

The Local History of Kababir in Haifa: Constructing a Narrative of Uniqueness

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Abstract

The neighborhood of Kababir in Haifa is known as the center of the Ahmadiyya community in the Middle East. It was established in the nineteenth century as a hamlet, and was later annexed to the municipality of Haifa. The article traces the history of Kababir since its establishment until 1964 and observes the accelerated transition from rural to urban life at the periphery of an expanding city. The story of Kababir thus illustrates one path to urbanism within Palestinian society. Based on local written and oral sources the article also shows the role of collective memory in interpreting past events and constructing cultural identity.

Keywords

Ahmadiyya – Collective memory – Haifa – Muslim minorities – Oral history – Palestinian history

Introduction

Kababir is a neighborhood situated on the slopes of Mount Carmel, located on the outskirts of Haifa. The two minarets of its mosque present an impressive

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image of Haifa when approaching the city from the South. Kababir is an extension of Haifa's urban space and its residents are relatively well integrated into urban life. Nevertheless, Kababir is unique—historically, geographically, and socially. It is historically interesting for two reasons: Firstly, it is the center of the Ahmadiyya community in the Middle East and the only Ahmadiyya community in Israel (although there are also members of this movement scattered in other towns in Israel, the occupied territories and in neighboring states). The second reason is that the relatively late establishment of Kababir and its proximity to Haifa subjected its residents to an accelerated socio-cultural change.

Initially I embarked on this project in order to study Kababir as an illustration of the transition from rural to urban life as a result of the expansion of a nearby urban space. As a result, one aim of this article is to unfold the history of Kababir as one path of transition from a rural to an urban way of life. However, interviews and the methodology of oral history have led to the second aim pursued in this article: to study the role of memory in constructing local identity and perception of the past by people from Kababir.

For the purpose of the study I conducted open interviews with five people, aged 58-85, who were born in Kababir to veteran local families. I found to my surprise that interviewees conveyed repeated versions of the local history, generally consistent, with only minor diversities. I expressed my interest in their personal life stories and experiences, and yet heard personal memories interwoven with collective memories from a distant past. The history of Kababir was told as a well-organized, coherent and unified narrative, very similar to the written version presented in a book by one of Kababir's residents.¹ It became clear that the book has gained authoritative status and was used to aid the memory of the informants.² However, the integration of personal experiences beginning from the 1930s or 1940s with historical narrative from the mid-19th century intrigued me and guided the line of inquiry pursued in this article.

I find the concept of "collective memory" useful to understand the role played by past events in the life-stories of interviewees. "Memory wells up from groups that it welds together." It unites a contemporary community, and

1 'A. 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī* (Shafa'amr: Dar al-Mashriq, 1980).

2 On 'aids to memory,' see A. Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different." In *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Robert Parker and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998): 68-9. 'Odeh's book does not commemorate a destroyed community, but in its structure, nostalgic spirit and authoritative status it resembles books commemorating destroyed Palestinian villages. See, for example, S. Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998): 19-28.

therefore, unlike history, it is “always a phenomenon of the present.”³ This is its social function, but it is not the only one. Inspired by Alon Confino’s theoretical approach,⁴ I argue that collective memory serves also in enabling the local narrators in their interpretations of political and cultural aspects in the history of Kababir and in their personal life experience. Two events in particular—the foundation of the community and the adherence to the Ahmadiyya—gain priority and are represented in a way that renders coherence and meaning to the life-experience of people from Kababir.

Written documentation on the history of the neighborhood is sparse. The most detailed source is the monograph by ‘Odeh, one of the community’s members, written with the stated aim of providing answers to questions of local younger generations and outsiders.⁵ Archival documents consist of scant correspondence between representatives of the local community and the Mandate authorities, and the military government authorities following the establishment of the State of Israel (available in the Israel State Archives). Some information on British attitudes toward the Ahmadiyya can be deduced from the Empire’s policy in other colonies, which is documented in files found at the National Archives in London. Finally, oral evidence is of considerable importance in this work due to the paucity of written material, and even more so due to its preoccupation with questions of historical construction and communal identity.

1 Dating the Establishment of a Permanent Village

The land of Kababir belonged to al-Tira, a large village south of Haifa. In the late Ottoman period, Kababir and its land were classified under the category of *mazra‘a*, meaning that for the purpose of tax collection it belonged to a larger permanent village.⁶ Land under this category was associated with a particular permanent village solely for the purpose of taxation. There was no connection between the village’s agricultural land and that of the hamlet. A temporary

3 P. Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History.” In *Realms of Memory*, ed. Pier Nora (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 3.

4 A. Confino, “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method.” *American Historical Review* 105/2 (1997): 1386-1403.

5 ‘Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 3.

6 Dr. Eberhard Graf von Müllinen, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Karmels* (Leipzig: Baedeker, 1908). For this article I used the Hebrew annotated translation: A. Geva Kleinberger and Y. Ben Artzi, *Ha-Carmel shel von Müllinen* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 2013): 168.

hamlet on *mazra'a* land often became a permanent village. This was due mainly to demographic pressures and the fact that there was insufficient land in the village of origin.⁷

The rocky and hilly land of Kababir is ill-suited for intensive cultivation and was used mainly for grazing. Caves in the area provided shelter for animals and shepherds while water was taken from two springs in the streambed below (Wadi al-Siyah). Lime-burning pits are also found in the area, indicating another possible source of income for the population.⁸

'Abdallah 'Odeh recounts that the ancestors of the 'Odeh family settled in Kababir around the time of the Crimean War, i.e. during the 1850s.⁹ The family consisted of the father 'Odeh, his wife Safiyya, five sons and three daughters (another son died before the family arrived in Kababir). They came from the village of Ni'lin, near Ramallah. Their reason for leaving Ni'lin is unclear; one version maintains that the family had to leave due to blood feuds between clans affiliated with the Qays and Yaman factions.¹⁰ 'Odeh was accused in four cases of murder and was forced to leave Ni'lin under a reconciliation agreement. Several details in 'Odeh's biography support the plausibility of this version. It is said that 'Odeh and his brother were orphaned and raised by a paternal aunt. The brother also died in childhood and young 'Odeh remained as the only remnant of his nuclear family. This suggests that 'Odeh did not have strong patrons to back him during times of conflict.¹¹ If so, it is possible he was used as a scapegoat in the strife and received the punishment for others. Another possible explanation for the departure from Ni'lin is that the father wanted to save his sons from military service.

'Odeh belonged to al-Bash clan, affiliated with the lineage of a commander in the army of Salah al-Din who settled in Ni'lin. Al-Bash descendants scattered

7 D. Grossman, *Ha-Kfar ha-Arvi u-Vnotav: Tahalikhim ba-Yishuv ha-Arvi be-Eretz Israel ha-Othmanit* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1994): 13, 44-5.

8 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 19, 25-9.

