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Sasha Rivers 5 April 2023

# “Desert Experience, Discerning Eyes, and Limitless Amount of Time”: Bridging the Gap Between the Bedouin as Primitive and Political Through the *Jerusalem Post*’s Reporting from 1948 to 1967

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An abstract of

a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences

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Abstract

"Desert Experience, Discerning Eyes, and Limitless Amount of Time": Bridging the Gap

Between the Bedouin as Primitive and Political

Through the *Jerusalem Post*'s Reporting from 1948 to 1967

By Sasha Rivers

The Bedouin are a group of Arab tribes found across the Middle East and North Africa who lived formerly nomadic lives, although their way of life has been complicated by modernity. The majority of existing literature on the Bedouin population in Israel focuses on the current Bedouin struggle for land rights, or the role of Bedouin as part of the larger Arab minority in Israel. Of these trends, land rights comprise most of the discussion around Bedouin in Israel, not only in academia but in general. Compared to the aforementioned topics, there is a relative lack of literature on the Bedouin with regards to current Bedouin society and their political role in Israel as one of the fastest-growing populations in the country.

I elected to work with primary sources to analyze the history of the Bedouin in Israel through the way the news depicts the Bedouin. This thesis focuses on reports of Bedouin in the Israeli newspaper, the *Jerusalem Post*. Using a collection of articles from 1948 through 1967, I illustrate the dual identity of the Bedouin that the *Jerusalem Post* portrays: one side being a reductive image of pastoral nomads unaware of how to navigate modern society, and the other depicting the Bedouin as political actors involved in the fledgling state of Israel. I posit that in contradicting itself with these two images of the same minority group, the *Jerusalem Post* demonstrates that the Bedouin have forged a political identity within Israel despite the primitive image society has imposed on them. Not only does this contradiction provide additional context to the history of the Bedouin in Israel, enriching available literature on the Bedouin, but it also expands Israeli history as it pertains to its treatment of minority populations.

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# Introduction

## A. Background

In 2017, Said al-Harumi, a Bedouin man from the town of Segev Shalom (Shaqib al-Salaam), was elected as a Member of the Knesset (MK), the Israeli Parliament. He was elected three more times, in 2019, 2020, and 2021.[1][2] As an MK, al-Harumi focused on uplifting his people: the Bedouin. Only two months after his last reelection, al-Harumi tragically and suddenly passed away on August 25, 2021. He was one of only six Bedouin men to ever be elected to the Knesset. In the summer of 2022, I was hired by the Sayyid al-Harumi Initiative,[3] an NGO founded in the name of the late MK aimed at economically empowering the Bedouin community in the Negev, the desert region in the south of Israel. In the summer of 2022, I lived in Jerusalem and worked closely with the co-founders of the initiative: I designed their website from scratch, traveled to the Negev to meet with different Bedouin communities and survey conditions in unrecognized Bedouin villages, and conducted secondary research on Bedouin life in Israel. The latter of these tasks proved difficult: there is a tangible dearth of academic literature focused on Bedouin in Israel. At some point last summer, I decided to write my thesis on the Bedouin population in Israel because I believe I can make a truly meaningful contribution to academia in broaching a topic that is often left ignored, especially in the Western, English-speaking canon.

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[1] "All Past and Present MKs: Saeed Alkharumi," The Knesset, The State of Israel, March 16, 2023, https://main.knesset.gov.il/en/MK/APPS/mk/mk-positions/959.

[2] Due to an unstable political climate, Israel held an unprecedented number of elections between 2018 and 2022, with five snap elections in four years, hence Al-Harumi's high number of re-elections in short succession.

[3] Spelling differs due to lack of standardized transliteration, although Said is the most common spelling found across sources about al-Harumi.

This thesis analyzes the depictions of Bedouin in the *Jerusalem Post* (*JP*), an Israeli newspaper first issued in 1932. My research focuses on articles published between the years of 1948 and 1967, as these are the years during which the entire Bedouin population in Israel lived under military government rule. The *JP* is a valuable primary source that demonstrates how the Bedouin exist in a dual role within Israel as semi-nomadic pastoralists in need of state-sponsored aid, and political actors with agency. We know that the UN intervened at the behest of the Bedouin for the return of their tribes to the Negev post-1948. We also know Bedouin helped find the Dead Sea Scrolls. How did the *JP* report this history? How did non-Bedouin Israelis view the Bedouin? What does this say about the history of the early Israeli state, and the place of indigenous people in its society today?

Defining who is a Bedouin and who is not one is a difficult task. Historically, the term Bedouin referred to a way of life; Bedouin were nomads whose lives were centered on herding. The word Bedouin comes from the Arabic word *badawi* (pl. *badu*), which is best defined as an antonym of *haḍr*, meaning "sedentary, urban, civilized," although it could be loosely defined as "desert-dweller."[4] Since the sedentarization of the majority of Bedouin communities across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the twentieth century, the word Bedouin has changed from defining a lifestyle to referring to an identity.[5] Today, "Bedouin" simply refers to the descendants of those once-nomadic groups who have since settled in villages, towns, and cities across the region. There are still significant cultural markers that differ from tribe to tribe, which generally manifest in the speaking of different Arabic dialects from nearby non-Bedouin (or even members of other tribes), tattoos, clothing, types of housing, behavior, politics, and so forth.[6]

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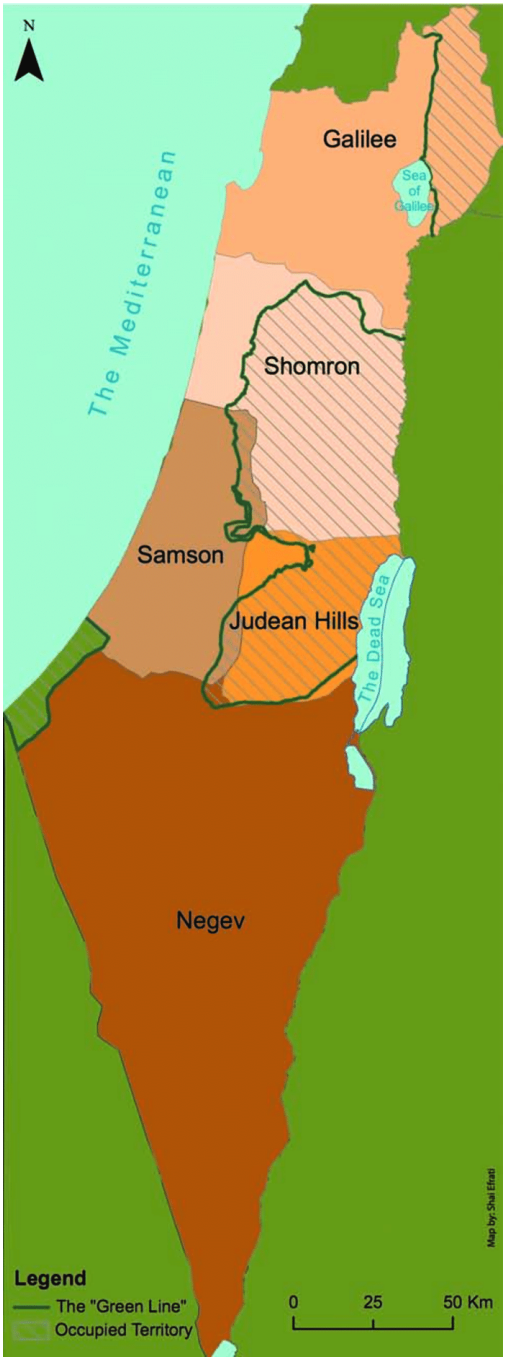
[4] Donald P. Cole, "Where Have the Bedouin Gone?" *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 237.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.




