



Figure 1.1. Local laborers employed by Israel's Public Works Department lay the foundation of a new road from Khan Yunis to the Jewish kibbutz Nirim, in the Negev, 1969. Moshe Milner, The National Photo Collection.

CHAPTER 1

Regulating Territory through Development and Humanitarian Aid

—Why did you leave the horse alone?
—So that he keeps the home company, oh my Son
for homes die if their owners are gone . . .
Eternity opens its doors, from afar,
For the passing of the night. The prairie wolves
howl to the frightened moon.

—Mahmoud Darwish, (1995) 2001

The Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish described his people's exile from their homeland (*al watan*) through the image of an abandoned horse. Banishment is to the unknown, toward an uncertain, threatening future in which one must survive until it is possible to return—"tomorrow, perhaps in two days."¹ But after seventy years, this longed-for return has not yet come to pass and the Palestinians' yearning has become integral to the "permanent temporariness" of the refugee camps in which they languish.²

Two years after the Zionist-Arab War of 1948, the Palestinian refugees found themselves subject to the administrative responsibility of UNRWA. UNRWA's management of the Palestinian refugees, which continues to this day, was distinct from international approaches toward other "undesirables" experiencing displacement at that time.³ UNRWA was founded in the same month and year as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which had been established to deal with the multitude of stateless persons in Europe after they had been driven from their homes in World War II.⁴ Non-European refugees and displaced peoples, primarily of decolonizing countries, generally fell under the remit of the Salvation Army and various other missionary relief services and were quickly incorporated within broader development aid and nation-building programs. Distinct from the

regimes of care offered to the European and non-European refugees of World War II, UNRWA's approach to the Palestinians—condemn them to a living death through the duality of “care” and “control”—proffers new insights into the meaning of humanitarianism in the Cold War era.⁵

This chapter traces development discourses prevailing in the wake of World War II to interrogate the foundational ideas of “economic peace” foisted upon the developing world under the auspices of humanitarianism and the particular facets of that concept as adopted by Israel after 1967. This exploration does not seek to diminish humanist values or claims to the existential rights of all peoples; rather, using a temporal lens of spatial power, it aims to analyze the durability and vicissitudes of humanitarianism under settler-state conditions.

Highlighting the ways in which UNRWA was rooted in both humanitarian and development aid, this chapter situates the agency within the broader ideology of development aid and economic peace emerging between the two twentieth-century world wars. It goes beyond reading UNRWA as a temporary postwar response to the Palestinian refugee crisis, through placing it as part and parcel of an imperial political economic modus operandi that envisioned poverty as an opportunity, adapted across time and geography. Primary focus is given to the refugee resettlement projects and the contestation of humanitarianism and development in the settler-colonial context.

Background

For refugees still living in the camps, the catastrophe of their expulsion is embedded deep in their minds and memories. Ahmad el-Lahamm Abu Fouad, a refugee who today lives in the Dheisheh refugee camp, described the moment his family was forced from their home in Beit Attab, a Palestinian village, located twenty-three kilometers from Jerusalem, that Israel destroyed in the 1948 war: “We left, despite hoping that it would not come to this. . . . We were sure that we would return shortly. . . . Around us, people took temporary refuge under the olive trees of Bethlehem; others were running in the streets of Al-Khadir [a township some five kilometers from Bethlehem], looking for a place to shelter. We hid in a deserted cave in Irtas [a Palestinian village four kilometers from Bethlehem]—we preferred to live in a cave rather than sleep under a tree” (figure I.2).⁶

Shakher (Abu Mahmoud), from the destroyed Palestinian village of Jarash about twenty-eight kilometers from Jerusalem, also found himself in Dheisheh Camp. He described the harsh nights he experienced



Figure I.2. Refugees in caves near Bethlehem, 1948. UNRWA Archive.

until he arrived at the refugee camp, listening day and night to the radio, which promised him a speedy return:

We left together, fifteen of us, and began to run away before the Jewish army could reach our home. . . . We continued walking until, on August 15, 1948, we reached a deserted fort, which in time we understood to belong to the Christian Waqf. We continued living in the fort for a year and a few months, during which time we would go every day to a sort of café in Al-Khadir and listen to the news on the radio, including news about Bernadotte. The UN's emissary to the Middle East, the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte, promised to return us shortly to our homes. One day, the person responsible for the Waqf lands, Abu el-Falat, appeared, threatening to evict us from the fort. My father went with him to a court in Jordan, and there the court ruled that we would stay in the fort until the war's end, and [it] forbade Abu el-Falat from evicting us. The following

day, he came back with a Jewish soldier known as Mishbak, who ordered all of us to leave and get onto trucks that were waiting for us outside. . . . Against our will, we were forcibly put on the trucks, and that is how we arrived at the camp.⁷

The persecution, hunger, seeking of shelter, and hope of return described by these refugees testify not only to the violence of the war but also to the demarcation of the camp's initial borders. Neighboring Arab states, which many of the fleeing civilians managed to reach, could not ensure the security of the refugees. These states were themselves recovering from the war and continued to suffer the economic scars wrought by European—that is, British and French—colonialism. Themselves in need of assistance, these underdeveloped states were unable to offer meaningful help to the refugees. Faced with insecurity and persecution—in both their homeland and in the camps—the refugees found themselves under the aegis of humanitarian agencies active in the region at the time and more readily equipped to assist them. “We opened our eyes and found the Red Cross offering us slices of bread,” recalled Dheisheh Camp resident Abu Adel, from Beit Attab.⁸ Abu Mahmoud likewise described the assistance—the “milk, tins of powder that were dissolved in water and given to us to drink”—by the humanitarian organizations that reached out to the nearby communities of Al-Khadir, Beit Jalla, and Artas.⁹

These humanitarian organizations were present as a result of UN Resolution 212, dating from November 19, 1948, which had established the UN Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR) agency to undertake wide-reaching welfare assistance. To carry out its work, UNRPR leveraged a number of UN agencies with expertise in the provision of emergency humanitarian aid. UNRPR was also supported by nongovernmental organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS), and a Quaker relief organization, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). A year later, during the fourth general assembly of the United Nations, on December 8, 1949, the passing of UN Resolution 302 established UNRWA, mandated to carry out “relief and works programmes” for Palestinian refugees forced from their homes as a result of the 1948 war. UNRWA was granted responsibility for fifty-nine camps: twenty-five under Jordanian control (including four camps east of the Jordan River and twenty-one in the West Bank, which Jordan had annexed), eight in the Gaza Strip (under Egyptian administration), eleven in Syria, and fifteen in Lebanon.¹⁰



Figure I.3. Interior of a building housing Palestinians, Mia Mia Refugee Camp, Lebanon, 1954. UNRWA Archive.

Effectively acting as an emergency “humanitarian government,” UNRWA was responsible for maintaining Palestinian refugees’ lives and livelihoods, in alignment with an emerging regime of global economic development.¹¹ UNRWA’s management of the refugees’ everyday lives through the provision of basic services was taking place through numerous wide-reaching programs for the development of infrastructure, education, health, and housing to advance the resettlement of these Palestinian refugees (figure I.3). Through its resettlement efforts, UNRWA played a key role in recasting the Palestinian refugees—victims of war—as poor people left destitute by unfavorable economic conditions. UNRWA’s humanitarianism, as indicated in its efforts described here, should be conceived within its linkage to the colonial modes of economic development constituting the decolonization politics of the Cold War era.¹² Framed as promoting the “right to humanity,” practices to resettle the Palestinian refugees under the banner of economic peace may be juxtaposed against the Israeli state’s aim to instrumentally depoliticize the refugees and bar their repatriation.

The Roots of Economic Peace between Humanitarianism and Development

Following the devastation of Europe's old empires, particularly the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires (in 1918 and 1922, respectively), which had been exacerbated by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and collapse of the Russian Empire, more than 1.5 million people were made refugees and displaced persons. These multitudes would be forced to seek shelter in a changing world of nation-state building.¹³ Aid relief for these refugees had thus far been provided by the oldest surviving humanitarian organization, the Swiss-based ICRC, founded in 1863. However, in the eyes of Henry Pomeroy Davison, an American banker who chaired the War Council of the powerful American Red Cross (ARC), the crisis in Europe was an opportunity to establish a new order. In 1919, Davison founded the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS)—an exemplar of an emergent transnational, global community, with the aim not only to relieve human suffering but “to prevent it” through peacetime programs.¹⁴

As World War I drew to a close, the LRCS supplanted its wartime remit of aiding soldiers with a new agenda of “peace work”—medical research, public health education, and disaster relief—in which the sciences would be brought to bear on global problems. The LRCS headquarters in Geneva became a permanent hub for technocrats, who parsed relief and development practices and disseminated medical innovations among its national member societies around the world. These shifts, argues historian Julia Irwin, were influenced by active American involvement in the LRCS and US dominance of the humanitarian landscape at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁵ The ARC pushed the boundaries of humanitarianism to encompass aid development programs, treating war relief as it would relief in the wake of natural disasters—pestilence, famine, and flood—which until then had been treated as separate spheres.

Just as the Americans related to natural disasters as the sweeping away of outmoded infrastructure, so too did they frame war relief as an opportunity for progress, a chance to build something better. Their cultural logic of disaster relief powerfully shaped the ways ARC experts imagined the consequences of war and the organization of relief. With ARC at the center of international humanitarianism, the belief swept across the Progressive Era United States that development aid was the key to securing global peace and democracy.¹⁶ Through skilled relief experts applying the rational power of the human intellect, they reasoned,

the consequences of war and disaster could be mitigated, managed, and redirected toward productive ends.

Humanitarianism demonstrated the power of aid in securing food, shelter, and education. But, as Amanda Kay McVety argues, humanitarianism also represented the triumph of universalism over European particularism in spreading the ideals of development beyond the racial logics of its traditional champions, white Europeans, who perceived in capitalism an inherent capacity to bestow growth upon the colonized “other.”¹⁷ Thus, the interwar period shifted the intellectual center of development away from northern Europe and ushered in a new generation of American thinkers and a revolution in Western economic theory. Possessed of a belief in the power of specialization and expertise, American economists emphasized human manipulation of the market to spur growth and transform the United States into the world’s “economic laboratory.”¹⁸ In short order, economic expertise transformed the people’s understanding of development. Progress was no longer solely a question of race, religion, or culture but of income, encoded in statistics and embodied in the power of expertise to manipulate and manage. New conceptions of social realities as conditions to be quantified and managed fostered ideals of welfare economics and greater international cooperation. Poverty became opportunity; economic growth merely required proper stimulation.¹⁹

The post–World War II era provided fertile ground to test these new perceptions. The war marked an unprecedented phenomenon in relation to refugees in Europe, whose numbers exceeded some thirty million, necessitating the intervention of humanitarian organizations and welfare agencies in affected areas.²⁰ The United States began disseminating its emerging aid relief and development agenda at a time when nation-states and colonized peoples were actively seeking Western development aid to reconstruct their ruined territories, rehabilitate their communities, and resettle those displaced by the war. Yet development aid was also critical to non-European countries, which after decades of colonial domination and extractivism were seeking independence. The United States championed these ideals—promulgated through capital investment and technical assistance—as catalysts of peace and freedom across the globe. International cooperation was built on a model of mutual assistance, that is, the exchange of technical and scientific knowledge for the improvement of human welfare.²¹ In a bid to counter the growing influence of the Soviet Union, the United States provided aid to rebuild (noncommunist) countries across Europe, thereby spreading its influence across the developing world.

