‘Arab Jahalin: from the Nakba to the Wall

Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Campaign

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Thanks and dedications:

This book is dedicated to the Jahalin, part of our people, who I was lucky to know and happy to visit, meet and talk with, especially: Hajj Salim Odeh, Hajj Suleiman Muhammad Abu Dahuk, Junis Salah Hammadin, mukhtar Abu Yusif, mukhtar Abu al Fahd, mukhtar Abu Dawood, Abu ar-Raed, Abu Falah, Abu Ahmad el-Harrash, Abu Zeid, and Hussein Abu Dahuk. I thank all of them for their cooperation in making this research successful.

Special appreciation is given to Ibrahim Dayf Allah Abu Dahuk, through whom I started to know about this especially oppressed part of my people. His words were sharp, hurt and left a sign on my heart, deep like the injustice, oppression, and racism that he lived through. I hope that with this work I can give a clear picture of what you told me and reflect the injustice, oppression and racism that you experienced.

Hajj Salim, this research may not return you to Tal ‘Arad, but it may contribute to spreading the truth. Like what Ibrahim Dayf Allah said:

“Tyranny in this land can go beyond all limits…. but we will return.”

Sixty years into the Nakba it is our people’s struggle to give the hope and the power that will finally end the policies of ethnic cleansing, occupation and racial discrimination in Palestine, to reinstall justice and to return us to our lands and homes.

Hadeel Hunaiti
Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Campaign
Glossary:

• Social structure of the ‘Arab Jahalin:

The ‘Arab Jahalin tribe or *asha’ir* (pl. *asha’ir*) is formed by a number of extended families or hamula. These extended families can comprise hundreds of members and many families or ‘aile.

We will use the Arabic terminology, as it best describes this structure and avoids the patronizing ethnologic perceptions that are often linked to English terminology.

• Palestine ‘48: Palestine ‘48 denominates the land controlled by Israeli authorities and military since the armistice agreement in 1949. It is the current terminology used by most Palestinians.

• Nakba: the Nakba (Arabic for: catastrophe) denotes the mass ethnic cleansing of Palestine that started in 1948 with the establishment of the state of Israel. That year saw the mass deportation of some 750,000 Palestinians from their cities and villages, as well as massacres of civilians, and the razing to the ground of over 531 of Palestinian villages and communities. The policies that characterized the Nakba still continue today.

• ‘Arab: ‘Arab in the context of this research does not refer to “Arab” origin but means “Bedouin”.

• Mukhtar, pl. makhatir: each *hamula* has a head of the community or *mukhtar*.

• Ethnic cleansing: The term “ethnic cleansing” was introduced by the US in the context of former Yugoslavia of the 1990s, in order to avoid the legally binding terminology. However, we have opted to use this terminology for its strong descriptive nature. The correct legal term corresponding to the ethnic cleansing is “population transfer”, which - if undertaken in
violation of International Humanitarian Law by the occupying power - is a war crime. Population transfer is also considered to be a crime against humanity if it is undertaken systematically (as a policy) and on discriminatory grounds (i.e. against one national, ethnic, religious group). We use both terms here almost interchangeably.

Notes on the Translation:

This text is a translation of the report 'Arab al-Jahalin: men an-Nakba ila al-Jidar.

Citations have been taken from Arabic books. Page numbers of books that have been published first in English still refer to the Arabic translation of the book. Statements from members of 'Arab al-Jahalin have been translated as faithfully as possible; where confusion may arise we have footnoted the terms.
Introduction

This study analyzes the Israeli ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian Bedouin, beginning during the Nakba and continuing into the present. We deal with the situation of the Bedouin in the West Bank in general, but our particular focus lies with the ‘Arab Jahalin presently living in areas around Jerusalem. We look at how Israeli political designs on Jerusalem have affected this Bedouin group, beginning with the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and running to the present day.

Few studies have been written that deal with the fate of the Bedouin who were expelled in 1948. A few NGOs have carried out research on the ‘Arab Jahalin around Jerusalem, but these studies have been limited in scope and did not aim to be comprehensive works. Indeed, while they deal with the current situation faced by the Bedouin, they do not enter into a detailed discussion of the conditions under which the Bedouin have lived since 1948. Additionally, these studies are to a large extent overlapping in terms of sources and the events they are discussing.

Finally, this group of studies focuses exclusively on the ‘Arab Jahalin living around Ma’ale Adumim, thus limiting their focus to the groups which were forcefully moved to a hill near Abu Dis near the Jerusalem central rubbish dump. In focusing exclusively on these groups, they ignore the other Bedouin who live in Khan al-Ahmar and in an area northwest of Jerusalem. The study of these other groups is pertinent, however, as they too are threatened with expulsion.

In this study, we expose the 60 years of forced expulsion the ‘Arab Jahalin have faced. Furthermore, we argue that following the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, a policy of ethnic cleansing has been implemented against the Bedouin living around Jerusalem. This

1 The previous studies that were prepared focusing on the ‘Arab Jahalin are BADIL, Displaced by the Wall: Forced expulsion as a result of the construction of the Wall and the its associated system in the occupied West Bank [“Arabic”], (Bethlehem, 2007) and Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions, Jahalin Bedouin refugees, nowhere left to go, (Jerusalem, 2007).
policy employs a variety of mechanisms, and it continued through the Oslo period. Today, it is being carried on by the construction of the Wall and its associated regime. All of this is done under the framework of an ethnic cleansing plan organized against the Palestinians in Jerusalem, the aim being to forcibly change the “demographic balance” in the city and to create an undivided Jewish capital.

We have chosen the ‘Arab Jahalin to represent the situation of the Bedouin for a number of reasons. First, the Jahalin are the biggest group of Bedouin in the West Bank, both in terms of the large area of land they inhabit as well as in terms of population, which numbers around 7,500. Also, since they are spread around Jerusalem, they are harshly affected by the construction of the Wall and the continued expansion of the settlements. The ‘Arab Jahalin’s situation best represents how the Zionist project around Jerusalem is one of ethnic cleansing that is not only wrecking havoc on the Bedouin communities - indeed all the Palestinian people - but undermines their unique way of life.

We have based this study on extensive interviews with 15 members of the ‘Arab Jahalin. These people are of varying ages and come from different areas. They have each experienced the different stages through which the ‘Arab Jahalin have passed from the Nakba until the present day. We complemented the interviews with brief, unrecorded interviews with six other people to obtain further details, factual or chronological records and contextual information.

The interviews continued for five months, beginning at the end of October 2007 until the middle of April 2008 with partial interruptions in December 2007 and January 2008. The interviews were recorded on tape and then transcribed.

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2 There is a difference cited by the different organizations regarding the numbers of the ‘Arab Jahalin in the West Bank. The study that was prepared by BADIL and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) puts the number of Jahalin spread around Ma’ale Adumim at around 30,000. This number is exceedingly high. The PCBS, instead, indicates that the Arab al-Jahalin are 1,276, a number which is far too low, considering that the number of Bedouin living in Abu Dis is 2,000. A report prepared by LAW - The Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment indicates the number of ‘Arab Jahalin is 7,500. This number is the most likely, based on our own fieldwork, conversations and experiences with different Bedouin communities.
For more than half a century, the Palestinian people as a whole have faced the Israeli policy of ethnic cleansing, and the subsequent colonization and settlement of their lands. This discriminatory plan is based on the occupation of the land and the transfer of settler groups to take the place of the native people. As such, ethnic cleansing is the logical result of the Zionist myth of “a land without a people” and a necessity for its implementation.

The Zionist movement has pursued a policy of ethnic cleansing since its inception. It has carried out massacres, assassinations and wide-scale destruction in order to actualize this plan. In the 1948 Nakba, Zionist militias and the army carried out a number of massacres of Palestinian villagers. 531 population centres were destroyed or depopulated during this time. More than 750,000 Palestinians were expelled between the years 1947 and 1949 through massacres and attacks, as well as through intimidation and a climate of general terror. This was followed by the establishment of the state of Israel on approximately 77% of the area of historic Palestine - a territory even larger than what was allotted to the Zionist movement in the partition plan put forward by the United Nations in 1947, against the will of the Palestinian and Arab people and their UN sanctioned right to self-determination.

Since that time, Jewish immigrants from every part of the world have been encouraged to settle in Palestine to strengthen the Israeli grip on the land. This continues to happen while the native Palestinians spend their days and nights living in the wretched conditions of refugee camps in neighbouring Arab states or the West Bank.

The establishment of the state of Israel was not the end of the Zionist land grab. After the Nakba, Zionist voices called for expanding the borders and expelling what remained of the Palestinians, reclaiming the so-called land of Israel and expanding the modern state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean. Some went even further, demanding the annexation of the east

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3 BADIL, Displaced, p. 70.
and west banks of the Jordan. While the Israeli government did not initially have a chance to further the state’s expansion, it still continued to expel Palestinians. Indeed, from 1948 – 1967, thousands were expelled from their land.

Then came the 1967 war, during which the Palestinian people were exposed to another wave of ethnic cleansing. Around 400,000 Palestinians fled to neighbouring Arab countries, most of them forced to emigrate for a second time. This time, however, Palestinians generally remained on their land and refused to leave.

With the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israeli authorities were faced with a serious dilemma. If they annexed the West Bank and Gaza into its official borders, the demographics would favour the Palestinians and a Jewish majority would be impossible to maintain. Nur ad-Din Masalha confirms this fact, as he shows that after 1967, neither Likud nor Labour supported officially the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza. At the same time, both parties fought the growing Palestinian national movement and opposed the creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. Instead, both parties promoted the idea that Jordan was the Palestinian state.

Not wanting to annex the West Bank and the Gaza Strip but unwilling to relinquish the land, the Israeli authorities were forced to find a practical solution that allowed for the continuation and expansion of the Occupation control without harming the demographic balance. This need has been translated into a creeping settlement project, wherein settlement blocs gradually expand their control over nearby land while simultaneously isolating Palestinian communities. This causes the “migration” of Palestinian people, or what effectively amounts to the forcible transfer of Palestinians. The use of settlement expansion as a tool not only for land theft, but also for ethnic cleansing, has continued throughout the Oslo period.

Palestinian population growth – or the so-called

5 BADIL, Displaced, p. 65
6 Masalha, Nur ad-Din, Imperial.
“demographic bomb” – has continuously preoccupied the Zionist establishment, and is constantly discussed as a major threat to the Jewish state. The expansion of Israeli settlements and the strangling of Palestinian population centres, which amounts to ethnic cleansing, is considered to be a necessity for the existence of Israel. In other words, the current state of permanent siege on highly populated areas, with the goal of either expelling the population or implementing some form of self-administration that will preserve the “demographic security” of the Jewish state, is a non-renounceable state policy.

In an effort to achieve full territorial control without succumbing to the “demographic bomb,” the settlement project has consistently been a cornerstone of Israeli policy. Between 1977 and 1984, Zionist governments pumped huge financial resources into the settlement projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. By 1984 there were 113 settlements spread over the whole of the West Bank. In 1990, 140,000 colonists lived in the West Bank. These numbers do not include the settlements in Jerusalem which the Occupation refuses to count as such.

Today, after countless discussions and peace negotiations, the settlement expansion on Palestinian land continues to go unchecked. No solution was found at the Madrid conference in 1991, which finished without stopping the settlement expansion. With the signing of the Oslo accords, settlement expansions increased in scope. Between 1992 and 1996, the number of settlers was between 100,000 – 102,000. By 1998, this number had increased to 180,000.

Today, the Palestinian map is marred by 148 settlements. Of these 148 settlements, 78 are found east of the Wall, with 369,280 people settling in them. On the west side of the Wall 54,750 people live in 70 settlements. Accompanying this settlement project is the forced transfer of Palestinians. Home demolitions, land theft and lack of access to water and services affect all levels of Palestinian society.