Map 0.1, a map of the wine regions of Israel, which I specifically selected due to how clearly it showed the Negev and Galilee regions of the state. From Daniel Monterescu, "Border Wines, Terroir across Contested Territory," *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 17, (November 2017): 137.

Today, the Bedouin population in Israel numbers well over 200,000.[7] The majority of Bedouin in Israel live in the Negev, the desert in the southern region. *Haaretz* reported last year that the Israeli government actually has no idea how many Bedouin live in the Negev: the

[7] It is widely reported that the number of Bedouin in the Negev alone is around 200,000, although finding a reliable source for an actual population total is difficult.

Population Authority and the Authority for Development and Settlement of the Bedouins in the Negev (also referred to as the Bedouin Settlement Authority) both reported different numbers, although it is generally accepted that half the Negev Bedouin population lives on recognized land, while the other half lives on unrecognized land, and that each of these populations numbers somewhere around 100,000.[8] In essence, half the Negev Bedouin population lives in cities specifically constructed for them, while the other half of the population live in villages around the desert on land that the state of Israel has not zoned for Bedouin residence; the government therefore refuses to recognize the Bedouin presence on "unrecognized" land, and the people living there have no permanent addresses, and are not connected to the electric or water grids.

A significant population of Bedouin also live in the Galilee region in the north of Israel, although the most recent census data for Bedouin in the Galilee is from 1999, with a population around 50,000.[9] There are also small pockets of Bedouin populations in the central district of Israel, although their 1999 numbers only totaled to 10,000.[10] I will discuss Bedouin from all parts of Israel, with heavy emphasis on Negev Bedouin due to the comparative size of their population.

B. Methodology

One of my goals for this thesis is to write something novel enough to make a true contribution to Jewish Studies literature in the United States. I selected the *JP* because it has the

[8] Almog Ben Zikri, "Israel Does Not Know How Many Bedouin Live in the Negev, Watchdog Says," *Haaretz,* August 4, 2021, https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2021-08-04/ty-article/.premium/state-comptroller-government-does-not-know-size-of-bedouin-population-in-negev/0000017f-e83a-d62c-a1ff-fc7b20300000.
[9] Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Bedouin in Israel," 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20071026125647/http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/mfaarchive/1990_1999/1999/7/the%20bedouin%20in%20israel. (Accessed through a web archive due to the original MFA link being defunct)
[10] Ibid.

largest online searchable English-language database of any Israeli newspaper, although there are other longer-standing Israeli publications, such as *Haaretz*. Despite *Haaretz*'s publication of many articles in English, there is no English-language *Haaretz*-specific archive. Because my work is contributing to the US-based body of Jewish studies and is being written for an English-speaking audience, I also prioritized analysis of primary sources that are written for an English-speaking audience. Someone fluent in Arabic or Hebrew could certainly work with other Israeli primary sources and ask the same questions I do in order to build on this work. Furthermore, I believe the existence of the *JP* as an English-language publication in a state where English is not an official language creates an interesting opportunity for analysis.

The *JP* has been and continues to be the most important English-language publication in Israel since the newspaper's founding in 1932. Under the British Mandate, it was highly critical of the British government, which made attempts to censor the *JP*.[11] Tension between the *JP* and the government culminated in the 1948 bombing of the newspaper's offices and press, in what is alleged to be a British-Arab conspiracy.[12] The bombing resulted in four deaths and the wounding of several dozen.[13] During my time in Jerusalem, I lived in a majority American immigrant neighborhood, and the *JP* was on the coffee table of every American household I visited.

I took into account political bias in reporting and learned that the *JP* was originally a left-wing publication that shifted to the right in 1989, after being purchased by the Hollinger Group, a now-defunct Canadian media company that also owned news sources in the UK and US.[14] Since the political left in Israel tends to have a more positive attitude towards Israel's Arab

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[11] "Jerusalem Post," Jewish Virtual Library, 2008, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jerusalem-post.
[12] Ibid.
[13] David Brinn, "70 years on: The bombing of the 'Post' offices, and the paper's legacy," *Jerusalem Post*, February 1, 2018, https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/70-years-on-the-bombing-of-the-post-offices-and-the-papers-legacy-540401.
[14] "The Press in Israel," BBC Monitoring Media Report, May 8, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4969714.stm.

population, the left-leaning tendency of the *JP* during the era I am focusing on means more coverage on and respect paid to the Bedouin, although the archival material I consulted still read as outdated. Today, the *JP* is widely recognized as right-skewed, while *Haaretz* is a more left-wing publication, and there is the possibility for an interesting future study comparing the two outlets and their coverage of the Bedouin, or another minority group within Israel.

Additionally, the *Jerusalem Post* was called the *Palestine Post* before April 1950. A handful of the articles I cite are from pre-1950 and are cited as the *Palestine Post*; for all intents and purposes, it is the same newspaper.

This thesis focuses on *JP* articles between May 14, 1948 and 1967.[15] When I first began my archival work for this thesis, I planned on reading articles from 1948 until a more recent year; I quickly realized that was not feasible for work of this scope. I begin my time constraint with the declaration of the state of Israel on May 14, 1948. I chose 1967 as a cut-off point because that is the year that the Military Government ended in Israel. This will be explained in the first chapter, but in brief, from the end of the 1948 war until 1967, Israel placed its entire Arab population under the rule of Military Government, restraining their movements and not allowing them to live outside designated areas. I chose this era to explore in my thesis because the Bedouin were included in those who lived under the Military Government, and much literature on the Bedouin tends to leave out this important context to their history in Israel.

I used the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database to access the *Jerusalem Post*. The database allowed me to constrain my search for articles by date published and search terms. As I narrowed my research, I used one main query: articles containing the term "Bedouin" or "Beduin"[16] between the dates May 14, 1948 through 1967. In total, there are around 1,900

[15] The day the British Mandate ended and David Ben-Gurion declared Israel as an independent state.
[16] The spelling of Bedouin varies in the *JP*.

articles that return a result when I searched with the constraints given above. Many of these only mention the Bedouin in passing; to assure my research was as thorough as possible, I read through every result, ensuring that I was using the largest available pool of articles for my research, although I did not quote or cite every article I read for this thesis. I skimmed through all 1,894 articles and flagged ones that seemed applicable to my research question. In writing this thesis, I selected 52 articles to cite from my archival research; each of these articles were specifically selected for their rich narrative detail.

The database was not very user-friendly, and sometimes the results it returned would vary, even if I was searching with the same constraints. The most consistent number of search results for my main query was 1,894 articles, but this number occasionally varied for reasons I could not explain. Similarly, when I would search for the same terms more than once, such as articles containing "Beduin" and "voting," I would receive different numbers of results. Because the database was not as reliable as I would have hoped, I made sure to thoroughly catalogue pertinent articles using the database's save feature in case I had difficulty finding them later.

I understand that in my focus, I am certainly missing other opportunities for points to be made on this topic; I hope that my research inspires others to look into not only Bedouin in Israel, but also the use of the *Jerusalem Post* as an archive for other Israeli minorities. While an English-language newspaper may not seem an obvious archive to explore Middle Eastern minority populations, as will be examined later in this thesis, there were many instances in which the *JP* reported on important moments in Bedouin history in Israel that were not recorded anywhere else. In this way, the *JP* has preserved additional context to Bedouin history, despite its relatively tangential role to the Bedouin.

This work is meant to be preliminary. The scope and the current state of the database do not permit the use of methods that might allow other kinds of research. For example, while the search function the database uses seems to be using word search technology, the articles themselves are not word searchable, so it would be difficult to do a linguistic analysis unless one manually converted all the articles to be word searchable on their own.