In 1943, the League of Nations published *The Transition from War to Peace Economy*, arguing that for “relief to be effective, [it] must not simply fill the human belly for a short period of time, but must enable the individuals who require it to continue that process themselves in the future.”²² It was clear to the League of Nations that the foreign relations and peace forged through development cooperation required economic growth and the integration of all peoples within a new global economy. The logics of humanitarian and development aid grew entangled to such a degree that it is difficult to distinguish between them.

The humanitarian organizations and technocrats who administered relief aid and planned the reconstruction and development of ruined European countries soon began transmitting their knowledge to the decolonizing world, gaining significant power in the shaping of cities there. This did not happen spontaneously. In 1947, responsibility for war refugees was shifted from the military, under the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), to the International Refugee Organization (IRO)—a move led by the United States. Going further, the United States took action to limit all forms of short-term humanitarian aid. Counter to the prevailing models of temporary emergency aid and voluntary repatriation established in the interwar period to assist millions of displaced persons (DPs), the IRO viewed the resettlement of refugees and DPs under the banner of humanitarian relief to be the only practical policy for solving the refugee problem.²³ Thus, in 1947, relief and rehabilitation operations gave way to the emergency program of the Marshall Plan, whose mission to provide people with immediate help would be expanded by the UN two years later to encompass a range of development aid programs.

This new approach to humanitarianism was framed by the Technical Assistance for Economic Development of Underdeveloped Countries effort and the US Point Four Program. Marking the emerging global politics of the Cold War, short-term assistance for disaster recovery ostensibly went hand-in-hand with development aid to defeat hunger in the developing world. Humanitarian aid thereby provided a bridge; poverty would justify development interventions. Poverty posed a problem for everyone, and development was the necessary solution.²⁴ Development aid was thereby entwined with the complementary practices of humanitarianism, poverty relief, and resettlement to leverage regional economic peace. US regional strategic interests, however, would be challenged by the plight of the Palestinian refugees and Israel’s refusal of their right of return. The IRO’s strategy of resettlement over repatriation was challenged under the specific context of the resettlement of the

Palestinian refugees in light of Israeli settler-colonial aspirations, to conclude with the transformation of IRO into UNRWA.

Universal Humanitarianism and the Settler-Colonial State

From the outset, the United States played an active role in the Middle East region through its dominance of the UN's humanitarian relief bodies, which framed themselves as saviors of the unfortunate countries now hosting the Palestinian refugees. American interest in the Middle East would become yet more acute in the face of expanding communist influence in the region. American and British interests aligned to ensure military dominance and secure control of the region's petroleum resources. With oil at the top of their agenda, the United States and United Kingdom prioritized technical approaches to regional economic development, to be enacted through, *inter alia*, humanitarian aid for the refugees.

The US government operated on two complementary trajectories: financial aid to improve the refugees' terrible living conditions and promotion of economic development as the solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. In autumn 1948, the UN supported relief for the refugees and urged all member states to contribute some US\$40 million to establish a humanitarian relief organization to aid the Palestinians; half of that amount was underwritten by the United States.²⁵ Practical distribution of supplies fell to the UNRPR, LRCS, and AFSC, all of which already had a presence in Palestine and were assisting the first refugees of the war.²⁶

As Israel persisted in its refusal to allow the refugees to return, the United States and international humanitarian bodies proposed that economic development plans to aid the Palestinians should facilitate the resettlement of the refugees in a third country. It should be noted, however, that the term "resettlement" was not in common usage with respect to refugees until the mid-1960s, when the UNHCR defined it as a mechanism for transferring refugees from an asylum country to another state with consent to admit and grant them permanent residence. However, the practices of refugee resettlement, particularly rural resettlement to promote economic peace in host countries, was common among the League of Nations and humanitarian bodies during the interwar period. As refugees were treated as economic migrants—for example, in Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Bulgaria, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Libya—rural development projects prioritized their economic integration, often within national reconstruction schemes.²⁷ However, amid the international order of the Marshall Plan and proliferation of UN

humanitarian agencies, for which progress for the poor and vulnerable was evidenced by gross domestic product (GDP), resettlement could be wielded as a political tool by both host and donor states.²⁸ Thus, strategies to foster the sustenance of refugees became imbued with Cold War political thinking, with refugees envisioned not simply as economic migrants but as victims in need of protection.

Such perceptions cohered with Israeli settler-colonial logic. Israel regarded the resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Arab states as an ideal solution to “dissolve” the issue of return and advance regional development plans. However, the resettlement of refugees under the logics of global economics—that is, the violence of development and humanitarianism—also encountered the structural violence embedded in resettlement as a mechanism to establish a Jewish state. The latter was debated among Zionist leaders after the 1937 Partition Plan, with the principal aim of removing Palestinians from the land and resettling them in Arab countries.

In August 1948, before the war had even ended, Israel had already established a “transfer committee.”²⁹ This group worked primarily with the United States and United Kingdom to plan the resettlement of refugees in neighboring Arab states.³⁰ The committee, whose members were experts on population transfer implemented in the interwar period, called for the compulsory transfer and resettlement of Palestinian refugees in Iraq.³¹ They continued to pressure the United States and United Kingdom to advance Israeli plans to resettle the refugees. The Americans responded by pressuring Israel to allow the return of one-third of the refugee population (some 250,000 refugees). Israel agreed to repatriate all of the Palestinian refugees who had reached the Gaza Strip (some 270,000), in exchange for Israel’s annexation of the Gaza Strip. The proposal was swiftly rejected by the Arab states, especially Egypt, which feared the implications of any further territorial expansion by Israel.³²

Under increasing Israeli pressure and in light of clear US interest in maintaining economic and political stability in the Middle East, the United States proposed economic and political steps to resettle the refugees outside of Palestine. The United States sent George McGhee, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African affairs, to Beirut to present a Middle East economic development plan. McGhee proposed defusing the issue of return by resettling the Palestinian refugees in Arab states—in particular in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq—in return for economic development assistance to those countries.³³ As a precondition for the Export/Import Bank putting forward

a loan of US\$49 million to Israel, McGhee demanded the repatriation of two hundred thousand refugees—a condition Israel flatly rejected.³⁴

On August 26, 1949, Gordon Clapp, who chaired the UN Economic Survey Mission to the Near East, arrived in the Middle East to explore possibilities for the regional integration of refugees.³⁵ Clapp's mission, which included specialists on refugee issues, proposed a plan of public works to employ refugees as a first step toward their resettlement. In view of the refugees' plight—as well as the turbulent geopolitical atmosphere in a region not yet ready for large-scale development projects—the mission proposed that the welfare assistance provided by various humanitarian organizations continue.³⁶

Clapp and the mission also examined the possible development of irrigation systems connected to the Jordan River to ensure the practical integration of refugees within host nations. The mission also proposed opening new acreage in eastern Syria and Iraq to resettle the refugees.³⁷ To implement such models, Clapp suggested setting up a body to deal with the refugees on behalf of the UN, a body that would be empowered to formulate plans for the refugees' employment and resettlement in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.

The UN General Assembly accepted Clapp's proposal, and with the passing of Resolution 302, UNRWA was established. The mission's report estimated the costs of its employment and relief program at around US\$54.9 million, and it projected resolution of the refugee problem within eighteen months and set a target date of December 31, 1950, for conclusion of the aid program.³⁸ To ensure UNRWA's effectiveness in moving economic development forward, the United States, with support from Britain, France, and Turkey, extended UNRWA's budget by approximately US\$40 million, which came with a mandate to advance the economic reintegration of the refugees in the Near East. Development plans, the United States asserted, would favor resettlement over repatriation.³⁹ From that point onward, UNRWA operated in sustained contradiction: as an emergency humanitarian agency, supplying the basics of food, shelter, education, and health services under the umbrella of human rights, and as a facilitator of long-term development projects tasked with the integration of the refugees.

Economic Development and the Institutionalization of UNRWA Humanitarianism

In UNRWA's annual reports, agency director Howard Kennedy defined a Palestinian refugee as “a person who lost his home and means of

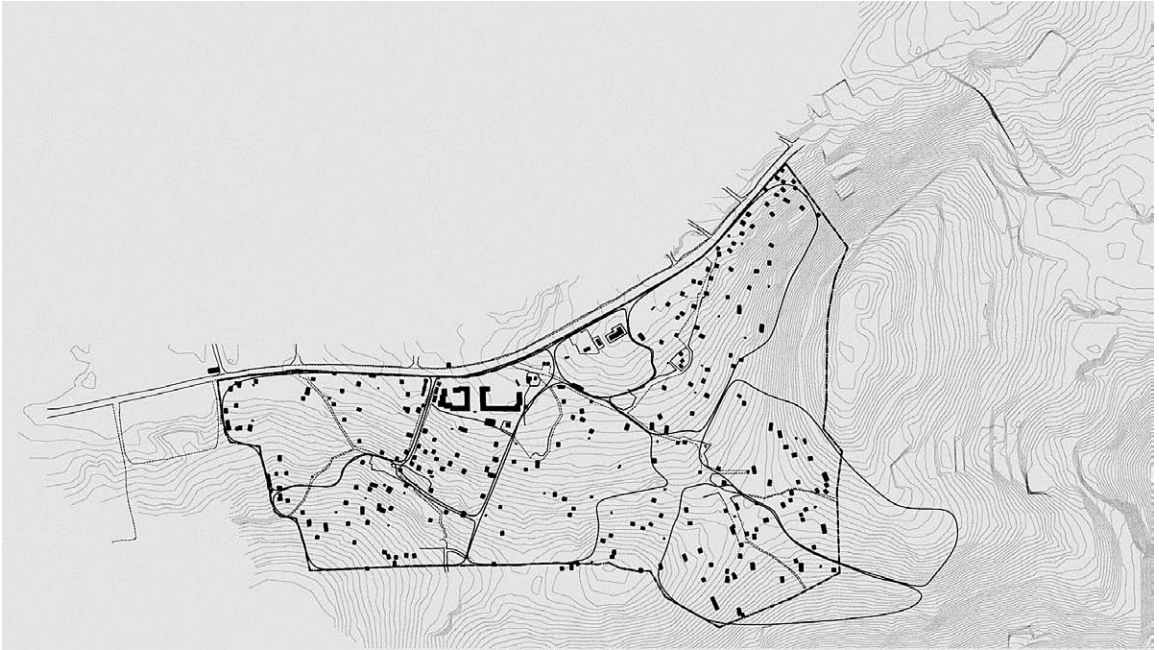


Figure 1.4. Plan showing tents in the Dheisheh refugee camp, West Bank, 1950. Each cluster of tents indicates the collective space of tents from a single hamula (extended family). UNRWA's Camp Development Pilot Project 2006–2008.

livelihood as a result of hostilities, and who lived in (what is now) Israel for two years before 1948.⁴⁰ UNRWA, assisted by the various other humanitarian organizations and host nations, provided the refugees with canvas tents and food according to family size. UNRWA also dealt with registered refugees sheltering in schools and deserted buildings or living out in the open in the aftermath of the war. To set up camps, the agency first secured a lease of land from the host country, primarily in areas in which the refugees had already gathered. To enable surveillance and control of the refugees, as well as to limit political activity, host governments fenced each camp with wire and established police posts (figure 1.4).