7 For only one example see: http://archive.newsmax.com/archives/articles/2002/10/18/181802.shtml
The expansion of settlements does not only imply the confiscation of land for immediate use, but also the enclosing of areas of land that have been allotted for future settlement expansion. Furthermore, a settler-only transportation grid has been imposed on the West Bank. This transportation grid, coupled with the extensive systems of military zones and checkpoints, serves to preserve continuity between settlements while simultaneously isolating Palestinian population centres.

Since the beginning, Jerusalem has been at the heart of the settlement and land confiscation plans. Directly after the '67 war, the Occupation authorities annexed the eastern part of the city and enlarged its municipal boundaries eastwards to add 70,000 dunums to the Jordanian municipal boundaries, which comprised 6.5 square kilometres. The drawing of the new municipal boundaries – now 71 square kilometres - was a classic example of racial gerrymandering. The purpose of this new configuration of municipal Jerusalem was to include the maximum contiguous territory with the minimum non-Jewish population into the city’s boundaries.9

A first masterplan for Jerusalem had already been drawn up as early as in 1968. This masterplan was aimed at laying out a strategy to implement the Zionist goal to judaize Jerusalem and to enclose within it as much land with as few Palestinians as possible. In July of 1980, the Occupation ratified the Basic Law on Jerusalem, declaring Jerusalem “whole and united”, and Israel’s permanent capital, over which Israel exercised exclusive sovereignty. Additionally, the Basic Law codified the annexation of the eastern part of Jerusalem. Then in 1995, the Occupation drew up a new, even more ambitious plan of annexation and colonization, called the “Metropolitan Jerusalem Plan”. This was a new large-scale development plan for a region covering 40 percent of the West Bank. The plan’s main target area was “Greater Jerusalem”, comprising an area of 440 sq km, of which less than a quarter is within pre-1967 Israel.10


Most recently, a Masterplan 2000 was drawn up to plan the expansion and judaization of Jerusalem until 2020. While it is still in the process of approval, its implementation on the ground is already going ahead, at times even superseded by new plans. Its core principle rests on the goal to achieve a 70:30 ratio between Jews and Palestinians - by all means necessary. Settlement construction, the Wall, “spatial segregation” and land confiscation are among the urbanistic means to discriminate against and expel Palestinians from their homes and lands.

All of these plans combine the expansion of settlements with the expulsion of the Palestinian people from ever more lands. The current ethnic cleansing of the Bedouin, which we are examining in this report, is an integral part of the Israeli plans for Jerusalem.

The Bedouin in Palestine (1948-1959)

Historically, the Bedouin have been found in the south of historic Palestine in Bir Saba’, the Naqab, and south of Hebron. In addition to these regions, some groups were spread in the north, located around Haifa, the Galilee region and Tubas. The Bedouin rely on pastures and water sources for their livelihoods, spread out on large areas of land. Their social basis is the hamula (extended family).

The Bedouin in Palestine are semi-nomadic. Historically, they have tended animals while simultaneously engaging in agricultural activities. This means that they were permanently housed in certain areas. They did not leave these areas, except for short periods in order to tend their flocks of animals. However, the space in which they moved with their animals was quite expansive.

A number of statistics have indicated that the number of Bedouin in the Naqab was between 55,000 - 90,000 in 1948, consisting of 92 different asha’ir (tribes). The Bedouin were spread over an area of land about 11,872,000 dunums. According to Ilan Pappe, the Bedouin of the Naqab in 1948 had a number of institutions that they had set up to organize land ownership, grazing rights, and access to water. At this time, Jews made up only 1% of the residents in the Naqab.

Zionist forces entered the Naqab in October of 1948. The people of the Naqab were the last to be exposed to the ethnic cleansing plan that was carried out against the Palestinians. The tribe located northwest of Bir Saba’ was the first targeted by Zionist militias for expulsion. Some of the people of the tribe were expelled in July, while the rest were transferred out in November of the same year.

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12 The Arabic uses the term “quarter-nomadic”.
15 Pappe Ethnic p. 44
16 Pappe Ethnic p. 201
The ethnic cleansing operations that were undertaken against the Bedouin in the Naqab affected 11 *asha'ir*. The most prominent among them were the *asha'ir* of Tara'bin, al-'Azazma, at-Tayaha and al-Hajajira. In Bir Saba’, for example, the city was cleansed entirely of its Palestinian inhabitants. After that cleansing, massacres were carried out against residents of the district, the most prominent of which was perpetrated in ad-Dawayima, a village located between Bir Saba’ and Hebron. The murder of 80 to 100 people in this village is considered to be one of the worst massacres of the 1948 Nakba.

The ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the Naqab continued until 1959. By this time, more than three quarters of the Palestinian population had been uprooted and displaced from their land, and the Naqab was declared a “military closed area”. As such, the Bedouin found themselves under military regime, and they suffered under oppressive restrictions that severely limited their freedom of movement and way of life. Settlements were constructed and finally, in the 1970s, those Bedouins who remained were gathered together and forcibly transferred within their districts to seven *rekuzim* (Hebrew for: concentration) camps. Half of the 130,000 Bedouin in the Naqab now live in these townships, all of which languish at the bottom of every socio-economic index. The rest lives in unrecognized villages threatened with demolition orders and unable to obtain even the most elementary services, such as running water or electricity from the state. Almost the same practices have been employed since 1967 against the Bedouin in the West Bank.

The Bedouin, like other Palestinians who were expelled in 1948, took refuge in neighbouring Arab states, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip. Those who fled to the West Bank generally did not move far; the Bedouin from the north of Palestine were in the north of the West Bank, while those from the Naqab remained in the south, taking refuge near Hebron and Bethlehem. They remained there until the mid 1950s, and as it became clear that a political solution was not forthcoming, they began to disperse.

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17 On 29 October 1948 during Operation Yo'av, Zionist forces murdered between 80 and 100 people in ad-Dawayima. News of this massacre, which included killing of children and rape, led to a massive flight of people from the area. See: Khalidi Walid. All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948. Institute of Palestine Studies: Beirut, Lebanon, 1992. p. 215.
18 Pappe Ethnic p. 201
into areas that were more suitable for their lifestyle. Bedouin groups began to spread from these areas, moving to places around Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem and Jericho. There, they built their communities and began to establish new lives. However, after the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 they would once again suffer another forced transfer.
The Bedouin pushed to the West Bank during the Nakba

Around 22,000 Bedouin from areas in Palestine ‘48 have taken refuge in the environs around Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jericho. They were semi-nomadic and ventured for limited times to the north, middle and south, sometimes arriving on the east bank of the Jordan River searching for pastures. In the winter, they returned with their flocks to their homes around the previously mentioned population centres. Additionally, they opened shops from which they sold animal products, including milk, dairy products and wool to the villages, cities and camps in both the West Bank and Jordan.

With the occupation of what remained of Palestinian land in 1967, Occupation forces began to restrict the territories inhabited by the Bedouin, a first step to eventually concentrate the Bedouin in few areas. Under this regime, the Bedouin suffered from harsh military procedures that served to restrict their movement, to isolate pastures and to cut off their access to water sources. Some pastures were even bulldozed by the Occupation forces. Under false pretexts, the Occupation began to consolidate control over a number of areas, annexing the land upon which the Bedouin lived, and classifying it as “state land.” These lands, which were considered “natural reserves” or “closed military zones” reserved for military drills, were designated as being off-limits to the Bedouin. Occupation forces demolished shelters and arrested a number of people to ensure that the Bedouin stayed off the land.

20 Those Bedouin who moved with their flocks during certain seasons did not necessarily move with all the individuals of their family.
In order to guarantee that the Bedouin did not approach these areas, the Occupation forces dispatched what they called “green patrols.” These patrols were charged with pursuing the shepherds who needed to enter the closed areas to graze their animals. They drove the shepherds off, often going so far as to physically assault and arrest them. The green patrols also attacked the flocks of animals, either firing on them or seizing them. They forced the owners to pay fines if they or their animals were caught too close to the closed areas. Additionally, shepherds were forced to pay a fine if animals were confiscated and quarantined. The amount depended on the number of animals, and it included all costs that the Occupation expended in the confiscation procedure. Thus, the shepherds were forced to pay for transportation, food, and a number of other fines involved with the processes. Thus, the total cost to the shepherds far exceeded the real value of the animals.

In the beginning of the 1970s, Zionist policy toward the Bedouin in the West Bank began to evolve in tandem with settlement activity. The Bedouin were still under the control of the military, and Occupation forces continued to destroy their tents and to expel them from their homes. These sorts of operations escalated as the settlement plans for the areas were implemented. A pattern emerged, where the Occupation would demolish a Bedouin community and transfer the inhabitants, while in the place of the Bedouin, a Zionist settlement would be established. Furthermore, the Occupation administration deployed new tactics against the Bedouin. They introduced new building procedures that not only prohibited the Bedouin from building new structures, but that also prevented them from repairing or adding to any of the existing ones.

The Oslo agreement was a catastrophe for the Bedouin in the West Bank. Under Oslo, the land classified as area C was given over to complete Occupation control. However, the vast majority of Bedouin live on area C land, and as such, they find themselves subject to continued ethnic cleansing attempts. Even in the face of a ferocious siege and settlements encroaching on their lives and pastures, however, they have largely remained steadfast on their land.
Before going into detail about the ‘Arab al-Jahalin – the ashira best representing the precarious situation of the Bedouin in the West Bank - we will give a brief overview of the most prominent Bedouin asha‘ir in the West Bank.

‘Arab ak-Ka‘abneh:” The people of ‘Arab ak-Ka‘abneh lived in the areas near the edges of the Jordan Valley: ‘Anata, Jaba’, Dir Dibwan, ‘Ayn Samia, al-Jeeb, and Bir Nabala. Their total population is 1,330.\(^{21}\) They trace their origins to areas southeast of Hebron, which were completely annexed by Israel after the 1948 occupation.

The ‘Arab ak-Ka‘abneh have suffered under the Occupation regime, and have seen their tents bulldozed, their people arrested, and their animals confiscated. With the construction of the Wall at the northern entrance to the village of Bir Nabala, northwest of Jerusalem, the Occupation administration isolated 6 families from the ‘Arab ak-Ka‘abneh. These families are trapped between the western part of ar-Ram, which has been completely annexed by the Wall, and Bir Nabala. Those trapped in this area are under severe movement restrictions and are prohibited from moving outside the area. For example, the people must leave the area in order to buy basic necessities. However, if Occupation soldiers catch them on the main street, they are liable to be fined or arrested.

Students have to be escorted by the Red Cross in order for the Occupation forces to allow them to reach school. Since the main road has been cut off, however, students have to travel to ar-Ram, then through Qalandiya, through Ramallah and back around to Bir Nabala. Thus, a trip that used to take 5 minutes now takes several hours.

‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh:” The ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh are located in the far southeast of the city of Bethlehem, at least 25 Km from the city. Their original lands, which used to stretch from Wadi al Ghar to ‘Ayn Jeddi (Ein Gedi), located on the shores of the Dead Sea, were taken in the 1950s when Occupation forces carried out an

attack in the area of ‘Ayn Jeddi. Following this attack, the ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh were displaced inside the 1967 borders, and their land was annexed to the Israeli state.

Today, around 1,200 ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh live southeast of the city of Bethlehem. Around 800 people are found in the areas of ‘Ayn Duyouk and ‘Ayn as-Sultan northeast of Jericho. Also, close to 3,000 people from the ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh live in Jordan, where they fled during the 1967 war. Most of the ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh depend on their animals as their primary source of income.

The people of the ‘Arab ar-Rashaydeh have been subject to a number of serious demolitions, expulsion attempts and other repressive operations:

-1983: Occupation forces launched a raid against shepherds returning from a grazing area, where they had camped in the summer with their animals, located about 2 kilometers from the built-up area of the village. They confiscated around 1,500 sheep and imposed huge fines on the owners.

