Abstract (summary)

By the beginning of June 1948, Arab regular armies were carrying their offensive into Palestine. At that time, about 190 Arab villages had been conquered by Jewish forces, and their Arab inhabitants, numbering about 145,000, became homeless. These data were compiled by an unofficial "Transfer Committee," which had not received authorization from the Israeli government, although its members were from the Jewish political elite. The figures were presented to the Israeli prime minister, David Ben Gurion, as part of the committee's proposed solution for blocking a possible return of the displaced Palestinian Arab population. In the opinion of the committee, to prevent the Arabs returning to their homes, the Israeli authorities would have to lay waste as many deserted villages as possible and establish in their place 90 new Jewish settlements. In those villages where destruction was impossible, the committee suggested renovating the existing buildings for habitation by Jews. The Arab refugees were to be resettled in Arab-controlled territories in different Arab states.(16)

According to its own data, by September 1949 the Settlement Department had rebuilt about 2,600 structures, (including housing units, stores and public buildings) for the use of settlers in cooperatives established in 27abandoned Arab villages.(29) Of the 96 settlements that were actually established between January and September, 27 were located in abandoned Arab sites, which meant that abandoned Arab structures were used in less then a third of the new settlements. The Settlement Department records indicate that the use of abandoned Arab structures decreased in the following months. Between September 1949 and September 1951, abandoned Arab structures in only eight additional villages were rebuilt, bringing to 35 the total number of abandoned villages whose built-up area was used by Jewish settlers. Moreover, using Arab structures was considered in most of the new settlements to be a temporary measure, preceding the construction of permanent new houses. In only 13 of these villages, were settlers to remain permanently in the renovated structures, and most of the new settlements were eventually built from scratch.(30)

The eradication of the Arab rural landscape included within the bounds of the State of Israel was by no means a consequence of pre-war Zionist planning, but a result of wartime and immediately post-war necessities. Demolition of abandoned villages and desolation of cultivated areas originated primarily from the Jewish leadership's wartime political and military considerations, although the cultural dimension of this process cannot be

overlooked. According to modernist and rationalist conceptions conveyed by Zionist leadership and members of the Jewish Zionist community in Palestine, the traditional Arab agricultural system was considered obsolete and backward. The Jewish national movement originated in Europe and was led by socialist parties, which considered the settlement of rural areas as the avant-garde in the process of the return of Jewish people to their ancient homeland. Such factors precluded the adoption of "primitive" Arab structures, especially as these were identified with an alien and hostile national entity that resented Zionist competition over the same tract of land. The most representative spatial structure of Zionism was the cooperative rural settlements: modern in design and meticulously planned. Structures that did not satisfy these standards had to be removed. Any other "rational" views concerning the usefulness of the Arab structures were dismissed by the majority of Jewish decision-makers and rural population.

Full Text
The Transformation of Abandoned Arab Rural Areas

INTRODUCTION

SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION RESULTING FROM WAR

CATASTROPHES, EITHER "NATURAL" OR "MAN-MADE," retain a significant place among the agents of transformation of human landscapes. They usually constitute a drastic effect, producing the extreme transformation of social, economic, cultural, and environmental systems.(1) These drastic catastrophic processes differ in magnitude, intensity, and frequency from dynamic processes involved in transforming human systems and landscapes, such as development, immigration, planning, etc.(2)

War produces a set of enduring catastrophes, causing a wide and drastic spatial transformation process, The destructive force of weaponry and the shortened decision-making process associated with war provide the opportunity for the different societal elements affected to change the established settlement picture with a rapidity impossible in times of peace.

This capacity for change is not uniform for all war situations, and depends on a number of factors, such as the type, range, and amount of arms and weapons in the possession of the belligerents, the scope of the military action, the political regime of the countries involved, which bears upon decision-making in such areas as use of weapons for mass destruction,

implementation of emergency measures and legislation, expulsion of certain groups, devastation of conquered areas, or using their physical and economic resources for the war effort.

The conclusion of a war situation, whether by a treaty, a cease-fire, or the surrender of one of the parties, marks the onset of an interim "immediately post-war" period. During this period, societies adapt to, or "digest" the outcome of the war. It is characterized by the reassimilation of soldiers into civilian life, the initial rehabilitation of areas destroyed in battle, resettlement or repatriation of refugees, and integration of conquered lands by the victorious side or adjustment to the loss of land and resources by the vanquished. The adaptation of the outcome of war might be achieved by using different means of coercion such as emergency legislation, compulsory labor, and enforced population movements. The end of this period is marked by gradually returning to a peace-time routine and to a permanent and profound rehabilitation process, in what might be referred to as the "post-war period."

The history of the twentieth century is replete with examples of these processes, including the effects of two world wars, national emancipation, and the decolonization that ensued.(3) The 1948 war as a whole is not an exceptional case among others, although distinctive of contemporaneous wartime and immediately post-war spatial transformation case studies because it ended with the inclusive reorganization of rural landscapes in the newly formed State of Israel. Arab rural structures had been almost totally eradicated and a new Jewish rural landscape was initiated. This is not to suggest that vast rural areas as those of post Second World War Poland or post partition Punjab did not undergo substantial devastation through wartime, but they had experienced some initial reconstruction effort during the immediate post-war period which was intended to reconstruct the prewar human environment counterpart to the development of new spatial structures. In the Israeli case, reconstruction involved a systematic annihilation of the old and an initial phase of the formation of new spatial structures by redistribution of agricultural lands and the establishment of a new settlement system.