In time, UNRWA's initial lease arrangements were converted to long-term agreements with the host governments, which, in addition to providing land as needed, took responsibility for supplying water and paying the leases.⁴¹ The refugees suffered at the hands of the host governments; despite receiving funds from UNRWA and development investment from the United States, host governments treated the refugees as unwanted foreigners. Host countries policed the camps harshly and blocked refugees' access to citizenship. Apart from Jordan,



Figure I.5. Everyday survival in Aida Refugee Camp, 1956. UNRWA Archive.

which encouraged local political representation, host countries generally prohibited the refugees' participation in parliamentary elections. Saudi Arabia and Iraq, each of which hosted relatively small numbers of refugees, bestowed rights of citizenship and general legal equality—excluding the right to vote—on refugees in 1951 and 1953, respectively.

Resolution and return were nowhere to be seen; with each passing day, the refugees' situation deteriorated. Obligated to alleviate the difficulties of their own living conditions, the refugees took steps to improve the quality of their daily lives. To prevent the ingress of rainwater into their tents, they built low rock walls or added a *tirack* (a layer of leather cloth placed over the tent for warmth). Others furnished their tents with straw beds, which buffered them against the cold, waterlogged ground (figure I.5).

While the refugees grappled with threats to their survival, efforts to resettle them continued to threaten their right of return. At the beginning of March 1950, the Israeli Foreign Ministry formulated a

program to house the refugees elsewhere. In one such scheme, Israel developed an integrated plan to resettle refugees in Libya—encouraging Palestinians who had remained in Israel to immigrate there as well; the plan included an exchange of property with North African Jews. These ideas, proposed by Yehoshua Palmon, an Israeli expert on Arab affairs, were discussed with various UN agencies in 1952. According to the historian Nur Masalha, who has described the proposal in detail, the plan was supported by Levi Eshkol, Israel's finance minister. Eshkol, who had become head of the Land Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, formally approved the plan in May 1954 together with a number of ministers and directors of national agencies, including Joseph Weitz and Yoav Tzuckerman of the Jewish National Fund. In addition to Libya, they suggested the Jordan Valley and Sinai for the resettlement of any remaining refugees. To actualize their plan, Eshkol and his contemporaries sought a US foreign aid grant with which they planned to purchase agricultural land from Italian colonists who had left Libya. The Palestinian refugees, who would be situated in the Libyan provinces of Tripoli and Cyrenaica, were to farm the land with the help of Libyan workers. Leaked to the press in 1958, however, the plan was abruptly halted.⁴²

Eshkol and Weitz persisted with their plans for Libya, the Jordan Valley, and Sinai after 1967. Yet, what is missing from Masalha's description of this scheme is the motivation underpinning the desire to resettle the Palestinian refugees of the oPt in the Jordan Valley and Sinai. Israel, as Masalha stresses, had set its sights firmly on Libya. Inclusion of the Jordan Valley and Sinai, however, was proposed by Eric Johnston, whom US president Dwight Eisenhower had appointed in 1953 to mediate negotiations between Israel and the Arab states over water rights to the Jordan River. Eisenhower, who yearned to resolve the refugee problem and do away with the camps once and for all, on this occasion offered an economic development plan for the Jordan Valley and Sinai. The plan envisioned the irrigation of 936,000 dunams in the Jordan Valley at an estimated cost of US\$121 million, with the aim of supplementing the Jordan Valley's existing labor force with approximately 143,000 refugees from the West Bank.⁴³ The plan also called for irrigation of the northwestern region of Sinai, an effort that it was hoped would provide employment—and ultimately resettlement—for an additional 200,000 refugees in the Gaza Strip. Implementation of these programs was contingent on the intensive and wide-ranging mobilization of professional surveyors and technical engineers (figure I.6).

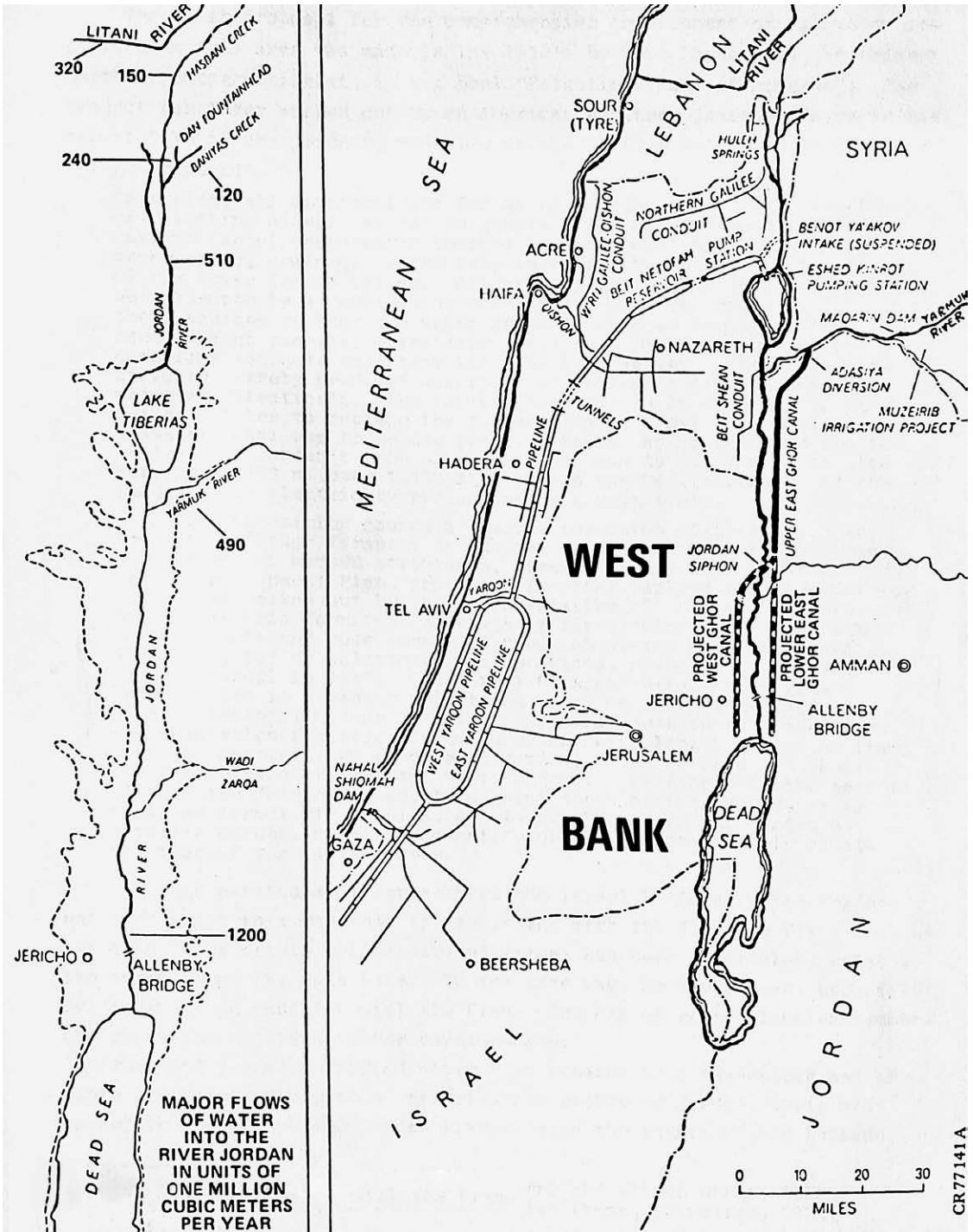


Figure I.6. Eric Johnston's plan for development of water resources in the region, including the resettlement of Palestinian refugees, 1953. UNRWA Archive, File RE I40/4.

Johnston's Sinai project was proposed to the Egyptian government, which had itself developed an irrigation plan for 370 square miles of land adjacent to the Suez Canal, pledging to UNRWA that a quarter of the area would be allocated for the resettlement of twelve thousand families from Gaza, amounting to some seventy thousand refugees.⁴⁴ As it turned out, by 1954 the project had made fewer than eight thousand refugees self-sufficient.⁴⁵ The UN deemed the program to have demonstrated no appreciable progress: both the refugees and their host countries remained firmly committed to return, a reality that only strengthened the continuance of UNRWA.

Facing sustained rejection of refugee integration, the US Congress threatened drastic cuts to UNRWA's budget, with funding transfers to Arab host states contingent upon their provision of housing and citizenship to the refugees. Of a total aid budget of US\$54 million, the US government had allocated only US\$16.5 million to humanitarian relief, with \$37.5 million earmarked for the rehabilitation and absorption of refugees.⁴⁶ By 1956 and in the wake of the Suez Crisis, Johnston's efforts had been exhausted. Israel had captured the Gaza Strip and Sinai in its tripartite campaign against Egypt—territories it would hold for four months.

Israel grasped at the opportunity to annex the Sinai Peninsula and settle 215,000 refugees in El-Arish. The idea was initiated by the same figures who had pushed to resettle the refugees in Libya, joined by the agronomist Raanan Weitz, son of Joseph Weitz. Fearing a massive concentration of Palestinians in a single area so proximate to Israel, they proposed dispersal of the refugees in three groups, in Sinai, Israel, and the Gaza Strip. To mitigate security risks to Israel, Jewish neighborhoods would be built between "islands" within which the refugees were to be resettled.⁴⁷

The United States blocked the proposal. However, Israel's short-term occupation of the area demonstrated that wars could provide opportunities not only for renewal, betterment, and progress, as championed by the United States under its agenda of economic peace, but also for population transfer and the coercive resettlement of the Palestinian population.

UNRWA and the Development of the Camps

Toward the end of 1953 and parallel to the formation of the Johnston plan for the development of Sinai, UNRWA focused on replacing refugee tents with permanent shelters. The Gaza Strip would serve as the laboratory for this experiment amid the geopolitical developments