-1997: Occupation forces launched a raid on the same area in the end of summer and again confiscated close to around 1,500 animals. As a result, violent confrontations flared up between Occupation forces and owners. Fatima Suleiman ‘Awda Rashaydeh was martyred during the fighting, and at least 30 other residents were injured. As was the case in 1983, the residents were forced to pay an exceedingly high price for the return of their animals.

-2005: Occupation forces launched a surprise raid on the same district and demolished around 20 structures which were used for residential purposes as well as animal care.

‘Arab ar-Ramadin: The people of ‘Arab ar-Ramadin live on the northern and southern edges of Qalqilya city. They arrived in the

22 Ibid.
23 ‘Arab ar-Ramadin refers both to the name of a particular Bedouin group as well as their village outside Qalqilya city. The ‘Arab ar-Ramadin near Qalqilya should not be confused with the ‘Arab ar-Ramadin located on the southern-most edge of the West Bank.
1950s, when they were cut off from their lands south of Hebron. They consist of a few residential groups, numbering 357 people. They live in shelters constructed of sheet iron, canvas and wood.

With the construction of the Apartheid Wall around Qalqilya city, northern ‘Arab ar-Ramadin was isolated to the north beyond the Wall. A military gate that is controlled by Occupation soldiers has been installed, and the soldiers bar any Palestinian from entering the area unless their ID card explicitly indicates that they have residency in the area. Without this ID card, Palestinians must apply for special permission from the Occupation administration. Not only is this procedure terribly complicated, but it is also rare that permission is granted. Furthermore, the Occupation administration does not officially recognize the community, and as such, the whole village (22 structures) is considered to be illegal and is under demolition threat. In March of 2008, 5 additional residential structures were targeted for demolition. These are in addition to the original 11 under direct threat since 2004.

On 11 March 2008, Occupation forces launched a surprise raid on northern ‘Arab ar-Ramadin and destroyed two residential sheds belonging to ‘Abdallah Sa‘id Hussein ar-Ramadin and his married son ‘Adel, as well as their respective families. This attack affected around 10 individuals, leaving them all homeless.

As for southern ‘Arab ar-Ramadin, it is isolated behind the Wall to the south of Qalqilya city in the pocket created by the Alfe Menashe settlement. The residents face the same restrictions on movement as those discussed above. Under Occupation law they are not recognized as being part of a legal village, and they are therefore threatened with imminent displacement.

24 All of the previous data has been compiled by the Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign via daily data collection from 2001 to the present time. For more information, see Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign/ Ma’an Development Center. Palestinian Towns and Villages – Between Isolation and Expulsion, Ramallah, Palestine, 2007. http://stopthewall.org/activistresources/1583.shtml
**Abu ‘Abd Hamad at-Turkman**\(^{25}\): This group was expelled from Haifa and took refuge in the Jenin district. Around 300 were expelled in 1998 after the Occupation military demolished their homes.

‘Arab al-‘Ajajira and al-Masa’id\(^{26}\) Some of the individuals of this *ashira* live on the edges of Jiftlik in the Jordan Valley. This village is not recognized by the Occupation, and as such the Bedouin have been under the same threat of expulsion as the residents of Jiftlik.\(^{27}\)

**‘Arab al-Hanajira and al-‘Azazima**\(^{28}\): These *asha’ir* are currently spread in Musafar Beni Na’im\(^{29}\), located 23 kilometres southeast of Hebron. The people of the two *asha’ir* arrived from Bir Saba’ in the Naqab after being forced out in 1948. After the 1967 occupation of the West Bank, the Occupation authorities classified the districts in which they had taken refuge as closed military zones. The Bedouin were thus set to be expelled a second time, but the families refused to obey the Occupation orders. In 1996 the Occupation forces attempted to remove them, demolishing a number of tents and leaving 35 persons without shelter. Today, these two *asha’ir* are under continued siege and threat from soldiers and settlers.

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\(^{25}\) Akhbarna, Forgotten.
\(^{26}\) Ibid.
\(^{27}\) Since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the Jordan Valley has been a priority for Israeli colonization and ethnic cleansing because it guarantees control over all of Palestine and makes a Palestinian state unviable. Depopulating entire communities, ever-increasing constructing of settlements, establishing extensive military zones and taking measures to isolate the Jordan Valley from the rest of the West Bank all aim to make life for Palestinians in the Jordan Valley untenable. Policies similar to those in the area East of Jerusalem are applied against the Bedouin here, with entire communities like al-Hadidiya threatened with expulsion. For more information see: http://stopthewall.org/factsheets/1147.shtml
The ‘Arab Jahalin

The Jahalin before the Nakba: Life in Tal ‘Arad

Before the founding of Israel, the Jahalin were spread throughout the Tal ‘Arad district. Their lands started almost 50 km north-east from the town of Bir Saba’, and extended in the north to an area some 30 km south of Hebron city, and in the east 30 km west of the Dead Sea. In other words, the lands of the Jahalin were located between Wadi al-Ghar, Tal ‘Arad, Wadi az-Zawayra, Yata and Beni Na’im.

This area was officially under the administration of the governor of Hebron, but its geography and landscape put it in continuity with Bir Saba’. The ‘Arab Jahalin therefore consider themselves as originating from the Bir Saba’ district rather than from Hebron.

Hajj Salim ‘Owda Salim Abu Dahuk, born in 1917, is now living in Khan al-‘Ahmar. He described the district which the ‘Arab Jahalin lived. He stated,

“The area where we lived extended from al-Hudayba and Qabr Muhammad to ar-Rabwa, which marked the border between us and the ashira al-Thulam and Bir Saba’. From there, go to the west you will be in al-Hudayba and as-Sarj and al-Buqa’aya, and Shraifiya. Go to the north to Wad Siyal and Khosiydiya. All of these lands, until you reach ah-Humiyda, belong to the Sra’ya Jahalin hamula. From there, you go to Wadi Jarfan, which belonged to the asha’ir Ka’abneh. From there you go to Wadi al-Ghar which belonged to the Rawa’in (a hamula of the ashira Ka’abneh) and [near them] the Rashaydeh [are living] in Hahsahisa. From Hahsahisa you go to at-Ta’amra. These are our borders.”

In Amin Sa’oud Abu Bakr’s Hebron District between the years of 1864 – 1981, the author points out that the asha’ir staying in Hebron

28 Ibid.
29 Beni Na’im is a small town southeast of Hebron. Musafar refers to a large area of communal land owned by the village that is used by shepherds for grazing their flocks
30 These are the names of plains, valleys and communities. This practice of naming localities, the inhabitants and landmarks contained in them, and their relation to other localities is traditionally used by the Bedouin in the Naqab to map and describe their land. All places mentioned are in the Tal ‘Arad area.
in 1874 in terms of size were as follows: “The Jahalin tribe 100 tents and 150 men, the ak-Ka’abneh were 50 tents and 80 men, the Rashaydeh tribe was 60 tents and 100 men.” The author adds that the Jahalin reached 500 persons at that time.31

The *ashira* Jahalin consists primarily of three *hamula*: as-Salamat, ad-Dawahik and as-Sray’a. Everyone in the *ashira* branches to these three *hamula*. Major families within the *ashira* are: ak-Korshan, Abu Ghaliya, Basis, af-Fuqara’, Hamadin, at-Tabina, Abu Firaha, as-Seyayila, ak-Kutayfat, al-Bu’aran, al-Ghwanima, ad-Dhyafin, al-Hersh, an-Numaylat, al-‘Ara’ara’, al-Hathalin, and others.

According to the accounts we heard from the Jahalin who lived during the Nakba or heard stories from their fathers or grandfathers, the ‘Arab Jahalin were the owners of the land in Tal ‘Arad, with official papers to prove this point.32 However, they did not preserve these papers. They insisted that they subsisted on both agriculture and animals, and that they established permanent dwellings in the area. The presence of permanent residences is evidence to the fact that, while they did tend animals, they were not a nomadic people. Moreover, it is important to underline that even if the documents proving land ownership were hidden or lost or even if they never existed, this does not deny the right of ‘Arab Jahalin to dwell and graze their animal on the lands that they traditionally inhabited. Legally, the battle fought by indigenous peoples from around the globe has won recognition by the UN that land rights are not

31 See: http://aljahaleen.maktoobblog.com/310289/
32 There is a story told by the Jahalin about the official papers from the times of the Ottoman Empire proving they own the land of Tal ‘Arad. The story states that their land at the time of the Ottoman Empire was going to be registered in the name of the state. The *makhatir* in the area were told that there was a meeting in Tal ‘Arad, but not its purpose. The *makhatir* went to the meeting, Abu Dahuk among them, and were told by the translator that the government planned to register the land in the government’s name. The elders left before the representative of the Ottoman government arrived, therefore no papers were signed. After a little while Abu Dahuk went to Yafa and met a lawyer named Ibrahim al-Dusuki. They agreed to take the Ottoman government to court in Istanbul and that Dusuki would get a piece of the property if it was returned. The two men left to Istanbul and were not heard from for seven years. They were thought dead by the Jahalin until Abu Dahuk returned with official documents confirming that the land belonged to the tribe. Abu Dahuk gave the documents to a friend of his in Hebron to keep; however, he and his friend both later died and so the documents were lost. The Jahalin confirmed that Dusuki took his piece of land, as agreed upon, and that he died in Tal ‘Arad where his grave remains. They also confirmed that he has sons and grandchildren currently living in Jordan.
based on a narrow conception of private property. Furthermore, the right of return of the ‘Arab Jahalin is more than a legal right. Rather, it is a political issue that cannot be denied or negotiated away.

Salim ‘Owda said,

“God, if now, if I walk with you now in Tal ‘Arad, I can tell you this land belongs to who, this land belongs to who, this land belongs to who. We used to live in Tal ‘Arad in the area called Hadayba and Siyal and Shorayfiya, see how, al-Hadayba in Tal ‘Arad is the farming area. There we used to plant and harvest wheat and barely. We used to live a good life.”

From statements like this one, it is clear that the Bedouin in the Naqab had established borders amongst themselves. These borders delineated which family used which parcels of land.

The mukhtar of the as-Salamat, Hammad ‘Abdullah Basis as-Salamat (Abu Dawood), 65 years old, lives on the hill near Abu Dis. He is one of the individuals of the Jahalin who lived in the period before the expulsion. Here he describes Tal ‘Arad,

“We were living in the east of Tal ‘Arad, [our lands extended] until the edge of the Dead Sea, to ‘Ayn Jeddi. We were living in tents and keeping our sheep and goats in the caves [in the area]. We were farming the land for barely, lentils, and wheat. We lived off animal wealth, such as camels, horses, sheep and goats.”

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33 The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN General Assembly Resolution A/61/L.67) states:

Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return. (Article 10)

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.

2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired. (Article 26)

34 Abu Dawood is the name we will use when referring to mukhtar Hamad ‘Abdullah Basis.
In addition to the agricultural work, the expulsion of the Bedouin people was another topic that came up frequently in our conversations. In a number of other interviews, the Jahalin told of operations undertaken by Zionist militias against them, wherein the people were expelled and agricultural land burned.

The Jahalin and the first Palestinian Nakba

The Naqab was the last district to be invaded by Occupation forces, who conquered the area in the October of 1948. The operations of ethnic cleansing continued until the year 1959. Between 1948 and 1953, these actions were focused in the south of Palestine.

The ‘Arab Jahalin were among the Bedouin who were affected by the ethnic cleansing operations around 1950, although the people of Jahalin disagreed on the exact date. Some stated that the cleansing operations began in 1949, and continued until the beginning of 1950. Others told us that the ethnic cleansing operations began in 1950 and finished in 1951, when there were no ‘Arab Jahalin left in the Naqab. But all of them agreed that the cleansing operations began in the beginning of the summer, when the barely and wheat was ready to be harvested and did not take much longer than a year.

