 1872, the Ottoman government sold the villages of al-Majdal, al-Harij, al-Harthiyyeh, al-Yajur, and al-Harbiyya, claiming their lands had not been cultivated for three consecutive years and had therefore reverted to the state for disposition (Kimmerling 1983, 34). On this occasion, 18 *qirats* were sold to Sursuq (75 percent) and 4 *qirats* to the Khoury family.[9]

The Zionist movement targeted the Jezreel Valley in the early stages (around the 1910s)

because of its agricultural fertility (Beska 2014) and geographic importance to establishing territorial contiguity. Estimates of the amount of land purchased by the Zionist movement in the Jezreel Valley from 1921 to 1925 range between 200,000 and 240,000 dunams (Al-Hazmawi 1998, 296; Kimmerling 1973, 23; Stein 1984, 56; Yazbak 2000, 101). Until the early 1930s, most of the land purchased was sold by the Sursuqs and other large-estate owners living in Beirut. When it first purchased 65,000 dunams from the Sursuq family, the Palestine Land Development Company—a key Zionist land-acquisition organization established in Britain by the Zionist Federation in 1909 to increase Jewish landholdings in Palestine—was forced to delay expulsion of tenants from the land. The British Colonial Office was aware of the possible removal of Palestinian tenants from the land and assured them of guarantees for their protection. But on December 6, 1921, the Land Ordinance of 1920 was amended and government intervention in land transfer was restricted (Stein 1980, 71–72). In the amended ordinance, valid until it was voided in June 1929, all limitations were removed regarding the size and value of land subject to transfer. This enabled organizations to purchase large concentrations of lands. The legal protection afforded land tenants from 1921 to 1929 was bypassed by Arab owners and Jewish buyers (Stein 1980, 72). Of the 1.6 million dunams purchased by the Zionist movement until 1948, over 300,000 dunams of the most fertile land was in the Jezreel Valley (W. Khalidi 1987, 149).

Buying and selling lands in the Jezreel Valley became a central political issue for several reasons: the many transactions; the importance of this fertile valley to Palestinian agriculture; the region's proximity to Haifa, an urban economic center; and these being the first massive purchases of land by an official Zionist organization during the British Mandate (Stein 1984). Doumani (1995, 25) asserts that, for a time, Marj Ibn ʿAmr was "the most fertile plain in all of Palestine." According to Weitz (1950), only 3 percent of the Jezreel Valley was uncultivable, hence the importance of this area.[10] Weitz's data actually show the falsity of the Zionist argument that Palestinian land was undercultivated. The land sales in the Jezreel Valley over several years established procedures for compensating land tenants under the auspices of the British, making it more difficult for—but not preventing—the Zionist movement to purchase land.

Land-purchase transactions have been extensively discussed in previous research. For our discussion, the most important fact is that the purchases had dramatic consequences for the fallahin—expulsion and loss of livelihood. Thousands of fallahin of the valley were forced to leave their villages, although the precise numbers are disputed. In 1930, Arabs testifying before the Shaw Commission (Commission on the Palestine Disturbances of August 1929) claimed that 1,746 families (approximately 8,730 persons) were forced to leave their land (Commission on the Palestine Disturbances 1930, 118). Appearing before this commission, Arthur Ruppin, a Zionist leader, claimed the number of land tenants did not exceed 700 to 800 families, less than half the number cited by Arab witnesses. Furthermore, Ruppin argued that most of these tenants found alternative land. According to the population registry of 1922, cited by Sir John Hope Simpson, a British official, in his October 1930 *Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, 4,900 persons had been living on lands purchased by the Jews, although this count does not include inhabitants who, to avoid military service, did not register their lands (Simpson 1930, 51). If we estimate their presence at about 20 percent, then the total combined is 6,000 persons. The Jewish Agency for Palestine (founded in 1908 as the Palestine Office of the Zionist Organization) noted in its memorandum to Simpson that 688 land tenants left the valley (Simpson 1930, 51).

The Great Arab Revolt and Palestinian resistance to land appropriation are well known. But the uprooting of fallahin from this area has remained in the shadows. The accumulation of Zionist property to establish settler colonies was causally linked to dispossession, which was a prior requisite of settlement. Reducing this issue to its economic dimension and to the private fate of land tenants and their families obscures its colonial and collective dimensions.

Kanaana (2000, 70–71) accepts the Palestinian estimate of about eight thousand inhabitants gradually uprooted following the purchase of 240,000 dunams from the Sursuq family, which was completed in 1921. In al-Fula, for instance, a Palestinian inhabitant was killed while resisting the transfer of lands to Zionist settlers, and the village was demolished (ultimately becoming the site of Kibbutz Merhavia) and its residents totally displaced.[11] Kanaana lists the villages depopulated and erased in the area: Jenjar, al-Safafa, Tall al-Far, Jalud, al-Fula, al-ʿAfula, Tall al-ʿAdas, Jayda, Tall al-Shumam, Qamun, Jabata, Khnayfas. Uprooting due to land purchases also occurred in the coastal plain, the Hula Valley, and the Baysan area resulting in the displacement of seventy Palestinian villages according to Kanaana.

The collective dimension of land purchase and colonization also emerges through a brief review of the collective reactions to them. When the Great Arab Revolt broke out in 1936, fallahin constituted about two-thirds of the Arab population in Palestine (Yazbak 2000, 203). The consensus is that a main reason for the outbreak of the revolt was the emergence of a class of landless fallahin created by the advancing Zionist settlement (Anderson 2013; Yazbak 2000; Porath 1978; Morris 2001).[12] The Palestinian national movement regarded the "national home for the Jewish people" ("The Palestine Mandate" 1922) as a creation of British policy (Shoufani 1998). Therefore, the revolt was directed against both British policy and the organized Jewish colony (the Yishuv).

Fallahin in the Jezreel Valley participated in this revolt. At first, many of the Turkmen who had settled in the Jezreel Valley generations earlier and largely assimilated with the Arab environment wished to preserve good neighborly relations with the nearby Jewish colonies, because they had already established close friendly relations and shared commercial interests (al-Khatib 1987). They hesitated to take part in the revolt, but the situation rapidly changed, and they joined in. Al-Hajj Hasan Mansur declared the revolt in the valley in conjunction with the Jenin district leadership, headed by Yusuf Saʿid Abu-Dura, who had been the general commander of the revolt in the Jezreel Valley until he was replaced by al-Hajj Hasan Mansur.

Among the villages in this area, al-Mansi was known for its active participation in the revolt. Reports of these events from the Zionist side mention the village as "hostile" and inhabited by "gangs." Palestinian reports confirm this and situate the activism in this village in the broader political context of resisting colonization and the British policy of facilitating Jewish sovereignty (Anderson 2017). Five village inhabitants planned all the rebels' actions in the northern district (al-Khatib 1987, 73). A battle that Palestinian sources call the battle of al-Mansi was fought on village land in 1938, and six rebels were killed.

Al-Mansi was not the only village in the valley to participate in the revolt. Abu Zureiq offered shelter to the rebels, for which the British dismissed the village's mukhtar. A whole military unit taking part in the rebellion was stationed in this village, and its leader was killed in the battle of al-Mansi. The villages of Abu Shusha, Daliyat al-Ruha, and all three al-Ghubayyat villages did not maintain separate military units, but some inhabitants belonged to units headquartered at al-Mansi. Al-Kafrayn also did not have a separate unit but hosted rebels and provided them with food and drink. According to Palestinian reports, Qira (Qira wa Qamun) did not participate in the revolt and fighting units did not use it as their base, but it did offer refuge at times for rebels who

followed Abu-Dura (Kabha and Sarhan 2004). The course of Zionist settlement in the Jezreel Valley, the displacement of cultivators and entire communities, and the ensuing violent clashes culminating in the Great Arab Revolt highlight the collective implications of the Zionist colonization practices on Palestinian fallahin.

THREE KIBBUTZIM OF HASHOMER HATZAIR AND THEIR NEIGHBORING PALESTINIAN VILLAGES

The three kibbutzim that are the focus of this book lie on the margins of the Jezreel Valley, the largest valley in Palestine (see map in image 3) and often referred to simply as the valley (*ha-ʿemek*). Situating the kibbutzim within the history of land tenure and colonization of the area is not simple, due to shifts in the political geography. During the British Mandate, the three kibbutzim and the nearby Palestinian villages were included in the jurisdiction of the Haifa district, except for the village of al-Lajjun, which belonged to the district of Jenin.[13] Consequently, much of the macrolevel data on colonial encroachment in this area relates to the Haifa district, including the city of Haifa itself and localities along the coast, whereas the relevant settlement framework for our purpose is the margins of the Jezreel Valley and the bordering hills.
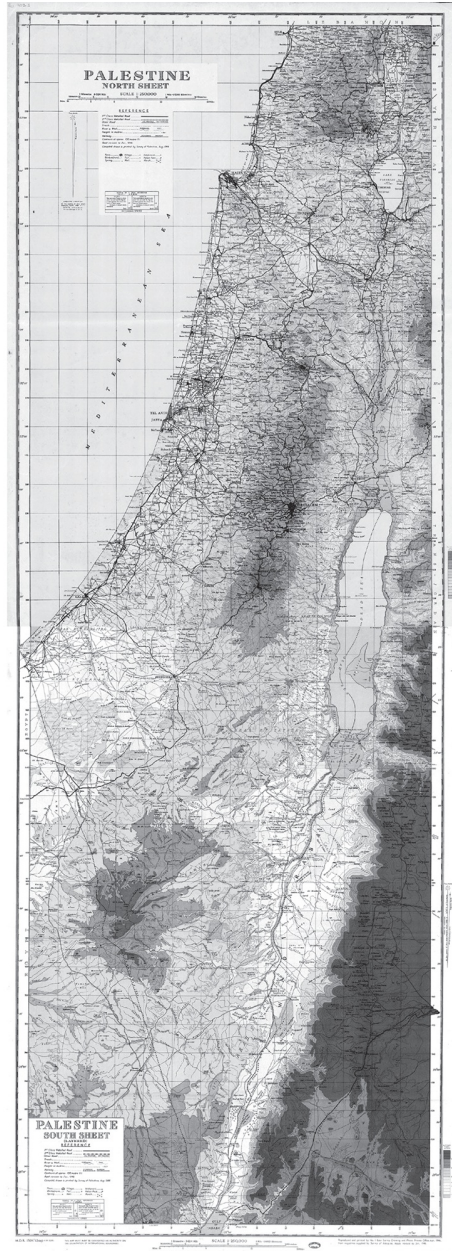
IMAGE 3. Map of historical Palestine.
Sources: "Palestine north sheet, reproduced and printed by No. 1 Base Survey Drawing and Photo Process Office," 1947, and "Palestine south sheet, reproduced and printed by No. 1 Base Survey Drawing and Photo Process Office," 1946, from the collection of the National Library of Israel, courtesy of Eran Laor.

IMAGE 4. Map of Bilad al-Ruha, on the western margins of the Jezreel Valley.
Source: Adapted from "Palestine north sheet, reproduced and printed by No. 1 Base Survey Drawing and Photo Process Office,"
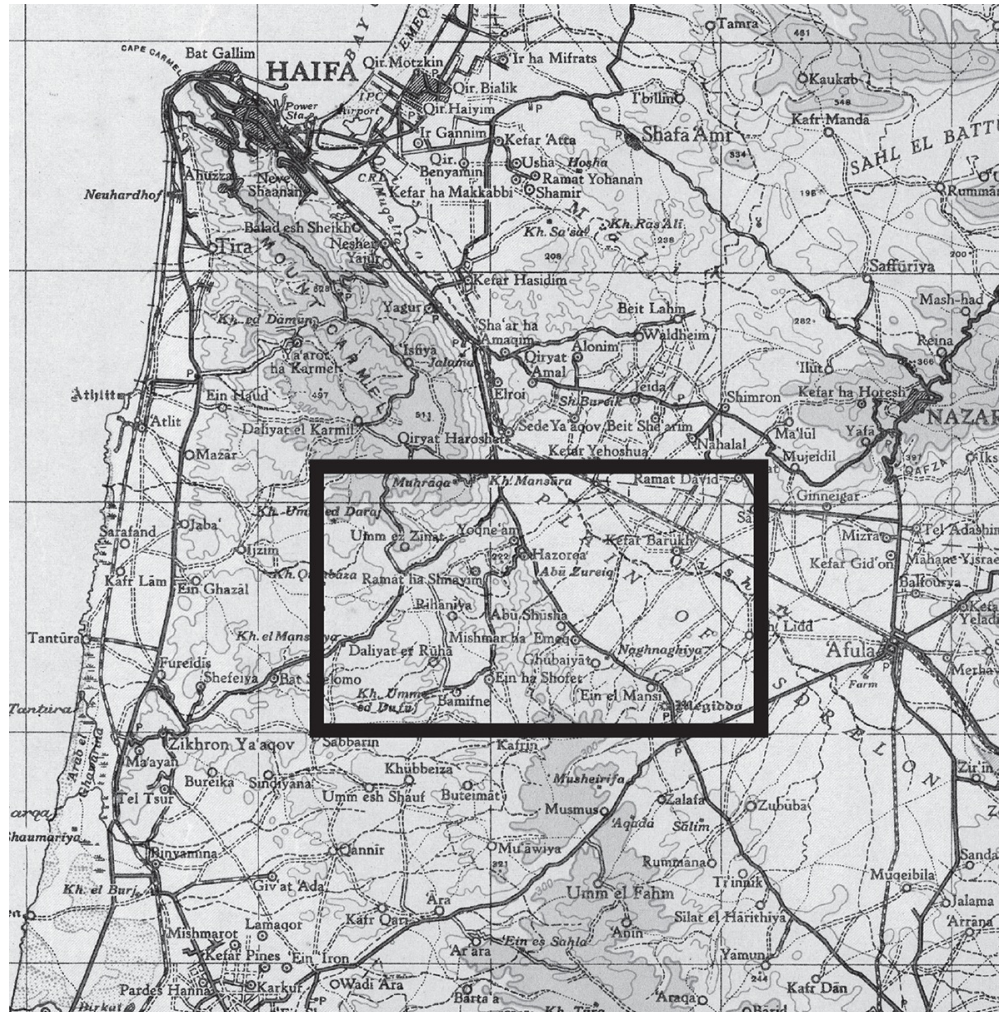1947, from the collection of the National Library of Israel, courtesy of Eran Laor.

The Bilad al-Ruha / Plain of Manasseh (image 4) was initially named the Efrayim Mountains by the Jewish settlers, a name mentioned in various documents from the 1930s and 1940s.[14] Palestinian and Jewish Zionist descriptions of the area differ (see Yoash 1967, 24–25; Kabha and Sarhan 2004, 7). The difference lies in the attempt to demarcate the area. Kabha and Sarhan (2004), who relied on interviews with Palestinians, used the location of Arab communities (Qira, al-Lajjun), whether still existing or not, to which Jewish settlements (Yokneʿam, Barkai, Pardes Hannah, Benyamina) had been added. Vilnay (1945), in contrast, does not name a single Arab locality despite the geographic landmarks (the Amir mountains, Tell Yokneʿam) that indicate the names of Arab localities (Qira, Umm al-Fahm). The Palestinian definition counted thirty villages in Bilad al-Ruha, counting all three al-Ghubayyat villages as one: Abu Zureiq, Abu Shusha, Umm al-Dafuf, Umm al-Shauf, Umm al-ʿAlk, al-Burj, al-Burika, al-Biyar, al-Butaymat, al-Buyshat, Joʾara, Khubbayza, Daliyat al-Ruha, al-Rihaniyya, al-Zarʾaniyya, al-Shuna, Sabbarin, al-Safsaafa, ʿAra, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa, al-Naghnaghiyya (the last three villages are sometimes counted as one, the al-Ghubayyat villages), Qannir, Qira, Kafr Qara, al-Kafrayn, al-Lajjun, Musmus, al-Musheirifa, al-Bayda, Muʾawiyya, al-Mansi, and al-Sindiyana (Kabha and Sarhan 2004). Of these villages, all near the three kibbutzim of this study were

ethnically cleansed. Those still existing today are in Wadi ʿAra (Iron Valley), which was transferred to Israeli jurisdiction in 1949 in accordance with the ceasefire agreement with Jordan.

Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek

Mishmar ha-Emek was founded in early November 1926, on land purchased by the JNF with funds raised by the United Palestine Appeal. The kibbutz was created by Hashomer Hatzair B (the second organized settlement group of Hashomer Hatzair) and is the oldest of the three kibbutzim examined here. Mishmar ha-Emek is ninety meters above sea level and overlooks the Jezreel Valley and the surrounding hills: the Nazareth mountains of the Lower Galilee to the north, Mount Tabor and More Hill to the east. The Mishmar stream, alongside the kibbutz, flows down from the Samaria hills toward the Kishon River (al-Muqattʾa), which flows on to the Mediterranean Sea (Vilnay 1977). The kibbutz is six to seven kilometers west of the village of al-Lajjun, which is at the mouth of Wadi ʿAra, and about eight kilometers from Yokneʿam (Qira), on the Haifa–Jenin road (Regev 1978, 5).

The founding settler group originated from Poland and Galicia. Some of its members moved from the Haifa neighborhood of Neve Shaʿanan to the Jewish colony of Afula and worked in construction and roadbuilding until they were allotted land for settlement. When the first group settled on the land, in 1926, it numbered eighty members, but only half a dozen chose to live at the site, then named Abu Shusha (appropriating the name of the nearby Palestinian village). They were to guard the land that had been purchased from Arabs and begin to cultivate it. In October 1929, after a wave of clashes (the 1929 events; in Arabic, *habbat al-Buraq*), the rest of the group arrived and began building the kibbutz. A kibbutz settler's account of the "settling on the ground" (ʿ*aliya ʿal ha-karka*, or literally, ascending on the land) in November 1926 offers background on the village before the initial encroachment:

> The group left Afula and traveled a dirt track to Tell Megiddo. From there it proceeded along a camel track to the foothills and reached Abu Shusha. We then climbed along a thorny cactus hedge until reaching the large house that was on the boundary of our land, standing at the western edge of Abu Shusha village as a part of it. Waiting for us near the house was the elderly Arab guard, Abu-Miri, to whom the JNF had entrusted all the purchased land until our arrival. This house, where we stayed from our first day at Abu Shusha until summer 1927, was a large residence belonging to the previous landowning effendi. . . . When we came, several fallahin families were still living there, land tenants of the previous owner. They received reparations from the JNF and left the next morning, without any trouble. (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 22)

Unlike other colonization narratives, this story emphasizes that the settlers of Mishmar ha-Emek came to an inhabited and cultivated site, and then lived in immediate proximity to the existing village of Abu Shusha, which had about six hundred inhabitants.[15] Such features similarly defined the settlement of the other two kibbutzim I focus on here. They settled in inhabited areas and near—at times only a few dozen meters—existing Palestinian villages.

Settling on the land was merely the first step. The land allotted to Mishmar ha-Emek in 1926 amounted to about 4,600 dunams, of which 1,600 were hilly ground, and the rest—about 3,000 dunams—flatland (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 23). At the time of settling on the ground, the kibbutz lands constituted "a long narrow strip, about 1,200 meters wide, from the Kishon river in the north to the Manasseh mountains in the south" (Regev 1978, 25) (at times, this plot of land was referred to as Abu Shusha land by the settlers themselves). The site where the original kibbutz settlers stayed was surrounded by Arab villages that sat a few hundred meters away: "Abu Shusha to the west, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta to the east, and their lands surround ours. Bedouin Arabs of the Turkmen tribe inhabited Abu Shusha, and al-Ghubayya was inhabited by fallahin, land tenants of Beq [Yousef Beq], also residing in the village" (Vilnay 1977, 4919–4920). During *habbat al-Buraq* (the 1929 events), the site was attacked by Palestinians who gathered at the nearby village

of al-Ghubayya (it is unclear whether this was al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa [Upper] or al-Ghubayya al-Tahta [Lower]).[16] The settlers were forced to leave for Afula at the Haganah's recommendation (Y. Beʾeri 1992). Two weeks later, the settlers returned to their Abu Shusha site in greater numbers—103 adults and children—and on September 5, 1929, the group's encampment in Afula was dismantled. The renewed settlement took place under the military auspices of the British forces, described by a settler:

> To secure the now enlarged Mishmar ha-Emek settlement, the British army conducted daily patrols on the Haifa–Megiddo road. The soldiers habitually entered the kibbutz to rest and receive refreshments. Two English-speaking members looked after the British soldiers: Aryeh "Shofar" [Diamant] and Mitek Bentov. . . . Even Captain Caff, the famous English commander of the Mansura detention camp, with whom friendly ties were maintained ever since the nighttime attack on Mishmar ha-Emek, would visit us, accompanied by several Arab policemen and a Jewish police officer. . . . The army would come in the morning hours, and the police in the late afternoon. (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 39)

The number of Mishmar ha-Emek settlers grew as the years went on, as table 1.1 depicts.

Until the founding of Yokneʿam and Kibbutz Hazorea, both in 1935, Mishmar ha-Emek—the first Jewish colony in the south of the valley—was the only Jewish colony on the boundary of the Jezreel Valley. The nearest Jewish colony was Kfar Baruch. When the Great Arab Revolt broke out, the kibbutz, too, was assaulted. Clashes in woods that had been recently planted by the settlers were common:

> Those three years of "events" were a long period of harsh, drawn-out security tension, concentrating all forces and efforts on a single purpose: ensuring the welfare and security of Mishmar ha-Emek. This included reinforced guard duty of the kibbutz—its farming areas and woods. At first serious damages were sustained by the woods as well as the farming area, but luckily, casualties were few. Most of the first year of these events was dedicated mainly to guarding and protecting the woods—because of the [potential for] fires, the woods were actually sealed off against ill wishers, attackers, and arsonists. The kibbutz invested all its forces and devoted its heart to the battle to save the woods. (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 63)

TABLE 1.1. Population growth at Mishmar Ha-Emek.

Year	Population
1930	112
1935	220
1940	280
1945	349

Source: Regev 1978, 27.

Palestinian resistance to settlement meant the settlers' main focus and resources were directed toward security. Mishmar ha-Emek was among the first kibbutzim to be founded in the area, so it served as a training site for numerous groups of future kibbutz settlers of the Hashomer Hatzair movement, including Kibbutzim Hazorea and Ein Hashofet. These kibbutzim worked as a network and eventually became part of the same settlement movement.

As Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri (1992) attests, the Arab revolt slowed the progress of the kibbutz in Mishmar ha-Emek. Still, its expansion proceeded. In 1932, the kibbutz held 2,039 dunams, but the settlers requested more land and received additional areas for farming beyond the Kishon River, the land of al-Tura, previously held by Kibbutz Mizraʾ. From 1939 to 1947, the kibbutz held 5,300 dunams (not counting the mountainous ground) (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 52, 81, 143). In 1949, the kibbutz appropriated more area, and its dryland farming expanded to 6,156 dunams (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 145). In 1978, the kibbutz had 11,700 dunams, 7,100 for dryland farming, and

3,085 dunams of pasture (Regev 1978, 31).

Abu Shusha and the Palestinian villages near Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek

Abu Shusha was located on a small, wide stream on the southern edge of the Jezreel Valley. In 1882, it was described as a small farm that received its water from the stream flowing on its western side (Khalidi 2006, 142–143; Arraf 2001, 389). In 1944/1945, its inhabitants numbered 720, and the village maintained a schoolhouse and a mosque. The villagers found their livelihood in livestock and farming, especially growing wheat, vegetables, tobacco, and fruit trees. Of the village lands, 5,883 dunams were privately owned as *mulk*, and 3,077 were *musha'a* land. The total area was 8,960 dunam; 5,870 dunams were cultivated, and 600 dunams served for olive tree growing (al-Dabbagh 2006c, 585; Khalidi 2006, 142; Hadawi 1970, 47).

The three al-Ghubayyat (al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa [Upper], al-Ghubayya al-Tahta [Lower], and al-Naghnaghiyya) were located close to the Haifa–Jenin road. Their total area amounted to 12,139 dunams (al-Dabbagh 2006c, 586; Khalidi 2006, 159–161), of which 11,607 dunams were privately owned as *mulk* and 532 dunams were *musha'a*. In 1945, the total population of these three villages numbered 1,130 (Hadawi 1970, 47). They had plenty of water sources and found their livelihood in growing grain and tending livestock (Khalidi 2006, 159–161).

Al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa was situated along the eastern slopes of Bilad al-Ruha on a hill. The Haifa–Jenin road passed to the north-east of the village. Its existence is documented from the late sixteenth century on. In 1596, its inhabitants numbered 215 (Khalidi 2006, 160); in the British Mandate years, the number sank from 393 (in 1922) to 150 (in 1943) (Arraf 2001, 394).

Al-Ghubayya al-Tahta lay below al-Fauqa. In 1888, the Ottoman authorities established a school in the village to serve all three al-Ghubayyat, but the school ceased to function during the British Mandate. The village lands were owned by Yusef Bek al-Khalil of Lebanon, who maintained relations with British Mandate officials, and he was assassinated in 1938 by a leader of the Palestinian revolt in the Jezreel Valley for collaborating with the British (al-Khatib 1987, 58–59; Arraf 2001, 392). The number of village inhabitants rose from 80 in 1922 to 200 in 1931; in 1938, they numbered 225 (Arraf 2001, 393)·

Al-Naghnaghiyya was the smallest of the three al-Ghubayyat. Located on the northern edge of a hill overlooking the wadi and the Jezreel Valley, it lay very close to the Haifa–Jenin road. Beside farming and husbandry, the villagers planted fruit trees in a small area north of the village (Khalidi 2006). Al-Naghnaghiyya's population numbered 272 in 1922; in 1931 it rose to 416 (Arraf 2001, 401).

Al-Mansi or 'Arab Baniha was situated on the western edge of the Jezreel Valley, south of the Haifa–Jenin road. In 1922, its population numbered 402; the number grew in the following years to 451 in 1931. Economic growth and population migration may explain why in 1943 the villagers numbered about 300 and in 1948, 742 (Arraf 2001, 397). The village contained a mosque, a school (founded in 1946), and a mill. Ample water sources enabled the villagers to raise livestock and grow crops, particularly olives and vegetables. In 1945, the village lands amounted to 7,611 privately owned dunams, and 4,661 dunams of *musha'a* land (al-Dabbagh 2006c, 588; Khalidi 2006, 176–177). As previously noted, al-Mansi was prominent in its resistance during the Great Arab Revolt (al-Khatib 1987).

TABLE 1.2. Demographic and geographic data on Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek and its surrounding Palestinian villages, 1946

	Population	Houses (year)	Jewish-owned land (dunams)	Land total (dunams)	Cultivated dunams, no olives
Abu Shusha	720	155 (1948)	0	8,960	5,870
Al-Ghubayyat (all 3 villages)	1,130	108 (1931)	—	12,139	11,092
Al-Mansi ('Arab Baniha)	1,200	292 (1948)	0	12,272	7,950
Mishmar ha-Emek	390	n/a	4,736	4,850	2,957

Sources: Hadawi (1970) except the number of houses in al-Ghubayyat is from al-Dabbagh (2006c, 586).

Table 1.2 shows the extensive cultivated village lands, which exceeded by far the land cultivated by settlers.

The fate of neighboring villages in 1948

The Battle of Mishmar ha-Emek (Hebrew)/Abu Shusha (Arabic) is considered a key confrontation in Israeli historiography of the 1948 War. It took place a month prior to the declaration of the State of Israel, from April 4 to 15. Here, I do not offer a full historical reconstruction of the events, but rather an overview based on what is largely agreed upon in the existing historiography. In certain cases, I also shed light on the differing points of view. Rather than military affairs, I emphasize understanding the fate of the indigenous inhabitants and their key resources, land and water.

The battle broke out on the initiative of the Arab Liberation Army (or Jaysh al-inqadh al-ʿarabi), a corps of approximately five thousand volunteer soldiers from Arab League countries intent on stymying the partition of Palestine, led by the charismatic commander Fawzi al-Qawuqji (see Parsons 2016; Hazkani 2021). The ALA began assaulting Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek on April 4, aiming to conquer it. The kibbutz was strategic because its location allowed control over the Haifa–Jenin road.[17] Testimonies show that Abu Shusha inhabitants "loathed" Qawuqji's forces, but this may exaggerate their lack of enthusiasm for the ALA.[18] The kibbutz withstood the attacks and moved from defense to offense. With the Haganah holding the Haifa–Jenin road and after British intervention, Qawuqji's units on April 7 agreed to halt the attack, on the condition the other side would "be committed not to carry out reprisal actions against villages in the area" (Morris 2001, 161). The commanders at Mishmar ha-Emek refused to accept the ceasefire; they wanted instructions from Tel Aviv. On the night between April 8 and 9, they reached Ben-Gurion and told him, according to his journal, "We must expel the Arabs from the area and burn the villages." They told Ben-Gurion "they would have no existential security if the villages remain standing and the Arab villagers will not be expelled, for they [the Arab villagers]

would attack [Mishmar ha-Emek] and burn mothers and children all" (quoted in Morris 2001, 161). Consultations resulted in a decision not to accept the ceasefire proposed by Qawuqji's ALA. The Haganah resolved "to conduct extensive counterattacks, rid the area of the Arab Liberation Army troops and the local Arab population, and totally demolish the villages in order to permanently remove the threat to Mishmar ha-Emek" (Morris 2001, 162). Qawuqji's forces were repelled by the local Haganah troops, who were reinforced by Palmach (the mobile strike force) members (W. Khalidi [1961] 1988, 13).

In this battle, all the villages neighboring Mishmar ha-Emek were displaced. The Haganah acted in accordance with Plan D, an offensive strategy aimed at ethnic cleansing (Pappé 2006). According to Morris (2001, 93–94), the plan stipulated that

> Arab villages and towns be conquered and occupied permanently or erased off the face of the earth. It also specified that the Arab villages be surrounded and searched for weapons and nonmilitary forces; if such actions evoke resistance, the armed forces in the village are to be exterminated and the villagers should be expelled out of the country. If the Haganah forces do not face resistance, the villagers should be disarmed and a garrison force should be stationed in the village. Certain hostile villages (not named in the plan) would be subject to destruction by fire, explosions of mines planted in the rubble—"especially . . . [ellipsis in the original] villages that we were unable to permanently control." . . . The operation orders of several brigades (Alexandroni, Carmeli, Etzioni, etc.) include instructions from Plan D that the villages in their area should be "taken over, destroyed, or annihilated, according to your judgment."[19]

Morris claims this was decided on at a meeting held in Kibbutz Hazorea shortly before the kibbutz was attacked. After the decision taken at the meeting with Ben-Gurion, Haganah and Palmach units attacked all the villages surrounding the kibbutz (Abu Zureiq, al-Kafrayn, al-Naghnaghiyya, al-Mansi, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa), expelled to Jenin any inhabitants who were still present, and demolished the villages. See table 1.3.

Kibbutz Hazorea

Kibbutz Hazorea was founded in April 1936. Its name, the Sower, expresses the founders' aspiration to live on and from the land. It is approximately sixty meters above sea level and about twenty-three kilometers from Haifa (Vilnay 1974, 1843–1844), along the Haifa–Jenin road, which Vilnay calls the Haifa–Yokneʿam–Mishmar ha-Emek–Megiddo road.[20] The settler group that founded Hazorea had split from a movement that was created in 1916 and had 1,600 members at its peak. The Kameraden movement consisted of Jewish middle-class youth who aspired for Jewish communal renewal. Its members perceived the Jews as a religious community within the German nation and were not affiliated with Zionist youth groups. Internal tensions grew in the late 1920s, and in 1932 the movement split: smaller factions shifted to the political left, and another faction approximated the German-nationalist trend. Most members united as Werkleute—Bund Deutsch-Judischer Jugend (Laborers—union of German-Jewish youth). Inspired by Martin Buber, they leaned toward religious socialism and planned to found farming communities in Germany. With the rise of Nazism, they grew closer to Zionism and prepared to settle in Palestine. Hazorea was the first and only kibbutz that Werkleute members founded in the country (another kibbutz of Werkleute, Mishmar ha-Darom, was dismantled and its members joined Hazorea). At first, Werkleute members remained without any organizational affiliation, but in 1938 they decided to join Hashomer Hatzair because of their ideological proximity. Their settlement on the land had no direct connection to any of the previously existing settler movements.

TABLE 1.3. Arab villages displaced and demolished following the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek / Abu Shusha

	Conquest date of the village	Demolition date	Units involved
Al-Ghubayya al-Tahta	The night of April 8/9 (first village conquered in the battle)	Days after the conquest	Palmach
Al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa	The night of April 8/9	Days after the conquest	Palmach
Abu Shusha	April 11	April 11	Haganah and Palmach
Al-Kafrayn	April 12	April 19	Palmach
Abu Zureiq	April 12	Begun April 13, completed April 15	Palmach
Al-Mansi	The night of April 12/13	Days after conquest	Palmach
Al-Naghnaghiyya	A few days after entering the village	Days after conquest	Palmach

Source: Adapted from Morris 2001, 160–165, 217–218.

In 1934, with the agreement of the Zionist establishment, Werkleute raised funds from friends, relatives, and acquaintances to purchase land in Palestine on which they would settle. Members of the group, who began to immigrate as early as 1933, raised 5,000 Palestine pounds in donations and another 8,000 as a long-term loan; they gave the money to the JNF directorate in Jerusalem to purchase land on their behalf.[21] The founding group first settled in Hadera and built barracks there. In preparation for establishing the colony, Yehoshua Hankin, a key figure in Zionist land purchases, purchased an extensive area—the Yokneʿam block of the lands of Qira—17,500 dunams in the northeastern corner of the Manasseh Hills, northeast of Wadi Mileh (or Milk as the settlers called it), bordering the Abu Zureiq village. Half this area is a plain of compacted earth; the other half is rocky hills. This block had been owned by three families: the Sursuqs and Tuwainis, who lived mainly in Beirut, and the Khourys, who lived in Haifa. The Sursuq family acquired its shares in the 1870s, when it made its other purchases in and around the Jezreel Valley (Kanaana 2000; Levinger 1987, 154). In 1924–1925, Yehoshua Hankin purchased lands owned by the Sursuq and Tuwaini families, totaling 8,750 dunams (Levinger 1987, 154; Shatil 1977, 66–67). Qira inhabitants kept their lands. In February 1934, Hankin purchased the other half of the lands from the Khoury family. For ten years he had attempted to purchase the lands; the family agreed to sell only after going bankrupt and the judge appointed to adjudicate their property ruling in favor of the Palestine Land Development Company's purchase proposal (Levinger 1987; Avneri 1982). In 1940, the lands were registered under the Palestine Land Development Company's name.

Of the 17,500 dunams purchased, 3,500 were allocated for founding Kibbutz Hazorea. Still,

when the settlers came, they were able to occupy only a narrow strip of about 15 dunams, which they called "the towel" for its shape. The Qira villagers did not evacuate the site. The conflicts between Hankin, who had purchased the land mostly for private settlement (i.e., for Yokneʿam), and the kibbutz members lasted for years. The settlers gradually expanded the land they held. In 1939, the kibbutz held 1,200 dunams for dryland farming; in 1946, it held 2,400 dunams. The population of the kibbutz grew along with its territorial expansion.

Tables 1.4 and 1.5 illustrate the same trend of settler population growth and indigenous population decline as seen for Mishmar ha-Emek. Some Qira inhabitants left during those years after being compensated, though there is little information in this regard. Some moved to Safuriyya and Shefa-ʿAmr, and others founded the village of Kaʿabiyya (Kabha and Sarhan 2004). Others remained. No data exist regarding the village population just before 1948; in the last year for which we have data, 1945, 410 people lived in the village (Hadawi 1970, 48), a number similar to that in the kibbutz.

TABLE 1.4. Kibbutz Hazorea population, 1936–1975

Year	Population
1936*	125
1941	223
1947	421
1975	825

Source: Shatil 1977, 101.
* The population numbers for this year do not include members of Werkleute's Kibbutz B (Shatil 1977, 101).

TABLE 1.5. Demographic and geographic data on Kibbutz Hazorea and its surrounding Palestinian villages, 1945

	Population	Houses	Jewish-owned land (*dunams*)	Total dunams	Cultivated dunams, no olives
Abu Shusha	720	155 (1948)	0	8,960	5,870
Abu Zureiq	550	Unknown	0	6,493	4,375
Yokneʿam	690 (1944–1945: 410 Arabs, 280 Jews)	2,921	13,625	14,766	Qira: 261*
Umm az Zinat	1,407	—	51	22,156	6,284
Kibbutz Hazorea	290	—	3,215	3,318	2,503

Source: Hadawi 1970, 47–49, 89–92.
* The British village survey of 1945 does not provide data on Qira's cultivated land (Hadawi 1970, 92). Data on cultivated (wheat) fields in Qira village are in W. Khalidi (2006, 182).

Palestinian Villages near Kibbutz Hazorea

Abu Zureiq is said to be named after a holy site commemorating a villager of the same name who belonged to the al-Tawatha tribe, to which all the inhabitants were supposedly related (al-Khatib 1987). The village was along the northern slopes of the hill of Bilad al-Ruha, north of Abu Shusha. Some houses were on a hill along the Haifa–Jenin road. To the south, the village bordered Wadi al-Qasab and Wadi al-Janab, which together with another smaller ravine were named Wadi Abu Zureiq (Arraf 2001). The village's water sources included Wadi Abu Zureiq, a stream, and a well. After a gradual increase since at least 1922, the village had 550 inhabitants by 1945 and 638 inhabitants by 1948 (W. Khalidi 2006, 143; Arraf 2001, 387). The village had a mosque, and since 1937, a boys' school that also served the children of Abu Shusha village (W. Khalidi 2006, 143). The villagers relied on farming, mostly grains and small plots of vegetables, and animal husbandry for their livelihood. In 1945, village lands totaled 6,493 dunams; 4,401 were privately owned, and 2,092 dunams were *mushaʿa* land (Hadawi 1970, 47). Attempts to purchase its lands had failed.

Qira was on the western bank of Wadi Qira. The Muqattʾa (Kishon in Hebrew) River that flowed four kilometers north of the village constituted its northern border. On the hill near the village was a Turkish khan (inn) called Qira, after which the village was named (W. Khalidi 2006, 126–127). Village inhabitants were Bedouins, most of whom combined farming and husbandry for a living and who for part of the agricultural year lived in tents (Shatil 1977). The village disappeared in administrative records—an instance of colonial replacement under imperial auspices reflected in censuses and maps—so the data in the statistical yearbooks are only partial. The village had 86 inhabitants in 1931, 410 in 1945, but only 149 in 1948 (Arraf 2001, 412; Census of Palestine 1931, 94). The two Zionist colonies of Yokneʿam and Hazorea were built on its lands.[22]

Umm az Zinat was in a rocky area in the southeastern region of Mount Carmel, overlooking Bilad al-Ruha. A side road connected it to the coastal road and to the Haifa–Jenin road. It was one of ten large villages of the Haifa district (W. Khalidi 2006, 199–200). As early as 1888, an elementary school for boys was built in the village. In 1945 its population numbered 1,470.[23] The village had several wells, and its economy was based on poultry and farming (grains, vegetables, and fruit trees) (W. Khalidi 2006). In 1943, 1,834 dunams were used for olive groves, the largest in the Haifa district. In 1945, 18,684 dunams of the village lands were privately owned as *mulk*; 51 dunams were owned by Jews, and 3,421 dunams were *mushaʿa* land —in total amounting to 22,156 dunams (Hadawi 1970, 49).

The British village survey published in 1946 offers inconsistent data, reflecting the difficulty of using a numerical table to express the violent transformations of settler colonization. A transfer of land did not necessarily entail immediate elimination of the indigenous Palestinian cultivators or unequivocal settlement. Interestingly, in the tables of the survey, Kibbutz Hazorea is described as "previously a part of Qira" (Hadawi 1970, 48), whereas Qira appears in the table with Yokneʿam, which, along with Hazorea, appropriated its lands (49).

The fate of neighboring villages in 1948

Qira's inhabitants had faced repeated displacement efforts since the first purchase of lands there by Hankin in the mid-1920s. Some village inhabitants left. But on the eve of the 1948 Nakba, about 140 inhabitants still remained. In March 1948, about a month before the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek, Yehuda Burstein—a JNF official and field guard for Kibbutz Hazorea—visited the village and recommended that inhabitants leave the village. They did so in the night of March 12, 1948; on March 22, members of Kibbutz Hazorea destroyed the village, and on April 5 they

completed the removal of its ruins.[24]

Abu Zureiq was attacked on April 11 and conquered by Palmach units. Some of its inhabitants reportedly abandoned the site before the attack; those who remained (about fifteen men and two hundred women and children) were expelled (Morris 2001, 162). The men were taken prisoner and interrogated by Hazorea settlers over the killing of two kibbutz members. The villagers were shot as they fled, which was reported by kibbutz members without reference to the number of casualties (Morris 2001, 163). Palestinian sources report ten fatalities in the "Abu Zureiq massacre" (Jawad 2007, 106).

Umm az Zinat was attacked by a unit of the Golani infantry and conquered on May 15, 1948, following the fall of Haifa as part of Operation Biʿur Hametz (Spring cleaning) (W. Khalidi 2006, 199).[25] By the end of April, all its inhabitants are reported to have left; Palestinian sources report them as expelled.[26]

Kibbutz Ein Hashofet

In commemoration of Louis Brandeis, a member of the U.S. Supreme Court and a leading American Zionist (*shofet* means "judge," ʿ*ein*, "spring"), this kibbutz was built on JNF lands purchased by the Tzur Company. Brandeis himself donated money to facilitate the purchase. The kibbutz founders spent five years in Hadera before settling on the purchased land. In Hadera, members of the Polish Hashomer Hatzair group, Banir, joined the first group of North American Hashomer Hatzair settlers. Ein Hashofet was the first kibbutz of North American Hashomer Hatzair and the first colony in Bilad al-Ruha's hills, aiming to ensure a territorial continuum from the Sharon area to the northern valleys. Dov Vardi, a kibbutz member, clarified that, to thwart the danger of disconnection, "the architects of the settlement project—Arthur Ruppin, Abraham Hartzfeld, and Yosef Weitz—saw a possible solution only in Jewish presence on the plain."[27] At the onset of the Great Arab Revolt, the two existing kibbutzim in the area (Mishmar ha-Emek and Hazorea) were isolated. Kibbutz Ein Hashofet settled in Joʾara in 1937 (in image 5, settlers survey land for the kibbutz) and moved to its present site in 1938 (the settlers were joined in 1939 by a second kibbutz, Dalia). In 1938, as the Arab revolt escalated, a base was built for the Field Companies (FOSH), the Jewish commando units formed under the auspices of the British, at the site where Ein Hashofet's founding group had settled. Later, national officer-training courses were moved to Joʾara, which became a training base for the area's Haganah and Palmach forces. Today, an eastbound road descends from that point, passing by Joʾara toward Mishmar ha-Emek, and another road leads north to Ramat Hashofet and Ein ha-Emek and merges with the road connecting Yokneʿam and the coast (Vilnay 1977).

IMAGE 5. Zionist settlers surveying land in Bilad al-Ruha, 1937.
Source: Ein Hashofet Archive photographic collection.

TABLE 1.6. Kibbutz Ein Hashofet population

Year	*Population*
1937	40
1943	217
1945	320
1949	308

Source: Letter from Kibbutz Hazorea to the Agricultural Center, January 30, 1949, EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952; see also Hadawi 1970, 47.

There were forty members in the initial settlement nucleus (*gar'in*). They cultivated half the purchased land (4,443 dunams)[28] first while the other half remained inhabited by land tenants who had not yet left. In 1939, after ownership of the village lands of Daliyat al-Ruha and Umm al-Dafuf was transferred to the JNF, the kibbutz received another 500 dunams. At first, the group

worked in forestry and preparing the ground for the JNF;[29] later its cultivated areas included grain production, irrigated fields, and fruit tree groves (including olives and vineyards).[30] In 1942, the cultivated area amounted to 1,757 dunams; after the war, in 1949, the kibbutz was cultivating 5,600 dunams.[31] By 1952, the kibbutz cultivated land that had previously belonged to the displaced Palestinian villages in the region—al-Kafrayn, al-Mansi, Abu Shusha, Lajjun, Rummana, and Zabuba—totaling 6,008 dunams.[32] Table 1.6 shows the population growth.

Palestinian Villages near Ein Hashofet

Joʾara[33] was southeast, between al-Rihaniyya and al-Kafrayn. It was a small village, with 94 inhabitants in 1922. In 1931, its population was reduced to 62 (Census of Palestine 1931, 9). In 1937, Kibbutz Ein Hashofet was built on the village lands (al-Dabbagh 2006c, 673). In 1945, the village was evacuated completely. It is mentioned in the British village survey in brackets, as part of the description of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet: "Previously a part of the Joʾara lands" (Hadawi 1970, 47).

Al-Kafrayn, or "the two villages," perched on a hilltop six kilometers north of Wadi ʿAra. It dates to the Crusades period, when it was called Kafruna. In the late nineteenth century its population numbered 200; 9,981 dunams were privately owned and 901 were *mushaʿa* land. It had a mosque and a boys' school founded in 1888. The village had about ten streams and wells, and its economy was based on wheat crops and husbandry (W. Khalidi 2006, 169).

Daliyat al-Ruha, on a low hill between two shallow wadis, had a side road accessing the main road. In the late nineteenth century its population numbered 60 inhabitants; in 1945, the number reached 280. Its economy was based on husbandry and farming. Numerous nearby streams constituted the water supply (W. Khalidi 2006, 157–158). Most of the village lands were purchased by the JNF; by 1945, its area was under three types of ownership: 178 dunams were owned by Arabs, 9,614 by Jews, and 216 dunams were *mushaʿa* land. In 1931, the village appeared in a separate column in the census and was noted as inhabited by 163 persons (Census of Palestine 1931, 89). However, in the 1945 census, the village no longer appeared separately but was listed together with Kibbutz Dalia, which was partially built on its lands in 1939 (W. Khalidi 2006; Hadawi 1970, 47). The village lands were divided among three Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim: Dalia, Ein Hashofet, and Ramat Hashofet.

Umm al-Dafuf was on the south of Daliyat al-Ruha and was often considered part of Daliyat al-Ruha. It numbered 44 inhabitants in 1922, and 49 in 1931. That year, ten houses were recorded in the village (Census of Palestine 1931, 97). In 1939, Kibbutz Dalia was built on the village's land (al-Dabbagh 2006c, 675) after the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (its Yiddish acronym is PICA) and the Palestine Land Development Company purchased its lands (Kabha and Sarhan 2004, 23). Umm al-Dafuf was displaced completely after the kibbutzim Dalia, Ein Hashofet, and Ramat Hashofet took over its lands. The village does not appear in the 1946 British village survey. Some inhabitants were displaced and moved to al-Sindiyana and others to al-Kafrayn (Kabha and Sarhan, 2004, 23).

TABLE 1.7. Demographic and geographic data on Kibbutz Ein Hashofet and its surrounding Palestinian villages, 1931–1948

	Population (year)	Houses (year)	Jewish-owned land (dunams)	Total dunams	Culti-vated dunams, no olives
Jo'ara	62 (1932) 0 (1948)	14 (1931)			
Umm al-Dafuf	49 (1931) 0 (1948)	10 (1931)			
Daliyat al-Ruha and Kibbutz Dalia*	280 Arabs, 320 Jews (1945)	6 (1931) 91 (1948)	9,614	10,008	9,749
al-Kafrayn	920 (1945)	154 (1948)		10,882	10,058
Ein Hashofet	320 (1945)		4,542	4,611	2,342

Sources: Census of Palestine 1931; al-Dabbagh 2006c; W. Khalidi 2006; Hadawi 1970.
* The village of Daliyat al-Ruha and Kibbutz Dalia are registered together in the British village survey (Hadawi 1970, 47).

Fate of the Palestinian Villages in 1948

Al-Kafrayn was attacked by Haganah and Palmach units on April 12, during the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek / Abu Shusha. It was reported as already empty and was demolished on April 19, during battle maneuvers of Palmach troops at the site (Morris 2001, 162).

As table 1.7 shows, of the Palestinian villages around Ein Hashofet, only al-Kafrayn was still standing in 1948. The hamlets of Joʾara and Umm al-Dafuf were by then entirely displaced; Daliyat al-Ruha gradually lost its inhabitants in the years before the Nakba, and whoever remained was likely uprooted following the battle of Abu Shusha in April 1948 (Kabha and Sarhan 2004, 39). It is no coincidence that the villages entirely erased before 1948 were the smaller and weaker ones, located precisely where new Jewish colonies were built. In 1948, the great majority of villages in the area were ethnically cleansed. Out of thirty villages in Bilad al-Ruha, just five remained. Zionist colonies continued to expand and crop up over the gradually destroyed villages.

Historically, the Zionist movement justified the colonization of Palestinian lands on the basis of contentious claims to land and belonging. Foremost among them were that Palestine lacked a national people, that the area was populated by wandering nomads unrooted in place, that the land was a largely uncultivated desert, and that Zionist rehabilitation would make the desert bloom. Yet the Zionist movement's sundry branches knew all along that the land was inhabited, that much of it was cultivated, and that its inhabitants by and large rejected and resisted colonization. In fact, this last crucial feature slowed colonization and set the contours of the Zionist project. The settlers' relegation of Palestinians, a people supposedly lacking in agricultural ability, instantiated the Zionist civilizing modernist discourse that would be called on to authorize, legally but more so morally, the seizure of land to benefit Zionist growth. And yet Zionist representations often differed from reality. Even without delving into daily village life,

we see clear evidence of long-cultivated land, deeply rooted presence, and a complex social order undergoing processes of change on multiple fronts. Keeping this context in mind will be crucial as we explore in following chapters the colonization practices in the frontier and subsequent representations of these practices.

Chapter 2

COLONIALISM BY PURCHASE: POSSESSION, EXPULSION, AND REPLACEMENT

> We confirm hereby that we have received a letter from several land tenants of Daliyat al-Ruha complaining of the intention of Advocate [Yitzhak] Ben Shemesh [the company representative] to dispossess them of the land. We do not think you should answer this letter. Any reply, be it the worst, would make them believe even more that their complaint has been noted. The letter is kept in our archive.[1]

SO WROTE THE TZUR DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION COMPANY in August 1941 to the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the land-acquisition arm of the Zionist Organization. Weeks before, the company, a small private Zionist enterprise with which the JNF contracted to purchase land for Jewish settlements in Mandatory Palestine, had sold the property of two Palestinian villages, Daliyat al-Ruha and Umm al-Dafuf, to the JNF to expand local kibbutzim in the fertile Jezreel Valley. The total area belonging to Daliyat al-Ruha amounted to 4,031 dunams and that of Umm al-Dafuf, 4,030 dunams.[2] These lands were to be allocated to three kibbutzim of Hashomer Hatzair—Ein Hashofet, Dalia, and Ramat Hashofet.[3] For the fallahin, for whom the land was both their means of subsistence and their home, this was not merely a transaction but a transformation of their lifeways. The fear of dispossession led several Palestinian village inhabitants to file the complaint that opens this chapter. For the socialist-Zionist expropriators, such land purchases prompted both elation at what they considered the conquest or liberation of the land for the Jewish national movement and a recognition of indigenous intransigence. Following the company's advice, the Zionists employed a strategy of willful ignorance. They failed to address the concerns of the Palestinian tenants of this area, the fallahin, and simultaneously recognized *and* disavowed their presence. Ultimately, the lands were gradually allotted to the Zionist colonies under British imperial auspices.

Before the 1948 Nakba and the Israeli state's inception, a combination of purchase, violence, and coercion constituted the primary means of Zionist settlement in Palestine. As is often the case, archival materials dictate or constrain the scope of analysis. This chapter centers on Kibbutz Hazorea and Kibbutz Ein Hashofet. Their development illustrates paradigmatic features of the occupation of lands (*kibush ha-karka*) of the fallahin by kibbutzim and enables an understanding of both the formation of structure and the role of contingent events. Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek is addressed in later chapters, not here, because its archive does not contain the depth of materials held at Hazorea and Ein Hashofet pertaining to land appropriation. However, Mishmar ha-Emek and a very large number of other kibbutzim are isomorphic.

In pre-1948 Palestine, colonization by sheer theft was inconceivable because of Palestinian resistance (Hourany 2003) and because British government regulations sought to lessen the conflict between Zionists and indigenous Palestinians so that civil conflict would not undermine their imperial interests (Forman and Kedar 2003). Moreover, Zionist colonization came at a moment when the violence of colonialism was becoming ever more intolerable to the colonized and in global public opinion. Socialist-Zionist settlers, relying on Zionist land-acquisition organizations to allot land, used purchase to procure the exclusive right to claim, possess, and

control space. In this phase, Zionist settler elites sought not the proletarianization of indigenes but their replacement and removal to secure their possession of purchased land.

The purchase, replacement, and removal process was the foothold that facilitated the conditions for the inception of the Israeli state. It was by no means inevitable. But prior scholarship has generally neglected both the contingent aspects of the establishment of a Jewish state and the ramifications of the accumulation of incursions and dispossessions (at times of complete villages), or the "slow violence" (Nixon 2013) dealt to local Palestinian communities before 1948.

This colonization by purchase is not sui generis.[4] However, one of the historically unique aspects of Zionism is that the socialist labor Zionist settlement movement, in addition to the kibbutzim, held that land belongs to those who work it. Capitalism, as we can discern from the Zionist case, has not been the sole social-property system of primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession in settler colonial societies.

Settler colonialism is a social field with shifting tactics regarding the securing and reproduction of political power. Drawing on Steinmetz's (2008, 2016, 2018) extension of Pierre Bourdieu's field theory to the colonial state,[5] I analyze Zionist settler colonialism as operating within a social field of power containing three major players (all of whom require further disaggregation): Zionist settlers, indigenous Palestinians, and British imperial authorities. This field of power produced social hierarchies (indigenous inhabitants, settlers, imperial managers) and differential sovereign capacity (including facets of mobility, institutional power, and recognition). Within this field, struggles ensued over political, military, economic, and material (primarily land) resources. Zionist land acquisition and management established local Zionist *semisovereignty* through the gradual appropriation of Palestinian resources backed by the British imperial administration's legal apparatus and martial support on the ground when necessary. The British Mandatory government was, for much of its nearly three-decade existence, an incubator for the Zionist colony (the Yishuv), enabling its territorial expansion (see Fakher Eldin 2014).

However, settler colonialism is not a coherent, unified process; it consists of myriad social agents, mechanisms, and interests, often responding to contingencies. Locating the Zionist settlers, indigenous Palestinians, and British imperial authorities together in the same social field of power exposes the profound challenges faced by the settlement project. Studying the micro and local scale also reveals the extent to which coercion and dispossession were involved in taking control of even legally purchased land. The microscale cases examined in this chapter allow theorizing the process of settler colonialism from the ground up. Rather than imposing a top-down preformulated functionalist explanation, this mode of analysis depicts the political, ideological, *and material* "raw materials" (borrowing from Steinmetz 2001, 219) that would ultimately constitute the Israeli settler state but that were not guaranteed to do so.

PROCURING SETTLEMENT

Settler colonial land purchase and occupation in Mandate Palestine was built on violent encounters stemming from the presumed reversibility of territorial conquest and the refusal of indigenous populations to capitulate to the extension of the Zionist frontier of settlement—that is, into their homeland. Zionist settlers were not simply immigrants seeking to join an existing polity (which included the Jewish Old Yishuv). Rather, they sought to replace the existing polity (and indigenous aspirations) with their own political sovereignty. Although they relied on Britain as their proxy mother country, Zionists did not operate from one metropole. Therefore, multiple mediators were present in this social field.

Wolfe (2006) defines settler colonial elimination of indigenous peoples as structural (most often read from 1948 onward in the case of Israel). Because Wolfe's argument risks an ahistorical understanding of settler colonialism, I supplement his theorization by drawing on Sewell's (1996) historical sociological thesis, which views events as sequences of occurrences that can result in durable changes in structure: "cultural schemas, distributions of resources, and modes of power [that] combine in an interlocking and mutually sustaining fashion to reproduce consistent streams of social practice" (842). A microhistory of relations and interactions—a close examination of the formation of the settler colonial *field*—is therefore crucial to understanding how contingent indigenous practices shaped Zionism's shifting colonial practices. The structure of elimination posited by Wolfe is, then, contingent. The process of colonization can be *decelerated* because of indigenous inhabitants' resistance to settlement. The structure becomes reproducible through iterative socioeconomic and political process and repertoires of action like kibbutzim occupying land cultivated by fallahin and the resistance of fallahin to their dispossession.

The great majority of settlement in Palestine before 1948 followed a consistent pattern. In the absence of Jewish political sovereignty, and because of restrictions on Zionist land purchase set by the Ottomans and (to a lesser extent) the British between 1882 and 1948, Zionist institutions purchased land through the Palestine Land Development Company (PLDC) and the JNF and allocated it to colonies affiliated with various political currents of the labor settlement movement.[6] Still, the initial purchase did not usually suffice to establish a colony in the chosen area. Typically, a group of settlers would claim a site as the basis for its colony; once there, it would request the British authorities to allow them to expand occupied land strips for what they deemed security reasons.

From the 1930s until 1948, a complex interactive field took shape: a fraught, temporary coexistence, in which settlers and natives reacted to contentious circumstances amid looming tension and asymmetry under British imperial auspices. Early on, decisive factors for Zionist success were the economic viability of the new colonies and the ability to fortify purchase through physical presence on the ground and to turn this presence into a basis for further expansion. Only later, when circumstances were favorable, would settlers declare the institutionalized founding of a kibbutz.

The juridical features of the Mandate period disabled indigenous sovereignty by empowering Zionist settlers. Transferring property de facto involved individual and collective confrontations between the settlers and the indigenous population in which multiple varieties of violence were deployed. Cultivators' transformation into land tenants had previously weakened their hold on the land but did not necessarily lead to their wholesale uprooting. The Zionist movement's purchase of fertile and strategic lands from Arab estate owners led to the violent displacement of the cultivators and entire villages, which fomented resistance or rebellion. In some cases, Palestinian land tenants would remain on the purchased lands while Zionist settlers awaited their expulsion. Palestinian acquiescence to offers of financial compensation and alternative locations, British force, or the establishment of illegal Zionist colonies on village lands ultimately led to the removal of these land tenants.

New colonies for Jewish settlers in Palestine were often built on Palestinian lands, first through purchase and subsequently by warfare. However, resistance shaped pre-1948 Zionist colonial expansion in many places. From the 1930s onward, settlers faced individual and collective refusal on the part of Palestinian cultivators, including organized violent resistance, which prompted intensified settler violence. This interaction was undergirded by the British

government, through its courts of law and governing apparatus, and by the settlers' semi-independent paramilitary forces, which established facts on the ground unilaterally protected by juridical and military means.

Dislodging the economic dimensions of settlement from the political ones, a common tendency in extant scholarship (e.g., Avneri 1982; Granovsky 1949), masks the relationship between sales and purchases on the land market and contentious politics on the frontier of colonial settlement. By the early 1930s, British authorities were constrained by Palestinian protest and revolt, leading them to regulate the eviction of Palestinian cultivators from their land (see Schölch 2006; Owen 2000; Issawi 1966; Adler 1988; Bunton 1999; Forman and Kedar 2003; Al-Hazmawi 1998; Fakher Eldin 2019). This intensified Zionist colonization by violent means, supplementing purchase with force. Without clear enforcement by the imperial sovereign, settlers and indigenes deployed their own forces in an asymmetrical battle over resources and dominance in the social field.

A considerable portion of Zionist land purchases occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, during and after the largest mass Palestinian mobilization and strike, the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, which challenged both British imperialism and Zionist settler colonialism. During the revolt, the British constrained Zionist settlement. To evade their restrictions, settlers often used the tower and stockade method: a prefabricated tower and sheds would be established and quickly fenced in.[7] This is one of several ways the revolt transformed the structures (in Sewell's sense) of land tenure, imperial relations, and settler colonial land conquest.

