Israel has never intended to control the Palestinians: Its goal has always been to drive them out. However, during the Mandate era, as part of their effort to disorganize the Palestinian society, Zionist organizations established various surveillance bodies to examine and monitor various aspects of Palestinian society. These related to the demographic, religious, tribal, and *hamula* (extended family or clan) composition of the Palestinians, their spatial distribution, political behaviors, and military capabilities, as well as their resources, chiefly lands and water sources. These activities were part of an all-inclusive effort to establish a Jewish state against the will of the indigenous Arab population.

Yet, when the 1948 war ended, Israel leaders found that, contrary to their expectations, a number of Palestinian communities, primarily in the Galilee, had eluded the ethnic cleansing conducted by Jewish forces. The incomplete character of the expulsion of the Palestinians subsequently became subject of much speculation and distortion.1 However, internal discussions among Israeli leaders indicate that the continued presence of these Palestinians within the state of Israel was unintentional and undesired.2 Although a system of political control which relied on the British Defense (Emergency) Regulations was imposed on the Palestinians and a military government to rule them was established already during the war, in addition to various ad hoc practices of surveillance, driving the Palestinians out continued to be Israel’s main objective.3

Although expulsion remained Israel’s favored goal – and various schemes to effect it were contrived during the 1950s and 1960s4 – as early as 1951 Israeli leaders...
began realizing that these Palestinians might stay longer than expected. Moreover, various essential laws, which would normalize their civic status, such as the nationality law, could no longer be delayed. Therefore, thorough discussions on the governance of the Palestinians were conducted – known as Birour or clarification – in which many senior Israeli politicians, Arabists, and high-ranking army and intelligence officers took part. The list of participants in these meetings is impressive, including such figures as David Ben-Gurion, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (Arabist and the second Israeli president), Moshe Dayan, Moshe Sharett, Yigal Alon, Shimon Peres, Abba Eban, Isser Harel (the head of the General Security Services and the Mossad after the war), and Mishael Shechter (a senior military officer and for a period head of the military government); Yehoshua (Josh) Palmon, Ziama Divon, Shmuel Toledano (all three of whom served as advisors to the prime minister on Arab affairs); and Abba Hushi, Reuven Barkat, and Amnon Linn (three leading Arabists).

Many of these participants ruled the Palestinians during the successive two decades. More importantly, however, these discussions generated a discourse that defined the language, the mindset, and the concepts through which the Palestinians would be conceived and governed until the 1990s, and in some aspects up to the current day. Such premises include the perception of the Palestinians as a demographic threat that demands continual biopolitical management; the understanding that they ought to be splintered into smaller identity groups and the bolstering of the emerging identities through education and propaganda; the need to disrupt the spatial continuity of Palestinian populated areas; the prevention of Palestinians from establishing autonomous institutions while bolstering of their dependency on state institutions; the institutional separation of Palestinians from Jews; and the emptying of their formal political rights through trickery and the formation of a native comprador elite.

From Transfer to Surveillance and Political Control

Although those in charge of governing the Palestinians resigned themselves by 1952 to the idea that a Palestinian minority would remain in Israel in the foreseeable future, the principles of surveillance, population management, and political control mentioned above were not formalized until 1958, a decade after the establishment of Israel and two years after the Kafr Qasim massacre, which represented a moment of crisis in the Israeli official discourse by unveiling the state’s hidden agenda. The 1958 plan was put together by senior representatives of the various bodies that ruled the Palestinians: The Histadrut’s Arab department, the General Security Services (Sherut Bitachon Klali or Shin Bet), the office of the prime minister’s advisor on Arab affairs, the Israeli army, the military government, and Mapai’s Arab department. The authors of the plan outlined three presuppositions upon which it was premeditated. First, though expulsion during war should not be ruled out, transfer in normal circumstances was not possible.5 Second, integration of the Palestinians as equal citizens in Israeli society and polity was not possible; only their partial incorporation could be considered. Third, security
considerations should always be the overriding ones. The plan itself is long and detailed, but I shall summarize its main points below.

1) Political control. This would be pursued by preventing the Palestinians from establishing any autonomous political body that would articulate their views and concerns. Meanwhile, the state would mobilize local groups of collaborators to act against any secessionist effort that Palestinians might make, particularly any effort to recognize the Galilee as part of the Palestinian state according to the 1947 partition plan. Moreover, these collaborators would be used to present any political struggle that Palestinians might wage against the state as internal Palestinian contention between radicals and moderates. They would also spy on their communities and pass on information to official bodies.

2) Segmentation of the Palestinians. This objective entails two processes: spatial ghettoization of the Palestinians by severing the territorial continuity of Arab populated areas and the balkanization of the Palestinian minority. The first part would be achieved by implanting “serious Jewish wedges” in Palestinian populated regions, while the second would be accomplished by nurturing in every “ethnic” component of the Palestinian population particularistic interests, through favoritism and other means.

3) Economic dependency. This would be pursued at the individual level as well as the collective one. At the personal level, Palestinians are to be directly connected to the state through personal interests. Those who reap profits from economic exchange with official bodies (such as the public sector, state bodies, Histadrut enterprises, and so on) ought to identify with the state. Meanwhile, at the collective level, the Palestinians were to be incorporated into the periphery of the Israeli economy and the lower tiers of the labor market through their employment in state and Histadrut enterprises. However, this incorporation could be possible only if their employment served to increase the profit of Jewish companies.

4) Provision of services and local-level administrative changes. The provision of services to Palestinian localities, including running water, paved roads, electricity, and public health – dubbed “modernization” by Israeli politicians and scholars – represents an essential developmental tool. However, behind this supposedly positive policy laid sinister intentions. Reuven Barkat – an Arabist, Histadrut leader, Mapai member, and a chief author of the plan – revealed the hidden (panoptic) logic behind this policy, stating:

The electrification of the Arab village has an immense value not only in economic-cultural terms; it has also a significant security value. When you pass by Wadi ‘Ara street [which crosses the Triangle area, inhabited by Palestinians] at night you see a hostile darkness . . . if we illuminate this darkness, we take them out of the darkness and place them under our supervision. The same is true with regard to streets and transportation.