The highly political nature of the Israel-Palestine conflict is impossible to avoid. These politics manifest themselves specifically in the language one chooses to use about the land that is known today as Israel. For example, the Hebrew word for the desert in the south of Israel is נגב, or Negev. The Arabic word is نقب, or Naqab. Depending on the author or translator of a given text, either of these transcriptions are used. In this essay, I will be using Negev, as Naqab is simply the Arabized word for the desert; the same goes for the city of Be'er Sheva, and many of the other spellings of places I use.

The spelling of the word Bedouin varies in the *Jerusalem Post*; the vast majority of articles I read use the spelling Beduin. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, both spellings are acceptable. I will be using Bedouin unless directly quoting a source that spells it differently.

Throughout this thesis, transliteration of Arabic titles and terms was guided by standards of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES). For transliteration of personal names, I used the same guide yet defaulted to those used by individuals in their publications, websites, or social media platforms. For places, I have deferred to generally accepted spellings to enhance clarity. When it came to names of people, tribes, or places for which I had no alternative spellings, I defaulted to *JP* spelling, although I am not confident in the *JP*'s transliteration capabilities due to the vast majority of its authors not being Arabic-speaking.

C. Literature Review

There is a lack of attention paid to Bedouin in Israel, from both an academic and humanitarian standpoint. I hope my thesis brings more eyes to Bedouin history and allows for a new angle through which people can understand the Bedouin population in Israel. There is little to no existing literature to be found at the intersection of the Bedouin and Israeli media. I did not find any scholarship analyzing Bedouin depictions in print media, let alone other Israeli media. One piece of scholarship I did find that utilizes the *Jerusalem Post* as a source in discussion of the Bedouin is a 1979 journal article that provides an overview of the Negev Bedouin in Israel, specifically after the 1948 war.[17] The *JP* articles cited are used as numerical references, providing population numbers from 1978.[18] The focus of this article, written by Kurt Goering, is the Israeli government's treatment of the Bedouin and state sedentarization plans, and while the article discusses life for the Bedouin under the military government, it is not as in-depth as my research on the subject, as Goering's focus is more on Bedouin sedentarization than quality of life. Although I read this article in its entirety, I did not consult with it for my research, due to more contemporary scholarly work on the same subject.

In preparation for my research, I sought scholarly work on tribes and tribalism. It was important to me to develop an understanding of the tensions between tribes and governments, as that lies at the crux of Chapter Three of my thesis. In *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, Khoury and Kostiner examine the roles of tribes in the Middle Eastern political context.[19] The authors posit that relations between tribes and states take many different forms: sometimes fitting into various fragmented societal groups, other times being complete outsiders to social

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[17] Kurt Goering, "Israel and the Bedouin of the Negev," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 9, no. 1 (Autumn 1979): 3-20, https://doi.org/10.2307/2536316.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East,* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1990).

and political systems, in some instances forming their own states with other tribes, or finding other ways to "resist states by acting as antistates," or merely coexisting with states.[20] I commonly found clashing roles of the Bedouin throughout history: some acted as spies for the Israeli side during the 1948 war, while other groups collaborated with the Muslim Brotherhood. *Tribes and State Formation* allowed me to reconcile these varying conflictions; Bassam Tibi's article in the book states that despite the decline of nomadic tribalism in the Middle East, tribal cultural values such as "tribal loyalty and self-awareness" have persisted, allowing for the importance of Bedouin tribal identity to continue.[21] This persistence of the importance of tribal identity explains the varied actions of the Bedouin; if tribal identity subsumes other social and cultural identifiers, then it follows that different tribal groups of Bedouin are going to take different actions in the face of social and political change. It is also worth noting that Khoury and Kostiner do not dedicate a chapter to Israel, despite purporting that their book is about the Middle East as a whole.

Patricia Crone's essay, "The Tribe and the State," was also formative in my work on the Bedouin.[22] Crone posits that the ideal definition of a tribe is a political group reliant on age organization (i.e., seniority rules), although this definition is one of many used in the anthropological sphere.[23] Her argument for identifying tribes as political rather than cultural units is based on the fact that if one recognizes tribes as cultural units, then the basis for a tribe's existence rests on the outside observer rather than a member of the tribe.[24] This argument informed not only how I understand tribal relations among the Bedouin, but also how I read *JP*

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[20] Khoury and Kostiner, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East,* 7.
[21] Bassam Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old Tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East, in *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, 136.
[22] Patricia Crone, "The Tribe and the State," in *The State: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. John A. Hall (New York: Routledge, 1993), 446-473.
[23] Ibid., 447.
[24] Ibid., 448.

reporting of these tribes, especially when the *JP*'s bias as a non-Bedouin publication was evident through its often-degrading descriptions of Bedouin tribal life. Crone goes on to use the Bedouin as an example to argue against the definition of tribes as cultural units, stating that with the cultural definition, the Bedouin "would have to be recast as a single tribe divided into countless subtribes" on the basis of cultural and ethnic similarity of the Bedouin.[25] Crone also laments the lack of inclusion of Middle Eastern and Central Asian tribes in the academic canon.[26]

Academic literature on the Bedouin tends to focus on Bedouin in regional groups, which can often lead to Bedouin in Israel being left out due to ongoing political circumstances. There is some literature on the representations of the Bedouin as "primitive" or "backwards" and how these depictions clash with descriptions of the Bedouin's burgeoning political roles in increasingly sedentary communities. Dawn Chatty argues that the Bedouin in Lebanon are overlooked politically due to their failure to modernize at the same rate as the rest of the population, as well as their geographic remoteness.[27] Chatty has also written about the relationship between the Bedouin and the Syrian government, positing that the Bedouin in Syria have for the most part maintained sovereignty, but in recent years have actively drawn the government into increasing influence and governance in the *Badia*, or Syrian desert.[28] Chatty's work on Bedouin in Syria and Lebanon helped inform my perspective on the ongoing situation of the Bedouin across the Middle East; demonstrating that Israel, while unique, is not the only state whose Bedouin are treated differently from non-Bedouin citizens.

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[25] Crone, *The Tribe and the State*, 449
[26] Ibid.
[27] Dawn Chatty, "Bedouin in Lebanon: The Transformation of a Way of Life or an Attitude?" *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 6. no. 3 (2010): 21-30, https://doi.org/10.5042/ijmhsc.2011.0061.
[28] Dawn Chatty, "The Bedouin in Contemporary Syria: The Persistence of Tribal Authority and Control," *Middle East Journal* 64, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 29-49, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20622981.

Contemporary literature on the Bedouin in Israel often focuses on the Negev Bedouin struggle for land recognition,[29] and I consulted with many of these resources in my research. For example, Havetzelet Yahel's article "Land Disputes between the Negev Bedouin and Israel" raises important points about the conflict between the Negev Bedouin and the Israeli government.[30] Yahel contextualizes the ongoing land dispute between the Negev Bedouin and Israel through an analysis of illegal Bedouin construction in the desert and the state's responses. The very presentation of Bedouin history found in Yahel's work underscores the need for more research of the kind advanced in this thesis. Specifically, this work glosses over Bedouin life under Israeli military rule between the years of 1948 and 1967, which I believe provides essential context for the ongoing land recognition struggle. Although my research does not focus on the contemporary issue of land recognition and rights in the Negev, the historical overview I provide in Chapter One, and further context in later chapters, better historicizes the current situation for Bedouin in Israel.