Changing the scale of analysis (in contrast to most existing literature) from macrolevel political mobilizations to processes of the everyday and closely following the colonization in a demarcated area reveals a protracted struggle by the region's Palestinian villages against the expanding colonies. According to Kimmerling's (1983) articulation of the three components of territorial control (presence, ownership, sovereignty), the 1948 war primarily transformed presence (through demographic replacement and the turning of Palestinians into refugees) and sovereignty (with the institutionalization of the State of Israel). Once the state attained sovereignty, the transformation in ownership was then facilitated by means of law. From this perspective, 1948, the expulsion, and the resource transfers were not a sudden catastrophe but decisive moments in a more protracted process of colonization that started in the previous decades.

From 1948 on, the kibbutzim under discussion rapidly finalized the war's outcome by demolishing the villages, thus ensuring the permanency of the state of absence, along with a relatively rapid, ending three to four years after the war, taking of possession of village lands and transferring them officially into kibbutz hands—that is, turning presence and sovereignty into ownership. Systematic destruction of the Palestinian villages did not necessarily play a part in the military confrontations; the occupation of lands took place before the war and in the years directly following it. The scarcity of Palestinian records from the area renders a genealogy of the full resistance impossible, but the fissures in the settler colonial archive help flesh out Palestinian resistance during the 1930s and 1940s, before their ultimate displacement.

PURCHASE AND TAKEOVER: THE PROCESS OF DISPLACEMENT IN THE JEZREEL VALLEY BEFORE 1948

Hashomer Hatzair settled around seventy-five kibbutzim across Palestine in the first half of the twentieth century, over half of which were established *before 1948* near or on the lands of neighboring Palestinian villages. This was the case for Joʾara, the small Palestinian village that

disappeared through purchase and forced evacuation by 1945 (and vanished from official maps in that year). The gradual expulsion of Arab cultivators by Zionist settlers was by no means exceptional. Zooming in on them illustrates colonization by land purchase as a process repeated across labor settlement at the time. The patterns identified in the following are consistent across leftist colonies, which constituted the core of Zionist rural settlement. Just as Zionism operated through a "policy of detail" (Said 1979b, 36), so too does my analysis reach the microscale dynamics, interactions, affective responses, and flows of power otherwise overlooked in the extant literature on macroscale transformation. As Shafir (1989) argues, it was not mere ideology but material processes on the ground that fomented ultimate indigenous replacement.

KIBBUTZ HAZOREA AND THE OCCUPATION OF QIRA

The lands of the Palestinian village of Qira were purchased by the PLDC in two phases—first in 1924–1925 and then in 1934. The PLDC designated 12,300 dunams to become the new Jewish town of Yokneʿam, and a 3,500-dunam strip south of this block was planned for Kibbutz Hazorea, whose members passed money they raised to the JNF (Levinger 1987, 156; Levinger and Maoz 1983, 27). The agreement between the two institutions stipulated that the JNF must have its settlers on the ground by early October 1935 and that the PLDC was committed to removing the land tenants (Levinger 1987, 157). These Arab land tenants, Bedouins of the al-Saʿadiyya and Kaʿabiyya tribes (Kabha and Sarhan 2004, 60), turned over a share of the crop to the landowner as a condition of their permanent presence. They did not anticipate that sale of the land would change their usufruct. The settlers arrived intending to uproot them. Initially, they settled only a portion of the land. Most of the cultivable land purchased for them was still occupied by the Arab land tenants. In 1934, they still lived on and cultivated about 4,800 dunams of the lands allotted to both Jewish settlements; by 1943, they still held 3,189 dunams (Levinger 1987, 153, 158). Only in 1940 were the lands registered in the estate ledgers under the PLDC's name.

During the decade between the first and second land purchases in Qira, political conditions in Palestine changed significantly, and the conflict over colonization escalated and its collective-national dimensions intensified. The most prominent juridico-political change was the Protection of Cultivators Ordinance, first issued in 1929 and amended in 1933. The amended ordinance made evicting land tenant cultivators contingent on a contract that stipulated their agreement and payment of compensation. Given the rising anti-colonial Palestinian nationalist tide, it is not surprising that many inhabitants of Qira refused to vacate their lands.

Another explanatory factor in the development of the conflict and the Palestinians' refusal to leave is the tension among the settlers themselves, between the semiurban settlement project of Yokneʿam, composed of private individuals, and the collectivist kibbutz settlement. The kibbutz settlers suspected Yehoshua Hankin—a key figure of the PLDC, who favored the development of Yokneʿam—of not offering ample compensation to the Arab villagers who cultivated the lands allocated to them and of using the arrangements reached with those who did agree to leave to appropriate their land for Yokneʿam at the expense of developing the kibbutz. The conflict proved the effectiveness of organized, collectivist settlement sponsored by the national institutions to withstand indigenous resistance. However, the factional cleavages among the settlers allowed the inhabitants of Qira—both landowners who wished to sell their land at a better price and tenants who did not wish to leave—greater maneuverability in dealing with the Zionists. The traces of such clashes in the archives enable us to examine how formal sales became de facto control and to comprehend Palestinian survival as the last inhabitants clung to

the land.

IMAGE 6. First structures of the Hazorea colony, pictured in 1936.
Source: Nadav Mann, Bitmuna, from the collection of Asher Benari, Kibbutz Hazorea. From the collection of the National Library of Israel, courtesy of Dorit Yaari, Aharon Benari, Micha Benari, the Pritzker Family National Photography Collection.

Initial Colonization, 1935

Hazorea settlers arrived after the ordinances for the protection of tenants had been passed. Palestinian tenants were still living on Qira lands, having paid part of their harvest to the previous landowners (the Sursuq, Tuwaini, and Khoury families). Their tenancy was maintained through custom, with no written contract or formal anchoring, and thus they were under threat of expulsion. The tenants, however, likely saw their relation to land possession as stable.

On December 3, 1935, an advance group of about thirty Hazorea members, most of them immigrants, settled in the Arab khan (communal inn) that had formerly belonged to Qira village, where they would remain for a few months. According to one of the settlers, this khan sat atop a hill overlooking Wadi Milk and two kilometers from where Yokneʿam was to be built (Benari 1986, 101). This building remained in place until the 1970s. That the Zionist settlers decided to stay there indicates their concerns over safety and the logistical importance of occupying the high ground overlooking the village. On April 15, 1936, the settlers moved to a 15-dunam plot of village lands that the Zionist land-purchase agencies had allocated to them (image 6 shows the edifices that the settlers ultimately erected). It was the only available large plot, and they fenced

it in.[8] They also held a few hundred dunams of farmland in small, separate plots (freed from vacated tenants) amid other fields still cultivated by Palestinians (Benari 1986, 107).[9]

Days after this move from a small outpost to a real, albeit minimal, settlement, the Great Arab Revolt (1936–1939) broke out. The revolt prevented any attempt by the settlers to evict the tenants. Rebels led by Yusuf Abu-Dura, trying to halt land sales to the Zionist movement, threatened village elders in the area who had made deals with the Zionist financial institutions to move peasants and receive compensation (Palestinian society was fragmented by class and replete with competing interests; moreover, the looming threat of Zionist state making was not always clear to Palestinians who sold large tracts of land) (Levinger 1987, 162).[10] British authorities intervened to prevent political disarray in Palestine, which would have threatened British imperial stability across the region. The British police requested that the settlers evacuate; they refused.[11] After several assaults against the settler encampment originating in Abu Zureiq village (Benari 1986, 108–109), the British police arrived and, according to a settler's account, informed the settlers,

> Founding a settlement on such a spot, in proximity to two Arab villages—Qira to the west and Abu Zureiq to the south—was irresponsible. They cannot guarantee our safety and demand that we leave the place. However, the kibbutz members refused to budge, having consulted with the Haganah men in the area. Alongside their refusal to abandon the settlement, they proceeded to fortify the camp. A kind of watchtower was erected on the hill near the water tank, made of double wooden walls filled with gravel. Such a wall provided shelter from the ammunition of our assailants ("the gangs" as they were called at the time)—their rifles or pistols. Ditches were dug as well, and posts erected around the camp. Most importantly, the woodshop, too, was fortified. It was surrounded with a similar double wall of wooden beams filled with gravel, and the entire population was ordered to spend nights inside the woodshop. (Benari 1986, 108)

This letter sheds light on the dynamics in the frontier and settler consciousness. Indigenous Palestinians refused to submit to the occupation of their land and would resort to all available means, including violence. Consequently, settlers needed to fortify their colony.

Reports by kibbutz settlers to the JNF reiterated the need to expand the kibbutz owing to "escalating security needs":

> Because most of the land purchased by the JNF is still in the hands of the Arab land tenants, we have been given this narrow strip of land as a temporary spot—as the only part of the designated area for building our settlement. There was also hope that an additional area bordering the camp would be vacated shortly. . . . The opinion of security experts—especially A. Ratner—regarding the disadvantages of this location was confirmed during the attack against our group on Saturday night, June 20 of this year [1936].[12]

The settlers argued that, unless they occupied their Palestinian neighbor's lands, they would be exposed to potential attacks. Given the political circumstances and escalating confrontation, the settlers were unable to purchase land by negotiation. A memorandum from the kibbutz to the Jewish Agency noted that Hankin

> explained to us, rightfully, that at the moment no negotiations of this sort were possible. Therefore, we have but one option: to turn directly to the British authorities with the help of the Jewish Agency and have them issue an official order to evacuate this area so as to provide minimal security for the kibbutz. A precondition for this would be some sort of reparations to be paid the Arab land tenants. We do not wish at this point to dwell on economic problems, results of local conditions, whose solution is vital to the survival of our kibbutz: Our basic demand is for our own institutions to help us urgently in getting the British authorities to expand our territory—this is a vital issue for us.[13]

The settlers' words clarify their intent to use security as a justification to expand their hold on the ground, which was their long-term objective in any case.[14] The purchase had been carried out. But it was now a matter of displacing the Arab inhabitants to secure land for settlement and cultivation. Security was therefore the justification for colonial violence in the form of territorial expansion.

The settlers' appeal received the support of the JNF, but Hankin and the PLDC managed the

deal.[15] In another letter, they mentioned the danger posed by Abu Zureiq village, with which they had maintained proper neighborly relations.[16] The British authorities first chose not to interfere in the contested lands of Qira (Levinger 1987). Despite repeated requests, they did not have full support from the settlement institutions. The PLDC preferred to clear of its inhabitants 1,800 dunams of Qira's land purchased by the JNF, which would strengthen the settlement of Yokneʿam, and only then allocate land to the kibbutz. Hazorea settlers were compelled to transport water from Mishmar ha-Emek and later to buy water from the PLDC.[17] In September 1936, during the revolt, Hazorea settlers planned to act on their own accord ("forcefully erecting a fence around the plot without prior agreement of the land tenants").[18] Yosef Weitz of the JNF explained to Hankin that the JNF would not back this action.[19] Having tried to obtain the backing of the JNF, the area's Haganah committee, and the PLDC, the settlers turned to the local Haganah commander, Kibbutz Hazorea's financial manager, and to the head of the Jewish Agency's political department, Moshe Shertok, who heard the details of the plan and hastened to signal his approval (Benari 1986, 111). A Hazorea settler described what transpired:

> Two simple barracks were prepared for transfer, fencing materials were purchased, tractors were organized as well as security squadrons. Two days before Yom Kippur, at Mishmar ha-Emek, I was ordered to come home [to Hazorea]. It was the night of the planned action. I was assigned to one of the security squads, armed with a hunting rifle, and was ordered to lie in a ditch facing Qira village and remain alert. It was a quiet night, no moonlight. The only sounds were of dogs barking and donkeys braying in Qira. Our men, along with reinforcements from our neighboring settlements, quietly crossed the fence and then quiet hammering was heard, fixing the fence poles of the new border. Qira villagers did not actively oppose us but summoned Shalant, an Arab officer from the Yagur police station. This officer was appropriately informed by the [PLDC] of the affair. He calmed the villagers down and the entire operation was concluded peacefully. As we later realized, our operation became a model for the tower and stockade settlement system used a few months later in the Beit Shean Valley (Kibbutz Nir David) and elsewhere. (Benari 1986, 112)

The settler describes a military operation par excellence, requiring collaboration in the broader settler colonial social field and its networks and the cooperation of British representatives through the settlement's connections. However, this description of the land occupation may misrepresent the actual process. From his perspective many years later, the settler described the action as successful and "smooth," perhaps because all the Qira villagers were eventually displaced. The documentary record, however, provides evidence to the contrary. Hazorea settlers did add a small area to their land, and Yokneʿam settlers fenced in lands opposite the site and erected barracks. Yet when the inhabitants of Qira discovered what had happened, they attacked the workers the next morning; an Arab villager was shot and wounded, the police intervened, and the status quo was reinstated in Yokneʿam (Levinger 1987, 163). Armed Palestinian forces, likely commanded by the leader of the revolt in Jenin, assaulted the settlement and slowed the eviction efforts (164).

The settler's assertion that "Qira villagers did not actively oppose us" does not seem to appreciate the resistance to "conquest" (Benari 1986, 112). Documents in the archive show that armed Palestinian protests against the settlement slowed down eviction attempts. The gap between the archival materials and the official discourse of kibbutz settlers shows the significance of Palestinian agency to prevent loss of control of their lands. This incident reveals that the social field of settler colonial land conquest entailed, in the most basic sense, a conflict over the securing of capital in the form of land.

Fencing In, 1938 ("the Second Conquest")

After the settlers' failure to alter their situation themselves, they turned to the British courts. Yehoshua Hankin relied on Clause 15 of the Land Transfer Ordinance, a landowner's right to reclaim a farm that had been turned over to tenants for cultivation when reclaiming is needed

"for the sake of the farm or the land itself," including "developing the site by drying it out or irrigation or by settlement or by denser colonization." He proposed an exchange of land whereby the tenants would vacate about 800 dunams, which Kibbutz Hazorea would use to establish itself in situ; the tenants would receive alternative land at the northern edge of the Qira land block (Levinger 1987). Following numerous delays, in March 1938, the Haifa court ruled that the forty-seven tenants on the specified land be relocated to alternative areas, the land be handed over to the PLDC, and the tenants were to pay the costs and advocate's fees.[20] But because of the ongoing revolt and Palestinian intransigence, the British authorities hesitated to implement this ruling.

In a meeting with the Haifa district commissioner, Morris Bailey, on June 27, 1938, Moshe Shertok asked him to issue an order vacating about 50 dunams of their tenants for Kibbutz Hazorea, to be carried out in combination with a pending order to vacate lands purchased for the Yokneʿam colony. Bailey refused to combine the orders for Kibbutz Hazorea and Yokneʿam, but he suggested the PLDC present a plan detailing the lands desired for Hazorea and the lands with which it was willing to compensate the Arabs.[21] Bailey's decision was in line with general British policy at this time. During the Arab revolt, evacuation operations were a source of worry for the British, who cared most about the security situation. Within the broader imperial field of power, when British interests conflicted with the settlement operation, the latter was delayed. Despite settlers' denials, the Palestinian resistance co-constituted land conquest in the settler colonial field.

As of July 1938, despite the settlers' appeals, British authorities had not yet evicted all land tenants. At the JNF board of directors meeting in July 1938, Yosef Weitz stated, "Hardly a day passes without the JNF dealing with this question—with the kibbutz, with the PLDC, with the Jewish Agency's political department." The JNF and PLDC disagreed on whether requests to the British to evict Arab tenants had been made for both the private settlement of Yokneʿam and the settlement of Kibbutz Hazorea or only the former, but the report indicates the settlers agreed that the most important matter was to establish facts on the ground. Hankin is claimed to have said, "The main thing now is to move the Arabs around, and then an agreement can be reached with them."[22] Despite the variegated interests within the Zionist settler groups, all were united on the aim of expelling the indigenous population to allow settler expansion.

Shertok continued to correspond with the British district commissioner, notifying him that the PLDC had filed the request for vacating the tenants in July, in accordance with the commissioner's request, and asking him to speed up the eviction. Shertok asked whether the British could dispatch police to implement the eviction, "to carry out the land consolidation scheme at Yokneʿam."[23] The letter makes clear that the obstacle to eviction was the "security" situation in the rural area—the ongoing Great Arab Revolt. Security became both the justification used by settlers and the obstacle cited by the British (in addition to having their security services deployed elsewhere, the British feared that carrying out evictions would increase hostility and further fuel the revolt). Within the field of settler colonial occupation, security thus operates as the supreme mechanism that constitutes and is recursively constituted by the struggle over settlement.

On August 30, 1938, the district commissioner acquiesced, and the eviction order became valid on September 1.[24] After the order was issued, Kibbutz Hazorea appealed to Kibbutz Alonim, about ten kilometers to the north, for assistance in carrying out the land takeover:

> We ask you to let Kibbutz Hazorea have a group of sixteen–twenty persons for half a day of fencing work in order to take over the lands now transferred to us administratively by the authorities. This event is a decisive turning point in the settlement of

Kibbutz Hazorea and its taking hold of the land designated for its establishment. As you know, the kibbutz has been present at the site for over two years now and is finally about to receive the area that was sold to the JNF by the [PLDC]. The government has announced that the official handover will be carried out at the site in the presence of its representatives on Tuesday, September 6 of this year. The fencing in must, then, be carried out on a single occasion for the duration of a few hours, to take acknowledged possession of the land. We are certain that you shall meet our request and help this kibbutz conquer its land.[25]

The fencing was accomplished with the help of kibbutzim in the area (image 7 displays an example of the kibbutz's fencing practice). The settlers could rely on collaborative relations shaped by dynamics of strong regional and national networks of kibbutzim and other rural settlements. Ultimately, the entire labor Zionist settlement movement was aligned against the Palestinians. These networks were another feature of the field of settler colonial land occupation.

The military-police eviction operation proceeded as planned on September 6, 1938. A settler of Kibbutz Hazorea detailed "the second conquest," illuminating the violent process of settlement that operated through recruiting the network of colonies and the British authorities:

IMAGE 7. Hazorea settlers building a fence, 1938.
Source: Nadav Mann, Bitmuna, from the collection of Asher Benari, Kibbutz Hazorea. From the collection of the National Library of Israel, courtesy of Dorit Yaari, Aharon Benari, Micha Benari, the Pritzker Family National Photography Collection.

If "the first conquest" [initial occupation of the land in 1935] took place secretly, in the dark of night, the second conquest [September 1938] was carried out in broad daylight and with the backing of the British Mandate rule. . . . The threshing ground belonging to Qira village would remain in the possession of the villagers who held on to it until clearing the place in spring 1948. The kibbutz prepared itself for the great eviction. A large quantity of fencing materials was made ready: iron rods and

barbed wire rolls, as well as work tools for the hasty job. Construction materials and spades were prepared to erect defense posts for the new area. Security squads were assigned—I was among them—and preparations were made to handle any eventuality. On the designated date . . . people from all the settlements in the region arrived to give a helping hand. Everyone went to work: first the iron rods were hammered into the ground, along the entire route of the fence that would surround the area approved by the authorities, while the security force escorted the workers. Then came a team stretching the barbed wire, including many women members. . . . Emphasizing the authorities' backing of this operation, a carload of British soldiers appeared on the nearby road, as well as mounted policemen. At sundown the work was finished. Hazorea held the land on which we could erect our first permanent buildings. Again everything went well. The Arabs of Qira did come to protest our action, but our impression was that they were simply doing their duty. After all, they had known for a long time that they would have to vacate the land and move to other localities made available to them. However, pressure was exerted on them by Arab nationalists who opposed any Jewish settlement, and such pressure resulted in their resistance of anyone demanding their eviction and refusal to accept the compensation that the [PLDC] was offering them. (Benari 1986, 127–128)

The settler's memoir illustrates that distancing the indigenous population from land in its possession was not completed simply by legal arrangements but required force. The settler's justification that "they [Arabs] had simply been doing their duty," coerced by nationalists, disregards the rebels' agency, instead attributing their actions to a political scheme. Dismissing the collective and national consciousnesses of the indigenous peasants and their perception of the Zionist settlers as invaders, the settlers would attribute tenants' resistance to external pressure by the national leadership and not to the distress resulting from the population's localized dispossession. Counter to settler logic, the displacement of inhabitants from the land actually contributed to their national consciousness.

Qira did not participate in the revolt, and no fighting units used it as their base, but many other neighboring village inhabitants did.[26] Scholars have long argued that certain events of the Great Arab Revolt were, especially after September 1937, constituted by a bottom-up, anti-colonial popular mobilization of peasants (see Anderson, 2013; Swedenburg 1989). Hashomer Hatzair's settler discourse thus resembles the general ideology of the Zionist movement that depicted anti-colonial Palestinian resistance as incitement by the Arab elite. They did not grasp the peasant revolutionary aspect of the revolt because doing so was contrary to their interests and their ideology.

Following these proceedings, the kibbutz sent a letter to David Stern of the settlement department of the Jewish Agency, describing the eviction operation and thanking the agency for its support of "the second conquest," taking place nearly three years after the first settling on the ground.[27] The kibbutz also requested to set a date for discussing an additional eviction.

The second phase of the land tenants' eviction, carried out in 1938, exemplifies both the power relations between the sides and the structural limitations of the settlers' success in the field of land occupation. On one hand, the fencing in obtained only modest results. On the other hand, the appeal to the British courts did eventually yield results. The affair illustrates the extent to which the British supported settler colonization for security and other reasons, including the supposed improvement of the area with a change in owners. According to the ideology of improvement, development, and civilization, the modes of cultivation by the local community were irrational, unproductive, and wasteful. Still, the British Mandate set limits on the settlers' actions. Hankin was forced to offer alternative land in the Qira block, which is to say the settlers were unable to totally displace the tenants, and even after this measure was taken, only several hundred dunams changed hands in the course of two years. The success in September 1938 was partly one of morale: the political atmosphere changed because the British empire had brutally crushed Palestinian society and suppressed the revolt,[28] and several elders began negotiating their eviction.

Expansion of the Colony, Post 1938

The kibbutz's success in taking possession of 800 dunams of land enabled its establishment, but this was still far from satisfying the desire of the settlers to control all 3,500 dunams they had been allotted. This success did, perhaps, affect the morale of the Arab cultivators. About one year later, in May 1939, the elder of the Saʿadiyya clan, one of the prominent families in Qira, opened negotiations regarding evacuation with the PLDC. With the compensation he was to receive, he planned to purchase land in Shafa-ʿAmr. Some months later, negotiations started with members of the Kaʿabiyya family, who left the area in fall 1939. In these instances, the Zionist establishment had to pay the evacuees greater sums than they offered in the mid-1930s. In 1940, the JNF notified the kibbutz of its intention to transfer another 506 dunams of vacated land to the kibbutz.[29]

In December 1942, Kibbutz Hazorea wrote to the JNF board of directors, detailing the kibbutz's difficulties regarding agricultural development, especially control over water sources and land. The total area allotted to the kibbutz amounted to 2,761 dunams, but this included 215 dunams of land "on which the Arab village of Qira and its threshing ground are situated," which

> constitutes a festering wound in the body of our kibbutz. Not only is an Arab village present right next to our residential area; it even takes up an area that is most suitable for intensive farming and makes it hard for us to access the spring water flowing next to the kibbutz and benefit from it for irrigation. . . . Considering the need to ensure the kibbutz's self-sustenance, the JNF purchased an area of 500 dunams for us in September 1940 (of which we received 160 dunams). The 340 dunams remaining have not yet been vacated and, in the meantime, another area has been given to us for temporary cultivation. . . . Finally, may we call the attention of the JNF board of directors to the problem of vacating our lands and displacing the Arab land tenants who, after seven years, are still holding on to them. Except for economic considerations . . . the matter poses a *security problem* [emphasis in the original] both for Hazorea and for Yokneʿam, and a fundamental solution must be found in the near future.[30]

This letter contradicts claims of the unproductivity of Palestinians. The Zionist settlers specifically wanted to control fertile, cultivated land. The ongoing conflict with the Palestinian farmers of Qira also exposes the limitations of private settlement as Hankin promoted it. In late 1943, a structural change took place in local power relations: the JNF purchased a considerable part of the lands (3,800 dunams) from Hankin, committing itself to evict the land tenants. In 1944 and 1945, the JNF—through its official Yehuda Burstein, "Bashan," the field guard of Kibbutz Hazorea and a Haganah member—drew up additional eviction agreements with the Saʿadiyya elder. The elder received twelve Palestine pounds per dunam, a price three or four times steeper than the one previously paid (Levinger 1987, 167).

Fencing and Plans for Takeover, 1946

Following these eviction measures, Hazorea in 1946 possessed 2,400 dunams, of which 160 were fields held by Arab tenants. Tenants held another 3,900 dunams—600 in the hilly area and 3,300 in the fertile plain. Those remaining on the ground continued to resist their eviction. Yosef Weitz of the JNF was troubled by tenants' interference with the preparation of an area, probably for forestation: "How dare they" he asked, "after the stronger among them had left?"[31] Still, the power relations had changed. If in the mid-1930s British policemen explained to Hazorea members that settlement between Qira and Abu Zureiq was irresponsible, the remaining Qira villagers now found themselves isolated between the two colonies of Hazorea and Yokneʿam. Nevertheless, they refused to vacate the area, and there is no evidence of their selling additional land. In February 1946, Hazorea settlers made another attempt to expand the lands in their possession. In the late 1930s they would have had to appeal to the courts to obtain alternative land and request the presence of British police. By the end of the mid-1940s, however, after becoming stronger, and as some Arab elders proved willing to vacate land in return for monetary

compensation, the settlers were in position to take village lands by their own force.

In February 1946, *Filastin* (a Palestinian Arabic newspaper) reported an attempt by Jewish settlers to take over the land of the Palestinian village Qira and the resistance of the fallahin. This report, though it does not quote the inhabitants themselves, is the best evidence available to reconstruct how the settlers' actions were perceived by Palestinians and their efforts to resist:

> The fertile lands of Qira wa Qamun are inhabited by about 500 Arab families who cultivate them and live on their harvest. Some of the landowners sold some of the land to Jews in 1936–1939, whereas the rest held on to theirs. . . . About 150 Jewish men and women attacked these lands with armored tractors and barbed wire fences. They divided into three groups: the first plowing, the second erecting fences, and the third intended to act upon any show of Arab resistance. The Qira wa Qamun villagers did not notice this provocation intended to steal their land until 30 of them—men, women, elderly people, and children—struggled with the Jews for two hours, stopped them, and forced them to retreat. After an hour the police arrived to investigate the goings-on. In addition, we received a call from the inhabitants of Qira wa Qamun, demanding that the authorities back them and save their lands.[32]

Filastin's report demonstrates the terror, violence, and complications embedded in the social field of settler colonial land occupation and the replacement of the inhabitants of Qira and complements the memoranda describing such actions in the discussions of the settlement institutions. No doubt the kibbutz settlers were aware of the problems Palestinian cultivators faced when they were evicted from their land and lost their livelihood. But the kibbutz testimonies do not discuss the implications of purchase, eviction, and occupation of the lands of the indigenous population.

For the kibbutz, the process of land occupation did not end with this action. On February 13, 1946, the kibbutz assembly discussed another action to remove tenants and take over village houses. This time they planned to invade homes in Qira and have several kibbutz settlers sleep in them, believing this would hasten the eviction. Kibbutz settlers deliberated to what extent this measure would exacerbate relations with the village inhabitants and how severely they would respond and decided to consult security officials.[33] The kibbutz settlers discussed the desired effect of their action on the morale of the indigenous population. If the kibbutz settlers stayed in village houses, they assumed the Qira villagers would see the takeover as an irreversible fait accompli or a presence secured by an act of conquest (Kimmerling 1983). This plan was apparently not implemented, but when read with the knowledge that this discussion took place only two years before the displacement of the last Palestinian farmers from Qira during the 1948 war, the desire to occupy their homes takes on different meaning.

Against all odds, and despite intimidation and threat of evacuation and expulsion, some land tenants (around 149, down from 410 in 1945) managed to stay in the village until 1947–1948. At that point, land colonization through purchase and incremental, violent operations transformed into warfare and expulsion. Land purchase through colonial law reinforced, among Jewish Israelis, the legitimacy of acquiring these lands, denying the transformation of law under the British Mandate and the violence that enabled land transfer from Palestinian to Zionist hands. Such legitimation—the generation and maintenance of support for contentious action—among settlers is another crucial feature of the social field of settler colonial takeover, because it enhances the strength of settler claims to symbolic and material capital.

From Purchase to War: Fencing, Plowing, and Land Allocation, 1948

In March 1948, Yehuda Burstein, the kibbutz field guard, recommended that Qira's remaining villagers leave. Some escaped to the slopes of Mount Carmel; others moved to Jenin. The long process of Kibbutz Hazorea's takeover of the village was thus completed. A week after the Qira villagers left, the kibbutz newsletter *Ba-shaʿar* (At the gate) reported their departure:

These very days have seen an event that, even in normal times, would turn into a great festivity, an event we have been looking forward to for twelve years now, since the day we first set foot on Yokneʿam land: the last Arab-Sayida [*sic*] villagers have left Qira, vacated the threshing ground, and joined other members of their tribe living on the slopes of Mount Carmel, outside the bounds of Yokneʿam. This eviction opens new channels—both for opening our settlement and for developing our economy. Many great dreams have been spun around this event ever since, but now is not the time to make them a reality. We could carry out—and hurried to carry out—only what these times both allow and demand. We erected a simple barbed wire fence around the threshing ground. And a double military fence that goes out near the Franz outpost, crosses the wadi and the Ein Hashofet road, surrounds the new outpost erected at the southeastern corner of Qira mound and descends in front of the Muslim cemetery down to the Ein Hashofet road, where it has stopped for the time being. We hope to be allowed to turn the land given to us into an integral part of our settlement and be able to cultivate it in peace.[34]

In his memoirs, a settler referred to the takeover and emphasized its symbolic importance:

They moved to an area that the [PLDC] offered them near Mount Tabor and vacated the lands they had held, including the threshing ground, which was intended for constructing most of the residential area of Hazorea. We immediately resorted to materializing our hold on the vacated land. We dismantled the existing fence and erected a new one, and we plowed the land as much as was possible, to use this, too, as an accepted manifestation of our possessing the land. The existing plans for construction on the vacated area, which for years had remained sketches on paper without any viability, became an actuality overnight, and the constructors have already approached the architect to correct and update these plans in light of the innovations and lessons learned in the past few years. (Benari 1986, 183–184)

In a journal he kept from March to August 1948, Meir Meron—a member of Kibbutz Hazorea and a teacher—documented the fencing done by the colony as soon as the Qira villagers left. Meron confirms that the settlers, uncertain whether the inhabitants might still return, hurried to plow the threshing ground, which was the center of Qira's village life and the most prominent expression of Arab villagers' presence: "The house roofs of the village were ruined and areas were plowed inside the village as well. Only a single old man with two dogs remained in Qira. In spite of the grim situation, it is a liberating sight, seeing our own members in this space."[35] The fate of the one old man remains unknown. The settlers' frenzied haste to plow and transform the village chillingly foreshadows the ultimate fate of the majority of Palestinians.

Meron reported his sense of liberation at seeing the village emptied of its inhabitants. However, shortly afterward, in an entry dated April 3, 1948, he described the systematic destruction with different affective valences:

Last night forty of our men and ten from Yokneʿam demolished the houses of Qira. The roofs had already been removed two weeks ago, and last night the shacks were removed and the walls of stone houses toppled. All this was done according to JNF instructions. The Arabs then returned to their tribe on the slopes of Mount Carmel. . . . In spite of everything, I find it hard to get over the feeling that we have done wrong. We have wrought ruin. I know it is a necessary evil, I know this is an hour of chance that must not be missed. I know that we bear the justice of progress, and they will receive compensation—and still a sense of guilt remains. We have acted in violation of law and order, and I still have a hard time getting used to such a situation here, where law is not the rule.[36]

There is no comparable expression of guilt in descriptions of the expulsion of the Qira villagers during the fencing of 1938. Meron was familiar with all the arguments justifying the action, but still he finds the deed immoral—the social field is here defined by indigenous contestation and settler ambivalence. The settler's description illustrates the legalistic understanding of the morality of the Zionist enterprise. The juridical realm paired with a racialized understanding of difference, rather than an acknowledgment of Palestinian humanity and collectivity, constituted the settler's discomfort with his deeds. The legal transaction that legitimated dispossession among the settlers would later be replaced by other justificatory regimes, primarily that it was a just war and that security was needed because, unless Zionist settlers conquered their neighbors, they would expose themselves to being attacked or killed.

After April 1948, Kibbutz Hazorea found itself without the neighboring villages of Qira and Abu Zureiq. In the kibbutz assembly, members were informed of the development and "the complicated problems regarding the new situation resulting from the Arabs leaving the villages."

More watchmen were needed to guard the "expanded area," and the situation required more money "for certain vital requirements."[37]

Members of other colonies in the area began to demarcate lands and apply for their cultivation rights, even before any official leasing policy was drawn up.[38] After the initial distribution, Hazorea contacted the settling institutions regarding the allotment of land. Just before the 1948 war, the kibbutz held 2,646 dunams. Subsequently, it claimed 2,300 dunams of Abu Zureiq's land and demanded more land from Qira village, nearly doubling its area. Ultimately, Hazorea agreed to the JNF's counterproposal to receive Abu Zureiq lands instead of the Yokneʿam block, which included Qira land.[39]

The 1948 war was the tool for the accelerated appropriation of Palestinian lands. Kibbutz Hazorea illustrates the process by which asymmetry in the social field of land occupation became entrenched: gradual settlement in the years preceding the Nakba were crucial for establishing the base for the realization of the Zionist colonial project. By November 1949, the JNF had given Kibbutz Hazorea 1,000 dunams of Abu Zureiq's lands. Hazorea's newsletter *Bashaʿar* discussed the significance of this acquisition: "Because Qira village has been obliterated, the kibbutz receives more living space, especially around its residential area, some of which had been held by several villager families who refused to receive reparations and move elsewhere."[40] Toward the end of 1953, Hazorea received additional lands for cultivation that had previously belonged to the villages of Abu Zureiq, Abu-Zabuba, Taʾanah, and Lajjun; lands from the remaining villages of Mukeibala and Rummana were also made available to the colony for cultivation, although they did not become its permanent possessions. By mid-1956, Hazorea controlled over 7,200 dunams.[41]

KIBBUTZ EIN HASHOFET AND THE NEARBY PALESTINIAN VILLAGES, 1936–1948

Joʾara

In the vicinity of the Plain of Manasseh / Bilad al-Ruha, close to Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, a road sign displays the name Joʾara. It directs visitors to the GADNA (the Hebrew acronym for a paramilitary youth corps) camp and museum there. This sign makes no mention of the small Palestinian village of Joʾara about seven kilometers south of Qira.

The purchase of the lands of the Plain of Manasseh / Bilad al-Ruha at the eastern edge of the Jezreel Valley from 1924 to 1934 was carried out by Yehoshua Hankin acting for the PLDC.[42] In 1936, the JNF purchased the lands from the PLDC, the PICA (the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association), and private investors, because they feared they would lose the lands because of the Great Arab Revolt. In *My Diary and Letters to the Children*, Yosef Weitz emphasizes the importance of the site for creating a territorial continuum between the settlements in the Jezreel Valley and the Samaria region. When the fourth and last part of Joʾara village lands were transferred to the JNF on November 11, 1936, Weitz (1965a, 165) wrote,

> If the land tenants vacate the site, we shall come to settle it. This is one of the purchases in the hilly region in which I was interested. The site is near Yokneʿam and Mishmar ha-Emek. From there we shall proceed through Daliyat al-Ruha to al-Shafiyya near Zikhron Yaʾakov, and the distance between the Jezreel Valley and the Samaria region will be bridged by our lands. To that end, another 10,000–12,000 dunams must be purchased.

The contract drawn up between the JNF and Tzur Development and Construction Company clearly indicates that the JNF purchased an entire village, including its land and structures. The JNF bought 4,553 dunams with all the houses on it and divided it into thirty-two plots. The

sellers were committed to hand over the area "no later than the end of December 1936, free of land tenant rights" or any other claim that would prevent the buyers from using "the entire area of Joʾara village."[43] Although "free of land tenant rights," the land was not free of the land tenants themselves, some of whom were still living in the village.

Establishment of the settlement was preceded by two visits from the settlers and their supporters "to check out the terrain." In March 1936, a few months before the lands were transferred to the JNF, Aryeh Diamant, "Shofar," of Mishmar ha-Emek (the main security official of the area), Abraham Hartzfeld (a leader of the labor settlement movement), Menahem Bader of Kibbutz Mizraʾ (the representative of Hashomer Hatzair in the Yishuv's Agricultural Center), and Abraham Fein (a member of the settling group of Ein Hashofet) visited the site. During this first visit, the settlers did not climb up the hill they intended to settle for fear of confronting the local inhabitants. Fein's description of the planning to establish the colony contradicts the settlers' arguments that the inhabitants' unwillingness to take compensation and leave was instigated by Arab leadership. The labor settlement movement commonly claimed that the Arab masses were content with, and even benefited from, Zionism and that the elites and outside agitators instigated unrest. However, the settlers had to disguise their true intentions in order not to arouse the inhabitants' suspicion:

> Another few months passed, before the JNF purchased several thousand dunams around Joʾara hill, including the hill and the tiny, shabby hilltop village of only seven impoverished families dwelling in miserable shacks. Yet a difficult problem presented itself in planning the actual settlement on the ground. Those were times of bloodshed throughout the country. The mufti's rule and the gangs in the Arab regions constituted an obstacle and endangered any attempt to settle the land. The act itself needed to be planned so that no premature suspicions would arise among the Arabs of the region. The British rule, as we know, was not too helpful regarding the Yishuv's settlement efforts. The police, based in the town of Haifa, kept away from this area that sheltered different gangs active both near and far. We doubted whether we could really overcome such hardships and not reveal to the gangs in the vicinity our intention to settle soon. We must be a model for the tower and stockade method during this period of settlement.[44]

A second visit, about a month later, from a different group included Fein and was led by the deputy chief of police of Haifa and the Northern District, Kalman Cohen.[45] The party "headed out, with Officer Cohen in the lead and escorted by a large group of security guards."[46] The reconnaissance party masked the true intention of their visit, claiming they were there to plan the erection of a police station. Fein described this second visit:

> For the first time we ascended Joʾara hill and, to the astonishment of its few inhabitants, began to inspect the house that stood deserted, with no roof, its windows and doors broken. The ground floor was filled with cattle and sheep dung. The place served as a night pen of sorts for livestock, whereas the villagers lived in nearby shacks surrounded by cactus bushes.
>
> During our visit the village elder was summoned. He invited the entire group into a *madafe* [reception hall] inside a shack adjacent the southern part of the building. Negotiations then began over the possibility of erecting a police station on the hill.
>
> The village elder proposed that the deserted building be refurbished as a residence for the policemen and for the station itself. Owing to the surrounding conditions and lack of transportation, the policemen would have to be mounted, which was our excuse to demarcate the spot for building stables for the police horses. Thus, we toured the building and the entire hill, and the initial plan for settlement was drawn up for the first settlers who would arrive in two months' time.
>
> After several more walks escorted by the village elder, we left, having taken the first step toward settling this new region.[47]

In Fein's account the settlers' reconnaissance mission surprised the villagers, who were not at all prepared for the visit. There is no sign they were aware of the land being sold and bought, and despite Fein's concerns regarding local suspicions, the village elder showed proper hospitality to the touring group by hosting it at the *madafe* (reception hall).

The preparations for settling Ein Hashofet on Joʾara's land exposes that, although the Zionists often complained about receiving inadequate British support, they knew their enterprise depended on British backing and, ultimately, British bayonets (at least until the White Paper of 1939). After all, it was the British (with some Zionist assistance) who violently squashed the

Arab revolt of 1936–1939. We cannot know if Deputy Cohen undertook this visit in his official police capacity or on behalf of the Zionist movement.

Weitz's report on the visit to Joʾara provides a detailed description of cooperation between the settling group, the Zionist institutions, and the British authorities. Weitz notes that he acceded to the police request to reduce the size of the visiting group and confirms that talk of creating a police station was meant to mislead the inhabitants.[48]

IMAGE 8. "A meeting with the village dignitaries," circa 1937, Joʾara.
Source: Ein Hashofet Archive photographic collection.

IMAGE 9. "Joʾara inhabitants," circa 1937.
Source: Ein Hashofet Archive photographic collection.

> The policemen served as an excuse for the Arabs in Joʾara, supposedly intending to establish a police station there. We reached Joʾara at noon. While the police officer spoke with the Arab *bek*, owner of the land, and his land tenants about organizing the police station, Vilensky measured the building and its rooms. Then we toured the three springs, checking the possibility of water supply to the house when the kibbutz settled in. This particular tour was held by Fein, Vilensky, and me, as well as the Arab policeman and one of the local Arabs. In the meantime, we also viewed the hills near the house and the surroundings.
>
> We left at 2:30 p.m. The policemen returned to Haifa, and we to Mishmar ha-Emek, where we had a talk about the actual settlement of Joʾara. Ben Shemesh stated that the police officer promised to issue a license for appointing a *ghafir* [policeman] for Joʾara. In the meantime, the house arrangements, water supply and road would all be dealt with using the excuse of preparations for opening the police station. The *bek*—owner of the land and responsible for vacating the tenants—would always be present and help with the work and would gradually vacate the tenants so that by August, after the harvest, the entire area could be handed over to us. I notified Ben Shemesh of our agreement to this plan, on the condition that by August the entire area would be given to us free of its tenants, and if not, Tzur Company, from which the JNF had purchased the land, would cover any investment we shall have to make in work and construction. (Weitz 1965a, 221–222)

Both Fein's and Weitz's testimonies indicate a precise plan for settlement with as few mishaps as possible and with the cooperation of both the British authorities and the Arab sellers of the land. The village elder and the tenants knew nothing of the sale or the intention to evict them at this point. The forceful evacuation illustrates how the kibbutzim, agents of the semisovereign capacity of the Yishuv, were backed by the Zionist Organization and its affiliated institutions because, despite their socialist ideals, they accumulated political, cultural, and material capital that, together with British support, enabled the colonization process.

Eviction of the Arab cultivators was not completed until the actual settlement on July 5, 1937. That day about forty settlers, escorted by security personnel, came to the site and erected a tower and stockade, the nucleus of the settlement, on over half of Joʾara's lands.[49] Yaʿakov Barʿam, a member of the settlement group, described the settlement's establishment in a letter to his in-

laws:

> We are on hills. Before coming here we thought we would be surrounded by mountains on all sides, unable to contact others in the area. To our relief we realized this is not so. From here we can look out over the entire [Jezreel] Valley. Evenings and nighttime we see plenty of faraway lights. We did not know how much the valley settlements would care for us. On our first evening, when our friends from Hadera and others left, twenty-six men and two women remained here. We lit the projector and saw lights signaling us from all directions in the other valley settlements.
>
> We responded with our projector, and they were signaling and sending us congratulatory messages on our settling day. . . .
>
> On the morrow we began working. First, we had to tend to fortifications in order to face any dangers. We have nearly finished these tasks. Next, we shall begin work around the building and erect a dwelling barrack, because the current building is not enough. This work and laying pipes from the spring to the building will take several months. This is our plan before any farming action and until the Arabs move out. The villagers live with us. Their shacks are built from the wall of our house into the courtyard. They do not come into our dwelling, except for those who do various types of work for us. They are now busy at their threshing ground, work that will last some time. Generally speaking, the situation is vague at the moment. We live without a real plan, simply as hired hands doing certain types of work toward a certain purpose. . . .
>
> . . . The main question is security. Living securely. Our primary wish is to be allowed to live, and we wish to grow our bread from this land. If things are quiet and we can do our work undisturbed, this will be good and we will achieve things. . . . There is no panic, everyone's calm. We have ten *ghafirs* of our own and four sent to us from other valley settlements as reinforcement, so our security is firm enough and sufficient.[50]

In 1989, Dov Vardi, a founding settler of Ein Hashofet, described the day the group "settled on the ground" as part of the tower and stockade campaign.[51] Vardi mentions that the group of forty settlers first had to stay on the hill along with twenty-four Arab tenants remaining at the site, over one-third of the local population recorded in 1931, because the lawyer for the Tzur Company had not yet reached a final agreement with the land tenants on the terms of their eviction:

> Only on August 18, 1937, did Yitzhak Ben Shemesh, representative of Tzur Company, finally arrive, working in coordination with the JNF to reach an agreement with the villagers who would vacate the place. It was agreed that they would demolish the roofs of their shacks themselves, and in return for their willingness to leave, they would receive one Palestine pound for each cultivated dunam. The eviction was carried out peacefully. The *bek*, moving with his money to Haifa, received 1,300 pounds, and the land tenants [in aggregate] 2,709 pounds. Most of them moved to nearby al-Kafrayn. On the morrow, the tractor driven over from Mishmar ha-Emek plowed its first furrow. After one year at Joʾara, the members moved to the opposite hill, where they began to build Ein Hashofet. They were employed by the JNF in forestation work and stone clearing, as well as laying the foundations for their kibbutz.[52]

A report by Hashomer Hatzair members who settled in Joʾara to delegates celebrated "the land tenants' departure from the village" and the "very first plowing for the year 1937" as momentous events in development of the settlement:

> At noontime, Advocate Ben Shemesh of Haifa and the Arab land broker *bek* came to Aryeh Shofar [Diamant] of Mishmar ha-Emek, and they sat around a table in one of the rooms of the new barracks, on which the map of Joʾara was laid, and finalized the land deal. Hundreds of pounds changed hands, from Ben Shemesh and the *bek* to the Arabs who entered one by one to receive their reparations. Each of them filled out a form in which he transferred his claim as a land tenant to one of our members. We thus became tenants of the company [the Palestine Land Development Company] and received land. They received various sums, some of them dozens and others hundreds of pounds. The largest sum was handed to the mukhtar—the village elder. As far as we could see they were all satisfied. We were told that one of them, in a private conversation with one of our members, disclosed that he owned land in the neighboring village of al-Kafrayn, but when he heard that Joʾara was being given to the Jews he came to settle here. He owns a house and land in al-Kafrayn, and yesterday he pocketed dozens of pounds because of the tenancy he had purchased here. The mukhtar says there is nothing better than receiving reparations from Jews. He goes to al-Kafrayn and hopes that he will receive tenancy pay there as well.
>
> Such is the "claim of dispossession" that is at times heard even in our own ranks. Most of the Arabs moved to al-Kafrayn yesterday. We were involved in this as well, with our own truck that made one round of delivery. As early as yesterday the Arabs began their own demolition of their shacks, and we continued today, facing much more work before we can actually vacate the whole area and prepare it security-wise. Several shacks are potentially useful for us and we decided not to demolish them. The entire land of Joʾara is now in our hands. Done is the land transfer that we so feared.[53]

This account simplifies the collective expulsion of an entire village. By emphasizing that some of the Joʾara land tenants were not truly local villagers, the writer diverts the conversation from settlement in a populated land to the indigenous people being allegedly "satisfied" and having a

lack of rootedness in the village. The settler seeks to calm the fears and doubts of anyone who raised the "claim of dispossession" by providing the details of the compensation of the indigenous. Apparently, at least some Hashomer Hatzair settlers were aware of this claim and perhaps even deliberated over the issue.

Less than a fortnight later, on August 29, 1937, Abraham Golan, a member of the settler group at Ein Hashofet, reported to U.S. members of Hashomer Hatzair. His description emphasized the villagers' poverty. If according to the previous description, "the Arabs themselves" began demolishing their dwellings, here the writer notes that the settlers added "payment" for each of the poor land tenants to demolish their own shacks:

> From the short message I cabled you, you already know that the Arabs have vacated the entire area, and the land is now in our possession. Needless to explain the joy felt by all the kibbutz members at the time, as we first plowed it with our tractor and slightly enlarged the space in which we had camped before, so crowded and close to the Arabs. The demolition of the Arabs' homes was carried out by they themselves in return for taking with them the timber that had served as their ceilings with piles of dung and soil on top. Speaking of poverty and hardship of the Arab *fallah*, we witnessed them ourselves when they left the village with their meager belongings—some metal rods [probably plow parts], a few tattered mats, some rags, broken jugs, and livestock. Their children are barefoot, their eyes infected. I do not exaggerate or distort history when I say that the Arabs were quite glad and did not hide this as they received their reparations in return for their tenancy claims, and they openly said some days earlier that they had been waiting for this day for several years. . . . Even those of us who accept reality without trying to interpret or understand it—and thus perhaps our pangs of socialist conscience give us no rest—held our tongue in view of what we saw in reality rather than in literature or learned writings.[54]

The kibbutz archives, along with inadvertently revealing settler violence, show the instability of colonial rule. The records reveal aspects of settler anxiety about some land tenants unwilling to leave their land even after being compensated. The settlers' declarations about the legitimacy of the transactions contradicts their own anxiety.

The initial reports of the settlers described the land tenants' departure from Joʾara as without conflict. But a year later, on July 15, 1938, the kibbutz was attacked by Palestinians:

> 9:20 p.m., as I stood by the projector, I heard two shots, and kibbutz members who were home at the time and heard Rona's scream rushed to their posts. This apparently was a signal to the attackers, because the telephone was cut off and after some moments shots were heard again from the fruit tree grove north of the house, to mislead us to that side while carrying out the major offensive from the south. At that very moment members standing at the post overlooking the village well saw figures approaching on the path between the cactus bushes and fired at them. Massive gunfire then opened along the entire southern fence, and luckily for us no one was in the yard any longer; everyone managed to make it to their posts. The post near the stable was under constant fire, and members saw the assailants face to face and heard their savage cries. The three southern posts functioned the whole time and fired nearly four hundred bullets within half an hour. Strong resistance at the right moment, surprising the assaulting gang, had its effect, and after suffering some casualties, they began to retreat, dragging with them their wounded and dead.[55]

Unusually, there is oral testimony about this incident from an inhabitant of the Arab village of al-Mansi, which was known throughout the region for taking an active part in the Great Arab Revolt. Al-Khatib (1987), who collected oral testimonies from Arab refugees of al-Turkeman, quotes the recollections of Amin Hasin Diab, the nineteen-year-old son of a rebel, on the battle of Joʾara:

> One of the unforgettable battles was fought at the settlement of Joʾara next to the Arab village of al-Kafrayn. . . . The British army hastened to help the settlement when the rebels attacked it. At this battle, Musa Ahmad Diab and Idris Ibn Nasser al-Khalil were wounded, shot by the English and left bleeding. At night the rebels managed to reach them and evacuate them to a house especially designated to host wounded rebels, but they died of their wounds a few days later, for lack of proper medical care. (75)

In the testimony of the Ein Hashofet settler, the settlers defend themselves heroically against the offensive of a faceless enemy ("the assaulting gang," "their savage cries"). They defeat the enemy and see this as a deed of "exemplary courage."[56] The testimony of the indigenous refugee describes the incident as one of the "unforgettable battles," indicating its importance in the eyes

of the witness. The testimonies reveal two prominent factual gaps: according to the indigenous refugee, the assailants were shot by British forces that came to the settlers' rescue; the kibbutz journal makes no mention of this. According to the settlers, the assailants dragged away with them all their wounded and dead; according to Diab, the rebels were forced to leave wounded men in place—he names them—and returned at night to evacuate them and take them to safety and care. The different accounts of the parties could be due to the rebels' uncertainty about who was shooting at them, British or Zionist settlers (especially if the settlers were uniformed settlement police, it would be easy to mistake them for British); and the settlers would not necessarily know where the wounded rebels lay or when they were removed by their comrades.

Despite these factual gaps, both versions conclude that the Palestinians refused to capitulate to encroachment on their home/land. Both versions illustrate that, for years before 1948, Zionist settlers were embroiled in violent battles against Palestinians who opposed them throughout the process of colonization.

Fight over Land Distribution, 1948

The expansion and occupation of lands was completed during the 1948 war and afterward, in discussions over how to distribute the spoils of war, the Arab lands. As early as the end of April 1948, debates ensued between the settlement institutions and the kibbutz over recently depopulated village lands.[57] Yosef Weitz of the JNF attended a kibbutz assembly discussion on April 25, where kibbutz representatives addressed matters of security, investing in fortification, and the possibility of the JNF making a loan to the kibbutzim. Weitz informed them of the intention to erect an additional settlement in the area of Daliyat al-Ruha village. According to the assembly notes,

> The talk with Weitz touched on harvesting fields, deserted enemy property, and a new settlement. On this occasion we [the kibbutz members] discussed the situation at the kibbutz that is still establishing its agriculture. In conclusion, this should be cleared up with the institutions. The settlement must take in the lands of Dalia that have been liberated, as well as the 1,000 dunams belonging to the PICA.[58]

A farmworker union letter to the kibbutzim Dalia, Ein Hashofet, and Ramat Hashofet noted that

> the new colony, Kibbutz Ramot Menashe, was founded in July 1948, despite the desire of the neighboring kibbutzim (Ein Hashofet, Dalia, and Ramat Hashofet) to divide the lands of the displaced villages among themselves. The new kibbutz, settled by a Polish group called Builders of the Negev, was allotted 3,000 dunams at its founding.[59]

On July 31, three months after expulsion of the indigenous inhabitants from the area, members of Ein Hashofet discussed cultivating the fields of the depopulated villages:

> It has been proposed to use the abandoned fields and sow winter grains. The question is whether the government will give us guarantees. The cultivators pose two questions: manpower and tools. This year we barely completed the harvest manually because of lack of tools. We may receive Allis[60] in another two–three months. As for the combine, we have not yet made inquiries about which kind should be added. In the meantime, we have initiated the order of a combine, not binding. The manpower situation is more difficult. Still, we have decided to request 1,000 dunams in the valley. We decided to demand 500 dunams of sorghum out of the 32,000 dunams existing in the district. We made this decision because we expect a deficit of 60–70 dunams for seeds.[61]

From here on, the kibbutzim in the region, both new and established, competed to assume ownership over "abandoned" lands. In March 1949, a member of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet wondered about the fate of "abandoned areas":

> We are aware of abandoned areas in our region whose fate has not yet been determined, whether for new settlement or for other purposes. However, even if some of these lands will be designated as additions to our own, this would not constitute a solution to the problems weighing on the kibbutzim today. All these lands require cultivation, and this is a slow process that

will take years.

Therefore, we see the need for additional land of the abandoned areas in the valley that would enter our possession immediately. The area needed for each kibbutz is about 2,000 dunams for cultivation beginning September 1950. Because the problem is crucial for us, we need to meet with the agricultural center for further clarification of our demands.[62]

Ein Hashofet expanded dramatically in the 1940s. In 1942 it had 1,757 cultivable dunams; in 1949, it had 5,600 cultivable dunams.[63] Its letter to the Department of Uncultivated Lands in the Ministry of Agriculture, in which the kibbutz noted the detailed sowing plan for the year beginning in September 1952, gives an overall picture of the kibbutz's expansion. According to the letter, Kibbutz Ein Hashofet cultivated 6,008 dunams of abandoned lands, including 1,445 dunams from the village of al-Kafrayn; 700 dunams from al-Mansi; 330 dunams from Abu Shusha; 958 from the villages of al-Lajjun, Rummana, and Zabuba; and 2,575 dunams from Joʾara and Daliyat al-Ruha, including lands of Joʾara and Daliyat al-Ruha that the kibbutz occupied before 1948.[64] The land appropriated in 1949 alone, after the total expulsion of villages in the area, was around three times the land acquired from the kibbutz's inception from 1936 to 1942.

The sheer pace of land occupation demonstrates that Zionist settlement was contingent on an array of material factors, and it by no means guaranteed the emergence of a fully sovereign settler colonial state. Despite some two decades of socialist-Zionist settler colonization seeking to displace them, the Palestinian inhabitants continued to cling to their land, thereby altering the process of settlement. The 1948 war completed what the Zionist settlers could not achieve through years of purchase and settlement: they gained control of lands still lived on by Palestinians and seized additional lands. After all, Zionist land purchasing had acquired only about 7 percent of the total territory of Mandatory Palestine by May 15, 1948, or about 20 percent of cultivable area (Stein 1984, app. 2).[65] Therefore, the 1948 war was another phase in the transformation of "gradated sovereignty" (Stoler 2006, 219) in Palestine.

Chapter 3

ENCOUNTERS ON THE SETTLER COLONIAL FRONTIER: KIBBUTZ RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING PALESTINIAN VILLAGES

UPON ARRIVAL IN THE WESTERN MARGINS OF THE JEZREEL VALLEY in the 1920s and 1930s, Zionist settlers encountered not a terra nullius but a densely populated and cultivated frontier. What relations formed between settlers and the indigenous Palestinians in this settler colonial frontier? What was the role of these relations in the wider colonization processes? In what ways did they contribute to constituting the socialist-Zionist ideology of Hashomer Hatzair settlers?

The common view in the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim committed to socialism, a binational political framework, and the ideal of the brotherhood of peoples was that productive neighborly relationships developed between the settlers and their Arab neighbors. However, contextualizing the modes of daily interaction in the conditions of a dense frontier already penetrated by a transformative settler colonial incursion and nascent forms of resistance undermines the claims of kibbutzim that genial relations, physical proximity, and the need to manage everyday life were expressions of willing collaboration on the Palestinian side.[1] This narrative ignores socioeconomic aspects of the frontier existence of the fallahin whose access to key resources such as land, infrastructure, and capital investments was reduced because of settler encroachment on their space and other dynamics, such as exploitation by Arab landowners, high imperial taxation, and the effects of the global depression of the 1930s, including low prices for primary agricultural products.

In the minutes of kibbutz meetings of the 1930s and 1940s that have been preserved in the archives of the kibbutzim, daily interactions with Arab neighbors appear on the margins if at all. They tend to emphasize official, ceremonial, and watershed interactions (such as organized visits or shared celebrations) at the expense of the phenomenological texture of routine relations. Therefore, I also examined texts written later, including interviews in which settlers reconstructed the relationships. Using such later testimonies is problematic, considering the instability of memory. Nonetheless, they illuminate certain aspects of the history that would otherwise remain obscured. I do not use interviews I conducted with refugees of the Palestinian villages because this book focuses on using settler colonial knowledge by reading *against* the grain—that is, through a critical settler colonial paradigm—and by reading *along* the grain, which allows anxieties revealed in the archival record to emerge on their own (Stoler 2008). Nonetheless, although the kibbutzim's documents and the testimonies of the settlers disclose significant aspects of their relations with Palestinians, they do not by any means reflect Palestinians' ambivalent perceptions of these relations with the settlers.[2]

Relatively few scholarly studies deal with interactions and relations of Palestinians with the Zionist settlers in everyday life in the frontier before 1949.[3] Among the few critical systematic studies is the notable work of Lockman (1996), which addresses inter alia the relations between

Arab and Jewish workers in urban Haifa. Some Israeli research on quotidian interactions between Palestinians and Jews during the British Mandate also focuses on the cities—Tel Aviv, Jaffa, and Haifa, for instance—and especially the relations among laborers (see Bernstein 2000, 2008; Razi 2001). But, the rural peripheries, where the majority of Palestinians lived, remain understudied. One important reason is the scarcity of archival material about this area. But this has changed in the last decade, due in part to the development of the methodology of oral history and its legitimacy in Palestine studies. However, the development of relations between settlers and indigenous Palestinians is hardly discussed in Palestinian historiography, which often reproduces the hegemonic order within the Palestinian national movement by focusing on how the national Palestinian elite regarded Jewish colonization and the Zionist project (see, e.g., Hourany 2003; W. Khalidi 2006). This approach overlooks the relationships that did develop and ignores the social experience of subaltern groups (particularly women and fallahin) in Palestinian society, who made up a clear majority during the Mandate. Moreover, it tends at best toward a partial discussion of the causes of the relatively swift collapse and disintegration of Palestinian society during the Nakba.[4]

TRACING RELATIONS

In the framework of the nationalist paradigms, the relations between Zionist settlers and Palestinians in the years before 1948 can too easily be labeled collaboration or betrayal. The problem is not merely political but, rather, inherent in the research itself. Settlers indeed used relations with Palestinians to gather intelligence and promote the colonization process (Cohen 2008). Clearly, we should not reduce all aspects of relationships during the British Mandate to such strategic purposes. But the lack of research situating patterns of interaction in their proper context might lead either to a unidimensional view that perceives any interactions between Jews and Arabs as collaboration or to an imagining of any local understanding reached by Jewish colonies and Palestinians as a utopian alternative to the eventual confrontation and the Nakba.[5]

Adel Manna and Saleh Abdel Jawad are among the few Palestinian scholars who address this topic in its complexity. In an unpublished lecture delivered at Birzeit University, "Non-Aggression and Good Neighbor Oral Agreements between Palestinian Villages and Jewish Settlements during the 1948 War," Jawad discusses six villages, Sheikh Muwannis, Deir Yassin, Zarnuqa (Zarnuga), Qira, Abu Zureiq, and Qisariya, that maintained complex relations with the neighboring Jewish colonies that were based on common interests. Villagers of Qisariya had been employed by a neighboring kibbutz as guards for years. Nonetheless, they were eventually uprooted. Massacres were perpetrated in three of these villages. Members of the audience, especially people from these villages who apparently feared that his statements would tag them as collaborators (Jawad 2007, 63n13) criticized him.[6] This illustrates the precarity of reexamining the relations between settlers and indigenes that developed throughout colonization —both the simplistic tagging of Palestinians as participating in exemplary good neighborly relations or as collaborators—while ignoring the complex reasons for social practices and relationships.