9 *Ibid.*: 9, 15. One informant dated the settlement in Kababir to 1835, which is also one of the options suggested as year of birth of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. Interview with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014.

10 Salim Tamari characterizes the Qaysī-Yamanī affiliations as a "fictive alignment" that functioned primarily to form political alliances, mainly in times of inter-clan conflicts. S. Tamari, "Factionalism and Class Formation in Recent Palestinian History." In *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Roger Owen (London: Macmillan 1982): 181-5.

11 On the responsibility of paternal relatives for providing and supporting orphans in the extended family, see I. Agmon, *Family and Court: Legal Culture and Modernity in Late Ottoman Palestine* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006): 147-9.

throughout Palestine, so when 'Odeh and his family left Ni'lin they headed for relatives from al-Bash clan, first in the village of Far'un (near Tulkarm) and a few months later in the village of al-Tira.¹² In both places they received a warm welcome. However after having stayed for some time in al-Tira, 'Odeh expressed his desire to leave the village, apparently to evade local family feuds. His relatives granted him the land of Kababir, chosen because it was suitable for grazing; it had available water sources, and nearby ancient ruins provided stones for houses to accommodate the extended family. Another advantage of Kababir was its proximity to the expanding town of Haifa, which meant access to markets for agricultural yields and to additional sources of income as day laborers. 'Odeh settled there with his wife and children.¹³ Subsequent generations carried the name of their forefather.

Some information found in archival documents and other written sources supports the version of internal migration to Kababir. However, travelers who visited the Carmel area before the 1880s do not mention a permanent settlement in Kababir.¹⁴ Permanent residents in Kababir are documented in the unofficial census conducted in 1886 by Gottlieb Schumacher, an engineer appointed by the Ottoman government to supervise a road construction project. The census in the Acre district was aimed at determining the number of men available for *corvée* in the project. Schumacher estimated that there were about 25 residents in Kababir.¹⁵ About 20 years later the Swiss traveler and diplomat Eberhard von Mülinen described a village containing eight houses inhabited by peasants from Gaza, and claimed that it had been established about 30 years earlier (around 1878).¹⁶

12 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 7-9, 15-16; 'A. al-Mudawwar, *Qaryat Tīrat Ḥayfā* (Birzeit: Birzeit University Press, 1995): 143-4.

13 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 9-17; Interviews with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014; A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014.

14 See, for example, C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of the topography, orography, hydrography, and archaeology* (London: The Palestine Exploration Fund, 1881): 301-2; Map of Western Palestine in 26 sheets from the surveys conducted for the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Sheet 5, scale: 1:633,600, London: 1880; L. Oliphant, *Haifa or Life in Modern Palestine* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1887): 35-6.

15 G. Schumacher, "Population List of the Liva Akka." *Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 19/3 (1887): 178. On Schumacher and the projects entrusted to him, see Y. Ben Artzi, "Gottlieb Schumacher—Mapot ve-Tokhnit le-Pituaḥ Heifa be-Shalḥey ha-Me'a ha-19." *Cathedra* 73 (1994): 62-82.

16 Kleinberger and Ben Artzi, *Ha-Carmel shel von Mülinen*: 168.

This narrative of migration, avoidance of violent confrontations, settlement and obtaining a title to the land was conveyed consistently in conversations as well as in 'Odeh's book. It portrays the community in Kababir as exceptional and homogeneous from its establishment until today, over five generations. The narrative fulfils an explanatory function: it personalizes the ancestors of the community, and expresses moral values of that community. Therefore it can be seen as a local myth.¹⁷

Nonetheless, the narrative corresponds with historical developments of the time, in particular the population movements in the Middle East as well as Ottoman land laws and policy. Migration has been an extensive global phenomenon since the 19th century, and the Middle East was no exception. Like many other places, Palestine experienced emigration, internal migration, and immigration from neighboring countries and beyond. In the following I shall address some characteristics of this wider phenomenon.

In Palestine, the waves of migration were accompanied by the establishment of new villages and suburbs together with the expansion of existing communities. Most migrants were seeking to enhance their livelihood in the large urban centers, mainly in the coastal area; others fled conscription under Egyptian or Ottoman rule. Another social group involved in these processes consisted of nomads encouraged by the state to settle permanently.¹⁸ Jews, mainly from Eastern Europe, were also part of this population movement, due to severe poverty and persecution. Their numbers in Palestine were increasing with the inception of the Zionist movement around the same time.¹⁹

The transformation of Kababir, from a *mazra'a* to a permanent village around the 1880s, is also consistent with the implementation of the Ottoman land laws that were part of the *tanzimat* (reform) project. These laws, enacted in the second half of the 19th century, codified and arranged the registration of individual rights to land in order to maximize land resources and increase state revenues. The implementation of land registry provisions in Palestine, a peripheral area within the Ottoman Empire, succeeded only partially.²⁰ But it

17 R. A. Segal, *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 4-6.

18 G. M. Kressel and R. Aharoni, *Egyptian Émigrés in the Levant of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2013); A. Carmel, *Toldot Heifa bi-Yemey ha-Turkim* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1977): 156, 169-73; B. Kimmerling and J. S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: The Free Press, 1993): 36-63.

19 G. Alroey, *Ha-Mahapekha ha-Shketa: Ha-Hagira ha-Yehudit me-ha-Imperia ha-Rusit 1875-1924* (Jerusalem: The Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 2008): 207-11.

20 H. İslamoğlu, "Property as Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858." In *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East*, ed. R. Owen (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000): 3-63; O. Yiftachel, S. Kedar and A. Amara, "Iyun

is likely that peasants who settled in the hilly land of Kababir, which was irregularly cultivated, took advantage of the new laws to gain title to land.

2 Between al-Tira and Haifa

Fluctuations between rural and urban ways of life characterized the history of Kababir. Its people maintained connections with the village of al-Tira until the latter was depopulated in the 1948 War.²¹ In its first decades, Kababir belonged to the municipality of al-Tira and its residents participated in elections for the municipal *mukhtar* (mayor). In 1934 the village was separated from al-Tira and became represented by its own *mukhtar*. Members of the 'Odeh family married spouses from al-Tira and participated in celebrations there. Peddlers from al-Tira sold food in Kababir regularly.²² A few families from al-Tira moved to Kababir after joining the Ahmadiyya movement, probably due to harassment from the Sunni community in their village of origin.²³

Interviewees narrate that their families raised sheep, goats or cattle during the Mandate years. The houses were built in two levels; the lower one was for animals, while the upper one was used as the family residence. The milk from cattle provided for the family's consumption while the women made dairy products and sold surpluses in the city or to nearby convents. The people of Kababir also cultivated land located at the mouth of Wadi al-Siyah, near the seashore. This land was used for growing wheat and, to a smaller extent, vegetables.²⁴

Mehudash be-Halakhat 'ha-Negev ha-Met': Zkhuyot Qinyan ba-Merhav ha-Bedvi." *Mishpat u-Mimshal* 20/1 (2012): 24-32.