Mansour Nasasra's book, *The Naqab Bedouins: A Century of Politics and Resistance*, informs much of my research because it is one of the few recent monographs on the Bedouin of Israel. I see my work as complementary to Nasasra's, as the *JP* archive provides much additional evidence to a lot of moments in Bedouin history discussed by Nasasra. As my work will demonstrate, there has been willing collaboration between the Bedouin and the Israeli government, something not discussed in *The Naqab Bedouins*. Interestingly enough, Nasasra does use the *JP* as a supplemental documentary source for varying points: political debate over abolishing military rule,[31] reporting of post-war suspicion of Arabs,[32] and other topics. Other

[29] I discuss this struggle in Chapter One.
[30] Havatzelet Yahel, "Land Disputes Between the Negev Bedouin and Israel," *Israel Studies* 11, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 1-22, https://www.jstor.org/stable/30245791.
[31] Mansour Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins: A Century of Politics and Resistance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 207.
[32] Ibid., 119.

Israeli and Palestinian news outlets are engaged with on the same level throughout the book. Furthermore, my thesis provides evidence of when certain groups of Bedouin received suffrage, which was not discussed in Nasasra's book. It was incredibly difficult to find information on Bedouin voting in Israel in general.

There already exists much research on Israeli print media. For instance, Sara Jud analyzed the *Jerusalem Post*'s representation on the Iranian Nuclear Agreement, which was a helpful piece in how I incorporated *JP* evidence into my own writing.[33] Although my thesis relies on the *JP* as its primary source, I see it not only as contributing to literature on Israeli media, but as contributing to literature on Bedouin living in Israel. My thesis is contextually specific; although considerable research exists on tribes in general and Bedouin across the region more specifically, the population I am looking at is understudied.

D. Structure

Aside from an introduction and conclusion, the substantive portion of this thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter of this thesis provides a comprehensive historical overview of the Bedouin in Israel. It explains when they migrated to the land, and treatment of their communities under Ottoman, British, and Israeli rule.

Chapters Two and Three analyze *Jerusalem Post* reporting between 1948 and 1967. The chapters are organized thematically. Chapter Two identifies the ways in which the Bedouin are depicted in the *JP* as a primitive, pre-modern people, and how this depiction benefits the new state of Israel by painting it as a benefactor to its "simple desert-dwellers". Chapter Three studies

[33] Sara Jud, "Analysis of the Jerusalem Post Representation on Iranian Nuclear Agreement," Academia.edu (May 2015): 1-17, https://www.academia.edu/17255862/Analysis_of_the_Jerusalem_Post_Representation_on_Iranian_Nuclear_Agreement.

how, despite the depictions in Chapter Two, the Bedouin participated in Israeli politics, and the way this participation was reported through the *JP*. The tension between the two facets of reporting between Chapters Two and Three is the focus of this thesis: despite frequently portraying the Bedouin as impoverished simpletons living outside of modern society, the *JP* also manifests a complex Bedouin political identity through its reporting.

# Chapter One - A History of the Bedouin from the Ottoman Empire to the State of Israel

## A. Bedouin Under Ottoman Rule

The Bedouin tribes currently living in Israel mainly migrated there during or after the eighteenth century.[34] There is documentation of certain tribes from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the same land, but these tribes differ from those currently living in Israel.[35] There is a documentary gap between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries regarding which Bedouin tribes arrived when, but the majority of the Bedouin arrived during the rule of the Ottoman Empire, which controlled Palestine from 1516 until 1917.[3637] While there was a mass period of Bedouin settlement across the Middle East from the 1940s through 1970s, the Ottomans attempted to begin the process of settling the Bedouin long before then. In 1858, the Ottomans undertook large-scale land reform across the Empire which directly affected the Bedouin, due to Ottoman refusal to legally recognize Bedouin land ownership without documentation.[38] The Ottomans were the first to initiate such sedentarization plans on the Bedouin, although these plans were "particularly unsuccessful" in southern Palestine (the Negev region).[39]

In the larger history of Bedouin in the Middle East, the consensus is that they were relatively independent of state authority until the mid-twentieth century, but this is not so upon closer inspection. Foremost, the Ottomans refused to recognize Bedouin land ownership, because

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[34] Clinton Bailey, "Dating the Arrival of the Bedouin Tribes in Sinai and the Negev," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 28, no. 1 (1985): 46, https://doi.org/10.2307/3631862.
[35] Ibid., 22.
[36] Ibid., 47.
[37] Seth J. Frantzman, Havatzelet Yahel, and Ruth Kark, "Contested Indigeneity: The Development of an Indigenous Discourse on the Bedouin of the Negev, Israel," *Israel Studies* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 95, https://doi.org/10.2979/israelstudies.17.1.78.
[38] Mansour Nasasra et al., *The Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism: New Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 36.
[39] Ibid.

the Bedouin did not possess deeds to their land, thus allowing the Ottomans to relocate the Bedouin at will.[40] The Bedouin of the Negev remember Ottoman rule as an era of oppression, and Bedouin resistance to this oppression was a factor in instability in the region.[41] For example, Ibrahim Pasha, an Ottoman general in Egypt, captured the Negev in 1831. General Pasha met strong resistance from the Bedouin there, who "duly rebelled," causing his withdrawal a few years later.[42] This withdrawal caused a ripple effect, allowing the British to take control of Egypt in 1882, although the Negev remained under Ottoman control for another few decades. As the Ottoman Empire was facing its impending collapse, the turn of the twentieth century reinvigorated Ottoman efforts to oversee the Bedouin in the Negev.[43] Given the failure of oppressive tactics to control the Bedouin, the Ottomans attempted to maintain order by including the Bedouin in government positions.[44] The implementation of this new policy coincided with the transformation of Be'er Sheva from a small village into an administrative center. Today, Be'er Sheva is referred to as the "gateway to the Negev," and it is the largest city in the southern region of Israel. As part of their attempts to settle the Bedouin, the Ottomans built Bedouin-specific infrastructure in Be'er Sheva: a Bedouin market, schools for their children, and a tribal court.[45]

Despite these newfound attempts at governing the Bedouin, they did not create permanent settlement.[46] Unfortunately, the last years of Ottoman rule over the Negev Bedouin were marked by a return to the military violence and oppression of previous years. The British

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[40] Havatzelet Yahel and Ruth Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin during the 1948 War: Departure and Return," *Israel Affairs* 21, no. 1 (n.d.): 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2014.984421.
[41] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism*, 40–41.
[42] Ibid., 41.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid., 42.
[45] Ibid., 51.
[46] Ibid., 42.

arrived in 1882, which destabilized Ottoman control over the south of Palestine.[47] With this instability came higher rates of intertribal disputes, which the Ottomans were notably poor at helping settle.[48]

B. Bedouin Under the British Mandate

After the Sykes-Picot agreement[49] in 1916 and the subsequent defeat of the Ottomans in 1918, Great Britain gained official control of Palestine in 1920. Despite the change in hands, life for the Bedouin did not shift dramatically; however, the British sought to incorporate the Bedouin into their colonial administration by assigning tribal leaders, or sheikhs, to various governmental duties and responsibilities.[50] Due to the size of the Negev – roughly half of Mandatory Palestine – Great Britain prioritized strong control over what their government saw as a highly strategic region. Britain's objectives were to secure control of the Bedouin, and integrate them into governmental administration in order to gain their loyalty.[51] Sheikhs were also left in charge of tribal affairs because Britain recognized the importance of the leaders in keeping order among the Bedouin. It was a deliberate policy under the Mandate to build positive relations with the Bedouin through their traditional structures.[52]

The recognition of the sheikhs' importance and authority over local areas allowed them to be intermediaries between their tribes and state authorities. The sheikhs' assigned power primarily manifested in keeping the peace within their tribes and collecting taxes; nonetheless, multiple sheikhs were appointed as mayors of Be'er Sheva over the course of the Mandate.[53]

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[47] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism*, 45.
[48] Ibid., 47.
[49] The agreement between Britain and France over what land each nation would rule over at the fall of the Ottoman Empire.
[50] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism,* 37-38.
[51] Ibid., 38.
[52] Ibid., 43.
[53] Ibid., 43.