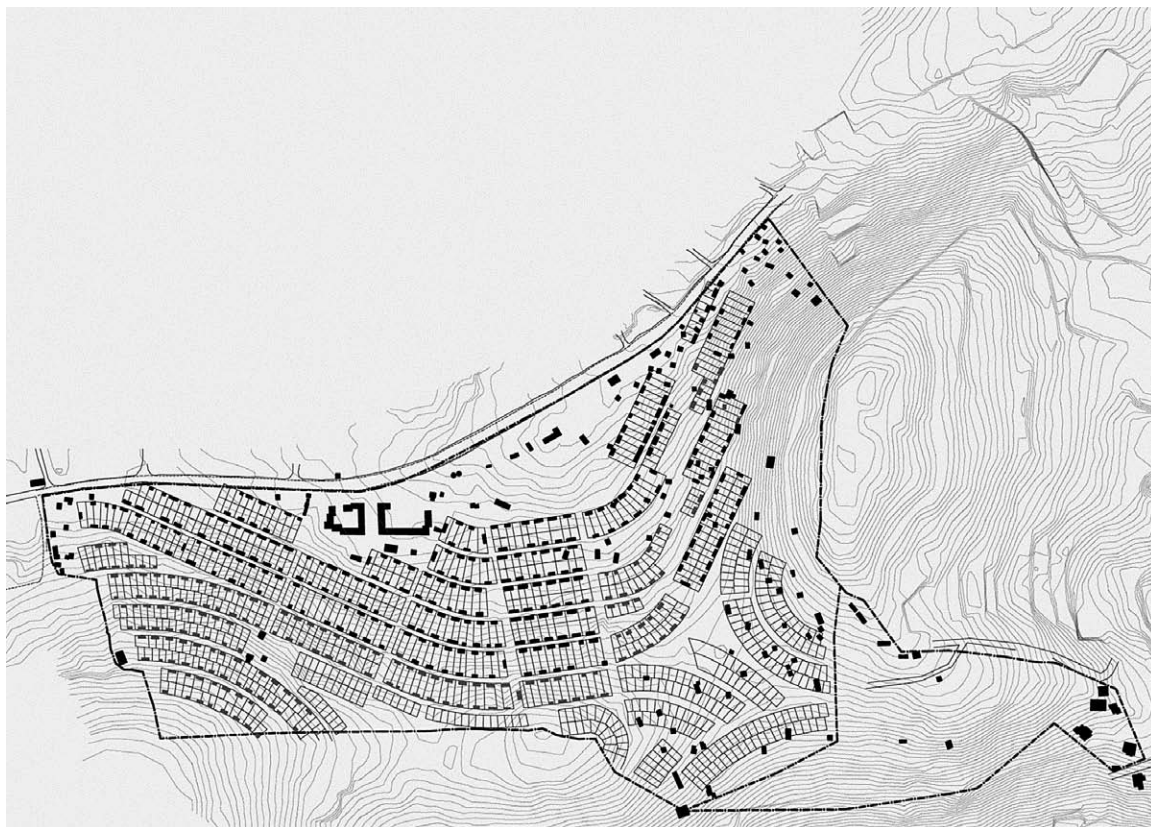


Figure I.7. Dheisheh Refugee Camp plan illustrating the spatial organization of shelters. UNRWA's Camp Development Pilot Project 2006–2008.

following the Suez Crisis, including the ascendance of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, his proximity to the communist bloc, and his commitment to the Palestinian right of return (figure I.7).

To avoid this spatial transformation being interpreted as a means to integrate and resettle the refugees, UNRWA defined its initiative as one of improvement, not development. According to conversations with George Kattan and Mostafa Abu Bahaa, UNRWA's engineers in Jerusalem and Ramallah, respectively, shelters built by the agency were modeled on those used in the rehabilitation of European refugees in Britain and France. To execute its detailed plans, UNRWA employed Arab laborers who lived in the villages and towns near the camps. A large proportion of the refugees, both men and women, built shelters either on their own initiative or through direct employment by UNRWA. In return, they earned a modest payment and a doubling of their food rations.⁴⁸

The dwellings were built in modular fashion, and there were three principal types: A, B, and C, with basic areas of 8.4, 10.5, and 12.6 square meters, respectively. UNRWA allocated the shelters according to the size of each registered family: A, B, and C; AB, BC, and AC; or AA, BB, and CC. Each shelter, built on an average property area of around 98 square meters (i.e., 14 by 7 meters), featured a door, a wood-framed window, a 5-centimeter-thick concrete floor, and a sloping roof protruding 20 centimeters over the window and 30 centimeters over the entrance façade. Because the shelters were built on leased land as an emergency response to harsh living conditions, host states forbade the building of additional floors, as well as the renting or sale of the dwellings. Once the shelters were completed, UNRWA began building social infrastructure, including schools, clinics, food distribution centers, youth facilities, and more. The host countries demanded that UNRWA demarcate each camp's borders and the extent of areas under the sole jurisdiction of the host country.

Through discussions with engineers and refugees, it was apparent that the dwellings did not meet basic domestic needs, a problem exacerbated by the natural growth of the families. Thus, in 1960, UNRWA began issuing the refugees building permits to expand their living spaces. Approval was conditioned on the use of tin or similar construction materials, so that the dwellings could still be defined as temporary. UNRWA characterized these additions as “necessary developments,” mainly used by the refugees as kitchens, storage areas, or shops. In short order, these ad hoc essential additions created cause for concern for both UNRWA and the host state, Egypt, which felt a loss of control over the camps' expansion. Evolving conditions compelled UNRWA's engineering department in Gaza to develop and accelerate new plans and, under pressure from Egypt, clearly define and demarcate the camps' final boundaries.

UNRWA's division in Gaza was the first to lead a process of re-drawing camp boundaries, transferring knowledge to the agency's divisions elsewhere (figure 1.8). In November 1960, UNRWA's representatives in Gaza and Beirut corresponded regarding the usefulness of the agency's new detailed plans for the camps. The representative in Gaza maintained that the proposed survey plans were indeed useful, as they would provide proper permanent records of the large number of shelters, including essential information on physical infrastructure such as water mains, wells, pumps, sewage and surface water drainage, electrical mains, outfall, and more. These official records, he argued, were “essential to the continuity of development of the camps, which in

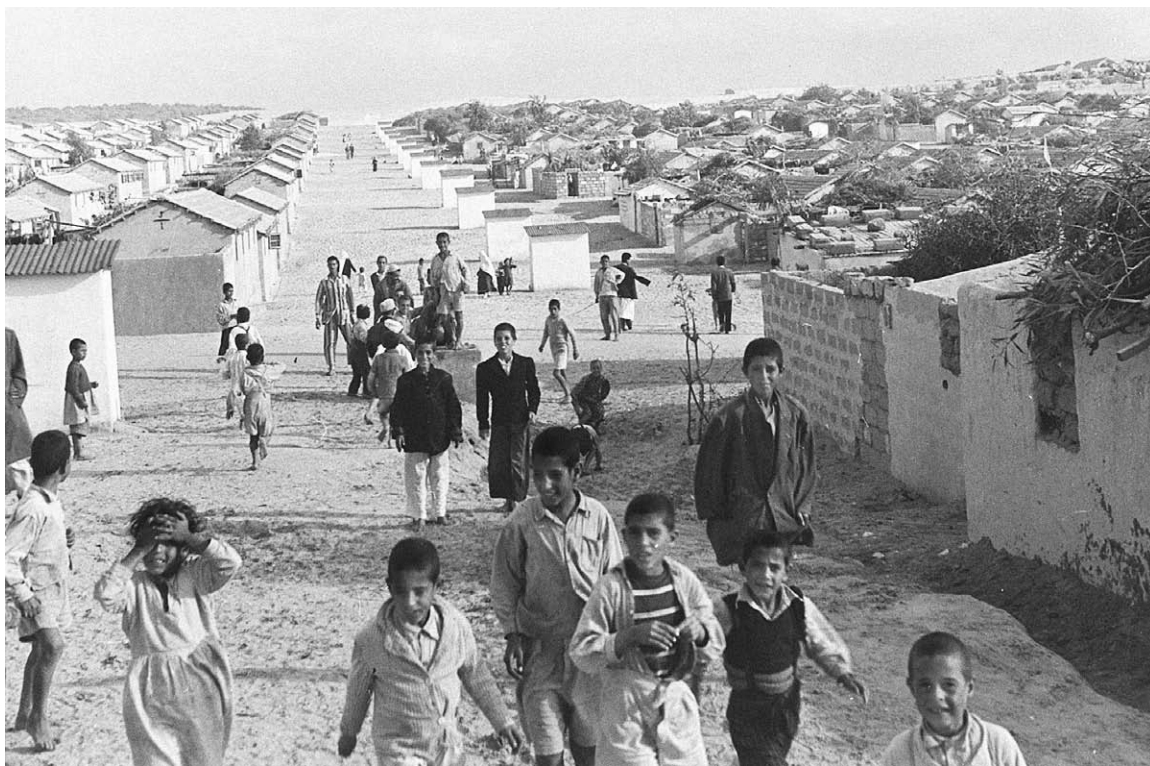


Figure 1.8. Shelters in al-Shati Refugee Camp near Gaza City, 1956. Pridan Moshe, The National Photo Collection.

fact are assuming the aspect of small towns.” The plans, he noted, were crucial in light of the camps’ accelerating natural growth and unregulated construction undertaken by the refugees, which was constraining UNRWA’s movement within the camps. In the absence of official plans, UNRWA would have no proof that the new structures were blocking access to the camps’ main roads, which the agency required “for its safety and for control.” Moreover, the representative noted, UNRWA lacked the legal authority to demolish unlicensed structures, a right that lay exclusively with local authorities.⁴⁹ With the utility of the plans having been demonstrated in Gaza, UNRWA’s division in Amman adopted the same strategy in Jordan, in the hope of gaining “more control over the population in the camps.”⁵⁰

This spatial transformation—from rows of tents to permanent structures of concrete, brick, and tin—signaled the evolution of the camps into built environments more akin to cities. But this transformation also highlights the gray zone within which UNRWA operated, maintaining its legitimacy through the provision of humanitarian aid while concurrently engaging in resettlement practices. All the while,

UNRWA's legal office maintained the line that the unfolding spatial transformation of the camps was a matter of practicality only—a technical response intended not to alter the nature or boundaries of the camps but to ensure a “comprehensive and binding description of [their] existing boundaries.”⁵¹

The year 1959 marked when UNRWA was meant to finalize delineation of the camps' boundaries and essential infrastructure and to conclude its role in the crisis. Instead, on December 9, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 1456 (XIV), extending UNRWA's mandate by a further three years. The resolution stated, “*Noting with deep regret that repatriation or compensation of the refugees as provided for in paragraph II of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) has not been effected, that no substantial progress has been made in the programme endorsed in paragraph 2 of resolution 513 (VI) for the reintegration of refugees either by repatriation or resettlement . . . , the situation of the refugees continues to be a matter of serious concern.*”⁵² Following the extension of UNRWA's remit, the agency's donors were encouraged to view the refugees, most of whom were unemployed, as a resource rather than as an obstacle to regional development. In a special report, former UN secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld pointed out UNRWA's past errors, most notably the agency's aim throughout the 1950s to resettle the refugees as a collective social group. Hammarskjöld proposed that the dual aims of resettlement and employment—that is, full resolution of the refugee problem—would be better served by including the refugees in an overarching process of regional development, especially in view of the surplus capital flowing from oil production in the Persian Gulf states. Hammarskjöld treated the region—Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, the Arabian Peninsula, and Israel—as a single economic entity offering substantial long-term capital and labor mobility. Surplus labor of the more populous Egypt and Jordan, which hosted the lion's share of the refugees, was to be released to countries with potential labor shortages, such as Iraq and Syria. Part of this population movement would include the Palestinian refugees, who could be given freedom to cross international frontiers—including into Israel. To maintain existing employment and raise living standards by 2 percent each year within a decade, a total of four million jobs would be needed between 1959 and 1970 in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. The scheme, it was estimated, would enable the employment of half a million Palestinian refugees. Part of the surplus labor, Hammarskjöld reasoned, could be shifted to countries with surplus capital, projected to face labor shortages by 1970, and part to Syria and Israel, provided

the latter received sufficient outside economic assistance to ensure success of development programs. Capital investment would be largely in agricultural and industrial projects. To remain competitive, agriculture would have to become highly mechanized. The establishment of new production areas would therefore entail high costs and require the absorption of significant surplus labor. An estimated US\$12 billion would be required to accommodate the net increase in the labor force, with a further US\$2 billion needed to absorb the refugees. Non-oil-producing, capital-deficient countries would require approximately US\$9.5 billion in investment by 1970 to absorb the total estimated labor force, including the refugees. As such costs were beyond the capacities of the non-petroleum-producing states by some US\$5.1 billion, oil-producing states would be required to make up the shortfall.⁵³