21 Al-Tira was depopulated during the 1948 War and is known today as the town of Tirat Carmel. Heavy fighting took place in the village because of its strategic location dominating the road South of Haifa. Some hundreds of its inhabitants, mainly women and children, were evacuated when the village became a battleground. The people, who remained in al-Tira after it was occupied by the IDF on 16 July 1948, were expelled. The IDF was accused of committing atrocities in al-Tira. Israel denied this, although around 28 burnt bodies were found near the village. B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 175, 207-209, 438-440; al-Mudawwar, *Qaryat Tirat Hayfa*: 187-239.

22 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 10-14, 75-6.

23 Al-Mudawwar, *Qaryat Tirat Hayfa*: 133-4.

24 Interviews with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014; B. O., Haifa, 28 August 2014; F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014; and A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014.

Men from Kababir joined the expanding labor force in Haifa, apparently around the beginning of the Mandate period.²⁵ They worked in construction projects such as the deep-water port, British military camps in the Haifa vicinity, water and sewage infrastructure, and the local oil refineries. Two of my informants recounted that their fathers worked as junior bureaucrats, one as a timekeeper and the other a clerk.²⁶ This transition, from agriculture to wage labor, occurred in many Arab villages near Haifa as a result of increased demand for wage laborers in the expanding city, scarcity of cultivable land and a decline in prices of agricultural products.

Beyond the factors that attracted villagers to work in Haifa, the people of Kababir were forced to seek wage labor also as a result of an ongoing process, whereby they were losing their rights to cultivable lands. Families sold a small number of land parcels in order to survive the hardships during the First World War. During the 1920s, members of the 'Odeh family made an effort to register their land with the help of a mediator from among Haifa's notables. They were asked to reward their benefactor by selling him some of the land for a nominal price. Some parcels were given up as a bribe to the registrar; others were sold in order to fund the registry fee. Within a short time it turned out that this corrupt official had listed some land in the name of one of his associates. Efforts to prove that the 'Odeh family legally owned the land were to no avail. Agricultural land cultivated by the people of Kababir near the seashore was transferred to the Mandatory government, which used it to build military camps.²⁷

The transition to urban life was accelerated in the 1940s, although the neighborhood remained on the relatively isolated outskirts of the town. In 1940 it was annexed to the municipality of Haifa.²⁸ In 1943 the municipality banned grazing and logging on Mount Carmel, with the stated aim of maintaining a green area and encouraging tourism. The ban negatively impacted those who made their living on grazing. A Palestinian Arab newspaper blamed the Zionist movement for trying to displace the residents of Kababir by destroying their

25 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 96; Interview with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014.

26 Interviews with A.H., Haifa, 4 September 2014; F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014.

27 According to 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 44-9, the land was confiscated. According to the memoirs of an official of Hakhsharat ha-Yishuv Company, those plots of land had been cultivated by tenants, and the Mandatory government purchased them from the owners—Hakhsharat ha-Yishuv and people from al-Tira. G. Kadosh, *Ge'ulat Karka'ot be-Heifa 'al Yedey Hevrat Hakhsharat ha-Yishuv* (Haifa: no publisher, 2003): 37-47, 65.

28 T. Goren, *Shituf be-Tzel 'Imut: 'Aravim ve-Yehudim ba-Shilton ha-Mekomi be-Heifa bi-Tkufat ha-Mandat* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 2008): 55.

livelihood.²⁹ A road connecting the neighborhood to the city was constructed in 1946. Until then the paved road ended at the last house of the Jewish neighborhood.³⁰ Electricity became available only in the 1960s, although power lines to the Jewish street leading to Kababir were already laid in 1946.³¹

But alongside the difficulties posed by the municipality, the city attracted villagers from Kababir as well as from more remote rural areas. It offered higher education, job opportunities, high wages for skilled and literate workers, leisure activities and social and financial mobility.³² Hence the distancing of the population from an agricultural livelihood was not unique to Kababir, although its transition might have been more rapid than in more distant villages, due to the proximity and the villagers' familiarity with Haifa.

3 The Ahmadiyya Mission to Haifa and the Process of Conversion

The Ahmadiyya is a movement within Sunni Islam, founded in India in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839?–1908). Mirza Ghulam declared himself the promised *mahdī* and *masīh* (messiah), claimed that he received divine revelations, and invited believers, who were seeking for the truth, to pledge allegiance to him. The Ahmadiyya promotes the propagation of its creed by sending preachers all over the world. Its leaders were prolific writers and encouraged translations of the Qur'an and of their own writings.³³ The emphasis on a peaceful propagation of the faith and on written texts lay at the basis of the missionary activity and education that will be discussed below.

29 D. Shoval, "Heifa shel Ma'ala," *Al ha-Mishmar*, 22 May 1944: 2; Goren, *Shituf be-Tzel 'Imut*: 336. A few herd owners in Kababir continued to raise sheep, goats and cows until the 1950s or 1960s. Interview with A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014.

30 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 31; Interview with A. A., Haifa, 5 February 2015.

31 "Proposed Extension and Alterations in the L.T. Network in Kababir Quarter, Haifa," a work plan map of the Palestine Electric Corp., 1946, HMA, 61730. Interviews with A. A., Haifa, 5 February 2015; B. O., Haifa, 28 August 2014.

32 J. Vashitz, "Hagirat Kafriyim le-Heifa bi-Tkufat ha-Mandat—Tahalikh shel 'Iyur?" *Cathedra* 45 (1987): 113-33; N. Ben Ze'ev, "Bein Kfar le-'Ir: Hayey Mehagrim Kafriyim be-Heifa bi-Tqufat ha-Mandat" (PhD dissertation, Ben Gurion University, Be'er Sheva, 2010): 27-60; M. Yazbak, "Ha-Hagira ha-'Arvit le-Heifa, 1933-1948" (M.A. thesis, University of Haifa, 1984).

33 Y. Friedman, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and its Medieval Background* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed., 2003): 1-46; W. C. Smith, "Ahmadiyya." In *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1960).