Moreover, supplying these services by Israeli official or semi-official bodies would increase Palestinians’ dependence on the state.
Meanwhile, the administrative changes entailed the democratization of Palestinian local politics by establishing elected local councils. However, in this realm, as with the introduction of modern service, controlling and monitoring Palestinians constituted the main objective. Democratic politics comprised an ideal field through which Arabists would engineer Palestinians’ social relations at the local level by fomenting conflicts among rival hamulas, for example, or by giving benefits to “positive Arabs.” A top secret document from 1959 states:

The government’s policy . . . has sought to divide the Arab population into diverse communities and regions. . . . The municipal status of the Arab villages, and the competitive spirit of local elections, deepened the divisions inside the villages themselves.11

5) Enforcement of the hegemonic order. Various forums and publications were established to induce what Fanon called “mystifications” among Palestinians.12 These included a daily Arabic newspaper; clubs for workers, farmers, and youth to be run by the Histadrut’s Arab Department; and the launching of a Hasbara department.13 Special attention was paid to the “intelligentsia,” who were considered the most potent sociopolitical force among the Palestinians. Their unemployment could lead some to foment rebellion among Palestinians or at least to challenge the official discourse. However, they could also be used to spread Hasbara within their communities and abroad, and it was suggested that they be employed in low-level positions in Israeli consulates and embassies for this purpose. A more sinister proposal was to encourage educated Palestinians to work in the entertainment industry in order to help divert Palestinians’ attentions from their grim realities. Indeed, a senior politician who participated in the discussions of the plan underscored the need “to establish musical bands and entertainment groups, this give expression to the feelings in the cultural field. . . . This [recreation] is also an employment sector for students and secondary school graduates. . . . The Roman slogan of ‘bread and entertainment’ is not wrong.”14

Further, the authors of the plan advised to manipulate the class dynamics of Palestinian society through education. Education should be used to co-opt Palestinians drawn from a fallahin background rather than from the declining middle classes. The reasoning was that literati with middle-class origins would carry and articulate the grievances of its class, which had played a leading nationalist role during the Mandate era, a legacy that the rural intelligentsia lacked.

**Surveillance, Political Control, and “Enlightened Occupation”**

The military government that formally ran the day-to-day aspects of Palestinians’ lives was terminated in 1966. However, the Defense (Emergency) Regulations, which constituted the legal infrastructure for intrusively and systematically supervising and controlling
Stifling Surveillance

the Palestinian, have never been revoked. The functions that the military government fulfilled hitherto were transferred to the police and the Shin Bet.

The Arabists had to rethink their premises and plans within a few months after the termination of the military government, however. Following the 1967 War, Israel pursued what its leaders called a “liberal (enlightened) policy” toward the Palestinian residents of the newly conquered territories. The Arabists thus had to grapple with the question of how Israel could pursue a more liberal policy toward non-citizen Palestinians than toward those who were Israeli citizens. To deal with this conundrum, Shmuel Toledano, the advisor to the prime minister on Arab affairs, summoned Arabists, ministers and Knesset members involved in Arab affairs for a “top secret meeting” on 20 June 1968. Toledano outlined clearly and succinctly the principles of Israeli policy toward the Palestinian minority, which read as follows:

a) Arab organizations – we decided to:
   1) Prevent the establishment of independent Arab political parties or nationwide Arab organizations.
   2) Prevent the establishment of nation-wide Islamic organizations on religious or national basis and disallowed [popular] Islamic rituals.
   3) Prevent the establishment of Arab municipal organizations beyond the local level.
   4) Prevent the establishment of large Arab economic enterprises – an independent bank, Arab labor unions, and chambers of commerce – [while] endeavoring to preserve Arabs’ economic dependency on the Jewish sector.
   5) Prevent the establishment of independent social institutions and sport clubs. Instead, [we] encouraged the integration of Arabs into existing Israeli frameworks.

b) Reward and punishment – we acted according to the following guidelines:
   1) Awarding preferential treatment in socio-economic development to certain villages and religious sects.
   2) Giving side benefits to collaborators and withholding them from negative elements.
   3) Cultivating leaders at various levels – Knesset members and heads of local authorities – by channeling side benefits through them.

c) Demography – we acted according to the following policy guidelines:
   1) The inculcation of the family planning notion among the Israeli Arabs.
   2) The awarding of direct and indirect assistance to those who wish to migrate.
   3) The initiation of various measures for the liberation of women, particularly raising their educational standards and elevating [their] family life more generally. We reached a conclusion that an increase in the woman’s education causes a decline in her fertility. We faced a question: what is preferable – a large population with low national [consciousness] or small population, [but] more educated and more nationalistic? As education increases so does patriotism.
We gave priority to the demographic issue. We said, it is not important how nationalistic they might be, the main thing is demography.

4) In the field of internal migration we encouraged the settlement of Arabs and Bedouins in the mixed cities at the center of the country. We proposed [that] Jews [move] from the city to the village and the Arabs from the village to the city.