Hajj Salim ‘Owda remembers:

“What happened to us, God knows, it was like this time. The plants were ripe and this tall [he indicated with his hand the height of the plants]. None of us left [Tal ‘Arad] on account of the massacres that [the people] heard about. We only left when they expelled us. From 1950, I mean in 1951 not one of us remained in the area. When they [the soldiers] came the people escaped. Those who were able to take their tents, they took them with them and those who were not able left without them and fled with their children to save their lives.”

35 This particular interview was carried out during the harvest season.
36 According to the accounts of the Jahalin, whether or not tents and other property could be saved depended on whether the soldiers spoke with residents and threatened them or just came and burned down the tents.
Hajj Mohammed Ahmed Abu Dahuk (Abu Falah), aged 65 and living close to the Jerusalem – Jericho road, stated:

“One day the Jews came upon us and occupied Bir Saba’. They continued coming towards us, coming, coming…the last tribe to be expelled was the Jahalin, the Dawahik hamula and the Salamat hamula about 1949 – 1950…The people were planting the [barely and wheat]. I remember it was the beginning of the harvest [season], it was June and the crops were ripe. In the beginning of the harvest the people escaped and the crops remained and they were not able to harvest them.”

Means of transfer used against the Jahalin during the Nakba

From our interviews, we were able to discern three main strategies employed by the Occupation against the Jahalin. Occupation forces aimed to first concentrate Bedouin in particular areas and then to expel them en masse.

1: Targeting individual shepherds: This was the first method used by the Occupation forces against the Bedouin in the Naqab. Invading forces set up military bases on Bedouin land, and dispatched patrols at all hours who would fire on shepherds and their flocks and confiscate animals. This pushed a small number of people out, but they did not leave the district completely. Instead, they fled to the borders of Tal ‘Arad and took refuge with families living in more secure areas where the military had not yet reached.

Hajj Salim ‘Owda’s detailed description of the events gives an example of this first strategy of expulsion. He was a young boy at the time and experienced the attacks first hand. He told us,

“No one left on account of the massacres that we heard about, but when they came and expelled us. In the beginning they set up a military base next to Tal ‘Arad on the north western side, in the area called ‘Asfura. They built a military camp, God, right in the heart of our agricultural land. The land where they built [the base] was our agricultural land, and the crops were as long as this

37 Abu Falah is the name we will use when referring to Hajj Mohammed Ahmed Abu Dahuk.
tent pole [he gestured towards a tent]. The sheep which they saw, they took. The Bedouin went west towards the farmland or east with the sheep and they began to shoot at us, it was prohibited [going to the farmland], so we fled from the shooting.

They were shooting, firing on us with guns, oh God, the cars [military jeeps] were patrolling, and if they saw you they would shoot you, and if they saw sheep they would shoot them. The owner of the sheep could not escape from death [unless God saved him]. I mean [if] someone shot at us, will we stay? Sure, we wanted to escape. We returned to the tent. They came during the day and shot the people that went to the fields. They shot anybody they saw…

They continued to take the sheep. When the soldiers came, the shepherds escaped. They [the soldiers] took the sheep from the Fuqara’ [family]. They took the animals from Musa Salman af-Fuqara’, from as-Sray’a Jahalin, and from Musa Mohammed Nasar, and Nasra Bin Suleiman, and confiscated with this around 300 or more heads of sheep… Before, it was a fruitful country and we were living a good life, cultivating the land and living from the crops.”

According to Abu Dawood:

“We left in the 1950s, it was said that the Jews entered the district, and many from the as-Salama were killed. One named Mohammed Arhiyal as-Siyayla.38 The Jews killed him in the same area, in the [agricultural] land, east of Tal ‘Arad, where he was harvesting in the fields when they shot him. They killed him and scared the people to make them leave. They burned the homes of as-Salama and took the sheep of the Abu ‘Asida and the ak-Kutifat families.”39

2. Psychological warfare: Occupation forces frequently employed psychological warfare during the 1948 attacks, and the situation in the Naqab was no different. Here in particular, Occupation forces

38 On the Arab Jahalin’s website, Mohammed Arhiyal as-Siyayla is mentioned. The passage refers to him as Muhammad Ibn Arhiyal Muhammad Hassan Hassan as-Siyala Salamat Jahalin (Abu Khalil) and confirms that he was martyred, adding that he was not married.
39 These two families are part of the as-Salama hamula.
would directly threaten individuals with the aim of spreading terror in the greater community to the point where the people would flee. Hajj Salim ‘Owda recalled the Occupation forces arresting two people, who were taken from the community because an accident had occurred (see below). In the military bases, the soldiers told them that if any of the Bedouin had not left before dawn, no one would be left alive. The men returned to their tents and told their families what had happened to them. This created a climate of terror amongst the people, which spread throughout the camp and caused the people to flee. Salim emphasized that the men broke camp and moved to the area of as-Sarj, a nearby area where they took refuge with another community. Even there they were not safe, however, as military patrols followed them there, and forced another expulsion.

Hajj Salim ‘Owda described these events at length,

“What happened to us then, just as God knows it is happening in this time, the harvest was ripe, like this [indicates with his hands the size of the crops]. Me and Sami Bin ‘Ali were coming down on the horses. We went to al-Hudayba where the agricultural land was. Every morning we used to loose the camels in the east, and the camels got to know the area and the fields. There was a camel belonging to Ibn ‘Ali, and there was a camel belonging to Salam al-Bu’aran and a camel belonging to Salim al-Bu’aran. The camels used to go to the east, and we used to go west where the crops were. In the afternoon, when we were finished with the crops, we looked for the camels, but we didn’t see them. We asked the shepherds where they were, but no one knew.

The next morning, Sami Bin ‘Ali and Salim al-Bu’aran and Salam al-Bu’aran were searching for them. They were walking on until [they reached] Namil al-Hudayba, west of the crops. They found the three camels in the heart of the agricultural land. When they took the camels, there was a jeep coming from the military camp. The jeep was beeping and followed them and stopped them and took the camels. God was witness on this. They brought them into the center of the [military] camp, forced the camel to sit and tied them up.

Salam al-Bu’aran, God rest his soul, was an orphan. He, his father’s
second wife and his brothers and sisters had only this camel. One of them said, “God will replace [this camel], lets go.” Salam said, “On the life of my father, either I will bring back the camels tonight or they will kill me.” He went to bring them back from the military camp, and they told him “Boy, they will kill you” and he said, “[if they] kill me, [let them] kill me. When the sun set, he walked until it got dark. There was a guard on this side and a guard on the other side. They had a [small water] tank and they knocked on it with a stick when they felt there was danger. He continued to be patient until late at night. He entered the camp, the fence wasn’t very high, and released the knot [that secured the animals]. Bin ‘Ali’s camel was very big. While he was driving them out with a stick, he accidentally hit that camel at the testicles and it fell on the fence. The fence collapsed and they all escaped.

But in the morning, soldiers arrived in jeeps and when they saw shepherds they shot them, any one walking they shot, any one passing by they shot. They arrested someone called ‘Abd al-Qadar and another one who’s second name was al-Barawi. The soldiers took and arrested them, they were from the as-Samat family. I think if I remember his first name was ‘Owada [al-Barawi]. They took them to the camp, the officer in charge said that if they saw anybody in the area, then no one should be blamed but himself, we will kill him and we will take all of the animals from the ‘Arab Jahalin. This is what they told the men that they arrested. The men came and told us what had happened to them. The people were terrified and broke down their tents and we put our camps east of as-Sarj, in [the area of] the home of Nasr Suleiman, God rest his soul. We were more than 100 people. We were laying in the tent thinking [what to do], and at that time a jeep came towards the tent. When he [Nasr Suleiman] saw the military coming down, we started to break down the tent. The soldiers got out of the jeep and told people “carry your things and leave.” The people replied, “Foreigners, we are leaving” and the soldiers replied, “hurry.” It was a big jeep that transported soldiers. We took the tents, and the soldiers took the iron poles [for the tents] and they killed one of the people of the as-Samat.40 They found him in the Qabr Mohammed area, and they shot him and killed him. What should I tell you…?”

40 During the interview Hajj Salim remembered that the person killed was Muhammad as-Siyala, the same person about whom Abu Dawood reported.
3. A policy of attacking larger communities. With the people concentrated into fewer places, Zionist forces carried out the wholesale annihilation of communities, which included the destruction of tents, the killing of animals, as well as murder. This was done in order to force the Bedouin off their land and to cleanse the whole area. The area in which the Jahalin lived was extensive, with the people of the ashira dispersed in different agricultural communities inside the district of Tal ‘Arad. Following the killing of individual shepherds and the spreading of terror, people began to flee towards the edges of Tal ‘Arad. Near the end, they had taken refuge in the furthest areas. Here, the Zionist forces concentrated their attacks, consequently pushing the Bedouin people as a whole in the direction of the West Bank. These final operations took approximately half a year to complete, and when they were over, the entire region had been ethnically cleansed of its original Bedouin inhabitants.

Abu Falah spoke about this period,

“How do we live right now, we are divided [into groups]. Some of us live in Wad Abu Hindi, some live in Abu Dis, some in Khan [al-Ahmar]. In Tal ‘Arad, we were living the same way. When the Jews came, they attacked the Bedouin. Those that lived in one place escaped, while the others that heard about this hid, one day, two days, three days until they saw that hiding was useless. They [the soldiers] began to discover their [hiding] places attacked them, following them everywhere, until they made them leave. It was like this that the people left. They did not have weapons to defend themselves, no Jordanian [soldiers] defending them; no government to defend them. … We used to live in tents, and sometimes in caves in the winter.

They were attacking us from their jeeps with guns, shooting and things like that. They were attacking the Bedouin with jeeps during the day, shooting anyone they saw. If the people did not escape, they would kill them. I am telling you, there was one deaf person called Khamis, and the people left him and the soldiers shot him and burned the tents. The people left those areas to these areas here.”

Other accounts of the expulsion the Jahalin narrate that the Zionist militias used spies to inspect the area and to terrify the
people thereby spreading horrific rumours to make them leave.

Hajj Salim elaborated on this period and the murder of Khamis,

“When we left the people went far from the place where they were but they didn’t build their tents afraid that the soldiers will see the tents and will come. They lived in the open. The men went to a higher place watching the area checking if the Jews could come from any place and it seems one spy told the Jews that the Jahalin left the country and some of them are still in that place. There was some one, a good guy, he sent us a messenger to warn us that the military is looking for you and they want to kill you. This messenger came at night then we wake up early morning and we took our things and we left quickly. We found out that the military is walking behind us following our traces. The tents stayed there, we couldn’t take them. When the military arrived there and they saw the tents they put them on top of each other and burned them. My uncle Khamis, he was old and deaf and he was not able to run with the people and he was left behind. He looked around and he found a place in the rocks and he sat there and the army when they came they saw him they murdered him, they shot him in his eye.”

The ‘Arab Jahalin were not safe even after the massacres in Tal ‘Arad. Upon vacating Tal ‘Arad, they arrived in the Wad al-Ghar area where they were subject to harsh repressions. There, the ashira ‘Azazima was attacked, leading to the arrest of five people. While three of these were from ‘Azazima, two were Jahalin. They were in pastures with their sheep, and Occupation forces led them back to the tents, where they executed them in revenge for Jews that had been killed in a past incident.

The flight of the ‘Arab Jahalin from their land during this period was clearly not a voluntary choice, as Zionist propaganda often wants to depict it. Rather, it came about as a result of a well prepared ethnic cleansing campaign that was carried out not only against the Jahalin, but against all Palestinians living on 1948 lands. This plan and its effects have been discussed in detail in other works.
The Jahalin after the Nakba (1950 – 1967)

After the ethnic cleansing operations, the Jahalin who were living in Tal ‘Arad fled to the West Bank. In the beginning, they took up residence on the outskirts of Bethlehem and Hebron. It was here that UNWRA recorded them as refugees, but this recording was done without moving them into the refugee camps that were being established. The year in which the Jahalin completed their registration with the UNWRA is known as the year of “dipping the fingers.” This refers to the act of dipping one’s fingers in ink and imprinting it on the papers that had been prepared by the United Nations.