Manna (2008) narrates the story of his grandmother, Jamila, a refugee from the displaced village of al-Jaʿuna; her family's relations with the family of Manu Friedman, a settler of Rosh Pina; and the execution of Manna's grandfather during the 1948 massacre in Majd al-Kurum. The Israeli army entered the village in a reprisal raid for Fawzi al-Qawuqji's Arab Liberation Army having used the family's home as a larder and their garden as a base for militia volunteers. Before the Israeli army's incursion, Jamila sent a letter to Friedman who was then a Haganah

commander. She reminded him that they were brothers in milk, meaning that they were breastfed by the same woman. She also mentioned that her husband, Abu Maʿayuf, had traded with him and asked him to have mercy on her and her family. The letter was no help. The former ties between the two families did not prevent the disaster that befell her family. Manna also noted the trade relations between his father-in-law and the same Manu Friedman and the role of such relations in relocating some of another family, the Hlihels, refugees from Qaddita, to the village of ʿAkbara near Safed, not their original village. Manna's account underlines the importance of research about common people and their everyday lives to understanding Palestinian history in general and the circumstances of the Nakba in particular.

Understanding that the way we narrate the past can be bound up in ideological commitments, I proceed cautiously, acknowledging that both the Zionist and Palestinian national epistemes are deeply entrenched in the sources on which I rely.

ENCOUNTERS AT THE FRONTIER

At first glance, the documents in the kibbutz archives—press clippings, local newsletters, kibbutz memorial books, personal notes—offer a picture of genial relations that seems to confirm the testimonies and self-image of kibbutz settlers. However, a thorough examination of these documents, especially diaries and personal journals of kibbutz settlers from the 1930s and 1940s, and interviews held in later years with the settlers themselves, gradually exposes a somewhat different reality. There is a clear correlation between the extent of documentation and its classification and the intensity of the interactions. Here too, rich documentation is available from Kibbutz Hazorea, whereas documentation at Mishmar ha-Emek, although abundant, is less extensive and reflects a more limited point of view. Unlike the two other kibbutzim, Ein Hashofet does not have records on its relations with the neighboring villages.

From the settler side, neighborly relations did not develop merely as a result of spatial proximity; they were strategic and entangled with the prospect of elimination. A Palestinian village could be very near geographically and yet it would not be considered a neighbor with which to foster relations. Settlement in the region led to the development of two patterns of relations between settlers and the indigenous. Nearby villages whose lands the settlers did not manage to purchase were considered neighbors; relations with them were expected to last. Villages with lands targeted for settlement and sometimes purchased, whether near a kibbutz or practically at the very same site, were perceived by the settlers as temporary and destined for elimination, so relations with the inhabitants there were not pursued.

For example, Hazorea established relations with its neighbors in Abu Zureiq (one of Jawad's examples) while disregarding the village, Qira, whose territory it appropriated. This different treatment did not prevent the demise of either village in 1948. This is not to argue that interactions did not take place with those villages destined for erasure. Certain interactions were typical of frontier conquest, such as the erection of barbed wire fences between populations. With time, limited interactions took place, mediated primarily by kibbutz settlers who specialized in relations with Arabs. Relatively calm periods enabled some expansion of social and economic interactions. Nonetheless, ultimately, the vast majority of villages in Bilad al-Ruha were uprooted and their lands and property appropriated by the neighboring kibbutzim.

The opposition of Palestinian inhabitants to settlement in their area produced a need to train settlers from Zionist colonies to make contact, solve conflicts on the ground, and manage relations. Broader initiatives of the Zionist movement shaped local efforts, which in turn influenced the initiatives. Especially in the 1930s, these initiatives formed specialized roles for

relating to the Arab population and training cadres in Arabic language and culture in preparation for encounters with Arabs. Earlier Zionist efforts to discern Arab life are well documented (Jawad 2016; Cohen 2008, 35–36; Eyal 2006), and formalized education in Arab society for intelligence purposes was institutionalized by the Haganah's Village Files project in the early 1940s, which gathered physical and demographic data of Arab villages.

Still, it is challenging to disaggregate the roles of the kibbutz Arab experts and the Zionist military intelligence Arabists, due to their interconnected relations and overlapping functions. Most interactions between the kibbutzim and the neighboring inhabitants were confined to a limited number of figures charged with maintaining relations with the Arabs, some of whom were recruited officially by the settlement institutions and the Zionist military establishment. Eventually, for many of them, relations with the Arabs became their primary work. Relations with the neighbors of the kibbutzim thus constituted an informal form of intelligence gathering in the period before the establishment of official Zionist military intelligence bodies, such as the Haganah's intelligence service (Shai) in 1940.[7] In this way, knowledge served the material configurations of power.

In Mishmar ha-Emek and Hazorea, only a few settlers (in Hazorea no more than five) maintained most ties with the Arab inhabitants of the area. This group consisted of security personnel, such as Aryeh Diamant (Mishmar ha-Emek) and Levi Granot (Hazorea), who were considered the mukhtars (elders) of the kibbutz after receiving special training as mediators between kibbutz society and Arabs in the area.[8] Others in this arena included Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov (Hazorea) and Arabists like Eliʿezer Beʾeri (Hazorea), who studied Arabic and developed political ties with Palestinian society on behalf of Hashomer Hatzair and his own kibbutz, and Yehuda Burstein, "Bashan," who was not a kibbutz member but a field guard for Yokneʿam and received a salary from the Palestine Land Development Company while also purchasing land on behalf of the Jewish National Fund (JNF).[9] At times the various roles were congruent: Yehuda Bashan and Levi Granot were field guards and also acted on behalf of the Haganah. Elisha Lin and Micha Lin (both of Mishmar ha-Emek) also acted on behalf of the Haganah. Diamant was both a security and a settlement official. Beʾeri worked at developing political ties while also collecting material for security intelligence. The group included some who were apparently motivated by curiosity and an interest in Arab society but who played no role in settlement institutions, such as Hillel Meirhoff (Hazorea), a locksmith who offered technical assistance to the Arab inhabitants of the area. Cooperation among most of the settlers of this small group deepened and played a major role in displacing the Palestinian villages during the 1948 confrontations.

In a eulogy for Aryeh Diamant, nicknamed "Shofar" by the Jews and "Khawaja Saleem" by the Arabs, one Mishmar ha-Emek settler described him as a figure who both terrified the Arabs and nurtured relations with them.[10] This combination was at the heart of his duties and was particularly resonant amid an increase in reported thefts of the kibbutz's harvest in the fields by the local Arabs. What the settlers saw as land theft was the result of settler colonial incursion and the transformation of the customary use of the land imposed by the settlers through the new definition of boundaries implemented by land fencing and new legal practices enforced by the British. In some cases, settlers would take the lead in their localities to impose this new legal reality either by force or through cultivating relations with the indigenous Palestinians. The eulogy for Diamant explained, "Aryeh decided to take matters into his own hands. And so he did —the Arab thieves were prosecuted; Aryeh was merciless to the thieves and friendly to neighbors who proved themselves honest human beings. . . . His reputation was known in all the

villages around us. Over time the Arabs learned that there was to be 'no theft in the fields of Mishmar ha-Emek.'"[11]

In the 1930s Diamant underwent Haganah training, was appointed a member of the area's security committee, and was chosen as the liaison officer who would communicate with the British police on behalf of the Jewish Agency.[12] He was also in charge of the guards, weapons, and everyday security at Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek. Because this was the first colony in the area, he was a crucial link for the kibbutz model of settlement of the entire region. Diamant was thus involved in the establishment of new colonies, including Ein Hashofet and Dalia.[13] He contributed to the new settlements his experience among the Arabs and "counseled them in neighborly relations, ties with the governing bodies, solving land conflicts, organizing defense of their localities and establishing modes of assistance in times of need." The prerequisite for this was Diamant's purported expertise. He was said to be one of few with "personal acquaintance of many of our neighbors, their property and family and clan ties. He was welcomed in their homes with respect. In times of need he helped or hampered, as the situation demanded, and all from a single point of departure—that this was helpful for Mishmar ha-Emek, his home, its survival and prosperity. For its honor—as a settlement and as Jews!"[14]

This language manifests Hashomer Hatzair's vision of itself: Jewish Zionist honor required dealing fairly with Arab neighbors. The deliverer of Diamant's eulogy, who was also a Haganah member, hinted that the activities of Diamant and others like him were not unanimously endorsed by kibbutz settlers. Opposite Diamant were the so-called deluded, whose "hallucinations" of humanism and pacifism prevented them from understanding the need for security actions.

Diamant's extensive knowledge also enabled him to take part in settler incursions, such as the kibbutz members' takeover of an especially important area, the threshing ground of Abu Shusha village, which was held by the villagers after the land had been purchased by the settlers:

> We remember Aryeh's brilliant action to return the area beyond Wadi Abu Shusha to our possession. This area, which also included the village's threshing ground and the ruin, belonged to us but was abandoned for about fifteen years. No one, neither our members nor the functionaries of the JNF and the settling company, believed he would succeed. The White Paper laws of restricting the Jews in Palestine also did not help or the "claim" that the participants had to the ground. Aryeh knew how to reap what he had sown for years, and to everyone's astonishment, the area was fenced up all the way to the village houses and an undisputed fact of possession was set.[15]

Diamant's profile is typical of other activists who combined security activity with the nurturing of contacts with Arab inhabitants of the area.

Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov of Hazorea spoke differently of the factors that promoted such relations in an interview with Eyal Ofek, another Hazorea member who researched his kibbutz's relations with the villages of Qira and Abu Zureiq:

> Yohanan's personal relations with Qira were good. At times he preferred to visit them in their homes and tents, where he was a welcome guest. Yohanan admits he was an exception and that relations on behalf of the kibbutz and that kibbitz relations with Qira, if any, were motivated by instrumentality and not sympathy, as his were. . . . Yohanan differentiates between those who maintained such relations because they had to and those who did it from the heart and liked this way of life.[16]

As a rule, Ben-Yaʿakov told Ofek, relations with the Arab villages were "instrumentally motivated"—organized according to utilitarian considerations, such as offering medical aid or serving Zionist interests. Ben-Yaʿakov further elaborated in a conversation with Arnon Tamir:

> BEN-YAʿAKOV: I was once told to look for a tractor in the hills. I didn't know where those "hills" were. I was told, somewhere. Over there. Where Mansoura is located now. There's a track going up. And there, listen—I climb as though in the desert. An Arab comes towards me. The first Arab I ever saw on horseback. With a club. I remember he had gold teeth, but he was smiling. And I had always thought, an Arab does not smile. From that moment on we became friends. He was the field guard of the [Palestine] Land Development Company.

TAMIR: How did you communicate?

BEN-YAʿAKOV: With our hands and feet, but it worked. Later at the khan was another guard. He spoke French. His name was Abu Razi. He was a wonderful person, an excellent guard. We stood watch together at night, so he taught me about guard duty as well as some words in Arabic. . . .

TAMIR: You didn't speak Arabic. How does one get into these things?

BEN-YAʿAKOV: It's a weird thing about Arabs. I realize I always had this affection for simple people. Everything regarding gypsies and Arabs and the Orient. Perhaps it's in the blood—who knows.[17]

This interaction, mediated by orientalizing tropes, also highlights the emerging social relations. Arabs were often employed to guard Zionist settlements, effectively incorporating them into the colonization that was already engendering the erasure of indigenous lifeways.

Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov trained another Hazorea member, Levi Granot, as a field guard. In a later interview, Granot similarly attributed his enlistment to curiosity and his desire to become acquainted with the area. For him, this meant entering another world—"a world of contacts with Arabs." His words highlight his cultural unfamiliarity; with minimal Hebrew he also had to manage in Arabic:

It began in 1942. Why did I get into this? There was a certain desire for something unknown, a will to familiarize myself with the area. I think quite a lot about that time. I think about what we got into, and I don't know whether we knew what we were getting into. It's a whole world, after all. A world of contacts with Arabs. We lived all day, weeks and months, with those villagers. There were Qira and Abu Srik [Abu Zureiq], the nearby villages. I was there. My work was in the fields. . . . We didn't know Hebrew, and suddenly here I was surrounded by people who spoke yet another foreign language, which I had to pick up and managed to catch only in bits and pieces. And we had to be in contact with another culture, totally foreign. In addition, I constantly had to confront them. This was something I was not really up to, and I made quite a few mistakes. Not only I, others did no better. With all the negative aspects this entailed. Corruption, for example.[18]

Granot's words evoke a mixture of curiosity and calculation. He was aware that conflict was the context, and he was indeed working for the Haganah intelligence service, the Shai. Yet these relations were part of his adventure. No less important is how this passage illuminates the Hebraization process that the settlers underwent themselves in their transformation from immigrants (and often refugees) to settler colonizers in a new national project. This differed significantly from other settler colonial cases wherein no such unifying linguistic or cultural process was necessary. The unification of Jewish settlers through the Hebrew language is one way Zionist settler colonialism constituted the colonizer as much as it did the colonized (Memmi 2003) and is a testament to its capacity to imagine a new national community.

The romantic-orientalist characterization intimated by both Ben-Yaʿakov and Granot was expressed, with a certain superiority more typical of settlers, in Eliʿezer Beʾeri's eulogy for Levi Granot:

It is strange and hard to explain—what attracted us, and not only us, about Arab ways. Perhaps it was the feeling that we, coming from the Diaspora, a people unattached to the earth, intellectuals, encountered people who were not such intellectuals but rather peasants. There was this invisible longing here, of which none of us is free. This attracted Levi [Granot]. How did things work? We were field guards. At sunrise on a summer day the guard would go out to the [Jezreel] Valley on horseback to inspect the roads. He might discover a mine there or an ambush. Perhaps some theft had taken place. You were alone in the valley, with your mare and the sun. Later, at 6 a.m., as the ground got warmer and there was no wind blowing yet and all was quiet, the guard would stop by the tent of one of Qira's Bedouins. He would enter the tent of Abu Dahoud [Abu-Daʾud], and they would have coffee and talk. Argue. Learn. Spend time together.[19]

This passage evinces practical settler security tactics, and it also reveals how their interactions with the Palestinians transmuted their own epistemological orientation toward land territorialization and belonging. Their nonindigeneity is paradoxically made evident by Beʾeri's binary apposition of the Jewish "intellectuals," a "people unattached to the earth," and the Arab peasants.

In 1940, a "committee for Arab action" was formed in Kibbutz Hazorea. The role of the

committee was "to promote neighborly relations," to see to it that kibbutz members actively exchanged their knowledge and shared a common mode of action (Meirhoff 1944, 41). It is likely that this committee was the outcome of a recommendation made by Ezra Danin, head of the Haganah's intelligence unit, to form committees to facilitate relations with each village. Danin hoped such committees would both reduce tensions with the villages and produce intelligence about them (Danin 1987). Ofek concluded that, although there was no explicit evidence confirming that the committee in Hazorea resulted from Danin's recommendation, "some direction and coordination with the Haganah in this matter was indeed involved."[20] He based his assumption on the nature of the committee, which included Levi Granot, who worked to bring the Arabs and Zionist settlers together but also kept a watchful eye and reported to the Shai.

Eliʿezer Beʾeri (1914–1985) was a key figure in Kibbutz Hazorea's Arab activity (*peʿulah ʿaravit*). In 1940–1941 he collaborated with partners in other kibbutzim to create the Arab Department of Hashomer Hatzair, which became the infrastructure for MAPAM (the United Workers' Party, containing leftist factions of the labor Zionist movement; see the introduction) activities among Arabs following the founding of the Israeli state (Beinin 1990, 27). This work intended to establish a rapprochement between Zionists and Arabs—the more the Zionists knew of the Arabs, the better they could establish political ties. Archival evidence is unclear as to whether Beʾeri and others undertook this work in response to a directive from their movement or of their own volition. Unlike the mukhtars, field guards, and security officials, Beʾeri saw his role primarily as political. But his actions were planned and systematic. He toured the area and kept notes from his conversations, and eventually, the information he gathered assisted kibbutz security officials as well.

The only person in the small group of kibbutz settlers specializing in relations with Arab neighbors whose actions, according to the archival records, was unconnected with security, settlement, or politics is Hillel Meirhoff of Hazorea, who helped his neighbors technically as a locksmith and gathered ethnographic material on the villages in the area as well. Meirhoff was also the one person who, in his kibbutz's tenth anniversary book, argued explicitly that there were no real contacts between most of the kibbutz settlers and the Arabs:

> It became clear that in our relations with Abu Zureiq as well, personal contact was most important. The real ties are created in mutual visits and talks. An appeal by an Arab is always to a specific kibbutz member whom he trusts, never to the kibbutz at large. It is lamentable that the number of Arabs willing to receive a Jewish visit and reciprocate is much larger than that of kibbutz members. Even if our small group has managed to acquire a certain position of friendship and trust with some villagers, still most of the kibbutz members have remained outside this relationship, and the lack of interest, time, and familiarity with the language and customs often results in complications and misunderstandings. Here we face the need for Arab action internally, of informing our members, because we are called on to take the initiative. We hold the key that will either open or lock the door that separates the Orient that gazes to the West from the West that has settled in the Orient.
>
> (Meirhoff 1944, 42)[21]

Read one way, these words are a rare statement in which a settler expressed his willingness to be incorporated into the area and not to paternalize those (indigenous) living on the land. His writing offers an objective possibility, in Weberian terms, of how things might have unfolded differently in 1948 and after, outside the frame of settler colonial supremacy. The scarcity of such a state of mind among the settlers is due to the inherent characteristic of Zionism as a settler colonial project that aimed not to incorporate the Zionists into the region but to conquer it and form a distinct social and political structure alien to the local one. Read in another way, the author points to the tensions specific to Hashomer Hatzair and its ideology. Although many Zionists did not care whether they were perceived as colonizers, their ideology compelled settlers of Hashomer Hatzir to be concerned about their relations with their Arab neighbors, which

generated the tensions reflected in the preceding passage.

Meirhoff left the kibbutz in 1949. In a 1988 interview, he described how he regarded the relations with the Abu Zureiq villagers and how his fellow kibbutz settlers perceived his relations with the Arabs. He never imagined that there was a chance that Abu Zureiq would be uprooted, and he saw the villagers as permanent neighbors. What occurred in 1948 was apparently hard on him. In 1967 he traveled to Jenin in search of the uprooted villagers of Abu Zureiq and met the widow of a good friend, who shed tears upon their encounter. She had wanted to return and visit the place, but Meirhoff insisted she not. He had supposed the uprooted villagers of Abu Zureiq would eventually return and wanted to keep their belongings for them. This, of course, has still not happened. Meirhoff exemplifies the tensions of an internationalist-cum-colonialist movement. The extensive discussion of "neighborly relations" between kibbutz settlers and the Palestinian inhabitants of the villages in the area cannot conceal that members of the settlements maintained very limited contacts with their neighbors, and they usually involved a handful of kibbutz settlers for whom relations with Arabs was their occupation, tied inherently to the ultimate occupation of the lands of their neighbors.

TENSIONS ON THE BORDERLANDS: SOCIALITY THROUGH ANTAGONISMS

Although not all relations between the settlers and the Arabs were hostile, it is nonetheless true that settler colonial incursion and disruptions of the social and economic patterns of Palestinian communal life were prominent in determining the form relations would take. Designating land as closed areas for exclusive Jewish use was one of the main tools by which settlers could secure territory. From the moment of settling on the ground, relations between the kibbutzim and the villages hinged on establishing physical borders and excluding the prior inhabitants from using the area. Purchase and presence, as Kimmerling (1983) puts it, did not always suffice to exclude the indigenous (sharecroppers, fallahin, and especially shepherds) from the lands. British courts were one of the tools that kibbutzim used to distance the indigenous population from purchased lands, though court procedures could be drawn out, and in the interim further trespassing could occur. From the settlers' perspective, any postponement of preventing indigenous entry into the cultivated areas meant damage to their income. Claiming territory was thus commonly facilitated by erecting fences. Violent interactions ensued between the kibbutzim and the villages with the arrival of settlers to the area. The vast majority of the interactions during the first phases of settlement consisted of confrontations around effective control of land (trespassing, struggles over land cultivation) and theft (villagers stealing from the kibbutzim). Such daily incidents became more intense during the brief 1929 events, or *habbat al-Buraq*, and later during the Great Arab Revolt, when the indigenous frequently resisted settlement by setting fire to fields and wooded areas.

Land Disputes, Theft, and Fencing: Mishmar ha-Emek and the Villages

The first years of Mishmar ha-Emek, 1926–1936, although I do not devote extensive attention to them, are vital for understanding the relations between the kibbutz and its neighboring villages, especially because kibbutz security and settlement figures were key actors in the settlement of other kibbutzim in the area. When Mishmar ha-Emek members first settled on the ground, they clashed with the local inhabitants over control of land and its use. One such example was recalled by Emanuel Lin twelve years after an incident in 1928:

That day, the cattle of Rubiya Tahta [al-Ghubayya al-Tahta] grazed in a field literally right next to us. When members went down to chase them off a fight ensued. Arabs from the village ran out to join the shepherds. . . . We were only twelve fellows and all ran down to the field, among us Simcha and Nutzek, carrying two registered hunting rifles. In the meantime, the number of Arabs grew and our fellows were doing poorly, more and more of them injured by the Arabs' (oak wood) clubs. Then Simcha and Nutzek fired in the air, to scare them. But this didn't succeed. The Arabs, who were numerous, charged at the shooters, grabbed the guns, shot one of their cows, mounted their horses, and galloped off to the police station to lodge a complaint against us.[22]

At that point the power relations were not yet clear. The confrontation took place out in the fields between the settlers and local shepherds, not with attackers who came from afar. The first solution for the settlers was to configure borders between themselves and the villages by erecting a fence around the kibbutz area:

Our neighbors uprooted the fig trees we had planted next to the wooded area and cut down the fruit trees near the first well. Their cattle and sheep nibbled and broke the line of cypress trees we planted as a border along the width of our first vineyard. This taught us that without a fence we could not protect the fruit tree grove, so as we uprooted the tree stumps, we began to secure iron rods with concrete and stretched barbed wire along the area intended for tree planting.[23]

According to David Hadashi, founder and coordinator of the orchards in Mishmar ha-Emek, the row of cypresses marked the border of the land claimed by the settlers. This sign of spatial presence was then replaced by a fence, yet the fence erected by the settlers did not protect the kibbutz from a more severe attack that took place during the 1929 *habbat al-Buraq*. As Hadashi reported, the assailants were neighbors, most likely from Abu Shusha and al-Ghubayyat:

We made plans to expand tree planting for the next year, to welcome the entire kibbutz group with its children. Our delight did not last. The 1929 riots began. We were required by the government and the settling institutions to evacuate. Our members persisted [in remaining], but in vain. Finally we were forced to leave for a while—after the threshing ground went up in flames and our neighbors attacked us fiercely—and left just a police guard at the site. Only after some days, when we came to water the tree nursery, did we discover the extent of the devastation. We stood still, gazing at the saplings, uprooted and mercilessly murdered. The blood in our veins froze. There were still signs of life among the saplings. They had been lying on the ground for a night or two. Of the 12,655 trees planted, 6,000 were uprooted.

We believed that our neighbors were not the perpetrators, because the woods were to be of use to them too, sanitizing the area, adding life to humans, birds, animals, bringing more humidity and greenery to the site, providing shade, rest, and health for the working man. We did not deny them firewood, all the stumps we cleared before planting—but we were wrong. We were not thinking of our own toil. We were angry at the sight of this murderousness, took pity on the young saplings, raged at the axe blows that fell on this blessed project.

But we quickly came to our senses: we would double and triple, strengthen and expand our woods. And so we did.[24]

For the kibbutz settlers, such an act was irrational violence; for the villagers, it represented resistance to encroachment. Uprooting settlers' fruit trees was one of the main forms of the villages' opposition to settlement and to the elimination of their grazing rights on lands that had been sold to the Zionist land-purchase institutions. This capacity for resistance can be recovered textually in the settlers' documentation. Identifying these moments is not a fetishization of resistance in the face of seemingly insurmountable structural forces but a recognition that the Palestinians were aware of the ramifications of settler colonization and acted on them and were not passive victims incapable of refusal. Rather, they inflected the history of colonization.

Following the attacks associated with the 1929 *habbat al-Buraq*, the Mishmar ha-Emek settlers had to vacate their colony. Upon their return, they reported thefts from the kibbutz grounds and flocks of neighboring villages grazing in their area. Trespassing and theft were addressed through the court system.[25] There were similar trials in the 1930s.[26] In addition to legal suits, the settlers used their own resources to claim the lands, including guard duty, an important tactic from the onset:

When we first settled, the Arabs harassed us heavily. Their flocks swarmed over our wheat fields and caused extensive damages. However, we quickly overcame this trouble. Day and night, guards patrolled the fields on horseback and chased away the flocks. Our aggressive stance was so effective that the Arabs began to respect us. We also suffered thefts in our vegetable garden, cornfields, and grain. Only after several cases of catching the thieves and handing them over to the police did

things begin to improve, and the number of thefts was greatly reduced.[27]

At some point, after the settlers settled in and became acquainted with the neighboring villages, the kibbutz had the indigenous inhabitants sign a commitment to avoid entering the areas in the possession of the kibbutzim. Such agreements occurred in all three kibbutzim under study and were preserved in each case. They were usually signed by the kibbutz as an entity, whereas on the Arab side individuals signed, reflecting the different modes of organization of the two parties.[28]

The settlers' descriptions usually depicted Palestinian aggression without mentioning any cause or context—ignoring the negative effects on the livelihoods of the local Palestinians who formerly relied on grazing their flocks on lands enclosed by the kibbutzim. Reading between the lines of the documents offers some hints of the practices that underlay the clashes. A 1934 confrontation between Mishmar ha-Emek and Abu Shusha reveals the varying perceptions of ownership and rights. The Abu Shusha inhabitants believed they had the right to sow the fields that Mishmar ha-Emek had purchased. The kibbutz's response was to counterattack by plowing along the hilly border:

> This week, Shofar [Diamant] was secretly informed of the plan of the Arabs of Abu Shusha to sow our land across the wadi. . . . On Tuesday, then, Shofar came out on a tractor, escorted by police, and began to plow along the edge of the hill. The Arabs with Shitai [probably meaning al-Shtewi, the mukhtar of Abu Shusha, who maintained ties with Mishmar ha-Emek members] at the lead gathered and ran to interfere, claiming this was "public land" (a threshing ground). The policemen demanded to see a map outlining the borders and signed by them as well, proving to them that the border was placed correctly and that we were entitled to plow there. Nahar [Ibrahim al-Nahar], the village mukhtar, came along and demanded that the plowing be suspended for a week, for he wishes to speak with Yochevedson[29] about possibly exchanging lands with us (we know that such exchange cannot take place when the village lands are jointly owned, and as long as they are not divided among particular families, no transfer can be recorded in the property registers). Shofar agreed and made do with opening a furrow along the border.[30]

Despite the tense relations, only in a retrospective report in 1942 was it hinted that, at first, the Arabs perceived the settlers as "foreigners" and "occupiers." The testimony from an anonymous settler also shows that the kibbutz lands grazed by the flocks of neighboring villagers were not cultivated and that the kibbutz itself did not yet possess flocks of its own:

> As we settled on the ground at Mishmar ha-Emek we were the first Jews in the region. The Arabs regarded us as foreigners, with a mixture of respect and fear. They did occasionally try to test our reactions by stealing and moving border markings about. Furthermore, as long as the land was not completely cultivated and we had no flock of our own, the shepherds brought their herds to graze on our land. . . . In the 1929 events they were ready to annihilate us and even participated in looting raids against us. As the entire kibbutz group arrived [on the ground] and took hold and our children appeared, as our life no longer resembled that of occupiers but was normal and permanent, they began to show more understanding and see us as normal people. Still they would not avoid annihilating us in the 1936 events or abstain from participating in the robbery; however, these two villages [al-Ghubayyat and Abu Shusha]—except for a few individuals—did not partake in the riots.[31] The reason for this is perhaps the lesson they learned in 1929: arrests and punishments. And as is known, Stiwai [distortion of the Arab name Shtewi, Abu Shusha's mukhtar] himself asked the gang leaders not to open fire from the direction of the Arab villages.[32]

This anonymous settler went on to describe how relations improved following these tensions and how the kibbutz provided medical care to the Arabs. According to this account, the nearby villages learned their lesson from the 1929 clashes and the arrests and punishments by the British authorities. The settlers, for their part, treated them with a mixture of assertiveness and consideration and knew not "to overdo it."[33] Mishmar ha-Emek's settlers did not perceive the aggressive aspect of the settlement project itself. Here too, neighborly practices are ambiguous: providing medical services might have been a humane gesture among neighbors but also a strategic component of the relationship.

Levi Granot, who served as a field guard at Kibbutz Hazorea beginning in 1942, offers a more

complex picture of the confrontations over land cultivation. During the Ottoman period, Granot said, the Abu Zureiq inhabitants were confident in their claims to the land and had "different ideas about land property,"[34] because they held the territory jointly in the *mushaʿa* system, which rotated cultivation of the fields among different families. For Granot, as he explained in a conversation with Arnon Tamir, the heart of the problem of theft actually lay in grazing rights, which he deemed a different or incommensurable mode of ownership and land use that could explain the repeated instances of Arab-owned flocks grazing on lands that the settlers considered their exclusive property:

> ARNON TAMIR: What was the theft situation in the fields?
>
> LEVI GRANOT: Looking back, I think there were hardly any cases of theft. There was a problem with the flocks. Theirs was a Bedouin mentality. *Even the law that existed regarding grazing was not a defined property law* [my emphasis] but, rather, adhered to the Ottoman law that, as soon as a field was harvested—and they used to cut the grain with sickles, leaving plenty of straw—the field then became common property. This was very deeply rooted in their thinking. This was one of the clashes between our mentality and theirs. We wished to keep the straw for our own livestock. This was nearly impossible. We did achieve it by forming straw bundles, which is not something they used to do. As soon as we could define the bundled straw as property, it also received legal recognition. However, this did not register with the Arabs. It was the main reason for clashes in the fields. Thefts per se were few.[35]

Granot may have underplayed the extent of theft, because other testimonies suggest that it was more commonplace, especially in view of the economic gap between the settlers and the indigenous villagers and their relations of alienation and hostility. Underlying what Granot termed a "Bedouin mentality" and an incommensurable set of procedures and customs ("Ottoman law") was a different model of cultivation, one he deemed less intensive, in which the straw remaining in the cultivated field was free for anyone's use. Granot was aware that considering straw as private property was a novel practice. He recognized the differences in modes of cultivation and organization of property, and this was repeated in other testimonies of kibbutz settlers about their encounters with neighboring Arab villagers. This transformed the conflict over land and resources into a discourse about cultural differences between the "backward" villages and the "progressive" or "modern" kibbutzim. Ironically, it was the *socialist* kibbutz settlers who sought to impose a form of private property according to which everything that grew on their lands was theirs exclusively.

Some kibbutz members attributed the absence of friendly relations to the ostensible cultural gap between the kibbutzim and the Palestinians rather than to conflict between a settler colonial project and an indigenous population. Here, too, is a mixture of a realistic estimate of limitations of the potential for interaction because the settlers, who were only gradually learning Hebrew, did not speak Arabic at all and of orientalist stereotypes.

> As our kibbutz developed, we managed, by explanatory talks, field guard duties, and trials [court suits against Palestinians], to make the Arabs in our area realize that they must not graze our reaped fields without permission. They have grown accustomed to this entirely, all the way to the Kishon River. At Tel Toura we consider their needs, and because we have no interest in using such fields, we allow them to graze there. Mutual relations are usually good; but our members do not always know how to consider the Arabs' customs of decorum when they meet them at the kibbutz, and at times they are offended by our lack of attention and consideration. As is well known, hospitality is very customary among the Arabs. If you come to an Arab's tent, he would not ask you why you came but invite you for coffee and have you stay as long as possible. When an Arab comes to Mishmar ha-Emek, however, he does not get the kind of attention that would be expected at his home. Still, proper reception entails frequent and lengthy visits; the Arab—except during the fieldwork season—has plenty of time on his hands. And one should know how to receive one's neighbor properly and have him grow accustomed to adapt to our terms when coming to us. Most importantly, to achieve respect and understanding, we should learn Arabic, at least to the extent that is needed for meeting and everyday conversation.[36]

Implicitly, the different style of kibbutz settlers' treatment of guests is presented as an expression of a different time economy. The kibbutz settlers should adapt temporarily to the customs of their neighbors while undergoing an educational process of sorts, because they

anticipated that the Arabs would eventually outgrow their bad habits. But this discussion begins with an act of aggression—the lawsuits initiated by the kibbutzim against their neighbors to compel the Arabs to abandon their traditional use of reaped fields.

Before the 1936 revolt, on occasion the villagers of Abu Shusha joined forces with Mishmar ha-Emek settlers to fight a common enemy—Bedouins. In 1933, a year of severe drought, the latter entered the fields in the area in search of feed for their livestock.

> The great threat posed to our fields and those of our neighbors came from the nomadic Bedouins, bringing their flocks from different areas in search of any vegetation to feed their animals. Our area was filled with stories of the Bedouin tribe ʿArab al-Saghar that controlled the Beit Sheʾan and Jordan Valley areas. . . . When they passed by with their numerous flocks, nothing would hold them back. Thousands of sheep, cattle, and camels and hundreds of people crossed the fields, leaving behind "scorched earth" devoid of crops, total devastation. That same year—of drought—a rumor reached the Arabs of the area that the tribe planned to come by Abu Shusha, and they were terrified. They came to Aryeh [Diamant, of Mishmar ha-Emek] with a[n extraordinary] proposal that together—they and we—would post guards over the fields to protect them from the invaders of the east. They appreciated that we were such excellent guards, so we could certainly come up with ways and ruses to protect our property from the Bedouins. Aryeh checked this out and, upon realizing the rumors were true, came to me and proposed that I and Mitya meet with the Abu Shusha villagers and coordinate joint guard duty.[37]

This incident occurred when, for the Arabs of Abu Shusha, the status of the kibbutz settlers—whether they were permanent invaders or a people seeking to join the land—was still undetermined. To protect themselves, they established relations and collaborated with the kibbutz, an indication of the ambiguities of relations on the frontier of settlement. Such collaboration, motivated by the need for self-defense and neighborly courtesy, was certainly not an endorsement of Zionist settler colonization. Such moments of cooperation also occurred in other colonial contexts, exemplifying the assemblages of power and collaboration within colonialism, rather than simply acceptance of domination.

Great Arab Revolt and Mishmar ha-Emek

Confrontations escalated during the Great Arab Revolt. However, the official conception of Hashomer Hatzair stipulated that it was not the common Arab people behind the riots but, rather, the Arab effendis and reactionary leaders like Grand Mufti al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni. However, several scholars (Swedenburg 2003; Anderson 2013) have noted that it was simultaneously true that the fallahin resisted because their historical lifeways and livelihoods were threatened and that the effendi class had a somewhat different agenda (particularly from September 1937 on, fallahin often acted against the interests of the elites). Nevertheless, Hashomer Hatzair's perspective disavowed the complexities of a stratified Palestinian society, while hewing to the colonial appropriation of indigenous resources, thereby refusing to acknowledge the destruction of indigenous modes of life and rights that fueled resistance.

Around Mishmar ha-Emek, the main form of fallahin resistance was burning trees that had been planted in the area. One settler described a fire in a journal that he kept during the first six months of the revolt:

> Forty people quickly put out the fire. However, it managed to destroy nearly 1,000 trees. A thousand live, green trees, toil of our own hands. We sat by this devastation and wondered, what for? . . . We decided to lay ambush and wait for Arabs who we feared would return and try setting fire yet again. Sixty men remained, armed. We hid among the pines and waited. We sat there for about an hour. Afterward a guard patrol arrived, watching over the entire wadi and woods, and we went back home.[38]

In April 1936, in the first phase of the revolt, Aryeh Diamant drew on his preexisting relations with the local community and traveled to Abu Shusha to ensure that its inhabitants would not participate in the general conflagration. The kibbutz newsletter reported that Diamant differentiated between the Arab neighbors of the kibbutz and "external incitement."

> Our neighbors welcomed Shofar warmly. They conversed about the general situation in the country, about the press, false

rumors that incited horrific actions. Our neighbors' elder announced that they felt very distant from the recent events; they were good neighbors, busy with their seasonal farmwork, and had no mind for adventures. They did promise—in any event of attack by evil external forces—and reassured our mukhtar that Abu Shusha would look out for him and his family. Shofar thanked them for this hearty promise and demanded of them to calm things down. He also hinted clearly that we were ready to defend ourselves in all circumstances. He explained that the incitement results mainly from unfamiliarity with the situation and the dissemination of false rumors, and he invited them to "listen to the Voice of Jerusalem," for the radio is a credible source of information and the only one to be believed. That very noon, two of our neighbors who were literate and could understand the radio's urban language listened very carefully to the "talking crate" and exited, speaking to each other. Here no lies could be told, everything we heard is truth itself, for inside that crate sit three—an Englishman, an Arab, and a Jew—who keep each

other from telling lies. Shofar also visited the fields of Abu Shusha. He spoke with the reapers and took friendly leave.[39]

In this phase of the revolt, Mishmar ha-Emek settlers saw themselves as opponents of terrorist action on the Jewish side. They did not use the term common in the labor settlement movement, *restraint* (*havlaga*), but they opposed the violent reprisals they read about in the press. The weekly kibbutz newsletter reported:

Defending our lives and our property are presently our main concern and are the pulse of our present reality. . . . However, certain assumptions and reactions are heard here and there among us that are not our own. An understandable pain erupts in the heart of any of us in these days of horror for the Jewish community, when victims are falling without reason or guilt—and at times such pain exceeds reason and takes on forms that are foreign, not in keeping with our own spirit. Some opinions are heard that contain the seeds of blind hatred toward the neighboring people who have now fallen prey to somber forces. . . . Pain blocks one's thinking and one ceases to seek the cause for our present condition and enters an ominous dead end for those who remain distant from the mob lust that has overtaken Tel Aviv more than once recently, calling the masses "to charge Jaffa and take revenge." None of us would share such views even at times of great tension and restrained pain. We are all far from this. But one must be clear: even in times of emergency we must maintain our reason and form of response, defend and build while

remaining loyal to our own way and its possible fulfillment.[40]

The attempted attenuation of settler colonial violence reflects the tensions at the heart of the socialist-Zionist settlers. They could seek peaceful settlement, which for them necessitated encroachment and displacement, and *also* denounce the more confrontational violence of the organized Zionist establishment. They believed that they could be the vanguard of a settler colonial project, a violent process by definition, while disavowing certain forms of brutality. Because they opposed the more blatant violence deployed by elite elements of the militia of the labor settlement movement (the Haganah Field Companies, or POSH, established in 1937) and the outright terrorism of the right-wing Revisionist Zionists, they believed that neighborly relations could be maintained.

During the first months of the revolt, between April and October of 1936, the kibbutz settlers were forced to acknowledge that the nearby villagers were involved in hostilities against them. Kibbutz spokespersons demanded military aid from the British and joined the call for harsh treatment of the rebels, including the neighboring villages. The British were initially indifferent or hostile to settlers' pleas for assistance but subsequently became more receptive.[41] The Arab revolt intensified Zionist collaboration with the British imperial field of power. Collaboration operated on several fronts, including recruitment of Jewish Supernumerary Police and Special Night Squads to join British forces to suppress the revolt.

One settler's journal described an argument with a British policeman over the protection of Mishmar ha-Emek: "[Mitek] asked if the laws of civilization or of the desert were at stake here. The police officer accused Mitek of exaggerating, although he could understand his resentment from Mishmar ha-Emek's point of view."[42] The kibbutz was frustrated with the response of the British authorities and subsequently sent volunteers to augment the police force. Shortly afterward, a British military unit was stationed in the kibbutz itself. It was the British who discovered that villagers of Abu Shusha and other villages nearby were involved in the attacks against the kibbutz. The Arabs were then forced to pay fines and compensation every time a fire broke out or an incident took place in which Abu Shusha or other villages in the area were

implicated.

The British deployed harsh punitive practices such as the demolition of several homes in Abu Shusha whose owners were accused of assaulting the kibbutz. The British commander carried out the demolitions in the presence of Diamant, an expression of the close cooperation of the kibbutz with the British forces that had developed by that time and an example of the practice of summary collective punishment.[43]

The same member of Mishmar ha-Emek cited the report of another kibbutz member who was present during a punitive action alongside the British forces:

> We arrived at the village. Shofar [Aryeh Diamant] remained in the car and we, along with Smites [the British commander] entered the house from which shots were fired last night. There was no one in the yard. The Arab's wife was near the house. Smites informed her that within an hour the army would come to demolish the house and that she must remove family belongings during that time. From there we drove to the last house of the village. Here we found the entire family. Smites told the owner that this house would be demolished and must be evacuated. The Arab began to plead and swear he had done nothing wrong. Finally Shofar told him that he would try to see to it that the house would not be demolished. We went back to the previous house and then the army came, some of the battalion stationed there and some from Haifa, expert in house demolition. Smites and Shofar immediately led them to the first house. The army summoned the entire village and ordered people to remove all belongings from the house. The Arabs took out everything and the soldiers placed the dynamite charges. After the house was emptied, everyone moved back and some moments later a strong blast was heard and the house went up in smoke. When the dust cloud disappeared, half the house was destroyed. Later the remaining part was destroyed, and with a third blast, part of the yard wall as well. Thus the work was done.[44]

Although the mukhtar of Mishmar ha-Emek accompanied the British forces and led them to the house designated for demolition, he nonetheless appeared as a mediator who intervened in a home demolition. Thus, Hashomer Hatzair's conceptual dual dichotomy was retained—between the local Arabs and external inciters, and also between the Jewish mukhtar who nurtured his relations simultaneously with his Arab neighbors and with the British army. However, in practice, the British Zionist repression of the Arab revolt devastated Palestinian Arab society physically and economically, punishing the indigenous population for resisting Zionist colonization and British imperial rule, whereas the Zionist colony was strengthened and legitimated.

Setting fire to the wooded area and the fields was the main mode of Palestinian resistance against the kibbutzim in the region during the revolt. These were not actions carried out by individuals against individuals for their own benefit but, rather, collective *political* acts intended to damage the entire colony.[45] The fields and forests were concrete symbols of the land component in the struggle between the indigenous population and the settlers. For the settlers, land occupation via afforestation marked ownership. At times the trees served as "an advance-guard of the settlement process" (Algazi 2010, 246). According to Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov of Hazorea, unlike the attempts to set fire to crops and fields, shots fired at the kibbutz from the neighboring villages were not real assaults but instead a show of power expressing hostility ("fantasia," as he put it).[46]

Palestinians were collectively punished for arson and compelled to pay compensation to the damaged kibbutzim as well as fines, some in the form of financing the presence of a British police unit (the *ghafirs*). In documented cases from Bilad al-Ruha, traces of evidence of participation in the revolt led to Palestinian villages. But the inhabitants refused to collaborate and provide information about the identity of the suspects, a form of collective resistance. The Hebrew daily of the Histadrut, *Davar*, reported that the villagers of al-Kafrayn refused to give the authorities information about the identity of the arsonists, and the village elders were prosecuted:

> Yesterday at the Yagur police station a second trial of the Mishmar ha-Emek forest arsonists took place. Elders of Kufreyn [al-

Kafrayn] were prosecuted, because the arsonists' tracks led to that village according to both police trackers and dogs. Haifa deputy governor P. Gordon sat in judgment. The police dogs followed the tracks in both cases and, in two different directions inside the same village, entered two houses empty of their dwellers. The village would not disclose where the people vanished who had apparently been involved in the deed. Officer Cohen testified about the search and investigation and accused the village of arson. The judge fined the village, according to the collective punishment law, the sum of 200 Palestine pounds (a huge sum for impoverished fallahin) and said that "like me, you too are sorry for these deeds done to Mishmar ha-Emek—unforgivable crimes. I emphasize this especially regarding Mishmar ha-Emek, which I have heard has done so much for its neighbors. And if indeed the police did not manage to catch the culprits, it has been proved that the criminals did come from this village." They should be glad to be fined only 200 Palestine pounds, for that is the cost of damages done, without an added fine that the judge is wont to prescribe in such cases. He was considerate of the village being poor and having to finance the presence of six policemen for three months. He notified the village that he would take any measures to ensure payment of this sum.[47]

Collective punishment was indiscriminate and attributed guilt to all who participated in resistance (and some who did not). Nonetheless, indigenous resistance was typically described as individual, not collective.

In May 1936 the villagers of al-Kafrayn (670 according to the kibbutz) all left the village, likely out of fear of being accused of setting fire to Mishmar ha-Emek's fields on May 11 or of attacking the kibbutz:

They explain abandoning their village by saying they cannot bear the collective punishment they had received. Shofar [Aryeh Diamant] thinks they will be back in a matter of days, although this is not certain. The act has great demonstrative value and with successful press propaganda they might be turned into "martyrs." The Arab officer on site was very agitated upon hearing the Arabs had left the village. He told Shofar that it was our fault, and Feibush asked him if he thought that perhaps it was our fault that they set fire to the trees. And he had no answer.[48]

On May 12 the Arabic newspaper *Filastin* reported on the abandonment of al-Kafrayn under the headline "Villagers Expelled from Their Village: Jewish Policeman Takes Revenge on Arabs." According to a settler's account,

Representatives of the village al-Kafrayn visited the newspaper's head office and reported that the government has fined the village 150 Palestine pounds and stationed policemen on the site. All 720 villagers had to leave the village after informing the government that they were not responsible for the arson. They also said that police officer Cohen was very aggressive and beat the villagers during his investigation. They direct the security official's attention to this treatment by the Jewish officer.[49]

The abandonment of al-Kafrayn and the collective punishments imposed on the neighboring villages of Abu Shusha and Joʾara reveal the seriousness of the confrontations between Mishmar ha-Emek and the neighboring villagers, amounting to more than just between the settlers and organized, armed Palestinian bands.

EXCHANGE OF GOODS AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE EARLY YEARS OF COLONIZATION

Another paradigm of relations emerged through the exchange of knowledge and goods, though relations were unequal. Despite conflicts around land control in the first phases of settlement, the settlers depended on the indigenous population and their resources until they established an independent economy. This included indigenous knowledge about the nature, ecology, and cultivation capacities of the area. However, these dependencies were temporary and eventually eliminated.

Technologies of Settler Colonial Hierarchy: Mishmar ha-Emek

Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri recalled that the settlers of Mishmar ha-Emek, relatively distant from other colonies, first purchased basic commodities from the neighboring Arab villages. The local inhabitants shared spring water with the settlers: "We would bring water from the spring in the

wadi, for our own consumption and for our livestock. Close to the spring the Arab women would wash clothes; flocks of sheep and work animals came to the spring from the village. On no occasion did they refuse us water. It was obvious to them that we and our livestock need water and may get it at the spring." Beʾeri testified that the kibbutz settlers initially learned from the villagers about their area's conditions, rainy seasons, and times of sowing grains winter and summer. Over time, the points of contact between the kibbutz members and their neighbors increased: "In a certain field we would plow and sow—and in the neighboring fields, the Arabs plowed and sowed. When we took breaks together we tried to ask them about field crops and get their advice, but these talks were still rather lame."[50] The settlers also bought products from the Palestinian villages in the area, reflecting the general pattern of dependency of earlier *moshavot* (colonies) and the Yishuv in general until 1948 on Arabs' agricultural expertise, labor, produce, and more (see, e.g., Mandel 1976). The turning point came when the entire kibbutz group came from Afula to Mishmar ha-Emek in late 1929, and the dependence of the colony on the neighboring villages was greatly reduced.

At first the settlers wished to be educated in local cultivation traditions by the indigenous peasants. Subsequently, they benefited from Zionist institutional budgets and heavy equipment. This secured their superior position through a different, capital-intensive agricultural model, one based not only on the sowing cycle but also on artificial fertilization, pesticides, and farm machinery. "In our first year on the ground," Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri recounted,

> our grain growers (after learning their vocation at Mikve Yisrael [agricultural school] said they must ask the Arabs what they grow, what succeeds, what they sow, and when. And indeed during our first years we learned a lot from them. But later things reversed. We received funds, purchased equipment, learned and experienced more, and began to use methods that grew more sophisticated each year: in preparing the soil, sowing cycle, fertilizing the ground. And the earth yielded. We had good crops. Then the Arabs, whose eyes were always open to see how we were faring, came to learn from us. They were surprised and curious to know how we did it. For generations they had sown after the rains, whereas we did it before the first rains. This resulted in larger crops than theirs. Apparently their fruit tree groves and vegetables suffered greatly from pests, and they also asked us to teach them how to prepare early tomato beds. I also guided them in everything that concerned vegetable growing.
>
> Thus our relations tightened.[51]

Beʾeri added that the kibbutz members provided the Arab villagers with seeds and advised them on dealing with pests and disease.[52] Ostensibly, dependence shifted to interdependence, which ultimately transformed into a hierarchy.

Kibbutz Hazorea and the Neighboring Villages—Qira, Abu Zureiq, and al-Ghubayyat

Hazorea's relations with its neighbors were complex because the kibbutz encroached on an existing Arab village, Qira, which was not fully depopulated of all its cultivators, and another Palestinian village, Abu Zureiq, over whose lands Hazorea settlers could not make claims. Their proximity to Qira—the kibbutz was situated a few dozen meters from the heart of the village, the threshing ground—did not turn the villagers into veritable neighbors in the eyes of most of Hazorea's settlers. In their first years the settlers cultivated small plots interspersed among the plots of Qira villagers, and they could not reach their lands without crossing the Qira plots and encountering the people. But as far as the kibbutz settlers were concerned—there is no controversy about this in the documentary record—Qira inhabitants were expected to leave. So their presence was perceived as temporary, and attempts were made to force them out. Ideology played a secondary role in shaping the kibbutz settlers' perception and treatment of their neighbors. More important was the relative location of the settlers and the indigenous population on the frontier of settlement, where indigenous replacement and the gradual destruction of their livelihoods by occupying and appropriating their lands structured relations. The nature of this

relationship was determined by the logic of the settler colonial process and the constraints on land acquisition. One of the settlers pointed out that the Zionist settlement institutions were responsible for deciding that the kibbutz would be founded directly on the lands of an Arab village, perhaps for security considerations or to create a settlement continuum:

> A settlement-security committee arriving in spring 1936 to set the location for the new settlements found that for security and planning reasons there is only a single practical possibility—namely, in the area between the Haifa–Megiddo road and the hills that lie at a small distance from it. But this area had not sufficient room for two localities and was inhabited with houses, fruit tree groves, and the threshing ground of Qira-Qamun village, the sharecroppers that cultivated the lands of Yokneʿam. Clearly, these lands would not be vacated before the village itself. For Hazorea the crucial problem was that even if the construction plan was ready, the kibbutz had no way to act on it because the land had not been vacated. (Shatil 1977, 70)

Hillel Meirhoff explicitly expressed this approach to the neighbors in an article he wrote on the occasion of Hazorea's tenth anniversary. "The fact that Qira villagers would one day leave the place will necessarily account for much of the relations with them. This was the reason for our early and total reservation and decision not to buy from or sell them anything" (Meirhoff 1944, 41). The kibbutz distinguished between the status of the Qira villagers as sharecroppers (*arisim*) and the Abu Zureiq villagers as fallahin:

> In all the years since we settled on the ground, we tried to nurture our relations with the neighboring Arab village of Abu Zureiq rather than with the villagers of Qira. The Qira people were sharecroppers who would, sooner or later, leave the place and settle elsewhere near Mount Tabor, because the lands they were still holding had long since been sold to the JNF. But Abu Zureiq was populated by peasants whose homes and lands were fully owned by them. Indeed, this was no centuries-old ancient village but, rather, an area where the Turkish authorities had let people of Circassian origin settle. However, the decades of cultivating that land made them Arab fallahin per se. (Benari 1986, 187–188)

Levi Granot similarly confirmed,

> The treatment of Abu Sreik [*sic*] was different. . . . We regarded Abu Sreik with special favor, much more than the villages that came later—Abu Shusha, Mansi, Rubayya [al-Ghubayyat], and Lital Awadin [Lydd al-ʿAwadin] in the valley. With the closer neighbors in Abu Sreik, there was obvious interest in regular relations, even if there was wariness on their part as well, whereas the farther villagers did not express such need or will.[53]

A relative normalization in the relations between the kibbutzim of the area and their neighbors prevailed in the 1940s, but only after a period of calming down following the Great Arab Revolt. The pacification of the villages, which entailed no small amount of destruction, and the consolidation of the colonies impelled changes in their relations. After the wave of evictions from Qira between 1938 and 1940 and because of the refusal of the remaining villagers to evacuate, Hazorea's relations with Qira stabilized to some degree and some contacts were established. Relations between Hazorea and Abu Zureiq also began to form in the 1940s.[54]

Meirhoff, who worked in Hazorea's metal shop, played a key role in this. He recalled, "Before and during the events there were no relations to speak of. Later the villagers began to have their plows, drills, and carts repaired in our workshops. We distributed *besok* [double blade] plows to teach them the best way to plow."[55] Meirhoff modified plows to suit the needs of the Palestinian farmers.[56] He wrote the recommendations to work camp directors that were needed by Abu Zureiq villagers who required "Jewish certificates" of good behavior to be employed. The mukhtar of Hazorea also wrote such a letter.[57]

Most of the settlers of Hazorea attributed changes and farming improvements in the Arab villages only to the kibbutzim and to themselves. Meirhoff, who was more familiar with the area than others, had a different view. "I don't know how Hazorea affected the farming [in Abu Zureiq]. However, the escalated development of Haifa and the ties of Abu Zureiq to Haifa are the effective element; the villagers purchased their equipment in Haifa."[58] These few words remind us that even if for the settlers this area was a frontier, it was near one of the most important urban, manufacturing, and transport centers of the country.

A recurring component in the relationships between the kibbutzim and their Arab neighbors was the provision of medical services. Kibbutz settlers reported that villagers sought out the nurse in Mishmar ha-Emek or the doctor in Hazorea and the political importance this had.[59]

The villagers also rented or borrowed tools, such as field rollers or water pumps, and bought seeds and plants from Hazorea (Meirhoff 1944, 42). The villagers had their work tools repaired at the kibbutz and sometimes bought them from the kibbutz workshops. But when the kibbutz suffered a shortage of materials, it stopped selling to them. The kibbutz settlers in turn bought commodities from village stores. But sometimes Hazorea refused to sell their neighbors agricultural equipment and supplies. Be'eri reported that in May 1941 the mukhtar ʿAbd al-Khaliq wished to buy Moroccan wheat for sowing and was refused, "for there was not enough."[60] There were also other considerations. Meirhoff reported, "In the summer, Khalil al-Jalili wished to purchase strawberry plants and was refused again, because our gardeners feared the competition." A request to inseminate a cow was not met, "for fear of contagious cattle diseases."[61]

It is difficult to assess the balance of trade and other exchanges between Kibbutz Hazorea and the Arab villages solely on the basis of documentation from the kibbutz archive. But occasionally they involved some complexity. Meirhoff reported that Hazorea purchased 150 tons of manure from Abu Zureiq—a vital factor in maintaining soil fertility and one of the most important items in short supply in Palestinian agriculture (Kamen 1991, 197). The British authorities conditioned loans to the kibbutz for buying the manure on the Palestinian village providing written confirmation that it did not need it—that is, that it was indeed surplus rather than sold under duress. The village provided the required document. According to Meirhoff, "On this occasion [there was] a fundamental argument with Khalil al-Jalili on mutual help. I was willing . . . to know their plans regarding requests, in order to enter them into our economic program."[62]

CHILDREN'S ENCOUNTERS AND WEDDINGS

Violence was never the only form of social relations. Relations often centered on family life, celebration, and children's play.

Mishmar ha-Emek and the Villages

The most important testimonies of social encounters between Mishmar ha-Emek and the neighboring villages are related to children. After 1936, David Shafir, "Rahamim," who came from Baghdad and taught Arabic at Mishmar ha-Emek's high school, organized meetings of children from the kibbutz and neighboring villages. Rahamim initiated the meetings after consulting Mordechai Ben-Tov, a kibbutz member and a key figure in Hashomer Hatzair and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi and the author of Hashomer Hatzair's program for a binational state. One of those children recalled, over fifty years later, how the kibbutz children would meet one day a week and play with the Arab children in the kibbutz playground. When a blue flag was raised all the children would run over and play. "These encounters produced familiarity as well as the fights and squabbles habitual among children, especially since language was still a barrier. Rahamim would translate, mediate between the opposing sides and restore peace."[63]

Elisha Lin, too, recalled these encounters of children supervised by their teacher, Rahamim.

When the flag waved over the dining hall of the school, many of the neighboring Arab children would see it and arrive. We played dodge ball, soft ball, paddle ball. . . . With us were Rahamim and Poli, and Arab teachers joined as well. We deepened the friendly ties that began out in the fields, when we worked, or near the fence beyond well no. 1, bordering with the

neighboring village Rubayya Taht [al-Ghubayya al-Tahta]. A square fence separated our area from the villages. . . . The children of Rubayya were those of sharecroppers who cultivated the lands belonging to Yusef Bek. We traded with them: they gave us "*fahot*"—bird traps—and we gave them balls or old shoes. . . . Despite this friendship, the Arab children often stole things. I think they envied us. Despite our life of poverty and want at little Mishmar ha-Emek, we had it better than they did, both in our everyday life and in our crops—for example, in the way we coped with rodents out in the fields, and so on.[64]

In addition to these organized encounters, Lin described how spontaneous contacts—and with them material exchanges—developed in the area where the kibbutz yard bordered on al-Ghubayya al-Tahta. Whereas fellow Mishmar ha-Emek settler Eitan Ben-Or depicted the fights as children at play, Lin suggested they were at least in part due to the gaps in status between the Jewish and Arab children that became apparent in the meetings.

It is hard to judge the depth of these relationships from these testimonies. In Mishmar ha-Emek there was frequent talk of the relations between Amnon Lin and a Palestinian child, Salim of Abu Shusha. According to Beʾeri, despite a "severe decline in relations" they were not completely cut off even after 1936.[65] These interactions occurred during World War II, a unique period. They were an expression of Hashomer Hatzair's vision of internationalism and its stepped-up Arab activism. Other currents of the Zionist movement, even kibbutzim of other movements, had no interest in relations of this sort.

Ben-Or (2009, 62–63) described Mishmar ha-Emek children attending weddings at Abu Shusha accompanied by Aryeh Diamant before the Great Arab Revolt, indicating both congenial bonds and the kibbutz settlers' feelings of superiority.