5) It was decided to split up the demographic concentrations of Arabs in the Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev by Jewish settlement or state institutions, such as army and police [compounds] and civilian institutions.

d) The ethnic group, the tribe, and the hamula – we determined that the disintegration of the tribe and the hamula should be deceleration, without being committed, however, to representatives who have no actual support. This means we shall try to preserve the hamula and the tribe, yet if in reality this proves unattainable we should adopt other leaders; this is first. Second, singling out and giving preference to the Druze and Circassian communities and to a limited extent to the Greek Catholic community. This prevailed until the Six Day War [of 1967].

e) Land – we decided to:
1) Wrap up the claims of the present absentees. . . . Soon we shall set a deadline for the submission of requests for compensations.
2) Conclude the land settlement in the North [i.e., the Galilee] and embark on such an arrangement in the Negev.
3) Avoid land confiscation as long as it is possible. We saw that land seizure sparks unrest. Therefore, during the last three years we did our best not to expropriate land. . . . I think this episode is about to end.

f) Jewish-Arab tension – we reached the conclusion that frictions between Jews and Arabs [i.e., attacks by Jews on Arabs in public spaces] should be prohibited.

g) Disorderly building – we concluded that zoning plans for the villages ought to be prepared. . . . In places where [such] plans exist, we shall begin the demolition of houses [which were built outside the locality’s boundaries].

h) The Bedouins – we decided to:
1) Move them northward in a collective and organized manner.
2) Sedentarize the Bedouin and change [their livelihood] from agriculture to wage labor.
3) Gradually eliminate their livestock.15

After outlining these principles, Toledano presented three alternatives for discussion. First, to pursue a liberal alternative modelled on the policy employed toward the Palestinians in the occupied territories, which would include a larger margin of freedom of expression and the transfer of Islamic endowments to Palestinians’ management.16 Second, to keep the current policy unchanged in the light of its success. Third, to adopt a compromise between these two options. Ultimately, the policy principles outlined by Toledano were
not substituted by a liberal policy. Rather, they were maintained by the Israeli government and constituted—with some additions and tactical refinement—the official policy toward the Palestinians in Israel until 1991.

Institutionalized Control and Surveillance

The plans and policy principles mentioned above were put into practice through a multi-layered system of control and surveillance. It included several institutions, some relying on naked force and others using subtle forms of power—reminiscent of the Althusserian distinction between repressive state apparatuses and ideological ones. Probably the most conspicuous repressive apparatus is the military government. Although it existed earlier, the military government was officially established on 3 September 1948. Its head was a military general responsible for all aspects of Palestinians’ lives who was part of two hierarchies: the military and the civilian. On issues under military authority, he reported to the chief of staff, while on civilian issues, he worked under the minister of defense. The area under military rule was divided into five regions at first, but was condensed into three after 1950: the northern district (the Galilee), the central district (the Triangle), and the southern district (the Naqab). Each of the three regions was headed by a military commander. The Arab population which remained in the cities of Haifa, Jaffa, Lydda, Ramla, and al-Majdal (before their transfer during the early 1950s), was concentrated in poor neighborhoods and was put under military rule until 1 July 1949, when Jewish immigrants were settled in deserted Arab houses, thus converting some of these cities—which had been Arab cities—into mixed ones.

The military government was staffed by a small and mostly unfit workforce. For example, in 1949 it was composed of some 1,000 employees, decreasing by 1958 to 116 persons, 87 of whom were assigned administrative and operational duties (such as liaison with the local population), while the remainder fulfilled escort and patrol duties. Many of its members were drawn from the human surplus of the army that was viewed as unfit due to age, health, or injury. Moreover, many were corrupt, thus making looting, racketeering, and cruelties a hallmark of this system. This compromised staff was responsible for a rapidly growing population. In 1958, the staff of 116 persons ruled over 180,000 Palestinians and had to perform formidable tasks. Indeed, on 14 May 1950, Prime Minister Ben-Gurion decreed that the various ministries should deal with Arabs only through the military government. Ziama Divon, the second advisor to the prime minister on Arab affairs, detailed the following assignments entrusted to the military government, besides its main task of stopping the return of Palestinian refugees:

1. Imposing emergency regulations: the closure of areas, military courts, administrative detention, imposition of curfews, and confinement of movement.
2. Gathering up-to-date information on the population under its jurisdiction.
3. Allotting passes and work permits outside the areas of the military government.
4. Granting licenses for carrying arms.
5. Establishing local councils and appointing mukhtars.
7. Giving advice in the appointment of teachers and civil servants.
8. Leasing land.
9. Granting permits for the purchase of tractors.
10. Granting various franchises.  
11. Encouraging the establishment of development projects in the villages.

These functions gave the military government comprehensive and overwhelming powers to control all aspects of Palestinians’ lives. Its most immediate manifestation was the system of permits and passes. The three regions under the military government were divided and subdivided into smaller units, which in many cases formed the boundaries of a single locality or a small cluster of villages. For example, until 1954, the Galilee was divided into forty-six areas and passes were required to move between them. Even after the relaxation of restrictions, the areas under military rule were divided into sixteen zones. Meanwhile, the Bedouin population in the Naqab was confined to the siyaj, which comprised less than ten percent of the areas in which they previously lived. The military government did not exist only to control the Palestinians, but also to carry out other assignments, such as: confiscating Palestinian lands by declaring them closed military areas; Judaizing space; regulating the entrance of Palestinian workers into the labor market; and organizing Palestinians’ expulsion if an appropriate opportunity were to emerge.

However, the military government was the outer layer of the coercive apparatuses. Probably the most essential one is the Shin Bet. Established in the summer of 1950, the Shin Bet’s main mission has been the prevention of sabotage and espionage activities. Yet, it had engaged in wide-ranging surveillance of the various aspects of Palestinian lives: it monitored Palestinians in classes, offices, mosques, public spaces, and social gatherings to learn about their political attitudes. Such activities were conducted alongside the usual practices that such agencies commonly undertake, including wiretapping, intercepting mail, and bugging communications systems. Additionally, the Shin Bet screened, and in many cases continues to screen, Palestinian candidates for positions in state and public sectors such as teachers, headmasters, inspectors, bureaucrats in state and Histadrut-related bodies, and functionaries in Islamic religious institutions. Its recommendations were usually passed to the office of the advisor on Arab affairs. Additionally, the Shin Bet gave advice to policy-making bodies regarding available policy options toward the Palestinians.