An important point to highlight from the brief period of British rule is that, despite written laws to the contrary, Britain allowed Bedouin land ownership with respect to Bedouin customs.[54] While there were standard land ownership laws that applied to the Mandate, the British instead chose to respect the traditions of the Bedouin in the way they oversaw land ownership and tribal borders. This is relevant since the Israeli Supreme Court ruled in 2017 that Israeli law, along with Ottoman *and* British Mandatory land laws, clearly requires documentation and registration of land ownership, and that the Bedouin traditional land rights were not recognized by the relevant state authorities even before the state of Israel was established,[55] despite evidence that the British did not actually enforce the laws that the Israeli Court is upholding.

However, the British did not respect the Bedouin solely because of altruism; there was a reason that the British allowed Bedouin land-use practices according to their own customs. Great Britain needed the cooperation of the Negev Bedouin for security purposes: it was simpler and cheaper for the Bedouin to police each other rather than have British soldiers do it. The British also feared that the Bedouin would resist if their land use was challenged.[56]

From 1936 to 1939, there were Arab revolts in Mandatory Palestine due to rising tensions and violence between Jewish and Arab communities in the Mandate, a result of an increased volume of Jewish immigrants in the wake of the Balfour Declaration.[57] During this period, the Bedouin fought with other Arab rebels and helped temporarily defeat the British in Be'er

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[54] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism*, 44.
[55] Alon Margalit, "The Israeli Supreme Court and Bedouin Land Claims in the Negev," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 24, no. 1 (February 2017): 60, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26557859.
[56] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 80.
[57] The Balfour Declaration is a 1917 letter from the British Foreign Secretary stating Great Britain's support for a national home for the Jewish people in the British-controlled Mandate of Palestine. The publication of this letter led to a large increase in Jewish immigration to Palestine in the following few decades.

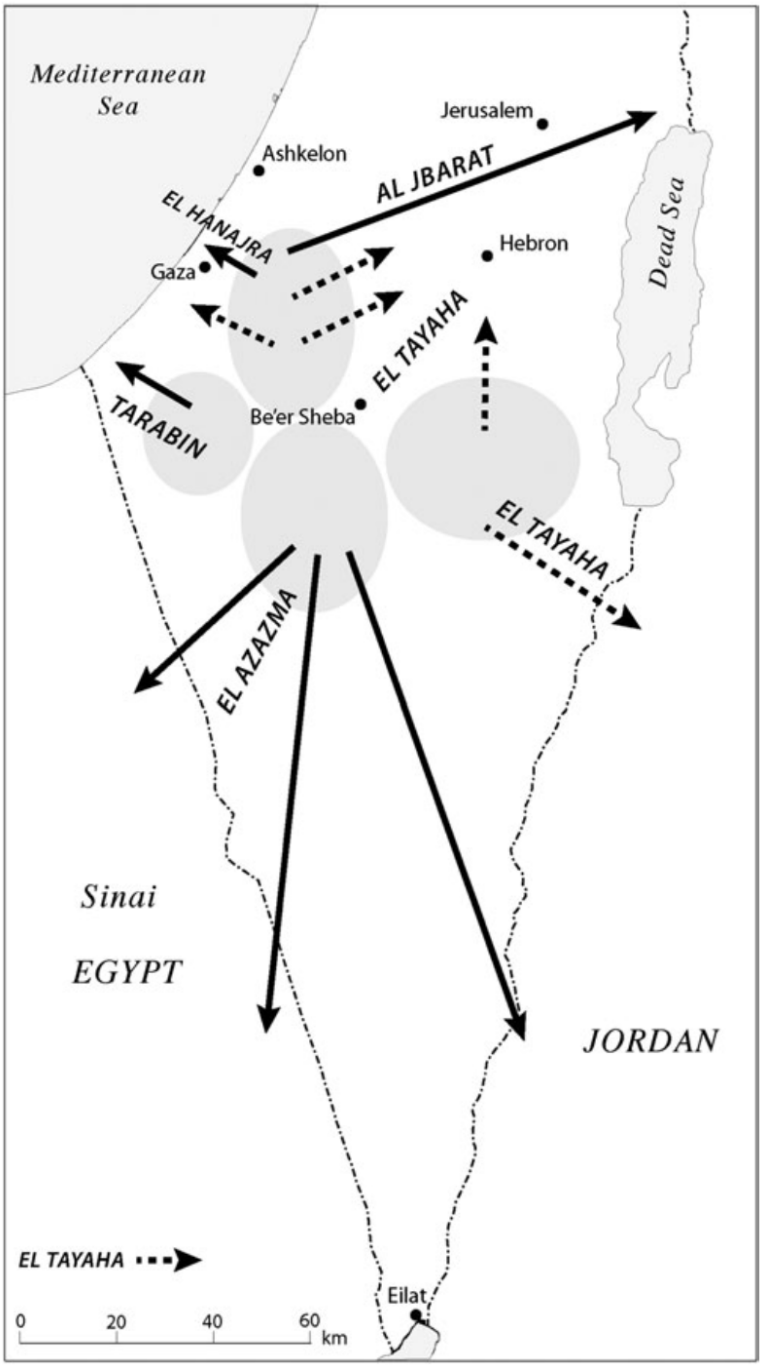
Sheva,[58] resulting in the forced exit of many Jews from the city.[59] After Britain's issuing of the White Paper[60] in 1939, there was a period of "somewhat fragile peace and stability…[although] leading Bedouin shaikhs, in line with other Palestinian leaders, 'refused to accept the White Paper.'"[61]

The British Mandate ended on May 14, 1948, and the British withdrew from Be'er Sheva on that day. It would not be until October 1948 that the Israeli army would take control of the city.

C. Life for the Bedouin in Israel

The British, in their work to "utilize" the Bedouin, took measures to try to count all the Bedouin in the Negev. Given the nomadic nature of the Bedouin, these numbers vary greatly. The last census taken in the Mandate was conducted in 1946, and lists 90,000 Bedouin.[62] According to Aref Abu-Rabia, an anthropologist at Ben-Gurion University in Be'er Sheva, the Negev Bedouin population was somewhere between 65,000 and 103,000 people at the end of the Mandate in 1948.[63] Across the many sources I cite, the general academic consensus seems to be that the population numbered around 65,000 before the war. However, this number does not reflect the population of the Negev after 1948. At the beginning of the war, much of the Negev Bedouin population simply left; entire tribes from all parts of the region relocated to the Jordan Valley, Gaza, Fukhari (a region near Mount Hebron, which at the time was not under Israeli

[58] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism*, 45.
[59] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 5.
[60] The White Paper was released by the British government in response to the Arab revolts, limiting Jewish immigration and preventing Jews from buying land in 95% of the Mandate.
[61] Nasasra et al., *Naqab Bedouin and Colonialism,* 45.
[62] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 2.
[63] Cole, "Where have the Bedouin Gone?" 246.




Map 1.1, Yahel and Kark, "Negev Bedouin During the 1948 War," 13.

control),[64] and other parts of the Negev and Sinai that were not yet under Israeli control.[65] The map below shows the general directions of motion for many of the Bedouin who left to avoid the impending violence.