Abu Falah spoke about this,

“We left and headed for the Bethlehem area, to at-Ta’amra and Sa’ir. The United Nations registered us there in the Bethlehem area. We did not stay in Hebron. We took the cards [for refugees] from Bethlehem, but they did not give us tents. The Sray’a hamula was counted in Khan [al-Ahmar], and they didn’t give tents or anything to them either. The people stayed under blankets. Those days when they counted the people, we called it the year of “dipping the fingers”. You would dip your finger in the ink and imprint it. You wouldn’t come back again. The ink would stay on your finger for one month so they would know that you were counted.”

Abu Dawood also spoke about his experiences during this year,

“We went to Hebron, we were in large groups. We had our animals [sheep and goats], our camels, donkeys, our tents and everything else. In the beginning we lived in the Hebron area, in an area called Zayf. There, the United Nations came and told us that they were going to make [refugee] cards. They did make cards for part of us, but there are some people [today] who are still not counted. There are three families of the ‘Arab Jahalin who continued to live in Tal ‘Arad, but not more than that. I think we stayed in Hebron from 1952 – 1953.”

The Jahalin lived in the area east of Bethlehem and Hebron for
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no longer than three years, all the while hoping that the crisis would end and they would be allowed to return to their lands in Tal ‘Arad. But things dragged on without an end in sight. The ‘Arab Jahalin began to feel confined, particularly in at-Ta’amra and Sa’îr. Due to their animal holdings, they felt that they would be a burden on the local population because of the strain they could cause on the pastures and local water sources. Thus, the Jahalin moved away with their animals and tents and settled on hills south and east of Jerusalem, as well is in places around Jericho and in the Jordan Valley. These lands extended from the ‘Anata crossing to eastern al-‘Eizariya and Abu Dis, to Khan al-Ahmar and Nabi Musa and until the hills around Jericho and the Dead Sea.

This new area was spacious and was distinguished by the many pastures and water sources nearby, which allowed the Bedouin to preserve their way of life.

Abu Dawood described this area,

“We came here to live, and also for our animals. Here the people were working. In Hebron there were many animals belonging to al-Yatawiya and al-Jaysiya. In addition to that, we were refugees. We became a burden on the people there, so we moved to the Jerusalem area. We passed through Bethlehem for two or three months and then continued travelling until we got here [the Jerusalem area].”

This land belonged to Anata, Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariya and al-Isawiya. Some of it was considered public land and fell in the state registry, like the area of Khan al-Ahmar and Nabi Musa. The land in question was far from population centres, and it consisted primarily of desert areas that were not suitable for agriculture. As for the little agriculture that could be done, the Jahalin would plant in the winter and then move around with their animals, returning in the summer to harvest. The Jahalin lived on this land without engaging in agricultural activities before securing the permission of the owners. Also, they were prohibited from building permanent residential structures on the land, and they would have to leave the area at the request of the owner. These conditions were part of an oral contract between the owners of the land and the Jahalin.

41 Al-Yatawiya and al-Jaysiya are two communities in the Hebron area.
The people honoured their commitments, and during the time they stayed in this area, there were no serious problems between the two parties.

In this area, the ‘Arab Jahalin were relatively mobile and moved their camps from place to place. They did not give the impression that they wanted to settle on the land. As such, the owners of the land were not interested in demarcating borders between different parcels of land. This did not cause any serious conflicts between the owners of the land and the ‘Arab Jahalin, except in rare cases when a member of the Jahalin did not hold to the conditions of using the land.

Abu Falah described how the Jahalin used to live on this land,

“This area belonged to the ‘Aysawiya. We used to plant that area [gestures to an area] belonging to the Anatiya. We planted it, until that mountain [another gesture]. In the time before 1967, the Bedouin were not living on this land. They stayed on it in summer, after that the people harvested the crops. The country was open in front of them. They would go to the Khan al-Ahmar side, which was not an agricultural area. They stayed in Nabi Musa, which was also open. In the winter, they moved away from the agricultural areas, and came back during the harvest season.”

The ‘Arab Jahalin, as we have previously pointed out, settled in a semi-permanent manner around Jerusalem, grazing their animals for most of the year and then returning in the summer to harvest crops. They enjoyed complete freedom of movement, as they were able to bring their animals from the east bank of the Jordan River to their homes around Jerusalem with no problems.

Abu Falah described this time in the 1950s,

“Before 1967, during the Jordanian times, if there was no grazing in this area, we would go to Jordan. We went to Jenin to graze [our animals] and returned here. No one asked us anything. Also, the Jordanians were helping us with animal feed. I hope that we would get only half [of what we got] during the Jordanian time. I mean, no one asked you where you are going.”
Abu Dawood shared his opinion,

“We moved in all areas. From this area, we passed with our animals to the east of the Jordan. We spent the summer and the end of the spring there and then returned. We were also free to go to the Ramallah area without problems during the Jordanian times.”

61 year-old Mohammed Ahmed Dayfallah Abu Dahuk (Abu af-Fahd) is the mukhtar of the ashira and is currently living in Beit Iksa. He described life under Jordanian rule,

“Movement was very easy. A person was free to come and go during the day and night without anyone questioning him. You could go to Jordan, to the south of Hebron, to the Nablus area without anyone questioning you, without any problems from the people and with no one questioning you.”

In addition to the abundance of pastures, there were a number of fresh water springs, for example Wad al-Qelt and ‘Ayn Fara. These wells were essential for the maintenance of animals and were easily accessible for the Bedouin. The ‘Arab Jahalin also used these water sources for human needs, as they used containers to store the water at their camps.

Abu Dawood spoke to us about these water sources,

“There was water in the areas we were staying in Um Rassas, about seven wells. Now Ma’ale Adumim is on that area. The seven wells, dug a long time ago, are still there. In Khan [al-Ahmar], there were also a lot of water wells. ‘Ayn Fara, ar-Rawabi are springs where the people used to [drink this water] and water their animals. This water was flowing above the ground in rivulets.”

Mohammed ‘Ahmad Salem al-Hersh the Salamat is 53 years old and living on hill of Abu Dis told us,

“The Jerusalem area was very wide, and there were no settlements and no [military] training areas. Each year the people were taking their sheep to the Dead Sea, around the af-Fashkha area. They put them in the salt water in order to kill the small insects. [Once] the insects were gone, the animals would become clean.”

42 Abu af-Fahd is name we will use when referring to Mohammed Ahmed Dayfallah Abu Dahuk.
In addition to the freedom of movement and the abundance of water and pastures, the Jahalin also had open access to the markets in Jerusalem. The ‘Arab Jahalin were dependent on this market to sell their products, which included cheeses, yogurt and other dairy products. Suleiman ‘Ali Salem al-‘Ara’ara (Abu ar-Raid), 50 years old, living in the Khan al-Ahmar district, talked about these markets,

“Our products were in the Jerusalem market, [and we were also] selling sheep in Jerusalem. There was the Friday market at the ‘Amouda Gate in the north. [It is] on the left when you are going up, on the right when you are going down.”

*Mukhtar* Mohammed ‘Afnan al-Hamadin (Abu Yusif), living in Wad Abu Hindi, south of Abu Dis, spoke on this topic as well,

“The country was free and all of our products we sold in Jerusalem. Yogurt, cheese, animal fat, butter and milk; all of these we sold in Jerusalem for a good price...ten minutes to reach the al-‘Amouda Gate, without any questions.”

The 1950s witnessed the construction of a number of roads and streets around Jerusalem. One of these was the Jerusalem – Jericho road, which was established a year before the 1967 war. During this period, a number of Jahalin stopped tending animals and began to take jobs as labourers, working on the construction of the road. In addition to roadwork, some were employed in other construction projects. Also, some of the Jahalin worked in agriculture, where they were farming the land in nearby villages based on a special agreement between the land owner and the worker known as a “third or two-thirds system”.

According to Abu Falah,

“We were working. Whoever had animals would work with them, sell their products, and use them for food. The people of the

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43 Abu ar-Raid is the name we will use when referring to Suleiman ‘Ali Salem al-‘Ara’ara.
44 Abu Yusif is the name we will use when referring to Mohammed ‘Afnan al-Hamadin.
45 The Bedouin would rent the land from villagers for farming. This rent was repaid in kind, with Bedouin giving the owners a third or two-thirds of the harvest, depending on the particular agreement.
villages gave us land for rent on a third or two thirds basis. We cultivated a few lands like this, belonging to Anata. The Bedouin who were near to the land did like this, planting it with wheat for their families, the barely for animals. This is how it worked. But most of them were depending on animals.”

During this time, the ‘Arab Jahalin were capable of re-establishing their life in the West Bank. They were living on the animal products, and the access to markets and pastures guaranteed some stability and peace of mind. New work opportunities were being presented. However, their desire to return to their lands in Tal ‘Arad still remained strong.

The Jahalin after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967

The 1967 war, which resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, represented a second Nakba for the ‘Arab Jahalin. During the war, a large number of them fled to Jordan to escape the military confrontations that were taking place in the Khan al-Ahmar area and in other open areas outside Jerusalem. Furthermore, a climate of fear was created as news spread about massacres committed by Occupation forces in local villages. Those who remained found themselves under direct occupation and subject to harsh military rule. Occupation forces closed pastures and water sources, and harassed shepherds. These repressive practices would evolve into a new campaign of ethnic cleansing and forced expulsion that served to facilitate the Occupation’s settlement expansion and land grabs.

Abu ar-Raid recalled what happened to him and his family during 1967,

“I was 8 years old and I was sitting with my mother and brothers and sisters in the tent. My older brother and my father were with the sheep at ‘Ayn Fawwar. We were living on Mukhmas land. At this time, the Jews occupied Mukhmas and all their land. While we were sitting in the house, a woman escaping from Mukhmas came to us in our house. We asked her, ‘What is it?’ She said, ‘The Jews have occupied Mukhmas, killing the women
before the men, killing the children before the elderly.” So we escaped into a valley, and we saw our uncle there. We told him the story, and he told us to go to my father, and to come here. We left the house and didn’t take anything, except a small water container. I went to my father and told him the story. He told me, “Go to your mother and tell her to stay in the valley until I come.” He broke down the tent and collected our belongings. We brought flour and blankets. We escaped and arrived in al-Quranta. From there, the Israeli tanks passed us [on the way to] Jericho. They [tanks] reached Jericho, so the people stopped [at Wadi al-Quranta].

When the tanks passed, we returned to the valley and waited there. After that they occupied Jericho. The [soldiers] said that anyone who raised the white flag would not be killed. After 6 days the people returned safely [from the places where they were hiding]. During the war, half of the people fled to Jordan, and half stayed in the West Bank.”

After 1967, the Occupation administration confiscated the land east of Jerusalem, as well as in the Khan al-Ahmar area, and Nabi Musa. The lands upon which the ‘Arab Jahalin were living were transformed into closed military areas or natural reserves. Following this theft of land, the Occupation forces began to clamp down on the ‘Arab Jahalin, closing their pastures and dispatching military patrols to chase down the shepherds. These patrols intimidated and arrested shepherds, and also confiscated their animals, with the goal of forcing the people to leave.

The people of the ‘Arab Jahalin recall a number of stories that happened to them during this time. Occupation forces in military jeeps and planes carried out numerous raids on shepherds who were grazing their animals. Soldiers would confiscate sheep and transport them to specially constructed holding areas in the Jordan Valley and later in Bir Saba’. Fines were imposed on the Bedouin, who were forced to pay for the lorries that were used to transport their animals, the food they consumed, and charges for the holding facilities. The Occupation administration gave the owners a limited time to pay back these massive fines, and when this time limit expired, the animals were sold in public auctions.