Following the death of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, a successor was chosen by consultation of the community elders. He came to be known as *khalīfat al-Masīh* and the title passed to his successors. In 1914, the movement split into two—the Qadianis (after Qadian, the birthplace of Mirza Ghulam), and the so-called Lahore Group. The Qadianis consider Mirza Ghulam to be a prophet and are therefore repudiated by Sunni orthodoxy as non-Muslims. The smaller Lahore Group regards Mirza Ghulam merely as a *mujaddid* (renewer) and is considered less heterodox. The community in Haifa is affiliated with the Qadianis. The headquarters of the Qadianis was moved from India to Pakistan following the latter's establishment in 1947. The *khalīfa* (leader) of the movement was forced into exile in 1984 as a result of state-condoned persecution. He settled in London, where the headquarters of the movement is situated today.³⁴

A First known Ahmadi adherent in Palestine was active in Jerusalem around the time of the First World War. Zayn al-'Abidin was assigned by the first Ahmadi *khalīfa* to study Arabic in order to spread the Ahmadi tenets in Arab countries. He acquired a reputation as an outstanding scholar and was appointed as a lecturer on the history of religions at the Salahiyya Muslim College in Jerusalem.³⁵ Apparently, Zayn al-'Abidin did not directly act as a propagandist (*mubashshir*), although he did expose his students to the ideas of the new movement and translated books by Ahmadi leaders from Urdu to Arabic. The first Ahmadi missionary, Jalal al-Din Shams, arrived in Haifa in 1928. He began his mission in Damascus in 1925 but encountered severe resistance that culminated in an attempt on his life. To prevent further trouble, the French authorities expelled him from Syria. While in Haifa, Jalal al-Din Shams met a worker of Syrian origin named Rushdy al-Basati and recruited him. Al-Basati recruited a couple of friends from the al-Qazaq family to join him in disseminating the

34 On the discriminatory legislation against Ahmadis in Pakistan, see Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*: xi–xvi, 192–4. On the circumstances that led to the exile of the *khalīfa* Mirza Taher Ahmad, and a monitor of contemporary persecution, see: “Persecution of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community” <https://www.persecutionofahmadis.org/> (accessed 15 December 2014).

35 ‘Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 138; “*Ta’rīkh al-Aḥmadiyya fī al-Diyār al-‘Arabiyya*” in the official Ahmadiyya Arabic website, http://www.islamahmadiyya.net/show_page.asp?content_key=2&article_id=5 (accessed 18 December 2014). The Salahiyya College was established in 1915 in order to train Muslim theologians in religious subjects together with an introduction to languages, history and sciences. It ceased to operate shortly after the British occupation of Jerusalem. See M. Strohmeier, “Al-Kulliyah al-Salahiyya, a Late Ottoman University in Jerusalem.” In *Ottoman Jerusalem*, vol. 1, ed. S. Auld and R. Hillenbrand (London: Altajir, 2000): 57–62.

new movement's tenets. These individuals socialized with members of the 'Odeh family, who worked in Haifa, and introduced them to the Ahmadi missionary. Jalal al-Din Shams was invited to settle in the village and made it the center of the Ahmadiyya movement in Arab countries, a status it holds to this very day.³⁶ Two members of the 'Odeh family, who were among the first to adhere to the new movement, donated land for the building of a mosque in 1934.³⁷

'Abdallah 'Odeh claims that "Kababir was the first Arab village to accept the Ahmadiyya collectively" (*bi-ṣūra jama'iyya*).³⁸ The portrayal of the village as a whole as adhering to the new movement was implied also in an interview with M. A.: "The village became the first Ahmadi village."³⁹ In his book, 'Odeh ascribes collective action to the extended family also with regard to other aspects of life: the distribution of cultivable land and care for the herds, hosting visitors, the protection of the houses and families, and a joined decision to select one of the brothers to study in al-Azhar and teach the young boys in the village.⁴⁰ This description constructs the local community as homogenous, cooperative and recognizing the true faith from the very beginning. However, it stands to reason that not all of the people in Kababir converted at once. According to the official Ahmadiyya website, in 1950 the movement had 80 members in Kababir.⁴¹ What was this group's share of the neighborhood's total population? According to 'Odeh himself, the village had about 250 residents in 1947.⁴² In the municipal elections held in 1950, there were 170 eligible

36 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 139; Interviews with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014; F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014; "Min Ṣulaḥā' al-'Arab wa-Abdāl al-Shām," in the official Ahmadiyya Arabic website, http://www.islamahmadiyya.net/show_page.asp?content_key=2&article_id=7 (accessed 18 December 2014). It is worth noting other people from Syria, who migrated to or found refuge in Haifa and became prominent activists. Two well-known examples are 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam and 'Abd al-Hamid Haimur, founder of the Palestinian Arab Workers Society. See A. Schleifer, "The Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam." *Islamic Quarterly* 23 (1979): 61-81; Z. Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 145-6. Al-Qazaq family migrated from al-Tira to Haifa. Interestingly, its origins were also outside Palestine, in Kazakhstan. Al-Mudawwar, *Qaryat Tīrat Ḥayfā*: 144.

37 "Min Ṣulaḥā' al-'Arab". The land was registered in the name of the missionary to Kababir in 1931-1936, Abu al-'Ata al-Jalandhari. The title was converted into the name of the Ahmadiyya Society in 1994. Land Registry Office in Haifa, Register of Deeds, Tira, vol. 22: 185.

38 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 139.

39 Interview with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014.

40 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 24, 27, 44.

41 "Min Ṣulaḥā' al-'Arab wa-Abdāl al-Shām."

42 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 32. According to another source, in 1944 the population in Kababir was 300. Goren, *Shituf be-Tzel 'Imut*: 336.

voters, i.e. men and women over the age of 18, listed at the polling station in the neighborhood.⁴³ In any case, the number of Ahmadiyya adherents in Kababir around 1950 amounted to fewer than half of the inhabitants. Over the years additional members joined the religious community. It seems plausible that the people of Kababir tolerated and perhaps even welcomed the presence of the new movement; however they did not rush to join it.

One interviewee, A. H., recounted how his grandfather was persuaded to convert to the Ahmadiyya in 1954 or 1955, as he heard it from his father:

... It was the sheikh, the man of the Ahmadis, who passed by my grandfather saying: "Good morning, how are you *hajj*, what's up? Well, when will you join us?" [...] In these words, like this. "We are for thirty years here. Do you see us doing something wrong?" "No, actually not. But I don't know. I will see. Everything will be all right." And he said: "All right" and went. Then my father said to his father, my grandfather: "Here, let's talk real. Did we see them doing something against the religion, something wrong? So now, father, what is going on?" So he tells him: "you know what, let me think about it." The next morning he [the grandfather] came to the Mosque and [...] called to prayer.

When I commented that the sheikh probably asked the grandfather to join the Ahmadiyya several times earlier, A. H. added: "This time he also told him: 'I think if I came with a weapon you would have joined long ago,'" meaning that a strong person is naturally more impressive and people are more likely to join him.⁴⁴ The sheikh's statement highlights by the invoked contrast the reluctance inherent within the Ahmadiyya to use coercion.

Two benefits that the new movement brought to the village are obvious: education and a well-organized community. Education was highly prioritized within the Ahmadiyya movement, and Qadian "appears to have been ... the most literate town in India, with almost total feminine literacy."⁴⁵ Abu al-Ata al-Jalandhari, a vigorous missionary sent to Palestine by the Ahmadi *khalifa*, established a primary school as early as 1934; additionally, an evening school was opened for adults. He also brought a printing press and began to publish an Ahmadi bulletin and pamphlets in Arabic. Girls were also encouraged to get an education. It seems, however, that the girls' school in Kababir operated

43 "Election Commission of the Municipality of Haifa," 1950, HMA, 36466.