When the invasion of Arab armies into Israel began after the declaration of the state on May 14, Egyptian forces entered the south, some of them through Be'er Sheva. As seen during the Arab revolts in the 1930s, Bedouin were known to fight alongside the Arab armies, although in the Negev the Jews were mainly fighting defensive battles, which were not focused on the Bedouin.[66]

Although the Bedouin were not necessarily targets during the war, the majority of remaining tribes engaged in some form of resistance during the war. Some Bedouin were

[64] Yahel and Kark, "Negev Bedouin during the 1948 War," 11.
[65] See ibid. 10-12 for a more detailed list of the exact movements of many different groups of Negev Bedouin in 1948.
[66] Ibid., 14.

noted to have cooperated with the Muslim Brotherhood, who had sent members from Egypt to fight in Palestine; an Israeli intelligence report from 1948 stated that the Bedouin were very helpful to the Brotherhood, making their tribesmen "available to the Brotherhood command and provid[ing] them with all the weapons, ammunition, and vehicles they had at their disposal."[67] When fighting resumed in the Negev after the first truce in June 1948, some kibbutz[68] members who served as contacts with the Bedouin protested Jewish destruction in Bedouin villages, stating that the Bedouin "had always maintained sympathetic neutrality and actually helped us in our war by providing information," but the violence continued on all fronts.[69]

Former mayor of East Jerusalem and author of *Al-Nakba*, Aref Al-Aref (sometimes Arif Al-Arif) denied frequent Bedouin-Jewish collaboration during the war, stating "The Egyptian Muslim Brothers who fought in the Beersheba area recognized that a large number of Bedouins were loyal and part of them fought against the Jews to the bitter end…Even if there were a few individuals who were different, there is no truth in the things said about the Bedouins having spied for the Jews."[70] It has been argued that, despite Al-Aref's statement, there was systemic collaboration between Jews and Bedouin. In my archival work, I frequently found conflicting evidence over what roles the Bedouin have played throughout Israeli history; some tribes collaborated with the government, while others colluded against it. To the question of Bedouin military action during the 1948 war, there is evidence pointing in both directions, which suggests that there were likely Bedouin assisting both sides.

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[67] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 15.
[68] A kibbutz is a Jewish communal settlement. They proliferated during Jewish settlement in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine, and are still a form of communal living in Israel today. The term for one who lives on a kibbutz is a kibbutznik.
[69] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 15.
[70] Translation found in Yahel and Kark, "Negev Bedouin during the 1948 War", 16; original Arabic found in Aref al-Aref, ***al-Nakba, nakbat Bayt al-Maqdis wa-al-firdaws al-mafqūd 1947-1949***, ***(1949-1947*** النكبة : نكبة بيت المقدس والفردوس المفقود***)***
(2013) 747.

Be'er Sheva permanently became part of Israel in October 1948, at which time Bedouin began to submit requests to return to Israel and come under Israeli protection.[71] The new Israeli government was hesitant to allow the Bedouin to return, but many government officials understood that they would be allowed to return at some point, and agreed that most Bedouin had remained neutral during the war.[72] The Bedouin met with Israeli Prime Minister (PM) David Ben-Gurion on November 25, 1948, in order for the new PM to respond to the many applications from different Bedouin representatives about the possibility and conditions of their return.[73] At this meeting, it was agreed that the Bedouin would eventually be able to return. Although their return was guaranteed, no decision was made at this meeting as to *when* the Bedouin could return because Israel's policy was that as long as the war continued, the issue of return would be left on hold.[74]

On November 30, 1948 the Israeli Ministry of Defense held a meeting with the Committee for Bedouin Affairs to discuss the question of return "in accordance with security considerations."[75] Ultimately, it was decided that Bedouin land claims were invalid; the Committee decided where to place three of the tribes that had made requests, totaling approximately 9,000 people.[76] In returning to Israel permanently, the Bedouin were effectively agreeing to a complete cession of their lands:

> The State of Israel did not recognize the right of ownership of the Bedouins in the Negev to the lands upon which they lived before the establishment of the state, or of 'maintenance of rights' for the returning tribes. As an integral part of consenting to the tribes' return, it was made clear to them, that the authorities were the ones who would decide upon the new location of their distribution.[77]

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[71] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 17.
[72] Ibid., 20.
[73] Ibid., 23.
[74] Ibid., 25.
[75] Ibid., 26.
[76] Ibid., 27-29.
[77] Ibid., 36.

By May 1950, only two years after Israel's declaration of statehood, the Military Government reported that the Bedouin population in the Negev was around 17,500.[78] In 1951, only 19 tribes remained in Israel.

| TRIBE | AREA POPULATED BEFORE 1951 |
|---|---|
| Najmat al-Sanne | Jbibat, Kharbit Abu Ghalyon, Wadi Gaza, Tal Jameh |
| Abu Blal | Abu Shʿar |
| Abu Srihan | Wadi Abu Msaʿid, Jur al-Jarm, Kharbit Abu Ghalyon |
| ʿAzazma (Masʿodin) | Khazaʿla, Martaba, Abu Shaʿr, Kharbit Abu Dhiban, Kharbit Abu Ghalyon |
| Qdirat al-Sanne | Wadi al-Sharia', Abu Sdeir, Laqiya, Jisr Abu Rqaiq |
| Abu Rqaiq | Zummara, Jisr Abu Rqaiq, Sdeir |
| Abu ʿAbdon | Wadi Fteis, Abu Sdeir, Meileha, Karkor |
| Al-Talalqa | Mishmar Ha-Negev region (Bir Abu Mansour), Twayel Abu- Jarwal |
| Al-Oqbi | Mishmar Ha-Negev region (Bir Abu Mansour), al-ʿAraqib |
| Al-ʿAtawna | Jammama |
| Saqr Al Huzayil | Shoval region (Wadi Suballa), Sefeiha |
| Al-ʿAssam | Abu Sdeir |
| Al-Afenish | Sfeiha region |
| Abu ʿAmrah | Kharbit Abu Ghalyion-Qurien |
| Abu Rabia | Tal al-Malah region |
| Abu Qrinat | ʿAraʿara |
| Abu Jweyaʿd | Sdeir |
| Al-Huzayil | Kharbit al-Huzayil |
| Al-Assad | Laqiya |

Figure 1.1, a list of Negev Tribes from 1951, and the areas they occupied before being concentrated in the Restricted Area, from *The Naqab Bedouins*.[79]

After Israel's establishment came the imposition of military rule on the state's Arab minority.[80] This military rule was based on British Emergency Defense Regulations from the

[78] Yahel and Kark, "Israel Negev Bedouin," 31.
[79] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins,* 132.
[80] Ibid., 111.

Mandate to combat Jewish militant groups and suppress Arab revolts.[81] Nasasra cites a report from the U.S. Embassy in Israel to the State Department from 1950, detailing the military government and its division and control over its Arab population: Israel divided the Arabs within its borders into four districts, each under the supervision of a Military Governor, while Jewish areas were under civil governance.[82] One of these military zones accounted for the entire Negev, extending across one million dunams (~386 square miles) and including around 13,000 Bedouin.[83] In the Negev, military rule meant the creation of the Restricted Area, a triangle of land between Be'er Sheva, Dimona, and Arad, where the Bedouin were forcefully moved.[8485] At this time, Arabs living under military rule had to obtain permits for travel; this included the Bedouin, who lived under "intense supervision" and could not leave without obtaining permits from the military government.[86]

Bedouin life stagnated in the Restricted Area. Due to a lack of urban planning, many spontaneous Bedouin settlements were created, characterized by tin shacks and tents, because permanent buildings (e.g. stone or concrete structures) were forbidden in the Restricted Area. These settlements were denied recognition by the government, and were therefore also denied electricity, running water, and roads.[87]

This thesis focuses on Bedouin life in the Restricted Area, which lasted until 1967, when the Israeli government attempted to deter the Bedouin from continuing to build spontaneous