The losses that the shepherds accrued from these operations

46 Al-Quranta is approximately half-way between Jericho and Jerusalem.
were not limited only to the financial cost of the fines. The animals were often injured in these seizures, and the owners lost a number of young who were separated from their mothers during the quarantine process. But despite all of this violence and intimidation, the owners of the animals continued to risk entering their pastures.

Abu Fahd recalled one of these animal confiscations,

“When they stole my sheep, it was in the 1970s. They took them from here, from Beit Iksa. They sent them to the quarantine in Bir Saba’. They made me pay a fine, around 10,000 shekels. They told me, “You entered Israeli areas.” But it was ’67 area, not an Israeli area. Beit Iksa is not within the Green Line. This area is in the West Bank, and its people have West Bank ID.

It was a very big force; one or two of us could not resist them. They came, 200 – 300 soldiers, with lorries. They carried away [the animals] by force and told us, “You have to pay the transportation costs.” If it costs 200 shekels from here to Bir Saba’, you pay 2000 shekels. They used 4 or 5 lorries to carry the sheep, so you had to pay such an amount. They fed the animals, during 3 or 4 days, so you have to pay for the food. It was all done by force, and you paid by force.

The people would never follow the Israeli army orders. When they arrived at the closed zone, the soldiers were following them and firing on the animals. When they realized that shooting on the animals would never stop the people, they started taking the sheep and [arresting] the people who were with them. [They used] military jeeps and sometimes helicopters and took many people. They came to this mountain [gestures] and arrested 10 or 15 people with their sheep, taking them to Bethlehem or Ramallah. Here, they made a military court for them and fined them. If they didn’t pay the fine, they would imprison them. The fine was very high, 1000 Israeli lira, and every nine lira were equal to one Jordanian dinar. This was a large amount of money, because at that time life was cheaper than today.”

In addition to closing the pastures, the Occupation authorities also barred the Jahalin from accessing key water wells. The areas around the wells were classified as natural reserves, and the soldiers used

47 During this time, the lira was the currency of Israel.
this pretext to prohibit shepherds from using them. Following this de facto annexation, the wells were often used to supply water to Israeli settlements. The ‘Arab Jahalin recall the area called Um Rassas, where seven water wells were located. These wells were all annexed and used for the settlement Ma’ale Adumim after the Jahalin were expelled from the area in 1975.

The annexation of water sources and the closure of pastures were used by the Occupation as means to exert direct pressure upon the ‘Arab Jahalin. In the middle of the 1970s, the Israeli administration attempted to actualize their master plan for Jerusalem, directing more effort towards transferring the Jahalin by pushing the Jahalin in the direction of Palestinian villages and towns, such as Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariya, al-‘Isawiya and Anata. Occupation forces began to demolish Jahalin camps and tents without prior warning, while simultaneously founding new settlements and expanding existing ones. The first of the settlements to be established was Ma’ale Adumim. Directly after it was completed, Occupation forces destroyed the tents of the nearby Jahalin community and transferred them to an area a few kilometres away from the bulldozed area. These kind of operations became the norm, and with each settlement that was established around Jerusalem, another expulsion was undertaken against the ‘Arab Jahalin communities living on the coveted land.

The Occupation forces were aiming, just as they did immediately after 1948, to push the Bedouin into concentrated areas around Abu Dis and al-‘Eizariya. This was done in order to gain full control over land that was to be used for settlements and their expansion. The ‘Arab Jahalin were not conscious of the extent of this project, and would only become so later, during the Oslo years.

It was in the 1970s that the Palestinian people began to unite against the Occupation, joining the ranks of the PLO. The people of the Jahalin also joined in the resistance, as they considered their condition, as well as that of the Palestinian people in general, a product of the Zionist political framework. During this time a number of people were arrested, remaining in prison for many years.48

48 Most of the Jahalin which we interviewed who are 50 years or older have been jailed by the Occupation. The fact that they participated in the Palestinian national liberation movement was an additional reason for the Occupation to persecute them and limit their movement.
One of the reasons that pushed the ‘Arab Jahalin to join the resistance was the Occupation’s accelerated efforts to consolidate its grip on the lands it annexed and occupied by implementing its Settlement and Jerusalem Masterplans. Upon examination of the places around Jerusalem in which the Jahalin lived, it becomes clear that those areas in the north, west and east of Jerusalem were coveted by the Occupation administration. Indeed, these lands were designated to become part of “Greater Jerusalem”, which was being developed by Zionist planners through the annexation of large amounts of land around Jerusalem, as well as through the construction of settlements to be included in Jerusalem’s new municipal borders.

On 21 September 1975, Occupation bulldozers began to clear a vast area of Khan al-Ahmar land, in an area called Um Rassas, where a number of ‘Arab Jahalin families were living. This area also contained seven communal rainwater wells that were used by the community. Occupation forces expelled the families living in this area, as the soldiers tied their tents to military jeeps and drove off, destroying the tents and scattering out their contents. The Jahalin were transferred to a hill a few kilometres from the area where they were expelled.

Abu Dawood vividly remembered this expulsion,

“The first time they started demolishing our tents was in the beginning of 1975. First they started building the Ma’ale Adumim settlement. We were living in the place [where they built] Ma’ale Adumim. We had tents from zinc and sackcloth and they destroyed them. They expelled us various times, until we arrived here. They did not give us demolition orders or anything. They came at eleven o’clock in the morning and told us to leave. Two tents remained in the area and they connected them to the jeeps and drove off [with the tents attached]. They told us to leave and we went a kilometer from the area to here.”

Since the middle of the 1970s into the end of the 1980s, the settlements in the area increased in size. Additionally, new settlements were established, like Mishor Adumim, Kafr Adumim, Mizpe Jericho, Wered Jericho and Givat Binyamin and others.49

The founding of these settlements was accompanied by new expulsions of families from the ‘Arab Jahalin, especially from the Dawahik *hamula*, to the Beit Iksa and Nabi Samuel areas. However, [not even there] they were not safe from the assault of the Occupation and its settlements.”

Ibrahim Deyfallah Abu Dahuk (Abu Ahmad) is 53 years and was one of the first to be forcefully expelled from Khan al-Ahmar to Nabi Samuel, and he described what happened,

“Some of us were being expelled in the 1970s, some in the 1980s and some in the 1990s. This was according to the time when they set up new settlements, and their turn came to be expelled. In the 1970s there were no demolition orders. They came to the Bedouin, tied the tent to the jeep and drove off. This happened until 1981, when the came and expelled us.”

There is no doubt that the expulsion of the ‘Arab Jahalin is part of the realization of the “Greater Jerusalem” plans, which call for Jerusalem as the “eternal and undivided” Jewish capital. In the same way, the current path of the Apartheid Wall also serves to realize this plan and to further threaten the ‘Arab Jahalin.

In the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the ‘Arab Jahalin were spread out and divided into two areas. A part of them remained steadfast in Khan al-Ahmar and east of Jerusalem. The second was forced to move to an area northwest of Jerusalem, where they established themselves on the outskirts of Beit Hanina, Beit Iksa and Nabi Samuel.
After Oslo: A third Nakba for the ‘Arab Jahalin

The Oslo agreement, signed in the beginning of the 1990s, was devastating for the ‘Arab Jahalin. Under Oslo, the land where the Jahalin lived was classified as Area C and under complete Occupation control. The C zone was considered to be an area devoid of Palestinian inhabitants. During the Oslo years, the Jahalin became fully aware of the extent of the Zionist settlement plans in Jerusalem and what it meant for their future.

Abu af-Fahd spoke about the effects Oslo had on the ‘Arab Jahalin,

“After Oslo, I considered myself dead and buried in the grave. They demanded of me that I forgot the land of ’48 as I forgot my mother’s milk. Area C, where I live, is off limits [to me]. I cannot continue to exist; it is like they put me in a grave. To whom should we go? We did many protests when they expelled the Jahalin from Ma’ale Adumim area.”

Directly after the Oslo agreement, Occupation forces issued a military order requiring the expulsion of dozens of Jahalin families living near Ma’ale Adumim. These families were living in an area classified by the Occupation as (O6), meaning it was reserved for the expansion of the settlement. This order was the proverbial straw that broke the camel’s back. The ‘Arab Jahalin felt as if the Palestinian negotiators had abandoned them to face their fate alone. The Jahalin had effectively exhausted every possibility, and now there was no possible place to take refuge in the event of another expulsion. The ‘Arab Jahalin began to try new tactics, attempting to draw more national and international attention to their situation by using the media as well as legal and political means.

50 One of the Jahalin, who preferred not to be named, confirmed that during a demonstration organized by the Jahalin in 1997 to protest their expulsion from their lands that Saeb Erekat was asked whether the Jahalin case was discussed during the negotiations. Erekat responded that the negotiation team considered the Jahalin land as empty because the people were ‘behind the mountain’ and they were not aware of their presence.

51 (O6) is a name given by the Occupation forces to the Ma’ale Adumim settlement expansion and development plan at that time. Numbers are usually used by the Occupation to determine the borders of an area that it seizes for expansion. Among the most commonly referred to is plan E1, which is the area for future expansion and development of the Ma’ale Adumim settlement.
A delegation representing the Jahalin went to the President Abu ‘Ammar (Yasser Arafat) and informed him of the situation. Abu ‘Ammar assigned Saeb Erekat and Faizal al-Husseini to follow up their issue, charging them with defending the group and paying the costs of the lawyers, which were crucial for the Jahalin’s court battle.

In the courts, the ‘Arab Jahalin demanded that the Occupation government return them to their lands in Tal ‘Arad. The Jahalin also indicated that they would be willing to settle for the same quality land located in the West Bank, suggesting Nabi Musa and Khan al-Ahmar, which had been public land before it was annexed by the Occupation in 1967. They also stated that they would be willing to remain on their lands near Ma’ale Adumim, as long as the demolitions and attacks ceased.

Occupation courts deliberated the case for two years, during which time demolitions were frozen. In 1997, the courts ruled against the Jahalin, calling for the transfer of the Bedouin to a hill in the Abu Dis area. This land, owned by families from Abu Dis and confiscated by the Occupation, was presented as a “gift” to the Bedouin families. Each family was to receive a sliver of land, with each parcel not exceeding half a dunum per family. The families obviously refused this offer and chose to ignore the Occupation courts, remaining on their lands and attempting to bring national and international attention to their struggle.

The decision to expel the ‘Arab Jahalin came only two months before an announcement from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, who on 28 October, authorized the addition of 1000 residential settlement units to the existing settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. These units would be added over the course of an 18 month period. This announcement also included plans to fortify 33 other settlements located close to area A. Ma’ale Adumim was among the settlements to be expanded. The timing of the court ruling against the Jahalin and the announcement of settlement expansion were not coincidental, as they provide yet another illustration of the courts working to facilitate the Occupation settlement expansion.

Despite the government decision, however, the ‘Arab Jahalin
remained on their land and launched a campaign that included protests, media work and appeals to consulates and external political forces. This lasted for seven months, until March of 1997, when a large force of Occupation soldiers launched a surprise raid on Jahalin belonging to the Salamat hamula living around Ma'ale Adumim. This mixed force was 1,000 strong and consisted of regular police, border and riot police, and soldiers accompanied by military jeeps and helicopters, medical cars and large lorries to carry caravans. These caravans were to be used to forcefully move the people and their possessions.

Occupation forces announced that the area was a closed military zone, and proceeded to carry out the demolition of tents, moving the contents into the mobile homes. They forced the families to the lorries, and unceremoniously dumped them on a hill in Abu Dis. Jahalin youth were violently beaten during this attack, and this transfer continued for two weeks, during which time 60 families, about 400 people, were evicted and transplanted to Abu Dis. The people have refused to sign any agreement that would prejudice the rights of the current owners of the land who reside in Abu Dis, and as such, they have refused so accept the half dunum offer.