44 Interview with A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014. A similar version of a son recruiting his father and grandfather—the first Ahmadiyya members from the 'Odeh family—appears in the official Ahmadiyya Arabic website: "Min Ṣulahā' al-'Arab."

45 Smith, "Ahmadiyya."

irregularly at the beginning.⁴⁶ Nevertheless one should bear in mind that the majority of rural Muslim girls had no possibility to acquire an education during the Mandate years.⁴⁷ Some teachers were local, others were Ahmadis from Egypt, Syria and Iraq, who arrived at the movement's important center and served as teachers. A few of them were graduates from renowned educational institutions in the Middle East and Europe.⁴⁸

Against this pro-educational background, B. O. presented a more complicated picture. She was an excellent student, who did her homework in the bathroom—the only quiet area in a two-room flat occupied by a family of nine children. When she graduated the eighth grade, her father objected to her continuing into high school, claiming that he could not afford it. The father's refusal persisted although she received a scholarship from the Haifa municipality. B. O. is convinced that the objection to her further education stemmed from a gendered perception regarding girls' education rather than economic circumstances. F. M., a classmate, confirmed she was the first girl of Kababir to graduate eighth grade. She missed the opportunity to continue her studies in the mid-1950s; however girls four or five years younger than her did receive secondary education if they wanted to. Her own two daughters pursued university studies and have academic careers.⁴⁹ Hence it took about 25 years from the establishment of a pioneering primary school in the peripheral small neighborhood until its people encouraged their daughters to pursue secondary education.

Another advantage that the Ahmadiyya offered was (and in view of some members, still is) the existence of a well-organized community. All members of the community over the age of seven belong to one of five councils arranged according to age and gender. The councils offer not only religious content but also social gathering for men, women, and youth. An elected board handles the affairs of the community, including maintenance of local institutions, raising donations, religious ceremonies and maintaining relations with believers scattered in other places.⁵⁰

46 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 58-9, 139; Interviews with A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014; F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014; M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014. On girls' education in Kababir, see also Rachel Hoter-Yshay, "Siḥa 'im Shliaḥ ha-'Ahmadiyya." *Davar* (9 April 1947): 4.

47 A. Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900-1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004): 37-8.

48 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 59; Interviews with F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014; A. A., Haifa, 5 February 2015; "Min Ṣulāḥā' al-'Arab".

49 Interview with B. O., Haifa, 28 August 2014.

50 Interview with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014; N. Komissar, "Kababir—Hashpa'at ha-Dat ha-Ahmadit 'al Sgiruta ve-Yhudiuta shel Qehila" (M.A. thesis, University of Haifa, 1986): 105-8.

4 Sunna, Ahmadiyya, and the Colonial Context

Alongside the benefits that the new religious movement brought to the people of Kababir, it is important to point out that members of the Ahmadiyya faced mounting difficulties and hostility. From their point of view, they adopted the true form of Islam, did not abandon the religion, let alone denied it. But they were marked as heretics by some of their Muslim neighbors. There were noticeable tensions between the community and Sunni Muslims in Palestine. Ahmadiyya members suffered alienation, threats, and harassment. In some cases they encountered violence, mainly while trying to propagate the Ahmadi creed. In April 1944, a group of seven members, who distributed pamphlets and sought to recruit people to the movement in Acre, were attacked and two of them were injured—lightly according to British officials, severely according to the Ahmadiyya missionary. A single person was arrested, tried and imprisoned for seven days following this incident, although the attack was carried out by a group of people.⁵¹ Odeh describes in his book two other cases of assaults against Ahmadis that he experienced personally as a child in Hebron and Nazareth. He also mentions a failed attempt to assassinate the Ahmadi missionary by people from Haifa.⁵²

Sunni Muslim officials in Haifa did not turn to physical violence in order to harass Ahmadis. They had other means. In 1936 the qadi in Haifa instructed Sunni registrars (Sg. in Arabic: *ma'dhūn*) not to process marriages of Ahmadiyya adherents. The head of the community met with the qadi and learned that he did not object to marriages when both spouses were members of the Ahmadiyya, but would not agree to the marriage of an Ahmadi man and a non-Ahmadi Muslim woman. The head of the Ahmadiyya community begged the qadi to appoint a *ma'dhūn* from the community who would handle their marriages.⁵³ However, no answer to this request was found in the archival files, and the problem was perhaps solved temporarily. Nonetheless, in 1943 the head of the community applied twice to the British District Commissioner asking permission to have a *ma'dhūn* of their own.⁵⁴ Again, the qadi of Haifa

51 "The Ahmadiyya Movement—Haifa," ISA, M-68/337. The assault was reported also in the Hebrew press: Y. V., "Al Kidush Shem Shamayim." *Al ha-Mishmar* (5 May 1944): 2.

52 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābīr Baladī*: 140-1. 'Odeh does not indicate the date of the attempted assassination, but the missionary in question was Abu al-'Ata' al-Galandhari, who stayed in Palestine in 1931-1936.

53 "Marriages among Members of the Ahmadiyya Sect," ISA, M-14/295.

54 From the Ahmadi missionary to the Arab countries to the Haifa District Commissioner, 9 January 1943, ISA, M-871/61/117/25; From the Ahmadi missionary to the Arab countries to the Haifa District Commissioner, 10 April 1943, ISA, M-871/61/117/29.

refused to handle marriages of Ahmadiyya members. The British authorities had to intervene in a delicate religious issue and demanded an explanation from the qadi.⁵⁵ After consulting with the Supreme Muslim Council, the qadi withdrew his refusal to register Ahmadi marriages.⁵⁶ It took two written appeals and an eight-month wait until the problem of the Ahmadis was solved.

Before moving on to discuss the implications of this confrontation, it should be emphasized that the issue of marriage—whom one is allowed to marry, and to stay married to—is a crucial component in the construction of communal identity. In his refusal to process marriages of Ahmadiyya adherents, the qadi of Haifa actually declared the Ahmadis' exclusion from the Sunni community. The response of the head of the community was cautious: he requested to appoint an Ahmadi *ma'dhūn*, and did not ask the British authorities to recognize the religious autonomy of the community. A maximalist demand would have acknowledged the qadi's approach, meaning the exclusion of the Ahmadis from the Sunni Muslim community. Since they saw themselves as Muslims "in the fullest sense of the word," it is no wonder that Ahmadis tried to reconcile with Sunni orthodoxy and refused the position of a separate religious minority.⁵⁷

Back to the correspondence mentioned above: the delayed and indecisive British response in this case is worthy of close examination. The British colonizers had encountered the Ahmadiyya in India and in other territories. Mirza Ghulam and his followers supported British rule in India and praised British willingness to grant religious freedom to all. Ahmadi leaders vehemently opposed calls for jihad and civil disobedience against Britain, even in the 1940s, when national sentiments and aspirations for independence rose. However, they did not receive from the British the support they expected in return for their loyalty. The disappointment was understandable, especially when Ahmadis faced hostility from the Sunni majority.⁵⁸

It is commonly thought that Britain sought to refrain from interfering with Muslim religious matters. Thus in the case of Palestine, it retained the

55 From the Lieutenant Governor of Haifa to the Qadi of Haifa, 11 May 1943, ISA, M-871/61/117/30.

56 From the Qadi of Haifa to the Lieutenant Governor of Haifa, 16 August 1943, ISA, M-871/61/117/32.

57 The Ahmadi refusal to be represented in the Pakistan National Assembly as a minority in 1976 is another example of this attitude. See Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*: 45.