A third apparatus is the police. Beside its duty of maintaining law and order, it had additional assignments in the Palestinian-populated areas, including political surveillance and control. The police, particularly the “department for special assignments” (Matam), was entrusted with surveillance of the Palestinians as well as coordinating police activities with the Shin Bet and the military government.
These three organizations – the military government, the Shin Bet, and the police (Matam) – along with the prime minister’s advisor’s office, coordinated their activities through a joint committee, known as the central committee (HaVa’ada HaMerkazit) at the national level and through district committees (Va’adot Mirchaviot) at the regional one. The central committee was entrusted with, among other things: screening of candidates for teaching and dismissing teachers on political grounds; and deciding on the awarding of licenses for taxis, trucks, and the opening of businesses. Meanwhile, the three district committees (corresponding to the areas under the military government) were in charge of overseeing the day-to-day activities of the Palestinians at the micro level as well as composing recommendations to the central committee.

While these apparatuses functioned through supervising, punishing, disallowing, restricting, suppressing, and expropriating in order to prevent dissent and to encourage collaboration, the Histadrut’s goal was to incorporate Palestinians in state structures and in the economy as second-class citizens. Its role was formalized in August 1949 through an agreement between its representative and the advisor on Arab affairs. According to this, the Histadrut would be in charge of, among other things: banking, marketing organizations, transportation, local cooperatives, and granting credit. It was also stated that its role was to serve political ends: “The development of the Arab economy has to contribute to the struggle against forces in the Arab community that oppose de facto or de jure the Israeli state, its security, or development.”

While it marketed Arab agricultural products in Jewish cities and settlements by setting up open markets, it was aided by the military government in establishing shops in Arab villages where Israeli products were sold in order to “circulate” the money that Palestinians earn back to the Jewish economy. The Histadrut was also the main supplier of vital services. It provided health insurance and health services through its nationwide Kupat Holim clinics and was responsible for training paramedical personnel. Moreover, as a workers’ union it provided protection for Palestinian employees, after their acceptance into the labor federation in 1960. It also established sports clubs in Palestinian villages, particularly soccer teams – the most popular game among Palestinians – within the Hapoel sport network.

Alongside these activities, it aimed to influence Palestinians’ consciousness through wide-ranging educational and cultural activities. For example, it opened in some localities “clubs [which] included a library, a reading hall, games and newspapers.” These clubs also screened films, showed plays, and hosted public lectures. As early as 1961, special attention was paid to Palestinian women, because as one Histadrut report claimed: “From our activity in this field, we learned that Arab women are susceptible to our Hasbara and are ready to be incorporated in the Histadrut’s and state’s life.” Therefore, various courses for women – modeled on colonial education for native women – were launched, focused on teaching house management, handicrafts, and Hebrew.

Moreover, in the realm of Hasbara, the Histadrut’s Arab department assumed in 1960 the management of al-Yawm, the semi-official Arabic daily. Additionally, it published a wide array of publications including al-Yawm for Children, which – with
the recommendation of the ministry of education — was sold to schools; and the monthly al-Hadaf (the Target), which was also launched in 1960 and offered political and social analysis, taking the place of Haqiqat al-Amr (The Truth of the Matter), the long-standing Arabic propaganda publication of the Histadrut and the Jewish Agency. Other publications included the semimonthly magazine for teachers Sada al-Tarbiya (The Echo of Education), which was distributed to almost all Arab teachers as members of the teachers’ union. The Histadrut also published books in Arabic, mostly translations from Hebrew, as well as calendars that emphasized Israeli dates and celebrations. Moreover, it tried to influence large Palestinian audiences (not only the literate) through films screened in Palestinian villages either as distractions or to transmit subliminal messages. Additionally, a theatre group of Iraqi Jews (the Ohel group) was established and performed plays written by Arab playwrights, such as the classical romance Majnun Layla, which was launched in October 1956.40

Given these activities, one report stated that:

The Histadrut is [viewed as] the main public body that manifests Israel’s presence in the Arab villages throughout the year. In Arab villages there are almost no branches of governmental ministries or [Mapai] party branches. The Histadrut is the only body that occupies buildings and centers of activity that show in practice, through signs, flags, etc., the presence of Israel in the Arab villages, small and large, and this is important. I would say that the Histadrut has become hegemonic in the social, cultural, and political arenas.41

The Histadrut was also a tool to enlist Arab support for the ruling Mapai party by pressuring them to vote for Mapai or the Mapai-backed Arab lists for the Knesset.42 Having thus outlined Israeli plans for controlling and supervising the Palestinians — which aimed after 1952 to incorporate them at the margins of the polity, society, and the labor market — and the institutions responsible for putting these plans into practice, let us address their impact and effectiveness.

State Power in Operation and Its Subjects

The effectiveness and success of Israeli strategies depended upon the degree to which Palestinians could be lured or coerced to subjectify the modes of operation, rationalities, images, and tactics that these plans entailed. Such subjectification is, of course, unthinkable in normal circumstance and becomes possible only under what Carl Schmitt called a “state of exception.”43 In the rest of this section I shall discuss some of the surveillance and control methods employed to implement these plans. The first method was the division of the population horizontally and vertically, according to various criteria, down to the smallest “natural unit,” thus enabling state power to trickle down through the social body and affect the targeted groups.
The Jewish-Arab Binary