In a recently published article written by G. Falah, a Palestinian geographer,(4) the annihilation of the Arab rural landscape that took place during the 1948 war and after is considered as an attempt to eradicate the Arab cultural landscape subsequent to an ethnic cleansing of Arab rural areas committed by the victorious Jewish side. The Israeli state sought the removal of past cultural traces of the Palestinians in order to form a new Jewish

cultural landscape manifesting the attachment of the Jewish people to what they considered their restored ancient homeland.

As demonstrated by contemporaneous cases of ethnic cleansing that took place in other parts of the world; e.g., in Eastern and Central Europe following the Second World War and in post partition Punjab -- devastation of built-up structures and the eradication of cultural landscapes did not necessarily follow the termination of the war. Moreover, houses and other installations were used for the resettlement of new populations, and were considered an essential infrastructure for the rehabilitation of destitute refugee populations.(5) The rationalization for the eradication of Palestinian Arab rural areas included within the bounds of the newly formed State of Israel should therefore be more carefully scrutinized.

Without disregarding Falah's argument, a wider set of explanations concerning the deeds of different elements among the Israeli political and social systems during wartime and immediately post-war periods of emergency should be presented in order to understand the spatial outcome of the 1948 war.

THE ARAB RURAL PERIPHERY DURING THE 1948 WAR

The history of Palestine since the First World War is imbued with violent struggles between the Jewish Zionist and Palestinian Arab national movements over the control of a country considered as a homeland by both sides. As long as Palestine was under British mandatory rule (1917-1947), the conflict was limited to quasi-war situations; i.e., urban rioting or guerrilla warfare. Its spatial effects were confined to such aspects as a growing separation of Jewish and Arab communities in mix-populated cities and towns and the establishment of fortified Jewish agricultural settlements.

The 1948 war, the first in an enduring Arab-Israeli conflict, was a postcolonial struggle, and can be viewed as the destiny of a segment of the disintegrating British empire. The war ended with the defeat of the Arab side -- the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states -- and the establishment of the State of Israel by the Jewish zionist national movement. During the actual period of fighting (December 1947 to January 1949), the vast majority of the Arab population of the territory included within the bounds of the newly formed Jewish state either fled or were expelled, and the abandoned areas were eventually repopulated by Jews.

There is considerable argument concerning the number of Palestinian Arab refugees. Official Israeli sources have proposed 520,000, while Arab estimates have varied between 750,000 and

1,000,000, and British estimates range from 600,000 to 760,000.(6) It is estimated that about half the Arab population who left their homes during the 1948 war came from rural settlements.(7)

As with the number of refugees, there is considerable argument concerning the number of abandoned Arab villages. Official Israeli data from the early 1950s mention 360 sites. Research conducted by Palestinians in the 1980s placed the number at between 390 and 472. These discrepancies derive from the problematic definition of the unit of measurement due to differences between the official figures on Arab villages published by the British mandate government.(8)

The main wave of Jewish immigration to Israel, consisting of about 690,000 people, began with the establishment of the state in mid-May 1948 and lasted until the end of 1951. Among the immigrants were survivors of the Holocaust and oriental Jews who had left Arab and Moslem countries due to the growing tension between Arab and Moslem majorities and Jewish minorities.(9) These immigrants were the largest Jewish group to be settled in abandoned Arab areas and on abandoned Arab lands.

THE WARTIME DEPOPULATION OF THE ARAB RURAL PERIPHERY

During the first three months of the war, most of the fighting took place in the urban areas of Palestine, while fighting in rural areas was scattered. Jewish forces raided villages considered to be bases for Arab guerrilla forces operating against Jewish settlements and transportation lines. These raids usually resulted in the bombing of a number of houses, and sometimes in the killing or injuring of some of their inhabitants.(10)

In March 1948, Arab attacks on isolated Jewish settlements and transportation lines became more frequent and heavy. In addition to facing the escalation of the war with the Palestinian Arabs, the Jewish leadership was expecting an invasion of Arab regular forces from neighboring countries into Palestine at the formal termination of the British rule on 15 May 1948. To defeat the Arab guerrilla forces and prepare for the expected invasion, the Haganah(11) initiated an offensive according to principles drawn up in Plan "Dalet."(12)

Formulated in February-March 1948, the plan pinpointed Arab settlements to be taken over by Jewish forces. Villages located in strategic places or which were known to be "breeding grounds of insurrection" were designated for "obliteration," to use the terms of the plan. This

meant displacement of the inhabitants across Arab lines and demolition of the houses and other buildings to their foundations. In less militarily important villages, if the Arab residents resisted Jewish occupation, they had to be transferred to an area outside Jewish territory, and a garrison was to be set up at the evacuated site. The number of villages specifically earmarked for obliteration or evacuation was small, although the plan stipulated that local senior commanders could, at their discretion, increase or reduce this number. However, in most of the villages that had to be taken over, the inhabitants were to be allowed to remain if they did not offer resistance.(13)

The course of a war is unpredictable and even the best-laid plans cannot anticipate all that transpires on the field of battle. During the Jewish offensive that was initiated at the beginning of April, most of the decisions to destroy built-up areas of conquered Arab villages were taken by local commanders, and destruction was not necessarily of those designated for "obliteration" by Plan Dalet, although it can be assumed that local commands, which had received copies of the plan by mid-March, were aware of these instructions and were operating according to the spirit of its regulations. In any case, in the day-to-day reality of this irregular or semi-regular war, the villages served as tactical and logistic bases for Arab forces, and their destruction was considered essential.