58 *Ibid.*: 27, 34-8, 176; S. Lavan, *The Ahmadiyya Movement: A History and Perspective* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974): esp. 156-8.

jurisdiction of shari'a courts in matters of personal status.⁵⁹ However, the shari'a courts were incorporated into the colonial legal system and were therefore subordinate to it. This allowed British colonial representatives to meddle in religious issues in ways that would serve a divide-and-rule policy as well as the needs of a modernizing, centralizing state.⁶⁰ The three examples discussed in the following reveal the British tendency to avoid alienating Sunni orthodoxy in cases of conflict with the Ahmadiyya movement.

In 1922, an Indian woman was blamed for bigamy after marrying a second husband without divorcing the first one. The woman pleaded that she had converted to the Ahmadiyya and, since this conversion was considered an apostasy in Islam, her first marriage was nullified; therefore, her second marriage could not be regarded as bigamous. The court (operating under British colonial rule and supervision) had to decide whether the Ahmadiyya is apostate from Islam, or a sect within Sunni Islam. In this case, the court decided that "Ahmadiyya is merely a sect within Sunni Islam."⁶¹

A report on this case was given as legal precedent with relevance to a similar legal proceeding in Tanganyika (now part of Tanzania). In this instance a Muslim woman claimed the dissolution of marriage following her husband's conversion to the Ahmadiyya. The expert in Islamic law who wrote the report added his personal opinion, as advice to the British district officer in Tanganyika:

Seeing the husband could divorce his wife at any moment and for any or no reason, it seems only reasonable to allow her to claim a dissolution of marriage if she feels she cannot live with an Ahmadi—and almost all orthodox Muslims in East Africa would support this.⁶²

Correspondence in this file indicates the readiness of British colonizers to meddle even in matters of personal status that were ostensibly under the autonomous jurisdiction of religious communities. The British expert ignored

59 A. Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006): 31-3.

60 P. Sartori and I. Shahar, "Legal Pluralism in Muslim-Majority Colonies: Mapping the Terrain." *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 637-63; S. A. Kugle, "Framed, Blamed and Renamed: The Recasting of Islamic Jurisprudence in Colonial South Asia." *Modern Asian Studies* 35/2 (2001): 257-313.

61 The case is recorded in an expert opinion attached to a letter from Winnigton Ingram to J. J. Towney (a provincial commissioner in Tanganyika), 6 December 1951, NA, CO 822/434, 7-8.

62 Ibid.: 5.

or was unaware of the difference between apostasy of a man or a woman: a Muslim woman must not remain married to a man who has committed apostasy (*ridda*) and their marriage is automatically revoked. In contrast, a Muslim man may remain married to a wife who has converted to a monotheistic religion.⁶³ Hence, the analogy made by the expert between the case in India and the case in Tanganyika is invalid in terms of Islamic legal doctrine.

Another case in which British officials took a stand in a religious Muslim controversy clarifies the political priorities behind their approach to the Ahmadiyya. In October 1945, the Ahmadiyya leadership requested from the government in Sudan to allow one of their missionaries to enter the country.⁶⁴ The request was rejected—despite the intercession of the Ahmadi imam in London—on the grounds of orthodox Muslim opposition to the entry of the Ahmadi missionary. The Sudan government, as it was subtly put by the Sudan Agent in London, wished to avoid “further complexities to an already complicated political situation.”⁶⁵

The cases from India, Tanganyika and the Sudan, together with British foot-dragging in response to the problems of the Ahmadiyya in Haifa, point to a British effort to avoid confrontation with the Sunni majority. The Ahmadiyya was a small community—in Palestine during the Mandate it numbered a few dozen adherents at most—and maintaining the colonial status-quo demanded refusal to acknowledge them. Moreover, when the Haifa District Commissioner was asked by the Ahmadis to intervene in their conflict with the qadi of Haifa, he had to deal with the lack of uniformity within the Palestinian Muslim population. The Mandatory government was unwilling to categorize sects within its Palestinian Muslim subjects. Anderson’s characterization of colonial census-makers as passionate for completeness and un-ambiguity is illuminating here.⁶⁶ The British did categorize Christians and Muslims in

63 J. A. Nasir, *The Status of Women under Islamic Law and Modern Islamic Legislation*, 3rd edition, (Leiden: Brill, 2009). Vol. 1: 42-43, 85, 154-155; A. Amawi, “Gender and Citizenship in Jordan.” In *Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, ed. Suad Joseph (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000): 171. However, according to another source, the marriage ceases through apostasy from Islam of anyone of the spouses. See: J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982): 165.

64 From M. A. Bajwa, Imam of the [Ahmadiyya] London Mosque, to Member of Parliament Creech Jones, 10 October 1946, NA, FO 371/53408. From 1899 to 1955 Sudan was formally under an Anglo-Egyptian condominium, and in practice it was ruled by a British governor general.

65 From C. G. Davis, Sudan Agent in London, to P. S. Scrivener, 30 October 1946, NA, FO 371/53408.

66 B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2nd ed., 1991): 166-7.

censuses and reports; however, while the government acknowledged nine factions within the Palestinian Christian population by recognizing their religious courts, it did not recognize corresponding autonomous rights of the Druze, Metwalis (Shi'ites), Baha'is and Ahmadis. Members of these communities had to turn to the services of the Sunni shari'a courts in matters of personal status. While Druze and Baha'i entitlement to religious courts was recognized under the State of Israel, matrimonial matters of Ahmadis are still decided by Sunni shari'a courts.⁶⁷

5 Taking a Stand in Times of National Struggle: The Arab Revolt and the Nakba

Reconstructing the attitudes of people from Kababir toward the Palestinian national movement prior to the establishment of the State of Israel raises questions and speculations and only little definite answers. Information on Kababir's involvement in the Arab Revolt (1936-1939) and the 1948 War—the two major dramatic events involving the Palestinian national movement—is scant in primary and secondary sources. The following section will present the fragments gathered and offer a possible explanation to the dearth of historical evidence.