Hammar skjöld's economic solution to an essentially political problem prioritized Western economic interests, forging a compromise between Israel's refusal to repatriate the refugees and Arab resistance to their resettlement. Wary of being seen as having acquired any form of permanent status, the refugees grew increasingly suspicious of the UN welfare agency. As expressed by Rashid Ariqat, the deputy head of UNRWA in the Jericho area, "They [the refugees] said UNRWA doesn't work for refugee interests and are U.S.A. agents. The Agency, which they needed, was not acceptable to the people who considered UNRWA a drug to keep them quiet. . . . They were eager for a radical change and the Agency could not help them in the Return but only help make them stay longer."⁵⁴

The refugees' growing mistrust was aired in the November 1960 edition of the journal *Falestinona* (Our Palestine), which published calls by Palestinian nationalists to disband the agency and described UNRWA as "the meager welfare agency for the destruction of the Palestinian issue."⁵⁵ In 1964, *Falestinona* published an article entitled "Palestinian-Chinese Relations: The Chinese People Support the Struggle of the Palestinian People." The article referenced a speech by the Palestinian delegation in Beijing, which emphasized the common struggle against the British Empire and other colonial powers that since World War II had worn the mask of US economic imperialism. The delegation emphasized American and British support of the Zionist organizations that had enabled the establishment of the State of Israel, described as "a poison knife in the body of the Arab nation, and as a colonial base that strikes the Arab liberation movements. . . . It is not necessary to mention the tripartite plot against Egyptians and the Gaza Strip . . . of which the Chinese people and their great leader were aware, standing beside nobly

and with courage. . . . It is not for nothing that American colonialism is now creeping into Africa and Asia in its newly independent countries.”⁵⁶

The camps—particularly in the Gaza Strip and West Bank—were simultaneously undergoing another form of transformation, from places where political organizing was forbidden into the principal hubs of the Palestinian national movement. Throughout the 1960s, opposition from within the camps intensified, receiving considerable support from Egypt’s Nasser, who was a champion of pan-Arabism, and from other Arab states. With the communist bloc’s power increasing in the region, a situation that had direct economic implications in the Gaza Strip, the camps became hotbeds of political activism and resistance to the policies of Israel and the Western powers, embodied by UNRWA.⁵⁷ The coming war with the Arab states presented an opportunity to progress to a new political, economic, and social order.

The Lead-Up to the Six-Day War

By early 1960, UNRWA had clearly been transformed, from a temporary relief and aid agency into a permanent institution providing the Palestinian refugees a broad range of social services the host countries were unable to provide. In the aftermath of Egypt’s nationalization of the Suez Canal—which, at least until the war of 1967, appeared to be a major victory for pan-Arabism—currents of nationalism swelled throughout the Middle East. This period, marked by a spirit of revolution, was influenced by political upheaval around the world, including in Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam, and China. As in Palestine, the United States and its Western allies conspired to pacify the poor of the Global South through economic development and resettlement practices. In the resulting resistance movements, Palestinian nationalists began to see a way forward to achieve their own aims.

Encumbered with conflict and Cold War rivalries, the Palestinian refugees awaited their fate under harsh conditions and without civil rights. On June 5, 1967, war broke out between Israel and the Arab states. By June 10, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) had occupied the Syrian plateau (i.e., the Golan Heights), the West Bank, Sinai, and the Gaza Strip, sealing off the occupied territory (with the exception of East Jerusalem). After nearly two decades of efforts to block, transfer, and economically integrate the population it had displaced, Israel found itself directly responsible for the Palestinian refugees.

CHAPTER 2

Social-Economic and Statistical-Demographic Sciences in Conflict

The outcome of the 1967 war yielded ambiguity regarding Israel's borders. Over the course of six days, Israel had captured territories with an area of some 68,589 square kilometers, more than tripling the area under its control. Israel had to decide what to do with the oPt and, in particular, the more than one million Arab inhabitants living there. The 1967 war brought the problem of refugees in the Middle East to the fore, shining new light on Israel's dithering over the return of refugees who had already been displaced from their homes in the 1948 war. Now in control of the entirety of the region, Israeli government officials set about deciding the fates of these refugees.¹

While the 1967 war yielded fewer than the one million UNRWA-registered refugees dating to 1948, this new war displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the Golan Heights, West Bank, and Gaza Strip, and many of them were being displaced for a second time. At the conclusion of the fighting, refugees amounted to 20 percent of the population of the West Bank and over 65 percent of the Gaza Strip's 405,000 inhabitants. In the Gaza Strip, the primary focus of this book, the number of UNRWA-registered refugees had swelled to more than 316,000, though some 40,000 to 45,000 refugees were compelled to flee in fear of the 1967 war. Thus, in the aftermath, some 270,000 refugees remained. The refugees primarily sheltered in temporary camps; all were denied the right of return. To distinguish between refugees from each of the wars, UNRWA defined as "displaced persons" (*al-Nazihoon*) all refugees of the 1967 war who had not previously been registered. As such, they did not fall under UNRWA's remit.²

Immediately following its lightning victory in the 1967 war, the Israeli government considered its options for the oPt. Israel's security establishment, which had prepared for long-term control of the territory and its population, pushed for the economic development of the region. Moshe Dayan, then head of the security establishment, viewed accelerated economic development of the oPt as a means to strengthen the Jewish nation-state. A multitude of structures and tools would be required to implement this aim, and foremost among them was a regional development policy. In developing such policy, the security establishment was aided by professionals in the fields of economics and sociology. A committee, which came to be known as the Professors' Committee, was appointed to examine opportunities to integrate the economies of the Gaza Strip and Israel. The committee was tasked to explore, *inter alia*, constructive solutions to the problem of the Palestinian refugees who had been displaced by Israel in 1948.

The committee was headed by the economist Don Patinkin and the statistician-demographer Roberto Bachi, both of them leading Zionist figures who would play central roles in shaping the Israeli state from its foundation until at least the mid-1970s. Patinkin and Bachi were not just social scientists but also technocrats who leveraged scientific claims to legitimize new political facts on the ground. Through measurement and the circulation of human and financial capital, these men helped to produce and materialize an ethnocratic territory, bringing to bear the post-1930 Western politics of development then prevalent in the United States, as well as the economic thinking and *modus operandi* of colonial Europe. Patinkin and Bachi likewise influenced other actors across the fields of science and politics. Mainly comprising experts in the fields of economics, sociology, and agriculture, the Professors' Committee formed two teams under its purview: the Socioeconomic Team, headed by the economist Michael Bruno, and the Sociological Settlement Team, headed by the agronomist Raanan Weitz. The work of these teams, expressed in socioeconomics and demographic cartography, reveals a conflict in the use of their respective scientific fields to discipline the Palestinians and assert Israeli control over the oPt. Ostensibly complementary in their approaches to development, the teams' use of science as a "power to colonize" in fact reveals conflicting perceptions of economic modernization, including the (dis)connecting of economic ties between the oPt and Israel.³ This conflict highlights the emerging tension between the forms and formulas of finance and commerce, which prescribed material improvement and exploitation of Palestinian economic potential, and a sociological predilection for

the elimination of the native, to be realized through the Judaization of conquered territory.

Occupation and Indecision Regarding the Future of the Territory

Notwithstanding uncertainty regarding the future political status of the oPt, it was clear to Israel that it had been presented with an unrivaled opportunity to exploit the Gaza Strip and establish new facts on the ground, particularly given the region's role as a buffer between Israel and its neighboring rival, Egypt. As early as June 7, the third day of the 1967 war, the first order was given to establish a military government in the oPt. Military rule was imposed on "all aspects of government, law-making, appointments, and administration regarding the area or its inhabitants."⁴ Since the founding of Israel, military governance of the Palestinians had been conducted in what were then called "seized territories," that is, areas under Israeli control that lay beyond the internationally recognized borders of the Jewish state in accordance with the United Nations' 1947 Partition Agreement.⁵ Military government was also imposed on the Gaza Strip during the short period of Israeli occupation from 1956 to 1957. The military government imposed on Palestinians within the areas of the State of Israel, however, was disbanded in 1966 and was not suited to deal with the large populations of Palestinians in areas conquered in 1967. Israel's Southern Command, which had already gained some experience controlling an occupied population some ten years earlier, resumed control of the Gaza Strip, operating in a notably more organized fashion than its counterparts in the West Bank and Golan Heights (Central Command and Northern Command, respectively).⁶

As laid down in international law, formal overall responsibility for activities in the oPt fell to the military governor, with representatives of the civilian units of various government departments serving under the authority of the IDF. Civil development activities were carried out according to the instructions of interministerial bodies. Formally, the Ministry of Finance oversaw administration, the prime minister was responsible at the ministerial level, and practical coordination and control were the responsibility of the Defense Ministry under Moshe Dayan. At the governmental-ministerial level, a committee dealing with affairs in the oPt was established. At the administrative level, a committee of directors-general was set up to coordinate both economic and civilian issues, working alongside a coordinating committee responsible for

political-security issues. Thus, all civil development, including planning and building for the incumbent and refugee populations, was subordinated to Israeli military and security imperatives. This arrangement prevailed until 1981, when, as the newly appointed minister of defense, Ariel Sharon established a civil administration separate from the military.⁷ This change was not merely technical. As described in chapter 6, Sharon had laid down a wholly new framework of governance for the administration of Palestinian civil affairs, including the planning and physical development of the towns and camps of the Gaza Strip.

The Ministry of Defense dealt with the practicalities of life in the oPt through both its military and civilian arms. But differences of opinion emerged between the Ministry of Defense and the broader Israeli government, which stymied decision-making on the status and future of the areas and inhabitants under Israeli control. The government was determined to develop the oPt for the long-term benefit of Israel—to rule over and manage the Palestinians, particularly the refugees. But to achieve this aim, a political-economic mechanism was needed to consolidate control of the territory without it becoming a financial burden—that is, to enable Israeli territorial expansion and the exploitation of the oPt's economic potential. While the Gaza Strip lacked known natural resources, its geographic location alone justified holding on to it. In addition, to continue Israel's prewar policy of integration and the transfer of refugees—as discussed in the previous chapter—it was deemed necessary to take over matters of welfare by supplanting UNRWA, which had failed to produce convincingly for refugees who persisted in their right of return.

Israel began formulating a number of strategic political and planning programs. Among the most significant, which were much discussed at the time, were the programs of Ministers Yigal Allon and Moshe Dayan. Differences as to the nature of the state's geo-demographic framework became apparent, between Allon's program for the future of the seized areas, in the Western portion of the oPt and ways to deal with the Arab refugees, and Dayan's program, described as a plan of enclaves—extended fists from the coastal plain to the hills.⁸ Dayan's approach was to formulate an overall policy that promoted long-term planning and strived to assist the local inhabitants without formally imposing mastery. His approach to the oPt was functional, with an overarching aim to establish an administration empowered to implement the development of the territory with minimal integration between Palestinian society and Israeli society. In light of the geopolitical reality, Dayan accepted functional compromise over the territory,

an approach strengthened by his desire to maintain fluid relations with the neighboring Arab states. He worked to implement an “open bridges” policy, which would facilitate the normalization of social and economic relations, while formulating a regional plan to establish outposts in the area. Dayan’s approach rested on two main pillars: opposition to an agreed partition of the western “Land of Israel” and negation of territorial annexation (to circumvent the demographic problem). With respect to the West Bank, all functions of governance were to be divided between Israel and Jordan.