By mid-May, about 150 Arab villages had been taken over. In all but a few cases, most of the inhabitants fled before or during the battle.(14) Both sides lacked heavy weaponry, so damage to built-up areas during actual fighting was meager when compared with, for example, the devastation of rural parts of northern and north-eastern France during the First World War, or to western and northern Poland following the Second World War.(15) While the number of conquered villages increased, demolition operations became rare due to shortage of explosives and other means of destruction, and to the fact that the sites of most of the villages had no military value that demanded their "obliteration."

DECIDING OVER THE FATE OF THE ABANDONED RURAL ARAB SETTLEMENT SYSTEM

By the beginning of June 1948, Arab regular armies were carrying their offensive into Palestine. At that time, about 190 Arab villages had been conquered by Jewish forces, and their Arab inhabitants, numbering about 145,000, became homeless. These data were compiled by an unofficial "Transfer Committee," which had not received authorization from the Israeli government, although its members were from the Jewish political elite. The figures were presented to the Israeli prime minister, David Ben Gurion, as part of the committee's proposed

solution for blocking a possible return of the displaced Palestinian Arab population.
In the opinion of the committee, to prevent the Arabs returning to their homes, the Israeli
authorities would have to lay waste as many deserted villages as possible and establish in their
place 90 new Jewish settlements. In those villages where destruction was
impossible, the committee suggested renovating the existing buildings for habitation by
Jews. The Arab refugees were to be resettled in Arab-controlled territories in different Arab
states.(16)

Had these recommendations been accepted by the Israeli government, the outcome would have
been a swift overall change of the human landscape in a considerable part of the rural area that
was controlled by Israel. Actually, the committee was proposing an immediately post-war
territorial reorganization. Ben-Gurion, who was more aware than the committee members of
the problems inherent in conducting a war, decided to reject the plan for both external and
internal reasons.

Regarding the former, peace negotiations with the Arabs mediated by the United Nations, were
already underway. Any step toward overall territorial change, which
meant the implementation of immediately post-war measures and which did not
reflect the views of the United States-backed UN intermediary, was liable to have the opposite
effect, such as pressure for the unilateral withdrawal of Israel from the conquered areas
and the inevitable exacerbation of the military situation.(17)

The internal reason for Ben-Gurion's decision was a political and ideological dispute in Israel
concerning the fate of the Arab refugees. The Israeli Prime Minister was not interested, at
time of war, in widening internal power struggles prevailing in the Israeli political system.(18)
Moreover, there were some institutions among the Israeli administrative system that were
interested in the preservation of the built-up areas of abandoned Arab villages for practical
reasons. The Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency planned to use them as temporary
accommodation for Jewish populations evicted from front-line agricultural settlements. The
Department for Absentees' Property operating within the Israeli Ministry for Minority Affairs
resented indiscriminate desolation of Arab villages, demanding a piecemeal operation that would
afford the preservation of such property as tiles, windows, doors, etc., for recycled use by
Jews.(19)

In July 1948, the Israeli government decided its policy: maintaining control of the Arab rural
areas and blocking the return of refugees by leasing the land to Jewish farmers for cultivation for
a one-year period, while refraining from systematic destruction and repopulation. From this point

on, a government-appointed Custodian for Absentee Property, which was subjugated to the Treasury, was authorized to supervise the abandoned property and the Agricultural Ministry was to be responsible for leasing abandoned land.(20) These procedures were to be seen as war-time rather than immediately post-war measures, so as not to suggest that this temporary land redistribution was leading to a permanent one.

The battles of the summer and fall of 1948 increased the area under Israeli control and led to a significant growth in the number of abandoned villages and inhabitants who fled or were expelled. During the entire period from July to November 1948, the government's temporary land-lease policy and directives concerning minimal use or destruction of structures in the abandoned Arab villages remained in effect, despite pressure from different institutions involved with the settlement of Jews and from local Jewish leadership to either demolish the sites and/or populate large parts of the area with Jewish settlers.(21)

Meanwhile, the army was the major body that nevertheless continued to demolish abandoned Arab structures. In contrast with the demolition carried out in the spring and early summer of 1948 on the initiative of local commanders, the decisions regarding demolition were now being made at the level of the Front Commands and officers of the General Staff. Although the military command instructed that demolition operations be regulated, its activities did not meet the wishes of the political ranks. A government committee on issues of abandoned property, headed by Ben-Gurion, was set up in July. At its meetings on 17 September and 1 October 1948, it was decided that no village building was to be destroyed without the committee's approval. Along with foreign and internal policy considerations, the government wanted to begin using the buildings in a number of villages for housing new Jewish immigrants,(22) especially in the environs of Tel Aviv.(23)