The first line of division is between Jews and non-Jews (i.e., Palestinians); or in other words, between the largely settler Jewish population and native Palestinians. In fact racialized boundaries are ingrained in the idea of establishing a homeland for European Jews through migration and political and military domination in a country overwhelmingly populated by indigenous Arabs. From the start, the state itself has served as a vehicle to achieve and further (Jewish) national goals. The term “Israeli” has been used as synonymous with Israeli Jew. The state also embarked on two parallel projects: the homogenization of the Jewish population and the Judaization of space. The first took the form of a vigorous promotion of a melting pot policy and the construction of a national character of “Israeliness.” The second project entailed the creation of a sense of exclusive entitlement to the country through ideologically inspired school textbooks and “scientific” knowledge in archaeology, geography, cartography, history, sociology, and political sciences, as well as through the de-Arabization and de-signification of the country’s landscape. Moreover, this notion of state-ethnic identification was linked to security. Consequently, the road to ethnically-based hierarchy and internal colonization was short. Indeed, the Jewish-Palestinian dichotomy was translated into a hierarchy of rulers and ruled. Yehoshua (Josh) Palmon, the first advisor to the prime minister on Arab affairs, spoke of the significance of “separate development.” In such an apartheid power structure, Jewish citizens as a collective, as well as specific groups of Jews, such as mayors (including Abba Hushi, Yosef Katran, and Mordechai Surkis), teachers in Arab schools, bureaucrats, Mapai and Histadrut employees, and high-profile students associated with Mapai at universities, were conceived by policymakers as potential or active agents in the surveillance and control of Palestinians.

Officially, the Jewish-Palestinian division was reproduced in the identity cards, where each citizen fell into one of two dichotomous ethnic categories: Jew or Arab (the blurred category of Druze, added in 1962, will be discussed later). Beyond the goals of stopping movement across borders (that is, preventing the return of refugees) and linking Palestinian ID holders to places of residence, it had additional restrictive functions similar to those of Stalinist Russia’s internal passport system. The identity card includes information that could be used for policing, for determining eligibility for movement in certain areas, and for providing a shortcut for affiliating persons to friendly or hostile groups. Indeed, Ben-Gurion affirmed the security implications of the national categorization of citizens, stating: “For security reasons we did not abolish the registration of religion or nationality in the identity card.” Realizing the importance of identity card for surveillance, the military government’s Arabists advised the population registry bureau of the ministry of interior to include information about hamula membership – a significant piece of information used to exercise control – in the official population registry, next to the regular entries marking each Palestinian citizen’s name, date of birth, residence, and so on. Aside from identity cards, other means of identification making Palestinians visible were introduced. For example, specific plate numbers for cars owned by Palestinians were issued and police were instructed to follow the movements of these cars and identify their parking places.
This Jewish-Palestinian division was further pronounced at the institutional level, where parallel bureaucracies along national lines were established. The official state offices and official institutions dealt with the Jews, while the military government and special Arab departments in various ministries, the Histadrut, and Mapai dealt with the Palestinians. Not only were the personnel in charge of Arab affairs Jews, but they were connected through and through with the surveillance and control apparatus: the Shin Bet, the office of the advisor on Arab affairs, and Mapai’s Arab department.

The Jewish-Palestinian division also found expression in laws or through differential application of laws, as legal discrimination was often veiled by universalistic language. The most obvious discriminatory laws are the Law of Return (1950) and the Nationality Law (1952), which consider every Jew in the world a potential citizen of Israel.55 Another set of laws concern the status of Jewish organizations such as the World Zionist Organization (WZO), the Jewish Agency, and the Jewish National Fund (JNF).56 These organizations have operated as subcontractors for the state, received state support, and consequently became indirect channels for discrimination. The JNF, for example, has been working in Israel since the state’s independence despite the racist nature of some of its articles of association, which prohibit the sale, lease, or sub-lease of land to non-Jews.57 Besides overt legal discrimination, many laws have been tailored to discriminate against Palestinians despite being stated in universal language.58 The Absentees’ Property Law (1950), for example, enabled the state to seize the property of Palestinian refugees and citizens who were labelled “present absentees,”59 and the Land Acquisition Law (1953) empowers the minister of finance to purchase – with or without the consent of the lawful owners – lands that the state had already expropriated.60

**Balkanization of the Palestinians**

Already in the 1920s, the Zionist Organization planned to divide the Palestinians and instigate – through bribery and other means – conflicts among the various religious and social groups. For example, in 1920, the “Intelligence Office” of the Zionist Executive’s political department in Palestine laid down a plan to manipulate differences and stir up conflicts among Palestinians. It proposed, among other things, buying off Nablus’s mayor and Bedouin shaykhs in southern Palestine in order to distance them from the Palestinian national movement; and, more ominously, fomenting conflicts between Christians and Muslims.61 Further, during the Mandate period, the Arab bureau of the Jewish Agency maintained informal relations with “moderate” Palestinians for gathering information and “to split Arab ranks.”62

Yet, this general scheme would have had limited impact had it not been pursued concretely by collecting and filing data, exploring new subdivisions, and creating specialized bodies with knowledge of the indigenous population and its customs, language, religions, economy, and sociopolitical structures. Indeed, these processes had a great impact not only on the Israeli war effort in 1948, but also on Israel’s control of the Palestinians after 1948. Further, many of those who managed the Palestinians after the establishment of Israel acquired their expertise in the pre-1948 period.
The most obvious and successful act of Balkanizing the Palestinians was the constitution of the Druze as non-Muslim and even non-Palestinian minority. The idea of Druze particularism was first raised in the course of a 1932 meeting between Yitzhak Ben-Zvi – an Arabist and president of the Jewish National Council – and ‘Abdallah Khayr, an educated Druze who, in the light of the struggle among Druze notables and families over leadership and prestige, suggested that the Druze ought to organize themselves as an autonomous religious group (*millet*) and distinguish themselves from the Muslims.\(^63\) This led Zionist bodies, particularly the intelligence services, to establish relationships with various Druze individuals. These relationships became useful during the 1948 war. Druze collaborators played a part in gathering information and conscripting Druze men to fight alongside the Jewish forces. Moreover, they helped in persuading fighters from the Druze volunteers’ battalion, who came from Syria and Lebanon to fight in Palestine, to change sides.