Conversely, Allon’s approach was guided by principles of ensuring the strategic continuity of the “Land of Israel” and consolidating the Jewish majority of the state. Aiming to achieve defensible borders, Allon likewise entertained the notion of limited territorial compromise, though he also proposed the annexation of various parts of the West Bank, the Jordan Valley, and the Gaza Strip—particularly populated areas at high elevations. In exchange for annexed portions of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip would be handed to an Arab state or, alternatively, annexed to Israel with an Arab state granted free access to the port in Haifa. In the latter scenario, inhabitants of the Gaza Strip would be transferred for resettlement in the West Bank, with Israel retaining the Rafah salient and eastern Sinai, including Sharm el-Sheikh.

From the conclusion of the 1967 war until the Oslo Accords, myriad formal governmental arrangements were advanced, some in the form of political declarations, which in the main were not approved, and others proposing ways forward within the political frameworks of various international peace initiatives. Many of these policies put forward planning guidelines exclusively for the West Bank while completely ignoring the Gaza Strip.⁹ Nonetheless, the Gaza Strip remained a focal point of Israel’s refugee problem, and attempts to resolve the problem would involve resettlement and economic integration. While Israeli policy toward the Gaza Strip clearly assigned considerable importance to the refugees and their resettlement, the various political factions in Israel remained divided on this issue. Israeli administration and control over the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip—local residents and refugees alike—became a focal point of conflict between advocates of outright territorial mastery and those in favor of a more practical approach.

Due to the fact that up until 1981 the Civil Administration functioned together with the security-military arm under the same regulatory and administrative branch of the military government, this body was deeply embedded in the security-military discourse. The voices of security policy-makers and other government officials were

therefore sufficiently dominant that official records of events in the Gaza Strip were—like those in the West Bank—largely recorded from their perspectives. But these two arms, military and civilian, were not in lockstep, and many of the disagreements that emerged between them ultimately left their mark in the built-up areas of the Gaza Strip. With a primary focus on the social scientists and technocrats who dealt with the spatialization and planning of the oPt, a fresh look at the Civil Administration's civilian arm illuminates Israel's historical approach toward the Gaza Strip, as well as the internal political struggles within the planning institutions that determined official policy in the region.

Israeli planning policy toward the Gaza Strip largely fell in line with the same central considerations underpinning government policies and processes of modernization that applied more broadly to the development of the state and settlement since 1948, that is, control and administration based primarily on security, settlement of territory, Judaization, and economic development to generate facts on the ground. The prioritization of settlement had long characterized the Zionist program in the region, dating back to the period when Jewish settlements functioned to demarcate the borders of the Hebrew proto-state and were leveraged to achieve the movement's other fundamental objectives: security and development.

As opposed to the settler-colonial societies that developed in, for example, Australia and North America, Zionist settlement came about, as illustrated by Patrick Wolfe, as an international movement that consciously chose to disregard the metropole in favor of the "collective motherland." Further, acquiring the lands of the native inhabitants concurred with the local laws of the time. Thus, Zionism, which drew strength from its dispersed population, prioritized land acquisition.¹⁰ The Jewish benefactors who funded these efforts differed from the speculators who financed territorial expansion in other colonies in that the Zionists were not explicitly seeking pecuniary returns on their investments. Freed from such financial demands, the capitalist rationale collapsed and Jewish imports swelled, denying a level playing field to the Indigenous Palestinians with limited resources.¹¹ Unconditional funding was leveraged through the Zionists' "Conquest of Labor" strategy, which maintained a self-sustaining, closed circuit of Jewish production, consumption, and exchange. Through their boycott of Palestinian labor and produce, the Zionists repudiated their perceived former dependency on others for subsistence. Systematically, the Zionists reserved broad, contiguous areas for exclusive Jewish settlement, upon which their nascent ethnocratic state would be brought into

being. Prioritizing ethnicity over efficiency, Israeli ethnocracy, as Oren Yiftachel describes, was manifested foremost through such processes of “Judaization”—a wholesale reshaping of space, wealth, and political power in Israel/Palestine.¹²

The considerations of settlement, security, and development became cornerstones of Zionist territorial structure and organization, as well as of the administration of populations within the framework of the nation-state. With the establishment of the State of Israel, Jewish elites became the uncontested political and economic ruling class. Ethnocratic values of Judaization, including emptying the land of its Palestinian inhabitants, were first materialized in the form of a state master plan: the so-called Sharon Plan of 1951, named after Arie Sharon, the architect who headed the Government Planning Department.¹³ In the wake of the 1967 war, however, the guiding principles of security, settlement, and development were to be implemented under starkly different physical, social, economic, and political conditions in the Gaza Strip. Whereas Jewish settlement and development had previously been carried out through the violent displacement and expulsion of Palestinians and the Judaization of the territory, Jewish settlement and security in the Gaza Strip after 1967 were to be enabled primarily through economic development, advanced through the exploitation of refugees and the incumbent Palestinian population inhabiting the region.

Like other Western or “developed” countries, Israel used economics to construct a new politics of development, providing novel forms and formulas through which Israel could restructure its relationship with the oPt. As described in Timothy Mitchell’s study of the political economy of the Middle East, this new form of politics was shaped by mutual assistance and the circulation of ideas between academic and state institutions.¹⁴

An Economic Policy for Controlling the oPt

About one month into Israel’s occupation in 1967, Israeli prime minister Levi Eshkol—aware of the limited scope of economic activity in the oPt—asked the American-born Israeli monetary economist Don Patinkin to serve as a member of a committee tasked with planning the development of the “seized territories.” Eshkol detailed the specific economic sectors Israel wished to develop—agriculture, water, industry, and housing—with a focus on security, community, and settlement issues. The Professors’ Committee, headed by the Italian-Israeli statistician and demographer Roberto Bachi, comprised mainly social

scientists. Besides Bachi and Patinkin, other members included the sociologist Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt; economists Ya'acov Arnon, David Horowitz, Zvi Dinshtein, and Moshe Zandberg (Zanbar); scientist Arie Dvorski; agronomist Raanan Weitz; Haim Gvati, as minister of agriculture and general manager of the ministry; Ze'ev Sherf, first as minister of trade and industry and subsequently as minister of housing; and former IDF chief of staff Tzvi Tzur.

The Professors' Committee's diverse composition meant that its members held a variety of positions and often contradictory ideologies. These experts' diverse professional backgrounds strongly informed the ways in which development of the Gaza Strip was to be perceived and later arranged by the committee. These planners and architects fell roughly into two camps: those in favor of regional development, with a focus on socioeconomic solutions to ensure Israeli prosperity and control, and those who based regional planning for the Gaza Strip and Sinai on statistical calculations and demographic considerations. This divide was principally cultural, bifurcating the committee among those who, as members of a global network of economists, approached development from the universal economic basis championed by the United States, and others more concerned with national economic independence. The latter, especially, had been active among the Zionist elite community and its Jewish settler funding bodies throughout the British Mandate period.

Don Patinkin graduated with a PhD from the University of Chicago in 1947, under the tutelage of economist Oskar R. Lange. A Zionist, Patinkin immigrated to Israel two years later, taking up a position at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, at which he became president in 1982. His remarkable dissertation, "Money, Interest and Prices" (1956), contributed to neoclassical-Keynesian synthesis in economics, whose emphasis on equilibrium economics, theories of unemployment, and general monetary economics was wildly successful and dominated macroeconomic thinking in the postwar period. As a quantitative economist, Patinkin led the establishment of the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1953, to which the Department of Economics subsequently moved. It was here that Patinkin and his contemporaries produced and disseminated the knowledge that was to be tested later on the Gaza Strip. Patinkin was critical of Israeli economic policy in the first decade after its foundation, believing that, to promote Israel's economic independence, the government should pursue a more liberal policy of minimal intervention in the market economy. His approach, however, was not endorsed by many of the other economists and professional elites of the Zionist institutions represented by the World Zionist Organization

(WZO). Patinkin's thinking on economic development, drawing on the schools of Americanization and internationalization, situated him well to take on leading roles in the formation of European economic committees under the auspices of the Economics Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition, his status and influence were amplified by a growing community of economists comprising mainly his own former students, who later served as technocrats in various government offices. Through his academic position, Patinkin was nominated as director of the Falk Project for Economic Research in Israel—the state's first economic research institution. Initiated in February 1954 under a grant from the Maurice and Laura Falk Foundation of Pittsburgh, the project established a scientific community of applied economists.¹⁵ Trained in Falk institutions, these young Israeli scholars engaged in theoretical research and developed new methods to target specific local problems.¹⁶

In contrast to Patinkin's community of economists, the other social scientists working under the remit of the Falk Project had roots in the WZO and Jewish Agency and therefore tended to be more Eurocentric. They were closely connected to the ruling political party and were influenced by the national production estimates of Ludwig Gruenbaum (Arieh Ga'athon). Gruenbaum headed an economic planning unit focused on empirical research targeting Israel's demographic predicament, namely, how to facilitate the rapid absorption of Jewish immigrants. These scholars disagreed with Patinkin's desire to internationalize the Zionist economy, emphasizing that Israel, as a small country, could use its social and political assets to take advantage of a greater capacity for mass mobilization and thereby induce structural adjustments amid evolving technological conditions. Their views thus contrasted Patinkin's universalism and economic rationalism. For Patinkin, empirical economic research provided flesh for mathematically abstract, universal principles.¹⁷

Emergent tensions between the economists and social scientists of the Falk Project would extend to the Professors' Committee, under the leadership of Bachi. Bachi represented the Zionist economists and technocrats of the government and WZO, collectively charged with resolving the state's demographic problem in order to ensure the economic viability and security of the new Jewish state. After having been named full professor at the University of Genoa, Bachi immigrated to Palestine in 1939 in the shadow of Italy's fascist racial laws of oppression. In Italy, Bachi had been trained within the modernist tradition of statistical cartography. Between 1945 and 1947, he worked in the Department of Statistics of the British Mandate government in Palestine, and he

became a full professor at the Hebrew University in 1947. Two years later, Bachi founded the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS). In parallel and alongside Patinkin, Bachi worked to establish the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Hebrew University, where he would serve as a dean from 1953 to 1956. Throughout his career, Bachi linked his academic knowledge to Israeli state objectives.