A sweeping change in the government's attitude came about in December 1948 with the acceptance of UN General Assembly resolution 194 that called upon the State of Israel to allow those Palestinian Arab refugees who were interested in living in peace to return to their homes. The possibility of a massive influx of returning refugees was seen by the Israeli leadership as a threat to the very existence of the Jewish state. To prevent this from occurring, plans for rapid population of the abandoned areas were initiated, along with the wide-scale transfer of abandoned lands to Jewish settlements.(24) The expected source of population for the new settlements was the Jewish immigrants streaming into Israel.(25)

ABANDONED ARAB RURAL AREAS IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-WAR PERIOD

JEWISH SETTLEMENT PROCESS AND CONTROLLING THE ARAB ABANDONED AREAS

The establishment of Jewish Zionist settlements during the British Mandate period was coordinated by different branches of the Zionist movement. The leading ones among them were the JNF (Jewish National Fund), which purchased and allotted the nationally-owned lands, and the Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency, which organized the actual settlement. These -- known as the "settling institutions" -- retained their position after the establishment of Israel due to their skill and proficiency.

To coordinate the activities of these two organizations, a management committee had been set up toward the end of the British period which was comprised of two representatives from the Jewish Agency and two from the JNF. Representatives of other institutions who had an interest in the settlement process, such as the General Staff of the Israeli Army, Israeli government offices, and Jewish sectarian organizations, were invited to participate in its discussions, but were not nominated to be actual members of the committee.

Most settlements established by the Zionist movements were agricultural cooperatives, which was considered to be the most efficient means of achieving national and social goals set by Zionist ideology. When the 1948 war broke, all available manpower and resources were dedicated to the military effort and settlement plans were postponed. As the existence of Israel was secured in June 1948, a limited settlement process was conducted in strategic regions, mainly on Jewish-owned land, government lands, or some abandoned Arab lands with a legal status such as to allow their relatively easy transfer into Jewish hands.(26)

Following the acceptance of UN resolution 194 and the end of the major battles of the war in January 1949,the aim shifted toward gaining maximum control of territories that were within the bounds of the State of Israel. Thus, the settlement issue was freed from any political and territorial limitations that had existed during the war period, and greater financial resources were made available for establishing new settlements.

In early January 1949, the management committee presented its plan to the Israeli government. It proposed the establishment of 69 new agricultural cooperatives during the winter and spring of that year. Of these, 56 were to be established on abandoned Arab village sites, including 31 in which the original buildings would serve as living quarters.(27)

Consequently, the Jewish Agency allocated 1.9 million pounds sterling to renovate former Arab homes for housing new Jewish immigrants. By the end of April, 1.5 million pounds sterling of this budget had already been spent,(28) most of it for reconstruction of the built-up area of a small number of large abandoned Arab villages near Jewish urban centers which were to become urban settlements or neighborhoods. Only a small percentage was spent on reconstruction in abandoned villages destined to become cooperative agricultural settlements. The next step was taken in June 1949, when an additional 83 cooperative settlements were planned for establishment by September of that year. Only a part of these were located in abandoned Arab village sites and/or made use of existing abandoned structures.

According to its own data, by September 1949 the Settlement Department had rebuilt about 2,600 structures, (including housing units, stores and public buildings) for the use of settlers in cooperatives established in 27abandoned Arab villages.(29) Of the 96 settlements that were actually established between January and September, 27 were located in abandoned Arab sites, which meant that abandoned Arab structures were used in less then a third of the new settlements. The Settlement Department records indicate that the use of abandoned Arab structures decreased in the following months. Between September 1949 and September 1951, abandoned Arab structures in only eight additional villages were rebuilt, bringing to 35 the total number of abandoned villages whose built-up area was used by Jewish settlers. Moreover, using Arab structures was considered in most of the new settlements to be a temporary measure, preceding the construction of permanent new houses. In only 13 of these villages, were settlers to remain permanently in the renovated structures, and most of the new settlements were eventually built from scratch.(30)

Of the two hundred fifty, new Jewish cooperative agricultural settlements established between 1948 and 1951,(31) in only 14% was any use made of existing structures of abandoned Arab sites, and in only a third of them (i.e., 4% of all new settlements) were the settlers supposed to remain permanently in abandoned Arab buildings.

NEW JEWISH SETTLEMENTS AND ABANDONED ARAB PROPERTY

The question one might ask is why was such little use made of abandoned Arab structures in the immediately post-war period at a time when there was a severe housing shortage and tens of thousands of Jewish immigrants were forced to live in temporary housing in transit camps -- mainly tents, canvas huts, and shacks -- lacking minimal infrastructure and amenities, and exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather. The answer lies on several levels.

The first level is the military. Buildings in abandoned villages were used by the Israeli army for training purposes, destroyed as part of tactical field organization by the fighting forces, or were vandalized by soldiers housed in them.(32) This has been found to be a typical wartime process in an immediately post-war period.