Yusif Mohammed al-Harsh, one of the activists during the time of expulsion said,

"We challenged [them] for six months. We kept living there for three months [after the decisions]. In March 1997, the bulldozers came. They started demolishing everything, putting us in containers that they brought with them. They beat the youth and young people. The youth were resisting them. [Afterwards] my oldest son couldn’t move for four hours on account of the beatings.

Those [soldiers] came with helicopters, ambulances and police. Four different kinds, police, border police, soldiers and riot police. These four fronts came at once, together. When they want to demolish two homes, ten thousand soldiers come. I expect that there were more than 1,000. [They did not finish] in one day only, but several days. We were around 400 people, 60 families. During these two weeks, we were all expelled. They brought the blacks, and they kicked the people out of their tents. They entered, taking clothes, kitchen things, gas [tanks] and put them in the containers. Then they took the people and put them in buses. The lorries came,
and they put the containers on the lorries [and then] threw [the contents] on the mountain [in Abu Dis].”

**October 1997, destroying the Sray’a hamula**

In November of that same year, a large force of Occupation soldiers accompanied by bulldozers and military vehicles undertook a similar attack on Wadi Abu Hindi. This area, which is located southeast of Abu Dis close to the Qedar settlement, was inhabited by around 200 people of the Sray’a hamula. Soldiers locked down the area completely and barred anyone from entering. After doing so, they carried out demolitions of tents, animal pens, and agricultural sheds, scattering the contents and laying waste to other properties. In addition to this demolition, they also destroyed the community’s primary school. Finally, the soldiers confiscated the canvas, coverings and metal siding for structures so as to prevent rebuilding. Water tanks were also confiscated. The aim of this attack was to clear the land for the expansion of the Qedar settlement.

Despite this attack, the families decided to remain in their areas and resist the expulsion. They had received news as to the fate of people from the Salamat hamula, who had been displaced 6 months before to the hills in Abu Dis.

The people remained steadfast for two weeks in dire conditions, without access to the most basic necessities, as Occupation forces had prohibited them from moving and were frustrating any attempts to bring in food, water and other supplies. Soldiers would confiscate these supplies from anyone caught bringing them into the area.

During this time, the mukhtar faced the Occupation government, demanding a solution for the crisis. After about a month, the Bedouin succeeded in getting an extension order from the government. This order granted them a short extension and required that their tents and property be restored while their fate was being decided. After two months, a decision was issued to rebuild the school. However, the final decision regarding their fate is yet to come forth, as the hamula’s future will depend on the route of the Wall.
According to testimony from the mukhtar Abu Yusif,

“After they destroyed our homes, we stayed for 14 days in the desert, without anything. We were unable to bathe and unable to go anywhere. They barred us from [accessing] the water well and they were confiscating them [water supplies]. [They were confiscating] the tractors that were carrying [water]. They closed the whole area and announced that it was a military zone. No one was allowed to enter it, and we were without anything after they demolished our homes and confiscated [our belongings].

When the mothers made blankets for their children, they came and confiscated them. They demolished the school and refused to rebuild it. They allowed us to rebuild it after two months, but it should only be of zinc. We took a temporary extension order, and our fate until now is unknown. If they complete the Wall, which they are building here, they will not let us stay in the area. They will come and expel us.”

February 1998, destroying the Salamat hamula

Less than four months after the operation against the Sray’a, a large force of occupation soldiers launched a raid on a group of Bedouin from the hamula of the Salamat consisting of 35 families. They were living east of Abu Dis, on the edges of the Ma’ale Adumim settlement54, near the Jerusalem – Jericho road. The area in which they resided was classified as (O7) by the Occupation administration, meaning that it was reserved for settlement expansion. In February of 1998, the residents awoke to the sounds of a huge military force encircling their community. More than 2,000 soldiers, border police and intelligence, along with demolition equipment were present.

Demolition began immediately, and tents, animal pens and other structures were obliterated. Violent confrontations broke out between the families and the Occupation forces, leading to a number of arrests. Occupation forces appeared a second time to finish the operation, this time throwing the residents’ possessions into lorries, and forcefully moving everything to the same hill in Abu Dis where the first Salamat community had been

53 In reference to Ethiopian Jews serving in the Occupation military.
displaced. The Occupation forces issued an order calling for the immediate evacuation of the area. However, the people refused to acknowledge the order and decided to stay on their land.

The same day, the mukhtar of the tribe, Abu Dawood, met with president Abu ‘Ammar and informed him as to what had happened. Abu ‘Ammar granted the tribe 35 new tents to replace those destroyed by the Occupation. These were delivered the same night, and by the morning the families had set them up.

In response, the Occupation launched another raid against the Bedouin, arresting the mukhtar and two other eminent people from the community. While the three of them were held in detention, an officer demanded that they sign documents acknowledging the military order. However, the detainees refused to cooperate and did not present any documents. After being detained for a period of 24 hours, they were released.

Like the Sray’a, the families continued to hold on to their land, in the midst of their destroyed homes, for a period of two weeks. In the beginning of March 1998, the Occupation courts held their first session to discuss the Salamat case. Two representatives from the families and their lawyers attended, as well as the lawyers for the Occupation military. Their demands were the same as the Sray’a. Their priority was to be repatriated to Tal ‘Arad, but they indicated that they would also settle for land in Khan al-Ahmar and Nabi Musa. They also stated that they would be willing to stay in their present location, on the condition that harassment and expulsion immediately ceased. The hill near Abu Dis was deemed totally unacceptable. Not only did it encroach on the rights of the residents of Abu Dis, but also it is located near to the central Jerusalem rubbish dump, and as such posed a serious health risk.

The courts decided that the Jahalin should return to their lands outside Ma’ale Adumim for a limited time while they decided on a solution, in cooperation with the military. The courts refused to consider either Khan al-Ahmar or Tal ‘Arad as alternatives.

The Occupation administration offered to grant the 35 affected families 78 parcels of land, with each piece ranging in size between half a dunum to a dunum and a half. This land would be rented from the Israeli Land Authority for a period of 39 years, with the possibility of extension. The also offered reparations of
35,000 – 38,000 NIS, depending on family size, as well as 3,000 dunums of pastureland.\textsuperscript{55}

The families continued to insist that they would refuse such an offer, primarily because although the Occupation claimed this was state land, it was in fact owned by families in Abu Dis. But in the end, they were forced to accept the offer, because their expulsion was unavoidable and there were no alternatives.\textsuperscript{56}

Today, there are close to 2,000 people living on the Abu Dis hill. This number includes the first group of Salamat, who eventually accepted the land but continue to refuse any Occupation money. In total, 120 families live on 120 pieces of land.\textsuperscript{57} The families have settled in stone homes, although the local school is still housed in a caravan. The economic situation of the community is in dire straits. With no pastures and the rising cost of food, the Bedouin are no longer able to keep animals. Many have sold their animals and now work in low-level security jobs or as cleaning crews in nearby settlements. Others work collecting scrap metal, while a vast number are unemployed.

The original owners of the land have protested against this agreement, which takes even more land from them. However, elements of the political leadership of the PA have intervened in order to silence them.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{55} Abu Dawood stated that the Occupation has not granted any space for grazing until now, in spite of the court order. Most of the money they took was given to the lawyers. Also, they had to pay for the demolition as well as the cost of transporting their goods to Abu Dis. The soldiers forced people to pay fines, including expenses for the bulldozers, police guarding the area, and the like. For most of the families, there remained not more than 14,000 NIS of the money agreed to them by the courts.

\textsuperscript{56} Everything written concerning what happened in the Occupation courts is based on what was told to us by the Jahalin during our field interviews.

\textsuperscript{57} Each “piece” is 0.5 – 1.0 dunum in size.

\textsuperscript{58} Members of the Jahalin confirmed that after the landowners objected to the agreement, Saeb Erekat intervened and told them that only the landowners with official ownership documents are allowed to file complaints and objections and that those with no official documents can not.
The ‘Arab Jahalin and the Apartheid Wall around Jerusalem

The path of the wall around Jerusalem and the huge network of settler roads constitute the key threat to the future of the ‘Arab Jahalin. The route of the Wall around Jerusalem is integral to supporting the Zionist settlement plan for Jerusalem, as it annexes these settlements into the Jerusalem municipality at the expense of Palestinian communities.

The Wall around Jerusalem is the latest manifestation in the creation of a greater Jerusalem municipality. The Wall serves to cut off vast tracts of land from the Ramallah and Bethlehem districts, annexing them into the Jerusalem district. At the same time, the route of the Wall serves to isolate Palestinian villages, towns and neighbourhoods from Jerusalem, even if the residents carry Jerusalem IDs. The project, as has been openly stated by Zionist politicians across the political spectrum, aims to create new demographic facts on the ground and to transform Jerusalem into a “Jewish city” and the so-called “undivided capital of Israel.”

In this way, the Wall is a key part of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Jerusalem, including the Bedouin living on the peripheries. Indeed, the Bedouin are among the communities that will be the most drastically affected, with their way of life being completely destroyed. Also, the transfer schemes that are part of the Wall project will inevitably foster conflict between already damaged Palestinian communities and the Bedouin. These communities, which have already lost a considerable amount of land and have seen their economies devastated by the occupation, view the resettlement of Bedouin on their land as a drain on already meagre resources.

Before going into detail as to what is happening on the ground today, we will review the current locations of the Bedouin communities around Jerusalem and detail the schemes that the Occupation administration has presented for them.
‘Arab Jahalin in the north, east and south of Jerusalem

The Jahalin in these areas include three groups:

**Group 1:** 60 families from Sray’a *hamula* living in the Wad Abu Hindi area, which is a few meters from the Qeder settlement, east of Abu Dis.

**Group 2:** 60 families from the Salamat *hamula* and 25 families from the Sray’a Hamadin family living between groups of Jahalin set up on a hill of Abu Dis on the southwest side of Ma’ale Adumim settlement.

**Group 3:** Around 5 families from the Abu Dahouk family and the Sray’a *hamula*, set up along the historic Jericho – Jerusalem road around the factory districts of Mishor Adumim.

The Occupation does not recognize the Bedouin living in these areas. A number of military warnings have been dispatched to the residents in these different places, requiring the demolition of their structures, which were ostensibly built without permits. The residents are also required to vacate the areas. This policy is in-line with the previous Occupation settlement activity and the subsequent ill-treatment of the Bedouin. The Wall is projected to encompass these areas, thus annexing the settlement blocs and their surrounding areas.

Two years ago, the representatives of the so-called Israeli Civil Administration – the military wing dealing with administrative issues of the occupation – held discussions with the *makhatir* of the ‘Arab Jahalin who lived in the aforementioned places. The Civil Administration representatives presented them with an offer similar to that which was offered to the Salamat *hamula*. The *makhatir* announced that the Civil Administration initially offered to relocate them to Nabi Musa. However, after internal discussions, the offer was withdrawn on the grounds that the area would fall inside the route of the Wall.

The second offer by the Civil Administration was for 3,000 dunums of land located east of eastern Sawahre. While the Administration

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59 The Occupation forces Palestinians to apply for permits in order to build on their own land if it is considered Area C. This strengthens the grip of the Occupation on the land which it keeps illegally under its control and it has become a formidable means of ethnic cleansing.
claimed this was state land, it was in fact pastureland belonging to the residents of the village. The residents of Sawahre are of Bedouin origin who continue to keep large numbers of animals, grazing them on this particular plot of land. In an effort to avoid infringing on the needs of the residents of Sawahre, the Jahalin refused the offer. The Administration broke off the discussions due to the breakout of the July War against Hizbullah, and as a result, negotiations never passed this point. Also, it was reported in the media that work on the Wall would slow for financial reasons.