Bachi's influence on the structure of Israel's emerging ethnocratic system, however, was strongly linked to his role within Jewish national institutions following his immigration to Palestine. His demographic work, which embodied a three-part theme on the future of the Jewish nation-state, started during his tenure as founder and head of the Central Bureau of Medical Statistics (Hadassah) in Jerusalem. By tracking birthrates and the evolving socio-demographic makeup of the Jewish community, Bachi helped lay the foundation for Jewish numerical dominance over Palestinians in areas to be incorporated within the Jewish state. Prior to the massive waves of Jewish immigration and the forced removal of Palestinians from the territory, Bachi provided a new lens with which to frame the present in terms of the future.¹⁸ His work in the Department of Statistics in the war period (1947–1949) would strongly inform his methodology for quantitative analysis and comparison of geostatistical distributions. Bachi's approach—developed in the 1950s and 1960s—combined the measurement of points in space together with their constituent thematic aspects, computing the shape, extension, and direction of the entire distribution, expressed as a small number of parametric and nonparametric dimensions.¹⁹

Bachi's approach to the oPt was embedded in the Western colonial geostatistical methods he adapted for use against the Palestinians and took advantage of the violent dispersion of the Arab population. In the midst of the 1948 war, under a seven-hour general curfew, a census was carried out to register every household and citizen. Those absent from their homes at the time of the census were not registered as Israeli citizens, and their ownership of goods, property, and land was invalidated.²⁰ Bachi employed the same mechanism with the population of the oPt when a census of Palestinians was undertaken under a one-day curfew in the midst of the 1967 war (figure 2.1). The indiscriminate confinement of people to their homes was masked by Bachi's appeal to scientific objectivity and the improved chances of counting as many people as possible that would be afforded by the curfew (figure 2.2). Those fleeing the hostilities, however, many of whom had so recently been made refugees in 1948, were excluded from the census and, as in the previous war, were barred from returning to their homes and property. Ironically,

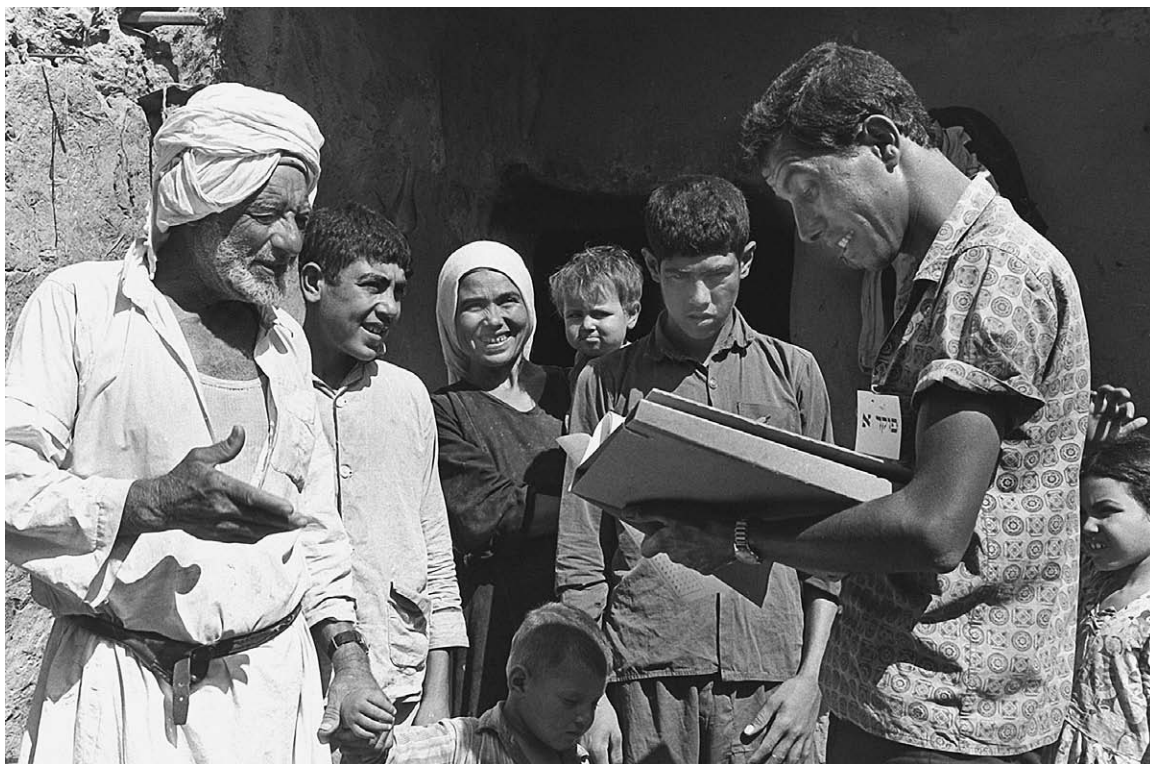


Figure 2.1. An employee of the Gaza Strip Military Government registers a family's details during the census, 1967. Moshe Milner, The National Photo Collection.

despite such mechanisms to erase Palestinian presence, Bachi's 1968 book, *Graphical Rational Patterns: A New Approach to Graphical Presentation of Statistics*, which presented the results of the 1967 census, may be viewed as a tacit acknowledgment of Palestinians' existence.²¹

The internal contradictions playing out on the Professors' Committee left their mark on the planning team, whose members were no less involved in the shaping of the oPt. The government asked the committee to assess proposals to resettle refugees in Israel, Arab states, or elsewhere overseas, including the implications of any such plans with respect to the structure of Israel's future society and economy. The committee was put in contact with various bodies addressing the ongoing problems in the oPt and, where appropriate, was invited to express its opinion on the connection between short-term development policies in the conquered territory and Israel's own long-term outlook. The committee expanded its membership, which consisted mainly of experts in economics and agriculture, and created two teams, one focused on socioeconomic development and the other on Jewish settlement and

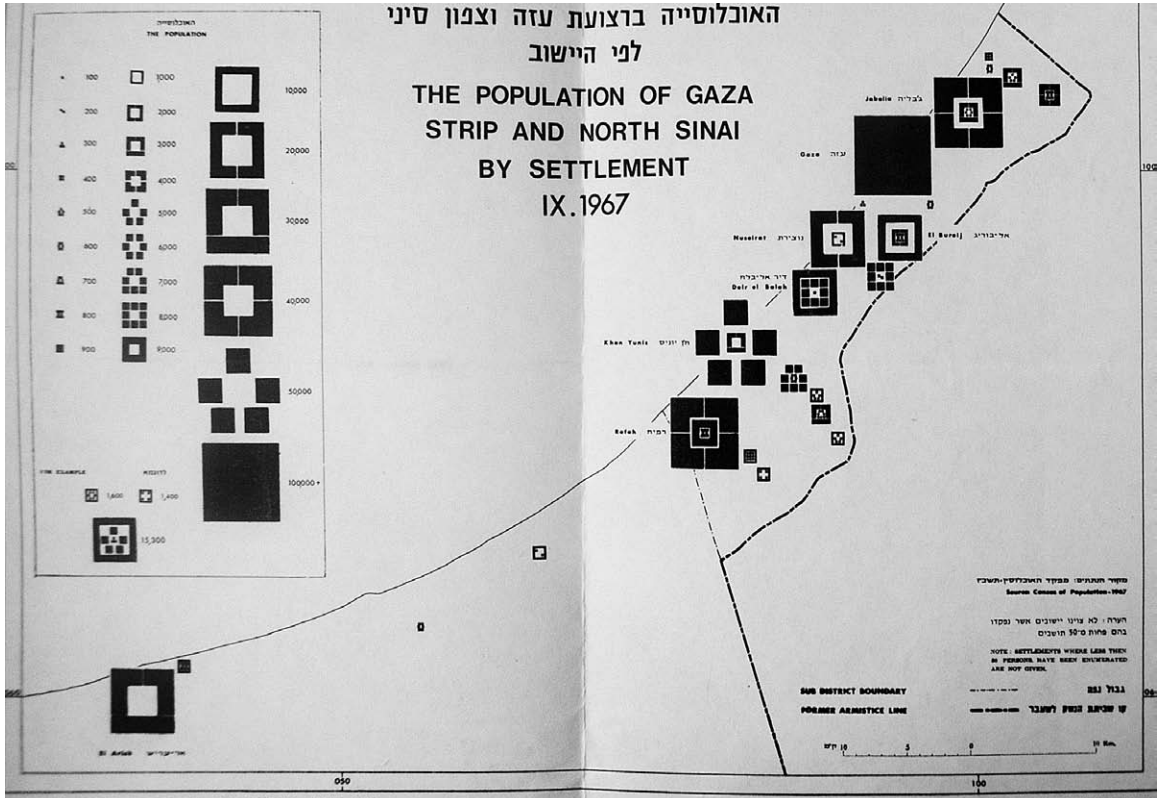


Figure 2.2. Cartographic representation of the population of the Gaza Strip and northern Sinai submitted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 1967. Israel State Archive, Planning Division, ISA-MOIN-InteriorPlans-0005g08.

the broader demographic considerations of the state.²² Each team was given two months to examine options for integrating the economies of the Gaza Strip and Israel, as well as to predict the likely social impacts of each proposal.²³ These two teams embodied the epistemological tensions playing out on the committee, between Patinkin and Bruno's economists on the one hand and Bachi's nationalist pioneers, headed by the agronomist Weitz, on the other.

The First Intradisciplinary Cracks

The socioeconomic team of the Professors' Committee was composed entirely of economists. Headed by Michael Bruno, the team assumed that solutions to the Gaza Strip problem could not be separated from those for the West Bank. Engaged to examine economic implications, team member Yoram Ben-Porat prepared a report with two external experts—sociologist and anthropologist Emanuel Marx and Middle East

historian Shimon Shamir. Marx and Shamir were asked to examine Israeli policy in the oPt in the period following the war, with a focus on the population of the Jalazone refugee camp, located five kilometers from Ramallah in the West Bank.²⁴

Ben-Porat, Marx, and Shamir claimed that development policy needed to be implemented cautiously and discreetly, so as not to create the impression within the refugee community that Israel was working to erase their status as refugees, undermine appeals for their right of return and compensation for their stolen possessions, or forfeit their right to aid from UNRWA. Israel, for its part, would supply the refugees with housing dispersed among permanent urban settlements, such that it would not be characterized as “refugee housing.” Further recommendations aimed to conceal the humanitarian role played by UNRWA and bring about the termination of the agency’s work in the long term, without declaring comprehensive plans for settling the refugee problem. The authors also identified the need to transform UNRWA from a voice of opposition to a collaborative body in initial planning processes. In sum, their preferred policy approach was to remake loaded political conflicts into mundane technical issues with noncontroversial solutions.

Ben-Porat, Marx, and Shamir’s report provided the knowledge base that informed subsequent work of the socioeconomic team. The team showed that, despite the territories’ vast physical area, their scope of economic activity was relatively minor, amounting to no more than 5 percent of Israel’s gross national product. Although aware of the agrarian basis of Palestinian society, it was clear to the team that economic development of the oPt must come from other sources, given the limited supply and demand for agricultural produce. In addition to the restricted market, water was also a limiting factor. To minimize the gaps between the territories and Israel, Patinkin’s logic leveraged microeconomic approaches to increase employment in the West Bank and gradually rehabilitate the refugees of the Gaza Strip. The refugee camps were to be remade as neighborhoods and suburbs of the adjacent cities.²⁵

Assuming that the oPt would be held for a long period of time, the report called for immediate solutions to ensure the physical and occupational security of the refugees. Believing the camps only served to perpetuate the refugee problem, committee members saw such security as contingent on Israel emptying the camps through a policy of rehabilitation. They suggested incentivizing refugees to leave the camps voluntarily, thereby freeing spaces inside the very dense spatial network of the camps. Aiming to narrow the gaps between refugees and local inhabitants, the report called for refugees to be provided with

basic housing in urban settlements. In the same way, their integration within the local labor market was key to ensuring the refugees' financial security and strengthening their social status outside the camps.