The impact of the Druze on the war’s result was largely inconsequential. However, these acts constituted, as one Arabist put it, “a poisoned dagger to stab into the back of Arab unity.”\(^64\) This constitutive act led Arabists and state officials to deal with the Druze through a colonialist prism as “friendly natives,” rather like the Gurkhas in India during the Raj, whose particularistic nature was encouraged in order to help controlling unfriendly natives.”\(^65\) However, for state officials, the benefit of dividing the Palestinians outweighed any contribution the Druze could make. Thus, for example, the head of the military government, Mishael Shechter (Shaham) stated:

> The Arab minority\(^66\) are not a unified thing . . . we are able to encourage this dissimilarity. If we succeed in making Arabs suspicious of the Druze – and not because they are loyal to us – this would be very important.\(^67\)

Druze particularism was promoted through the conscription of Druze men into the army, the constitution of separate Druze institutions, and the fostering of collaborationist elite. Soon after the end of the war, the Israeli army was interested in demobilizing the Druze who fought alongside it and only pressure by Ben-Gurion and Sharett made the continuation of these men’s service and later the conscription of Druze men possible.\(^68\)

In January 1956, the state imposed conscription on Druze men, despite opposition by the majority of the Druze population.\(^69\) Yet, more importantly, the minority unit (Battalion 300), mostly staffed by Druze, was used to suppress other Palestinians by blocking the return of Palestinian refugees, by engaging in sweep operations (that is, the detention and expulsion of refugees who returned to their villages, called “infiltrators” by Israel), and by stopping cross-border smuggling. Meanwhile, in the Naqab, this army unit engaged in the cleansing of Bedouin tribes and other Palestinians deemed unfriendly to the state.\(^70\)

After 1967, Druze servicemen were sent to control the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Military service has become a pillar of Druze particularism in another way. Many Druze ex-servicemen (up to 40 percent) find employment in the large Israeli security sector: as prison guards, policemen, guards and doormen in official institutions, and so on. These
jobs not only open to them a niche in the labor market blocked to other Palestinians, but it also effects their consciousness, as these positions demand “discipline, identification with the official policies, loyalty and subordination.”

At the institutional level, separate religious positions and institutions were created for the Druze community. These including the position of the spiritual leader, the religious council, a special court of appeal on religious matters, and separate courts for personal status law, which would act according to substantive laws different from the Hanafi school of jurisdiction, which had hitherto regulated such matters. In 1962, the formal separation of the Druze from the Muslim community was completed. A proposal to establish separate Druze schools was made as early as 1949 and, though a separate Druze educational system was not initiated until the mid-1970s, various educational programs were created to bolster Druze identity.

This policy of construction a separate Druze collectivity was supplemented by the formation of a new Druze elite, which would serve as an intermediary between the regime and Druze villages, *hamulas*, and individuals. This elite was formed in such a way as to ensure its perpetual dependence on Israel, due to its lack of autonomous sources of prestige and authority. To maintain influence, its members had to, of course, be loyal. They were not drawn from *hamulas* or branches of *hamulas* that had traditionally held leadership roles. And by fulfilling all sorts of mediatory functions, they accumulated considerable wealth. In this way, Israel ensured a shaky foundation for this elite, a precariousness that was furthered by the instigation of factionalism and rivalries among its members.

Israel tried unsuccessfully to replicate this policy vis-à-vis Palestinian Christians and Bedouin. A failed attempt was made in 1957 to enlist young Christian men in the army on a voluntary basis as a prelude for conscription. Moreover, Israel sought to beef up the status of the Egyptian-born bishop George Hakim, head of the Greek Catholic community, through various high profile state-supported socio-economic and political initiatives. This endeavor was unsuccessful, however, due to the incorporation of Christians into the Palestinian national movement, the high level of educational within the Christian community, and the associations that Christian Palestinians maintained with European and international institutions, which Israel did not wish to antagonize.

Meanwhile, the Bedouin were distinguished not through religious criteria – which according to the Ottoman millet system granted the right to demand recognition as an autonomous community – but rather according to its “unique culture” and “nomadic way of life.” Israel was able to obtain the collaboration of various tribal shaykhs in the Galilee who persuaded some of their young followers to join the Israeli army, mainly as trackers. Meanwhile, in the Naqab some shaykhs and their tribesmen were embroiled in various Israeli clandestine operations. Given the spatial dispersion of the Bedouins in the Naqab, the state created new divisions and the nineteen tribes which remained after 1948 were split into thirty-seven. Further, a new echelon of shaykhs, composed of collaborators, was formed. Like the new Druze elite, its members lacked traditional authority and instead accumulated wealth and influence through wide mediatory and administrative functions granted by the state.
**Further Divisions and Surveillance**

Even these categories, though, were too wide to enable Israel to exercise tight and continuous surveillance of the Palestinians and influence their behavior. To achieve such an end, the categorization had to be fine-tuned. The Palestinians were thus divided into ever smaller units. The next line of division was locality: Palestinian localities were categorized according to a hostile/friendly binary. Then, the residents of each village were divided into faith communities (in the case of multi-faith villages). This was followed by their classification according to *hamula*. The *hamula* was conceived as a strategic unit, large enough to enable manageability but at the same time small and meaningful, through which the attitudes and behaviors of individuals could be monitored and influenced.

The attention to the data at the local level – its registration, classification, filing, and archiving – dates back to the 1930s, when the Jewish intelligence service began the assemblage of the “village files.” A file of each village was created and included “[p]recise details . . . about the topographic location of each village, its access roads, quality of land, water springs, main sources of income, its socio-political composition, religious affiliations, names of its mukhtars, its relationship with other villages, the age of individual men (sixteen to fifty) and many more. An important category was an index of ‘hostility’ (towards the Zionism).” The information acquired was not only meant to undergird the direct war effort, but also to create mayhem in Arab villages through rumors and provocations. Ezra Danin explains that special courses for the intelligence officers were arranged during the 1940s, which included Arabic language and the mores and mentality of the “Ishmaelites,” as well as the basics of Islam. They were also instructed on how to embroil Palestinian villages in *fassad* (intrigues) in order to weaken them in periods of conflict with the Jewish community.