As children we would attend Abu Shusha weddings with Aryeh Diamant. After the cups of bitter coffee, sweet coffee was served, cigarettes handed out, cold drinks, and finally a bowl filled with rice and roasted lamb chunks. All present would take a pinch of rice and throw a sort of rice ball into their mouths and here and there grab a chunk of meat. Aryeh, respected by his hosts, would receive a knife, spoon, and fork. When he saw how dirty the utensils were, he would take the spoon and rub it against the tip of his nose. We thought this was impolite behavior, but his hosts took the hint and brought Khawaja Salim [the Palestinians' name for Diamant] washed, clean eating utensils. We watched the men's *dabka* (folk dance), raising billows of dust, and even tried dancing ourselves. Several women of the kibbutz made friends with women of Abu Shusha. Ties were formed mostly during visits to the kibbutz clinic, when the women brought their ill children for care. The Arab women danced, separately of course, and welcomed the kibbutz women who joined their dance. The women also ate separately.[66]

In a rare account by a Palestinian, Mahmud ʿAbd al-Latif (b. 1930), a refugee from al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa, spoke of trade ties and invitations to weddings:

Our relations with the Jews were good. My father traded in cattle and sheep. He would buy calves from Arabs and sell them to Jews at Mishmar ha-Emek, Afula, and al-Wurkani. From the Jews we bought grapes and apples and traded in them. We would buy on loan because there was no money. Relations were friendly. They came to our festivities. At Eid al-Adha [Feast of Sacrifice] and during Ramadan their mukhtars would visit us. The mukhtar of Mishmar ha-Emek was Salim. My father had very good relations with the Jews' mukhtar and also knew their women. (al-Ghubari 2010, 40–43)

These accounts reveal the ambivalences and ambiguities that constitute settler-native relations. For the Palestinian al-Latif (we cannot tell from a single account how many others shared his experiences and views), these relations were a combination of economically profitable exchanges and good neighborly relations. For the members of Mishmar ha-Emek, they were a combination of fun, curiosity (with paternalistic orientalizing and civilizational superiority), economic utility, pacification of potential enemies, and ultimately strategic utility in time of war. Hashomer Hatzair was unique among the Zionist settlement movements in pursuing such relationships systematically from 1940 on as part of its vision of internationalism. But the intensification of the struggle for Palestine after World War II, the UN Partition Plan, and the 1948 war destroyed any possibility of implementing that vision, which was impractical to begin with. Nonetheless, despite the settler colonial context for these relationships, they possibly reflect moments of cohabitation.

Relations between Hazorea and Qira

Most of the relations with Qira in the 1940s were mediated by Eliʿezer Beʾeri, who was building ties with the Arabs in the entire area on behalf of Hashomer Hatzair. He visited Qira repeatedly to settle conflicts related to trespassing, grazing rights, entry of livestock into kibbutz lands, and so on. Beʾeri proposed that, like other kibbutzim, Hazorea should erect a *madafe*, a hospitality tent for Arabs to supervise their entrance to the kibbutz grounds so they would not wander around unchecked.[67]

Beʾeri noted his impressions of an organized meeting between the toddler group of Hazorea and some of the Qira children on October 16, 1940:

> Previously, our children had always been afraid, and in this meeting, too, mutual caution was felt. Both sides conducted themselves nicely. At the end, our children showed some fear, and the Arab children immediately took advantage of it and imitated dogs barking, frightening our children. The son of ʿAli Khiyam, Freij, about four years old, stood out among them, a clever, nice, and nimble child. ʿAli himself approached and asked, "Are these kibbutz children?" "Yes." "Don't they have fathers?" I proved to him that every child knew the name of his father.[68]

Arnon Tamir interviewed his wife, Elisheva, who worked at the kibbutz children's house. She offered an exceptional testimony about a chance meeting with Qira villagers as she walked with the children outside the kibbutz near the spring on the outskirts of the village:

> ARNON TAMIR: Were you walking with the children in the wadi?
> ELISHEVA TAMIR: Certainly. Those were the years of World War II, and there was no fear of the Arabs. We often met Arab women of Qira near where the large bridge is today. They did their laundry there. They knew my name, had seen me with the children, and never understood that these were not my own children. We taught [them] to knit. At times I would go with the children up to the stone wall of Abu-Sreik [*sic*]. That is where [Qira villagers] would plow; there were vines and olive trees there. We met them. There was no fear. Not in daytime anyway.[69]

Thus, in many quotidian activities, relations were relatively friendly. At the same time, the consolidation of Zionist settler colonialism was proceeding apace. Hence, these were not neutral encounters between two equal parties seeking to live interdependently but, whether consciously or not on the part of the kibbutz, efforts to prevent violence even as the Zionist project and the kibbutzim continued dispossessing the villagers.

EIN HASHOFET AND THE SURROUNDING VILLAGES

The archive of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet contains little documentation of its relations with neighboring villages. There is only an Arabic contract for renting kibbutz work tools to a villager of al-Kafrayn.[70] In an interview conducted decades later, one of al-Kafrayn's inhabitants recounted,

> We used to steal from the lands of al-Joʾara and Yokneʿam. The Jews didn't say a word. In 1938 the Q. family sold its land to Jews; that is how the Jews built their settlement. The villagers of Umm al-Dafuf, al-Rihaniyya, and al-Daliya sold their lands too. But the people of al-Kafrayn did not. Some people maintained ties with the Jews, like my maternal uncle who was a butcher and slaughtered beef for the Jews. Beyond work relations we had nothing going on between us. At the same time, we didn't regard them as enemies or settlers. They didn't bother us. (al-Ghubari 2007, 18)

Beyond this, because of the lack of archival material, it is difficult to conclude much about the nature of relations. This brief snippet encompasses the entire range of relations surveyed in this chapter: apprehending the Other to garner descriptive data to be used in land conquest, responding to Palestinian indigenous resistance and breaches in boundaries, exchanging knowledge and goods, and socializing around children and celebrations. That "we didn't regard them as enemies or settlers" would, of course, prove to be only a temporary state of affairs.

Chapter 4

FROM PURCHASE TO WARFARE: RELATIONS BETWEEN KIBBUTZ SETTLERS AND NEIGHBORING PALESTINIANS DURING THE 1948 EVENTS

At the lookout post—the sound of the yelping dogs in deserted al-Kafrayn. Its houses are largely ruined, and only the unending yelping of dogs attests to their having had owners. In the [Jezreel] Valley to the east, at sunrise, the morning was dreamlike—a silver sea, with islands overhead, their peaks reaching the sky—Moreh Hill, Mount Tabor, and among the hills of Umm al-Fahm, the peaks of Mount Gilboa are revealed as morning clouds hover above. The colors keep changing, the sea lifts and slowly the golden fields of the valley appear in all their beauty, and the sunny globe emerges behind the peak of Mount Tabor.

Our country is beautiful, and we are fortunate to protect it.[1]

SO WROTE SHMUEL BEN-TZVI, A SETTLER OF KIBBUTZ EIN Hashofet, on May 20, 1948, reflecting on the recently destroyed neighboring Palestinian village of al-Kafrayn, which was cleared as the indigenous fled in fear of the Zionist forces, smoke billowing as they took flight. Ben-Tzvi's brief reference to the "deserted" village is, descriptively, hellish. In contrast, his vision of the valley at sunrise is paradisial. The Palestinian space is, for the settler, wretched; the Jewish one, revered. The depiction of space is presented as zero sum: to "protect" the Jewish country is to see the disappearance of its indigenous inhabitants. But their absence is palpable—the indigenous vanish from space yet become a presence in settlers' consciousness. The exclusive beauty of the country marked Jewish cannot be conceived without its onetime owners.

The socialist kibbutz settlers were conscious that, alongside their collective gain, a loss had ensued. To examine that awareness and their meaning making, not only regarding the military operations but also the ultimate fate of the neighboring villages, I examine how relations between the kibbutzim and Palestinian villages were conceived, documented, and represented during the 1948 war and the discussions held among the kibbutz settlers about the neighboring villages at the time. The kibbutz settlers' discourse can be categorized under three themes: military and security matters, social (how kibbutz settlers established, maintained, and broke relations with Arabs), and phenomenological (representations of lived experiences, interactions, and reflections).

The intelligence dimension of kibbutz relations with local Arab villages intensified in the early 1940s with the Haganah's preparation of the Village Files, which lay the groundwork for such relations becoming assets of strategic power in the 1948 war. This is a salient characteristic of Zionist settler colonialism. Only in rare cases did settlers deal with the catastrophe that befell their neighbors. Only when they were not directly involved in strategic decisions to displace their neighbors did they consider attending to their plight. Moreover, the spatial logic constitutive of the Zionist project, which continues today, promoted colonies separated from the indigenous population.

I do not provide a comprehensive history of the military confrontations or describe the military maneuvers of the Palmach, Haganah, the Arab Liberation Army (ALA), led by Fawzi al-

Qawuqji, or other forces in the area.[2] However, the outbreak of fighting between Zionist and Arab forces turned the Jezreel Valley into a battleground, most famously the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek. In this context, with large Haganah and Palmach reinforcements, the kibbutzim participated in conquering and expelling their neighbors. Therefore, the military operations (including those outside formally organized units) related to escape from, expulsion from, and demolition of villages and the fate of their inhabitants' property are relevant.

The organizing principle of Zionist settler colonization—replacing the indigenous population with settlers through the purchase and occupation of land—enabled elements of local semisovereignty *alongside* the organized national-level Zionist efforts before the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in 1948. As we have seen, purchasing the land did not lead to the immediate evacuation of the indigenous Palestinians. The new conditions in 1948 created the opportunity for the settlers to completely evacuate the indigenous population.

The most extensive documentation of the events of 1948 is in the archive of Kibbutz Hazorea. This is not surprising, because, as chapter 3 demonstrates, it cultivated closer relations with the nearby Palestinian villages than the other two kibbutzim. Consequently, Hazorea settlers spoke and wrote more extensively about the 1948 war and its consequences. I also draw on correspondence from the Zionist political and military institutions and key individuals such as Yosef Weitz of the Jewish National Fund (JNF).

KIBBUTZ HAZOREA AND THE NEIGHBORING PALESTINIAN VILLAGES QIRA AND ABU ZUREIQ

Michael Hermoni, the regional security commander and a settler of Hazorea, kept two journals during the war. One was personal, a summary of general events and an abridged log of action. The second, dictated to another Hazorea member, Peretz Ronen, covers February 1 to March 26, 1948, and is more detailed, listing the dates and times of actions.

Hermoni did not belong to the small circle of kibbutz settlers who nurtured ties with Arab inhabitants in the area. His notes and the accounts of others—both those involved with the Arabs and those who wrote journals during the war—enable us to understand the interaction between the military and security aspects of Hermoni's actions, on the one hand, and the social aspects manifested in the actions of those who kept ties with the Arabs and the views of kibbutz settlers who were neither security agents nor Arab relations specialists, on the other.

Hermoni noted developments preceding UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947, calling for the partition of Palestine. "Early 1947: secret hiding places for weapons, removing all arms from the kibbutz, training, especially of commanders and youth. Squad commander course, demolition crews, regional commander. Fencing and fortification works. Establishing the Palmach 1st battalion headquarters ('Seeds Association') in the kibbutz."[3] There were also rising tensions and preparations for war in other kibbutzim. Ein Hashofet, Dalia, and Ramat Ha-Shofet cut off their economic ties with al-Kafrayn in March 1947.[4]

Hermoni reported that, after the UN partition resolution, the kibbutz began to prepare for clashes in the area: "The UN resolution on the partition of Palestine. The kibbutz celebrates. The entire youth group transforms into a local Palmach unit. Reinforced guard duty. Neighbor villages in ferment. Breaking all ties with Abu Zureiq village."[5] Hermoni also noted intelligence data coming from Arabs, including one entry on information from an Arab with whom Eliʿezer Beʾeri had cultivated ties in previous years. Despite the official break off of relations between Hazorea and Abu Zureiq, some kibbutz settlers specializing in those relations continued to

maintain ties.[6] The breaking of relations was the local expression of a transition from putative peace to war.

Qira

The expulsion of the Qira inhabitants exemplifies the prolonged process of evicting land tenants from lands purchased by the Zionist institutions. Relations between Hazorea and Qira had initially been frosty because of the expectations of the kibbutz that the villagers would eventually be removed. By the 1940s, a modus vivendi had emerged; relations were peaceful but hardly stable. The last pre-1948 clash between the village and the kibbutz took place in February 1946, when the kibbutz fenced in additional parts of the village lands. The final expulsion of Qira took place in early 1948 under new conditions of escalating strife. So there was both a gradual process (indicating methodical planning) and a rapid acceleration (enabled by the rapidly changing circumstances).

Following the UN General Assembly vote to partition Palestine, widespread fighting broke out across Palestine. By March and April, the tide had turned in the Zionists' favor, prompting more offensive and aggressive military campaigns, including into parts of Palestine beyond the borders of the Jewish state envisioned in the partition plan. A series of tit-for-tat attacks ensued on a broad scale, with each side taking revenge for killings by the other. Weitz saw these mounting tensions as an opportunity to complete the eviction of Qira and Daliyat al-Ruha, after previous attempts by the Palestine Land Development Company and the JNF induced few inhabitants to leave. Benny Morris describes Weitz's intentions:

> As early as the beginning of January the idea began to form as to solving the problem of the Arab sharecropper. After meeting with JNF officials in the north and discussing with them the fate of the land-tenants of Yokneʿam [i.e., the Qira villagers] and Daliyat al-Ruha [near Kibbutz Dalia], [Weitz] wrote in his journal: "Is this not the right time to be rid of them? Why go on containing these thorns while they pose a danger to us? People ponder and consider this." (Morris 2001, 84)[7]

On February 1, 1948, Hermoni ordered three Hazorea settlers to stage an attack from Qira against Kibbutz Hazorea.[8] They stealthily approached the village and from there "fired volleys at the kibbutz—as if Qira inhabitants did the deed, for which they would expect retaliation by the Haganah" (Morris 2001, 84–85). This was a perverse form of warfare—a false flag operation in which the kibbutz attacked itself to make the villagers fear they would be blamed and punished, the kibbutz hoping they would flee. Hermoni did not mention this incident of deception—a not unusual omission in contemporary Zionist accounts—in his personal notes (Morris 1996).[9] But in his official log as regional commander, he recorded the event as if the kibbutz were actually attacked by Qira inhabitants.[10] The Qira inhabitants did evacuate their village and temporarily hide in caves. Two days later, this tactic was repeated when Haganah members staged an attack on the settlement of Yokneʿam from the direction of Qira. This stage of Weitz's plan—actively abetted by kibbutz settlers—failed.[11]

Another effort to rid the area of Arabs came in March 1948, after two Hazorea settlers were killed. On March 11 at around four o'clock, while Gabriel Levi and Bernhardt Schiffer were on their way home from work at Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek, armed Arabs blocked the road and called out to them to surrender. They refused. After a short exchange of fire, both were killed.

Eliʿezer Beʾeri led the lengthy investigation of their disappearance and then the effort to locate their bodies and learn of the circumstances of their killing.[12] The bodies were reportedly hidden until that evening underneath the schoolhouse in Abu Zureiq. At night they were carried to a gully in the hills, on the land of Abu Shusha, where they were buried. Beʾeri found out that "the attack was planned and organized by two or three people from the village of Arrabe (between

Jenin and Nablus) or from Nablus, who had come to Abu Shusha at noon that day. . . . The murder was committed with the participation of several Abu Shusha inhabitants, and perhaps Abu Zureiq inhabitants as well, whereas most inhabitants of both villages neither helped the perpetrators nor tried to resist them."[13] According to Beʾeri,

> About three weeks earlier [before the murder of Bernhardt and Gabriel], on February 4, two Jewish engineers were killed by Arabs near Kiryat Haroshet, as they drove by there in their car. In retaliation, an Arab-driven car from Jenin was attacked near Mansura. The attack on Gabriel and Bernhardt was planned and considered a retaliatory measure following the attack that reacted to the murder of the two engineers. There is room to assume that the intention had actually been to murder [the security official] Aryeh Diamant of Mishmar ha-Emek, who used to walk by there at that time most days.[14]

In the Mansura attack mentioned by Beʾeri, one Arab was killed and several were wounded. Hazorea's security official, Rio Lavie, claimed he did not know who carried out the attack and said perhaps it was "unorganized Jews." But he had heard that a Haganah Field Company commanded by Meir Amit, "Slutzky," was responsible.[15]

The killing of two settlers of Kibbutz Hazorea made possible the long-planned expulsion of the people of Qira village, although Hazorea settlers never suspected (according to Beʾeri) that they had killed Bernhardt and Gabriel. Rather, the settlers suspected inhabitants of Abu Shusha and Abu Zureiq. On March 12, a day after Bernhardt and Gabriel were killed, Yehuda Burstein went to Qira and "advised" the inhabitants that "there was anger in Hazorea" and suggested they leave because there might be a reprisal. According to Eyal Ofek, a Hazorea member, Burstein spoke to Qira inhabitants "in a way that implied they should leave immediately, for their own good."[16]

Burstein's visit to the village and his avowedly friendly advice are mentioned several times in internal kibbutz literature and interviews and are consistent with the duplicity of the two false flag actions in January 1948 that led to the temporary departure of Qira's inhabitants as well as an earlier interaction between Burstein and the people of Qira.[17] In 1976 Levi Granot told Arnon Tamir of another "friendly conversation" (probably in mid-1947) between Burstein and the inhabitants of Qira:

> Before they were gone, people of Qira came to Yehuda Burstein who, with promises of compensation, money, property etc., tried to convince them to release the land. They came bringing him the keys to their homes. They said, take the keys. We entrust them to you. We are sure you will keep them for us. Naturally he refused—he knows why.[18]

Asher Benari of Hazorea describes in his memoirs the painful experience of the inhabitants' last night in the village before leaving Qira:

> It had been only a few days since the disappearance of Bernhardt and Gabriel, and at night we heard unusual sounds from Qira. After all, the distance between us and Yokneʿam on the valley horizon was still occupied by Qira villagers, and the evening breeze frequently delivered their voices. It was easy, therefore, to tell that something unusual was happening there, because the tumult continued into the wee hours of the night. The next morning the reasons for such noise became clear: the village was empty! Its inhabitants had packed up all their belongings and property and left. All of a sudden they did what for years they had refused to do—move to the area that the [Palestine] Land Development Company had offered them at Mount Tabor. (Benari 1986, 183)

The inhabitants of Qira left their village on March 13. A few days later, Hazorea members went to Qira and dismantled the walls and roofs of the Arabs' shacks.

Benari's memoirs expose the causal connection between Burstein's warning and the abrupt departure of the people of Qira. The killing of Bernhardt and Gabriel was a pretext for their Jewish neighbors to deploy their long-standing relations with the people of Qira to hasten their expulsion during a time of unrest, using the events of 1948 to finalize what they could not do earlier. Settlers then wrote the history of the events as an unfortunate circumstance they had hoped would not happen, disavowing the constitutive operations of settler colonialism that

culminated in transfer in 1948.

The inhabitants of Qira assumed that their displacement would be temporary, until the situation calmed down. During previous clashes, entire villages would leave and then later return. But the strategic logic that guided Burstein, Weitz, and the kibbutzim was based on indigenous erasure and their permanent replacement by settlers.

According to a report by one kibbutz settler, those who left Qira "turned first to the slopes of the Carmel range and then continued to the Jenin area."[19] The Carmel is not on the way to Jenin, so most likely, the Qira villagers first tried to join former village inhabitants who settled on the Carmel after 1938's fencing in. Because of precarious mobility conditions during the Nakba, they were likely unable to reach the Carmel and so moved eastward to the Jenin area.[20]

Abu Zureiq

In Abu Zureiq, the uprooting of the inhabitants, demolishing of houses, killing of escaping inhabitants, imprisoning of villagers to investigate the fate of two missing kibbutz settlers, and settlers' deliberations over looting can be divided into five periods.

1947 PARTITION AND THE EXACERBATION OF RELATIONS

Relations between Kibbutz Hazorea and Abu Zureiq were intense compared with those of neighboring kibbutzim and villages. On November 29, 1947, the day of the UN General Assembly partition resolution, the Hazorea member and regional commander Michael Hermoni reported unrest in the Arab villages, a break in relations with Abu Zureiq, and a standby state of emergency. Cessation of relations between a kibbutz and a village was nothing new; for example, relations between Mishmar ha-Emek and Abu Shusha were broken during the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939. Eliʿezer Beʾeri recalled his attempt to establish a "peace agreement" between Hazorea and Abu Zureiq:

> About one year earlier [before the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek in April 1948], when I spoke with Abdel Hasheb [possibly a distortion of the Arab name ʿAbd al-Hashim], I told him, let's have a peace agreement. We will not attack you or you attack us. Who knows what will happen. Anyway, we'll agree not to wage war between us. We offered them a peace agreement. He said, good, we're willing. But you know, if a strong gang comes to you from your kibbutz, you won't be able to oppose them, and if a gang stronger than us comes to us, we won't be able to oppose them.[21]

This agreement was one of many between Arabs and Jews during the two years before the establishment of Israel in 1948. Azoulay (2014, 416) documented over a hundred such pacts and considers them attempts to imagine and practice local coexistence, to break the patterns of violence interrupting everyday life and bypass the colonial regime. She calls them "vehement joint efforts . . . to preserve their shared life and find peaceful solutions." Such cooperation may be praiseworthy. But local interactions evolved within the broader political context of asymmetrical settler-indigenous relations and the related constituent process of displacement. The kibbutz settlers may have sought peace to stabilize their newly established colonies, and the Palestinian villagers may have agreed to preserve some stability and safety in the face of accelerating incursions into their physical space. But such agreements were not civil projects between equal parties.

Following this agreement, relations between the kibbutz and the village began to break down. Beʾeri recalled the first signs of aggravation:

> All this happened within a few days. Even before 1948 I had contacts with people of Abu Zureiq and had a friend there. Once I rode horseback to Abu Zureiq, and near the spring below, the son of the man whom I had intended to visit would not let me through. He gripped the reins. I told him, what is this, do you no longer practice Arab courtesy? He said, things are different today.

"I want to speak with your father." "You can't speak with my father today." "You're not the one to rule who will speak with your father." We argued. In short, I was not allowed to proceed to the village. We never met after that. We sent some written words but received no answer. Later we heard there had been debates among them whether to answer us or not. As usual, the extremists had the upper hand.[22]

Rather than understanding the refusal to allow him into the village as a response to deteriorating political conditions, both local encroachments and the broader national project, Beʾeri seems bewildered by the young Palestinian's breach of the culture of Arab hospitality and ignores his own community's role in the settler colonial process and his personal role as a political agent interacting with the Palestinians.

PARTITION TO MARCH 11, 1948—EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES

Beʾeri noted differences between the positions of the elderly and the young, and another kibbutz source described similar tension. Kibbutz Hazorea delivered a written message to Abu Zureiq, but in contrast to Beʾeri's account, the village did respond—perhaps even in two letters. In January 1948, Hazorea sent a proclamation to Abu Zureiq (I could not locate it in the archive). Shortly thereafter, the spokesman of "Abu Zureiq Youth"—notably, neither the mukhtar nor the village elders—responded with a letter addressing the kibbutz in general, and especially the mukhtar of Hazorea, and Yohanan Ben Yaʿakov, the field guard. This letter was translated into Hebrew and published in the kibbutz newsletter on January 22, 1948:

Some time ago, you told us, we do not want attacks, and a week ago, you sent us proclamations. We read the proclamations that you sent us, where you stated that we are neighbors and friends and that we don't want attacks between you and us. But we regret what the Haganah did Monday evening at 4:30, at the northern gate of the colony, when ʿAbd al-Latif al-ʿAtili passed by on his way to the Carmel. A member of the Haganah attacked him and shot him with an automatic pistol. If this is the way you want to act, we must take this into account. We are not powerless with respect to attacks, because our lands lie alongside yours. If we so wish, we can attack each other, destroy the land, and lose income, both yours and ours. But this is not necessary.[23]

Here is a rare opportunity to hear the unmediated voice of Palestinians. The letter, written in spoken Arabic, lacks the ceremonial formalities, decorum, or greetings commonly used in official correspondence. Its writers relied on promises made by the kibbutz to avoid attacks and on the norm of good neighborly relations but also on their common interest in avoiding mutual harm. Like the kibbutz settlers, the Palestinian writers of this letter differentiated between their close kibbutz neighbors and the Haganah forces, outsiders, while also holding their neighbors responsible for the Haganah's violence. This correspondence reflects a rare glimpse of the possibility of coexistence between the indigenous and settlers from an indigenous perspective. But it may also be an effort to ward off further attacks from the Haganah.

Hazorea settlers who cultivated relations with the Arabs answered on behalf of the kibbutz in a letter addressed to the mukhtar and to the committee of Abu Zureiq village. It is unclear whether that committee is the same as the "Abu Zureiq Youth," especially because the reply was also addressed to the village mukhtar, who was not a signatory of the previous Abu Zureiq letter.[24]

We take this occasion to inform you that we often hear . . . shots fired at us from the mountains, from lands belonging to your village, and we do not think they are random. You have known us for a decade and more, and you surely have no reason to believe that a good neighbor has any reason to fear us, just as we are not afraid of anyone and can defend ourselves against any attack. In the past we have not ordinarily written to one another. . . . We wish to inform you that our home remains open to you and we invite anyone who is interested to come and visit us as usual. We will respect our guest. . . . You saw in the question that was raised that it is always best to openly discuss matters with persons responsible.[25]

Like Beʾeri's conversation with villagers, this letter reiterates the purportedly peaceful intentions of the kibbutz. However, the kibbutz was preparing for a military confrontation and its youth had already been recruited by the Palmach.[26] The exchange of letters included undisguised

mutual threats but avoided escalation. However, when republished in the kibbutz newsletter decades later, the letters were characterized as an example of "good neighborly relations" maintained even in wartime.[27] This was not the case. Hazorea had not managed to purchase the lands of Abu Zureiq. However, during the era of sovereignty of the British Empire, the kibbutz settlers did not envision its mass evacuation. Only when new conditions arose was coexistence terminated, transforming the structure of Zionist settler colonialism from colonization by purchase to colonization by warfare.

MARCH 11, 1948, TO APRIL 1948

Tensions mounted after the disappearance of Bernhardt and Gabriel. Settlers suspected the involvement of inhabitants of Abu Shusha and Abu Zureiq in the presumed kidnapping and murder. On April 4, al-Qawuqji's forces attacked Mishmar ha-Emek, attempting to occupy the Haifa–Jenin road. That day, according to Ofek, Beʾeri and Granot went to Abu Zureiq to seek information about Bernhardt and Gabriel, but they could not learn anything. Ofek described what happened in the village following the visit, on the basis of what he heard from Dudi Granot, Levi Granot's son, who heard the story from his father.[28] It was a somber visit.

> It appears that Eliʿezer and Levi sat with the elders, while outside the village youngsters crowded and called out against the Jews. The village elders claimed that with such feelings in the air they could not do a thing. Levi and Eliʿezer could do no more than return to their kibbutz empty-handed. This was the last contact Hazorea had with Abu Zureiq before the calamity.[29]

This suggests that the "youth," in whose name the letter was sent to Hazorea, opposed the "elders'" attempts to reach an agreement. A similar confrontation between elders and youth occurred in al-Ghubayya al-Tahta nearby (al-Ghubari 2010). Hazorea settlers visiting on the day of the attack against Mishmar ha-Emek raised a question about whether al-Qawuqji's forces were present in Abu Zureiq at this stage of the confrontation.

Hermoni recorded in his journal extensive day and night patrols and the arrival of a Palmach company on the hill on April 4–5, including Palmach commander Yitzhak Sadeh's arrival at Hazorea. Hermoni reported that Sadeh was given the Abu Zureiq file and oral information about the village.[30] This is the fruit of the relations established by kibbutz settlers who dealt with Arab affairs, especially those, like Levi Granot, who had been actively working with the Haganah and its intelligence service since 1942–1943 gathering information about the neighboring villages. Granot prepared a village report on Abu Zureiq that included photographs of the village from every possible angle.[31] The file also contained information gathered by Hillel Meirhoff, who was not involved with Haganah intelligence.

Qawuqji's attack on Mishmar ha-Emek, including a massive bombardment, was repelled by the local Haganah forces and Palmach troops. British forces were still in the country, and according to Morris (2001, 160–161), the attacks were stopped by a "British unit that appeared in the area. The British assumption was that the local Palestinians feared the consequences of al-Qawuqji's military offensive for their own safety. They also feared al-Qawuqji's men. On April 7 al-Qawuqji's forces agreed to cease their offensive, on the condition that 'the Jews promise not to carry out any reprisals against the villages.'" The commanders of Mishmar ha-Emek opposed the proposal but wished to consult with the leadership in Tel Aviv.

According to Morris, a discussion took place at Hazorea among the local commanders and the Palmach command before a delegation including Sadeh, who commanded the counterattack, and Hermoni went to meet Ben-Gurion in Tel Aviv. Before leaving, they spoke about "cleansing [*tihur*] the villages of Abu Zureiq and Abu Shusha between Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek" (Morris 2001, 161). The delegation reached Ben-Gurion during the night of April 8–9.

According to Ben-Gurion, the delegation requested his permission to expel the neighboring inhabitants. Ben-Gurion discussed their request at a MAPAI (the [Land of] Israel Workers' Party; see the introduction) party leadership meeting on July 24, 1948: "One must expel the Arabs of the area and burn the villages. For me this is a most difficult matter. [However,] they told me they had no assurance of their survival if the villages remain in place and their Arab inhabitants not expelled, for then [the Arab villages] would attack them and burn all mothers and children regardless" (quoted in Morris 2001, 161). Ben-Gurion was not a neutral witness. These words—spoken after the expulsion had already occurred—were a response to MAPAM's criticism of MAPAI and Ben-Gurion over their policy of expelling the Arabs. In effect, Ben-Gurion was accusing MAPAM of hypocrisy for their own participation in and benefiting from violence done to the Arabs.[32] I have not found evidence of MAPAM settlers attempting to refute Ben-Gurion's allegations.

AFTER APRIL 1948

Abu Zureiq was conquered on April 12 after a short battle (Ezov 2013, 209–210). Rio Lavie, Hazorea's security official, had not taken part in the fighting and said he heard no gunfire and that there were few casualties during the takeover of the village. He claimed that the goal of "cleansing" the area was not to expel Arabs and that "no one fired at Abu Zureiq villagers, [they] ran off."[33] Combatants of the Haganah Carmeli infantry brigade reported that a few inhabitants were still in place, including about twenty elderly and ailing persons.

Be'eri, the person most familiar with Abu Zureiq, claimed in a later interview that a force of al-Qawuqji's men stayed in the village but that the inhabitants were not really involved in the fighting and maintained a neutral stance between the two sides. However, the mere fact that their village served as a base for attacks sufficed for them to be considered aligned with the enemy forces, even if the settlers had personal relations with them. Be'eri claimed that the weapons possessed by Abu Zureiq inhabitants did not exceed the norm for an Arab village in that region:

> Then, when there was an assault on the village, after the liberation of Mishmar ha-Emek [from the siege], when the village was charged, several small Haganah units attacked Abu Zureiq. We [kibbutz members] were on standby and did not do much. The villagers naturally returned fire; it is customary for homes in an Arab village to possess weapons for defense against neighbors, robbers—after all, here in the valley, until some decades ago, Bedouins would come from the Bisan Valley to raid the villages.
>
> This [Haganah attack] failed, and the villagers escaped to the [Jezreel] Valley.[34]

Be'eri describes the escape as a spontaneous act but noted that escaping villagers were chased. "And if an escape begins, then everyone is on the run. It's a matter of hardly an hour. They were chased to the valley, but we let them escape. Very few were killed."

Be'eri presented a different account in a letter of April 14, 1948, two days after the conquest of Abu Zureiq, to Haganah chief of staff Israel Galili, Moshe Mann (of Kibbutz Merhavia, member of the Haganah general staff, and eventually Golani Brigade commander), Baruch Rabinov (head of finances at the Haganah general staff), and Ya'akov Riftin (of Kibbutz Ein-Shemer and a political leader of Hashomer Hatzair). There he wrote of the killing of inhabitants, both during the takeover and while going through village homes after the conquest:

> When the village of Abu Zureiq was conquered and its villagers, wishing to save themselves, ran into the fields of the valley, units from the neighboring settlements came out and surrounded them. There was some exchange of fire during which several Arabs were killed. Others surrendered or fell into the hands of unarmed Jews. Most of them were killed. And these were not gang members, as was later written in 'Al hamishmar [the MAPAM daily] but defenseless, defeated fallahin. Only members of my kibbutz [Hazorea] took prisoners. . . . Inside the village, several people who had hidden there were discovered some hours after the fighting and were killed. . . . Some say there was also a case of rape. But this might merely be a braggart's tale made up by the soldiers. Afterward all the village houses and the cistern were blown up. . . . of the property inside the houses, and the livestock remaining without shepherds, [our] men took whatever they laid their hands on; one took a coffee pot, another a

horse or a cow. . . . One could understand and justify taking village cows to Mishmar ha-Emek, for example, or if soldiers who took over the village would slaughter and fry themselves some chickens. But if any farmer from the nearby settlement [hinting at Yokneʿam] is accomplice to looting, this is sheer robbery. (Quoted in Morris 2001, 163)

Interestingly, individual looting was considered unacceptable among the socialist settlers, but looting beneficial for the collective well-being was justified.

In his essay on massacres perpetrated during the Nakba, Jawad (2007, 106) mentions the Haganah forces' massacre of ten Abu Zureiq inhabitants who posed no danger or threat during their escape from the village. Jawad relied mainly on interviews with Palestinian refugees. Ezov (2013, 210) simply notes that "Carmeli infantrymen 'escorted' the escapees with machine gun fire."

On April 13, Carmeli infantrymen began to blow up houses in Abu Zureiq (Ezov 2013, 210; Morris 2001, 162), as was done after the conquest of al-Kafrayn, where orders were issued to blast all the village houses to prevent the return of its inhabitants (Ezov 2013, 208). Several Abu Zureiq inhabitants were led to Hazorea as prisoners to be interrogated about the disappearance of the two kibbutz settlers, who had been killed.

Journals of two settlers of Hazorea enable us to follow the reactions of settlers to the events in the kibbutz. On April 12, the day the Abu Zureiq inhabitants were expelled, Bracha, a teacher, wrote,

> Anyway, today Abu Zureiq was charged and conquered. We heard gunfire and tremendous blasts all day. Several prisoners were brought to us, a woman and another few men. I didn't see them but was concerned about the Arab children. Apparently, the children and women were left alone and Arabs from the vicinity took them to "safety." Some wounded men arrived as well, one died and two were taken to a hospital. In the afternoon several vehicles passed by us, filled with soldiers on their way to the base after a hard day's work. I had very mixed feelings all day long. I was glad that we were being rid of the village, but on the other hand I am wholeheartedly against murder and warfare. I know that many might be feeling the same way, and I know that this is a crucial war of survival for us and could become desperate to the bitter end. But the way things seem today, I am not at peace with the idea of war against Arab villagers who have been on this land longer than us and are fighting for their home with the same feeling we are.[35]

Her support for expulsion and opposition to war crimes expresses the qualified humanistic worldview paradigmatic of the Zionist Left that culminates in an abdication of responsibility for violence (cf. Foucault 1997, 135). The teacher fails to locate the Zionist actions of April 1948 in the broader timeline of settler colonial violence and therefore obfuscates the meaning and outcome of the war. However, this is one of very few texts from the three kibbutzim that proffers the right of the indigenous Palestinians to fight for their home(land) and that notes Palestinian existence on the land preceding the settlers without delegitimizing their rootedness. The great majority of settler accounts disavowed both. The teacher considers the rights of the Arab villages to be rooted in the fact that they "have been on this land longer than us," and she compares this right to what she considered the inalienable right of the settlers. But the Palestinians' capacity to fight for their home came to justify their expulsion. Notably, she worried about the Arab children, but in purely humanitarian, not political terms.

The same ambivalence runs through testimony of Meir Meron, who worked with the kibbutz children's groups:

> Yesterday went rather quietly in our vicinity. But the bombardment of Mishmar ha-Emek persisted, and a convoy was attacked while trying to make its way from Kfar Baruch—by the only access route remaining to Mishmar ha-Emek. We could once more take the children home. At 1:30 a.m. [April 12, 1948], all the people were woken up, as planned. At 2 a.m. fire was opened at Abu Zureiq. But this did not last; some hours later we went to sleep as best we could, each at his post. . . . At 7 frequent gun shots woke me up. The alarm was sounded. . . . The shots at Abu Zureiq continue. Two hours later the thick fog rises over the third distant mountain range. We see the men [combatants] descending into the village. Later we learn that they quickly took over the external posts of the village, the Arabs having fled to its center. There they defended themselves until they ran off into the valley, where they were surrounded [by people] from Kfar Baruch, from Kfar Yehoshua, and from our side. I don't know how many of them were killed. Twenty were taken prisoner, driven to us while roped to each other, hands raised in the air. A flock of cattle was also brought to us and then chased out again—orders of the commander, no looting. We

learned that women and children were allowed to go back into the village, where many posts and "suspected" houses were being blasted. Rumor has it that our people looted quite a lot, in spite of orders. . . . In the afternoon we could take the children home again. After many hours of being shut indoors, this was a blessing. But after just an hour we were suddenly informed that a large Arab force was on the advance for a counterattack from Abu Zureiq. The children were returned to the children's houses; we made initial preparations for transferring into the cave but then found out that the information was erroneous.[36]

FROM BUILDING TIES WITH NEIGHBORS TO INTERROGATING THEM AS PRISONERS

Hazorea settlers' interrogation of the men of Abu Zureiq was not part of the main military operation. This was a local initiative, a component of the relations between the kibbutz and the neighboring village. Such independent actions of settlers demonstrate their role as agents of the eliminatory thrust of Zionism. The settlers of Hashomer Hatzair tended to disavow their responsibility for military operations and saw themselves as dovish leftists. Yet during the war, as previously, the kibbutzim played a major role in expulsions, through both local initiatives and their members' participation in the Haganah, the Palmach, and later the Israel Defense Forces.

We do not know if Hazorea settlers participated in the fighting at Abu Zureiq, but some of them apparently led the prisoners to Hazorea.[37] Eliʿezer Beʾeri assumed responsibility for interrogating the prisoners about Bernhardt and Gabriel, the two kibbutz settlers who had disappeared about a month earlier. Five years later, he published a partial account of the investigation:

> When, after conquering the two villages [Abu Zureiq and Abu Shusha] involved in the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek, we interrogated the prisoners we had taken from Abu Zureiq, we failed to find out any details from them about that tragic day. We interrogated each of them several times for weeks, threatened them, spoke favorably with them, promised to release anyone who would help us in our investigation, and even freed one of them in front of the other agitated prisoners when we needed to have him transmit a letter to Jenin—but to no avail. The prisoners would tell us nothing of what we wanted to know. These were simple villagers and indeed not privy to the secrets of the gang of fighters who had taken over the villages around us at the time.[38]

About twenty years later, in a conversation with Arnon Tamir, Beʾeri described the interrogation of the inhabitants as part of the good relations maintained between him and the village people:

> I had many contacts [with Abu Zureiq inhabitants]: serious talks, medical aid that we gave them. Many were attended by Dr. Weiler [of Hazorea], whom I helped as interpreter. I recall a woman who once experienced difficulties giving birth, and he helped her, as did I. To such an extent! When matters escalated in 1947 and 1948, I was also busy with security and political issues; sometimes I failed. I tried to gather information when Gabriel and Bernhardt disappeared. I visited Abu Zureiq villagers after the village was conquered, and we interrogated them as prisoners to get information on Gabriel and Bernhardt. We convinced Haganah men not to kill people escaping. They [the prisoners] were brought in, blindfolded, and when I addressed them they recognized my voice immediately. "Oh Mr. Eliʿezer, have mercy on us," and then some of them were imprisoned in Tiberias. I visited them there.[39]

Beʾeri's account underscores how the neighborly relations that had been maintained before the fighting became a violent tool to dominate the local Palestinians on the eve of their expulsion. He demonstrates no trace of acknowledgment of the catastrophe embodied in the transition from neighbor to prisoner. Beʾeri presents this as almost a natural continuum, which demonstrates that neighborly relations were *not* based on mutuality but on the ostensible superiority and civility of the kibbutz settlers as providers of medical aid to the Arabs who were merely passive and inferior recipients.

Arnon Tamir, who did not speak Arabic and was not particularly involved with the Abu Zureiq inhabitants, provided a vivid and harsh depiction of the uprooting of inhabitants and the interrogation of prisoners. Perhaps because he was not involved in relations with the Arab inhabitants, Tamir, unlike Beʾeri, described the human tragedy of those being expelled from their land from the perspective of an uninvolved observer, a passive, yet implicated, perpetrator of the

disaster of the indigenous:

When the fog lifted, the village looked deserted. A thin plume of smoke rose from some houses, from some oven or stove abandoned in haste. Down in the valley dozens of figures are seen on the move, men, women, and children. They cross the road and gather behind a low mound, with a small domed structure on top, a sheikh's tomb, surrounded by the villagers' graves. Not far from there, the water pump house at the edge of a thick mulberry tree grove. There they stand, looking at the village they have left.

The gunfire ceased. . . . Our neighbors stand in the gully between the pump house and the mulberry grove and stare. I watch them through field glasses from the mountain. I cannot tell from here whether they are crying or keeping silent.

Through the fields, single file, a group of our combatants approach them. Later some fallahin are led into the kibbutz yard, blindfolded with rags. We surround them, agitated. After all, we could have lived together until doomsday! They are led in a procession, in their traditional garb, torn shoes to their feet, farmers such as we are. No one imagined that people who have lived here for generations would not return home. (Tamir 1999, 76–77)

This macabre picture of a people exiled in distress—of prisoners blindfolded and despoiled, of blurry figures gathered across the graves of their ancestors, of a people outside looking in at what they had lost—positions Tamir similarly to Odysseus overlooking the Underworld.

Whereas Beʾeri's depiction blurred the difference between his earlier visits with his neighbors and their interrogation, Tamir rendered a harsh scene of an abrupt shift from neighborly relations to relations of perpetrator and victim:

The events shook us like an earthquake. We are bewildered, helpless. No one has any idea how to treat neighbors that have become prisoners overnight. We do not know what war is or what to do about prisoners of war. We bring them food and water from the kitchen. They sit under the pine trees at the edge of our yard, eating bread and cheese, drinking water. We stand guard over them, some of us with a rifle, others with a stick. Our neighbors. They don't understand, nor do we. We only feel that nothing will ever be as it was. Toward evening the order is issued to take them through the fields to the area east of Mishmar ha-Emek. There are Arab villages there, where they would meet the rest of the villagers and their family members. On the morrow we repair the small ruined bridge below the village and thus revive the lifeline connecting the two kibbutzim. . . . The conquered village is deserted. No one knows what will be done with the abandoned property and livestock. The east wind carries over to us the mooing of unmilked cows, the bleating of thirsty goats, and strange, foreign smells. Jewish settlers from the area flock over to the deserted village. Some leave it leading horses and carrying various objects on their way home. There is no state yet, no law, everyone does as they see fit. A day later some adventurers of ours dare enter the village. They would bury the bodies still lying under the rubble, for fear of epidemic. (Tamir 1999, 77–79)

Tamir saw himself, not as a political being relating to a political victim, but as someone merely powerlessly ensnared in a bewildering war. That he, like his neighbors, "doesn't understand" what happened effectively asserts innocence, a disavowal of his role in settler colonialism and a displacement of ethical responsibility. Here the narrator simultaneously exists inside and outside reality or in two different realities.

On April 18, four days after the battle, Hazorea convened a kibbutz assembly. Beʾeri read aloud the letter he had sent to Galili and other military leaders reporting the killing of Abu Zureiq's inhabitants and the massive looting. The assembly discussed the events during the fighting, the treatment of prisoners, and whether to take part in looting the property of their former neighbors. The minutes of the assembly are sealed in the archive. Participants' words are summarized but not always comprehensible. Some saw private looting as a threat to the morality of the kibbutz. Yosef Shatil, for example, said, "From the very beginning there was obviously no guideline against this way of looting, which is a very bad influence on the young."[40] Shatil demanded the kibbutz decide whether it would take part in the looting. Such statements did not invoke socialist ideology but insisted that in war there is a need for laws regarding the property of others.

Arnon Tamir, who was haunted by the expulsion for many years, said, "We must clarify our position anew. I am not at peace with myself neither about Qira nor about Abu Zureiq." Another kibbutz settler resented "the cruel treatment of prisoners."[41] It is unknown whether he meant the killing of prisoners during the fighting in the village or the kibbutz settlers' treatment of prisoners from Abu Zureiq held at the kibbutz itself. These reflections demonstrate the pattern

manifested throughout this chapter: a humanitarian worldview paired with a disregard for the material privileges of settler colonialism.

Rudi (perhaps Rudi Sandman or Uri Bar) shifted from the discussion of the fate of the prisoners to the issue of expulsion, using "transfer" for the first time. "I don't know, this is transfer. If you think about it, shouldn't the Jews be transferred from the Arab area [i.e., the part of Palestine the UN allocated for an Arab state]? I don't think it was necessary to ruin Abu Zureiq village." This is a rare real-time contestation of the expulsion of Abu Zureiq's inhabitants and the demolition of their village. Like the teacher, Bracha, who acknowledged the Arab inhabitants' right to remain on their land, comparing it to the kibbutz settlers' rights, Rudi invoked reciprocity, comparing the transfer of Arabs to the transfer of Jews.

In response, Menachem (probably Menachem Gerson, of the Werkleute youth movement [see chapter 1] and a kibbutz leader) proposed to "separate an ideological debate from practical propositions." Gad (probably Gad Levi), however, did not see any possibility of doing so. The kibbutz settlers proceeded to vote on who was "in favor of a practical discussion" and who was "in favor of a general discussion today." A "general," or "ideological discussion," likely involved the broad principles of Jewish-Arab relations. The vote was thirty to twenty in favor of shifting to a practical discussion focusing on the urgent question of the fate of Abu Zureiq's property after demolition of the village.

Hermoni made the move to a "practical discussion," complaining that the settlers who had emptied the village now did not wish to carry on with the looting, believing there were no objects left worth taking. Another settler thought there might still be some intact objects in the village as well as grain; he thought the village should be dug up in the search for weapons. Apparently, houses were still standing in Abu Zureiq on April 18.[42] Another settler proposed "to conduct a careful search because there are probably still many worthwhile things there." Another suggested combining the two propositions: first searching the village and then demolishing the remaining houses. The assembly decided to search the place thoroughly and then discuss what to do with the findings,[43] justifying looting through a discourse of security. There was no hesitation about appropriating their former neighbors' property.

Two days later, on April 20, 1948, kibbutz settlers met again to discuss Abu Zureiq and Beʾeri's letter. They began with the ideological discussion that had previously been postponed. Hermoni claimed the kibbutz failed in its mission to affect the attitude of Abu Zureiq's inhabitants. He believed the inhabitants' only option was to accept the settlement project; the indigenous people's rejection of collaboration with the settlers was delegitimated as incitement:

> In our treatment of the Arabs, we have not succeeded and are inciting them. It is a fact that even with the families who were close to us, our relations have soured. Lately it became apparent that we must rethink our ideas. There are examples in world history (Czechoslovakia and Crete). Even after partition, the Arabs would always be servants of imperialism.[44]

Hermoni was likely referring to the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Czechoslovakia, which was often invoked in the Yishuv as a good model for the Palestinians. Again, the settler positions himself inside and outside reality simultaneously, as if Hermoni blamed himself for failing to civilize the Arabs, reminiscent of the white man's burden. It was common among the socialist Zionists to identify indigenous Palestinians with imperialism, conflating fallahin with Arab rulers like the Hashemites of Jordan and Iraq and Egypt's King Faruq, who were, in fact, clients of the British empire. This discourse allowed settlers to exonerate themselves from their responsibility for expelling their former neighbors and expropriating their property.

In the April 20, 1948, discussion, others opposed Hermoni's argument. "After the ceasefire, we must live with them," said one. Eliahu Maʿoz expressed a similar position: "The war situation

must not make us lose our mind. We must not give up our basic views." Some upheld Jewish-Arab coexistence as a worthy principle yet also accepted the possibility that only the settlers would remain on the land. Another settler said, "Most importantly, Mishmar ha-Emek and we shall continue here. Be it with Arabs, then fine. If not, so be it. We cannot argue about the transfer issue."[45]

Beʾeri opposed Hermoni, leaving open the question of the return of refugees. Another settler attempted to avoid a concrete discussion of the fate of Abu Zureiq in favor of the general question: "As soon as we agreed to partition, we gave up some of our principles. The question is not only of Abu Zureiq but of the entire country."

The kibbutz settlers then returned to what was to be done with the loot. "We must not let souvenirs or such things remain in the hands of our settlers. We must be rid even of those things brought into the kibbutz or to the children's farm." Some proposed handing over the money to the Haganah. Others thought the sums spent by the kibbutz on warfare should be deducted from the looted money. Finally, they decided to handle the loot "as was customary." The kibbutz would hold on to the property in its possession, cover its payments to the Haganah fund by selling looted property, and not leave looted items in the possession of kibbutz settlers.[46] After some deliberation, they concluded that collective looting of Abu Zureiq inhabitants' property was legitimate, whereas private looting was wrong, attempting to reconcile their socialist values of collectivism with legitimating plunder.

The two main topics on the kibbutz settlers' agenda in 1948—population transfer and return and the fate of Arab property—superseded concerns about the quality of relations between Abu Zureiq and Hazorea. The basic assumption was that the indigenous Arabs had no right to oppose Zionist colonization. Indigenous existence on the land was conditional on their willingness to live peacefully with the settlers. Some settlers believed circumstances had changed and welcomed transfer; others thought they should uphold their original views opposing it. The return of refugees remained a theoretical issue, and they deferred dealing with it. In any case neither the kibbutz nor MAPAM would decide this question. Within several years, almost all kibbutz settlers—including those who regretted the depopulation of Abu Zureiq—accepted transfer as inevitable.

MISHMAR HA-EMEK, ABU SHUSHA, AND THE AL-GHUBAYYAT VILLAGES

Intelligence and Strategic Dimensions of Nurturing Relations Leading Up to the 1948 Events

Following the UN partition resolution, settlers of Mishmar ha-Emek, as in Hazorea, began fortification works (Y. Beʾeri 1992). At Hazorea, passing the Abu Zureiq file to Yitzhak Sadeh signals the moment when ties established and information gathered about Arab villages—whether political (à la Eliʿezer Beʾeri), or out of curiosity and interest in one's neighbors (à la Hillel Meirhoff), or in explicit intelligence work (à la Levi Granot)—became an important asset in the military confrontation. Similarly, at Mishmar ha-Emek the intelligence and strategic dimension of nurturing relations with the neighbors seems to have become more prominent.

In 1994, Elisha Lin, who joined Mishmar ha-Emek in January 1945, spoke of his work with another kibbutz member, Micha Lin, and two other settlers from Ein Hashofet and Dalia gathering information about Palestinian villages before the 1948 war. They relied on the amicable relations previously established between the kibbutz settler David Shafir, "Rahamim,"

and Arabs in neighboring villages:

> Before the War of Independence we made up a team of four scouts on behalf of the Haganah. We were to venture out four days a week and gather data for drawing topographic maps of the Arab villages in the area. We reached the villages and had to note access roads, homes of the village elders and the mukhtar, and water sources and the like so that eventually the Haganah forces would be able to act with the help of the drawings we provided. . . . This time, unusually, [Jumʿa, our "Arab friend"] resisted letting us in and urged us to hurry up with the coffee and get on our way. . . . "This lit a red light." "Fear" had become a component in our relationship, probably a result of accumulating hostility in our area, and in the country in general.
>
> We proceeded to Mansi. We reached the coffee house at the entrance to Mansi. As we walked along the main road, an Arab approached us and asked in Arabic, "Lawen?" (Where to?) We answered him with the Arabic expression, "Shimet al-hawa" (Taking a walk). He answered us in fluent Hebrew, "How long will this business go on between you and us?" Immediately we realized that all our attempts to disguise our "hiking," innocent, as it were, were transparent and the Arab told us this very clearly in our own language. We could do no more than simply turn around and head back home. In the time between the "events" and "the War of Independence," people in Mishmar ha-Emek knew how to nurture friendly relations with the Arabs but also to use them for gathering information and purchasing weapons in return, and thus people around us knew about the coming attacks perhaps much more than in other settlements.[47]

On April 4, 1948, the day al-Qawuqji's army attacked Mishmar ha-Emek, the son of Abu Shusha's mukhtar, Abdullah al-Shitawi, who was friendly with Aryeh Diamant, the mukhtar of Mishmar ha-Emek, arrived at the kibbutz and presented information on preparations for the attack. He reported that assault forces would be deployed in the Mansi Valley. This story is mentioned in several contexts as evidence of the good relations cultivated between the kibbutz and its neighbors.[48] But it is difficult to assess the motives of the mukhtar's son. He may have thought offering this information would enable Abu Shusha to avoid the confrontation. This underscores differences in the social and political organization between the kibbutzim and their Palestinian neighbors that had far-reaching ramifications in 1948. The Palestinians were split among rival leaders and fragmented beyond the local level (see, e.g., W. Khalidi 2006; Khalaf 1991; Hassassian 1990), whereas the kibbutzim were a collectivist organization and integrated into organized and consolidated countrywide institutions.

The Confrontation

As children, Mishmar ha-Emek settlers Eitan Ben-Or and Amnon Lin would visit Abu Shusha and play with Salim, the son of Husayn Abu-Salim, one of Diamant's friends. According to Ben-Or, when Salim grew up, he became active in the village in preparing for the confrontation.[49] Meanwhile, Mishmar ha-Emek settlers were thrilled to discover that seven of the kibbutz youngsters, graduates of the collective high school at the kibbutz, secretly left and enlisted in the Palmach (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 138).

During the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek, Abu Shusha was conquered without much resistance on April 9. Kibbutz veterans, including Aryeh Diamant, spoke of the minor role of Abu Shusha's inhabitants in the fighting.[50] According to some, shots were fired from nearby hills rather than from the village itself (Regev 1978, 20); others said they were fired by Iraqi soldiers (likely the ALA) stationed at the site. Some of the kibbutz high school graduates who had joined the Palmach participated in the conquest of the village (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 129).

According to Tzvi Meʾir's journal, when Abu Shusha was conquered, its occupiers discovered that "everyone had already left." Still, news of catching men in the abandoned village and the escape of inhabitants in the days that followed confirm that some people hid in the village and others temporarily evacuated to the immediate surroundings, intending to return. After Abu Shusha was conquered, its houses were set on fire. The next day, April 10, houses were blown up and "two Arabs were killed and their weapons were taken." Meʾir reported, "10:00: The Arabs of Abu Shusha and Abu Zureiq run off through the fields." The escapees were attacked by a platoon

from Kfar Baruch. An Arab counterattack to regain Abu Shusha failed.[51] In contrast to Hazorea and Abu Zureiq, throughout the conquest of Abu Shusha, the burning and blowing up of its houses, and the expulsion of its inhabitants there is no indication that Abu Shusha's former relations with Mishmar ha-Emek played any role. The absence of a history of hostile relations contributed to the complete silence surrounding the conquest of Abu Shusha.

Mishmar ha-Emek Kibbutz Assembly Discussion about Transfer and Expulsion

The minutes of the Mishmar ha-Emek assembly discussions from March 28, 1948, to October 18, 1948, are missing from the kibbutz archive.[52] There are also no records of kibbutz assembly discussions during November–December 1948, seven months after the expulsion of all the Palestinian inhabitants in the area and before the national conference of Hashomer Hatzair's Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi federation in December 1948. The conference provided an opportunity for a more comprehensive ideological discussion than was customary in kibbutz assemblies. Discussions at the conference did not reflect those held in the kibbutz in April 1948, when the fate of the neighboring villages was determined. But they constitute the best available testimony of the settlers' views regarding the fate of the indigenous Arabs who lived near them until then.

In preparation for the conference, the kibbutz held four discussions of the Arab Question, as the settlers called it, as a general issue and not restricted to their relations with their former neighbors. As in other kibbutzim, these discussions mark a shift in the settlers' practices, from colonization by purchase to colonization by expulsion and warfare, both of which resulted in accumulation by dispossession. In the November 27 discussion, Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri bemoaned the gap between the movement's formal ideological position on the Arab Question and the actual events of the war:

> We had a total failure, not in our ideology, but only in the performance of the movement members. The members did not know how to maintain the movement's [ideological] position. In this regard there are basic differences of opinion. This results in a very serious problem of not measuring up. How was our socialism expressed? We did not stand the test of a day-to-day class war. On the Arab question we could have manifested our Marxist position. The Arab Question is the test of socialism. Most members try to solve the problem by using their common sense, not with a socialist solution. The way of the Yishuv leads us to the opposite of what we wish to achieve, to the path of constant warfare with our neighbors. . . . It is not always possible to maintain an army against an enemy who is always ready to resume the fight. The situation would be different if those Arabs could have remained in the country and lived with us in peace.[53]

According to Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri, the "way of the Yishuv"—the Jewish colony in Palestine that became the State of Israel—led to "constant warfare" with their Arab neighbors. His position represents the left wing of MAPAM and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi. Nonetheless, like the rest of his movement, he did not describe the role of the kibbutzim in the war, instead displacing bellicosity to a more abstract structure. In describing his movement's failure to engage in class war, he revealed the myopia of the socialist settlers: perceiving the Arab-Israeli confrontation as a class question while denying the colonial character and ramifications of the project.

The presence of Arabs in the country posed many problems, until war came and "changed reality," said another settler, Lida. Although he did not identify with those supporting transfer and had reservations about "the heat of revenge," Lida thought the refugees should be prevented from returning. In his view, Zionism's two options had been brotherhood of peoples or transfer. During the war, transfer became a viable option among settlers of Hashomer Hatzair. But he feared it would result in living forever "with weapon in hand" and saw a contradiction between the kibbutz's socialist commitments and its positions on the "Arab Question."[54]

At the next kibbutz assembly, Micha Lin, who before 1948 gathered intelligence in the surrounding villages, spoke in favor of transfer:

I am against sentimentality on the Arab Question, and not necessarily because of the annihilation of six million Jews but, rather, to enable large immigration to this country. Where would we house the Arab refugees if such immigration does arrive? I would be willing to allow a certain number of Arabs (three hundred thousand) in, who would serve as a guarantee for peace —out of cold calculation. For keeping the peace in Czechoslovakia, the Sudeten population was removed, and our situation is worse by far. We now have to agree to the return of the effendis and of Ghubayya? And live under the threat of a fifth column? Could we perhaps concentrate them, to keep an eye on them in case of war (which will always break out) and out of regard for the country's security?[55]

Hashomer Hatzair settlers differentiated between effendis and fallahin, arguing that Arab resistance to Zionist settlement did not interest the common people. Calling the refugees effendis justified denying their right to return.

The Zionist settlers' worldview was also informed by other ethnic cleansings during and after World War II (see Confino 2012). Lin and others pointed to the recent example of the German-Czech population of Sudetenland. Nazi Germany, they understood, had used for German expansionism the pretext of protecting German minorities in Russia, Poland, and Czechoslovakia who had settled there centuries earlier. After the war, the Sudetenland Germans, many of whom were Nazi supporters, were expelled to Germany—first spontaneously by the armed forces of the anti-Nazi underground and later in an organized fashion by the new Czech government. German communities were similarly forcibly expelled from other countries. Many saw this as a legitimate and necessary move that would block renewed German expansionism.

For Lin, the rights of settlers who had lived on the land for several decades superseded those of the indigenous population, who might turn into a "fifth column." His argument in favor of allowing some refugees to return was essentially that they would serve as hostages in any future war—reasoning repeated by other participants in the discussion and implied by Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri ("The situation would be different if those Arabs could have remained in the country and lived with us in peace"[56]).

Aryeh Diamant refused to engage with ideological issues. The controversy over the Arab Question could not be resolved. The refugees must not be allowed to return. "There is plenty of room in Syria and Iraq"—places that often came up in the 1940s in discussions of transfer.[57] He did not hesitate to state that, although he accepted the party line, "on the Arab Question" he differed with MAPAM's official stand. Diamant warned, "If not only the Arabs of Nazareth had stayed in the country but hundreds of thousands, who knows how they would behave."[58]

Meir Talmi, a senior MAPAM leader, insisted that expulsion was not a side effect of the war. The British wished "to concentrate hatred by creating a refugee lobby," and the Arab rulers had "an account of defeat" to settle. But most Arabs, he claimed, were actively expelled because "it was necessary," or "they were displaced without having done anything wrong." Wherever there was no order to expel, no expulsion took place: "Nor was it on instinct. I was near Yad Mordechai when an order came through not to expel, and they didn't expel. Micha [Lin] says that for political reasons he wants a certain number of Arabs living here as hostages. Is there any chance of dialogue with these people?" Talmi stood behind what he considered the position of MAPAM. "The return of refugees is not an option. Some who are peace seekers will be returned, not within the present borders," but "within other borders in [Mandate] Palestine."[59]

Kibbutz settlers had practical concerns about the security of their newly enlarged territory. The refugees became a security problem because their property was looted and lands expropriated by the kibbutzim. There was always a potential that the land, the most important means of production, could be taken back by force. Therefore, in their absence, the former Palestinian villages retained something of a frontier character.