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[81] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins,* 112.
[82] Ibid., 115.
[83] Ibid., 116.
[84] Ron Morad, "The Land-Ownership Conflict Between the Negev Bedouin and the Israeli Government," n.d., 8, https://susskindreader.mit.edu/sites/default/files/Bedouin%20Land%20Ownership%20Conflict.pdf.
[85] The Arabic word for the Restricted Area is the *siyaj*, and the Hebrew word is *sayeg*. It is typical to see the word *siyaj* used in literature on Bedouin history in Israel.
[86] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 122.
[87] Ismael Abu-Saad, Harvey Litwick, and Kathleen Abu-Saad, *A Preliminary Evaluation of the Negev Bedouin Experience of Urbanization: Findings of the Urban Household Survey* (Beer-Sheva, Israel: The Center for Bedouin Studies and Development and the Negev Center for Regional Development, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, 2004), 14.

settlements by shepherding the population into cities. Israel was not the only nation in the region to attempt to settle its Bedouin population, although these state settlement projects have been described as "piecemeal and minimalist," with little overall impact.[88] In Israel, construction of these cities began with Tel Sheva, which was established in 1962, and ended with the establishment of Lakiya (sometimes Laqya or Laqye) in 1991.[89]

In 2002, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics published a ranked list of local authorities on a socio-economic index; the seven Bedouin towns founded in the late twentieth century were the seven lowest on the list.[90] Today, just over half the Bedouin population of the Negev lives in these towns - approximately 100,000 people[91] - while the other half live in what are referred to as unrecognized villages. These villages resemble the same spontaneous settlements described above. These settlements are illegal, and occasionally the Israeli government sends in bulldozers to demolish the semi-permanent structures in the villages. In 2018, 2,326 demolitions were recorded.[92] Although the government demolishes impermanent Bedouin structures, the Negev Bedouin are still citizens of Israel, so the government is required to build certain permanent structures for them, even on 'unrecognized' land: places of worship, schools, and community centers. The community centers are often included inside schools. Because the government refuses to formally acknowledge the Bedouin's presence, these permanent structures are not connected to the national power or water infrastructure, and so the Bedouin rely on diesel generators and septic for these buildings.[93]

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[88] Cole, "Where Have the Bedouin Gone?" 242.
[89] Morad, "Land-Ownership Conflict," 9.
[90] Ibid., 10.
[91] This number is much higher than Bedouin population counts post-1948 for many reasons, mainly high population growth, after their 1948 return.
[92] Tal Avrech and Marc Marcus, "Mechanism for Dispossession and Intimidation: Demolition Policy in Arab Bedouin Communities in the Negev/Naqab" (Negev Coexistence Forum for Civil Equality, June 2019), 11, https://www.dukium.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Demolition-Report-Eng.2018-1.pdf.
[93] This is my personal testimony, having worked in the Negev and surveyed unrecognized Bedouin villages.

The Bedouin are able to appeal to the Israeli Supreme Court for land rights, but as has already been established, the vast majority of Bedouin do not have the documentation that the Court has deemed necessary to prove ownership of land. To demonstrate prior ownership, "the Bedouin claimants need to show that the land plots were registered in their name in an official land registry."[94] Historically, even through British rule, "land rights were not formally documented and registered in an official land registry…the demarcation and transfer of these rights were governed by [Bedouin] customary arrangements," hence the lack of official documentation that is required of the Bedouin today.[95] Despite this, it is still fairly common for Bedouin to approach the government for formal recognition of land ownership, but few are successful. The issue of Bedouin land rights is raised frequently in the Knesset, where it stagnates either due to a lack of focus on the Negev, or general political instability.

Alon Margalit, an Israeli lawyer, has detailed two specific Supreme Court judgments, one from the al-Oqabi (al-Oqbi) tribe and one from the al-Kiyaʿan tribe. In the al-Oqabi case, the judgment investigated whether members of the tribe had owned plots which were seized by the Israeli government for "security reasons or development needs following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948."[96] The Court ruled that the tribe did not have any rights to the land - due to lack of documentation - and that they were therefore not entitled to either money or land in recompense.[97] The al-Kiyaʿan case dealt with the forced eviction of a portion of the al-Kiyaʿan tribe from Um al-Hiran; the Israeli government wanted the evicted tribe members to relocate to the Bedouin township of Hura in order to build a new urban town in their place.[98] The Supreme Court rejected these claims, "mostly on procedural grounds…noting that their claims - including

[94] Margalit, "The Supreme Court and Bedouin Land Claims," 60.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 58.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 59.

those related to a violation of their rights to property, equality and dignity - should have been raised earlier during the planning proceedings."[99] These cases are merely two examples of the Bedouin struggle for land recognition. Today, the situation is ongoing, and many Bedouin are still living in unfavorable conditions.

This chapter has served to provide as concise a history of Bedouin in Israel as possible. For the purpose of this thesis, the most important era of Bedouin history in Israel is from 1948 to 1967, the period during which the Military Government ruled over the entire Arab population of Israel. The next two chapters focus on this era in Israeli history, in order to expand upon existing literature about life for the Bedouin in the Restricted Area and bring evidence from the *Jerusalem Post* into this conversation.

[99] Margalit, "The Supreme Court and Bedouin Land Claims," 60.

# Chapter Two - Depictions of the Bedouin as Primitive

## A. Introduction

This chapter will examine the period of 1948-1967, during which the Israeli government kept its entire Arab population, including the Bedouin, under military rule. For Bedouin in the Negev, life under the Military Government manifested in living in the Restricted Area, a piece of land between Be'er Sheva, Dimona, and Arad, from which the Bedouin were unable to leave without obtaining travel permits.

During the first decade of Israel's statehood alone (1948-1958), over 750 articles containing the word Bedouin were published in the *Jerusalem Post*; of course, the majority of these only mention the Bedouin in passing. Of the substantive articles from this first decade, a few themes emerge. One coherent thread through the late 1940s to early 1950s is the important discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the role the Bedouin played in their unearthing. These articles, along with the rest included in this chapter, paint a picture of the Bedouin as primitive pastoralists. This chapter sits in contrast to the next, which focuses on the political actions of the Bedouin during the same era (1948-1967). The ascription of primitive qualities to the Bedouin in the press solidifies them in a societally lower position. While this is not a new concept to the grander study of indigenous people, exploration of it through the *Jerusalem Post* provides a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the position of the Bedouin in Israel during the specified era.

B. Bedouin, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Israel as the Holy Land

A major occurrence during Israel's first decade as a state was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), which were uncovered sporadically between 1947 and 1956. Their discovery was an incredibly important moment in Jewish history, as they are the earliest evidence of the Hebrew bible, and provide a firsthand account of life in an ancient Jewish sect.[100] The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of manuscripts from the third century BCE to the first century CE.[101] The majority of the DSS are written in Hebrew, and the writings comprise three categories: biblical, apocryphal (works that are omitted from various collections of the Bible but included in others, yet not in any religious texts preserved by Jews), pseudepigraphical (scrolls containing religious interpretive commentary from members of the community that composed the Scrolls), and sectarian.[102] The scrolls were found in Qumran, an archaeological site in the West Bank, inside of what is known as the Qumran caves.[103] The map on the next page shows the discovery sites of these caves.

Bedouin tribes living around the Dead Sea played a key role in the discovery of the DSS. There are at least 95 articles in the *Jerusalem Post* between 1948 and 1967 mentioning the terms "Dead Sea Scrolls" and Bedouin. Not only does this reporting demonstrate the patronization of the Bedouin as ancient desert people with little connection to modernity, but a more specific fetishization of the Bedouin way of life in the way many authors draw parallels between the Bedouin and ancient Judaism.