The village archive project commenced in the early 1950s and by 1955 a new assemblage of village files had already been put together. The structure of these files was modeled on the old one, with one addition: the voting results of the citizens in previous elections. A file was prepared for each village or tribe, in which was affixed a table composed of two sections. The first section included the basic data for surveillance and political control purposes. It contained information regarding the demographic and religious composition of the residents, the names of local leaders, sources of living, access roads, sources of drinking water, rivalries between *hamulas* or religious groups, the attitude of the community toward the state (index of hostility), and the major problems facing it.

The second section consists of a deconstruction of each religious community into *hamulas*. It included the following variables: the name of the *hamula*, the name of its head, its size, the results of its voting in the previous elections, and a projection of its voting results in the forthcoming ones. A column at the end allowed for annotations proposing means (carrots and sticks) by which the head of each *hamula* could be influenced.
Conclusion: The Synchronization of Surveillance and Political Control

Palestinians who remained in what became Israel after 1948 comprised a substantial numerical minority with shared history, culture, memories, moral claims, and strong sense of entitlement. Until 1952, Israeli leaders and Arabists hoped that they would be driven out in the near future. However, since then various plans to control and monitor the Palestinians were devised. One of the means to do so was splitting the Palestinians according to various organizing principles. This made their control and monitoring easier, particularly as the various categories of Palestinians were hierarchized and their members given differential treatment. The identities of some groups, principally the Druze and to some extent the Bedouins, were even defined in opposition to other Palestinians, thus generating rivalries and distrust. This technique of categorization also allowed the Arabists to objectify the Palestinians, summing them up and presenting them on maps, charts, tables, and records, thus giving a supposedly “rational basis” for the kinds of information they gather as well as to the allocation of benefits and repression. Moreover, the treatment of Palestinians not as individual citizens but as members of collectivities (large and small) headed by appointed “dignitaries” compelled Palestinians to exercise self-disciplining. Non-conformist behavior by an individual Palestinian could adversely affect the collectivity to which he or she belongs. Group pressure for quiescence was exercised particularly in intimate groups such as the family and the hamula and walled Palestinians off from each other along lines of blood and social affiliation.

The effectiveness of this system was enhanced by the extensive and continuous flow of information. Given the regime of passes, permits, and licensing that prevailed, the Palestinians had to come into frequent contact with various Arab departments, state and public institutions, and the military government. Not only was the personal data of these Palestinians (from, for example, universities, colleges, offices for car registration and driving licensing) stored and passed on to surveillance bodies, but they were often asked, in order for any of these basic bureaucratic processes to proceed, to supply information about relatives, neighbors, colleagues, students, and so on. Even worse, some of the processes were designed specifically to keep the information flowing. For example, an Arab teacher had to come in contact with the Arab department on several occasions during his career: when he is screened for the job, when he asked to get a full time job, when he asked for a transfer to his locality, when he requested a promotion, and so on. At every stage he might be required to give information. Further, the dignitaries at the various levels were considered unofficial gatekeepers: they wrote recommendations on behalf of “positive” followers and passed information on non-conformist ones. These measures introduced and maintained a cycle of favor-for-a-favor, which intensified and multiplied surveillance, rolling one informant or act of informing into the next. The principle goal behind all of this was to break the solidarity among Palestinians and to incorporate them at the margins of the Israeli polity and economy as subordinate collectivities devoid of an overarching identity, vision, will, or ability to resist. To follow Michel Foucault, whose oeuvre inspired this paper, one should inquire as to the counter-power Palestinians.
employed to confront this system. Unfortunately, this question has not been properly addressed and is still awaiting further research.

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Endnotes
1 For example, Israeli historian Benny Morris argued that this proves that the expulsion of the Palestinians was born out of war rather than by design. See: Benny Morris, The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Palestinian collaborators and communists, meanwhile, claimed that many Palestinians remained because the Jewish communities had urged them to stay. See, for example: Hillel Cohen, Good Arabs: The Israeli Security Services and the Israeli Arabs, 1948–1967 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 16–18. While Morris’s argument has been widely debated – see, for example, Nur Masalha, “A Critique of Benny Morris,” Journal of Palestine Studies 21, no. 1 (1991): 90–97; Norman Finkelstein, Myths, Old and New,” Journal of Palestine Studies 21, no. 1 (1991): 66–89; Ilan Pappe, The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006) – the allegation that these Palestinians make is troubling: it presupposes that Palestinian refugees had a choice to stay or to leave falsifying the realities which surrounded Palestinians’ exodus, including massacres, forced expulsion, indiscriminate shelling, and the flattening of villages and neighborhoods. Furthermore, many Palestinian communists – including leaders such as Emile Habibi and Emile Tuma – and collaborators left the country during the war and were allowed to return later by the Israeli authorities. See: Political Committee – Bureau [of Mapai], “Protocol of the Meeting,” 19 January 1950, 7, in Labor Party Archive, Beit Berl, Israel [hereafter LPA], Files: 2-025-1950-13.