Another settler stood out against the other kibbutz members by unequivocally stating that Abu

Shusha inhabitants did not fight against the kibbutz; he also mentioned that the village elders were executed (the archives contain no other reference to this). But his harsh account of the events was not an expression of protest. On the contrary, he considered these actions necessary:

> True, expulsion was unjustified. Abu Shusha village, for example, did not fight us. Its elders were executed. Still, it was a necessity. The Yishuv could not afford to have a fifth column in its midst. Without such a harsh line, our situation would be more difficult. In view of reality, one needs to change one's views regarding the return of refugees, with or despite our wish to have many Arabs in the country.[60]

This settler argued that those in favor of "returning peace-seeking refugees" enabled total arbitrariness. "One can use it to prevent the entry of numerous Arabs, if one is not interested, and if one is, they can be allowed in." He believed that "we must make sure not to allow a large Arab population," but the State of Israel would likely be forced to receive refugees and these must be won over.[61]

The formal position of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi on the refugee question is unclear. Yaʿakov Hazan, a prominent figure in Mishmar ha-Emek and a leader of Hashomer Hatzair and MAPAM, disagreed with Aryeh Diamant: "Aryeh said there is a gap [on the Arab Question], [but] he does not know how deep this gap is, not only on the Arab refugee question but about life as a whole." Hazan shifted the debate to the level of principle. Contrary to Diamant, he asserted a link "between morality and politics," arguing that "one cannot be a socialist without a vision. Without a vision, no regime has any value whatsoever." The vision was what brought him and others to this country. He upheld Hashomer Hatzair's historical position: "We never learned that we must expel Arabs to settle Jews. We never learned this anywhere. Movements are tested in wartime."[62]

Those who sought to maintain the traditional party line on the Arab Question emphasized social differences. The December 12 discussion opened with a lecture by Bernard, who expressed his objection to expulsion, differentiating between crowds of "miserable fallahin" who were "incited" by effendis and the Arab leadership or Arab states. He did not mention the formerly nearby fallahin—the inhabitants of Abu Shusha and al-Ghubayyat—and the history of relations with them but articulated a general ideological position against expulsion. He objected to comparing the Arabs to the Nazis and asked, "Who does the village belong to where Arabs have been living for eight hundred years? It belongs to them. And whoever says no [that it does not belong to them], he is not socialist; he is well on his way to fascism. The Arabs are not [German] Sudetens. The Arabs of Erets Yisraʾel are a miserable mass of fallahin. They are not murderers, they were incited."[63]

Another settler (possibly Eitan Ben-Or, the young kibbutz member who played with the neighbors' children during his visits to Abu Shusha and took part in basketball games at the kibbutz with the children of al-Ghubayyat) acknowledged the rootedness of the local inhabitants and rejected both their expulsion and their transfer outside the area of the Jewish state.[64] Beyond rejecting comparing Palestinians to Sudeten Germans, he gave a practical reason regarding power relations. Behind Czechoslovakia, he reminded his listeners, stood a power. "We are in the opposite situation; the Arabs are the power. . . . We have no moral right to stand in the way [of return] of the Arabs," he claimed. He insisted on maintaining Hashomer Hatzair's plan for settlement, "based on an agricultural development plan" that enabled progress for both Arabs and Jews.

Other settlers opposed the return of refugees under any condition and expressed their satisfaction with the uprooting of Arabs. One legitimated the expulsion of Arabs by raising the hypothetical question What would the Arabs have done if they had won? The departure of the

Arabs was a "favorable development." "Naturally, without war we couldn't have dreamed of it. Fate has given us a unique opportunity and we must use it." Another, Zeʾev, saw this not as a social but a political question. "Therefore I conclude that we must fight the return of refugees as strongly as possible. Naturally, a year ago I would not have held this view, but we must use this rare historical opportunity." The "opportunity" was not simply resistance to the effendis, but the occasion to garner the means of production through which the socialist kibbutz could grow, to gather more dispossessed land.

Another settler, who served as a junior officer in the war, mentioned Hashomer Hatzair members' criticism of the troops' conduct. He admitted that acts of theft and rape had been committed, but he was against "defaming the army" and argued for keeping things in proportion and not centering the negative aspects.[65] In contrast, Lovka Yavzori, who coordinated the security committee during the war (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 120), claimed Hashomer Hatzair's attitude toward the army was "positive and profound" and it had no animus toward the Palmach (cf. Spiegel 2010). But he expressed a different position regarding the refugees. Yavzori was one of the few who addressed what happened "in our own area," meaning perhaps Mishmar ha-Emek's failure to oppose the expulsion of their neighbors.

> Things were done against our will in our own area. The Arab population among us remained peaceful and loyal. It did not fight us. Nor did the British manage to motivate them. The war was waged by external forces, and these will always be against us. . . . Evil originated in the center [of the country]. The cleansing of the Galilee was not war but rather deterioration. This is a fight for the soul of the army, there is no dishonor about it.[66]

Yavzori argued for the return of refugees, although "the international situation might not enable us to do so."

Levi claimed that responsibility for deeds done in wartime—like acts of theft, murder, and rape—lies with the state, not the army. He directed his allegations against "members of Hashomer Hatzair who took part in such acts, as well as Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meʾuhad [the kibbutz movement that had joined in establishing MAPAM but had a more militaristic approach to the Arab Question than did Hashomer Hatzair] and MAPAM, who did nothing to prevent them." He called the collapse and helplessness of Hashomer Hatzair during the war a crisis of "the ideological collective." Referring to the looting in Deir Yassin, he warned that such permissive "savagery" leads to fascism. Levi was well aware that many wished to see the country Arab-free: "We live with a deep contradiction between sentiment and reason. But the political map cannot be built on sentiment, such as comfortably traveling between Haifa and Mishmar ha-Emek, for example, without seeing a single Arab." Levi believed that the modernization of Arab society under Israeli sovereignty would enable the preservation of Hashomer Hatzair under new conditions that could be created in a new era: "If we let the Arabs [inside Israel] have equality, development, clearly their level will be higher than that of other Arabs in the region." He argued for the return of Arabs, although "it is easier without Arabs." He sought to maintain the ideological foundations of Hashomer Hatzair's vision of a shared life: "The binational state is not our ideal—it was, rather, the expression of our vision of life in this land. And it is true that conditions have changed, and we must adapt to the new reality. But we cannot deny the basic precept of life shared by the two peoples."[67] These words echo Theodore Herzl's argument in his novel *Altneuland* that indigenous Arabs would appreciate the benefits and material welfare the Zionist movement would bring to Palestine.

In the last discussion before the national conference of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi, Sabak (Yehoshua Ferenson) noted that the reasons for opposing the return of refugees were not military (or as he put it, strategic) but political: making the most of "the opportunity." He distinguished

between peaceful inhabitants and "gangs" to support the return of refugees. He also offered a strategic reason: expelled Palestinians should not be left outside Israel's borders, because they might become enemies after "our treatment of them during the war."[68]

The discussion concluded with a vote on what the position of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi should be. The motion before the assembly was "when peace comes, we must agree to allow peace-seeking refugees to return, those who acknowledge the sovereignty of the State of Israel, and integrate them into the state's planning and development policies." This position sought the return of only "loyal" refugees, willing to accept Israeli sovereignty and abandon their Palestinian nationality and their ownership of the means of production (the lands now occupied by kibbutzim and other Jewish settlements). In the final tally, fifty-four settlers voted in favor of this motion. Six voted in favor of Zeʾev's motion: "For the good of the State of Israel, the refugees should not be allowed to return." Yohanan's motion, essentially postponing the issue ("When peace comes, the State of Israel will discuss the possibility of the return of refugees"), garnered twenty votes. Six settlers abstained.[69]

At Kibbutz Hazorea, as we have seen, there was a heated discussion about looting in the neighboring villages. There is no documentation of such a discussion at Mishmar ha-Emek. This difference might be partly due to minutes of the discussion at Hazorea being written very soon after the expulsion, whereas for Mishmar ha-Emek, the available documentation is of discussions held about nine months later. But this delay cannot explain the near total absence of any mention of the fate of neighboring Arab villages.

The contrast is even more stark if we accept the account noted in the preceding of MAPAM's leaders, including Yaʿakov Hazan, asking Ben-Gurion to have the neighboring inhabitants expelled. By May 1948, Aharon Cohen, one of Hashomer Hatzair's leading Arab experts, had proposed accepting a return of refugees. His activism prompted MAPAM to officially protest the army's maltreatment of the civilian Arab population with a resolution opposing "the tendency to expel the Arabs from the areas of the Jewish state" (Beinin 1990, 33–34). This resolution did not, however, advocate the return of refugees. We can only wonder whether MAPAM's ideological opposition to mainstream Zionist policy on the refugees affected the scope of expulsion.

In all the preparatory discussions for the national Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi conference at Mishmar ha-Emek, there were only two references to neighboring villages. Dudya affirmed that Abu Shusha did not participate in assaults against the kibbutz but nonetheless stated that inhabitants had to be expelled. Micha Lin raised the rhetorical question Did kibbutz settlers really wish to see the al-Ghubayyat inhabitants return? In both cases, the aim was to justify expulsion.

After years of living as neighbors, and despite the considerable weight of avowedly good neighborly relations in the self-image of Mishmar ha-Emek settlers, their discussions did not show any concern for the neighboring villages. This indicates a deep rift between the kibbutz settlers' left-socialist ideology and their colonization practices. Thus, the ostensible divide between the Zionist Left and Right was not as great as the Left imagined. The refugee issue remained a topic for an ideological debate, with little concrete mention of the fate of the neighbors and their villages. Members of Mishmar ha-Emek directed criticism at bodies outside the kibbutz—the army for its conduct during the war, official government policy, or at times, the leadership of Hashomer Hatzair and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi. But the general thrust of the discussions was an inward-looking reckoning with the kibbutz's ideology.

EIN HASHOFET AND AL-KAFRAYN

There is little evidence about Ein Hashofet's relations with its neighboring villages, not even the

closest one, al-Kafrayn. In March 1947, Dalia, Ramat Ha-Shofet, and Ein Hashofet received a letter addressed to all three kibbutzim from the Efrayim / Plain of Manasseh regional council requesting that they sever all trade relations with al-Kafrayn, a customary strategic practice of the Zionist institutions during times of tension.[70] The letter suggests the extent to which decisions about relations with the Arab neighbors were made beyond the kibbutz community, at the regional or even national level. The kibbutz hosted Haganah troops from Haifa as well as the Yiftah brigade of the Palmach. There is no documentary evidence of interactions between Ein Hashofet and al-Kafrayn from March until the sharpening of tensions following the adoption of the UN partition plan on November 29, 1947.

In April 1948 Elisha Lin was wounded by a shot from a sniper. Kibbutz Ein Hashofet considered this the opening shot of hostilities. On April 10, Shmuel Ben Tzvi wrote in his journal:

> In the morning hours our men conquered Ghubayya al-Foqa and Abu Shusha. They demolished these two villages, the first in its entirety except for some ruins, and the second mostly burned. Casualties were minimal for such an extensive operation— two dead and several wounded.[71]

After the villages were conquered, looted objects appeared in the kibbutz. Dov Vardi, a settler born in 1913 in Brooklyn who immigrated in 1939, documented a conversation after the looting with a youth group he was counseling:

> Sunday, April 11. . . . A short conversation took place today in the group about looted objects from the villages that began to appear among the youngsters, and I stressed that studies must go on as usual. But how difficult this is! The kibbutz is abuzz because of our men who have assembled here. The battles and cleansing of the area continue. It is hard to make the children concentrate, and when we do this demands such efforts on our part![72]

After al-Kafrayn was conquered, orders were issued to blow up its houses to prevent the return of its inhabitants (Ezov 2013, 208). Shmuel Ben-Tzvi heard the blasts reverberating in Ein Hashofet:

> The entire kibbutz was startled by the blast that shook all the window panes. It was the demolition of houses in al-Kafrayn. Our men found the village deserted. They blew up eighteen houses and left. They [al-Kafrayn's inhabitants] feared the Jews (al-Rihaniyya's villagers also left). This morning we saw smoke billowing out of al-Kafrayn. Slowly the villagers began to return, taking the Umm al-Fahm path leading to the village. Our men working out in the fields received several warnings and returned home. The general feeling is that we must be prepared for a reprisal on the part of al-Kafrayn. Although one can hardly imagine how [the inhabitants] of village after village of cultivators get up and run in fright.[73]

Ben-Tzvi continued with the majestic depiction of sunrise over the valley that opens this chapter.

The three kibbutzim deployed similar patterns of settler colonial discourse during the 1948 war. They also used their left-socialist worldview to formulate a racialized representation of class relations that rendered some Arabs acceptable and others deserving of expulsion. Ultimately, this distinction had no effect on who was actually expelled.

In recounting how settlers made sense of their place in the wider context of expanding Zionist semisovereignty and the establishment of the Jewish state, I have been less interested in what could have been and more attuned to the historical circumstances that informed their conceptualization of their roles. Despite the settlers' assertions of an ethics of peace, a common paradigm emerged in which some of them (most evidently at Hazorea) believed from the beginning that at least some Arab villages would have to be emptied for the security of their kibbutz. Some settlers acknowledged the rootedness of the Arabs, even as they anticipated their displacement. The only way to make sense of this is to treat Zionism as a syncretic concatenation of ideologies and practices and consider the dialectical relationship between the discursive and ideological realms and materialist settler colonial practices. Hashomer Hatzair's socialist ideology enabled the justification of accumulation by dispossession that defines settler

colonialism. The justificatory regime of race or the civilizing mission did not *follow* the process of accumulation. They were inextricable.

Chapter 5

SETTLER COLONIAL MEMORY: BETWEEN RECOGNIZING AND DISAVOWING

THE TRANSMISSION, PRESERVATION, AND MODIFICATION OF memory are critical junctures in a culture's making (Halbwachs 1992; Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy 2011; Ricoeur 2010) and a form of cultural and informational capital (Bourdieu [1984] 2000). Settler colonialism relies on memory as one element in its repertoire of legitimation tactics in the contention over the distribution of power and resources (Bruyneel 2021; cf. Confino 2015; and Slyomovics 1998). Understanding the complex social field of settler colonialism and its set of logics requires attending to cultural production, cognition, and symbolic actions of both the dominated and the dominant.

Because memory is constituted by hierarchical social relations, it prefigures access to material and social privileges. Sociological theories of collective memory have carefully traced how certain memories become dominant, particularly in institutionalized state cultural production (Olick and Robbins 1998), and also examined subaltern memory and suppressed histories (e.g., Alexander et al. 2004). Precisely in the spaces of fractured local, rather than homogenized national, memory we can locate the conceptual tools to subvert the false symmetry of the memories of the colonizers and the colonized and track the cultural, historical, and epistemological processes that legitimate claims to territory. Artifacts produced by the colonized Palestinians are often rare or unrecoverable. So records of Zionist settler colonial memory can be useful to trace the inner workings of power through the meanings attached to social actions and to retrieve subaltern sociopolitical forces and comprehend them within larger structures.

Memory practices are central to the legitimation of territorial sovereignty in historical Palestine. Memory buttresses territorial claims by rationalizing presence and possession. Oral representations of the past, print materials, and archival documents are the organized form of memory. Constructing a specific form of Zionist Israeli memory sustains the contemporary colonial apparatus. However, it cannot exclude the indigenous Palestinian Arabs from the project of remembering. A key characteristic of settler colonial memory is that it tethers settlers to the indigenous in simultaneous recognition and disavowal.

Most scholarship on Israeli collective memory deals with public and official representations of the past, largely overlooking the constitutive relations between Zionist settlers or Jewish Israelis with Palestinians, although this is changing.[1] A focus on colonies of Hashomer Hatzair that claimed to have maintained good relations with their Palestinian neighbors, including daily social and economic interactions, enables us to connect nationally patterned meaning making to more fractured local modes of representing the past. The three Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz colonies in Marj Ibn ʿAmr / Jezreel Valley—Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet, all of which came to possess the home/land of their onetime Palestinian neighbors—repeatedly invoked the memories of the displaced Palestinian villages and their inhabitants. I ask, How have memory and forgetting been organized and wielded among the kibbutzim? How have settlers' memories reproduced, legitimated, erased, or questioned their settler colonial practices?

SETTLER COLONIAL MEMORY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

The assertion of spatial belonging and the justification of the material process of territorial replacement often take the form of memories following the moment of settlement. Memory can justify past deeds and legitimate enduring privileges. Yet it can also raise unsettling questions about individual complicity in violence and its perpetration. Memory making can thus provide a unique "portrait of the colonizer" (Memmi 2003, 9) for understanding how settler colonizers perceive and present themselves and the colonized.

Albert Memmi (2003) articulated the ideological and epistemological principles that impel settler colonizers to embrace racial superiority, material inequality, and colonial domination. More than a critical vocabulary, the framework he provides is for understanding how colonialism's social formations are not only ruinous to those they oppress (the colonized) but shape how dominant status is (re)produced. Memmi's historical cases (the French settler colonies of Algeria and Tunisia) and Zionist settler colonialism are not absolutely commensurable. But to deny any basis for comparison is equally unhelpful. One must recognize the unique character of the European Zionist settlers, who were themselves victims of racial domination, exclusion, and extermination, and the Zionist settlement project is itself embedded in structures of subordination.

Jewish victimhood in the ruins of the Nazi Holocaust is a central theme in the field of memory studies. For many years there was a severe taboo against connecting the Holocaust and the Nakba in any way. Edward Said was an early voice challenging this taboo by describing Palestinians as "the victims of the victims, the refugees of the refugees."[2] Until recently, asserting this connection remained beyond the pale for Israelis (for an exception, see Bashir and Goldberg 2019). Sayigh (1979, 52) argues that Palestinian trauma has largely been excluded from the "trauma genre" because of the political closure of "moral communities." Just as discussions of the Holocaust are typically embedded in an exceptionalism that isolates it from the ideologies and practices of European colonial and imperial history (Arendt 1973, Shenhav 2013, and others write against this exceptionalism), the study of Jewish Israeli memory has been dislodged from its settler colonial context.

SITUATING ZIONIST SETTLER COLONIAL MEMORY

Since the 1990s, scholarship on what might be called counterhegemonic memories of Israel/Palestine has emerged (e.g., Ben-Yehuda 1995; Feige 1999; Grinberg 2000; Halperin 2021; Katriel 1997; Kassem 2011; Saʾdi 2002; Saʾdi and Abu-Lughod 2007; Sorek 2015; Zerubavel 1995). Like standard Zionist memory production, many of these studies focus on institutional representations of the past (memorials, monuments, museums, educational programs, parades) on a national scale. Counterhegemonic accounts of Zionism and Israeli society conventionally contend that the memory of the approximately 418 depopulated Palestinian villages[3] has been subject to loss or erasure (through ethnic cleansing) from the Jewish Israeli public sphere.[4] In this view, the material erasure of Palestinian villages parallels their discursive erasure in nearly all public spheres by ideological state apparatuses, including educational textbooks, official and state-supported historiography, media, maps, and road signs (Beinin 2005; Benvenisti 1997, 2000; Kadman 2015; Masalha 2015).[5] Beinin (2005, 10), for example, discusses "learning to forget," in which memories of destruction are strategically excluded from Israeli categories of knowledge.

Attending to practices of erasure is crucial to revealing how material hierarchies are sustained.

Despite the significance of the literature cited in the preceding, its assumptions about the nature of memory—most prominently that hegemonic memory entails forgetting and erasing, whereas subaltern memory entails resisting through remembering—may inhibit a more "multidirectional" analysis (Rothberg 2016). In contrast to studies that focus on the obliteration of Palestinian villages and their disappearance from the official collective memory in Israel (the term *collective* is highly debated; see Algazi 2014 and Bastide 1978), I highlight a different form of memory among socialist-Zionist kibbutzim. Transcending the binary of remembering and forgetting is necessary, not because such a binary is erroneous, but because it elides a central feature of settler colonial microlevel memory: the simultaneous process of recognition and disavowal. Rather than simply becoming a tool for the invention of tradition, producing allegiance to a constructed national identity or national mythmaking (see Zubrzycki and Woźny 2020), the memory production of settlers on the frontier who interacted extensively with the indigenous inhabitants is a social practice that entails fractured, contingent, and strategic dimensions that legitimate territorial accumulation, dispossession, spatial presence, and ultimately, replacement.

Memmi (2003, 13, 100) provides a method to incorporate the Israeli/Palestinian case into memory studies by arguing that colonization is an all-encompassing system. "For if colonization destroys the colonized, it also rots the colonizer." In the entangled reality of settler colonialism, and especially on the frontier of settlement, actions committed against the colonized simultaneously make the colonizer. Settler privileges are constituted by expropriation of the indigenous population, through both material and discursive practices.

Memmi deconstructs the processes that go into assembling an apparatus of settler privilege, offering a comparative-historical basis that can be used to assess the implications of settler colonial denialism by the leftist Zionists through the construction of selective memory:

> Accepting the reality of being a colonizer means agreeing to be a nonlegitimate privileged person, that is, a usurper. To be sure, a usurper claims his place and, if need be, will defend it by every means at his disposal. This amounts to saying that at the very time of his triumph, he admits that what triumphs in him is an image which he condemns. . . . He endeavors to falsify history, he rewrites laws, he would extinguish memories—anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy. (Memmi 2003, 96)

Socialist-Zionist settlers did not see themselves as usurpers. Rather, they understood their claim to territory and sovereignty through the convergence of their religion of labor and the unquestioned Jewish right to return to Palestine, while they denied the consequences of their settlement for the Palestinian Arab indigenous community. But their anxieties and subsequent *structural* denial can be retrieved through the fissures of memory production. Settlers misinterpret their own political character (Memmi 2003). For Zionist settlers, it was not their presence or acts of settlement that constituted the core of the problem but the resistance they faced and the need to suppress it that caused their unease.

> Having become aware of the unjust relationship which ties him to the colonized, [the colonizer] must continually attempt to absolve himself. He never forgets to make a public show of his own virtues, and will argue with vehemence to appear heroic and great. At the same time his privileges arise just as much from his glory as from degrading the colonized. He will persist in degrading them, using the darkest colors to depict them. If need be, he will act to devalue them, annihilate them. (Memmi 2003, 98)

This degradation is evident in the memories of Zionist settlers, in their discursive relegation of the Palestinians and in their adherence to a belief that whatever happened was not related to their settlement and displacement efforts. The absolution from foundational violence, or the move to claim irreproachability from what was deemed a larger national conflict, obfuscates the diverse and often contradictory tactics of settler colonialism on the ground. Memmi identified the colonizers' "double reconstruction":

> There is one final act of distortion. The servitude of the colonized seemed scandalous to the colonizer and forced him to

explain it away under the pain of ending the scandal and threatening his own existence. Thanks to a double reconstruction of the colonized and himself, he is able both to justify and reassure himself. (2003, 119)

A theory of settler colonialism must attend to the epistemological and representational moments of subjectivity formation and to the mechanisms that enable the continuation of violence. One way to do so is by examining the process of memory production of the settler colonizers, whether inadvertent or deliberate. This epistemological labor reveals the multifaceted, contested, yet nevertheless productive force of settler colonialism. Ricoeur (2010, 235) contends, "It is in terms of representation that what memory intends can be formulated insofar as it is said to be about the past." It is here, in memorial representations, that I begin my analysis of memory in the kibbutzim.

SELECTIVE MODES OF REPRESENTATIONS: MEMORY, FORGETFULNESS, AND ERASURE

Recall that in the Zionist politico-cultural context Hashomer Hatzair represented the radical left wing. The movement's main slogan advocated Zionism, socialism, and the brotherhood of peoples, which was expressed in their version of binationalism (see Ben-Tov 1946). Unlike other Zionist settlement movements, Hashomer Hatzair's kibbutzim fostered social relations with neighboring Palestinian villagers. Yet as we have seen in chapters 1–4, the movement also played a major role in the settler colonial project before 1948, dotting fertile areas of historical Palestine with colonies to establish the territorial contiguity desired for a future sovereign Jewish state. Hashomer Hatzair opposed certain hegemonic precepts in the Zionist movement while embracing an active role in the colonization of Palestine.

Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet cultivated social and economic relations with the neighboring Palestinian villagers. During the Nakba, all the villages in the Bilad al-Ruha region were depopulated, including those whose lands and property were taken over by these three kibbutzim.

How did these Zionist settlers, who upheld a socialist and collectivist ideology, make sense of this dispossession and exploitation? In Lockean liberalism, legitimate ownership of land is established through labor, by making land productive. This principle has historically formed a legitimating basis to expel or expropriate indigenous territory, because the natives can be deemed nonproductive (Wolfe 2016a). Socialist-Zionist colonization deployed a similar principle of legitimation based on A. D. Gordon's reworking of liberal thought (Gordon 1997). The settlers implemented the slogan of Jewish labor, which sought to exclude non-Jews from the labor market wherever possible. Imported capital allowed the settlers to become more productive and therefore more worthy than the indigenous Palestinians. Socialist Zionism did not rely on liberal capitalist terminology. But it did rely on a capitalist understanding of ownership, and its implementation on the ground by kibbutz settlers reveals that the practices of colonization were akin to primitive capital accumulation. The socialist negation of private property in the kibbutz is not so much contradictory as it is realized for an exclusive group—Zionist settlers. Ultimately, they believed their productive labor established the basis for their just sovereignty.

Testimonies from these kibbutzim demonstrate that erasure is insufficient to conceptualize relations between a settler colonial society and its memorial practices vis-à-vis the indigenous. The kibbutz settlers did not fully conceal or eradicate memories of the Palestinian villages and their inhabitants (the Arab neighbors, as kibbutz members called them). Rather, they are a fundamental component of the settler colonial representation of the past through memory. The local history and narratives of the three kibbutzim are anchored in their references to the

Palestinian villages. Although the villages themselves were destroyed, they continued to exist in the kibbutz consciousness—in children's stories, kibbutz anniversary anthologies, interviews with veteran kibbutz members, and kibbutz publications. The kibbutzim did not erase the entire memory of the villages, but their memories exclude their acts of forcibly appropriating land and property.

Different sources produced at different times point to a productive tension. Memory recall decades after historical events might allow more forthright reflections on historical violence. But such memories also become embedded in long-crystalized nationalist politics and myths. Synchronic reflections—during or directly following events—may be less clouded by post hoc mythmaking. Yet they are no less entwined in the leftist Zionist classification struggle over whose social action most impelled the so-called revolutionary project. The kibbutz archives are organized in a way that reveals that the settlers consciously and comprehensively labored to memorialize their efforts, ensuring that the past *as they perceived it* would be preserved and recognized for the settlers' contributions to the Zionist project (Sabbagh-Khoury 2022b).

My method is to read *along* the grain of the settler colonial archive to explicate the constitutive processes in consciousness and culture that took part in consolidating settler sovereignty (Stoler 2008). This entails, similarly to ethnographic fieldwork, attempting to fit meaning making into its original social contexts. The "portrait of the colonizer" (Memmi 2003) that emerges from the archived memories of Hashomer Hatzair colonies' representations of the Palestinians not only reflects but produces how the settlers understood themselves as imbricated (or not) in political processes of replacement and dispossession.

In early twentieth-century Palestine, socialist-Zionist settlers who were engaged in coerced territorial redistribution generally did not see their colonization practices as being at odds with their commitment to collectivist cooperation and class liberation. This is not a matter of hypocrisy but a dialectic that constituted socialist-Zionist kibbutzim and the entire labor Zionist settlement movement. Notwithstanding their disavowal of responsibility for their material role in dispossessing Palestinians of territory and sovereignty, the kibbutz settlers *did* debate their role in the Zionist national project and reacted to the disappearance of Palestinian villages. They certainly did not obliterate this history from their consciousness.

Mishmar ha-Emek's archive, for example, contains a 1994 interview with Elisha Lin, a prominent veteran of Mishmar ha-Emek, who offered a detailed recollection of the former Palestinian presence:

> To the east: Ghubbaya Tahta [Lower Ghubbaya]. . . . To the south: Kufreyn [al-Kafrayn]. The meaning of its name is "two villages," a large, hostile village. According to its inhabitants, this village included people from Umm al-Fahm and Umm az Zinat to cultivate farmland in the hills. Over the years the giant village grew and now resembles a town. There was a village called Hubeiza [Khubayza] (Kibbutz Gilʿad later settled nearby). Further in the direction of Bat Shlomo lay the village of Sindiyana, toward Daliyat a-Ruha [Daliyat al-Ruha] whose lands were purchased by the [Jewish National Fund] and its inhabitants displaced. Near Ramat Hashofet was also the village of Rihaniyya (where the only son of the Jewish governor of the north was killed in a retaliation operation: an Arab came out with a hunting rifle and killed the young man, the only casualty among our forces). To the west: Abu Shusha, our neighboring village. Its inhabitants, Turkmen Arabs who came here as Bedouins 150 years ago and have cultivated their land ever since, especially fruit tree groves. They were poor. Their children had a school whose director, incidentally, was the son of a Jewess from Zichron Yaʾacov and was known as a vehement Jew hater. . . . Further on lay Abu Zureiq, a very hostile village, bypassed by the road. The Arabs there, too, were very dark skinned, like those of Lyd al ʿAwalin [Lydd al-ʿAwadin]. . . . Another village to the west was Qira (between Hazorea and the present Yokneʿam). Its inhabitants left the village after their land had been bought. In all three directions—east, south, and west—lay villages, and to the north, beyond the road, were the fields.[6]

This reads as though Lin were a Palestinian describing the uprooted villages in the area before the Nakba with precision and great knowledge of the surroundings. The complete map of the region is preserved in his memory, and at times he slips into speaking of the villages in the

present tense (al-Kafrayn, nonexistent since 1948). The map is not empty. Lin names the Jewish settlements that replaced the Palestinian villages yet describes few concrete details about the villages and virtually nothing about what befell them. The gaze is external; the only interactions in Lin's account are the villages' relationship to the Jewish settlement—either peaceful or "hostile"—and Arab assaults against settlers.

The 1948 political conferences of MAPAM and Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi considered control of Palestinian lands and property as temporary until the return of the refugees. Nonetheless, during the war, the kibbutzim turned to the Jewish National Fund, the settlement institutions, and later, to the state institutions charged with administering Palestinian property to ensure that the lands of their former neighbors were transferred to their possession and to regulate control over land and property as soon as possible.[7] Kibbutz discussions about the lands and properties of their former neighbors died down in the early 1950s. Normalization of the disappearance of entire villages and their inhabitants took hold relatively quickly, and a significant gap opened between the formal political positions of their movement and the actions of settlers on the ground.

TABLE 5.1. Kibbutz Ein Hashofet cultivation of abandoned lands, 1952

Village name	Dunams
Ein Hashofet (Jo'ara and Daliyat al-Ruha)	2,575
Al-Kafrayn	1,445
Al-Mansi	700
Abu Shusha	330
Al-Lajjun, Rummana, and Zabuba	958
Total	6,008

Source: Reproduced from a letter sent by Kibbutz Ein Hashofet to the Department of Uncultivated Lands, Ministry of Agriculture, Government Offices, most likely in 1952 [date is unclear]. EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

A rich record in the archives of the kibbutzim documents the lands and property of the prestate Palestinian villages expropriated by them, listing them by name and the area transferred to each kibbutz. For example, table 5.1 shows Kibbutz Ein Hashofet's "abandoned" dunams as of 1952. As time passed, the origin of the lands was blurred and settlers no longer needed to demarcate plots of land by ascribing them to former villages in the area. Yet even after the Palestinian origin of kibbutz lands was blurred, memory of the villages' existence did not vanish from the kibbutzim. Consciousness of the villages' lands persisted, because the land was valuable for the kibbutzim's expansion. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between memory of the villages and that of lands—that is, to differentiate between the memory of villages and their inhabitants and their property and resources.

SETTLER COLONIAL REPRESENTATIONS

To transcend the binary of forgetting and remembering, I propose five modes of representation

and construction of kibbutz memory that varied over time: (1) a distinction between backwardness and primitiveness versus progress and development, (2) a belief that Arabs lacked deep connections to the land, (3) a conviction that there were good neighborly relations between Jewish kibbutzim and Arab villages and that the kibbutzim promoted cultural progress, albeit from the settlers' position of superiority, (4) asymmetrical renderings of belonging to a national collective, and (5) a belief in the legitimacy of land purchase and a reduction of the conflict over land to economic compensation.

Backwardness and Primitiveness versus Progress: Labor and Development

In the typical Orientalist mode of representation, the kibbutz memorial records portray Arab villages in conditions of backwardness and penury; their lands are described as destitute or neglected; their society is primitive and oppressively patriarchal—the opposite of developed settler society. A memory from Mishmar ha-Emek published in 1940 exemplifies the typical portrayal of Palestinian villages and how the settlers perceived themselves in contrast:

> We told them [the Arabs of Abu Shusha] of our grand plans: our desire to found a large cowshed, a coop with thousands of chickens, sheep and goat herds. They shook their heads and said, "These are tall tales. You won't be able to do this here, there's no water. The earth here is infertile." But over the years their minds changed. They saw the tractor plowing. They saw dozens of dunams plowed that very day—and their jaws dropped: such a machine, a wonder machine. They saw how we dug wells and after months of effort, water burst from the depths of the earth. . . . They saw the vegetable beds, the nursery, and fruit tree groves emerge like mushrooms and decorate the hills with their fresh greenery.[8]

The Palestinians' reaction to the "wonder machine" underlines their status as primitives, ignoring that in the neighboring Palestinian village of Abu Zureiq, agricultural machinery was already in use. The settlers' ability to make the wasteland flourish was a claim to a stronger bond to and knowledge of the land than that of its indigenous people, who were unable to decorate the hills with "fresh greenery."

Kibbutz settlers typically described the inhabited center of an Arab locality and rarely its cultivated areas. In 1970, one of Hazorea's first settlers recounted his memory of the neighboring village of Qira:

> There were no trees there back then; it was entirely bare. There were caves, and in front of the caves were small clay huts and only one stone house, a bit larger. Among the houses, various tracks zigzagged . . . and in this village lived Arabs, one or two hundred Arabs, I don't know how many, old Arabs and young Arabs and women, all dressed in black from head to toe. . . . And those Arabs were very poor, because the land was not their own. It belonged to some very rich effendi who lived in Beirut or in Paris.[9]

The name of the village was preserved, but this description indicates that nothing actually remained of it. Except for Khan Qira (the guest house demolished in the 1960s), the village was thoroughly destroyed in 1948 and the site plowed over. The settler painted a picture of Qira as a small, primitive village (in 1945 it was home to 410 Palestinian inhabitants, but after gradual, repeated expulsions by the kibbutz, only 100 remained in 1948). According to the settler, the Arabs lived in miserable conditions and were exploited by foreign "effendis," the landowners. In the socialist-Orientalist schema, Zionist settlers conceived of Palestinians as powerless, exploited feudal serfs, neither their own agents nor a group capable of class consciousness. This conception denied that the land tenure practices and their transformation under British imperial rule facilitated Zionist settlement. The description entirely overlooks the cultivated lands of Qira village, mentioned here only by negation, as something owned from a distance, not by the villagers.

Other settlers, too, depicted the same village as "miserable and poor" (see Ben Yaʿakov 1990, 34). That some inhabitants lived in caves and others in tents and shacks became an essential

characterization that ascribed the inhabitants to another, prehistoric era, literally as cavemen, to a time before modernity and progress. Settlers depicted the Palestinian population as primitive, and therefore ineligible to be rightfully indigenous or subjects who could constitute their own sovereignty, whereas the pre-Yishuv Jews were envisioned as continuing a perpetual Jewish presence in their homeland. The Zionist ideology constructed a selective linear time line of redemption, which relegated the Palestinians to be a people *without* a history, *outside* history, or with a false or fabricated history.

A children's story by one settler repeats the trope of primitiveness: "These lands on which we sit today used to belong to some very rich effendi from Damascus; the lands were farmed for him by poor people living on Qira mountain, simple poor fallahin who had no property because they had to give up most of their harvest to that effendi."[10] The author surmised that "those Arabs lived so very miserably in caves on Qira mountain" and, after their forced displacement, they relocated to a "lovely village," Kaʿbiyya. Here the expulsion of the peasants is part of their progress whereas the settlers built a new place and form of living worthy of notice. Backwardness justified the erasure of the Palestinians from their land.

The Palestinian villages also appear in a memorial book produced for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Ein Hashofet, which divided local history into four periods: prehistoric, Canaanite Israelite, Hellenistic, and Arab (Ein Hashofet 1962).[11] The Canaanite-Israelite period was described in relation to the biblical story of the fortress of Megiddo, with Beit Ras and Joʾara being frontiers. The kibbutz had in its possession an ivory scarab from the Hyksos period and a black stone figurine from about 1200–800 BCE. The Jewish inhabitants at this time were described as farmers who traded with other inhabitants of the area. Thus, the Palestinian village of Joʾara—which was displaced to make way for Ein Hashofet—was integrated into the biblical landscape. In the Canaanite-Israelite period, "Jewish inhabitants" were farmers, whereas in the Arab period, Palestinian villages were described as scantly populated and the land "desolate," an obstruction of the "true history" of the place. The book juxtaposes a glorious ancient Israelite past with Arab decline and misery. In this history, al-Kafrayn "was destroyed" in 1948, with no indication of how this occurred or how and when Joʾara was uprooted.

Modern Jewish settlement is presented as more productive, more efficiently using the land, and therefore superior to the "desolate" indigenous villagers, a description that contradicts the Zionist settlers' contemporary descriptions of the numerous Palestinian villages in the area in the 1930s and 1940s.

> The rocky wasteland is now covered by the Menashe forest, and most of this rock-strewn land is now fruit tree groves, vegetable gardens, and grain fields. . . . A visitor at the Plain [of Manasseh] today could not imagine that this blooming region was a desolate rocky wasteland only thirty years ago, uninhabited but for some impoverished and miserable Arab villages.[12]

In this mode of representation, settler colonialism erases the indigenous but conjures them symbolically to mark its own uniqueness (Wolfe 2006). This is not specific to the Israeli context. Such tactics have played a role in justificatory regimes in other cases of settler colonialism.

What differentiates the kibbutz settlers from other colonial settlers, and from right-wing Zionist settlers, was their belief in socialism (freedom from exploitation by capital and the formation of a classless society) and progress (developing the technical capacity of the means of production). Capitalism was certainly an impetus in other settler colonial cases and was also a factor in some elements of the Zionist project (e.g., in the citrus sector). However, the history of Zionism is distinct because of the prominent role of anti-capitalist ideologies in the colonization process. The logic of socialist modernity was translated into a settler colonial civilizing discourse.

Negating Rootedness and Reinforcing Nomadness: The Arabs' Lack of Deep Ties

As in other instances of settler colonialism, kibbutz settlers described Palestinians of the neighboring villages as rootless (Wolfe 2006; Veracini 2010). They were depicted as nomadic Bedouins, or people whose origins were elsewhere, although they were not strictly nomadic and were primarily engaged in agriculture and farming. Considering them as nomads made transferring them from their villages merely an issue of economic compensation. An article in *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek,* the kibbutz newsletter, "Our Arab Former Neighbors Were Not Arabs," reiterated the well-known fact that many of the neighboring villagers were of Turkmen origin; the message is mostly a negation of anything Arab—and thus their indigeneity:

> The Turkmen villagers are descendants of Turkish tribes from Asia Minor. They first appeared in the history of the land in the twelfth century. . . . Small Turkmen tribes settled around Haifa, in the western Jezreel Valley, and in the northern Sharon area. . . . During the British Mandate the Turkmen put up tents and clay huts, and over time, small villages appeared in their habitat between Megiddo and Yokneʿam. They also gave up their herds and proceeded to cultivate the land. . . . During the War of Independence the Turkmen assisted Arab gangs that fought the Jews around Mishmar ha-Emek. When the Jewish combatants gained the upper hand, the Arabs escaped the entire region, and along with them, the Turkmen evacuated their small villages, which turned into piles of rubble.[13]

This story offers a striking depiction of disavowal. It was not Jewish combatants who actively turned the once-populated villages to rubble. Rather, the villages themselves passively "turned into" rubble, with no active agent mentioned. Hence the ideology of brotherhood of nations remains intact and national events (the war), rather than settlers' actions, are responsible for the destruction of the villages.

This dialogue between Hazorea settlers recounting their memories similarly accentuates the rootlessness of the indigenous population:

> ARNON TAMIR: But they considered themselves Arabs?
>
> YOHANAN BEN-YAʿAKOV: Definitely!
>
> TAMIR: How did they [Abu Zureiq inhabitants] get here?
>
> BEN-YAʿAKOV: I don't know history. *I believe they came from Turkey at some point*. There is literature that the kibbutz members have collected. Anyway, they had not always been here.[14]

Emphasizing the nonlocal origins of the Palestinian inhabitants allows a smoother presentation of Zionist colonialism as resettlement of the promised land. But kibbutz narratives contain hardly any references to claims of a promised land because of Hashomer Hatzair's militantly secularist outlook. Yitzhak Ben Shemesh of Ein Hashofet is a partial exception in this respect, although he attributes to local Palestinians the belief in a proto-Zionist prophecy about Jews returning to their land.

> A prophecy convinced some of the Kafrayn villagers to sit tight on their *mulk* ground and even help the Jews settling the Plain [of Manasseh / Ramot Menashe] with food, equipment, and mediation in land purchases. The Arabs of Kafrayn never believed the Jews would expel them, but on the day al-Qawuqji's armed assault was repelled at Mishmar ha-Emek (April 12, 1948), Palmach forces charged the village with gunshots in the air and beatings. Kafrayn's inhabitants did not resist.[15]

This exceptional invocation of prophecy is deployed to ask who is *more* rooted in the land—the Jews or the Arabs? The answer provided here, the Jews, legitimates Jewish settlement in the promised land. This idea circulated even among secular socialist settlers, whose logic is encapsulated by Raz-Krakotzkin's (2005) witty aphorism "God doesn't exist, but he promised us the land."

Ben Shemesh's recollection about al-Kafrayn notwithstanding, Palestinian survivors who remained in their homeland after 1948 and those who were expelled from historical Palestine who continue to claim their right to their lands reject the Zionist claims that they are not deeply rooted in the land.[16] One salient expression is the issue of refugees' right to return, which

constitutes a main point of contention between Palestinians and the State of Israel.

Good Neighborly Relations and the Promotion of Cultural Progress from the Settlers' Position of Superiority

Another mode of representation Zionists used in depicting Arab villages was the claim that the kibbutzim and neighboring villages maintained mutually beneficial relations and that the kibbutzim promoted cultural progress. Hashomer Hatzair perceived good neighborly relations as proof of a possible solution to the tension between the settler colonial project and kibbutz settlers' commitment to humanist and socialist ideals.[17] Kibbutz settlers acknowledged that there may have been petty local conflicts between Jews and Arabs. But larger conflicts were due to external factors inciting the local inhabitants. However, as we have seen, most Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz settlers had few interactions with their Palestinian neighbors; most of the relationships that did exist were facilitated by a small group of settlers who specialized in these contacts.

In a memorial book published to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of Kibbutz Hazorea, five pages are dedicated to relations with Arab neighbors, under the subheading "We Are Brothers" (Kibbutz Hazorea 1996, 77–81). Articles written by kibbutz settlers are accompanied by four photos captioned, respectively, "Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov and the [Arab] guards at the Khan, 1935," "Qira, 1940," "A neighborly visit 1941," and "Efrayim Levi with an acquaintance from Ein Mahil, 1976." The photos and captions reflect the kibbutz settlers' belief that they maintained good relations with their Arab neighbors.

This kibbutz memory was transmitted to the younger generation in the game Treasure Hunt (created in 1988), a riddle with large sections of text reviewing the history of Zionist settlement. The solution to the game's riddle ends with a description of the villagers of Abu Zureiq escaping their homes as kibbutz settlers look on. The destruction of the village is not presented as a consequence of a long-term conflict or a settler colonial process resulting in the uprooting of villagers but, rather, as the disappointing end of an attempt to create good neighborly relations. "This brought to an end years of creating and maintaining good neighborly relations that, even if they did not include all the members of the kibbutz, still made up an integral part of the values, beliefs, and hopes that the founders aspired to lay as the kibbutz's ideological foundation."[18]

Similar sentiments were expressed by Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri, a veteran settler of Mishmar ha-Emek, who recalled in 1976,

> Relations with the neighbors were based not only on mutual visits but also on mutual assistance. From our neighbors we first learned about the conditions of our environment, the rainy season and winter and summer sowing of grains, as well as about other neighbors near and far. Then they began to learn from us, having witnessed our achievements. Our influence brought the villages such innovations as the petrol lamp and the European plow. At our clinic they received extensive medical care from the doctor . . . and from the nurse. . . . Many Arabs came asking for help and advice in their farmwork and would turn to the different persons in charge of our agriculture branches. . . . Naturally, our advice and help were always offered willingly, and thus the Arabs became regular guests in our yard and dining hall.[19]

Ironically, for a movement that deployed progress to legitimate its ownership of land, it was the indigenous Palestinians who instructed settlers about the characteristics of the land and their environment. No amount of modern machinery or science (which some Palestinians were already using) could replace indigenous knowledge, which the settlers acknowledged as valuable. But even this terse memory creates a hierarchical division: indigenous are described in relation to the natural and are therefore primitive versus settlers who possess scientific knowledge and technology (doctors, machinery, pesticides) and are therefore modern. Other veterans similarly represented the founding of the kibbutzim as beneficial to Palestinians.[20] This is a fundamental element of Zionist epistemology and the justificatory apparatus that legitimated the dispossession

and expulsion of the indigenous Arabs.

Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri's recollection is among many that mention the villagers' visits to kibbutz medical clinics. In other colonial contexts, too, health is a criterion of progress and thus of European superiority.[21] In this discourse, colonial services enhance the welfare of the indigenous population. Memories of providing medical services obfuscate the relationship of colonizer and colonized and divert discussion from the settler colonizer as appropriator of resources to that of the benevolent settler colonial savior.

The expropriation of Palestinian village lands reduced their cultivable area, stalled their development, and in some cases (e.g., Joʾara and Qira) caused their full or partial uprooting before 1948. Nonetheless, the Zionists saw themselves as the only builders of the land:

> A central ethos of the Jewish population was that of building. The Yishuv in general and the labor movement in particular saw themselves as builders of the land. Claim of the land is won first and foremost by work, and eventually the land would belong to those who redeemed it and made the wasteland inhabitable. Settlement, building, making the land bloom, these were an ethos (namely, a set of committing moral precepts), as well as mythos—namely, a weaving together of legend and reality that shapes and guides one's emotional relation to one's surrounding reality. (Shapira 2004, 133)

Palestinian refugees I interviewed from the Marj Ibn ʿAmr region, with few exceptions, recalled its plentiful agricultural products. In addition, Palestinians on the frontier of settlement were shaped by urbanization and modernization in cities like Haifa (on modernization, see M. Seikaly 2001; S. Seikaly 2015). Yet the kibbutzim refused to regard the transformation of the Palestinian society on its own terms and instead saw themselves as the only source of progress and modernity.

Another component in the narrative of disseminating progress—the founding of schools in Arab villages—was not actually a documented practice but a fantasy, expressing some settlers' perception that the indigenous learned everything from them. The three villages neighboring Mishmar ha-Emek—al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, and al-Naghnaghiyya—shared a school that was founded in the early days of the British Mandate.

Asymmetrical Renderings of Belonging to a National Collective

In this mode of remembering, Palestinian villages were perceived as isolated spots, as if each existed on its own with no connection to Palestinian society at large. By contrast, Jewish settlers were perceived as an integral part of a social-national whole. Accordingly, Palestinian villages' local expressions of opposition were attributed to external incitement. Armed Palestinian forces were regarded as completely unacceptable, whereas the presence of armed Jewish forces (Haganah and Palmach) was self-evidently positive. Only in 1948 did their Arab neighbors become, in the eyes of kibbutz settlers, part of the larger Arab nation, but the kibbutzim claimed no responsibility for the actions of the larger Jewish nation in Palestine.

Denial of the collective and national components of the conflict in kibbutz memory played a major part in representing the relations between the kibbutzim and the villages. The words *Palestine* or *Palestinians* rarely appear in kibbutz documents. This absence is vital to presenting the relations of the kibbutzim with their Arab surroundings as based on good neighborliness. At times, this practice appears as an actual denial of hostile relations. For example, one settler recalled the relations between Hazorea and Abu Zureiq:

> From the onset, relations were different with the neighboring village of Abu Zureiq which until late 1947 inhabited its *mushaʿa* land. To the kibbutz, Arabs of this village seemed permanent neighbors, and over the years many attempts were made to establish closer ties with them. Kibbutz members found it easier to understand that the Arabs had different rules of conduct, and their flocks entering kibbutz fields, thefts of fruit, and so on, did not seem crucial in establishing these relations. This attitude toward the neighbors did not change during the riots of 1936–1938. Kibbutz members knew that the villagers occasionally took shots at the kibbutz at night. But fortunately no one was hurt, and more serious assaults were carried out by

gangs coming from far away, rather than by the villagers themselves. (Shatil 1977, 50)

This memory relies on a division between good (although perhaps truculent) Arabs and bad (violent) ones who do not coalesce into a collective. The two modes of in/civility were incommensurable at worst and manageable at best. The mere acknowledgment of neighboring Arab inhabitants as people with willpower demonstrates the settler's conscious awareness of Arab subjectivity and discontent. Kibbutz settlers remembered the Palestinian discontent yet disavowed its causes.

Another recollection from 1976 similarly attributes Arab aggression to external "inciters":

> Some claim that it is an Arab custom to attack, not one's immediate neighbor, but farther away, but no doubt our good relations played their role here. When, after the [1929] riots, the entire group of Mishmar ha-Emek took hold of its site, and we built a large settlement surrounded by a security fence, relations with our neighbors were back to normal.[22]

Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri (1992, 59) recorded a similar memory: "Incidents and minor clashes, at times even violence, never bore signs of a national conflict. To both sides they appeared as neighborly quarrels. . . . Mostly they were smoothed out at meetings of our leaders with the elders of the village whose inhabitants were involved, and only a few instances reached court." Beʾeri confidently stated that there was no "national conflict" but also revealed he was well aware of the power dynamic in the good neighborly relations. Depictions of the enemy as not present in neighboring villages but nearly always in a village farther away continues into descriptions of the 1948 conflict, which often emphasize that neighboring villagers did not take part in the war against the kibbutzim; the violence was waged either by al-Qawuqji's army or by Arab gangs from elsewhere.

Legitimacy of Land Purchase and Conflict's Reduction to Economic Compensation

That land purchased from absentee landowners was legally purchased—and therefore Palestinian tenants had no claims to land after it was sold by its official owners—was frequently repeated in kibbutz memories, ignoring the complex land tenure relations in Palestine. Settler memories pose no contradiction between this view of property rights and Marxian political economy, even as other memory segments emphasize socialist revolution or freedom from an exploitative market society. Nor are there traces of the tension between this view and kibbutz settlers' criticism of Palestinian society: the poverty of the peasants and their subjugation by those whom kibbutz settlers called effendis, the landowners. Settlers perceived Palestinian peasants' insistence on clinging to the land even after it had been purchased from its official owners solely as a matter to be resolved by economic compensation.

> It was well known that the problem of vacating the land [Qira village] of Arab tenants was first and foremost an economic one, the question of the amount of compensation. Anyone close to the matter knew that the main difficulty lay not in the tenants' unwillingness to vacate but, rather, in the internal calculations of the purchasing company [the Palestine Land Development Company]—whom to prioritize when vacating and how to reduce compensation. (Shatil 1977, 49–50)

For this settler, conflict with the Zionist purchasing company, which he claimed preferred the private colony of Yokneʿam, was the main reason for the ongoing friction with the inhabitants of Qira. A purely economic view of colonization understands the process as a series of separate economic steps, not part of a collective process. "Therefore, the various 'conquests,' the takeover of certain plots of land essential to the kibbutz, were not regarded as acts of national hostility, and apparently the other side did not see them as such" (Shatil 1977, 49–50). Because the indigenous Palestinians were not regarded as part of a national collective, Palestinian resistance during the Great Arab Revolt was seen as not resistance to the Zionist project but as the result of pressure from "the gangs that threaten" them.[23]

Arnon Tamir, who raised difficult questions in his kibbutz, Hazorea, expressed the sole reservation in the archival record about the legitimacy of purchasing lands from their official owners and expelling the tenants. In 1938, Hazorea settlers, with the help of the British authorities, vacated some Qira villagers and erected a fence. This action was named "the second conquest." Tamir objected to this term: "Our land takeover, . . . in the chronicles of Hazorea is unpleasantly named *conquest*." In one of several interviews he conducted with veteran kibbutz settlers in 1976, Tamir raised this issue with Uri Bar:

> TAMIR: I'd like to ask again [about] the land over which we expanded our settlement . . . perhaps it's not a pleasant question, but between us it's okay: Was that land also purchased from the tenants?
>
> BAR: Land is purchased from its owners. The tenant, by law at the time, had certain rights, of course, but was never the landowner.
>
> TAMIR: Did we force them to sell?
>
> BAR: We did not force the effendi.
>
> TAMIR: No, I mean the tenants.
>
> BAR: The tenants had excellent protection of the Mandate authorities. There was no room for intrigue. There were those who wished to give us a hard time. Still, let us not forget the basic idea: a scantily populated land, [if] intensively cultivated, can absorb so many more inhabitants by intensive cultivation.
>
> TAMIR: If these had been quarrels among members of the same people, they would have been quite normal quarrels.
>
> BAR: That's right. Kibbutzim among themselves also quarreled over land.
>
> TAMIR: Yes. But things would never have ended up with such results had the national element not come in.
>
> BAR: Still, to conclude this, we should not have lied to ourselves and given over major positions [to the Arabs]. We felt justified in this act. It was very unpleasant, and we would have really wanted it to be done easily, in good will, but it was a necessity and our right to do so. We were not half-hearted about it. Not like after the battle of Abu Sreik [Abu Zureiq, in 1948]. I was among those who led the local captives away. . . . I lived with the illusion that they [the villagers] would return someday.
>
> . . . I wrote, War is war, but they will be back.[24]

For Bar, purchasing land and vacating the tenants before 1948 were categorically legitimate. His position differed on the Abu Zureiq affair, where Palestinian inhabitants were expelled during the Nakba. Nonetheless, the two concluded that the process was inevitable:

> TAMIR: The consideration of using the war to create facts on the ground—. . . I cannot say today whether this was wrong or not. It did relieve things for us considerably for a while and enabled us to establish the state, but whether it brought us closer to a solution, that I doubt.
>
> BAR: We are not going into the question of whether Zionist planning was right or wrong. At certain points along the way, things could have been different, but all in all I think there was no other choice.[25]

The uprooted Palestinian villages still existed in the memory of the settlers. The villagers were known, not well, but their existence was present. But narrowly focusing on economic compensation before 1948 obfuscates the appropriations and expulsions that partially constituted settler semisovereignty before establishment of the State of Israel.

The first four of the five modes of representation and construction of kibbutz memory analyzed in the preceding are familiar from settler colonial discourse elsewhere (see Lloyd and Pulido 2010; Memmi 2003; Veracini 2010). The fifth mode is more specific to the Zionist project, although not absolutely distinctive. Together, they illuminate settler colonialism's governing ethos. All five modes use memory as a justificatory apparatus and as a mechanism to perpetuate the processes and structures of settler colonialism long after the initial dispossession of the indigenous. Historians have long documented the efforts of Zionist and Israeli national historiography to write histories that exclude or minimize the violence and appropriation of the Zionist settler colonial project (Shlaim 1995; Flapan 1987). But the work of memory operates on a more fissured terrain—one that attempts to obfuscate, and at times render mute, questions of complicity and implication in structures of colonial domination while oscillating between

disappearance and presence of the indigenous Palestinian Arabs. Studying the representations of these memories is central to deconstructing the enduring power that animates social relations between the colonizer and colonized in Israel/Palestine. It allows us to rethink the nature of the conflict between Zionism and Palestinians and thereby potential pathways for redress and reconciliation.

Indigenous existence has endured for years in the local memories of post-1948 Israel. Today, the presence of the indigenous in settler memory does not jeopardize the settlers' version of reality. On the contrary, it contributes to a leftist, socialist self-image and moral claims to uphold a brotherhood of nations and binationalism. Selective memory, not absolute erasure, serves the interests of the settlers.

Settler colonial memory is constitutive, rather than simply eliminatory. As Said (1978, 14) wrote, "We can better understand the persistence and the durability of saturating hegemonic systems like culture when we realize that their internal constraints upon writers and thinkers were productive, not unilaterally inhibiting." Said was referring to literature, but the same applies to memory. Memory is constrained by structures and limited in its representational capacity and simultaneously fertile ground for the production and reproduction of repertoires of action and epistemes. Because memory is a malleable tool wielded differentially in different historical contexts, it is a crucial domain of meaning for sociology to address. Disaggregating memory production can illuminate the shifting logics of colonial rule. Critical scholarship should attend to cultural and epistemic as well as material domains concurrently to better explain the role of consciousness in settler colonial replacement.

Chapter 6

REPRESENTATIONS OF 1948: FROM OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION TO CONTROVERSIAL MEMORY

DURING THE 1970S SOME KIBBUTZ SETTLERS BECAME PREOCCUPIED with the 1948 war and its accompanying violence. They transcended simply erasing.[1] Rather, members of Hazorea, Mishmar ha-Emek, and Ein Hashofet developed specific forms of recalling, narrating, and representing the events of 1948, expressing diverse, yet patterned, trends in construction of memory.

Their archives contain numerous sources telling a compound story about these settlers' role in installing Zionist sovereignty. References to acts of expulsion, killing, and dispossession—largely absent or distorted in both official Israeli history and works published by the kibbutzim's internal presses—are at the forefront of some settlers' memories. But only a rare few felt what they termed "pangs of conscience."[2] As the events of 1948 became matters of public discussion in the kibbutzim, only a minority remained concerned by the violence of that year, and the discussions attributed little, if any, responsibility for the Nakba to the Zionist collective. Memories of Zionist heroism and self-defense against the attacks of belligerent Palestinians overshadowed discussion of the kibbutzim's implication in political violence.

Hazorea held public discussions of 1948 on three late twentieth-century occasions (1972, 1976, 1988–1989). Despite some resistance, on two of these occasions Arnon Tamir initiated discussions in reaction to contemporary political events. His memories of 1948 ostensibly haunted him, forming the impetus for raising the thorny subject for discussion with his peers, veterans of the first kibbutz generation. Tamir's memories reveal not merely his individual discomfort; they triggered the social memory of the kibbutz. By bringing up his memories, he activated others' in a public act of recall and accountability.

In Mishmar ha-Emek the brief discussion of the 1948 events was triggered by a film, *Khirbet Khizeh*, shown on Israeli television. At Kibbutz Ein Hashofet, the available documents include no discussion of this topic. Still, a critical resource for tracing attributions of political meaning to past actions and present conditions comes from a collection of fragments Ein Hashofet's archivist, Ofra Brill, assembled from Hashomer Hatzair colonies, mostly relating to abandoned property.

In all three kibbutzim, the documents reveal a gap between official representation of the past and those of the kibbutzim. Alongside the Israeli state's official representations of the 1948 war, the kibbutzim constructed their official narrative around an image of peace-seeking settlements under assault. They advance the claim of a just war of self-defense and center the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek as the main framework for understanding the "departure" (in the settlers' terminology) of neighboring Palestinians from their villages. However, in unpublished memoirs, discussions among themselves, and at times even in published memoirs, the representations of 1948 differ from the official kibbutz narrative.