The second is the political. As mentioned above, an important consideration in the destruction of Arab villages was preventing the return of the original inhabitants lest they form a fifth column. To this end, some abandoned villages in frontier regions of Israel were demolished by government authorities at the end of1948.(33) The consolidation of a policy for the widespread systematic destruction of abandoned Arab village was initiated by the Israeli government in May 1949, prompted mainly by American diplomatic pressure. The Palestine Conciliation Commission, set up according to UN resolution 194, was meeting at the time in Lausanne. The Americans demanded that Israel should allow the Arab refugees, albeit only some, to return to their homes so that the peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab nations could move forward.(34)

A senior Israeli negotiator at Lausanne advised the government to devastate 40 abandoned Arab villages to make the return of their former Arab populations impossible. Most of these villages were located in Israel's southern coastal plain, and a few along the road from Tel-Aviv to Jerusalem. This was not by chance, for these areas constituted the "land bridge" between Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem, and the southern parts of the state. According to the 1947 UN partition proposal,(35) most of the villages were included in the envisioned Arab state, and the Israelis feared that, as part of the peace agreement, they would be forced to give either some or all of them up or allow the return of their Arab inhabitants.(36)

Demolition began in July 1949 with the directive of the Manager of the Public Works Division of the Israel Ministry of Labor to demolish the majority of the houses in those villages. The decision was taken in the face of increasing American pressure being exerted on the Israeli delegation in Lausanne to soften Israel's position regarding the return of the refugees. Demolition operations were extended through 1949 and 1950 to other regions of Israel.(37) The author of the decision, one may assume, was Ben Gurion himself.

The third level is the cultural-ideological. Modernist Jewish planners, occupied by the Israeli government ministries and Zionist institutions involved in the construction of a new Jewish rural settlement system, foresaw the difficulties in adapting Arab rural structures and cultivation methods, which they regarded as obsolete and irrational, and

conforming the "primitive" lifestyle of an alien hostile population, hence unsuitable
for the Jewish agricultural system.

The clustered and agglomerated pattern of the traditional Arab village was fundamentally
different from the planned patterns typical of Jewish settlements.(38) The transformation of
the traditional Arab rural layout into that of a Jewish rural settlement, mainly a cooperative form
that had been planned according to socialist and modernist conceptions originating in European
culture, required the destruction of many buildings and the removal of debris, all at great cost.
Large parts of the abandoned villages were actually demolished by the Settlement
Department(39) or by Jewish settlers(40) during the first half of 1949. Finally, in August, experts
from the Settlement Department visiting abandoned Arab sites concluded that it was preferable
to establish completely new settlements rather than to populate those abandoned by the
Arabs.(41) Building modern houses was preferred by Jewish authorities and settlers, rather than
taking over what they saw as "primitive" houses, the habitation of an underdeveloped enemy
population.

Proponents of the modernist Jewish agricultural system
disapproved of traditional Arab cultivation methods. The tillage of small terraced
plots abandoned by Arabs in mountainous zones of northern and central Israel was considered
obsolete, and these lands were reserved for forestry. The Jews preferred to reclaim uncultivated
lands in the plains of the arid southern part of Israel by developing irrigation projects. Vast areas
of abandoned Arab olive groves were neglected by Jewish farmers, as the cultivation of olives
demanded a large investment of labor, but promised small profits.(42) Most of all, the olive
groves, which were uncommon among Jewish settlements, signified the "otherness" of the
Arab: the alien, the enemy.

The fourth level is the functional. Due to a wartime shortage of building materials, the Israeli
government initiated the planned demolition of abandoned Arab buildings in different parts of
the country to recover building blocks (stones), rafters, doors, windows, bathroom fixtures, and
so on. Some of this recycling of building materials was the result of non-institutional activities;
that is, of individuals among the Jewish population who pillaged abandoned structures.(43)

Mass destruction met some opposition from various Israeli institutions, asserting
that abandoned buildings could be populated as an alternative method of preventing the return of
Arab refugees. Government officials in charge of Arab affairs implied that abandoned villages
could be used for housing the 23,000 Arab refugees remaining within the Israeli
territory. The government Planning Branch raised opposition to the widespread destruction of

abandoned buildings that could be used for housing some of the 100,000 Jewish immigrants living in transit camps. The Planning Branch blamed the Settlement Department for unrestricted demolition and the contraction of the housing potential of abandoned Arab settlements.(44) These, however, did not change the demolition policy, since they offered no alternative to what were considered by the Israeli leadership as military and political necessities.

Villages that were not totally demolished were disintegrating throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Their built-up areas and infrastructure systems deteriorated and collapsed, and after a while were demolished by Israeli authorities. During the post 1948 war period (1950-1967), almost all the fragments of the abandoned Arab landscape prevailing in Israel's rural areas were eradicated.(45)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The eradication of the Arab rural landscape included within the bounds of the State of Israel was by no means a consequence of pre-war Zionist planning, but a result of wartime and immediately post-war necessities. Demolition of abandoned villages and desolation of cultivated areas originated primarily from the Jewish leadership's wartime political and military considerations, although the cultural dimension of this process cannot be overlooked. According to modernist and rationalist conceptions conveyed by Zionist leadership and members of the Jewish Zionist community in Palestine, the traditional Arab agricultural system was considered obsolete and backward. The Jewish national movement originated in Europe and was led by socialist parties, which considered the settlement of rural areas as the avant-garde in the process of the return of Jewish people to their ancient homeland. Such factors precluded the adoption of "primitive" Arab structures, especially as these were identified with an alien and hostile national entity that resented Zionist competition over the same tract of land. The most representative spatial structure of Zionism was thecooperative rural settlements: modern in design and meticulously planned. Structures that did not satisfy these standards had to be removed. Any other "rational" views concerning the usefulness of the Arab structures were dismissed by the majority of Jewish decision-makers and rural population.