None of the interviewees mentioned the Arab revolt, nor did they mention tensions between Kababir and its Jewish neighbors until 1948. According to 'Odeh, none of the people of Kababir took up arms and joined the guerrilla bands in the 1930s. However, they “did not skimp on financial contributions to the revolt.”⁶⁸ In one occasion, the contribution was collected using force: Rashid al-Sheikh, a rebel commander from al-Tira, arrived in Kababir with his band, surrounded the mosque during the time of pray and demanded that the congregation will hand over P£ 500. The people of Kababir could not raise that kind of money so Rashid al-Sheikh seized five men as hostages. The five were released the same night thorough the mediation of another man from al-Tira and subsequently the community raised P£ 50 that were given to that commander.⁶⁹

67 P. Shifman, *Diney ha-Mishpaha be-Israel* (Jerusalem: The Sacher Institute, Faculty of Law, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2nd ed., 1995): vol. 1, 80-1.

68 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 122.

69 Ibid.: 122-3. Rashid al-Sheikh 'Othman from al-Tira is briefly mentioned in: M. Kabha and N. Sirhan, *Sijl al-Qada wa-al-Thuwwar wa-al-Mutatawi'in li-Thawrat 1936-1939* (Kafr Qar': Dar al-Huda, 2009): 361.

No fighting took place in Kababir from November 1947, until the Hagana (the major Zionist military organization that operated between 1920-1948) forces took over Haifa on April 22, 1948. 'Odeh recounts how the people erected fortifications in the street alongside the Jewish houses near Kababir. The neighboring Jewish residents did the same in a nearby street, 200 meters separating between them.⁷⁰ Following the surrender of the National Committee in Haifa, Hagana forces began to search the Arab neighborhoods and seized weapons.⁷¹ Interviewees recall how the people of Kababir were gathered in the mosque's yard as soldiers searched the houses.⁷²

Kababir survived the *Nakba*, literally 'catastrophe,' referring to the Palestinian displacement and dispossession in 1948. Unlike most of the other Arab villages in the Carmel vicinity, it was not evacuated. Some families from al-Tira and from Haifa sought refuge in Kababir during the war. Most of these families had relatives there or belonged to the Ahmadiyya and previously resided in the city. The Arab residents of Haifa were ordered to concentrate in three streets in the downtown area, ostensibly for security reasons, although when this order was carried out (June 1948) its security justification was doubtful. However, Kababir's residents remained untouched.⁷³

Did the presence of the Ahmadiyya movement affect the fate of the neighborhood in the *Nakba*? Two interviewees stressed the fact that people stayed in Kababir because the leadership in Pakistan insisted that they do so. In the words of F. M.:

The people of Kababir were ready to leave and packed their belongings. What they heard about what was happening in the area compelled them to do that. But the demand of the popular leader of the movement [was]: "The people of Kababir do not leave. They stay." When they received this directive they stayed.⁷⁴

'Odeh credits the local Ahmadi missionary with the role of calming the frightened population at a time of political chaos and preventing irresponsible use

70 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 124-5.

71 Hagana report from 23 April, 1948, IDFA, 2-464/1954: 266.

72 Interviews with F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014; B. O., Haifa, 28 August 2014; A. A., Haifa, 5 February 2015.

73 Minutes of the sixth and eighth meetings of the committee on Arab affairs in Haifa, 10 June 1948, and 8 July 1948, Vashitz Personal Archive in HNA, 95-35.26(4). Vashitz criticized the ordered concentration, although he participated in carrying it out.

74 Interview with F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014.

of weapons held by locals. The missionary Muhammad Sharif, supported by moderate local sheikhs, convinced the people to stay in their homes. It appears that his influence also extended to residents who did not belong to the Ahmadiyya. The panic that was referred to in 'Odeh's account came against the backdrop of the murder of about ten unarmed Arabs, witnessed by the people of Kababir on the ridge overlooking the neighborhood from the south.⁷⁵ I have found no other sources to support the alleged massacre. However, one of the commanders of the Hagana in Haifa described in an interview that following kidnappings, abuse and murders of Jews by Arabs, his organization kidnapped Arabs in Haifa as a preventive action. It is unclear from his testimony whether the Hagana released its hostages in all cases or executed some of them.⁷⁶

Kababir enjoyed good relations with its Jewish neighbors. A dominant figure mentioned in this context was the *mukhtar* of the Jewish neighborhoods on Mount Carmel, Avraham Spektor, who was also a Hagana member. Spektor was personally acquainted with local residents in his capacity as the manager of the Mount Carmel Water Supply Committee that supplied water to the neighborhoods on Mount Carmel, including Kababir. In the words of A. H., Spektor "had looked out for the people of Kababir."⁷⁷

The emerging picture is that the small village that was marginalized by the Sunni orthodoxy, closely connected to the Palestinian political elite, was not involved in militant national activities. In light of that together with its good relations with neighboring Jews, its small population and peripheral location Kababir was not considered a threat by the Zionist and later Israeli authorities. This may also explain why Kababir is absent from archival documents dealing with the war in Haifa, while some other Arab neighborhoods are indicated. The involvement of the Ahmadiyya leadership in Kababir and Pakistan contributed to the neighborhood's relative stability during the *Nakba*. It seems that the combination of those circumstances affected the fate of Kababir that remained intact despite fierce battles in and around Haifa.

75 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 124-31; Interview with A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014.

76 Interview with Ya'akov Salomon, 10 March 1971, ISA, cited in T. Goren, *Heifa ha-'Aravit be-Tashah-'Otzmat ha-Ma'avak u-Memadey ha-Hitmotetut* (Sede Boqer: The Ben Gurion Research Institute, 2006): 481-2. On Ya'akov Salomon, see *ibid*: 499.

77 Interviews with A. H., Haifa, 4 September 2014; A. A., Haifa, 5 February 2015; "Minutes of Mount Carmel Water Supply Committee Meetings," HMA, 006559. On Spektor, see D. Tidhar, "Avraham Aharon Spektor." *Encyclopedia le-Halutzei ha-Yeshuv u-Vonav* (1966), vol. 15: 4787.

6 Following the Establishment of the State of Israel

The 1948 War, the prevailing austerity, and the military government ushered in a time of hardship. A few families from Kababir were among the numerous Palestinian inhabitants of Haifa and its vicinity who became refugees. Some families settled in Kababir following the *Nakba*, such as members of the Shanbur family from al-Tira, who joined their relatives already located in Kababir, and members of al-Qusaini, al-Bash and 'Awad families. The fate of the al-Qazaq family that settled in Kababir toward the end of the Mandate years was different: the family split up during the war, a few members left with the extended family that lived in Haifa.⁷⁸ In a census conducted in Haifa's Arab neighborhoods in June 1948, 58 households were registered in Kababir.⁷⁹

The livelihood of many people in the rural neighborhood was severely damaged. The military government (1948-1966) suspended many of the rights of the Arab citizens. Travel restrictions were the most significant means of controlling the Arab population. The military government in Haifa (as well as in other mixed cities) was removed by 1951, but Arabs still needed entry permits to enter areas under military government and they were still subjected to other emergency regulations.⁸⁰ As a result, contacts between the Arab residents and the economic and social hinterland of Haifa were interrupted.