I offer a close reading of kibbutz archival materials, most of which are translated and analyzed for the first time here. These materials contrast official memory production with the more fractured terrain of local settler colonial memory. The extensive excerpts from the archives present the texts on their own terms, with all their rhetorical exactitude. Because Hazorea's archive is by far the richest on this topic, its materials predominate in this chapter. I expand the findings from Hazorea and the other two kibbutzim beyond their particularities to trace patterns and identify both unified logics and fissures across the labor Zionist settlement movement.

OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PAST IN THE KIBBUTZIM

Selective stories produced about the past by the first generation of settlers have the status of official representations because they were published by presses and they have been incorporated into the hegemonic Israeli collective memory and become some of the most widely disseminated kibbutz recollections. The authors were aware of their role in writing history, and they shaped their narratives to fit a teleology of Zionist progress and redemption. They illustrate how settler colonizers negotiated the past and routinized a form of remembering that impeded critical examination, reproduced the Jewish people as a victimized collective, and denied implication in the "total violence" (El-Sakka 2022, 46) of settler colonization.

Official Representations in Kibbutz Hazorea

The memorial volume marking the sixtieth anniversary of Kibbutz Hazorea's inception (Kibbutz Hazorea 1996) is a typical example of the colony's official representation of the 1948 events. Eyal Ofek's essay centers the disappearance and murder of two kibbutz settlers:

> On Thursday, March 11 [1948] . . . , Bernhardt Schiffer and Gabriel Levy did not return from their workday in Mishmar ha-Emek. The two were murdered near Wadi Kasseb and their fate remained unknown for a long time. Only in 1950, following lengthy searches and a strenuous investigation, were their bodies found and buried properly in the kibbutz. The lengthy and complicated search operation was coordinated by our late member Eliʿezer Beʾeri. In the first few days of their disappearance, rumors of their fate were already circulating. Some claimed they had been murdered and buried around Abu Zureiq or Abu Shusha, and others said the two were being held hostage somewhere in the Triangle region. Another rumor had them in the hands of Fawzi al-Qawuqji and perhaps even transferred to Syria. A mere two days after Bernhardt and Gabriel vanished, the people of Qira left their village. Note that they fled for fear of being assaulted because of what had happened, although they were not directly involved. Attempts to locate the spot where Bernhardt and Gabriel were buried continued even after the founding of the state and the end of the War of Independence. Eliʿezer Beʾeri, through intelligence and police sources around the Wadi ʿAra region, established close contacts with various elements in the West Bank [at the time already part of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan], and eventually a former Abu Shusha inhabitant was summoned from there to point out the exact spot where their bodies were finally unearthed. (Kibbutz Hazorea 1996, 110)

The deaths of Bernhardt and Gabriel were an omen of the bloodshed that would follow in the country at large and this specific region just a few days later—events after which the village of Abu Zureiq would be conquered and its inhabitants flee for their lives.

Although the murder of the two settlers is the main event, Ofek acknowledges that the Arab villagers of Qira fled out of fear, even though they were not directly involved in killing his two comrades. But he does not explain why they were afraid. He does not mention Yehuda Burstein, "Bashan," the security official, sowing fear of retribution among Qira's inhabitants or the two false flag attacks on Hazorea in January 1948 that were meant to provoke the Qira villagers to flee for fear of retribution (see chapter 4). Omission is thus at the core of this memory. On other occasions, Ofek raised questions about this, his own, version of events. But only this version—a bowdlerized official memory—appears in the 1996 kibbutz memorial book.

During the 1948 war, leftist Zionist discourse shifted. Settlers began to describe Zionist occupations of territory and destruction of villages as a response to Arab violence and the local

Palestinians as choosing to cooperate with invading armies such as the Arab Liberation Army (ALA). Yosef Shatil of Hazorea recalled,

> A few days before Qawuqji's army began its attack on Mishmar ha-Emek, the last of the land tenants of Qira wa Qamun left in the night. Heated debate took place in Abu Zureiq about allowing Iraqi troops of Qawuqji's army to enter the village to block the road from Haifa to Mishmar ha-Emek. The extremists had the upper hand, the road was blocked, and two members of Hazorea were murdered on their way home. In the Haganah's counterattack on Qawuqji's army, the village of Abu Zureiq was occupied and destroyed. (Shatil 1977, 48)

Elsewhere in the same book Shatil discusses land tenure issues related to Qira and the kibbutz's settlement. Still, he does not connect the long-drawn displacement of most of Qira's inhabitants, beginning in 1936, to the flight of the remaining inhabitants in March 1948. Rather, Shatil describes this as a sudden event devoid of historical context. Although he acknowledges the plight of the local Arabs, he focuses on the consequences for the kibbutz and its ideology.

Inasmuch as the events of this last period involved the kibbutz directly, they did not suffice to undermine its confidence of its own beliefs. The last Qira villagers leaving a few days before the great attack against the neighboring kibbutz Mishmar Ha-Emek, the cutting off of the road to this kibbutz, and the murder of two of Hazorea members—followed by the conquest of Abu Zureiq village, which had allowed Iraqi forces to position themselves there—all seemed a tragic development in which only the necessary measures were taken. A heated debate broke out in the kibbutz after several people went to Abu Zureiq after its occupation to "collect souvenirs," and the kibbutz publicly condemned such actions. "It was difficult and depressing to see men, women, and children fleeing in fright over the fields at the time of the occupation, whereas the rich of the village had left several days earlier . . . they [Kibbutz settlers] felt sorrow and fear of eventualities, rather than hatred and the need for revenge" (Shatil 1977, 50–51).

A different memory of these events appears in the text of Treasure Hunt, a kibbutz game intended to teach Hazorea's children about the history of their home. The expulsion of the Qira villagers is deemed legitimate and justified because it is the "fulfillment of Hazorea's claim to lands that had been purchased . . . at full price."

> Another three years would go by, until in March 1948, three and a half months after the UN Partition Plan had been passed by a majority two-thirds of the General Assembly, the last tenants still remaining on Qira land were evacuated and were now empty-handed, having received no reparations whatsoever. This was at the onset of the War of Independence, while everyone was fighting for control of the roads, and on our road, too—connecting Jenin and Haifa—clashes and incidents were frequent. Our two members . . . were murdered and buried in some unknown spot. For a long time their fate remained a mystery, although many efforts were made to locate them. Yehuda Burstein (Bashan), a Haganah intelligence official from Yokneʿam . . . came to Qira and recommended that the remaining inhabitants leave the place for their own good, which they did. On the night of March 13, they abandoned their village, leaving behind one lonely old man who refused to go. Thus came to its end a lengthy and tedious struggle to fulfill Hazorea's claim to lands that had been purchased in the early 1930s at a high price with money our members had brought with them from Germany expressly for this purpose.[3]

The Treasure Hunt text attributes the expulsion of Abu Zureiq's inhabitants to the deterioration of relations between the kibbutz and Abu Zureiq. At the heart of the story stands ALA commander al-Qawuqji's attack on Mishmar ha-Emek and Abu Zureiq's inhabitants accepting al-Qawuqji's presence in their village:

> The onset of the War of Independence in January is typified by the struggle with the mufti's gangs that assault Jewish settlements, and each side tries to take over the roads throughout the country.
>
> On January 1, 1948, a shot was apparently fired by accident at an inhabitant of Abu Zureiq who was passing by the kibbutz on the main road. This incident exacerbated the relationship between the two communities, and instead of personal encounters that had taken place in the past, contact was now maintained by written correspondence. The friendship that had been nurtured over the years was now put to the test.
>
> On April 4, 1948, Qawuqji's forces arrived from the east—he was the "redeemer," with volunteers from the neighboring countries. The artery that connected Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek was blocked, and help came to Hazorea on April 12 from Mishmar ha-Emek, partners in the Treasure Hunt game to this day. The [Haganah Field Corps] company under the command of Meir Amit [later head of the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence and covert operations service] conquered Abu Zureiq

village and forced its inhabitants to flee through the valley, eastbound to Jenin. The post of Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov, a detective on horseback, was inside Hazorea's first concrete structure and looks out in the direction of Abu Zureiq village. From this point the kibbutz members also had a view of the villagers' flight from their village. That is where the treasure lies.[4]

Both Shatil's recollection and the Treasure Hunt game reinforce a version of history in which kibbutz settlers were never at fault for the violence that ensued from Zionist settlement. The game attributes no responsibility for the shooting at a resident of Abu Zureiq, instead describing it as an agentless accident. The expulsion of the neighboring villages is described with little emotion or regard for the pain of displacement. The war provided a justification for these settlers and allowed them to avoid a critical examination of their part in the making of the Nakba.

Official Representations in Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek

In Mishmar ha-Emek, stories of 1948 center on the April battle against al-Qawuqji's ALA. A 1978 Ministry of Education publication exemplifies the official Israeli representation. It is based on journals written by kibbutz settlers in the area—among them Tzvi Meʾir, of Mishmar ha-Emek—and focuses strictly on the battle. The publication omits descriptions of the fleeing villagers and village demolitions. Also absent are the meetings at Hazorea of the local security personnel, the Palmach commander Yitzhak Sadeh, and Meir Amit and the kibbutz's request to Ben-Gurion to approve expulsion of the villagers (see Regev 1978, 3, 6–7).

In *Mishmar ha-ʿemek ba-maʿarakhah* (Mishmar ha-Emek in the battle), a collection of essays by kibbutz settlers, Moshe Shamir, a Palmach fighter who had been a member of Mishmar ha-Emek in 1944–1946, describes the kibbutz's relations with Abu Shusha and contrasts the aggressive Arabs with the peace-seeking settlers.

> If, as in a nightmare, the devastators sow destruction and this, our wonder project, be beaten as our haters wish, then, as [the poet Haim Nahman] Bialik said, "Let [justice's] throne be cast down forever!" If this, all the goodness and purity that we have nurtured and grown under our Erets Yisraʾel sun, will be doomed to perdition, then this is the end of all ends: the whole world is lost, gone, no remains be left. The defenders of Mishmar ha-Emek ventured forth in a counterattack. Some of the surrounding Arab villages were strongholds for the attackers and were conquered. Har ha-Gaʿash, Abu Shusha, al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa.
>
> . . . They, our neighbors, know that Mishmar ha-Emek is invincible. Over twenty years of acquaintance have seen to that—but here, the fire has been set, will any of them help us quench it—for the sake of peace, the fields, the corn, the wheat; for the sake of the villages; for their sake; for the flocks and the pasture? For the sake of summer evenings, clouds on the horizon, the beauty of the Muhraqa] the highest peak of Mount Carmel], for the sake of a beautiful winter Sabbath, for the sake of Mishmar ha-Emek? (Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi Hashomer Hatzair 1950, 177–179)

Mishmar ha-Emek transmitted memory of the war through its own treasure hunt game. The confrontation with the neighbors is portrayed as having begun with an attack on the kibbutz and the shooting of one of its members, Elisha Lin, which then led to an attack against the neighboring village of al-Ghubayya al-Tahta. The game contrasts Mishmar ha-Emek's peaceful intent with Abu Shusha's belligerence:

> Throughout the country battles are waged: shots fired at Hebrew settlements, Jewish neighborhoods in the mixed cities targeted by snipers, and fighting on the roads; entire regions are nearly isolated. And in our own corner, the situation has been deteriorating. Mishmar ha-Emek, surrounded by Arab villages on all sides, is also the border settlement on the Jenin–Haifa road. . . . A decision is taken to devote all resources to fortification and training. Concrete outposts are built, fences are repaired, and communication ditches are dug, and the entire adult population including women and youth undergoes intense firearms training. In early March 1948, with the arrival of spring, the area heats up and on occasion the kibbutz is attacked by snipers from all directions. Instructions are issued to venture to the fields and grazing areas only with armed escort. On the Haifa–Jenin road, traffic moves in armored vehicles and escorts. Then, on March 11, this order is violated and two Hazorea members travel home unescorted; they are ambushed and killed in Wadi Kassab.
>
> The next day, while pouring concrete for outpost no. 6 facing al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, Elisha Lin ([who is portrayed as] Abu Gad [in the Treasure Hunt game]) is seriously wounded by a sniper shot. In response, the Haganah decides to blow up al-Ghubayya al-Tahta. . . . This is carried out by Mishmar ha-Emek members and a demolition crew from Nahalal. The Arabs evacuate their village and go to al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa and al-Naghnaghiyya and continue tending their fields. . . .
>
> Micha Lin's story:

> I met with Abdullah al-Shitawi on Friday evening in Wadi Abu Shusha. . . . I delivered Aryeh [Diamant]'s message requesting them to remain calm and continue to live with us in peace, and we, for our part, would not attack them. His response was clear, because that previous evening the village had decided to take part in the fighting against us. And he hinted, "The day after tomorrow, blood will be flowing up to our knees." Thus ended the conversation. The peace mission failed![5]

Here too, all violence is framed as Arab aggression, unwarranted by Zionist actions. The narrative provides a straightforward ordering of events. Indigenous expulsion is a natural consequence of just war, occluding the more complex structure of power and resistance on the settler colonial frontier.

In his 1992 book *Ha-kibuts sheli: mishmar ha-ʿemek 1922–1950* (My kibbutz—Mishmar ha-Emek, 1922–1950), Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri recalled the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek, day by day, from April 4 to 14. Like the Treasure Hunt game, Beʾeri attributes the expulsion of the villagers of al-Ghubayya al-Tahta and the destruction of the village before al-Qawuqji's offensive to the shot fired at Elisha Lin and the local Arabs' rejection of the settlers' offer of peace.

> In the meantime, our relations with our Arab neighbors gradually chilled, and over time the situation deteriorated. Shots were occasionally fired from the villages, but let it be noted that hardly any shots were fired from Abu Shusha even during the fighting itself. We requested [that the shooting cease] and warned all the villages [of repercussions if they did not]: but the two closest villages to the east, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta and al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa (or al-Naghnaghiyya, as the Arabs called it) did not heed us, and occasional shots and sniper fire erupted.
>
> One day, as our construction crew was busy erecting an outpost facing the eastern side of the kibbutz, shots were fired at the workers from al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, and Elisha Lin was badly wounded in the head. He was taken to the hospital and surgery showed that the bullet had hit close to the brain. In response, we notified the villagers that they must leave. Indeed, on the morrow we saw a long procession of fallahin and their families leaving the village and proceeding with their belongings eastward, toward the village of al-Mansi. After this village was evacuated, kibbutz tractors came and demolished all the shanty dwellings in it, and only the *bek* [landlord]'s house remained intact. The evacuation of the village and its destruction made it easier to defend Mishmar ha-Emek in the fights that ensued, because all the area near the fence had been cleared, making it all the more difficult for assailants to advance. In April, as the battle broke out, the kibbutz was prepared. The outposts had been completed as well as the connecting ditches. All the members, men and women, had weapons and ammunition and were assigned to outposts and auxiliary groups. (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 121–122)

Beʾeri's testimony barely mentions the kibbutz's almost twenty years of attempts to evacuate the Ghubayyat villages through land purchase.

Unlike al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, whose inhabitants left upon receiving the kibbutz's ultimatum, al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa was conquered in the battle against al-Qawuqji's force, which was fortified by the village. This became justification for the expulsion. Haganah forces depopulated the village of Abu Shusha, which according to kibbutz narratives did not take part in the assault against them. Beʾeri recalled,

> Monday, April 12: The shots fired at Mishmar ha-Emek were becoming less frequent. Abu Zureiq was finally conquered, and more and more Arabs were fleeing through the valley. In the afternoon we saw that Abu Shusha villagers, too, were fleeing. Many kibbutz members, and I among them, were amazed and wondered why the attackers from Haifa never asked us about this. Benjamin Arnon, member of headquarters, went up to Abu Shusha and found many men of a Haifa division of the Haganah Field Corps there, chasing Arabs out of their homes. He met their commander, Meir Amit, and asked him about this action, and why he was carrying it out before consulting Mishmar ha-Emek. His answer: "I am carrying out explicit orders I received upon leaving Haifa." We took our leave of Abu Shusha's villagers, who could be recognized by their black kaffiyehs. We didn't know then that they would not be back.
>
> This expulsion, the sight of the women and children running in the fields, yelling and crying, gave me a strong sense of revulsion; however, there was nothing I or any of my friends could do about this. At the same time, gunfire was targeting us from al-Mansi and al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa.
>
> In the afternoon armed Arabs were seen toppling telephone poles in the valley. The "chatterbox" [machine gun] fired at them, and I learned how precise it was. One of the assailants was wounded, and they all ran off in a fright. (Y. Beʾeri 1992, 131)

Apparently, the Hashomer Hatzair settlers were not consulted about the expulsion of the Abu Shusha villagers. Neither did they take any action to oppose it. They represent themselves as powerless rather than partners of the Zionist national institutions, disavow responsibility for the expulsion, and hold their neighbors accountable for the catastrophe that befell them.

Official Representations in Ein Hashofet

Memory in Kibbutz Ein Hashofet focused on al-Qawuqji's attack on Mishmar ha-Emek. A Palmach unit was based at Ein Hashofet and sortied from there to attack neighboring Arab villages. Ein Hashofet's newsletter published fragments of settlers' journals written in 1948,[6] and a memorial book published in 1962 (Ein Hashofet, 1962) contained settlers' memoirs of the war. The expulsion of the neighboring village of al-Kafrayn was relatively marginal in Ein Hashofet's representations of 1948. Ofra Brill described the shelling of Mishmar ha-Emek by al-Qawuqji's forces, and the reinforcement of the kibbutz by Haganah units composed of settlers of neighboring kibbutzim:

> More reinforcements arrived; civilian vehicles were mobilized, and the fighting ended after all the enemy's positions were conquered, up to the al-Lajjun police station. The fighting force, including the headquarters, then proceeded to other missions, and the strongholds were handed over to the kibbutzim. Our lot was to defend the Beit Rass outpost, and many of our members spent days and nights maintaining the stronghold, outposts, ditches, and observation points and performing excellent guard duty throughout all hours of the day and night, and thus, until the end of the War of Independence. (Ein Hashofet 1962, 147)

Absent from this memory are details regarding the elimination of local villages, even the village closest to Ein Hashofet, al-Kafrayn. There is only a very general mention of the "conquest" of nameless "villages." Then "the force took off on its missions and news arrived of the conquest of villages, retreats, reconquests, and so on" (Ein Hashofet 1962, 147).

The variations on the official version of memory presented here were contested by a minority of individual kibbutz settlers who had a different understanding of their role in Zionist colonization, their direct or indirect involvement in violence, and their ethical or political responsibility. Decades after 1948, discussions, often initiated by second- and third-generation kibbutz settlers, both parallel and depart from official representations. These discussions were often not published in kibbutz memorial books.

DISCUSSION OF 1948 AT KIBBUTZ HAZOREA: CONTESTING OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIONS

On May 5, 1972, Arnon Tamir[7] anonymously published an October 11, 1948, entry from "an old journal" in Hazorea's newsletter *Ba-shaʿar*. Tamir's memories of the expulsions of 1948 resurfaced when Ariel Sharon (then chief of the Southern Command of the Israel Defense Forces) secretly expelled some 1,500 Bedouin families from the Rafah Plain in the northeastern Sinai Peninsula. After Israel conquered the remainder of historical Palestine in 1967, the settlement project extended to the West Bank and Gaza (and Egypt and the Syrian Golan). The Zionist Left was sometimes critical of this endeavor, which the Right saw as hypocrisy given what happened in 1948. The expulsion was intended to take over about 140,000 dunams on the Rafah Plain to construct the Jewish colony of Yamit.[8] MAPAM activists in the Negev/Naqab, including kibbutz settlers, exposed the secret operation. This did not prevent the expulsion of the Bedouins from their lands, but a lengthy public debate erupted. Zionist right-wingers argued against leftists' claim that the expulsion of the Bedouins was immoral, noting that numerous kibbutzim had been built on Palestinian lands and the kibbutzim themselves were complicit in colonization and expulsion. This set the tone for revisiting the events of 1948.

Criticism and mutual recriminations over colonization practices between left- and right-wingers are rare moments in which Zionist settlers implicitly acknowledge the displacement and appropriation of Palestinians in 1948 and its continuation decades later. Accumulation through dispossession of land in 1948 and before—although not labeled as such—became a prominent element of the Left's claim to historical legitimacy. In contrast, expropriations of Palestinian land

that followed the 1967 occupation are generally attributed to the Right, although labor Zionist ministers and settlers, sometimes without a formal government decision, actively participated in the process. Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan, for example, personally authorized the expulsion of the Bedouin of Rafah Plain.[9]

Throughout his life, Tamir was troubled by the expulsions of Palestinians in 1948. The journal entry he published in 1972 was originally written six months after the events it describes: harsh scenes of the destruction and devastation of Palestinian villages, dead bodies left under the rubble, and abandoned flocks roaming the area. Tamir's testimonies provide a rare account by a Zionist of the 1948 generation of settlers' deeds and the plunder they "inherited" from Palestinians as well as the destruction of Palestinian society and the conversion of neighbors to refugees:

> In front of the reading room lies a small donkey. He appeared one day, following the abandoned flocks that were roaming the area after the conquest of the Arab villages. We let them roam, just as we left the Arab casualties lying around for many days —until just yesterday they had been our neighbors, mostly hostile but still neighbors—lying under the rubble of their homes, unburied. That was how we let the animals roam around among the piles and rubble. Some of the cattle we caught and ate, and the chickens, too, slowly made their way into our campfire feast pots. We sold the horses—a real market was being managed with this booty. I fear that eventually one member or another will find himself wondering about himself and what he had done. A kind of cynical madness had taken hold of people's hearts. We looted everything—property and livestock, stationary or alive, not just donkeys and dogs. The latter became feral once again, and the donkeys, too, may have followed in kind. At any rate they scattered, whole bands of them, in all directions, like some phantom army. It was an apocalyptical sight how they galloped on the abandoned trails, among the ruins of the demolished houses, under trees laden with unpicked fruit. From afar you could hear their hoofs pounding . . . the sounds grew near, dust billowed up from the dry, baked earth. The army of abandoned beasts galloped by, wandering in the dark, a live accusation to the humans who had abandoned them. That was how he came to us, the little black donkey. No one knows from where. Suddenly he was standing there in the yard. Not quite steady. His front legs were apparently injured. . . . Then the children discovered him and passed him from one to the other, and each child looked after him for some hours and days. My son . . . dragged him by the rope through the yard. . . . My well-groomed, sheltered child was playing with the small wild donkey that was actually meant to belong to another child who is now perhaps somewhere in a refugee camp across the border of our new state.[10] No one torments the little donkey with his thin legs. He eats and drinks plenty. No one beats him. But more than that, no one wants him. When someone slaps his back, a heavy cloud of dust rises. I heard he is going to serve as a live target for machine-gun practice.[11]

This parable of the unwanted donkey is a metaphor for the tragedy of displacement. With frankness and feelings of shame, Tamir mourned "the abandoned flocks." But he does not mention the processes and actions that resulted in this abandonment, who the perpetrators were, and the territorial replacement operations that restructured the political and spatial order.

Eliʿezer Beʾeri was, like Arnon Tamir, a founder of Hazorea. As a prominent member of the Arab Department of MAPAM, he may have felt a special responsibility to respond to Tamir's testimony and did so in *Ba-shaʿar* with "Misleading Words." In the article, Beʾeri claimed that Tamir's journal entry reflects memories and rumors, not what actually happened, because it was written, as Tamir acknowledged, in October, but "the last military operation [in the area] took place on April 16."[12]

> The entry opens with an account of our own barbarity toward human beings. . . . And I reiterate: there is absolutely no truth in this. The Arabs of Qira suffered no casualties, neither dead nor wounded. Among the villagers of Abu Zureiq and Abu Shusha there were casualties some weeks later, when the villages had been standing empty and abandoned for quite a while. . . . Furthermore, the journal entry is dated October 11, 1948, whereas the conquest of Abu Zureiq and Abu Shusha and the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek took place in mid-April of that year; the last military operation took place on April 16. In October 1948 our area saw no more battles or casualties, either buried or unburied. By that time memories were at work and stories told, some real and others fictitious. . . . Even in hostile Arab literature that I have read, published in Lebanon and Syria, there was no mention of Arab casualties in our area remaining unburied under the rubble of their homes. . . . I would be the last to idealize our past or claim it was immaculate. Even the histories of Haganah and Palmach are not exemplary. But we should not be condemned or do it to ourselves. The publication of that journal entry might leave an impression of a Sodom-like place with a single just man.[13]

Beʾeri's position in 1972 differs sharply from his own testimony closer to the events, which

reads more like Tamir's journal entries. On April 14, 1948, Beʾeri wrote to prominent MAPAM members in the military establishment expressing concern about the killing of Abu Zureiq villagers as they fled and the murder of people who hid in the village "after the fighting was over" (see chapter 4). This letter, Beʾeri's words at the May 1948 MAPAM political conference, and Tamir's interview with him in 1976 (discussed later) prove that Beʾeri knew that what Tamir reported in his journal was more or less correct. Beʾeri was both a key witness and a perpetrator in 1948. But after the fact he obfuscated and denied what took place. Hence, denial was not only an official institutional reaction to reports like Tamir's; kibbutz settlers who were complicit in or witnessed the events, like Beʾeri, also deployed selective memories to deny settlers' violence and plunder. A few weeks later, Tamir responded to Beʾeri:

> I published the entry now because I feel time and again the same kind of embarrassment—like many others—for deeds that reality forced us to do, for deeds that certain elements in the country made us do or drag us into or force us to agree to after the fact. . . .
>
>   At the time I realized the need to demolish houses on this plot of land where my own house stands now—I even managed the demolition itself, but my heart was not in what I was doing. I realized the necessity of removing the threat to our security between us and Mishmar ha-Emek after the siege was lifted and our members had been murdered in full view of the inhabitants of these villages. I witnessed the conquest from the observation post and saw with my own eyes that several houses were blown up during this conquest. I well remember that almost all of us were embarrassed, each for his own reasons. I saw with my own eyes how, on the morrow, settlers of the area streamed into the abandoned villages and looted them. I also fully recall the heated debate we held in the kibbutz, arguing about the proper fate of the abandoned property while as yet no civil regime existed in the country and there were no 'orders from above' that would rid us of our deliberations. Many of us thought that the villagers would return some day to live beside us. This was naive, because even back then certain elements in our establishment had other plans.[14]

Tamir did not differ from other settlers in using security as a justification for acts of colonial violence. He recalled the kibbutz discussions in 1948, following the expulsion of neighboring villagers, and "who demanded that the abandoned property be passed over to the general good and who simply kept silent." Unlike the control of livestock and farming machinery, the question of neighboring lands was not part of kibbutz deliberations, neither in 1948 nor in 1972. For Tamir, the issue of private booty was personal. He himself "took nothing from the village" to his own home, but he did take part in "campfire feasts, where the roaming hens were cooked and eaten."

> So? "If I don't enjoy them, others will, won't they?" This was trivial compared with the looting that often took place elsewhere, the same looting that corrupted all values. In one of the early ceasefires I was summoned, as the person in charge of construction, to check whether it was worth our while to purchase stones at the abandoned village of Umm az Zinat. Its villagers, known thugs, ran off and left the keys. I was surprised to find a Solel Boneh [the Histadrut-owned construction firm] bulldozer systematically demolishing houses one by one. In those days it was not yet the norm to demolish a village whose inhabitants had not been directly involved in hostilities. I asked the worker who gave the order. His answer: Someone up in the higher echelons. The demolition can definitely be justified, for actions had taken place in the past that jeopardized traffic on the Wadi Milk [Mileh] road. However, what about the treatment of the Rihaniyya villagers who had been peaceful? And on it goes. For nearly twenty-five years now we have been ignoring the fate of the Arab refugees. We have valid explanations: It was not our fault they fled. We absorbed the same number of Jewish refugees from the Arab countries. We are right, but for some reason I am uneasy. One could argue, of course, that these are all inevitable historical processes and that these are marginal, unimportant incidents, that I simply lack a sense of proportion and suffer too many pangs of conscience. Yet I cannot ignore the elements in this state that wish to accelerate the historical process—and this, as then, so today, under the guise of security needs. Back then it was Rihaniyya, now it is Rafah [Plain]. I am bothered that if I wish to preserve my personal and national existence, I am forced to carry out or agree to or support actions that are contrary to some of my general worldviews. And I am embarrassed. . . .
>
>   Let us not, however, be mistaken. Things took place in reality precisely as they were written and even the suggestion of using the donkey as a live target for target practice was real, even if it was not carried out. This suggestion served me once more as a symbol of the unconscious desire to use bullets to do away with a troublesome problem. Is this issue really so strange to you, Eliʿezer?[15]

Tamir's testimony illustrates that the war against the indigenous Palestinians was not merely waged by institutions or military organizations but incorporated the entirety of the settler colonial

society. Moreover, for decades the kibbutz settlers had been agents of territorial replacement and violence. Despite the shared security logic, the contradictions between settlers' values and deeds generated fissures in their narratives of the war of colonization. Gradually, Tamir extended the discussion beyond what he witnessed with his own eyes and what went on in his kibbutz, referring to the demolition of Umm az Zinat (a village in the Haifa Subdistrict) and the looting of its stones and culminating with the general issue of the refugees' fate. Tamir thus drew a straight line from Rihaniyya in 1948 to the Rafah Plain in 1972.

It is unclear if Tamir knew that in 1948 Beʾeri did protest the systematic expulsion of Palestinians, specifically the villagers of Umm az Zinat. At the meeting of MAPAM's Political Committee on May 26, 1948, Beʾeri argued that the expulsion of Umm az Zinat villagers and the demolition of their houses was not based on security needs:

> Apparently under the guise of military necessity, many actions are taken for political purposes par excellence without the party's objection and with party members being complicit on the ground. The departure of nearly half a million Arabs puts us in a difficult political position. Most of the Arabs who were uprooted or left were not necessarily expelled by the Jews; many left long before the conquests. The conquests are consequences of their leaving. . . . [Zionist politics] is manifested in four ways: (1) cleansing the State of Israel of Arabs, (2) not differentiating among peace seekers, the indifferent, and the withdrawers, (3) implementing a policy that would not enable Arabs to return, and (4) justifying actions on military grounds that are by no means military. Examples of this lie in the region between Haifa and Mishmar ha-Emek. The village of Umm az Zinat was conquered, and the inhabitants who did not leave of their own accord were expelled. Not a single shot had been fired out of this village. It should have been conquered but not depopulated. Action has been taken systematically to destroy the Arabs' economic foundations. In Abu Zureiq and Abu Shusha, both conquered villages, the Arabs were either expelled or taken prisoner. Obviously, as long as war is being fought, they must not be allowed to remain in their village. But not a single stone has been left in place there. Orders have been issued to demolish everything.[16]

In 1948, contemporary with the events, Beʾeri acknowledged a general policy of "cleansing the State of Israel of Arabs" and preventing the refugees' return, using military requirements to justify actions taken for other purposes and destroying the infrastructure of Palestinian society. He knew these deeds were sometimes perpetrated with MAPAM members' complicity.

How was the fate of the 1948 refugees revisited in the 1972 discussion? Tamir agreed that Israel was not responsible for their expulsion and accepted the equation between Mizrahi Jews, who had been forced to leave Arab countries, and the Palestinian refugees. Yet he remained uneasy. Like everyone else, he wrote, he too was proud "of many wonderful things done in our country in which I might have had the tiniest part," but he emphasized the importance of admitting contradictions, because otherwise, withstanding criticism by future generations would prove challenging. Tamir's was a unique voice among the three kibbutzim. He did not blur the acts of violence that were perpetrated, and he publicized certain poignant questions.

The debate in Hazorea initiated by Beʾeri and Tamir continued. Another kibbutz settler, Israel Neumark, responded to Tamir in a short piece comparing the events of 1948 with cases he had learned about in a Prussian school as a child. He contrasted the actions taken by the Jews, "a long-suffering people," with those taken by European colonial empires at war. But he acknowledged Tamir's words about looting as a cautionary lesson. "I see the journal entry as an appropriate warning, a reminder that we are not immune. I am sorry if anyone should compare this 'preventive' self-criticism to the boasting of sadistic acts, killing for its own sake, systems of annihilation and so forth."[17]

Controversially, Neumark admitted that kibbutz settlers had indeed left the dead Abu Zureiq villagers lying in the village after the battle. He did not specify when they were buried but implied a justification for the delay. Furthermore, he admitted that Tamir's claims about the looting of property were accurate, but he justified the collective looting by the kibbutz's poor economic situation. Such discussions were akin to a confession, allowing kibbutz settlers to

purify themselves of their sin without bearing the political responsibility for Arab expulsion and dispossession.

Aryeh Zamir, who was born in Germany in 1912, migrated to Palestine in 1934, and was appointed mukhtar of Kibbutz Hazorea in 1939, shifted the discussion from acts committed by the kibbutzim to assaults against them. He dismissed Tamir's words as a subjective impression that merited no discussion, regretting that the second generation would receive a distorted description of the past:

> One must not take one page [from a journal] as testimony of the goings-on. One must also assume that the same journal also contains entries from March and April 1948, days of serious concern for the fate of members who never returned, of roaring guns, shells that killed children in the neighboring kibbutz, of the blocked road between Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek, and the many hours in which the fate of the Yishuv was at stake. Thus, that one page that was published gave a false picture of what had happened, and even those phenomena that took place after the danger was lifted are not aptly described. Because members of Hazorea ventured into their surroundings in search of the neighboring dark man from Abu Zureiq, and Kibbutz Hazorea did not become rich by looting the neighboring village. Certain elements dealt with this issue of abandoned property.[18]

Zamir imagined that other entries in Tamir's journal would describe the "roaring guns" and the attacks. But he could not invent attacks against Kibbutz Hazorea and therefore emphasized the neighboring kibbutz and its fate. Similar to other settlers, he absolved the kibbutz of any responsibility for "abandoned property," although the "elements" that allocated the "abandoned" lands did so through constant negotiation with the kibbutzim and at times accepted their demands and requests to appropriate property.

The debate over Tamir's journal entry in the kibbutz newsletter included mainly the voices of veteran settlers who had personally experienced the events. Reactions ranged from denial of the facts to calling facts subjective impressions, and to recognition of the facts. This particular form of settler colonial memory thus entails not a wholesale forgetting but, rather, a selection through which the past is articulated in a manner that legitimates violence and appropriation but disavows responsibility. But the denials are complicated by figures like Tamir who, although a minority, expressed shame and embarrassment and questioned the effects, if not the underlying ideology, of settler colonization.

Representations of 1948 in Personal Interviews with Hazorea Veterans, 1976

Between February and April 1976, four years after the publication of his journal entry, Tamir, then editor of the kibbutz newsletter *Ba-shaʿar*, interviewed twenty-four kibbutz veterans in anticipation of the kibbutz's fortieth anniversary.[19] The memories evoked in the interviews provide a rare opportunity to examine discussions of 1948 among veteran settlers. The interviewer and interviewees knew each other well, and their discussions were not prompted by an external threat to the community's reputation or any heated political discussion. Tamir asked his friends about multiple facets of the history of their kibbutz; he himself reminisced and prompted his interlocutors to follow suit. He raised topics that his interviewees did not bring up of their own initiative. Among the twenty-four interviewed, only five referred to the 1948 war.[20] Four had previously been involved in mediated interactions with the Palestinian villages.

The first interviewee to mention the 1948 events was Eliʿezer Beʾeri. Tamir returned to the distress he felt about kibbutz settlers' actions in 1948. In these face-to-face meetings, the two did not refer directly to their debate four years earlier. Tamir said,

> Somehow, for me, the essence of the problem of the clash with the Arab people is the problem of Qira and Abu Zureiq. I cannot avoid it. I am no masochist, but I cannot say that the whole matter is smooth for me. I know, a war was fought and there was no other way; Mishmar ha-Emek was under siege, and I can assume there was no other way to lift the siege. . . . Still, I cannot say this does not trouble me. I have not forgotten the conversation we held at the kibbutz regarding the property that the

entire area joined in looting.[21]

In response, Beʾeri drew on a common representation of indigenous people to justify expulsion: they were rootless, he argued. There was no chance for them to resume their life here. He invoked the inherent logic of settler colonialism: "it's either them or us."

> I tell you, it troubled me, clearly. It is also a human issue. When I hear the word *refugees*, for me this is no abstract term. These are living human beings. One could say so much about it. You have to differentiate between Qira and Abu Zureiq villagers. Obviously, there would not have been enough room here for Yokneʿam, for us, and for Qira. Clearly, there could not have been three communities here.[22]

Beʾeri evaluated who "deserved" to stay. "Because [Qira villagers] were weaker legally, economically, and socially, obviously they never would have had a future here." He denied the rootedness of Qira's inhabitants, claiming they had not lived there for hundreds of years. The kibbutz settlers, Beʾeri claimed, struggled with the villagers over the land but attempted to avoid violence. As he saw it, they succeeded. Beʾeri ignored the violent clashes between the settlers and Palestinians, the refusal of many Qira inhabitants to evacuate the village, and their depopulation from January to March 1948. He returned to the fundamental claims of Zionism and especially of the labor settlement movement. The Zionists did not come to exploit the natives but rather to work the land themselves. He saw no problem in transferring Qira's inhabitants elsewhere. Those who live in the Galilee now, he said, lead a better life; their homes are larger than the kibbutz dwellings. To the persistent who would cling to the land and refuse evacuation —namely, the ones who were expelled in 1948—he devoted a single phrase, "Some of them became refugees."[23]

Abu Zureiq, the village whose lands the kibbutz did not manage to purchase, was different for Beʾeri. Its inhabitants could have remained, because "the place where they lived was [still] empty." But he, the man of action, explained the outcome as "destiny." "Neither they nor we alone would decide; destiny decided that they would become refugees."

Tamir pressed Beʾeri again, asking, "On principle are we not obliged to tell the younger generation about the Zionist issue and settlement? . . . What happened and how it was?" Beʾeri's reply returns to the justification of war:

> A war was fought. We did not start it, it was their leadership. The War of Independence was more difficult than all the wars that followed. For us it was a war "to be or not to be." They started, we fought, and we won, and they were harshly defeated. In their literature that war is the Holocaust, to this very day. [*He points to a book.*] [Here is] their list of the Arab casualties of all the armies. Incidentally, only one or two men of Abu Zureiq are listed. For them this is a horrible list. Not everything we have done is right, clearly. We made and still make mistakes.[24]

Beʾeri places responsibility for the disaster on the Palestinian and finds extenuating circumstances in an axiomatic rule—the triumph of extremists over moderates. Tamir answers him regarding the casualties: "There were at least two. One was the black man and the other, a man whose skeleton I eventually found out in the field." But Beʾeri persists in his denial, claiming the villagers did not tell their captors of any casualties. There is a simultaneous recognition and disavowal. Some actions were wrong, but overall, he identifies with the victors of a just war.

As noted previously, in 1948 Beʾeri protested against a systematic policy of expulsion. In 1976 he argued that things happen in war, *à la guerre comme à la guerre*:

> That's how it is in wartime. Sometimes it takes years to create a new reality, but in wartime a new fact sometimes emerges in a matter of hours, and remains for a very long time. Clearly, they became refugees, and one could not have imagined that the question of the refugees of Abu Zureiq would be resolved apart from the question of hundreds of thousands of other refugees. It's a part of the whole thing. Of course they are war victims. Is it a must? Of course not. We did benefit from it to a certain extent. For a certain benefit one pays the general price of the responsibility we bear for all the injustice. If you ask me whether it troubles me, of course it does. But not in the sense that Kibbutz Hazorea inflicted a particular injustice, rather in the general

sense—the Jews in the country, the state. We found ourselves in a state of war. Generally, when you kill an enemy—. . . Actually, you cannot avoid this, even if you don't want to kill a human being. And in war things are done that are unnecessary, it is obvious. . . . Land and property don't upset me that much. Living human beings do.[25]

Thus, Beʾeri shifted from the kibbutz's position regarding the nearby refugees, inhabitants of the neighboring village, to refugees in general. To him this was an injustice wrought by the Jewish population and the state, not the kibbutz on its own. Against this injustice, however, he immediately repeated the then-dominant official Israeli policy. Settlers were under threat because of the state of war *imposed on them*. Saying that "things happen in war" normalizes the expulsion as a consequence of exigencies of war rather than as the systematic outcome of the Zionist project of encroachment and replacement.

Interviewing Levi Granot, the kibbutz field guard who collected information about neighboring villages, Tamir inquired about relations with Qira's inhabitants. Granot spoke of "close neighborliness":

They lived on the land as land tenants and were protected by the law as such, legislated by the British. They had to be remunerated for their claims on the land that was purchased by the Jews. This process continued and was not completed by the time war broke out. They fled. There were still many of them. They fled shortly after the murder of Gabriel and Bernhardt. One of the people I remember with great admiration was Yehuda Burstein (Bashan) of Yokneʿam, who took responsibility for the evacuation of the village.[26]

Granot knew very well Burstein's role in the evacuation of inhabitants but chose not to speak a word about Burstein's "advice" to the inhabitants of the village. This became an open secret.

Tamir then reminded Granot that kibbutz settlers participated in the demolition of the houses of Abu Zureiq, to which Granot replied, "No one knew back then what would evolve here. We did what we did. Developments were swift. The villagers of Abu Zureiq fled. . . . There were few left inside the village. They had escaped into the valley, toward the Kishon streambed and from there eastward. It took quite a while until we realized they would not be back." Granot's answer is fragmented and terse. He turned the question of house demolitions into a fragmented account of the attack itself, thereby denying the enduring clashes that erupted because of colonial invasion into the land. He claimed he had no part in questioning the Abu Zureiq prisoners. The discussion proceeds to looting and property. Granot admitted that sacks of grain, carts, and livestock were brought to the kibbutz but also claimed that the settlers rejected booty in principle. Granot recalled a settler's words during deliberation about the booty in the kibbutz: "I don't want them, our neighbors, to find their belongings inside the kibbutz once they're back!" According to Granot, the absurd result was that other kibbutzim, not Hazorea, took the flock that roamed the area following the displacement of the village.

Tamir recalled Michael Hermoni's words at the kibbutz assembly discussion in favor of transfer, but Granot claimed not to recall this discussion. Tamir returned to the refugee problem, saying,

I'm very sensitive about this subject, to this day. In our conversation the refugee problem is raised anew from time to time. In the debate one can always claim that we absorbed half a million Jewish refugees from the Arab countries and that the problem had been exaggerated into a political one, whereas elsewhere more difficult problems have been solved. One could say that in most cases we are guilty, but between us—you and me, living right here—there is a point about this that troubles me.[27]

This interview reconfirms that there was no collective amnesia about the 1948 events. Veteran kibbutz settlers kept their memories alive, even if they were not written about or publicized and despite the kibbutzim's official representation of their past. The public omission of deeds committed in 1948 was due, perhaps, to the institutionalized denial of the 1948 events in Israeli public memory (Ram 2009) and partly to the founding fathers' desire to whitewash the violence of the past (Ben-Zeʾev 2010).

Tamir found no comfort in the official kibbutz memory shifting political responsibility for expulsion from the settlers to the indigenous inhabitants' conduct, whereas Granot was "not upset." He compared the situation in Palestine to that of Ireland and Cyprus, where, in his view, the minority's growth made living conditions impossible. He argued that after years of friction with the Arabs suddenly a change occurred. "The Arabs call it their Holocaust," answered Tamir. Justly so, Granot admitted, but he continued, "Just as the casualties cannot be revived, so the situation cannot be reversed."[28] Despite Tamir's uneasiness, neither he nor Granot thought Abu Zureiq's inhabitants should be restored to their lands. No material reversal of colonization's violence was proposed.

The memory of Yohanan Ben Yaʿakov, who was born in Germany in 1913, migrated to Palestine at age twenty, became known as a painter and sculptor, and served as a field guard in the 1940s, closely resembled official representations of the past. He blamed the Arabs for harassing the settlers and thus rejected their return. He had believed in justice and honesty, but his views subsequently changed. However, he expressed sorrow about the displacement of Abu Zureiq's inhabitants:

> I was more or less sorry about how things turned out for them. They would not have bothered me. Accounts were different with the people of Qira, because the lands they inhabited were not their property. It was purchased legally and in good faith. Paid up and all. Those who did not flee made a pretty good deal for themselves. They received land as well as money and now live near Mount Tabor. They're not doing so badly.[29]

Tamir suggested considering the villagers as "victims of circumstances" with whom neighborly relations had been maintained. He and Ben Yaʿakov agreed that kibbutz members never meant to harm Abu Zureiq's inhabitants. The conversation gradually turned into joint reminiscing:

> ARNON TAMIR: What happened to the property, then?
>
> YOHANAN BEN YAʾAKOV: Well, there were some bloodthirsty and greedy people. They tried to grab whatever they could. There were also some kibbutz members, and one of them, I recall, . . . forced people to return property to the Haganah establishment. I too enjoyed some of the chickens [belonging to the uprooted Abu Zureiq villagers].
>
> TAMIR: Then animals roamed there for weeks.
>
> BEN YAʾAKOV: That's right. [*Raises his voice*.] Anyway, it was heartrending! To this day I feel uneasy setting foot there . . . ! Because I recall more or less who lived where, who it was. What did we talk about? In general, being a refugee. I don't wish it on anyone.[30]

As a refugee himself, Ben Yaʿakov empathized with refugees and their pain. But he did not recognize his status as a settler, and he did not connect the two subject positions.

Tamir, although repeating the explanations and justifications commonly given for expelling the Palestinian refugees, was still troubled by it and wished to know whether his interlocutor felt the same. Ben Yaʿakov admitted he did, but immediately continued to the historical justification of the Zionist narrative—the return to ancestral lands:

> But, in fact, over the years it somehow changed, this whole idea, who owns this country? First of all, the Jews were already living here in the past, and they themselves were expelled. Look at the archeological findings; it's very moving, seeing and discovering remains of those periods in history when the fate of Jewish localities ended up as it did.[31]

Tamir was not satisfied with this. Many peoples inhabited various places, he reminded Ben Yaʿakov, who answered that the Jewish people, unlike others, never disappeared from Erets Yisraʾel. For Tamir, the justification was grounded in the present, not the past: only in this country could "Jews congregate and achieve independence." But Ben Yaʿakov responded that historical facts supported Jewish claims. "I would not want to be in Uganda. Even though quiet is assured there. Here, you feel the past somehow, if you sense anything at all."[32]

Uri Bar was the fourth interviewee who mentioned the 1948 events.[33] Tamir shared what he observed when inhabitants fled, and Bar offered an ideological framework in response. In contrast to previous interviews, Tamir accepted Bar's interpretation of reality:

URI BAR: At that time, the Arabs' policy was uncompromising.

ARNON TAMIR: In fact the majority of them didn't want us there in the first place. They saw us as a threat.

BAR: That is not exactly true either. There were good neighborly relations. The political forces among them did not accept our Torah [beliefs] that settlement would bring a blessing for both peoples. The idea was right.

TAMIR: But they rejected it.

BAR: That's true.

TAMIR: They didn't want us here from the beginning.[34]

Neither Tamir nor Bar spoke about why Palestinians, even those not directly connected to political forces, rejected Hashomer Hatzair's belief that settlement would benefit both peoples. Seeing the majority of the Palestinians as apolitical disabled a more complex understanding of what happened in 1948 and the decades before.

When Bar argued that expulsion was the only option, Tamir reminded him of the explicit policy to prohibit the return of refugees:

BAR: There were those [likely meaning those in the higher echelons] who knew more than we did about this. Many fled of their own free will, you know it as well as I do, without anyone having done them any harm. They hoped to return. Over our graves.

TAMIR: The consideration to take advantage of the warfare to create facts on the ground, . . . I cannot say today whether that was a mistake or not. It did provide us relief for a while and enabled us to establish the state, but whether it brought us closer to a solution, that I doubt.

BAR: Let's not bring up the question whether the Zionist plan was right or wrong. At certain points along the way things could have been different, but on the whole, I think that we had no choice.[35]

Then, as now, asserting that there was no choice ends the discussion of alternatives that might have avoided settler colonial violence.

Despite differences in settlers' accounts of the 1948 events, their statements and ideological justifications have several points in common. First, it is clear that settler colonial memory did not forget the 1948 expulsion of the indigenous Palestinians. Rather, settlers cultivated a selective memory that obfuscated the history of colonization, thereby turning expulsion into a by-product of war and viewing the indigenous as complicit in their demise. The flight of Palestinians was seen as caused by exogenous forces in which kibbutz members had no part. At times, even the Zionist armed forces were said to have played no role. What was done to Abu Zureiq after its inhabitants left was unmentioned. Second, the sources of conflict were blurred. The kibbutzim aspired to a life in the Jezreel Valley and worked for this goal, whereas the Palestinians were on the land but had only a marginal existence there. Palestinian resistance to colonization was interpreted as a refusal of Jewish existence. Indigenous opposition to Zionist appropriation—for example, refusal to leave purchased land and eruptions of violence against the kibbutzim—became the justification for Zionist violence. Third, the few Zionist settlers who expressed regret nonetheless classified the expulsions as inevitable. They articulated the events as a by-product of the war or as fated to happen.

Representation of 1948 in Kibbutz Hazorea Settler Memoirs

Four Hazorea settlers published memoirs, either commercially or in limited editions issued by their friends and relatives. They do not confront embarrassing questions; several emphasize an intention to convey to the coming generation a picture of the past as they perceive it. These books have similar structures. Most begin with the writers' lives in Germany and continue with

their arrival in Palestine, the settlement of land (ʿaliya ʿal ha-karka), and the establishment of the kibbutz. The 1948 events occupy relatively little space. These memoirs offer another opportunity to try to understand the events of 1948 at the local level and the formation of a selective memory that obscures the moment of intensified violence of 1948.

Asher Benari's memoir generally coincides with official representations of the war. This is most evident in his account of the night before Qira's inhabitants left. Kibbutz settlers heard "a clamor" and discovered that "the village was empty" (Benari 1986, 183). He describes this as "a great achievement" that enabled "an upsurge of creativity" and construction with no hint of the settlers' efforts to make the Arabs flee. "Perhaps they suspected that we would want to avenge the killing of our members on the way to Mishmar ha-Emek, and perhaps they thought the Jewish-Arab struggle would worsen and they would be hemmed in between Yokneʿam on one side and Hazorea on the other. At any rate, they decided to get out of here before disaster struck" (184). He noted the looting, but ascribed it to the Haganah Field Corps or to people who came "from afar to look for booty." He claimed that Hazorea members did not "enter the village to seek valuables inside the homes, but the kibbutz did take in animals that remained without owners." According to Benari, the kibbutz itself laid no hand on Arab property. Somehow, in the absence of their owners, those animals ceased to be "Arab property" and legitimately became "kibbutz property" (184).

In the section of his memoir devoted to 1948, Yohanan Ben Yaʿakov, the kibbutz's field guard and a purported friend of their Arab neighbors, describes the attack on Mishmar ha-Emek and his admiration of the Palmach troops. He does not mention the fate of the neighboring villages.[36]

Aryeh Zamir's memoir, a twenty-four-page notebook, refers to the uprooting of Qira and Abu Zureiq in two brief lines: "The property of the Arabs who had fled, especially the cattle, was handled by a state commission, which in our area was headed by Yehuda Bashan. For the lands issue, we appointed a committee in our council, headed by Yehoshuʿa Dayan as a kind of judge."[37]

As we might expect, Arnon Tamir's memoir differs from those of the other Hazorea settlers. He wrote it over several years and likely completed the task in 1992. Throughout, he oscillates between present and past (his life in Israel and in Germany). He recounts his visit to Germany in the late 1950s to file a reparations claim and records his thoughts about the kibbutz's relations with neighboring villages and the 1948 events. Tamir's memoir is obviously haunted by the Palestinian past and worth quoting from extensively to illustrate the legitimating function of settler colonial memory:

> The further we get from the past and the more we persist in the tradition of telling our sons, the more we change what we remember, adding to it, omitting from it, and correcting it. Evidence of this is found in the constantly repeated debates among the veteran kibbutz members. Some remember this as so and others differently; on this hillside where we dug a large pit to construct our swimming pool, which would always have refreshing water, there used to be a village, so-and-so many years ago. A little godforsaken hamlet—small stone houses and clay huts filled with smoke. In front of those huts sat our Arab neighbors who looked with amazement at our members laboring on the hillside in the sizzling summer heat, to change the world order. Every morning our members would venture forth from their tents and ragged shacks below in the valley and climb the desolate hill to plant trees, in the belief that they were busy with the act of creation. Our neighbors sat on this side of the wadi, precisely where I am sitting now. The name of the village was Qira. They were land tenants of an area that we had purchased at a steep price from owners who lived in Beirut or Damascus. The money for purchasing this land was collected from our parents who had remained in Germany. We arrived in this country with next to nothing. So we would sing, "We came empty-handed, the poor of yesteryear." But the sums we paid the owners did not suffice. They did not fulfill their commitment to compensate their tenants, our neighbors in Qira. We had to compensate each family separately through a long, tedious negotiation. Over the years nearly half of Qira's villagers moved to the northern side of the Jezreel Valley, to settle in a stone house on land they bought with our compensation payments. Other inhabitants preferred to drag the negotiations out and remained in the village. Perhaps they hoped to get a better price, and perhaps they had other reasons. . . . Thus, at this spot, near our swimming pool, all the threads of my story intertwine: We on the opposite hill, trying to redeem the wilderness with the sweat of our brow, and our neighbors on the other side of the wadi, who would later move or run away, and the money from Germany attempting to pay

for what would never again be whole. (Tamir 1999, 8–10)

Tamir recognizes indigenous subjectivity but simultaneously renders it abstractly. He does not regard the Palestinian inhabitants' claim to land as equivalent to the right of German Jewish refugees to seek safety.

Tamir opens his depiction of the 1948 events with a description of the attacks and continues with his witnessing his neighbors from Abu Zureiq being led into the kibbutz as prisoners:

> Some of our neighbors from the village of Abu Zureiq, to the east of our kibbutz, are led into our yard, first prisoners of a war that has not yet officially broken out. Agitated, frightened, we crowd around them. After all, we could have lived in peace, together, to the end of time . . . ! They are led in a procession, wearing their abayas, half-shoes on their feet, farmers like us. No one thought that those who had lived here for generations on end would not return to their homes. (Tamir 1999, 16)

Tamir repeatedly questions whether he is living on land that does not belong to him. But at the heart of his story is his return to Germany to file his claim for reparations. As is common in Zionist discourse, European Jewry's experience of extermination, expulsion, and replacement establishes a justification for Zionist deeds in Palestine. But the expropriation of Palestinian villages, the expulsion of their inhabitants, and the transformation of their lands resonated for Jewish refugee settlers, some of whom themselves faced ethnic cleansing of their societies in Europe. Tamir insists on the necessity of lawsuits in Germany to restore his family's possessions but draws no analogy to what might be done to compensate dispossessed Palestinians. He maintains a tension, moving between Germany and Palestine, between names on the signs of former Jewish shops on the streets of Stuttgart and kibbutz discussions in April 1948 about what to do with Palestinian property:

> Passers-by stop and silently stare at the goings-on. A disheveled woman pushes her way among the uniformed men, curses and disappears into the shop. There's no sense in my remaining in front of the store. My father won't come. The names on the signs have vanished. Hertz, Loewy, Silberg, Wolf. New names, new owners.
> Many a night we argued about what to do with the property of our neighbors that had accumulated in our yard: plows, work tools, personal belongings. Finally, we decided to sell them and buy weapons with that money, to reinforce our measly arsenal before the Arab armies invade our land. The mere idea of prospering from the property of others was foreign to us. "There's no blessing in theft."[38]
> How absurd. We are haunted by sayings all our lives. I am to take testimony in this city where my parents were robbed of their meager property. I am committed to lawsuits that have been made in my name. (Tamir 1999, 19)

Tamir's rhetorical strategy—oscillating between temporal and geographic contexts—reflects the entanglement of displacements, of the Jewish and Palestinian Questions. His awareness of trauma and haunting applies mainly to his own displacement, not the one from which he had and would continue to benefit. Even a settler colonizer who openly expresses pangs of conscience, like Tamir, can understand al-Qawuqji's forces' attack on Mishmar ha-Emek only by ignoring the constitutive violence of colonization (Tamir 1999, 71).

Although Tamir repeated familiar justifications for the expulsion of Palestinians, and his conscience told him he was blameless, he did not totally relinquish personal responsibility:

> Eventually we would hear that many of our former neighbors live in a refugee camp near the town of Jenin, about twenty kilometers from our kibbutz. Jenin then came under Jordanian rule, meaning it is far from us because it is across the border. For a long time we believed that, when peace comes, our neighbors would return and reclaim their homes and fields. But peace did not come. The war lasts a year, then another. Localities lie in ruins. The number of casualties on both sides is in the thousands. In the meantime, Arab inhabitants of the country begin to flee en masse. For many years, people would dispute the question of responsibility. My conscience says we are blameless. We wanted to live. But that does not mean we are not responsible. . . . The list of accounts and counteraccounts grows longer and tangles into a knot that cannot be unraveled. (Tamir 1999, 79)

In contrast to the institutionalized, hegemonic Israeli narrative that refuses any connection between the Nakba and the Holocaust (see Bashir and Goldberg 2019), Tamir did not refrain from merging the histories of Germany and Palestine. The Europeans, Jews, and Palestinians, he

noted, were unable to unravel the knot or settle the account:

> Several years ago, after many deliberations, we opened our home to German youngsters, and we tell them what happened and how. We do not have the answer to the question why. At times we wonder about how little they know about the recent past of their own people. Not many of them feel responsible for what their parents and grandparents did, which is not true of friends we have met in Germany, in Stuttgart even, who do their best to confront their past openly and honestly. At times we wish to believe that eventually we will be allowed to forget. But, surprisingly, the memories return with increasing intensity. Wounds are reopened.
>
> Our account with the Palestinians is also far from being settled. With no answer to any question that is raised, we find ourselves entangled in situations, which would have been avoided if both we and they had any moderating wisdom, to teach us the art of compromise. Good friends validate our right to exist and do not feel that the actual validation attests to doubting this right. This indubitably needs no affirmation. I continue to wonder why my—our—existence had to be won at the expense of others. (Tamir 1999, 95)

In only one exceptional passage does Tamir reaffirm the entanglement of historical violence through an encounter with a Palestinian:

> A few years ago, youngsters created a resting area for hikers around a water source, in commemoration of one of the kibbutz youth who was killed in a military accident. Close to the spring we meet young Arabs who have come there with an older man. He tells the youngsters that in the same small pool hewn in the rock, through which the spring water flows, women of his village used to do their laundry, and the village children used to bathe there in the summer. As we spoke, we learned that the older man had been a Qira villager who, after the murder of our two members, had fled east and has lived in a refugee camp ever since. We shake hands heartily. I inquire about his family, he asks about mine, as old friends do. We both avoid mentioning what had happened. My young friend, a German photographer, can hardly believe his eyes. He is eager to use his camera and photograph the encounter for posterity, as if to ensure in black and white that it is not hatred that separates us. Here is a chance incident, unimportant in itself. But it contains the fortunes of all of us, entangled with one another. There is no escape from the chaos of time and place here. They are one. (Tamir 1999, 96)

Because the witness of the friendly conversation is a German friend who is amazed by the dynamic between an Israeli and a Palestinian, this scene breaches the taboo on connecting Germany and Palestine. It does so indirectly, however, and in a way that avoids recognizing the ongoing material consequences of settler colonization and the violence of 1948. Moreover, to maintain an amicable interaction, Tamir and the Palestinian "avoid mentioning what had happened."[39]

Representations of 1948 in Kibbutz Hazorea in the Late 1980s: Contestations Resume

In the late 1980s, the debate over 1948 in Hazorea resumed, this time following a series of articles in the kibbutz newsletter by Eyal Ofek, a second-generation kibbutz settler, based on a research seminar paper he wrote as a student at Oranim Academic College on the events of 1948.[40] Ofek interviewed first-generation kibbutz settlers, and the summaries of those conversations are preserved in the kibbutz archive. His articles appeared in March 1987, before the 1988 publication of the first edition of Benny Morris's *Leydata shel beʿayat ha-plitim ha-palestinim, 1947–1949* (The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem, 1947–1949), which provoked further debate (among other topics, Morris addressed MAPAM's positions during the war and the active role of some of its kibbutzim in creating the Palestinian refugee crisis). While the kibbutz's internal discussions continued,[41] the general Israeli press reacted to Morris's book.[42] But the kibbutz's internal discussion was less a response to Morris's critical history than a confrontation between different generations of kibbutz settlers.