The third suggestion aims to put the Bedouin around the hill in Abu Dis where the other groups were transferred. This does not only apply to the Jahalin, and the Occupation has put forth the idea of concentrating Bedouin from across the West Bank in this area. The ‘Arab Jahalin refuse to accept this third suggestion for two reasons. The first reason is the afore-mentioned proximity of the proposed area to the central garbage dump for Jerusalem. The second reason is that the land belongs to the village of Abu Dis. Before 1967, the village owned some 28,000 dunums. Today, the 13,000 residents are left with only 4,000 dunums of their original land. The addition of a large Bedouin community to the area is not feasible and will cause serious social and economic problems.

‘Arab Jahalin in the northwest of Jerusalem

Around 45 families from the Abu Dahouk hamula who were expelled from Khan al-Ahmar in the 1970s now live in the areas northwest of Jerusalem. They reside in Nabi Samuel, and on the edges of old Beit Hanina and Beit Iksa. Occupation forces have issued orders requiring their removal as well as the demolition of their homes, which are claimed to have been constructed without the permits imposed by the Occupation. The real reason for their removal, however, revolves around the planned route of the Apartheid Wall that is set to annex the Ramot, Giv’at Ze’ev, Har Smuel and Giv’ on Ha’Hadasha settlements.60

On 18 January 2007, a large contingent of Occupation forces attacked the ‘Arab Jahalin living on the north western edges of

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60 The Occupation forces announced that there are plans to build a national park in the area of Nabi Samuel, where today seven families of the Arab Jahalin live. These families will be expelled by the Occupation forces.
the village Nabi Samuel. Soldiers destroyed tents belonging to Ibrahim Deyfallah Abu Dahouk, his brother, his brother’s son and their families. A total of 31 people were affected. The demolition was carried out because the families were living on the path of the Wall. Occupation forces informed the other families that they would be expelled because they were residing in the “security zone” of the Wall, although the expulsion has not yet been carried out to date.

Ibrahim Deyfallah put his tent in eastern Nabi Samuel. After a number of days, the military commander sent a reconnaissance patrol to inform him that he would be evicted yet again. This expulsion was to affect all Bedouin who lived in an area where the Wall was set to enclose the Ramot settlement. During that tour, the officer met Abu af-Fahd and told him that he wanted to talk about the suggested projects for the Bedouin in the area. But after two days, no more was heard from the officer. At best, however, the Jahalin can expect an offer similar to that which was offered to the ‘Arab as-Salamat who were expelled in 1998.

**Occupation solutions for creating internal Palestinian conflict**

“If you want to solve my problem, give me back the land you took from me by force in Tal ‘Arad”

At this point, the Wall is in its last stages of construction. The West Bank cantons are being solidified, effectively creating prison conditions that will be similar to the current situation in Gaza. Furthermore, the Occupation transfer plans are setting the stage for internal conflicts between the Jahalin and the villages of Abu Dis and Anata.

These conflicts do not mean that the residents are opposed to the Jahalin and their struggle. On the contrary, residents of the West Bank supported the ‘Arab Jahalin after they were displaced in 1948 from Tal ‘Arad. Now, however, the once wide-open spaces owned by the villages have been confiscated for settlement construction and the Wall, and the land upon which the ‘Arab Jahalin are to be transplanted is all that remains for these towns and their residents. Moreover, the owners of this land still consider the land to be theirs, and they have not given up on fighting the Zionist expansions onto it.
The ‘Arab Jahalin are aware of this reality and they are far from denying it. Indeed, they too have made great efforts to resist the plans of the Occupation. Not only do these resettlement schemes cause conflict between the Bedouin and the villagers, but the scarcity of pastures in these places undermines their key source of income. Many have already gotten rid of their animals, and those who hold on to them do so not for economic benefit, but out of a conscious effort to preserve their traditional way of life.

Abu Falah spoke about the conflicts between Bedouin and villagers,

“Today as you see, we are settled here by force. Al-Isawiya has all its land confiscated, Anata is the same. So we are now living on these lands and without stability. The Jews informed us that we should move. They want to expel us again. We are demanding an alternative. If they want to expel us, they should give us an alternative place to live. It must be government land\textsuperscript{61}, not [land] belonging to the villagers, not belonging to Anata. The group of Jahalin that they gathered in Abu Dis, until now is in a conflict with the people of Abu Dis. The people from Abu Dis tell them that ‘you are living on our land.’ Do you know if anything will happen to Israel,\textsuperscript{62} the people will fight each other. They will say, ‘Israel gave our land to you without our permission, but we did not give you our land.’ So if there is no solution except expulsion, we are demanding land that was state land before the occupation and does not belong to the villagers.”

By no means are the Jahalin opposed to the idea of development.\textsuperscript{63} In the event that a Palestinian state planned for such development and provided basic services and support, such as open pastures and animal feed, the Jahalin would be in wholehearted acceptance of the plan. What the Bedouin do not accept, however, is the idea that the Occupation authorities have a right to plan their lives by “offering” them land stolen from other Palestinian communities.

\textsuperscript{61} Land that was considered state, or public, lands before the Occupation of 1967.
\textsuperscript{62} It is understood from socio-historical context that this means if the Occupation forces were to redeploy, as they did around Gaza.
\textsuperscript{63} The Jahalin believe that occupation prevented them from developing their lives, due to their being expelled from their lands by the Occupation in 1948 to become refugees with no stable homes. The few Jahalin that purchased land and built homes there saw them demolished by the Occupation forces who cited excuses such as no building permits and security reasons.
Ibrahim Deyfallah Abu Dawuk spoke on this topic,

“They are trying to bribe us, with [other] people’s lands. For example, they said they would give us land in Beitunya. This means the same thing they did to the Jahalin in Abu Dis. ‘We will give you land and allow you to build on it.’ Even if the Israelis claim it is state land, but in reality it is confiscated from the people when they occupied Palestine. So to solve my problem, you are going to create a conflict between me and the original owners. By this, the Israelis are not solving my problem, but solving Israel’s problem. They don’t lose if they give you land that is not theirs originally. If they want to solve my problem, we have lands and our grandfathers have the documents from the Turkish times for our land in Bir Saba’. So let us return to Bir Saba’ [so as not to] base our life on expulsion. Instead of sending me to Ramallah, give me my original land which you took by force in Tal ‘Arad.”

Today, the Zionists are celebrating the 60th anniversary of Israel’s establishment. At the same time, the ‘Arab Jahalin, along with the rest of the Palestinian people, continue to face the reality of ethnic cleansing. With the construction of the Apartheid Wall and its associated regime, life for the Bedouin will become completely untenable in the coming years.

Abu Fahd spoke about a further problem facing the Jahalin,

“The Bedouin future is difficult. The Occupation is going to erase [us] out of existence. We will not find a life or a future if there is not a solution from the roots. The ones who can emigrate will emigrate. [The others] will melt into the community and become workers. The [Palestinian] Authority doesn’t care about their rights. Exactly the opposite, it is fighting the Bedouin economically. They import sheep, in the season in which there are sheep in Palestine, from New Zealand. They sell the [New Zealand] sheep for 50 dollars, while my sheep costs me more than 150 dollars. This is a very big blow for the farmers.

Today, the Palestinian police, are the ones who want the documents and official papers from us. They told us that we should send our milk to factories. Ok, find us a factory and I will be the first one to go with my community to sell them our milk. They can do whatever they want, but there are no factories. No factories or institutions that can buy up our milk. So where to
send this milk? We used to make cheese our own special way. Our families used to eat the cheese in our country, to consume the cheese we made locally…. there is no protection for us.”

Unfortunately, ever since it was founded, the Palestinian Authority has had a hand in the destruction of the Bedouin community. The Oslo agreement has effectively signified the signing away of Bedouin land to the Occupation in the form of “area C”. The PNA has excluded the communities from health and educational services because they are located in area C. It has also failed to actively support the economic needs of animal raising, as it has neither provided feed, nor assisted them in selling their products or even in controlling foreign imports that further undermine their source of livelihood. The Palestinian Authority’s record in regards to the Bedouin has been dismal at best.
Conclusions

Beginning with the Nakba and continuing with the 1967 war, on through Oslo and into the present, the ‘Arab Jahalin have been facing a sustained campaign of ethnic cleansing. The Wall, which is the most recent stage of this campaign, aims to add yet another chapter to this history of assault, land theft and massacres carried out against the Palestinian people.

If we compare the events of the Nakba in 1948 with what is happening now to the Jahalin, it becomes clear that the Palestinian people living around Jerusalem are being subjected to another well-organized ethnic cleansing campaign. Carried out through the Wall and settlements, with military and, through the rulings of the “High Court of Justice” legal support, this project aims to drastically change the demographic balance in the Jerusalem municipality, securing the Holy City as an undivided Jewish capital.

Occupation forces have applied two broad methods to ethnically cleanse the Bedouin in the West Bank. The first, and most simple of these methods, is through direct expulsion, as was carried out against the Salamat hamula in the end of the 1990s, ending with their forced resettlement on the hill outside Abu Dis. The second method utilizes a number of military procedures, including closing pastures, annexing water sources and confiscating animals. The aim of these strategies is to make life in a given area impossible, bringing about a “voluntary” population transfer.

The Occupation forces have presented the Jahalin with a number of schemes, claiming that they were attempting to provide a solution to the problem. However, these solutions are also structured by the politics of expulsion, with the goal being to create land disputes and thus spark internal Palestinian fighting.

It is also important to note that the PA is certainly not innocent with regards to the Jahalin crisis. Indeed, it can be said that the PA has played a role in destroying the resistance of the people and in undermining the livelihoods of the Jahalin in particular and the Bedouin as a whole through the signing of the Oslo
agreement, which essentially sanctified the Occupation actions.

The ‘Arab Jahalin are aware of this complex reality. They have stated time and time again that they would be willing to settle in lands such as Nabi Musa and Khan al-Ahmar until a solution to the refugee problem is found. However, the only just solution is the final return of the ‘Arab Jahalin to their original lands in Tal ‘Arad.

64 Here, the speaker is referring to Palestinians in general.
The Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign

Palestinian resistance to the Apartheid Wall has been facing daily the Occupation bulldozers that are destroying since 3 years Palestinian lands all along the Wall’s path enclosing the people into small and isolated ghettoes.

Only a few months after the first bulldozers started to destroy the lands in Jenin district for the construction of the Wall, on October 2nd 2002, the Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign was born. The Campaign work is based on the struggle of over 50 popular committees that mobilize and coordinate resistance on local, national and international levels and are, within the Campaign, supported by a wide coalition of Palestinian NGOs. Since its inception the Campaign has been the main national grassroots body mobilizing and organizing resistance against the Apartheid Wall. Its immediate goals are to tear down the Wall and, additionally, to achieve compensation for the population. They are firmly grounded in the context of the struggle against Israeli Colonization, Apartheid and Occupation, and for Palestinian rights and self-determination. None of the above demands can be compromised in the Campaign’s work.

In order to achieve these goals and to support the communities in their struggle to safeguard their lands, existence, and future, the Campaign:

• Mobilizes and coordinates local and national resistance within the communities.
• Supports people’s steadfastness in their lands despite the devastating effects of the Wall.
• Promotes common strategies of resistance to the Apartheid Wall among Palestinian organizations, ensuring that all Palestinian institutions are engaged in the same goals within a unified national framework.
• Collects data, testimonies and information from the ground to produce always up to date documentation and publications as a form of resistance and awareness raising among the Palestinian communities and institutions as well as on an international level.
• Raises awareness on the international level about the implications of the Wall on the Palestinian people and struggle. It calls for the isolation of Apartheid Israel through comprehensive boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns among international solidarity and civil society.
• Mobilizes political solidarity for the Palestinian struggle within civil society organizations and unions in the Arab world.
• Links the Palestinian struggle against the Wall and Occupation to the worldwide struggles against war, globalization, racism and colonization.

For more see: www.stopthewall.org