Restrictions and supervision of cattle raising, slaughter and meat sales were increased. Workers who had been employed by the British authorities or British army lost their jobs. Thus, people had to change or broaden their occupations. One of the largest goat farmers opened a grocery store and also became an authorized butcher and supplier of meat to Kababir.⁸¹ When conditions worsened and sources of income were dwindled, the people of Kababir turned to Abba Khoushy, the Mayor of Haifa (1951-1969). Khoushy directed them toward fishing, an occupation previously not pursued by them. Consequently, in the

78 'Odeh, *Al-Kabābir Baladī*: 36-8.

79 Minutes of the sixth meeting of the committee on Arab affairs in Haifa, 10 June 1948, Vashitz Personal Archive in HHA, 95-35.26(4).

80 A. Y. Degani, "The decline and fall of the Israeli Military Government, 1948-1966: a case of settler-colonial consolidation?" *Settler Colonial Studies* 5/1 (2014): 84-99; S. Ozacky-Lazar, "Ha-Mimshal ha-Tzva'i ke-Manganon Shlita ba-Ezrahim ha-'Arvim: he-'Asor ha-Rishon, 1948-1958," *Hamizrah Hehadash* 43 (2002): 103-13; Alina Korn, "Crime and Legal Control: The Israeli Arab Population during the Military Government Period (1948-66)." *The British Journal of Criminology* 40/4 (2000): 574-93.

81 From the director of the Ministry of Minorities, Haifa Branch, to the North district supervisor of cattle and meat, 3 September 1948, ISA, G-57/1319; Interview with M. A., Haifa, 15 August 2014.

early 1950s, men from Kababir hired boats or worked for Arab and Jewish contractors. A portion of the daily catch was taken home while some was sold to the Tnuva cooperative.

During the time of the British Mandate, F. M.'s father cultivated land below the village in addition to working in construction—at the port, in British army camps, at the refineries and in the laying of sewer pipes.

When the land below [the village] was confiscated for public and other purposes, he and others went to the mountain. They had no choice but to take stonework: [building] fences, stairs, trails [...], such jobs. [...] I accompanied him with my brothers to his work. He took construction projects and we did the calculations for him, calculating the area in square meters, everything.⁸²

Like F.'s father, many men from Kababir turned to various kinds of construction work in the 1960s, and gained a reputation as expert professional craftsmen that they hold until today.

I choose to end my account of the story of Kababir with a map from 1964 showing a strip development that connected Kababir to the continuum of neighborhoods on Mount Carmel.⁸³ The neighborhood, once in the outskirts of Haifa, became an extension of the urban space. By that time most men and some of the women were integrated into the urban labor market; access to secondary and higher education expanded. Agricultural production was abandoned almost completely. However, (in some respects until today) Kababir remained a quiet residential area, far from the bustle of the city.

Conclusion: Memory, Identity and Individual Experience

At the end of the 19th century Palestine became an area with many migrants of various kinds.⁸⁴ The 'Odeh family was part of this movement. They became an exception when a few decades after their migration they welcomed an Ahmadi missionary to their village and decided to join the Ahmadiyya. The

82 Interview with F. M., Haifa, 25 August 2014. Prior to his tenure as the Mayor of Haifa, Khoushy was the chairperson of the Haifa Workers' Council. Obviously, his connections with the Jewish Labor Organization (Histadrut) made him a contact person for the unemployed.

83 Map of Haifa, 1:12,500, Zvi Friedlander, 1964.

84 See note 18, above.

conversion brought other changes in their lives. It affected their interrelations with neighboring communities and with governmental and religious institutions. It aroused tensions with some of the Sunni orthodoxy and with some of their Muslim neighbors. However, it was the basis for forging connections with remote Ahmadiyya communities in India and later Pakistan, with Ahmadi associations that operated in Damascus, Bagdad and Cairo, and with the communities in Europe, mainly in London. The Ahmadis in Kababir became part of a religious community scattered all over the world. The neighborhood once on the periphery of Haifa became the Middle Eastern center of a worldwide religious movement.

The religious exception and relative geographic isolation contributed to the cohesion of the local community. But in constructing a unique local identity, collective memory is of crucial importance. The “explanatory power” of memory is revealed in the connections memory creates between the establishment of the community, morality, and the fate of Kababir in the traumatic events of 1948.⁸⁵

The collective memory of the people of Kababir emphasizes the migration of the founding ancestors, unity and harmony among the extended family and the tendency to stay away from feuds and violence, reflected also in the maintenance of peaceful relations with their non-Muslim neighbors. Equal education and praise for the ancestors who accepted the true faith early on are also stressed. These moral virtues are part of the local cultural identity, the contours of which go beyond religious distinctiveness. Deviations from this memory were also heard in interviews—the restrictions on girls’ education and the lengthy piecemeal process of conversion—but they were presented in a context that emphasized a speedy correction (academic education of girls in the next generation, and adherence of father and son to the Ahmadiyya).

The political implications of memory emerge in the narration of the survival of Kababir and most of its people during the *Nakba*. ‘Odeh’s book, as well as interviewees explained it by the involvement of the Ahmadiyya leadership. The “what-if” line of thought might be helpful here.⁸⁶ If the movement’s leadership had not instructed them to stay in their homes, and if it was not for the restraint and consideration of Muhammad Sharif—the missionary from India

85 See Confino, “Collective Memory”: 1388. For an example where the theoretical and methodological approaches presented in this article are employed, see his insightful article: A. Confino. “Miracles and Snow in Palestine and Israel: Tantura, a Story of 1948.” *Israel Studies* 17/2 (2012): 25-61.

86 E. Weinryb, “Historiographic Counterfactuals.” In *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, ed. A. Tucker (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 109-19.

and head of the community at the time of war—it is plausible that the residents would have become refugees, as indeed happened to most of the Arab population of Haifa and its surroundings.

The collective memory of the people of Kababir presents them as religiously exceptional, socially harmonized, and moral and homogeneous in their world-views. It constructs these virtues as part of their identity. Elements of the collective memory are considered explanatory for personal experience, such as living in the State of Israel, professional occupation and career and even individual relationships. From that point of view, the relevancy of collective memory to personal narratives and experience is natural.

In that way, the foundation of the local community and the adherence to the Ahmadiyya in the distant past are interwoven into personal life stories of narrators who were born in the 1930s and 1940s.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

HHA	Hashomer Hatzair Archives (Givat Haviva)
HMA	Haifa Municipality Archive (Haifa)
IDFA	The Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archives (Kiryat Ono)
ISA	Israel State Archives (Jerusalem)
NA	National Archives (London)

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