Among the participants in the kibbutz discussions of the 1980s were three settlers who had taken part in the debate in *Ba-shaʿar* sixteen years earlier: Arnon Tamir, Aryeh Zamir, and Israel Neumark (Eliʿezer Beʾeri had since passed away). This round of discussion opens a rare window into how the memory and ideology of elderly leftist-socialist settlers were crafted and reproduced over the years by selective transmission of the past.

In one discussion, Ofek asserted that he and his peers recognized the "moral dilemma" of the

previous generation, calling on them to reexamine the "myths" surrounding the 1948 war:

> In all of my research and writing I have tried to present the profound moral dilemma that befell the members of Hazorea and their deliberations in those fateful times. No doubt today, forty years later, it is difficult for us, the second-and third generations who did not partake in that experience, to sense the situation in which the kibbutz members found themselves back then. However, I don't see any point in continuing to nurture more myths than the numerous ones already existing, and it is our duty to present the straightforward, undisguised truth in all aspects.[43]

Ofek acknowledged the complicated position of the founding settlers but contended that an objectively true account of the past was recoverable and separable from power, beyond the limits of the knowledge derived from the personal experiences of the founding generation.

Some first-generation settlers welcomed the publication of Ofek's work and called for more research and clarification;[44] others thought his work distorted historical facts and accused him of inventing "myths" himself.[45] Just as Eliʿezer Beʾeri had challenged Tamir's historical claims in 1972, now Tamir challenged Ofek's claims and contributed to the enduring silencing of the Nakba. Tamir's article, "On myth and historical truth," welcomed Ofek's efforts "to go back and write the history of the Jewish and Arab localities in this region" and embraced his cautious formulations, but Tamir argued that Ofek's effort "did not spare him falling into several traps." One such trap, Tamir thought, was "the urge to expose clandestine plans." Tamir believed Ofek hinted at conspiratorial schemes when he wrote that in the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek and the conquest of Abu Zureiq "there were policy makers who believed in expelling Arabs." Tamir denied any such plan or policy. "It is well known that at a later time, beside attempts to persuade Arab inhabitants not to flee, demolition of Arab localities and expulsions also took place, just as at that time Jewish settlements were destroyed and their inhabitants evacuated. It was a civil war par excellence."[46] According to Tamir, those events were a "mutual escalation," not "planned developments." Tamir claimed that Ofek suffered from the methodological disabilities of historians:

> Another weakness of historians is the assumption that anything passed on from generation to generation, from father to son, is distorted by the narrator's bias, his will to weave a myth around his actions, that holy duty to destroy for the sake of pure historical truth. Thus, Eyal's writings, with a wink, as it were, imply that all the veterans' stories of innocence are a myth and that in fact they readily took part in looting.
>
> As to our regard for the fate of our neighbors and their property, it is very difficult to explain to people who did not experience at that time the extent of the threat to our existence, the chaos that filled the land with no law or rule, and the terrible embarrassment that filled us all in view of what was taking place. There were realists among us who knew quite quickly how to accept the evolving situation, but others went through a traumatic experience. The public was tormented with the question of what the future held for our relations with our neighbors when they would return (so we thought back then) and deliberated what should be done with the abandoned property. . . . I should add something here, which Eyal does not mention for some reason: the decision taken by the kibbutz assembly to collect what was left of the property was linked to the decision to sell it and buy weapons with the proceeds, to enlarge our meager arsenal. I could add that, having served over the years as construction coordinator of the kibbutz, I refused to haul even a single stone of a demolished Arab house for use in the kibbutz. . . . Such was our sensitivity back then. All this might not be important today, because customs and norms have changed. But I would like our grandchildren to know the truth about their grandparents. Whoever sees any historical truth as myth that needs to be destroyed at any price creates a myth again himself.[47]

Tamir, who had once protested other settlers' denialism, now played the same role in disavowing the kibbutz's participation in the violence and its appropriation of village property, dismissing aspects of the events that would indict the settlers.

Ofek responded, noting his surprise on discovering that what he had learned in the kibbutz educational system had been a myth:

> Having gone through the local school system and learning, along with all the other children, about the War of Independence from normative textbooks, I was greatly surprised when, in my studies at Oranim, I began to delve into this issue somewhat. Apparently no other myth system has been so greatly developed and entangled as the one that evolved around the historiography of the War of Independence. Only lately have essays and books begun to proliferate that expose a totally

different truth from that presented to us in textbooks and by word of mouth over the years.[48]

Relying on Morris, Ofek argued,

> The battle of Mishmar ha-Emek began as a Jewish defensive operation and ended according to Plan D [the Haganah plan of March 1948 that explicitly included eradicating Arab villages from strategic areas]. Here for the first time B. G. [Ben-Gurion] explicitly approved the expulsion of Arabs from an entire region in Palestine. According to British sources, the inhabitants of the neighboring villages did not take part in the offensive of the Arab Liberation Army . . . and did not even sympathize with Qawuqji's men.[49]

Ofek notes Ben-Gurion's claim that Hashomer Hatzair leaders demanded "the expulsion of the Arabs in the area and setting fire to the villages," and he refuted the myth of "the few against the many." He quotes Tamir's 1972 article that argued with Eliʿezer Beʾeri and presents Tamir's own testimony about the conquest of Abu Zureiq, concluding, "These things are a proper reflection of the facts, as is also shown in my work and the articles I have published on this issue in *Ba-shaʿar*."[50] This time, Tamir chose not to respond to Ofek publicly.

The question of looting was also central in Aryeh Zamir's response to Ofek:

> I still see a very different picture regarding our treatment of the Abu Zureiq villagers' property. On the day they fled as well as the next day, soldiers chased large flocks of cattle toward the kibbutz gate, intending for us to retrieve them. Without the kibbutz assembly's decision, several kibbutz members, including me, adamantly refused to receive this booty. We closed the gates and would not let even a single cow into the kibbutz area, because we did not want to profit from Abu Zureiq villagers' property. We made sure the flock would be handed over to Yehuda Bashan of Yokneʿam, whom the Haganah had appointed as coordinator and supervisor of all the abandoned Arab property in our area. I believe this story belongs to the picture that Eyal meant to describe of the goings-on forty years ago.[51]

Zamir disapprovingly attributes the looting to a minority, but he does not discuss the removal of the fallahin. These were complicated issues befitting a public symposium, not a kibbutz newsletter, he argued. He refuted Ofek's challenge to the standard argument that the war was fought by few against many. "I see this claim as a distortion of the reality of our life. . . . Eyal, I have no bachelor's or master's degree, but we lived through that time, and no grandiose historian will convince us today of the truth of that picture that you try to depict."[52] Zamir based his words on personal experience, and Itamar Rosen, another Hazorea settler, joined his view and answered Ofek with data "regarding the power of the [Israel Defense Forces] and the entire Jewish population," citing publications of the IDF's chief education officer.[53] Both Zamir and Rosen avoided questions relating to force against inhabitants of the neighboring villages.

Tzvi Raʿanan, a slightly younger kibbutz member (he joined in 1949), brought up the core issue of settler colonialism, the question dismissed in the 1972 and 1988 discussions by the overwhelming majority of settlers—that is, the moral issue of inheriting indigenous lands: "How could we live with the thought that we inherited Arab lands by expulsion?" Raʿanan's answer was that the considerations that led to the expulsion of the Abu Zureiq inhabitants proved valid in hindsight, although they shocked kibbutz settlers at the time. This answer corresponded to the dominant national Zionist narrative: the need to absorb Jewish refugees and found an economy and a society "that contribute to the historic existence of the Jewish People" far surpassed the importance of generating another refugee problem. Only this could "relieve the pangs of conscience regarding the Arab refugees that many of us feel now, as we did then."[54]

Israel Neumark, who had participated in the 1972 discussion, spoke in a similar vein. In his first article, he acknowledged that refugees had fled and many had been expelled "after the battles of Mishmar ha-Emek and during the first ceasefire."[55] The historical discussion, he asserted, was important and welcome, and perhaps Ofek would interview combatants and other members as long as their generation was still alive. "As for myths," he concluded, "we shall address those at a later phase of the study." He altered his position, however, in another article

and argued that historical analysis does not allow one to learn about the "soul," the feeling of the generation that experienced the events and fought, in his view, for survival:

> A mere step separated the Legion [likely meaning the ALA] on the road from infiltrating and destroying our kibbutzim. . . . We had only a few rifles, a machine gun, and several grenades. The Arabs were largely superior in the quantity as well as the quality of their arms. At Mishmar ha-Emek, the children, sheep, and others were evacuated in the dark of night. The conquest of Abu Zureiq immediately removed the direct threat to the kibbutz as well as clearing the access road to Mishmar ha-Emek. Whoever at national headquarters decided to destroy the village and expel its inhabitants was compelled by the most responsible strategic considerations. No one in Hazorea was glad that day, but we did breathe freely for a moment and prepared for the many hardships still ahead. As in every conquest, there was some marginal looting, severely condemned by those responsible for our defense. We probably made mistakes and mustn't deny them, but real history is not limited to the movements of armed forces, commanders' orders, and negotiations of one sort or another. What we would like to transmit to our sons is not an image of heroes and saints with a narrow or sophisticated ideology but, rather, our own human experience with all the anxiety and loss involved, our resolve to sustain ourselves in a fight for survival, where surrender would mean only one thing—death.[56]

In this mode of argumentation, what Jews felt and thought is more significant than what they actually did to Palestinians and certainly than what Arabs felt and thought. As we know, the expulsion of Abu Zureiq villagers was a joint initiative of the Jewish National Fund and security officials of Hazorea and Yokneʿam. Neumark presented the destruction of Qira, too, as part of the same action decided on by others. And as in 1972, he claimed that looting was "marginal."

The intergenerational transmission of knowledge prompted a crucial intervention in the narration and memory-making process surrounding the events of 1948. Most of the older generation possessed a hybrid identity: they were both immigrant-refugees and settlers. They believed that their offspring's survival depended on the successful defense of the kibbutz in 1948. But the second generation was not as invested in their version of historical memory. The now well-established kibbutzim colonies and the modern State of Israel conditioned the only order of social life they knew. They were more comfortable posing challenges to official representations of the past while being nonetheless implicitly entangled in a structure of domination from which they benefited but had not initiated.

DISCUSSION AT MISHMAR HA-EMEK

At Mishmar ha-Emek the revisiting of the events of 1948 emerged in response to the television screening of *Khirbet Khizeh*, a 1978 film based on the novella by S. Yizhar (1949) set in the fictitious Arab village of the novella's title.[57] The novella and film explicitly depict the expulsion of Arab inhabitants. Debates over the decision of the Israel Broadcasting Authority to screen this film and accusations that Mishmar ha-Emek settlers expelled the Abu Shusha villagers prompted discussions in the kibbutz assembly.

In a radio interview, the Palmach veteran Shaʾul Biber claimed that Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek expelled the Abu Shusha inhabitants. The kibbutz secretariat met on February 14, 1978, and discussed "Shaʾul Biber's defamation of Mishmar ha-Emek in 1948," as the notes of the meeting called it. Then the secretariat sent a protest message to the Israel Broadcasting Authority, "setting the record straight":[58]

> a. The members of Mishmar ha-Emek first settled the lands owned by the [Jewish National Fund] in 1926. The settlement bodies negotiated the deal with the Arab farmers to the latter's satisfaction, without any friction or tension between them and the settlers.
>
> b. Relations with the neighboring villages until the War of Independence were favorable, even friendly.
>
> c. Before the foundation of the state, the Yishuv began to suffer attacks. Qawuqji's forces came from the north. The villagers east of Mishmar ha-Emek in al-Ghubayya al-Tahta left the site even before the battles against Qawuqji's army. They must have known that Mishmar ha-Emek would be attacked from the east and preferred not to be caught in the crossfire. Inhabitants of the neighboring village to the west, Abu Shusha, took no active part in the fighting. In the last days of the fighting, when the

[Haganah Field Corps] broke through on the road connecting Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek, the villagers fled at midday on their own initiative, without any intervention on our part. Mishmar ha-Emek members were taken up with the fighting to the east at that time and had no role in the villagers' flight.[59]

This letter includes important components of the official representation of the past—denial of any prior "friction or tension" between Palestinian farmers and the settlers and a complete denial of participation in the expulsion of the villagers of Abu Shusha. As we know, some kibbutz settlers were surprised that a unit commanded by Meir Amit carried out the expulsion. But the secretariat's letter does not directly refute the claim that Hashomer Hatzair leaders requested permission from Ben-Gurion to depopulate the villages in the area.

Joseph Stockhammer, a kibbutz settler, responded to Shaʾul Biber in *Yediʾot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, writing,

The discussions [the kibbutz assembly] devoted to the question "Did we or did we not expel the villagers" I find positive, regardless of the decision taken. Kibbutz members who demanded a response showed a conscious sensitivity to the accusation, whereas members who vehemently opposed a response saw the Arabs' flight (or even expulsion) as an inevitable consequence of war.[60]

Stockhammer noted that the kibbutz discussion ignored Biber's challenge that

you, members of Mishmar ha-Emek (members of Hashomer Hatzair), who expelled the Arabs of Abu Shusha, should hold your tongue when the expulsion of Arabs is discussed. Do not join demonstrations and do not raise a racket, for you are no different than others. . . . There were security considerations for expelling back then, and the same considerations for expulsion [of the Bedouins from Rafah Plain] prevail now too.[61]

Stockhammer suggested the kibbutz settlers should not insist they did not expel anyone. Doing so would be an "affront to justice" and would not assuage their conscience. Their avoiding direct involvement in the expulsion is "merely a formal truth." Even if they did not carry out the expulsion themselves, they were glad to be rid of the neighbors who harmed their kibbutz. Not just the kibbutzim, he reminded his readers, but in cities and in development towns (built in the 1950s to house Mizrahi immigrants) Jews now live in houses and on lands that formerly belonged to Arabs.

Stockhammer resorted to the common exculpating formulation, "War imposed its horrors on us and with the strongest intention one could not shake oneself free of them all." Thus, he calls for limiting discussion to the injustice inflicted after the war: "Proving our past innocence is not sufficient. We must insist on preventing further injustice to what has already been inflicted, as much as we can."[62] Stockhammer's words did not stimulate further discussion.

These discussions illustrate how colonization is imbued with political meaning through memory practices. The violence of the 1948 war shaped arguments in Israel between the Zionist Left and Right in the 1970s and 1980s about further land conquest and domination and continues to do so to this day. Both deny Palestinian claims to historical Palestine.

DISCUSSION OF 1948 AT KIBBUTZ EIN HASHOFET

At Ein Hashofet, mention of the 1948 events was sparse and late compared with the other two kibbutzim. The kibbutz newsletter discussed the 1972 expulsions from the Rafah Plain. However, it did not address the unsettling questions regarding 1948 raised in Hazorea and, to a lesser extent, in Mishmar ha-Emek.[63]

Ofra Brill's account "The Treasure" includes discussions with her father about the history of the kibbutz:

I once asked him, "Dad, why are you proud to have been in the Palmach?" He was surprised but did not evade my question. He lifted me onto his knees, looked into my eyes and said in a contemplative voice, "Sweet daughter of mine, in faraway Europe

where your grandparents—my parents and your mother's—were at the time, a war raged, a terrible war during which the Germans annihilated millions of Jews, your grandparents and my two brothers included. One of the reasons they managed to annihilate so many Jews was that the Jews had no way to defend themselves. And here we are in this country, weapons in hand, and we fight for our right to create a home for the Jewish people, a homeland. It is a harsh and ugly war, but I am certain we shall succeed, and perhaps one day we shall even live in peace with the Arabs."

I understood very well that my dad did not hate Arabs. He knew that eventually we would have to live with them in good neighborliness. . . .

[On another occasion,] "Dad, where have you been?" I asked, openly curious. "At our neighbors, my child, our real neighbors," and his voice sounded sad. "What neighbors, dad? Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet? Dalia?" "No, no." He released a bitter chuckle. "The Arab neighbors, those who live in al-Kafrayn. Because of the war they have all fled the village, the women and the children, the village is entirely abandoned. But we feared that gangs were still hiding in those houses so we went from house to house to make sure no gangs were still sheltering there. The village was empty. There is nothing sadder than a village that has been emptied of its people."[64]

Brill's story shows how memory can be affixed to a minor physical object, thus obscuring the constitutive contradiction between the material practices of settler colonization and military conquest and the values the kibbutz purported to uphold.

Dad's words shocked me. I suddenly visualized our kibbutz abandoned, no members or children. And who would take care of all the animals that would remain? "Dad, could this happen to us too? Could it be that we too would have to leave the kibbutz because of the war? . . ." "I hope with all my heart, child, that we will never see such a moment." After a short while, he overcame his agitation. He took a necklace of blue Hebron beads out of his army shirt pocket, held it between his hands, smiled, and said, "Look at the gift I brought you!" I held my breath. "Dad!" I cried excitedly, "What a beautiful necklace! Where did you get it?" . . . "This, this we only took as a souvenir, after clearing the village."

The next morning, I realized I was not the only one. Other children received gifts of jewelry. The soldiers returning from their clearing mission wanted to rid themselves of souvenirs taken from the village, and many children who happened to meet the soldiers got lucky and received all the jewelry—the bracelets, necklaces, rings and daggers. . . .

Hanan, our homeroom teacher, entered the classroom. Thrilled, we showed him the jewelry. "Hanan, look what we got, it's from the soldiers . . . from al-Kafrayn." Hanan was dazed. He slowly took off his glasses and wiped them with his shirt. "What soldiers?" he asked. . . .

[Two days later,] Hanan raised his hand, asking for silence. "Children," he began, "we have assembled you urgently to discuss a problem that came up two days ago. As you know, a war is being fought in our country now, a harsh war sowing destruction and ruin. But in every war when the enemy faces you and then retreats, flees, or surrenders, you must respect him, not humiliate him. Our forefathers in biblical times knew and had learned the important rule that looting must not take place after the enemy has run for his life. . . ."

Chaos broke out among the children. It was hard to take in the term "looting." . . . Suddenly Hanan raised his voice: "Children, I'd like to have you vote on two proposals. One, collect the jewelry in a box and bury it in a hiding place until the day comes when we can return it to our Arab neighbors. Two, that each of you hold on to the item you received!" I felt my face burning. I wanted to get up and out, to escape this discussion, but something seemed to bind me to my chair. I knew that if I ran, I would have no right to oppose the option that would be accepted. Hanan asked who voted for each of us to hold on to what we had gotten. Only I did, hesitatingly. I blushed, felt everyone staring at me, got up quickly, and went to the shower room. All the other children voted in favor of collecting the jewelry and holding it in safekeeping until peace would come. Hanan was very glad. He said it showed how well the children understood the meaning of not looting from the enemy. A team from our social committee—Gideon and Noa—were in charge of implementing the decision, collecting the jewelry. . . . I found a hiding spot under one of the trees and quickly took the necklace out of my trousers pocket. . . . Suddenly I heard branches cracking. I shook with fear. Then all was quiet. I got up and walked toward the sound. To my surprise I saw an Arab boy, about ten years old, wearing a torn T-shirt and trousers, barefoot, standing near a high branch with lovely plums, and trying in vain to jump up and reach the branch. He was too short. . . . I stood silent and a thought occurred to me. Perhaps he is a refugee? Perhaps he fled from al-Kafrayn? Perhaps the necklace I hold belongs to his mother? . . .

Returning to the children's house in the evening, I saw a cart in the corridor, with a tin on it, and a large notice: "Some children have not yet turned in the souvenirs they received." [Gideon] lifted his eyes and gave me a piercing look. I did not blush or lower my gaze. I knew I would turn it in; I had taken my decision. When and how were none of Gideon's business. . . . Hanan spoke with us as adults. He told us how proud he was of our decision and how he believed that one day we would all be able to unearth the jewelry and give it back to our Arab neighbors who would return to the village. . . . When I knew everyone was asleep, I got up, removed the double necklace from under my pillow, caressed it gently, went to the tin on the table and placed my jewelry in with the other jewelry items. In the morning, Hanan came to the children's house, took the jewelry tin and buried it in one of the young woods nearby. Eventually, as we grew up and were graduating from high school, we wished to show the jewelry tin as a memento of our childhood days. But Hanan could not recall where the tin was buried.[65]

This passage highlights the morality of the settler children in their choosing not to keep the plundered "treasure." In other kibbutz accounts, property was sold and the proceeds used for collective aims (including buying arms). Here, the presence of an Arab child whose mother could

be the owner of the necklace and the loss of treasure (Palestinian property) suggest a rupture, implying that Palestinian losses of home(land) cannot be easily compensated.

Brill took materials from archives in the region and compiled them into one document, "Abandoned Property—assorted materials from different kibbutzim about the deliberations of members following the War of Independence regarding Arab property left after the villagers had left."[66] The existence of the "the treasure"—along with the memory of the looting—was confirmed by the kibbutz secretary, Yaniv Sagi. After an argument triggered by a visit to the kibbutz by activists of Zochrot (an Israeli organization working to familiarize Israelis with the Nakba), who called on the kibbutz to return "the treasure" to the Palestinians, Sagi wrote to Eitan Bronstein, then executive director of Zochrot:

> The local legend, alive at Ein Hashofet for decades, tells of Haganah combatants who returned from conquering the village of al-Kafrayn and brought with them jewelry from the village houses, which they wished to bestow on the kibbutz children. The teachers, however, would not have looted jewelry given to our children, so it was decided to bury the treasure. Over thirty years ago a decision was taken to build the children's music room on the spot where "the treasure" had been buried. One of the kibbutz members then went digging and found the little tin containing "the treasure." This tin was handed to Shimon Avidan (a kibbutz member, commander of the Givʿati infantry brigade during the War of Independence, former secretary-general of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi), who ran the archeology museum at the kibbutz. Before he died, Shimon handed "the treasure" to a young kibbutz member who had taken part in the archeological digs. This member possesses the tin to this day. When I asked him what it contains, he told me it's a small tin with very few jewelry items, mainly beads.
>
> . . . In his writing, Eitan [Bronstein] speaks of booty that is held by members of Ein Hashofet who refuse to return it to its owners. In reality these are a few old pieces of jewelry that we shall gladly hand over to any of the village's original inhabitants—even if merely as an item that reminds them of their historical narrative.[67]

At Ein Hashofet, as in Hazorea, as memory emerged it focused not on land but on displaced objects: an abandoned flock that Hazorea settlers refused to take in and jewelry buried in the ground after being given to children as booty by soldiers returning from battle. The questions of expulsion, indemnifying loss, and the destruction of the Palestinian society and home/land are marginal, relegated to the field of abstract politics. But both Brill and Sagi, in affective pangs of guilty conscience, ponder the fate of their former neighbors.

Fissures prevailed between official memory and strategic forgetting, on the one hand, and the memories and testimonies of settlers in the kibbutzim, on the other. These fissures are a constant, if largely latent, threat to the hegemonic discourse. However, misattributions and resignifications of the histories of colonization and dispossession shield settlers from ontologically unsettling questions over their presence on the land and replacement of indigenous Palestinians. Palestinian claims for recognition as a national collective, for property restoration, and for return remain foreclosed in settler colonial memory—in both official and kibbutz memories. Memory is therefore an apparatus for maintaining the status quo, and its fissures open the possibility for seeking redress.

CONCLUSION

IN JANUARY 2022, ISRAELI MEDIA COMMENTATORS TARGETED THE newly released documentary *Tantura*, by the Israeli Jewish director Alon Schwarz, as a vehicle to air unresolved anxieties around Zionist actions during the Nakba. *Tantura* reexamines the claim that the Palmach's Alexandroni brigade massacred two hundred or more Palestinians at the seaside fishing village of Tantura in May 1948. In *Tantura*, some Alexandroni veterans admit on screen that they were "murderers" who "took no prisoners."[1] Among other sources, Schwarz used research conducted in the 1990s by Teddy Katz for his master's thesis at the University of Haifa. Katz had interviewed Alexandroni veterans, some of whom acknowledged that members of their unit killed unarmed civilians after they conquered Tantura, and Palestinian witnesses. Katz's thesis initially received an outstanding grade, but it was later disqualified after several Alexandroni veterans filed a libel suit against him. Under pressure from his family and having suffered a recent stroke, Katz signed a statement affirming that there was no massacre. Twelve hours later he withdrew the statement, but the court and the university refused to reopen the case.

Prompted by this very public reckoning amplified by the film's debut at the renowned Sundance Film Festival, the Israeli media entered the lists. "It's Time to Stop Keeping Score: Both Sides Committed Massacres in 1948," wrote one.[2] The pro bono attorney of veterans of the Alexandroni Brigade characterized the film not as political argumentation but as "a case of forgery, lying, ugly cinematic manipulation, abuse of academic freedom, and aiding and abetting antisemitism of the old and familiar kind."[3] The *Haaretz* editorial board called for an investigative task force to excavate the parking lot that apparently conceals the site of a mass Palestinian grave.[4] The media furor and the institutional response of the University of Haifa,[5] Israel Defense Forces, and Israeli government raise key questions. Who can speak to history? Whose speech acts are considered legitimate? And how does the attribution of legitimacy shape claims to knowledge production, historical truth, sovereignty, and restitution?

The public discussions over the violence of the Nakba prompted by *Tantura* recall the memory practices among the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim in the Jezreel Valley / Bilad al-Ruha. This is true particularly around selective recognition and disavowal, the myopic recentering of the dominant party's morality in place of a commitment to undo traumatic injustice, inability to consider the relationship between contemporary violence and the history of colonization, Israeli Jewish supremacy, and efforts either to distance the kibbutzim from violence or reaffirm the inevitability of violence in the settler colonial war for a Jewish state.[6] The public contestation over *Tantura* demonstrates that settler colonial memory is unresolved and remains consequential to efforts to entrench exclusive Jewish territorial sovereignty. Settler colonial memory is an active component of constructing the self-understanding of the vast majority of Jewish citizens of Israel.

Another event around the same time revived disputes about a different, but related, history of Israeli colonial hierarchies. In the summer of 2020 controversy surfaced around the enclosure of the Asi River, which flows through the Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutz Nir David in the Beisan Valley, about forty-five kilometers east of Bilad al-Ruha.[7] Nir David was established in 1936 as the first of the tower and stockade colonies. Israeli law requires that the river, which emerges

from thermal springs and runs partially through the kibbutz, be accessible to the public. Nonetheless, in 2020, kibbutz settlers, many descended from its Ashkenazi founders, enclosed a section of the river and blocked access with fences and acts of deterrence. The kibbutz claimed that, although the river was public property, the land surrounding it was not. A Free the Asi movement sprouted when protestors from nearby development towns—colonies Israeli authorities built in the 1950s to house the influx of Mizrahi immigrants—gathered outside the kibbutz on Fridays to protest their exclusion.

The kibbutz settlers had imposed a literal social closure. That issues around privilege and exclusion from land, in this case the conflict between purportedly progressive Zionists (the kibbutz members) and the Mizrahi Jews, who usually identify with the political Right, have risen to the surface decades after the 1948 war indicates the durability of settler colonialism and the hierarchies it instituted. The ethnic cleavages between Ashkenazi Jews and those from the Middle East and North Africa continue to animate claims and grievances. Haunting the conflict at Nir David is the Palestinian dispossession that prefigured this conflict over access to space, although both the kibbutz settlers and the Mizrahi demonstrators excluded this prehistory from their consciousness and consideration. Lands of the destroyed Palestinian village al-Sakhina, whose 615 inhabitants were displaced in May 1948, were integrated into kibbutz territory following its displacement (Abu Sitta 2010, 111; W. Khalidi 2006, 58).

The Tantura massacre and Nir David's enclosure of the Asi River illustrate a fundamental historiographical tenet. We study history to explain the present. We seek out linkages between beginnings and outcomes, trace path dependencies that may lock structures in place, and uncover moments in which social actors either reproduce patterns or interrupt them in consequential ways. For some, including me, to carry out such a task is one effort in the attempt to decolonize the present, to reverse entrenched processes of violence, to dismantle Jewish Israeli supremacy and transform the persisting settler colonial relationship between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis into a democratic and nonhierarchical political structure. The past, then, is both unsettled and unsettling.

COLONIZING PALESTINE

My goal throughout this book is to reveal the social, political, and discursive processes of settler colonialism at the local level of lived experience as a set of contentious relations that gradually become both structured and structuring. I examine the settler colonial process enacted from 1936 to 1956 by three Hashomer Hatzair kibbutzim—Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet —in the populated rural frontier of Bilad al-Ruha and their interactions with the neighboring Arab villages: Mishmar ha-Emek with Abu Shusha and al-Ghubayyat (al-Ghubayya al-Fauqa, al-Ghubayya al-Tahta, and al-Naghnaghiyya), Hazorea with Qira and Abu Zureiq; and Ein Hashofet with Joʾara and al-Kafrayn. My exposition of the material histories is accompanied by an analysis of the cognitive and discursive modes of representation in the kibbutzim between the 1950s and 1970s regarding the colonization process, in particular the events that shifted the modality of colonization and land acquisition and appropriation from purchase to military conquest in the 1948 Nakba. Claims about past practices and relationships become entangled with representations and memories of historical events. As at Tantura and Nir David, they inject the past into present and become constitutive elements of enduring settler colonialism or tools to dismantle it.

Let us zoom out from Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea, and Ein Hashofet and bring into the wider frame the approximately forty Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz colonies established before 1948 in the

same location or near Palestinian villages across British Mandate Palestine. That frame approximates the map that appears in the introduction—colonies are peppered across fertile plains, punctuating the geographic and political order.

This perspective enables us to envision dozens of Eliʿezer Beʾeris, Arab experts; and Aryeh Diamants, security officials; and Brachas, kibbutz schoolteachers. We can, perhaps, visualize the countless quotidian interactions between settlers and natives in a range of encounters and social settings, from weddings to murders to displacements. We can also imagine kibbutz settlers and their descendants, some sorting through contested histories and memories, debating, and reminiscing but few wondering how they came to occupy the spaces where they now reside. A wider frame allows us to grasp the totality of colonization practices across Palestine, the hundreds of Palestinian villages and cities on the cusp of a long-lasting and traumatic transformation. A still wider lens would make visible the global histories of modern settler colonialism—the violence, displacement, and transformations imposed on land, resistance, and resilience.

Colonization Practices

I began my research for this book by responding to Baruch Kimmerling's conceptual distinction among the three elements of control over land—ownership, presence, and sovereignty. Ownership became actual control of the land only after establishing presence and, ultimately, sovereignty. Kimmerling's approach shifts the discussion from property and possession as merely judicial concepts to a historicized understanding of settler colonization as a dynamic process inflected by the transitions from Ottoman to British to Israeli sovereignty. My research reveals the importance of several factors that Kimmerling's and others' frameworks do not adequately address: (1) the protracted and gradual advance of the Zionist settler colonial project, (2) the consciousness and agency of fallahin, and (3) the importance of coercion well before the 1948 war. Coercion included establishing control over land, creating exclusive Jewish territorial contiguity (among the three kibbutzim of Ramot Menashe / Bilad al-Ruha and similar clusters of kibbutzim in other regions of Palestine), fragmenting the Palestinian collective, and during the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, the training of Jewish police and paramilitary units under British command and their access to arms. These factors did not achieve sovereignty in the traditional sense that Kimmerling employs, the establishment of a nation-state. Rather, they created "spaces of sovereignty" (Shenhav 2006) through a regime of semisovereignties, with a high degree of in(ter)dependence. Semisovereignty formed as a sort of gradated sovereignty (Stoler 2006) that preexisted and then came to constitute the territorial basis of the State of Israel.

Despite intense efforts to purchase land before 1948, the Zionist movement succeeded in buying just over 1.5 million dunams, or only about 7 percent of the land area of Mandate Palestine and 20 percent of the cultivable land. Repeatedly, purchase of land did not guarantee actual control of it. Many Palestinian farmers clung to the land they had cultivated for years and tried to continue cultivating it even after it had been formally transferred to the Zionist land-purchase institutions. Often, they refused offers of compensation.

Understanding the colonization process as a question of compensating individual cultivators obscures its political character. Resistance to the advances of the Zionist project was often collective, entailing passive or active cooperation among the villages. The most comprehensive expression of collective resistance was the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939.

Since at least the 1930s, Hashomer Hatzair settlers recurrently faced individual and collective refusal of Palestinian fallahin to accept compensation and relocate. At times, settlers also

encountered organized violence intended to halt the colonization process and attempts to take over the land. The Palestinian peasants' insistent grasp on the land surprised the settlers. The testimony of those who purchased the land and the kibbutz settlers themselves affirms that Palestinian inhabitants saw this attachment (their *sumud* [steadfastness]) as normative, not exceptional. The perspective of the fallahin challenges the hegemonic legal-economic account of settlement, which asserts that the Zionists purchased the land and thereby gained exclusive rights to it.

The Palestinian peasantry regarded their usufruct to land as rooted in Ottoman law and traditional local practice. Recall that the land tenants of Qira clung to the land until the last possible moment, March 1948. They did not leave until then in the face of pressure, enclosure, court claims, offers of monetary compensation, and threats of violence. The gap between their understanding of their rights and their attachment to the land and those of the settlers is very clear. From their point of view, the registration of the land they cultivated in the name of distant landowners who sold it to others, or the reregistration of the land in the name of the Palestine Land Development Company, did not void their rights to the land or their attachment to it.

Colonization fragmented the Palestinian collective. As chapters 1–2 demonstrate, the colonizers' settlement and the dispossession of the cultivators led to the destruction of Palestinian communities. Entire villages, some relatively small, like Joʾara, and some large, were wiped off the map. Some, like Qira, refused to disappear, even after a portion of their inhabitants were evacuated.

Consequently, settlement and colonization was more complex and more protracted than simply establishing a kibbutz on lands purchased from an absentee landlord and paying compensation to individual fallahin and pressuring them to move, either to alternative agricultural lands or to cities. Years before the 1948 Nakba, there were belligerent confrontations: daily clashes over land use; fencing, enclosure, and afforestation; tilling disputed land and collecting straw in the fields; and evacuations, with the help of British imperial police forces (1938) during the Great Arab Revolt or without their assistance (1946). These confrontations structured the unequal social relations on the frontier of settlement. What I call the 1948 events throughout this book did not merely usher forth a sudden rupture, even as they constituted the foundational moment in the conversion of the Palestinian *watan* (homeland) to the Israeli state. Rather, they continued a protracted process that began in the decades preceding 1948. Before, during, and after 1948, coercion and violence were essential in effectively settling and taking possession of the land in what had been a relatively densely populated frontier. Thus, the Nakba is ongoing (*al-nakba al-mustamirra*); it has long been ongoing.

Examining the empirical details of the settler colonial process at ground level reveals the strategic importance of the coercive enforcement of presence. Establishing a colony (ʿ*aliya* ʿ*al ha-karka*) involved confrontations between settlers and the local inhabitants, which on two occasions led to abandonment of the point of settlement (Mishmar ha-Emek, Hazorea). The settlers called the transition from their initial settlement to expanding its agricultural lands a conquest (*kibush ha-karka*). This too was not a onetime act but a protracted process—for example, the "second conquest" of Kibbutz Hazorea, which ultimately led to further conquests in 1946 and 1948.

From the beginnings of the Mandate, the British granted the Yishuv colony substantial internal autonomy. During the Great Arab Revolt, the Yishuv colony expanded its autonomy by gaining access to the legitimate use of armed force and participating in the severe collective punishments imposed on insurgent fallahin by the British imperial authorities. Zionist settlers appealed to the

British police and courts of law and acquired permits to use weapons under certain conditions. Settler youth enlisted in the Jewish Supernumerary Police, the Jewish Settlement Police, and the Special Night Squads under British command and became integral elements of Britain's repressive state apparatus. By the time the Anglo-Zionist alliance came to an end with the 1939 White Paper, these well-trained units formed the core of a greatly strengthened Haganah and enabled the establishment of the Palmach strike force in 1941.

Socialism and Brotherhood of Nations

The Yishuv colony was the infrastructure that enabled the Israeli state. It was greatly strengthened by the collectivism of the kibbutzim. Because they had no metropolitan sovereign state, Zionist settlers were relatively weaker than settlers who act on behalf of an empire. Collective settlements integrated with nationwide, politically united kibbutz federations and allied with Zionist institutions like the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the Palestine Land Development Company, and the Histadrut to compensate for this relative weakness. Collective organization imparted strategic advantages over private settlement during struggles over the control of land. In the Palestinian village of Qira, management of the confrontation over control of land was ultimately transferred from the hands of private purchasers to the JNF and Kibbutz Hazorea. As reflected in the dilemmas of the settlers of Kibbutz Hazorea regarding the fate of the property of the Palestinian inhabitants and the plunder that fell into settler hands, the transfer of booty to the kibbutz collective legitimated acts of plunder that many kibbutz settlers deemed unacceptable if undertaken by individuals for their personal benefit.

It is plausible to imagine that Hashomer Hatzair's ideological commitments to the brotherhood of nations, binationalism, and social revolution would lead its settlers to reconsider the meaning of colonization and its effects on the local inhabitants. The historical record indicates ambivalence. We should not read the archival materials documenting the relations between the kibbutzim and the Palestinian villages from the ideological perspective of Hashomer Hatzair— that is, to a priori interpret kibbutz practices as the realization of an ideology, although it is important to attend to the settlers' emic meaning-making practices. Refraining from a teleological reading of the relations that developed between the settlers and their Palestinian Arab neighbors in light of the eventual rupture of 1948 is necessary. The binational ideology of Hashomer Hatzair did not significantly shape the character of the settler colonization process or forestall adopting an active policy of expansion and encroachment. Left-socialist values did not motivate significant protest in response to the uprooting of the Palestinian villages before and during 1948 or prevent the kibbutzim from taking possession of the land and property of the adjacent Palestinian villages. Those rare settlers who protested on an ideological basis, like Aharon Cohen, became politically marginalized in the movement.

The settlers' socialist ideology shaped a logically incoherent perception of taking possession of the land and the settler colonial process. Their socialist ideology maintained that the land belongs to those who cultivate it. But they also maintained, like other Europeans of that period and commensurate with liberal capitalist ideology, that purchase of land from its absentee owners imparted to them the full and absolute right to the land and voided the rights of existing tenants or sharecroppers. Moreover, while they perceived their attachment to the land as collective, they misrepresented the relationship of the indigenous population to the land by ignoring their affective attachments, historical rootedness, and collective national political rights. They depicted land claims as individual economic problems that could be solved by monetary compensation. They denied the right of the Palestinian fallahin to object to Zionist colonization

and their capacity for agency, depicting their opposition as irrational or exogenously prompted. That view was rooted in the consensual Zionist understanding of Palestine as essentially Jewish and of its indigenous Palestinian population as essentially unrooted in the land.

Nonetheless, elements of the socialist ideology played an important role in justifying the colonization process for the kibbutzim. First, the values of modernization and productivization framed colonization as a developmentalist project, which, it was hoped, the indigenous would ultimately join. Second, the settlers' self-perception as a vanguard socialist collective led them to establish ethnically exclusive communities that were separate and separa*ble* from their Arab surroundings, although full separation did not become viable until after 1948. Third, the socialist-Zionist settlers deployed their understanding of the class distinction between effendis and fallahin to deny that any anti-colonial or national conflict existed and to claim that Palestinian refusal of colonization was a product of external incitement. This was integrated with a paternalistic, conciliatory approach toward their Palestinian neighbors, because fallahin were not deemed to be the real adversaries of the Zionist project.

The slogan of brotherhood of peoples (Hashomer Hatzair's version of internationalism) did play a role in shaping everyday life in the kibbutzim as well as their self-perception and commemorative practices. Some members of the three kibbutzim examined here made efforts to learn Arabic, visited the neighboring villages, engaged in forms of exchange, and offered medical and other limited assistance. At the same time, in all three kibbutzim there are explicit testimonies that nurturing relations with the Arab inhabitants of the area had the strategic intention of inducing them to accept colonization in peaceful ways.

As we have seen, the extent of the relations between the kibbutzim and their surroundings was very limited and not solely owing to a lack of command of Arabic. The exchanges of visits and festive events should not mislead us about the overall texture of relations. The kibbutzim established an exclusive society largely socially disconnected from their Arab surroundings. The few settlers who were in contact with the local Arabs repeatedly complained about a lack of interest on the part of the majority of the settlers of the kibbutz in fostering such contacts with their Arab neighbors. Most of the interactions between the kibbutzim and the local Arab inhabitants were mediated by a small group of settlers who specialized in relations with the Arabs. This became their area of expertise, and some of them were recruited to official positions on behalf of colonizing and military institutions. Only in rare instances were interactions based on cultural curiosity, as in the case of Hillel Meirhoff of Kibbutz Hazorea.

Proximity does not necessarily engender neighborly relations. The closest villages to the kibbutzim (such as Qira, adjacent to Kibbutz Hazorea) were the very ones that the kibbutzim singled out for eviction. Willingness to embrace the existence of inhabitants of the surroundings was based on temporal and spatial conditions. Kibbutz Mishmar Ha-Emek settlers understood the inhabitants of Abu Zureiq as permanent inhabitants with whom neighborly relations should be developed. Because the kibbutz had no plans to farm their lands, Jewish ownership would not result in expanding its land or productive capacity. Until 1948, Abu Zureiq's residents did not feel territorially insecure. Relations were shaped, first and foremost, by the locations of the settlers and the indigenous on the settler colonial frontier, the legal status of the cultivators, and the projected direction of the settlement process.

Neither the limited neighborly relations nor the exchanges that developed prevented the displacement of the indigenous Palestinians from their villages during the 1948 war. The relations that the kibbutzim had developed with their neighbors before 1948 became a strategic asset during the settler colonial war. The kibbutzim had only a limited role in determining

military strategy and tactics in the area, but they actively participated in the destruction of Palestinian villages, intended to prevent the inhabitants from returning and taking over their land, and the transfer to Zionist hands.

Therefore, the term that best captures the full range of encounters between the kibbutzim and their Palestinian neighbors is *settler colonial pragmatism*: the social relations between organized settler colonizers embedded in a network of colonial institutions and imperial governance and a fractured indigenous Palestinian population. The binationalism of Hashomer Hatzair in general and the three kibbutzim in particular was asymmetrical and based on the assumption that the collective of Jewish settlers were the bearers of progress that Arabs might join.

Let us revisit the question I pose in the introduction: What defines the Left when it is implicated in processes of settler colonial domination? My empirical findings have shown that the a priori supposition that a self-identified socialist Left—one that advocates class liberation, brotherhood of peoples, and the abolition of social hierarchy—is less prone to the perpetration of violence that accompanies settler colonial territorial redistribution is fallacious. Hashomer Hatzair was not corrupted, by more belligerent Zionist political currents or by capitalism. The reality the kibbutz settlers encountered on the ground, including indigenous resistance, dictated the settler colonial process and its transformations rather than the ideology with which they arrived. Even so, alongside the processes of colonization, the settlers legitimated and justified their practices with ideological schemas that reinforced settler colonial hierarchies.

Memory for Forgetfulness

My turn to memory in chapters 5 and 6 may appear unconventional for a historical sociology concerned with the material transformations engendered by settler colonization. However, settler colonialism is also enacted and reenacted in the realm of culture, consciousness, and memory. Notably, the Palestinian villages were not erased in Zionist settler colonial memory, and therefore meaning making revolved around their present absence. Memory forms part of a repertoire that legitimates claims to land and to belonging on it. Memory is also fertile ground for production and reproduction of settler colonial hegemony and culture because it is a dynamic and malleable instrument and a crucial domain of meaning making.

Memory is intertwined with material machinations of power and should be incorporated into investigations of the logic of settler colonial rule because it offers rich discursive evidence for the ways historical agents understood and acted in their worlds. Transformative theorizing can conceptualize memory as one of the multivalenced ambivalences that lie at the heart of settler colonial projects.

Memory practices are not simply ex post facto representations but are elements of the production of sociopolitical consciousness. Memory entangles temporalities, allowing the past to emerge in the present. In Israel/Palestine,[8] Zionist memory has reenacted and reframed settler colonialism, justifying past deeds and legitimating enduring privileges, while raising questions about individual and collective political and moral responsibility for perpetrating violence and dispossession. An explanation of settler colonialism entails attending to the epistemological and representational mechanisms that empower settler-ism as a durable force.

Historians have documented efforts of Zionist and Israeli national figures to rewrite the history of settler colonial violence and expropriation (Shlaim 1995; Hazkani 2021). In the three colonies of Hashomer Hatzair, memory has operated on a more fissured terrain while nonetheless attempting to obfuscate or render mute questions of complicity and implication in structures of settler colonial domination. A critical study of these memory representations is an essential

element of deconstructing the enduring power that structures the sociopolitical relations between colonizer and colonized in Israel/Palestine and to imagine potential pathways for redress and justice.

PROJECTING INDIGENOUS FUTURITY

This book describes articulating a national settler colonial project and the mechanisms of settler semisovereignty before the Zionist colony established a state. Zionist national identity is premised on settlement, replacement, and the denial and negation of Palestinian indigeneity. Reimagining Jews as indigenous is central to Zionist claims to re/possession. In this sense, the Palestinian is indigenous *through* a relational matrix with the Zionist settler colonizer.

Socialist Zionism entailed the construction of Jewish sovereignty *through*, not simply alongside, the active disavowal of indigenous Palestinian sovereignty. It entailed intensive and intentional planning; land purchase as a means of legitimating conquest; prolonged, forceful, or violent practices enacted against the indigenous population; and cultural representations that negate Palestinian rootedness. In 1948 the kibbutzim enjoyed victory and spoils while asserting humanitarian values. These foundational practices have shaped the lives of both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians over the past century, both those who were expelled from their homeland and those who continue to live in it.

Those who wish to disrupt patterned ways of enacting settler colonialism in Israel/Palestine must first understand why and how the current distribution of power is rooted in both material practices and memories of the past. The post-1967 patterns and practices of occupation and settlement are continuous with those of the pre-1948 and early statehood periods and reflect similar values, even if socialism and binationalism are no longer touted as part of the political program. Expropriation of land, home demolitions, vigilante settler violence, a restrictive permit regime, mobilizing international funding to support settlement expansion, and ethno-nationally based apartheid and separation are all extensions of and elaborations on early twentieth-century colonization techniques.

Prestate institutions like the kibbutzim, the JNF, and the Haganah and Palmach developed within the British imperial field, ultimately coalescing into the Israeli nation-state, Zionism's central contemporary colonizing institution. Despite this transition, the logic of colonization has never fallen to the wayside, and imperial support (now in the form of geopolitical superpowers like the United States) have continued to shape the field of power within which settler colonialism is legitimated. Only a radical break can disrupt this structure. Colonization corrupts the settler colonizer, which is why Fanon (2004, 2) viewed decolonization as necessarily "an agenda for total disorder."

In considering what comes next, we must look to the past and the concerted accumulations by dispossession and processes of social marginalization and erasure that enlist both state and society to sustain settler colonial hierarchies. As Coulthard (2014b, 61) put it, "By shifting our analytical frame to the colonial relation, we might occupy a better angle from which to both anticipate and interrogate practices of dispossession justified under otherwise egalitarian principles and espoused with so-called progressive state political agendas in mind." To ignore this is to overlook "what could prove to be invaluable glimpses into the ethical practices and preconditions required of a more humane and sustainable world order." Instead of viewing settler colonial beginnings as leading inevitably to the 1948 Nakba, the Israeli state, the subsequent 1967 occupation, and the hyperauthoritarian turn of Israeli politics in the 2010s, I have insisted on examining the political "raw materials" (to borrow from Steinmetz 2001, 219) that would

prefigure later processes.

In chapter 6 I told the story of Kibbutz Hazorea settler Arnon Tamir, who recalled the colonization in which he took part decades prior. In 1972 he wrote that, as the construction manager of the kibbutz, he was summoned to the nearby "abandoned" village of Umm az Zinat in 1948 to obtain stone and, to his surprise, encountered a bulldozer demolishing Palestinian homes. Tamir could not have predicted that nearly a half century later, in May 2006, some 2,000 Palestinians and about 150 Jewish Israelis would gather on the periphery of Haifa and collectively march to the same village, Umm az Zinat, in a symbolic political act of return. With placards naming the hundreds of destroyed villages and Palestinian flags waving in the wind, these demonstrators made their way to the unrecognizable village, today just scattered piles of rubble overgrown with flora north of Moshav Elyakim (W. Khalidi 2006, 199–200). Israeli farmers now use some of the ancestral Palestinian village land as cattle pasture, and the JNF Carmel forest has encroached on other segments of the village site. This march, held as Jewish Israelis commemorated Independence Day, was organized by ADRID, the Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Internally Displaced, as the yearly march to commemorate the Nakba and keep alive the demand to return. Just as Tamir kept alive the memory of dispossession and displacement, so too have Palestinians continued to look back to the past to animate political claims to future restitution and the demand to return (image 10 shows a return march in 2022, for instance). So although "settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory" (Wolfe 2006, 287), empirical reality in Palestine indicates that logic and outcome cannot be conflated. This invites a more cautious theorizing of the manifestation and limitations of the Zionist project in Palestine.

Commemoration of the Nakba is no easy feat in Israel. Israeli governments have fortified the Zionist denial of historical violence against Palestinians while continuing to perpetrate violence against Palestinians subjected to a capricious state. Meanwhile, Palestinian refugees cannot access their homeland. The 2018 Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People has further entrenched Jewish Israeli ethno-national supremacy and an exclusivist vision of sovereignty in historical Palestine. The Nakba Law, an amendment to the Knesset's 2011 Budget Foundations Law, threatens to punish commemoration of the Nakba. Archives are facing censorship.[9] As I write these words, the Israeli state and most of its citizen-settlers have yet to acknowledge the settler colonial violence from which they benefit and that many still actively perpetrate. Such violence, Palestinians know well, has not ceased. But neither have the many attempts to undo historically constituted domination. Palestinians continue to live in their homeland. They are planning with their (relatively few) anti-colonial Jewish Israeli comrades a decolonized sociality, taking inspiration from and further stimulating global anti-colonial movements for justice.

IMAGE 10. Palestinian return march to Miʿar village, May 2022.
Source: Rana Awaisi.

Notes

PREFACE

1. "Our Story," Zochrot, 2022, https://www.zochrot.org/articles/view/17/en?Our_Story.

INTRODUCTION

1. On this, see Lockman 1996, 21–57.

2. Initially, the hilly area was referred to by Jewish settlers as Harei Efrayim, but after realizing the geography did not correspond to the biblical reference, the name was changed to Ramat Menashe. Today it is Ramot Menashe.

3. Much important scholarship discusses land tenure changes through social and legal histories (e.g., Schölch 2006; Owen 1993, 2000; Yazbak 2000; Adler 1988; Abu-Lughod 1971; Al-Hazmawi 1998; Asad 1976; Bunton 1999; Forman and Kedar 2003; Issawi 1966; and Kedar and Yiftachel 2006). Crucial new research on land reforms (privatization and nationalization) and its conditioning of British and Zionist colonization includes the work of Fakher Eldin (2008, 2019), who depicts transformations in Ottoman and British policies, practices, and governmentality. I discuss transformations in land tenure in chapter 2.

4. The literature on settler colonialism is vast, from more contemporary scholarship (Loizides and Haklai 2015; Veracini 2010; Wolfe 1999, 2006, 2016a; Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Elkins and Pedersen 2005) to now-classical works (e.g., Fredrickson 1981; Fieldhouse 1976).

5. Abu-Lughod and Abu-Laban 1974; Elmessiri 1977; Hilal 1976; Jabbour 1970; Said 1979b; Sayegh 1965; Sayigh 1979; and Touma 1973; and see Sabbagh-Khoury 2022c. Maxime Rodinson ([1967] 1973) and other leftists took part in these discussions, as did non- and anti-Zionist writers in Israel/Palestine.

6. Other Israeli researchers reached similar conclusions that Zionist settlement was akin to other settler colonization movements, without committing to the theoretical framework of settler colonialism. For example, Benvenisti (1997, 15) made the comparison—while studying the Hebraization of the space and the giving to local sites new Hebrew names—between Zionist practices and the way the British went about settling territory.

7. I do not further discuss internal arrangements of social reproduction, such as childrearing, cooking, and agricultural production. However, these were important considerations in terms of ideological differentiation and political-economic structures of kibbutzim from the wider society and of Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi from other kibbutzim.

8. "Political" (*medini*) here was used in the specific Zionist Hebrew sense—that is, of relations with other nations, including the Palestinians—rather than relating to social-economic issues.

9. In April 1942, the American Zionist Congress met with leaders of the worldwide Zionist movement and shaped the Biltmore Program, which demanded opening the gates of the Land of Israel to Jewish immigration, entrusting the Jewish Agency with supervision of such immigration and writing a constitution of the Land of Israel after the war as a Jewish commonwealth integrated in the new democratic world. According to Halamish (2009a), the Biltmore Program was accepted unanimously by the Zionist leadership headed by Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion; only the Hashomer Hatzair representative abstained. In November 1942, the Zionist executive in Jerusalem ratified the Biltmore Program despite opposition by two representatives of Hashomer Hatzair and a representative of ʿAliya Hadasha (New immigration). The program's name was changed to the Jerusalem Program, and it replaced the 1897 Basel Program as the platform of the Zionist movement. According to Halamish, the main difference between the Jerusalem Program and Hashomer Hatzair's platform was that, instead of constituting a Jewish commonwealth over all the Land of Israel, Hashomer Hatzair envisioned a political regime that, in the first phase, would be subject to international supervision with the long-range objective of becoming a binational state (236).

10. Although here Shapira and Wiskind-Elper ostensibly accept the analytic paradigm of colonialism for explaining Zionism, they along with many other Zionist scholars did not adopt the paradigm, instead declaring it defamatory to the legitimacy of the Zionist project. This epistemological choice has contributed to a silencing of history and failure to identify the continuity of historical violence to the present settler colonial condition.

11. Among the most ardent critics of the Zionist Left were non- and anti-Zionist Jewish Israeli leftists, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, such as members of Matzpen (the Israeli Socialist Organization) and some more radical members of the Communist Party (see Lockman 1976).

12. See, for example, Sternhell 1995; Halamish 2004, 2009b; Peled 2002; Tzur 1998; Tsahor 1997; Zayit 1985; Shalev 1992; and Eisenstadt 1967.

13. A small non-Zionist Left has, from the early decades of the Zionist project, critically broached the subject of 1948 and settler colonialism, although they do not feature in this book (see Lockman 1976; Greenstein 2014). The book also does not detail more critical Zionist orientations to the "Arab Question"; see, e.g., David Myers' wonderful account of Simon Rawidowicz (Myers 2010).

14. On colonialism as a social field, see Steinmetz 2008, 2016, 2018.

15. Herzog (2000) argues that until recently the historiography of Israeli society was based on periodization deriving from the life experience of the dominant groups in Israel. Herzog cites Young, who claimed, "The important step is the framing of several

events in a given period and making them 'our own'—an opening date with special significance must be chosen" (209). An opening year in the collective narrative in Israel is 1948, the year of the war, which became the main story in constructing the "us."

16. Crucially, these statutory emergency laws and regulations would be adopted by the Israeli state's governance system; they remain today as a mechanism through which civil rights are denied and bypassed.

17. In contrast to the relatively scarce information on Palestinians on the frontier, some records about Palestinians in the cities can be found in the Israel State Archives. This institution seized records about Palestinian political organizing, and the archives include records on the Palestinian elite, most of whom lived in the cities.

18. This is not to say archives on the Palestinian rural frontier during the British Mandate are nonexistent. Davis (2010) writes of the dozens of village memorial books that preserved village history; other scholars, including me, have conducted oral history interviews with Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons on village life before and during and the Nakba (see, e.g., Jawad 2007); and a recent wave of scholarship has used creative tactics to reconstruct the history of Palestinian villages (e.g., Wachtel et al. 2020).

CHAPTER 1

1. The region is referred to as both Bilad al-Ruha (comfortable place) and Bilad al-Rawhaa (fragrant, or windy), depending on the emphasis placed on the letters (Kabha and Sarhan 2004, 10).

2. For example, al-Dabbagh 2006a, 2006b, 2006c; Kanaana 2000; Stein 1980, 1984; Kimmerling 1983; Khalaf 1997; and W. Khalidi 2006.

3. In 1922, the census recorded the Arab population as slightly over 660,000 and the Jewish population as 83,794. See Barron 1922.

4. Ottoman land registration was not completed before 1918. Land registration in the West Bank was halted by the Israeli government in 1967, and it has never been completed.

5. Weitz, the premier planner of Zionist settlement, viewed Arab tenants as a problem to be solved, a surplus population to be gotten rid of—in other words, the elimination of the indigenous qua indigenous as a putative solution to Zionism's demographic problem (Masalha 1992; W. Khalidi [1961] 1988).

6. ʿArab al-Fuqara was not near any of the three kibbutzim under study.

7. The following tribes were affiliated with the Turkmen: Bani Saʿidan, Bani ʿAlaqma, Bani Ghirʿa, Bani Dhubiyya, al-Shaqirat, al-Tuwatha or ʿArab Abu Zureiq, al-Naghnaghiyya, and Arab al-ʿAwidayn (Arraf 2001, 41–42).

8. A *qirat* constitutes one twenty-fourth of whatever is to be divided (e.g., weight, area).

9. The six Beirut families established a limited liability company to manage these transactions and the cultivation of the lands until they sold them to the Jewish National Fund (Alff 2019).

10. Weitz divides the territory into zones and provides the percentage of uncultivable land in every zone, stating that in the Jezreel Valley only 3 percent was uncultivable, compared with 28.7 percent in the mountains, 100 percent in the Judean Desert, 11.1 percent in the coastal plain, 11.3 percent in the Jordan Valley, 10.8 percent in the Hula Valley, 27.9 percent in the Negev Plain, 100 percent in the Negev mountains, and 69.2 percent in the Arava desert (Weitz 1950, 27).

11. The Palestine Land Development Company purchased the lands of al-Fula from Sursuq in 1910 (al-Dabbagh 2006a, 52).

12. Hourany (2003) summarizes the reasons for the revolt outbreak according to different researchers: increased Jewish immigration in the years 1932–1935, the Zionist effort to establish an exclusively Jewish economy through conquest of labor and land, the flow of wealth to the country, and the policy of the British Mandate in favor of the Zionist movement. Rising unemployment among Arab workers was due to Jewish monopolies of production in certain goods and exacerbation of agricultural problems that worsened suffering and poverty among many farmers who had to move from their villages into the towns, looking for sources of livelihood.

13. Al-Dabbagh (2006a) defines the Haifa district's boundaries as, on the west, the Mediterranean Sea; to the north, the Acre/ʿAkka district; to the east, the Nazareth and Jenin districts; and to the south, the Tulkarm and Jenin districts.

14. The definition of the region according to the Book of Kibbutz Ein Hashofet: "Our zone—now called the Plain of Manasseh —is Bilad al-Ruha, but it was mistakenly called the Efrayim Mountains. Its borders are natural and obvious. If observed from one of the Mount Carmel peaks (al-Muhraqa, for example) or from Umm al-Fahm, the area differs considerably from these two mountain ranges. This plain is in fact a geological feature formed by the mountains folding inward. It lies from southwest of Caesarea-Karkur to northeast—the Jezreel Valley, Mount Carmel, and Umm al-Fahm" (Ein Hashofet 1962, 15–16).

15. Many of the villagers lived as land tenants, and thus we have no precise information regarding the number of villagers at different points in time. The same holds true for the other two kibbutzim discussed.

16. The Shaw Commission, appointed to examine the causes of the *habbat al-Buraq*, claimed the cause of the revolt was "the existence and the creation of a class of embittered landless people" (Yazbak 2000, 196).

17. Morris (2001, 91) describes the position of the Jewish armed forces at the time, writing that the kibbutz "controlled the main thoroughfare on which an Arab army would eventually move in from the triangle of Jenin-Nablus-Tulkarm."