2 In a meeting of the secretariat of the ruling Mapai party with the party’s Knesset members on 18 June 1950, Moshe Dayan, a prominent commander of the 1948 war and later chief of staff and minister of defense, stated that Palestinians stayed in the Galilee because of the nature of the Israeli military operation there. According to Dayan, this operation took the shape of a double pincer movement, which resulted in many Palestinian villages finding themselves within Israeli controlled territory. Moshe Sharett, the foreign minister and chief architect of Israeli surveillance and control policies toward the Palestinians during their formative stages, emphasized that a different course that would have resulted in the expulsion of all Galilee Palestinians was not possible: “This process occurred in stages, and the circumstances surrounding the Arab exodus or uprooting in the first stages are not the same as in the final ones. Two facts – on the one hand the Galilee was the last area to be conquered and on the other it has the main concentration of Arabs who remained. The coexistence of these two facts is not accidental; rather it is a cause and effect. . . . We shouldn’t deceive ourselves by assuming that we could have managed this affair differently. When we confronted strong villages with deep roots that refused to move, we spared neither military power nor moral strength nor diplomatic valor” in seeking to drive them out (emphasis added). As for the Palestinian population in the Triangle area, it was transferred from Jordanian to Israeli rule under the 1949 Armistice Agreement, with the stipulation that it would not be expelled or harmed. In other words, as Dayan put it: “the borders there were demarcated in a technical way. Had the borders been set differently they would have become part of an enemy state.” In addition, some Palestinian Bedouin remained in the Negev desert, and other Palestinians remained in a few villages and townships such as al-Majdal (whose Palestinian residents were later expelled to Gaza in 1951). Other villages from which Palestinians were not expelled were primarily those inhabited by Druze, as well as two villages inhabited by Circassians. The Secretariat’s Meeting with [Mapai] MKs [hereafter Secretariat’s Meeting], “Protocol of the Meeting,” 18 June 1950, 1/4, in LPA, Files: Gimel-3; C/3.

3 For example, Moshe Sharett predicted on 18 June 1950 that a Palestinian minority, concentrated in the regions mentioned above, would continue to exist for some time. However, he conceived of its existence as temporary, stating, “the state of Israel, by a stroke of fate, will include for a certain period of time, a sizeable Arab minority. I do not know the length of this period nor do I know what changes are expected in the turbulent
future . . . However until the next upheaval . . . we will continue to have among ourselves a sizeable Arab minority.” Secretariat’s Meeting, “Protocol of the Meeting,” 18 June 1950, 2–3/2.

4 Operation Yohanan (1950–1953), which Sharett oversaw, included the transfer of Galilee Christians to Brazil and Argentina. Ariel Sharon’s 1964 plan involved waging war on Syria, during which 300,000 Galilean Palestinians would be transferred. Plan Hafarferet (Mole), which projected the expulsion of Palestinian residents of the Triangle to the West Bank, was erroneously executed in the village of Kafir Kasim on the eve of the Suez War and resulted in a horrendous massacre on 29 October 1956, during which Israeli soldiers shot dead 49 innocent peasants from the village of Kafir Kasim who were returning home, unaware that a curfew had been declared. It seems that the field commander wrongly assumed that Israel was going to attack Jordan, in the event of which there was plan to expel Palestinians from the Triangle to Jordan. All the perpetrators were either acquitted by the court or were pardoned shortly after their imprisonment. On these plans, see: Nur Masalha, An Israeli Plan to Transfer Galilee’s Christians to South America: Yosef Weitz and “Operation Yohanan,” 1949–53 (University of Durham, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Occasional Paper No. 55, 1996); Yossi Melman and Daniel Raviv, “A Final Solution to the Palestinian Problem?” Guardian Weekly, 21 February 1988, 19; Ruvik Rosenthal, “Mi harag et Fatma Sarsur: ha-reka’, ha-men’im ve-hishatalshelut ha-’inyanim be-farashat tevah Kefar Kassem” [Who Killed Fatima Sarsur? The Background, Motivations, and Unfolding of the Kafir Qasim Massacre], in Kefar Kassem: eru’im u-mitos [Kafir Qasim: History and Myth], ed. Ruvik Rosenthal (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMe’uhad, 2000).

5 Arab Affairs Committee [hereafter AAC], 30 January 1958, “Protocol of the Meeting,” 2–3, in LPA, Files 7/32.


12 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Penguin, 1961).

13 Hasbara in Hebrew means explanation. However its real meaning is the supplying of biased information or the supply of certain information in order to achieve specific goal; that is propaganda.


19 Segev, 1949, 48.


25 See: Kafkafi, “Segregation or Integration,” 357.


28 Regarding its more recent role in political surveillance, see, for example, Yuval Yoaz and Jack Kourie, “Shin Bet: Citizens Subverting Israel Key Values to Be Probed,” Ha’Aretz, 20 May 2007.


1949,” in the Lavon Archive of the Histadrut, Tel Aviv, Israel, Document no. IV-208-1: 5815.
32 Mol and Palmon, “Outline of Meetings.”
33 The Histadrut’s Arab Department, “The Activities of the Economic Section of the Arab Department Acting Beside the Histadrut’s Executive, Submitted to the Subcommittee of the Knesset’s Arab Affairs Committee,” undated report, 1–2, in the Lavon Archive, Document No. IV-208-1: 5814.
34 “A Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department,” n.d., 2–3, in LPA, political committee’s files.
35 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department,” 5–6.
36 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department,” 4.
37 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department,” 6.
38 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department,” 6.
39 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department.”
40 “Review of the Histadrut’s Arab Department.”
41 AAC, “Protocol of the Meeting,” 6 June 1968, 12, in LPA, Files 7/32/68.
49 Peretz, “Early State Policy,” 100.
54 Bauml, Tsel kahol lavan, 248.
55 Kretzmer, Legal Status, 35–44.
56 Kretzmer, Legal Status, 61–69, 90–98.
65 Parsons, The Druze, 127.
66 The very concept of an “Arab minority” is something that I oppose: in my opinion we should say the Arabs in Israel.
68 Avivi, Copper Plate, 78.
69 Avivi, Copper Plate, 80; Cohen, Good Arabs, 159–160.
70 Firro, Druzes in the Jewish State, 106; Cohen, Good Arabs, 185; Avivi, Copper Plate, 76.
72 Avivi, Copper Plate, 195–96.
73 Avivi, Copper Plate, 197.
77 Cohen, Good Arabs, 47–53; Amnon Linn, Be-terem se’arah: Yehudim ve’-Arvim be-Yisra’el [Stormy Skies: Jews and Arabs in Israel] (Tel Aviv, Israel, Document no. IV-208-1: 5815.)