About two hundred Jewish settlements were established during war- time and the immediately post-war period (December 1947-March 1950), thereby promoting the political, military, economic, and social objects of the newly born Jewish state. The settlement system established on abandoned Arab lands manifested an utterly different spatial pattern across the wide rural areas included within the Israeli territory. Only a handful among these settlements

used Arab structures. Pre-1948 Arab cultural landscapes were doomed to disappear from Israel's rural landscape.

The transformation of rural Arab areas included within the bounds of the State of Israel was distinguished by the incisive and swift characteristics of a political and military process occurring in wartime and in the immediately post-war periods and by the deep cultural alienation between Palestinian Arabs and Zionist Jews. The human landscape designed by the toil of many generations was eradicated in a short immediately post-war period lasting no more than eighteen months. To replace it, a new Jewish rural settlement system was initially constructed during a brief war and the immediately post-war period. In just two years, Palestine's traditional Middle-Eastern rural landscape was transformed into a Jewish Europeanized landscape formed according to modernist and socialist conceptions. Any interpretation of the recent Israeli rural landscape is impossible without recognizing the incisive effect of the 1948 war.

NOTES

(1). Catastrophes such as floods, earthquakes and droughts are considered "natural," while others, such as the breakdown of nuclear or industrial plants, are considered "man-made" catastrophes. Regardless of the type, the magnitude of calamity depends on the capacity, of the affected human society to cope with the outcomes. See W. Zelinsky and L.A. Kosinski, The Emergency Evacuation of Cities (Savage, MD. 1991); A. Oliver-Smith, "Introduction, Disaster Context and Causation: An Overview of Changing Perspectives," in A. Oliver-Smith (ed), Natural Disasters and Cultural Response, Department of Anthropology, College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA, 1986) 1-35.

(2). A helpful metaphor in this context is the distinction made by Mike Davis among processes forming temperate and Mediterranean landscapes of northeastern and southwestern regions of the United States; see, M. Davis, "Los Angeles After the Storm: The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster," Antipode, 27(3) (1995) 221-41.

(3). M.J. Proudfoot, European Refugees: 1939-1952 (London, 1956); J.B. Schechtman, Postwar Population Transfers in Europe 1945-1955 (Philadelphia, PA, 1962); K. Singh, The Partition of the Punjab (Patiala, India, 1972); S.E Ladas, The Exchange of Minorities: Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey (New York, 1932).

(4). G. Falah, "The 1948 Israeli-Palestinian War and Its Aftermath: The Transformation and De-Signification of Palestine's Cultural Landscape," Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 86(2) (1995) 256-85.

(5). Schechtman, Postwar Population Transfers; Singh, The Partition of the Punjab.

(6). B. Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949 (Cambridge, UK, 1987) 297-8; B. Kimmerling and J.S. Migdal, Palestinians: The Making of a People (Cambridge, MA, 1993) 146-56.

(7). W. Khalidi (ed), All that Remains (Washington, DC, 1992) 581-2.

(8). The Israel data sources are: Israel State Archives (ISA), Foreign Ministry (FM)-2401/22, memorandum on Arab refugee settlements (7 September 1953); ISA, the Prime Minister Ministry-C5440-210/55, government secretary to members of government (16 February 1950). For a summary of the Palestinian research data, see Khalidi, All that Remains, xv-xxi.

(9). J. Vainstein, "Immigration and Settlement," in I. Cohen (ed), The Rebirth of Israel (Westport, CT, 1952) 247-62.

(10). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 156-7; B. Etzioni, Ilan vaShelah Ma'arachot [TheTree and the Sword] (Tel-Aviv, 1952) 83-6 [Hebrew]; Z. Eshel, Hativat Carmeli be Milhemet ha Komimiut [TheCarmeli Brigade in the War of Independence] (Tel-Aviv, 1973) 40-1 [Hebrew]; A. Ailon, Hativat Givati beMilhemet haKomimiut [The Givati Brigade in the War of Independence] (Tel-Aviv, 1959) 233-7 [Hebrew];the destruction of houses as punishment for crimes was employed by the British during the quasi-war period of 1936-1939 (the Arab Revolt), as hundreds of houses in Arab villages whose owners were suspected of abetting the revolutionaries were demolished, see: Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 156.

(11). "Haganah" (the Hebrew term for "defense") was the name of the main paramilitary Jewish organization operating in British controlled Palestine and directed by the Zionist leadership. Its general staff and different units were the foundations of the Israeli army (IDF= Israel Defense Force), established formally in May 1948.