18. According to al-Khatib (1987), the villagers of Abu Shusha were surprised by Qawuqji's forces entering their village, but al-Khatib's source does not describe the inhabitants' position regarding the attack. Existing research does not provide a fuller picture of the inhabitants' views.

19. For more on Plan D and its ramifications for the Palestinians' exodus from their villages, see W. Khalidi [1961] 1988.

20. Note that Vilnay has eliminated Jenin, even though in 1974 the road still went there.

21. Letter from Kibbutz Hazorea to Menachem Ussishkin (Jerusalem) of the Jewish National Fund board of directors, June 6,

1938, HA, file on settlement issues, no. 21.

22. W. Khalidi (2006) claims Yokneʿam was built first on the village lands but does not mention Kibbutz Hazorea. He states that in 1945 all the village lands belonging to the inhabitants had already been purchased, and in 1950 the Upper Yokneʿam neighborhood was established. Kibbutz Tzorʿah, he wrote, was founded in 1936 between Qira and Abu Zureiq. Apparently, Khalidi was mistaken and meant to name Kibbutz Hazorea. Arraf (2001), however, notes that in 1935 Yokneʿam settled on part of the village lands. In 1936, Kibbutz Hazorea settled on other parts.

23. In 1922, the village had 787 inhabitants, 1,029 in 1931, and 1,705 in 1948, according to W. Khalidi (2006, 199) and al-Dabbagh (2006c, 659).

24. Eyal Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations with the Villages of Qira and Abu Zureiq between the Years 1936–1948" (Kiryat Tivon: Department of Middle Eastern History at Oranim College, 1988), HA.

25. *Biʿur Hametz* literally translates to "burning of unleavened bread," which notably evokes the ethnic cleansing that ensued.

26. See the testimony of Salim Fahmawi in Jonathan Cook, "Umm Al-Zinat: Commemorating the Catastrophe," *Al Jazeera*, May 4, 2006.

27. Dov Vardi, "Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir," March 1989, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127, first documents from the settlement at Joʾara (1937–1940).

28. Contract between Tzur Development and Construction Co. Ltd., Tel Aviv, and the Jewish National Fund, May 5, 1936, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127.

29. Vardi, "Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir."

30. The land situation at Ein Hashofet in early 1933/1934, EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

31. EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

32. Ein Hashofet to the Department of Barren/Uncultivated Land, likely dating from 1952 (the date is unclear), EHA, file no. 301.

33. The village does not appear in most of the Palestinian literature, likely because it had been totally erased before 1948 (see, e.g., W. Khalidi 2006; Arraf 2001).

CHAPTER 2

1. Letter from Tzur Company to the Jewish National Fund (JNF) chief bureau, August 6, 1941, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127, first documents from the settlement at Joʾara (1937–1940).

2. Tzur Company to the JNF chief bureau, total area of Daliyat al-Ruha village, February 10, 1938, EHA, file no. 127, first documents from the settlement at Joʾara (1937–1940).

3. Letter from Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi to the kibbutzim Dalia, Ein Hashofet and Ramat Hashofet, undated, EHA, file on land, no. 301, Stone clearing and drainage (1938–1952).

4. Other settler colonial cases used the mechanism of purchase. See, e.g., Kauanui 2018; Greer 2014; and Reichman and Hasson 1984 (specifically regarding the German Colonization Commission's purchasing actions in Prussia's eastern provinces from the 1880s onward).

5. Although Bourdieu and his coresearcher Abdelmalek Sayad do not refer to social fields in their work on the dispossession of Algerian fallahin (Bourdieu and Sayad 2020), I view my work as a continuation of their empirical scholarship on colonialism.

6. At times, the settler groups themselves raised funds that were then used by the JNF and the PLDC, as in the case of Kibbutz Hazorea. The source of funds is secondary in importance to the issue of their control: the collective organization of the Zionist movement directed the purchase negotiations and the allocation of land. In other cases, private entrepreneurs were subordinate to the JNF and the settlement institutions.

7. Approximately fifty-two colonies were established in this manner, including twelve of Hashomer Hatzair's between 1936–1939; Hazorea was not established by this strategy. See "Tower and Stockade," n.d., CZA, http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/Pages/TowerStockade.aspx. The British adopted an Ottoman law that an illegally constructed building could not be demolished if its roof was intact.

8. Gustav Horn, on behalf of Kibbutz Hazorea, to the JNF board of directors, Yokneʿam, October 10, 1937, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

9. In 1935, the kibbutz had 1,200 dunams of dryland farming in separate areas. Of these, the PLDC vacated 150 dunams. Gustav Horn on behalf of Kibbutz Hazorea to the JNF board of directors.

10. Palestinian youths led campaigns for popular sovereignty in different areas, aiming to raise awareness of the danger of land transfer to the Palestinian national cause (Anderson 2013).

11. "It was the opinion of all authorized institutions that one had no chance of lasting in this place and after two assaults against the encampment (set up near the khan), in the absence of any safe refuge, the police demanded we leave. Naturally, we did not comply." Kibbutz Hazorea to the Histadrut, October 10, 1937, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

12. "Memorandum—the Security Issue at Kibbutz Hazorea," Kibbutz Hazorea to the Jewish Agency, political department, Mr. Moshe Shertok, June 26, 1936, CZA, KKL5/8428.

13. "Memorandum—the security issue at Kibbutz Hazorea," Kibbutz Hazorea to the Jewish Agency, political department, Mr. Moshe Shertok, June 26, 1936, CZA, KKL5/8428.

14. Evidence of this is in a letter sent by Dr. G. Landauer on behalf of Kibbutz Hazorea to the Palestine Land Development Company:

We have tried, lately, to carry out land purchases in collaboration with you and we believe it is your duty to help us more than you have so far, regarding the transfer of land in Yokneʿam. . . . We have paid you the full price for this land. We must

conclude that land must not be paid for until it is received, free of tenants, so that settlers may inhabit it. . . . We request you not to neglect this matter as you have done so far but to do whatever you can to evacuate them and finally let us begin settling it. Kibbutz Hazorea has been in Yokneʿam for a long while now, and so far we have only had the area of our actual encampment for our use. This entails damages and large expenses because the land is not being cultivated. The same applies to the area meant for middle-class settlement [Yokneʿam]. We will claim compensation for all these damages and hope that in any case you will refrain from future losses and unpleasantness and hasten to give us the land that we have paid for. (Landauer to the Land Development Company, October 9, 1936, CZA, KKL5/8428)

15. Yosef Weitz to the political department of the Jewish Agency, Jerusalem August 1, 1936, CZA, KKL5/8428, regarding the kibbutz memorandum of June 26, 1936.

16. Protocol of the JNF board of directors meeting, October 18, 1937, CZA, KKL10. Another description is the following:

We arranged our encampment prior to the events [of the Great Arab Revolt] on a narrow sixty-meter strip bordering Yokneʿam land. Since the onset of the events/riots we aspired to enlarge our camp over an area of forty dunams at least, to put up our barracks slightly further away from the fence that is our only protection from the Arab village of Abu Zureiq, which is higher up. In spite of frequent requests by the authorized institutions as well as the police, which declared our position to be highly threatened security-wise—and even after two assaults against our position—we have not managed to convince the [Palestine] Land Development Company to vacate the thirty dunams bordering our temporary camp. ("Report on Our Settlement," undated, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21)

17. See protocol of the JNF board of directors meeting.

18. Yosef Weitz to Yehoshua Hankin, "Re: Kibbutz Hazorea—Yokneʿam," September 15, 1936, CZA, KKL5/8428.

19. A representative of Kibbutz Hazorea came to us today, informing us of a new "arrangement" regarding the confiscation of a plot of land from the Arab land tenants, to expand the constructed area of the kibbutz. According to him, the representative [on behalf of Hankin] agreed to the plan—forcefully erecting a fence around the plot without prior agreement of the land tenants—and only later would they be granted juridical and financial aid as needed. The kibbutz representative also requested the JNF's agreement to this plan. Our answer, obviously, was emphatically negative. The JNF did not agree to any action aiming to vacate Yokneʿam land that was sold us by you, which would not be agreed on or carried out by you and for which you would not be explicitly responsible. (Yosef Weitz to Yehoshua Hankin, "Re Kibbutz Hazorea—Yokneʿam")

20. Civil case No. 6073/37, in the Chief of Magistrates' of Haifa between Palestine Land Development Co. Ltd. Through its attorney J. Salmon, barrister at law of Haifa, and Mr. Attallah for defendants, March 3, 1938, SD/RPJ, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

21. Kibbutz Hazorea, "Report on Meeting of Mr. M. Shertok with Commissioner Bailey of the Haifa District," Yokneʿam, undated, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

22. Protocol of the JNF board of directors.

23. M. Shertok to Mr. M. Bailey, district commissioner of Haifa and Samaria District, Jerusalem, August 16, 1938, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

24. Commissioner Ordinance (English), HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

25. Avraham Hartzfeld to Kibbutz Alonim, Qusqus-Tivʿon, September 4, 1938, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

26. According to Palestinian reports, Qira did offer refuge at times for rebels who followed Abu-Dura (Kabha and Sarhan 2004).

27. The letter states, "With the help of other kibbutzim on Tuesday we fenced in and fortified the land designated for our settlement, and on Wednesday we fenced in about 250 dunams for farming." Kibbutz Hazorea-Yokneʿam to David Stern, settlement department of the Jewish Agency, Yokneʿam, September 9, 1938, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

28. To suppress the revolt and free up soldiers in anticipation of World War II, the British devastated Palestinian society through collective punishment, home demolitions, crop and livestock destruction, incinerating villages, and physical violence (see Hughes 2009).

29. JNF to Kibbutz Hazorea, September 22, 1940, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

30. Kibbutz Hazorea to Dr. Granovsky, JNF board of directors, Yokneʿam, December 12, 1942, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

31. Kibbutz Hazorea to Dr. Granovsky.

32. "A New Jewish Assault on Arab Lands," *Filastin*, February 11, 1946; Hebrew translation in the file on relations with the Arabs of the region, HA, no. 73. In an interview held by a member of the kibbutz with a Qira villager in 1976, the Palestinian recalled the event even though, as the interview made clear, villagers had underestimated its importance. Yoram Miron, interview with Shafiq Hassan and Khalil Ibrahim, April 12, 1976, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73.

33. Kibbutz assembly discussion, February 13, 1946, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73.

34. "An Eventful Week," *Ba-shaʿar*, March 19, 1948, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73.

35. Meir Meron, "The War of Independence—A Teacher's Journal," March–August 1948, HA, file on the War of Independence, no. 51.

36. Meron, "The War of Independence—A Teacher's Journal," April 3, 1948.

37. Kibbutz assembly discussion, March 15, 1948, HA, kibbutz assembly notes.

38. According to Golan (2001, 213), "At the beginning of the first ceasefire [June 11 to July 9, 1948], representatives of the kibbutzim in the Kishon regional council requested the [Israel Defense Forces] help them locate cultivable areas between Afula and Jenin. The areas of Arab villages around Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek, about 60,000 dunams, were the ones to be marked for

cultivation. The action included all kibbutzim in the western and eastern Jezreel Valley, even before the settlement institutions and government confirmed it, encompassing about 150,000 dunams of land.”

39. The kibbutz wrote to Yosef Weitz of the JNF, “We agreed on principle to receive the added land to complete the allotment of Abu Zureiq lands instead of the Yokneʿam block [land of Qira]. . . . We understand you favor our demands and find it possible to fulfill them through the purchase of abandoned land in Abu Zureiq.” Hazorea to the JNF, to Yosef Weitz, April 3, 1949, KKL5/609; copy held at HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21. See also Kibbutz Hazorea to the agricultural center, August 24, 1948, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21; Yosef Weitz to Kibbutz Hazorea “Re: Completion of Land Quota,” March 15, 1949, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21; Kibbutz Hazorea to Yosef Weitz, “Re: Completion of Land Quota,” March 20, 1949, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21; Yosef Weitz to Kibbutz Hazorea, November 7, 1949, KKL5/18137, copy held at HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

40. *Ba-shaʿar*, undated document (likely from the early 1950s), HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 073.

41. Michal Oren, Kibbutz Hazorea—Historical review of the status of land for “The Lands Team” (Eitan, Amiram, and Eliav) in a detailed report on Hazorea’s arguments, 2001, HA, file on settlement matters, no. 21.

42. Dov Vardi, “Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir,” March 1989, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127, first documents of the settlement in Joʾara (1937–1940).

43. Contract between Tzur Development and Construction Co. Ltd, Tel Aviv, and the JNF Co. Ltd. Jerusalem, May 5, 1936, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127, first documents (historical reviews), matters of land (1937–1940).

44. Abraham Fein, “Why Joʾara,” *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet* [Ein Hashofet news], 1974, EHA.

45. Sources differ on the date; it is most likely April 7, 1937.

46. Fein, “Why Joʾara.”

47. Fein, “Why Joʾara.”

48. The request passed through Yitzhak Ben Shemesh, a lawyer and representative of the Tzur Company. Weitz (1965a, 221–222) writes, “At first I thought we would be more numerous, but at the demand of Advocate Ben Shemesh on behalf of the police, I reduced the number of visitors.”

49. Vardi, “Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir.”

50. “If we could only live in peace,” Yaʿakov Barʿam.

51. Vardi writes,

The day of settling on the ground was July 5, 1937. A convoy escorted by security personnel drove toward Yokneʿam and from there took a left turn toward Joʾara. It was one of the more daring operations undertaken by the Yishuv during the tower and stockade settlement and was presaged in settlements such as Tel Amal and Hanita that preceded it [Vardi ostensibly confused the dates of the establishment; Tel Amal preceded Ein Hashofet, and Hanita followed both]. Until the settling on the ground of the second settler locality in the Plain of Manasseh, Kibbutz Dalia, on the lands of Umm al-Dafuf and Daliyat al Ruha on May 1, 1938, Joʾara was extremely isolated in those days. (Vardi, “Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir”)

Joʾara, Tel Amal, and Hanita also appear in Nathan Alterman’s famous poem “Zemer ha-Plugot,” written at the request of Yitzhak Sadeh for the field troops’ convention. Joʾara is the first among the settlements that symbolized the spirit of pioneering:

For not in vain, brother did you plow and build
Fought for mind and home
Joʾara, Tel Amal, Kineret and Hanita
You are our flags, and we the wall.
For we shan’t turn back, there is no other path
No people would retreat from life’s front lines
A combat company filed out at night
Your face, my homeland, walks alongside it to battle.

Alterman’s poem became a song of the infantry companies, popularly sung by generations of Israeli Jews as a Zionist-militarist nostalgic anthem.

52. Vardi, “Settlement of Joʾara Lands by Kibbutz America-Banir.”

53. A letter, its writer unnamed, from the Joʾara Point to members in Hadera, August 17, 1937, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 129, letters from the site to Hadera and to delegates abroad (1937–1938).

54. Abraham (Abie) Golan, “To all members of the delegation to the United States,” August 29, 1937, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 129, letters from the site to Hadera and the delegates abroad (1937–1938).

55. “The Attack on Joʾara,” *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet*, March 14, 1938, EHA, Joʾara history file, no. 127, first documents from the settlement at Joʾara (1937–1940).

56. “The Attack on Joʾara.”

57. The 1948 war is the moment when the categories of ownership transformed from colonialism by purchase to colonialism by warfare.

58. Kibbutz assembly discussion notes of Ein Hashofet, April 25, 1948, EHA. In his journal, Weitz (1965b, 272–273) reported on the insistence of the three kibbutzim—Ein Hashofet, Ramat Hashofet, and Dalia—on receiving the land and their objection to the founding of a new settlement.

59. Letter from the union of farmworkers to the kibbutzim Dalia, Ein Hashofet, and Ramat Hashofet, Tel Aviv, April 22, 1948, EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952. See also letter from David Hadashi, Alexander Parag, and Yehuda Schwartzburg (Kibbutz Ein Hashofet) to the agricultural center (exact date unclear, but probably from 1949), EHA, file no. 301,

Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952; and further examples in this file and in file no. 302, lands (1953–1965).

60. Referring to Allis-Chalmers, a tractor model at the time.

61. Kibbutz assembly discussion notes of Ein Hashofet, July 31, 1948, EHA.

62. Letter from Ein Hashofet to the agricultural center in Tel Aviv, March 28, 1949, EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

63. EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

64. The dunam amounts are taken from a letter sent from Kibbutz Ein Hashofet to the Department of Uncultivated Lands, Ministry of Agriculture, Government Offices, probably in 1952 (date is unclear), EHA, file no. 301, Soil, clearing, and drainage, 1938–1952.

65. Hadawi's 1970 *Village Statistics* puts Jewish ownership at 5.67 percent in 1945.

CHAPTER 3

1. Scholarship examining interactions includes E. Beʾeri 1985; Ben-Bassat 2009; Ben-Bassat and Alroey 2016; Gorny 1981, 1987; Gribetz 2014; Halperin 2015; Mandel 1976; Roʾi 1970; and Svirsky and Ben-Arie 2017. Halperin (2015), for example, shows that resistance, although not necessarily by fallahin, was as early as the First Aliya; Shoufani (1998, 297–306) finds the same. An important study by Kabha and Karlinsky (2021) examines a putatively more sincere form of economic cooperation between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the citrus industry. Monterescu and Rabinowitz (2008), meanwhile, examine interactions in "mixed towns."

2. An example of this ambivalence is Manna's (2008, 81) interview with an inhabitant of the village of Majd al-Krum, a site of a 1948 massacre, who maintained amicable relations with Haim Orbach, a kibbutz settler:

Abu-Saʿid, who until his dying days was proud of his friendship with Orbach, was surprised when I told him that Orbach had been working for the Haganah's intelligence unit, and that his friendship with Arabs served mainly to collect information about their villages. Abu-Saʿid, however, did not change his positive view of his friend Orbach. He was proud of the fact that he [Orbach] had played an important role in a supplies agreement, and later in holding off the massacre at the spring site in his village on November 6, 1948.

The majority of fallahin did not commit their experiences to writing (most were not literate), and if a few did, such documents rarely survived. Later, in certain cases, Palestinians themselves destroyed documents to prevent them from falling into Israeli hands, fearing retaliation against those whose names were mentioned therein. In 1948 and in 1967, Palestinians who took an active part in the Great Arab Revolt of 1936 destroyed their papers when their villages were conquered by Israel (Swedenburg 1989). In 1967, when Israeli forces conquered Jerusalem, documents related to ʿAbd al-Qadir al-Husayni were burned so as not to fall into the hands of the Israeli army and incriminate those mentioned in them (Jawad 2006b).

3. I do not refer here to Jewish-Arab relations in the territory before the Zionist movement became dominant in Palestine. Important studies focus on the Ottoman period, such as Tamari 2007; Barbor 1976; Svirsky and Ben-Arie 2017; Jacobson and Naor 2016; Campos 2010; and Klein 2014.

4. Khalaf's work (1997) was groundbreaking in the attempt to explain the implications of economic changes during the British Mandate on the disintegration of Palestinian society during the Nakba. And R. Khalidi (1991, 2020) notes the institutional and social disarray of the Palestinians that led to profound disintegration in 1948 in the Zionist onslaught. The economic and institutional differences between Zionist and Palestinian societies, entrenched by the British, are crucial to understanding the structural conditions of relations and incommensurabilities. These factors should be foregrounded, especially in the turn to local histories.

5. For instance, Azoulay (2014) discusses alliances made by Jews and Palestinians in about a hundred localities, which were configured to evade violent confrontations ignited by military forces. See also her film *Civil Alliance: Palestine 47–48* (2012). Azoulay's significant work isolates the agreements at one point in time: 1947–1948. But it does not provide any historical contextualization. Such local alliances between an isolated and fragmented Palestinian side and colonies belonging to the well-organized Yishuv effectively heightened the structural advantage of the settlers, who closely coordinated with their security officials and defense forces.

6. In another work related to the same research and the relations between Palestinian villages and neighboring Jewish settlements, Jawad (2006b, 63) did not mention Qira village.

7. Some of these kibbutz settlers later became part of the Haganah's Village Files project, which gathered information for surveillance and control. Facilitated by hundreds of Haganah scouts, reconnaissance commanders, and intelligence officers, the Zionist settler military apparatus—including kibbutz settlers and Arab experts who engaged with neighboring Arab villages—sought to apprehend the "basic structure of the Arab village" (Moshe Pasternak quoted in Pappé 2006, 12; see also Jawad 2016). Scouts surveyed topographic, geographic, architectural, sociocultural, and political features of the villages, including infrastructural elements (roads, land quality, water sources) and demographic data (including religious affiliations and the ages of the male population). Informants sketched village maps and viewpoints, many of which can still be accessed today in the Haganah Historical Archives (Salomon 2010). This information gathering sought socioeconomic details about landowners to enable land purchases at minimum prices and cultural and economic information to counter Palestinian resistance to the Zionist project (Jawad 2016).

8. Not all security officials were in direct contact with the indigenous population. Rio Lavie of Hazorea was the kibbutz security official, but there is no record of his involvement with the neighboring villages, unlike his Hazorea friends Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov and Levi Granot.

9. According to Orna Zamir, Yehuda Bashan was a guard and a Haganah intelligence man. "Until 1948 he represented the settling institutions in matters of property, members of Hazorea followed his instruction in everything, he led the way in all that concerned ties, including the case of Qira." Eyal Ofek, "Interview with Orna Zamir," December 8, 1987, HA, file on relations with the neighboring Arabs, no. 73. "Burstein worked for the Jewish settlements as district sergeant—responsible for the settlement of Migdal and later for the Efrayim Hills settlements. At the same time, he served as Haganah commander of the Migdal and Efrayim Hills region, as well as district intelligence officer in the Jezreel Valley." SHABAK memorial website, https://www.shabak.gov.il/memorial/Pages/018.aspx.

10. Yehuda Yavzuri, "Lovka," "Joint Guard Work—on Guarding the Fields of Mishmar ha-Emek in 1933," undated, MHA, file no. 3.41.

11. Yavzuri, "Joint Guard Work."

12. Following the founding of the State of Israel, Diamant was appointed an officer of the Acre police district in charge inter alia of preventing "infiltration and smuggling."

13. See "Evaluation in the Matter of Daliyat al-Ruha Village," 1942, MHA, file no. 3.41. In this case Diamant was appointed mediator in a controversy between the Tzur Company and "Mahmoud and Salim Iʾarar" [*sic*] regarding compensation that Tzur was to pay the sharecroppers living in that village. The mukhtar of one of the villages accompanied Diamant on a visit to the village to assess the land property value held by the vassals.

14. Lovka [Yehuda Yavzuri], "Aryeh Diamant—August 3, 1903–February 19, 1967," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek* [Mishmar ha-Emek news], edition commemorating Diamant, August 1967.

15. Lovka, "Aryeh Diamant."

16. Eyal Ofek, "Interview with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov," December 8, 1987, HA, file on relations with the neighboring Arabs, no. 73. Ofek did not quote his interviewee but summarized his words.

17. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov, March 12, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

18. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot, March 4, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

19. Eliʿezer Beʾeri, "Neighborly Relations," Levi Granot, March 9, 1915–May 1, 1977, HA. After twenty-five years of disrupted relations, the sons of Abu-Daʾud showed up at Kibbutz Hazorea and invited Granot and Beʾeri for a visit in Jenin.

20. Eyal Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations with the Villages of Qira and Abu Zureiq between the Years 1936–1948" (Kiryat Tivon: Department of Middle Eastern History at Oranim College, 1988), 47, HA.

21. Benari (1986, 187–188) confirmed this matter-of-factly: "Some of us, in their capacity as field guards, were in touch with the Arab neighbors, made their personal acquaintance, learned their language and customs."

22. Emanuel Lin, "24 Hours—Strict Internment!" (1940), *The First Years of Mishmar ha-Emek—for the Kibbutz Children*, November 3, 1926–November 3, 1976, MHA. This is a reprint of the original version of 1940 edited by Yaʿakov Doron, as affirmed by Emma Talmi in the introduction to the reprint.

23. David Hadashi, "Our Woods in the First Year!" (1940), *The First Years of Mishmar ha-Emek*.

24. Hadashi, "Our Woods in the First Year!"

25. See, for example, Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek to the Haifa Magistrates Court, October 6, 1932, MHA, file no. 3.41.

26. An example: "On June 22, Khaleel Qassem Mohmmad, Abed Ibrahim Mohammad, and Musa al-ʿIssa were tried and sentenced by Judge Harkavi to prison for damages they caused our fields. We request your honor to provide us with a copy of the verdict needed by us to file suit for compensation. Court session no. 3607/34." Letter addressed to the Secretariat of the Haifa Magistrates Court, August 29, 1934, MHA, file no. 3.41.

27. David Shafir, "Relations with the Neighboring Arabs" (1940), *The First Years of Mishmar ha-Emek*.

28. See, for example, "Commitment," April 16, 1930, MHA, file no. 3.41. This document contains a commitment by the inhabitants of Naghnaghiyya not to enter the area of Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek; the kibbutz signed as an entity on its own behalf, while on behalf of the village various inhabitants' signatures appear; one of the names identifiable in the document is Hassan al-Hassan. Qira villagers Abed Al-Qahili and Abdallah Al-Haj also promised not to enter the area of Kibbutz Hazorea. The agreement was written and signed in both spoken and formal Arabic, and translated into Hebrew, appearing in the commitment declaration:

We the undersigned, mukhtars and elders of Arab Saʾaida, living on the lands of Qira-Qamun, hereby declare that, following proven incidents that occurred of damage to trees, to sowing, to the fence or grazing in lands possessed by the Jews, as a result of the mindless actions of some of our shepherds, with whom we had and have no connection, everything that took place happened against our will and without our knowledge. We appreciate the efforts made by the Jews in maintaining peaceful and friendly relations between the two races, and we for our part will take all measures from now on to prevent painful incidents from being repeated that would spoil our relations with our neighbors and landowners, and we hope that there will now be no misunderstanding in any matter whatsoever, and if God forbid anyone should suffer any damage because of our negligence, we shall be responsible without need of warning of any kind." ("Commitment," May 29, 1946, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the area, no. 73)

29. Avraham Yohevedson (formerly known as Hananya Pevzner, 1882–1937) was one of the directors of the Palestine Land Development Company in Haifa and the northern district and played a major role in land purchases.

30. "Border Conflict at Mishmar ha-Emek—the Arabs of Abu Shusha Damage Our Land," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, December 7, 1934, MHA. Similar instances of contested fencing transpired among other villages and kibbutzim, illustrating the incommensurability of indigenous and settler understandings of land use rights across the Zionist collective settlement enterprise.

There was a fight over harvests between the village of Daliyat al-Ruha and Kibbutz Dalia (in 1945–1946, 9,614 dunams of a total 10,008 was Jewish owned; Hadawai 1970, 47): "The Arabs began to reap hay in the kibbutz field far from their own village; when attempts were made to chase them off, they summoned help, many people came, including some twenty [people] from al-Kafrayn apparently, and a rather hefty fight ensued. The Arabs managed to gather the reaped hay. Four kibbutz members were badly hurt. This is assumed to have been organized and that reaping the hay was merely a provocation." Journal of Eliʿezer Beʾeri, August 15, 1940–April 22, 1941, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the area, no. 73.

31. Zionists generally did not use the term *revolt* but referred instead to *riots* or *the events*.

32. Anonymous, "Our Relations with the Arab Neighbors," 1942, MHA, file no. 3.41.

33. Anonymous, "Our Relations with the Arab Neighbors."

34. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot.

35. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot.

36. Anonymous, "Our Relations with the Arab Neighbors."

37. Yavzuri, "Joint Guard Work."

38. Yaʿakov Doron (Kuba), "Journal of Events, April–October 1936," MHA. Doron (b. 1906) joined Mishmar ha-Emek in 1924 and was one of the most prominent figures on the kibbutz. Doron "kept an orderly journal about kibbutz life, of his own initiative . . . he noted episodes in the lives of kibbutz settlers. He interviewed young and old, documented roots, beginnings and opinions. These journals reflect the colorful image of the kibbutz" ("In Commemoration": commemorative pages on members of Mishmar ha-Emek who passed away, MHA). The journal covers ninety-three typewritten pages; in it Doron also copied press clippings and included several fragments written by others.

39. "Shofar Visits Arab Villages, Organization and Discipline Are Felt on the Kibbutz," *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet* [Ein Hashofet news], April 25, 1936, MHA. Diamant and Bentov paid a similar visit to the other small village near Mishmar ha-Emek, al-Ghubayya.

40. "Inwards," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, April 25, 1936, MHA.

41. Doron, "Journal of Events."

42. Doron, "Journal of Events."

43. House demolitions, collective fines, and other brutal punishments were widely employed by the British to crush the revolt, all under martial law. These measures were later adopted by Israel, first for the military government that governed Palestinian citizens from 1949 to 1966 and then for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

44. Doron, "Journal of Events."

45. "At our kibbutz [Hazorea] they [the Arabs] lined the road in groups. Stalks of wheat were piled next to each group. They intended to set fire to them and throw them into the hayloft." Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov.

46. Ben-Yaʿakov testified, "In some cases fire was opened from the hills. Several shots. So our people yelled excitedly. We were lucky. We had the feeling early because our miserable dog began to bark. We were prepared. They were scared, too. They were not brave." The interviewer, Arnon Tamir, replied in amazement, "This is very strange. To lie there outside the settlement and just fire shots." Ben-Yaʿakov answered, "That too was a part, firing in order to annoy. If the bullets hit, good. If they don't, no matter. Next time." Tamir, interview with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov.

47. Press clipping of *Davar*, May 1936, in Doron, "Journal of Events."

48. Press clipping of *Davar*, May 1936.

49. Doron, "Journal of Events."

50. Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri (Sheikh), undated document, "Our Relations with the Arab Neighbors," MHA, file no. 3.41.

51. Beʾeri, undated document, "Our Relations with the Arab Neighbors."

52. Beʾeri also wrote,

Our neighbors, whose rich farming experience helped us in the beginning, eventually realized that we were doing rather well. That even with their traditional crops such as wheat or sheep tending we were getting better results than they were. Many of them understood that these achievements were due to the many innovations we implemented, and they were very impressed with our wheat crops, fruit trees, and vegetable garden. They showed not only curiosity but also a willingness to learn, and some of them began to sow before rainfall, and implemented use of the European plow and the cart. Some asked us for seeds from our wheat field or of vegetables such as cabbage and cauliflower or grafts for apricots or plums. In the winter they came along and asked me to grow tobacco plants for them in the glass-covered nurseries where I was growing tomatoes. We met their requests as far as we could, and gave them seed samples of all the plants that interested them. The most pressing problem for them was pests and disease, and their visits seeking advice and help in this area increased yearly. In these cases, our advice was more important than help, for the various pesticides were dangerous. Any help we extended—seed samples or pesticides—was offered without asking for anything in return. (Beʾeri, "We and Our Neighbors," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976, MHA, file 3.31)

See also Beʾeri 1992, 60.

53. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot. In his book on the kibbutz, Shatil (1977, 47–48) also distinguished between relations with Qira and those with Abu Zureiq.

54. Danny Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt," summer 1988, HA, file on relations with the Arabs in the area, no. 73.

55. Hillel Meirhoff, "Journal—the Village of Abu Zureiq and the Geography of the Immediate Vicinity," HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the area, no. 73. The instructions for use were written by Meirhoff in Hebrew. Interestingly, the instructions were then translated into Arabic by the writer Sasson Somekh (Eyal Ofek, "Interview with Hillel Meirhoff," 1988, HA, file on relations with the Arabs in the area, no. 73).

56. "Especially remembered is a sketch of a plot he prepared with instructions in Arabic so the villagers would have use of this new type of plow that was being introduced." Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt."

57. Meirhoff, "Journal."

58. Ofek, "Interview with Hillel Meirhoff."

59. Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt"; Beʾeri 1992, 60.

60. Meirhoff, "Journal."

61. Meirhoff, "Journal."

62. Meirhoff, "Journal." Merhoff also wrote, "March 1, 1943. Document issued by the village stating that the village will still have ample dung for fertilizer purposes if they sell us 150 tons. We need the document in order to obtain a government loan of 700 Palestine pounds.

63. Ben-Or 2009, 69.

64. Elisha Lin, "Stories along the Way, 1927–1992," interviewed by Tamar Snir, February 1994, MHA, deceased section (personal file).

65. Yeshʾayahu Beʾeri, "We and Our Neighbors," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976, MHA.

66. Inhabitants of the villages near Mishmar ha-Emek used to invite Diamant to their sons' and daughters' weddings. A letter in his personal file invites Diamant to a wedding at ʿAra village in the Triangle, "Letter of Invitation to a Wedding, September 16, 1932," MHA, Aryeh Diamant's personal file May 3, 1903–February 19, 1967.

67. Journal of Eliʿezer Beʾeri, August 15, 1940–April 22, 1941, p. 41; HA, file on relations with the Arabs in the area, no. 73.

68. Journal of Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

69. Arnon Tamir, interview with Elisheva Tamir, April 1, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz life, a–f, no. 3–74.

70. Contract, November 8, 1940, EHA, file no. 117, first documents from the settlement at Joʾara 1937–1940.

CHAPTER 4

1. Shmuel Ben-Tzvi, "Pages of a Journal," EHA, file on security and Israel's wars, section no. 191.

2. For an account of al-Qawuqji's actions, based on Arabic primary materials and al-Qawuqji's own archived documents, see Parsons 2016.

3. Letter from the Efrayim regional council to the kibbutz secretariats of Dalia, Ramat Hashofet, and Ein Hashofet, March 22, 1947, EHA, file on security and Israel's wars—War of Independence, no. 1122, 1947–1948.

4. Letter from the Efrayim regional council to the kibbutz secretariats of Dalia, Ramat Hashofet, and Ein Hashofet, March 22, 1947. I cannot ascertain from the archival documents whether this was done on the initiative of the kibbutzim or in coordination with the Haganah.

5. Michael Hermoni, journal, HA, file on security, no. 51.

6. "March 3, 1948. Tawfiq al-Shami of Daliyat al-Karmel warns of ferment on the Carmel. His *ahraʾi mashak* [Hebrew acronym for noncommissioned officer] of the entire Carmel area. Commanders quarrel at Ein Ghazal and Igzim." Hermoni, journal.

7. Among the first problems handled by Weitz after battles broke out was that of the Arab land-tenants inhabiting Jewish-owned land during the British Mandate years. The British authorities often prevented Jews from evicting land-tenants on lands sold to the JNF by Arab landowners. Hostilities that broke out in late 1947, so it seemed to Weitz, were a golden opportunity for solving this problem. Weitz' activity in this matter was part of his overall perception favoring transfer as a solution of the Arab problem. Thus, as this issue is sensitive, there are many references to the subject of evicting land-tenants, but the journal entries published contain hardly any. (Morris 1996, 84)

8. Eyal Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations with the Villages of Qira and Abu Zureiq between the Years 1936–1948" (Kiryat Tivon: Department of Middle Eastern History at Oranim College, 1988), p. 30, note 59, HA.

9. See Sabbagh-Khoury 2022a and, for instance, Morris 1996 for numerous examples of deception in the Zionist practices of documentation and preservation. Questions remain over the motivations for disclosure and concealment: Did the Zionist history writers have the British on their minds or future Jewish generations? Were they aware of potential internal or external criticism, which might shape how they wished to narrate their participation in past events? Were such practices intended to silence possible dissent over expulsion?

10. File on Bernhardt May 16, 1917–March 11, 1948, and file on Gabriel February 26, 1913–March 11, 1948, HA.

11. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations," 30. See also Morris 2001, 84.

12. Eliʿezer Beʾeri, "How Gabriel and Bernhardt Were Killed," *Ba-shaʿar*, March 20, 1953, HA.

13. Ofek published this part of Beʾeri's work in the local newsletter *Ba-shaʿar* under the heading "Historical Trivia—Why Qira Villagers Deserted Their Village," March 20, 1987.

14. Beʾeri, "How Gabriel and Bernhardt Were Killed."

15. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations," 57–58.

16. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations," 57–58.

17. Benny Morris (2001, 84) has an overview of the goings-on not from the perspective of the local context but based on the overall policy of settlement institutions: "At first [Yosef Weitz] tried to get the principle agreement of Haganah headquarters to dispossess the land-tenants, and when he failed, he tried to organize several expulsions using his personal contacts in the settlements, in local Haganah units and with officers of the Haganah's intelligence service. In Yokneʿam he advised the regional

Haganah intelligence officer, Yehuda Burstein (Bashan), to 'advise' the tenants there and in the nearby village of Qira-Qamun to leave, and so they did, on March 13, 1948."

18. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot, March 4, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74. According to Beʾeri, this conversation was held in 1947, some months before the UN partition resolution, although this cannot be confirmed.

19. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's Relations," 30. Ofek also reported that "a solitary old man" refused to leave the village. According to what Ofek heard in the kibbutz, the old man "was tenderly cared for." The old man surely did not run into kibbutz settlers' open arms after the villagers left but was found there and held before settlers "looked after his eviction to the Carmel area," where evicted Qira villagers eventually settled in the late 1930s.

20. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot.

21. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri, March 2, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

22. Beʾeri continued, "Things escalated when Gabriel and Bernhardt disappeared and I began to look for them. It's a very long affair. We made efforts to contact them [the people of Abu Zureiq]. They remembered and didn't remember and wouldn't dare disclose anything, neither directly nor indirectly. Then there was the attack against Mishmar ha-Emek, and Abu Zureiq was one of the bases for the assailing force." Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

23. Letter addressed to Kibbutz Hazorea by the head of the Youth of Abu Zureiq, undated, apparently early January 1948, HA, file on Bernhardt May 16, 1917–March 11, 1948, and Gabriel February 26, 1913–March 11, 1948, translated into Hebrew and printed in *Ba-shaʿar*, January 22, 1948.

24. The letter, written by the kibbutz Arab experts, was composed in literary Arabic but contains several errors.

25. Letter addressed to the mukhtar and village council of Abu Zureiq, undated, apparently just before January 16, 1948, HA, file on Bernhardt May 16, 1917–March 11, 1948, and Gabriel February 26, 1913–March 11, 1948. The copy of the letter in Arabic mentioned in the archive is not signed nor dated; it seems to be a draft. When parts of the letter were published in the kibbutz newsletter in Hebrew, signatories were Aryeh (Zamir), mukhtar; Yohanan (Ben-Yaʿakov); Hillel (Meirhoff); and Eliʿezer (Beʾeri). The correspondence between Abu Zureiq and Kibbutz Hazorea was published in the kibbutz newsletter *Ba-shaʿar* on January 16, 1948, January 20, 1978, and March 28, 1986, under the heading "Nostalgia—Before the Storm," as evidence of the good neighborly relations the kibbutz had had with the village of Abu Zureiq.

26. Michael Hermoni, journal; see also "Nostalgia—Before the Storm," *Ba-shaʿar*, March 28, 1986.

27. Eyal Ofek, "The Last Link between Hazorea and Abu Zureiq," *Ba-shaʿar*, April 1, 1988. Rio Lavie, a prominent security figure of the kibbutz, heard of this controversy from Beʾeri and Granot. Eyal Ofek, interview with Rio Lavie on security issues in the first years of the kibbutz, January 26, 1988, HA, relations with the Arabs of the region, file no. 73.

28. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazoreaʾs Relations," 68.

29. Hermoni, journal.

30. In 1969, a copy was made of some of Granot's photographs under the heading "Abu Zureiq in 1946/7," with the caption "Photographs and notes toward conquest or careful watch over the gangs' movements—copied most accurately from a set of images by Levi Granot." The photographs include images of villagers' homes and observation points in the village. Next to the photos are notes on their contents. With the photo of the mukhtar's house, for example, is this: "Note: in October 1943 a two-room wing was added to the mukhtar's house, perpendicular to it, at its eastern edge." A map is also added to the photos. HA, file on security, no. 51.

31. Ofek, "Kibbutz Hazorea's relations," 17. I use this source because Meirhoff's journal passed into the possession of Levi Granot at an unknown point in time, attested to by a note on Meirhoff's journal in the archive: "Given [to the archive] by Levi Granot." Hillel Meirhoff, "Journal—the Village of Abu Zureiq and the Geography of the Immediate Vicinity," HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the area, no. 73.

32. The first case brought to my [Ben-Gurion's] attention of expulsion of Arabs was around the time of the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek,' and . . . the MAPAM leadership realized during the battle of this kibbutz that the ideology—in this case the brotherhood of Jews and Arabs—is not always congruent with strategic needs. They will face a cruel reality . . . [and then they] realized there is a single way and that is to expel the Arab villagers and burn the villages. And they did it. And they were the first to do so. (Morris 2001, 161)

I have not found a report on the meeting with Mishmar ha-Emek members between April 6 and 9, 1948, in Ben-Gurion's printed journal (Ben-Gurion 1983a, 342–344) or a report of what he said at the MAPAI assembly on July 24, 1948 (Ben-Gurion 1983b, 617–619). According to Morris (2001, 486n187), it is not known whether a special delegation from Mishmar ha-Emek saw Ben-Gurion or he was told about the events by Yaʿakov Hazan and Mordechai Ben-Tov, settlers of Mishmar ha-Emek and leaders of MAPAM, who took part in the meeting held by the Zionist Acting Committee in Tel Aviv between April 6 and 12, 1948.

33. "The order to conquer Abu Zureiq—a meeting in the dining hall before the attack on Mishmar ha-Emek [with] Yitzhak Sadeh, Meir Amit, Dan Laner, and from Hazorea—[Michael] Hermoni and Rio [Lavie]. The order regarded cleansing the area between Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek. No order was issued to *expel Arabs* [emphasis in the original]. The moment al-Qawuqji began to shell Mishmar ha-Emek, the villagers of Abu Zureiq knew their end was near. There was no order issued to conquer the villages." Ofek, interview with Rio Lavie. Ofek did not present verbatim quotes from the interviews he conducted but summarized them; therefore it is often difficult to understand the precise intention of speakers.

34. Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

35. Bracha, "Journal—Notes of a Kindergarten Teacher," HA, file on security, no. 51.

36. Meir Meron, "The War of Independence—A Teacher's Journal," March–August 1948, HA, file on the War of Independence, no. 51.

37. Evidence comes from the words of Hazorea member Uri Bar: "I was among those who led the locals taken prisoners away from the site. The Iraqis [the men of al-Qawuqji's ALA] had run off." Arnon Tamir, conversation with Uri Bar, March 16, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

38. Beʾeri stated in the same article that "the murder was committed by several villagers of Abu Shusha and perhaps of Abu Zureiq whereas most of the villagers in both places did not aid and abet the assailants, but nor did they try to stand in their way. Apparently they were not considered loyal by the gang members who kept from them the place of the victims' burial, having buried them on the mountain in the middle of the night." Eliʿezer Beʾeri, "How Gabriel and Bernhardt Were Killed," *Ba-shaʿar*, March 29, 1953, HA.

39. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

40. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 18, 1948, HA, *Sihot Kibbutz* section.

41. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 18, 1948.

42. Morris (2001, 62) claimed the demolition of this village ended on April 15.

43. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 18, 1948.

44. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 20, 1948.

45. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 20, 1948.

46. Kibbutz assembly discussion, April 20, 1948.

47. Elisha Lin, "Stories along the Way, 1927–1952," interviewed by Tamar Snir, February 1994, MHA, deceased section (personal file).

48. See, for example, Eitan Ben-Or, memoir, n.d., pp. 65–66, MHA; and Regev 1978, 20.

49. Ben-Or, memoir, 72.

50. Ben-Or, memoir, 61–62.

51. Tzvi Meʾir, "War Journal," MHA, file no. 3.64.

52. All protocol notebooks of the kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek since its founding until the present have been retained, except for the period mentioned here. According to the archivist, those notebooks have been lost.

53. Clarifications before Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi Assembly, November 27, 1948, MHA.

54. Clarifications before Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi Assembly.

55. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, "Continued Clarification Session before the Movement Assembly," November 29, 1948, MHA.

56. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948.

57. This argument continued during 1948; see, for example, Yosef Weitz, Ezra Danin, Zalman Lifshitz, "Memorandum on an Arrangement with Arab Refugees," presented to prime minister of the provisional government of Israel, October 31, 1948, Tel Aviv, CZA, A246/140.

58. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948.

59. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948. Talmi appears in the minutes under his nickname "Yudex."

60. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948.

61. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948.

62. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, November 29, 1948.

63. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, "Talks before the Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi general assembly," December 12, 1948, MHA.

64. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, December 12, 1948.

65. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, "Continued clarification before the general assembly," December 6, 1948, MHA.

66. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, December 6, 1948.

67. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, December 6, 1948.

68. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, "Continued Clarification before the General Assembly," December 8, 1948, MHA.

69. Notebooks of kibbutz assembly discussions in Mishmar ha-Emek, December 8, 1948.

70. "Letter from the Efrayim Regional Council to Dalia, Ramat Hashofet and Ein Hashofet," EHA, security and Israel's wars section, file on the War of Independence, kibbutz publications and documents of wartime 1947–1948, file no. 4.

71. Shmuel Ben-Tzvi, "Pages of a Journal," EHA, file on security and Israel's wars, section 191.

72. "From a Teacher's Journal," *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet* [Ein Hashofet news], April 4, 1978, EHA. The kibbutz newsletter did not name the writer of the journal, but in an assortment collected by Ofra Brill, Ein Hashofet archivist, "Abandoned Property—Assorted Materials from the War of Independence about Arabs' Property Remaining after Their Leaving the Arab villages," HA, file no. 73, she attributed some of this quote to Vardi. I could not locate the Vardi journal manuscript in EHA or find any documentation of his statements at the kibbutz assembly discussion on April 11, 1948.

73. Ben-Tzvi, "Pages of a Journal."

CHAPTER 5

Portions of chapter 5 are adapted from Sabbagh-Khoury (2022a).

1. Works that draw on localized, less institutionalized memory production on the relations between Zionist Jewish Israelis and Palestinians include Slyomovics 1998; Kadman 2015; Halperin 2021; Confino 2015; and Pessah 2019.

2. Edward Said, "The One-State Solution," *New York Times*, January 10, 1999.

3. The estimate of the number of depopulated Palestinian villages ranges from 369 (Morris 2001) to 418 (W. Khalidi [1971] 1992, 575) to 530 (Abu Sitta 2010, 106). These differences can be attributed to variations in the definition of what constitutes a village or a small locale, the absence of systematic information, and whether the measurements include Palestinian villages that were uprooted before, during, or after 1948.

4. Palestinian scholarship focuses on remembering places and persons as a form of resistance, manifesting the names, knowledge, and history of Palestinian places destroyed but not fully erased from Palestinian memory and history (see, e.g., W. Khalidi 2006; Seikaly 2001; Munayer 1998; Arraf 2004; al-Dabbagh 2006a; Abu Sitta 2000; Hasan 2008; Saʾdi and Abu-Lughod 2007; Arafat n.d.).

5. Benvenisti (1997) describes the erasure of the Palestinian past and rewriting of the Israeli map by giving new—and at times biblical—names to Palestinian sites and geography. Kadman (2015) offers a detailed description of the actual erasure practiced by the Zionist institutions and Jewish settlers in the lands of 230 Palestinian villages, at times in their very homes. She argues that, in general, Palestinian villages have been pushed to the margins of the Israeli discourse.

6. Elisha Lin, "Stories along the Way, 1927–1992," interviewed by Tamar Snir, 1994, MHA, deceased section (personal file).

7. See, for example, lands file, no. 302 (1953–1965), EHA; file on land clearing and drainage, no. 301 (1938–1952), EHA; and the archives of Hazorea and Mishmar ha-Emek.

8. "Relations with the Neighboring Arabs," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976, MHA.

9. Rafael Tavor, in "The Kibbutz Founders Tell the Children on the Kibbutz Anniversary," February 26, 1970, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73, also file no. 21.

10. Elisheva Tamir, in "The Kibbutz Founders Tell the Children." This segment is replete with exaggerated rhetoric; normally Palestinian sharecroppers handed over one-quarter to one-third of the harvest to the landlord (al-Hazmawi 1998).

11. A similar division to that presented here is in Micha Lin, "Geva, Tel Abu Shusha, Tel Shush," 1986, MHA, file on Jewish-Arab relations, 3.41.

12. GADNA Battalion, "Joʾara and Its Vicinity" (1970), p. 42, EHA.

13. *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek* [Mishmar ha-Emek news], July 14, 1972, MHA; see also HA, land file, no. 21, and file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73, which contain materials on the Palestinians who lived in Qira and Abu Zureiq; "Turkmen in the Jezreel Valley—the Tragic End," n.d., HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73; MHA, file on relations with the Arab neighbors; EHA, container on the history of Joʾara, file no. 4; and *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet*, 1937–1939.

14. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov, March 12, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74. Emphasis is mine.

15. Interview with Yitzhak Ben Shemesh, undated, among sundry materials from different kibbutzim regarding kibbutz members' deliberations following the War of Independence about Arab property that remained after the inhabitants' displacement from their villages, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73.

16. I conducted interviews with Palestinian refugees from Bilad al-Ruha, who asserted their rootedness to the land.

17. Lin, "Stories along the Way"; Shatil 1977, 48–50.

18. Danny Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt," summer 1988, HA, file on relations with the Arabs in the area, no. 73.

19. Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri, "We and Our Neighbors," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976.

20. "Relations with the Arab Neighbors" (1940), reprinted in *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976.

21. British India particularly stands out in this regard. See Arnold 1993.

22. Yeshʿayahu Beʾeri, "We and Our Neighbors," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek*, November 3, 1976, MHA, file 3.41.

23. Danny Nehab, "The Story of Kibbutz Hazorea: Settling on the Ground and Its Neighborly Relations with the Arab Villages in the Vicinity," written for "Looking for History," a video game marking Hazorea's fifty-ninth anniversary (1988), HA, file on settlement lands, no. 12.

24. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Uri Bar, March 16, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

25. Tamir, conversation with Bar.

CHAPTER 6

1. On ways of forgetting the Nakba in Israel's official memory, see Ram 2009. For memory of the Nakba among Palestinian society, see, for example, Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury 2019; Kassem 2011; Saʾdi 2002; Saʾdi and Abu-Lughod 2007.

2. Arnon Tamir, "In Favor of Embarrassment," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 26, 1972.

3. Danny Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt," summer 1988, HA, file on relations with the Arabs of the region, no. 73.

4. Nehab, "Solution—Treasure Hunt."

5. Mishmar ha-Emek, "Treasure Hunt," 1981, MHA, file 3.64.

6. For example, "Thirty Years Ago Today," *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet* [Ein Hashofet news], April 7, 1978, EHA.

7. Tamir, born in 1917, migrated from Germany to Palestine in 1939. He was active in the Werkleute youth movement in southern Germany. He attested that he and his mates, Jewish middle-class youth, aspired to the renewal of Jewish life in Germany by resuming farming and in other ways, but only after 1933 did they realize they could not do this on German soil. He eventually became a theater director and playwright.

8. Oded Lifshitz, "Return to Rafah," *Ha-daf ha-yarok* (The green page; a periodical published by and for the kibbutz

movement), February 7, 2002, HA.

9. Amira Hass, "From Yamit to the Jordan Valley, the IDF Continues to Force Arabs from Their Homes," *Haaretz*, April 16, 2012.

10. Tamir's son Hagai grew up to become a mythologized pilot in the Israeli Air Force who, during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, refused to bomb his assigned target, a boys' high school. See Negar Azimi, "A Pilot's Refusal, Reimagined," *New York Review of Books,* June 26, 2013; Avihai Becker, "Why We Refused," *Haaretz*, September 25, 2002.

11. The editors concealed the writer's name and wrote, "This journal entry is an authentic one of its time and does not reflect all aspects of reality, but it is true and frank." Only after this text ignited a debate did Tamir stand up as its writer. "An Entry from an Old Journal, 11.10.1948," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 5, 1972.

12. I see no reason to doubt the authenticity of Tamir's journal entry. He does not claim to have written about events as they happened. It is a personal journal that contains impressions, not a daily chronicle.

13. Eliʿezer Beʾeri, "Misleading Words," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 12, 1972.

14. Tamir, "In Favor of Embarrassment."

15. Tamir, "In Favor of Embarrassment."

16. MAPAM Political Committee, May 26, 1948, Yad Yaari Research and Documentation Center.

17. Israel Neumark, "Are They Merely Misleading?" *Ba-shaʿar*, May 1972.

18. Aryeh Zamir, "A Page out of an Old Journal," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 8, 1972.

19. The transcribed interviews are contained in the folder "Interviews with Hazorea Members—in Hebrew and German" in HA.

20. They were Eliʿezer Beʾeri, Levi Granot, Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov, Uri Bar, and Aryeh Zamir. Four other interviewees referred to the neighboring Arab villages: Menachem Raviv, Elisheva Tamir, Yosef Shatil, and Reuven Lavi-Rio. Transcripts of the interviews contain omissions.

21. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri, March 2; 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

22. Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

23. Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

24. Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

25. Tamir, conversation with Eliʿezer Beʾeri.

26. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot, March 4, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

27. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot.

28. Tamir, conversation with Levi Granot.

29. Arnon Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov, March 12, 1976, HA, personal records file of Hazorea members about their kibbutz lives, a–f, no. 3–74.

30. Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov.

31. Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov.

32. Tamir, conversation with Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov."

33. Rudolph (Uri) Bar also belonged to the group that chose the site on which the kibbutz was built.

34. Arnon Tamir, "A Talk with Uri Bar," March 16, 1976, HA, personal records files of Hazorea members about their life on the kibbutz, a–f, no. 3–74.

35. Tamir, "A Talk with Uri Bar."

36. Ben-Yaʿakov's memories appear in a printed booklet of about ninety pages, Was it only yesterday? Yohanan Ben-Yaʿakov 1933–1967, impressions and drawings, HA. His book consists of short pieces, not all of them dated.

37. Aryeh Zamir, memoir, n.d., p. 13, HA.

38. Note the contradiction with Asher Benari's claim that "the kibbutz itself laid no hand on Arab property."

39. The same mode of sociality prevails in Israel today; Palestinians are expected not to fixate on history in order to maintain amicable relations with Israeli Jews.

40. Eyal Ofek, "Historical Trivia: Why the Qira villagers Abandoned Their Village," *Ba-shaʿar*, March 20, 1987; Eyal Ofek, "Local history: Hazorea and the depopulation of Abu Zureiq," *Hazorea*, April 22, 1988, HA.

41. See, for example, Ofek, "Local History: Hazorea and the Depopulation of Abu Zureiq"; Eyal Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 20, 1988; Gustav Horn, "Myth Yes, or Myth No?!" *Ba-shaʿar*, May 27, 1988; on the debate over the expulsion of the Arabs of Abu Zureiq, see Tzvi Raʾanan, "Myth and History as It Really Was," *Bashaʿar*, May 27, 1988, HA.

42. See, for example, Israel Shamir, "This Is How It Began," *Al Ha-Mishmar*, May 13, 1988; Haim Hazan, "Yours Truly, Yaʿakov Hazan: This Is a Story of Myth and History, Conscience, Politics, and Journalism. What MAPAM Is Doing with Its Past," *Haaretz*, June 3, 1988. The discussion that ensued in Hazorea and the articles in *Ba-shaʿar* are also in MHA: "The Account in the Press of the Expulsion of the Arabs by Members of Mishmar ha-Emek during the War of Independence," folder on the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek, file 1986–1988, no. 3.64.

43. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself.".

44. Yoram Miron, "Hazorea, Qira, Abu Zureiq: Looking Back," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 13, 1988; Israel Neumark, "A Debate on Myth or Fact," *Ba-shaʿar*, June 3, 1988.

45. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself"; Horn, "Myth Yes, or Myth No?!"

46. Arnon Tamir, "On Myth and Historical Truth," *Ba-shaʿar*, May 13, 1988, HA.

47. Tamir, "On Myth and Historical Truth."

48. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself."

49. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself," 8.

50. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself," 8.

51. Aryeh Zamir, "More on the Subject: Hazorea and the Depopulation of Abu Zureiq," *Ba-shaʿar,* April 29, 1988, HA.

52. Ofek, "Create a Myth for Yourself."

53. Ofek is correct about the balance of forces in 1948. Until the Haganah and Palmach reinforcements arrived, the ALA forces were stronger in Bilad al-Ruha than the Zionist militia's. But, as usual, the stronger side won the battle of Mishmar ha-Emek. The victory, then, was not a miracle, a frequent description of 1948.

54. Tzvi Raʾanan, "Myth and History as It Really Was" [on the debate on the expulsion of the Arabs of Abu Zureiq], *Ba-shaʿar,* May 27, 1988, HA.

55. Neumark, "A Debate on Myth or Fact."

56. Israel Neumark, "Reactions to Eyal's Work," *Ba-shaʿar,* October 28, 1988, HA. The misattribution of the enemy force, "the Legion" rather than the ALA, should be noted because it pertains to the accuracy of this assessment of the military situation.

57. On the public discussion in Israel following the screening of *Khirbet Khizeh*, see Shapira 2001.

58. Kibbutz secretariat meeting notes, February 14, 1978, MHA.

59. Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek Secretariat to Yitzhak Livni, CEO of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, February 20, 1978, MHA, file on relations with the Arab neighbors, no. 3.41.

60. Joseph S. [Stockhammer], "Another Response to Shaul Biber," *Yediʿot mishmar ha-ʿemek,* March 29, 1978, MHA.

61. Joseph S., "Another Response to Shaul Biber."

62. Joseph S., "Another Response to Shaul Biber."

63. Yigʾal Lapid, "Colonizing the Territories—Questions and Remarks," *Yediʿot ʿein ha-shofet,* April 21, 1972.

64. Ofra Brill, "The Treasure," 1994, EHA.

65. Brill, "The Treasure." The gender of the storyteller, here a woman, played little role in shaping the discourse. An egalitarian project, kibbutz colonization was carried out by women as well as men.

66. The document is undated. When I asked what year it was published, Ofra Brill, the archivist, answered, "You can write that it's from the 1990s." This twelve-page document is in both MHA and HA.

67. Yaniv Sagi, "Their Revival, Our Ruin," [in Hebrew], Zochrot, https://www.zochrot.org/publication_articles/view/52021/he?, February 2007.

CONCLUSION

1. Haaretz Editorial Board, "Investigate Israeli Veterans' Testimonies, Commemorate Mass Palestinian Grave," *Haaretz,* January 24, 2022.

2. Avi Shilon, "It's Time to Stop Keeping Score: Both Sides Committed Massacres in 1948," *Haaretz,* February 10, 2022.

3. Giora Erdinast, "'Tantura' Is a False Craft That Presents a Liar as a Hero," *Haaretz,* January 31, 2022.

4. Haaretz Editorial Board, "Investigate Israeli Veterans' Testimonies."

5. In 2022, Professor Guy Alroey, rector of the University of Haifa, again denounced Katz's research. Ofer Aderet, "Israeli University Head Slams Research on 1948 Tantura Massacre 'Used to Advance Political Agenda,'" *Haaretz,* June 8, 2022.

6. See Alon Confino, "The Lesson from Tantura: It Is Impossible to Write History without the Voices of the Victims," *Siha Mekomit,* January 25, 2022.

7. For media coverage, see Judy Maltz, "Streaming Rights: How a Beautiful Kibbutz Waterway Became Ground Zero for Israel's Culture Wars," *Haaretz,* September 18, 2020; Noa Shpigel, "Small Piece of Heaven Locked Behind Kibbutz Gates Reveals Israel's Deep Social Divides," *Haaretz,* August 18, 2020; Lihi Yona, "The Story of Israel's Ashkenazi Supremacy in One River," *+972Magazine,* August 18, 2020.

8. I employ the slash to denote the unsettled geographic and temporal meanings attached to the territory that comprised historical Palestine.

9. On this, see Anziska 2019; Pappé 2020.

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS

CZA, Central Zionist Archives
EHA, Ein Hashofet Archive
HA, Hazorea Archive
MHA, Mishmar ha-Emek Archive

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem
Ein Hashofet Archive, Kibbutz Ein Hashofet
Haganah Historical Archives, Tel Aviv
Hazorea Archive, Kibbutz Hazorea
Israel State Archives, Jerusalem
Mishmar ha-Emek Archive, Kibbutz Mishmar ha-Emek
Pinhas Lavon Institute for Labor Movement Research, Tel Aviv
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