The team proposed two alternatives: hold on to the occupied territory, normalizing the local economic system without relocating the refugees, or relocating the refugees from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank as part of a ten-year plan.²⁶ Regarding the first alternative, the team saw that holding on to the Gaza Strip would require free trade between Israel and the West Bank, as well as increased employment in the West Bank by means of governmental development plans, particularly with respect to housing. The proposal would require Israel to invest approximately 73 million Israeli pounds, an estimate the team believed did not fully reflect the true cost to the Israeli economy of holding the occupied territory. Even taking into account unilateral transfers from abroad—with UNRWA payments constituting some three-quarters of the overall total—the Israeli economy maintained a persistent trade deficit. As Israel would not reach full employment or workforce utilization until 1971, a portion of national output could still be used to generate new employment. It was nonetheless clear to the members of the team that while this alternative would impose no net cost to the Israeli economy, without relocating the refugees from the Gaza Strip the overall refugee problem would persist.

To develop the second alternative, the team examined the possibility of absorbing the Gaza Strip's refugees in the West Bank. The team proposed relocating 2,000 to 4,000 families annually for the first few years and some 5,000 families annually thereafter, totaling approximately 50,000 refugee families in the first decade following the war (1967–1978). The camps could then be wiped from the Gaza Strip entirely. The team estimated that without actively incentivizing a large number of refugees to emigrate, some 250,000 refugees were likely to remain in the Gaza Strip. Requiring serious financial investment, the plan would impact the whole of the economy. The average cost of absorption of a refugee family was estimated at 20,000 Israeli pounds—half for housing and half for supplying means of production. In the decade following 1967, gross investment in the West Bank was estimated at 1.9 billion Israeli pounds. Of this, over two-thirds could be recouped through UNRWA's unilateral foreign currency transfers into the oPt—assuming such payments would continue, if in a different form, following a change in the refugees' status. For this reason, the proposal focused on industrialization of the occupied territory, as well as on rooting Palestinian economic dependency within Israel's overarching development agenda.

In parallel to considering the two proposals, the socioagricultural team was moving forward with economic plans for Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip and Sinai region. The team was headed by Raanan Weitz, an agronomist and head of the Jewish Agency's Settlement Department, and his approach to regional planning was deeply rooted in his ties to the Zionist settler movement and its philanthropic bodies. Weitz skillfully imposed his values on the settlement planners within the Jewish Agency, whom he viewed as "technicians." The ideological and conceptual frameworks that guided Weitz's approach to planning have been detailed in Smadar Sharon's research on the Lachish region. As the flagship project of the Jewish settlement enterprise, the Lachish development planned for the absorption of Jewish immigrants throughout the Negev region in the 1950s and outlined the planning of the Gaza Strip region (this so-called Eshkol regional plan is discussed in the next chapter).²⁷

Weitz studied agronomy in the Department of Agriculture at the University of Florence in Italy in the 1930s. During his studies, he took part in the development of the rural Pontine Marshes region under the Italian fascist regime. The project involved the building of new cities surrounded by rural villages and farms so that poor Italian peasants could settle there and thus constrain migration from villages to Italy's central cities; it was a means by which the totalitarian regime could effect disciplinary social engineering. In Florence, Weitz studied with Italian sociologists, who then joined the Italian colonialist project in Libya. After graduating in 1938, he returned to Palestine and began work in the Jewish Agency. But Weitz maintained professional ties with his former Italian colleagues and continued to visit Italy after being named deputy head of Israel's Settlement Department in the mid-1950s.

Weitz was thoroughly familiar with the models of demographic colonization tested in Italy and the Arab population centers of Libya. The models emphasized agricultural cooperation and domestication of nature through technological innovation, including extensive irrigation.²⁸ Weitz had also been influenced by the economist and sociologist Arthur Ruppin, one of the architects of Zionist settlement. Ruppin had imported the example of "internal colonialism" from Germany. Ruppin's planning model was premised on government appropriation of private land (Polish and German), which could then be transferred for settlement by German peasants in order to alter the demographic composition of the Poznan region (which then leaned Polish). What is missing, however, from Sharon's description of Weitz and his connection to the Italian-Israeli sphere is his relation to Bachi. During Bachi's tenure at the Central Bureau of Medical Statistics (Hadassah), where

he had developed his statistics on Jewish and Arab population trends, the Jewish Agency published a report on the census of Jerusalem. The report was based on Bachi's statistical methods and contained a chapter written by Bachi himself, "The True Rate of Natural Increase among the Jews of Jerusalem." Thus, the demographic problem that continued to vex the settler community brought Bachi and Weitz together to collaborate even after the founding of the state.²⁹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Weitz had grown familiar with the Gaza Strip well before 1967. As deputy head of the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, Weitz worked closely with Levi Eshkol, who had served as head of that department during Israel's brief first occupation of the Gaza Strip and later as prime minister (1966–1969) after the Gaza Strip had been reoccupied in 1967. In 1956, Weitz served on a committee examining the resettlement of refugees outside the Gaza Strip.³⁰ The committee operated in parallel to another—of which his father, Joseph Weitz, director-general of the Jewish Agency and obsessive advocate of compulsory transfer of the Palestinians, was a member—which had examined the possibility of resettling refugees in Libya.³¹

Weitz's family, cultural affiliation, and professional network thus broadened his demographic thinking with respect to the Gaza Strip. To further the settlement of the oPt, Weitz appealed to Edmund (Eddy) Rothschild, who chaired the international banking conglomerate owned by the Rothschild family. Weitz and Rothschild discussed formulating a program for refugee resettlement, which was to be integrated with a plan to develop regional water resources, a requisite precondition for the housing of Palestinian refugees in neighboring Arab countries. Weitz and Rothschild based their proposal on Eric Johnston's plan (see chapter 1), upon which both the United States and United Kingdom had worked intensively in the year prior to the 1967 war in hopes of securing UNRWA collaboration. The plan, which focused on the development of water resources primarily in the Jordan Valley and northwestern Sinai, aimed, *inter alia*, to facilitate the settlement of Palestinian refugees in the area, leveraging them as a workforce, as had been demonstrated in the interwar period in the Middle East and Africa in countries such as Greece, Syria, Lebanon, Algeria, Ethiopia, and Libya. Building on these understandings, Weitz submitted a preliminary report to Rothschild in which he suggested examining the area bounded by Rafah, El-Arish, and Abu-Ageila in northern Sinai for the possible development and resettlement of the refugees. El-Arish would serve as an urban center and, potentially, a port.³²

At a capital cost of UK£225 million, Weitz and Rothschild agreed on the construction of a desalination plant, increasing the supply of water

to Jordan, the Gaza Strip, and Israel by some three hundred million gallons per day. Rothschild contacted US and UK government bodies regarding the issue. In correspondence with the office of the British prime minister, it was explained to Rothschild that in Jordan this amount of water could be provided by developing existing groundwater resources at a capital cost of only UK£30 million. With regard to the Gaza Strip, they told Rothschild that a proposed dual-purpose power and desalination plant was feasible with a capacity not exceeding fifty million gallons per day but that, unlike Jordan, the Gaza Strip could not absorb the proposed 100 megawatts of surplus electrical capacity to be generated from the project. From the UK perspective, desalination in Jordan and the Gaza Strip was an uneconomic and—in the case of Jordan—unnecessary approach to the resettlement of refugees. With respect to Israel, the UK government maintained that, in the absence of an international scheme for the economic development of the entire region, it could not endorse Israeli plans to resettle refugees in Arab territories under occupation. In the wake of the 1967 war, the United Kingdom had become convinced that “the refugee problem is fundamentally political, and it calls for [a] political solution.”³³ Whereas Britain deemed construction of Weitz’s desalination plants to be technically feasible, it had serious economic and political doubts. While technological progress and national economic interests could potentially paper over some political issues, entrenched geopolitical interests were more likely to sap such technical solutions of their potential before any real momentum could be actualized. Notwithstanding these misgivings, the UK government did support the development of a nuclear power plant.

Undeterred, Rothschild turned his efforts toward the United States, where he tried to convince the government to provide US\$800 million to finance construction of a desalination plant, including US\$300 million for refugee housing. The US government suggested investment in a nuclear energy plant in the Middle East, which would help solve the refugee problem and represent a “shift in funds from a non-productive end use to end use.”³⁴ In parallel, the UK government responded that the construction of a desalination plant in Sinai would run counter to its policy of acting as an “emollient or a catalyst for peace-making,” as the proposed resettlement of refugees in Sinai would increase tension in the area and “further damage the extensive British interests in the Arab world.” The United Kingdom saw greater promise in the integration and employment programs under UNRWA, whose success could be strengthened by increasing Arab states’ economic capacities to establish general infrastructure. The UK government further emphasized

that the problem of Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip, unlike in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan (West and East Bank), was intrinsically *sui generis*, since there was no question of integrating three hundred thousand refugees within the communities of the Gaza Strip itself.³⁵

Eddy Rothschild persisted in testing the proposal and asked Weitz to prepare a report. Reviewing a triangle of 125,000 acres (500,000 dunams) marked out by Rafah, El-Arish, and Abu-Ageila—an area around one-third the size of Israel's own irrigable endowment—Weitz found that while the land was undeniably desert, it was suitable for growing semiannual crops. Referencing agricultural infrastructure design work carried out by the Planning Division of the Jewish Agency, he showed that every acre of land would require 3,500–4,000 cubic meters of water per annum to ensure double cropping (excluding 20 percent of the area for roads and ditches). To subsist with a net income of US\$1,000–1,200 per annum, Weitz estimated, an agrarian family would need 15–18 dunams, therefore requiring 12,000–15,000 cubic meters of water per annum. The Israeli government should, the report emphasized, provide each family US\$1,200–1,500 worth of building materials (as opposed to the US\$150 that refugee families received from the Egyptian government prior to Israeli occupation). Furthermore, Weitz prepared to undertake an additional survey to an area west of the triangle, an order of magnitude larger, between El-Arish and El-Qantara. The report concluded that at 15 dunams per family, 400,000 dunams could support 300,000 to 350,000 people (52,000 families), around half of whom would be subsidized farmers. These 52,000 households, Weitz argued, would require some US\$1,500 (for a total of \$78 million) in direct financial support, plus 400,000 million cubic meters of water annually at a cost of US\$16 million (at 4 cents per cubic meter).³⁶

The Professors' Committee thus faced two distinct approaches to the development and control of the oPt, and it had to decide between them.

Toward the Materialization of Two Plans

Within the primary sources and empirical research presented, one finds expert minds struggling to comprehend the politics of colonialism through scientific formulas and cartographies. The chapter that follows explores how causal explanations of extractivism, masked by Western beliefs in the development of the colonized, were manifested in distinct approaches to Israeli control of the Gaza Strip. The economic team headed by Bruno approached development from the cutting edge

of US discourse on development aid, where microeconomics was held up as a solution to national conflicts. In this camp, it was believed that the Palestinian refugees could be integrated within Israel's own economy, even if they were to remain in the Gaza Strip. The second team, headed by Weitz, embodied national perceptions of settler colonialism, in which the Judaization of territory was predicated on regional development—a civilizing mission targeting a backward population. Weitz held that Jewish settlement of the Gaza Strip would be possible only after the refugees had been housed elsewhere, within a wider framework of resource development throughout the Middle East.

Having received initial reports from their respective teams, Patinkin and Bachi asked for final proposals upon which to base a plan for the future of the oPt and resolution of the refugee problem. Two master plans emerged—competing visions reflecting Patinkin's and Bachi's discordant approaches to development. Each outlined a distinct way forward for Israel's spatial control, management, and integration of the Gaza Strip.