(12). "Dalet" is the fourth letter in the Hebrew alphabet, equivalent to "D."

(13). Archives of the History of the Haganah, 73/94, Plan Dalet (10 March 1948). This document, as well as several others describing the basic structure and original thinking behind the formation of the new army, may be found in English translation in Amir Bar-Or, "The Army's Role in Israeli Strategic Planning: A Documentary Record," Israel Studies, 1(2) (1996) 98-121, document II.

(14). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, index for map no. 2 and 159-60; A. Golan, "Tfisat Karka Arvit al Idai Yeshuvim Yehudim beMilchemet haAtzmaut" [The Transfer of Abandoned Rural Arab Lands to Jews during Israel's War of Independence], Catedra, 63 (1992) 124-5, 128 [Hebrew].

(15). See H.D. Clout, "The Revival of Lorraine after the Great War," Geografiska Annaler, 75(B) (1993) 73-91, as well as his "Reconstructing the Countryside of the Eastern Somme after the Great War," Erdkunde, 48 (1994) 136-149; and F.E.I. Hamilton, Poland's Western and Northern Territories (Oxford, 1975).

(16). ISA, FM-2564/14, Ex-Post Facto Transfer; the recommendations were based on precedent cases ofpopulation exchange such as those between Turkey and Greece and India and Pakistan.

(17). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem; Golan, "Tfisat Karka Arvit."

(18). For a description of the struggle between Mapai and Mapam for the control of the army, see A. Shapira, MePiturei haRama ad Piruk haPalmach [The Army Controversy 1948: Ben-Gurion's Struggle for Control] (Efal, 1985) [Hebrew]; Y. Gelbet, Lama Perku et haPalmach? [Why was the Palmach Dismanteled?] Jerusalem & Tel-Aviv, 1986) [Hebrew].

(19). A. Golan, "The Transfer to Jewish Control of Abandoned Arab Land during the War of Independence," in S.I. Troen and N. Lucas (eds), Israel, The First Decade of Independence (Albany, NY, 1995) 412-13; Central Zionist Archives (CZA), KKL5, 17146, Bobritski to Horin (22 April 1948); Labor Archives (LA), 235-1-IV, 2251C, Bobritski to the Settlement Department (21 June 1948).

(20). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem; Golan, "Tfisat Kafka Arvit."

(21). Golan, "Tfisat Karka Arvit," 135-48

(22). At that time, these were mostly Holocaust survivors from Europe.

(23). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 163-168; ISA, FM-2401/ 21/A, Protocol of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers for Issues of Abandoned Property (5 November 1948); Archives ofUnited Kibbutz Movement, personal archives of Aharon Zisling (the first Israeli Minister of Agriculture) 44-9-9, Protocol of the meeting of the Committee of Ministers on Issues of Abandoned Property (17 September 1948); Archives of the Israel Defense Forces (IDFA), 2433/ 50-11, Brigadier A. Avner to Chief of Staff, Operations Branch HQ (1 October 1948), A. Avner to Chief of Staff (26 November 1948), A. Avner to Yadin (3 January 1949).

(24). For a detailed discussion of the land transformation, see Golan, The Transfer to Jewish Control of Abandoned Arab Land, 403-40.

(25). Golan, "Tfisat Karka Arvit," 149-53. The number of Jews immigrating to Israel from its foundation to the end of 1951, since the first wave of Jewish immigration to Israel was over, was about 693,000, of which about 100,000 came during 1948. For details concerning Jewish immigration statistics, see Vainstein, "Immigration and Settlement"; on the need for widespread settlements within a short time, see Conversation of Ben-Gurion with P. Yarshov, held on 27 December 1948 in Y. Freundlich (ed), Teudot leMidiniut haHuz shel Midinat Yisrael [Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel], vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1984) 315 [Hebrew]; on theposition of Israel regarding the return of a minimum number of refugees and the solution of the problem via their settlement in Arab countries with restitution for their land, see M. Sharett to A. Eban (9 February 1949) in ibid., 423-4.

(26). Golan, "Tfisat Karka Arvit," 135-8.

(27). A. Golan, Shinui haMapah haYishuvit beAizorim Netushim al Yidei haOhlusia haAravit keToza'ah miMilhemet haAzmaut beShetah bo Kama Midinat Yisrael [The New Settlement Map of the Area Abandoned by ArabPopoulations within the Territory of Israel during Israel's War of Independence], Unpublished Ph.D. thesis,The Hebrew University (Jerusalem, 1993) 330-44 [Hebrew].

(28). CZA, Protocols of Jewish Agency management meetings, vol. 56, said by Z. Herman (29 April 1949).

(29). CZA, A202/115B, plan for new immigration and immigrant absorption in the settlements, Series B (14 June 1949); ibid., S43/229, approved budget for housing renovation

on abandoned property (30 August 1949); ISA, Planning BranchCL3729-3, settlements set up since declaration of statehood.

(30). CZA, S15/9784, Settlement Department to M. Shatner (20 March 1952), summary of findings regarding housing renovation in abandoned villages, end 1951.

(31). For data on the number of settlements established since the establishment of the State of Israel, see A. Bain, Aliya veHityashvut beMidinat Yisrael [Immigration and Settlement in the State of Israel] (Jerusalem, 1982) 273-89 [Hebrew]; H. Gvati, Mayah Shnot Hityashvut [A Century of Settlement], vol. 2 (Efal, 1981) 309-41 [Hebrew].

(32). Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 169.

(33). CZA, KKL9/230, YosefNahmani to Main Office, KKL (2 November 1948), Custodian for Absentee Property, Zefat to KKL, Tiberias (2 February and 14 July 1949); ibid., S15/9784, A. Weiderman to S. Zegorsky (15 August 1950); ibid., KKL9/ 25 -- the entire file deals with the issue of destruction of the houses in Samakh and useof the their materials in 1949-1953.

(34). On the meeting of the conference and American pressure on Israel, see: I. Rabinowitz, HaShalom Shehamak [The Road not Taken: Early Arab-Israeli Negotiations] (Jerusalem, 1991) 26-8 [Hebrew].

(35). On 29 November 1947, the UN Assembly, in its resolution 181, recommended ending British rule in Palestine and dividing the country into two states: one Arab and one Jewish. The resolution was rejected byArab Palestinian leadership and the Arab states.

(36). ISA, Labor Ministry (LM)-C6179-631510, list initialed Z.L. [this was apparently Zalman Lif], Lausanne (15 May 1949).

(37). ISA, ibid., A. Aharonov to the Tel-Aviv district engineer and the Jerusalem district engineer (1 July 1949); V. Eitan to Moshe Sharett (23 June 1949), and M. Sharett, instructions to representatives (25 July 1949); Y. Friedlander to the General Manager, PWD (1 February 1950). Ibid., LM-C/6179-63108, PWD -- Monthly Report, January 1950; ibid., Public Works Department (14-7)-CL/9225-1/7, A. Ahronov to the Minister of Labor (5 June 1950). See also Y. Rozenthal (ed), Teudat leMidiniut haHuz shel Medinat Yisrael [Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel], vol. 4 (Jerusalem, 1986) 154, 241-6 [Hebrew].

(38). On the pattern of the Arab village in Palestine, see Y. Ben Artzi, "Traditional and Modern RuralSettlement Types in Eretz Israel in the Modern Era," in R. Kark (ed), The Land That Became Israel (Jerusalem, 1989) 133-46; M. Brawer, "Transformation in Arab Rural Settlement in Palestine," in ibid., 167-80; and on different patterns of Jewish settlements, S. Weintraub, M. Lissak and Y. Azmon, Moshava, Kibbutz and Moshav (Ithaca & London, 1969).

(39). ISA, LM-C/6179-63108, PWD -- Monthly Report, January 1950; ibid., Public Works Department (147)-CL/9225-1/7, A. Ahronov to the Minister of Labor (5 June 1950). For what happened in some villages in theperipheries of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, see Golan, unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, 71-6, 278-88.

(40). IDFA, 2433/50-11, Brigadier A. Avner to Chief of Staff (26 November 1948); LA, IV-219B, 313, said by P. Engel of Kheiriya at a meeting on the abandoned settlements (15 October 1949); ISA, LM-C6179-631510, A. Bruzkus to Z. Bernzon (apparently from April 1950 [Ed.]).

(41). ISA, Supply and Rationing Ministry-C215-23/10, Raanan Weitz to Levi Eshkol (26 October 1949); CZA, KKL5/17148, S. Zagorsky to D. Shafrir (19 August 1949); ibid., S15/9603, L. Eshkol to Klivaner (22 November 1949); LA, 235-IV-5, 608, N. Shahor to the Settlement Department (7 February 1950).

(42). A. Golan, "Shinui Hanof Hyeshuvi shel Hastachim Ha'arvim Shnitsu beMilchemet ha'Atzmaut" [The 1948 War and the Transformation of Abandoned Arab Rural Areas], HaZionut, 20 (1996) 221-42 [Hebrew].

(43). CZA, KKL9/230, Yosef Nahmani to Main Office, KKL (2 November 1948), Custodian for Absentee Property, Zefat to KKL, Tiberias (2 February and 14 July 1949); ibid., S15/9784, A. Weiderman to S. Zegorsky (15 August 1950); ibid., KKL 9/ 25 -- the entire file deals with the issue of destruction of the houses in Samakh and theuse of the their materials in 1949-1953.

(44). CZA, KKL5/18875, Z. Lif to the Custodian (11 December 1949); ISA, LMC6179-631510, A. Bruzkus to Z. Bernzon [this was apparently in April 1950]; on the Arab refugees remaining in the State of Israel, see C.S. Kamen, "After the Catastro- phe, Part I: The Arabs in Israel, 1948-1951," Middle Eastern Studies, 23(4) (1987) 464-91.

(45). According to the data presented by Khaladi, All that Remains, xix, and which were gathered about 40 years after the period in question, 70 percent of the abandoned Arab villages

were completely destroyed; in 22 percent, some buildings were left standing; in 6 percent, most of the buildings remained and were left standing; and, in 2 percent, the Jewish settlers remained in the renovated buildings over a long term. These figures include villages that became urban settlements, whose fate has not been discussed here.