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[100] John Efron, Matthias Lehmann, and Steven Weitzman, *The Jews: A History*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), 84.
[101] "The Dead Sea Scrolls," The Israel Museum, https://www.imj.org.il/en/wings/shrine-book/dead-sea-scrolls#:~:text=The%20Dead%20Sea%20Scrolls%20are,to%20the%20first%20century%20CE.
[102] Israel Museum, "The Dead Sea Scrolls."
[103] Ibid.


Map 2.1 "The Community at Qumran," Bible Mapper Blog[104]

A long-form piece written by Yigael Yadin, an archaeologist renowned for his translation of some of the scrolls, provides a second-hand account of the Bedouin's discovery.[105] According

[104] "The Community at Qumran," Bible Mapper Blog, June 20, 2022, https://biblemapper.com/blog/index.php/2022/06/20/the-community-at-qumran/.
[105] Yigael Yadin, "The Message of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Historic Documents Came to Light at Birth of State," *Jerusalem Post*, April 4, 1958.

to the archaeologist, a group of Bedouin had discovered the DSS while moving with their goats along the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea. They stumbled across a cavern that "excited their curiosity," and, after throwing stones into the opening and hearing the sound of breaking clay, further investigated.[106] They carried the bundles for weeks before deciding to go to Bethlehem, the purported "commercial centre of the Bedouin from the Judaean desert" to see if their discovery was worth anything.[107] The sale of the scrolls to a friend of Yadin's is the end of the Bedouins' role in this story, although this is not the only evidence of Bedouin involvement with the Scrolls.

In many instances, the Bedouin are accused of mistreating the DSS, especially in contrast to the professional archaeologists; the archaeologists' "expert work" on their "expedition" is described respectfully, "despite the ransacking of the cave by the Beduin."[108] One 1956 article details how a Johns Hopkins professor had said in a lecture that two newly-found Dead Sea Scrolls "had been stolen and were being held for ransom…[and] that the thieves were Beduin."[109] The evidence of Bedouin mistreatment of the DSS creates an image of academics "rescuing" the scrolls from the "savage" indigenous people. This juxtaposition is demonstrated in yet another story from Yadin on the Bedouin findings of the Dead Sea Scrolls: "The Bedouin, with their desert experience, discerning eyes and limitless amount of time, were more capable of catching glimpses of rocky crevices and clefts…than the scholar who could only stay in the area for short periods due to lack of means and trying conditions."[110]

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was an important part of Israel's early history; the DSS helped lend legitimacy to the new Jewish state as the steward of Jewish history and culture.

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[106] Yadin, "The Message of the Dead Sea Scrolls."
[107] Ibid.
[108] Yigael Yadin, "Beduin Rifled Most 'Caves of Scrolls,'" *Jerusalem Post,* April 7, 1958.
[109] "Beduin Steal, Ransom 2 New Unannounced Dead Sea Scrolls," *Jerusalem Post*, May 25, 1956.
[110] Yadin, "Beduin Rifled Most Caves."

The central role Bedouin played in the tale of the Scrolls' discovery is demonstrative of a trend that spreads beyond the Dead Sea Scrolls: the Israeli depiction of the Bedouin plays a strange role in which the Bedouin serve as a monolithic representation of the way Jews themselves used to live in their Holy Land. In a 1953 article titled "Mirrors of the Past," the author calls on tourists to explore Israel through a historical lens.[111] He sets the scene with the "rolling rocky Judean hills," beyond which lies the Holy City Jerusalem, built by King David. He describes the place where the Sanhedrin - the High Court of ancient Israel - are allegedly buried, as well as the location of the tomb of King Herod's wife.[112] Among these idyllic images of an ancient era he describes Be'er Sheva: "the gateway to the Negev…the land of the Bedouin, the nomad Arabs, whose black tents dot the many desert wastes. Here are the many desert wells where camel and donkey, veiled girls and fierce tribesmen bring to mind the story of the Patriarchs."[113][114] The connection between Bedouin and Jewish history is made clear here: the "simple" lives of the desert-dwelling, tent-living Bedouin are a reminder of the ancient Jewish past, but do not figure into its future as a modern society. Be'er Sheva was also referred to as "the town of the Patriarchs," in a separate article from 1949, again linking desert life to Jewish memory in the land.[115]

Yet another piece focused on the life of Yardena Cohen, a free-spirited dancer and nature-lover, draws a similar comparison: Yardena "does not see the Beduin woman from Turan but the ancestors of the Jewish people–Hannah of Shilo, Yael, Ruth. This is the world of the Bible…"[116] The emphasis on the Bedouin role in the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the comparisons between Bedouin and the forefathers and mothers of Judaism solidify the Bedouin

[111] Ivor H. Norman, "Calling All Tourists: Mirrors of the Past," *Jerusalem Post*, January 23, 1953.
[112] Ibid.
[113] A reference to the Patriarchs of Judaism: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Michael Kiwe, "Planned Growth in Beersheba," *Palestine Post*, June 7, 1949.
[116] Sraya Shapiro, "Getting into Focus: Absorption is Personal," *Jerusalem Post*, March 23, 1963.

as a group outside of modernity. This emphasis serves to dilute the many different tribes and groups of Bedouin into one simple image of a primitive and antiquated people.

C. Bedouin as Desert-Dwelling "Animals"

Salameh the gashash

Figure 2.1, from "Tracking in the Desert," 1952.

Along with limiting the Bedouin to primitivity, the *JP* often reduces the Bedouin to animals. One article, "Tracking in the Desert," depicts Salameh, a Gashash (track finder), as having "strikingly intelligent eyes and the constantly searching look of a desert animal."[117] The author goes on to describe Salameh's adeptness at finding tracks left behind by thieves. Salameh, when asked to explain how he recognized the footprints as belonging to Bedouin, said, "the soles of the Bedouin, who walk the whole of their lives through burning hot sand barefoot, are harder than leather; and therefore their footprints are clearer than those of other people."[118] This direct quote lends itself to the "noble savage" depiction of Bedouin; although it is clear from the author's tone that he respects Salameh for his impressive tracking abilities, there is an undeniable tone of "other" that would not be so tangible if the man were not Bedouin.

One article tells the story of a Bedouin encountering difficulty in sending his first ever letter; this piece is rife with patronizing language about the way in which the man did not know where to enter the line, complained about the cost of stamps, and his subsequent cluelessness as to what to do with the stamps he had just purchased, to which "a roar of laughter echoed through the queue which by now had grown endlessly long."[119] The author describes how the line grew

[117] M.Y. Ben Gavriel, "Tracking in the Desert," *Jerusalem Post*, July 18, 1952.
[118] Ibid.
[119] M.Y. Ben-Gavriel, "A Beduin Sends a Letter," *Jerusalem Post*, July 19, 1949.

fearful as the Bedouin man pulled out a dagger, only to use it to untie the rag in which he kept his money. This piece exemplifies the primal traits ascribed to the Bedouin by the *JP*: the article portrays this man as laughably unaware of modern society, yet simultaneously dangerous and something to fear.

The "Beduin Medicine Man," a Dr. H. Koslovsky, believed there was "nothing romantic about the Bedouin."[120] Although Dr. Koslovsky "conquered the sternest taboo" in his ability to convince Bedouin women to remove their veils for medical treatment, it was reported that the one matter in which Bedouin women would not yield was childbirth: "Their children are born on the earthen floor, with a tribal 'wise woman' in attendance. Chickens and dogs scratch around, as always, while numerous progeny are shooed out of the tent. The infant mortality rate cannot be checked."[121] Again, this language is not only demeaning but reductive; here, Bedouin childbirth is not respected as a deeply personal event with tradition and tribal medicine given heed, but rather a wild scene with filthy animals and children running amok.

These articles depict the Bedouin not as citizens of, or participants in, the new Israeli society, but as a lesser, outside group to be studied, documented, or derided. In searching for a scholarly perspective on depictions of indigeneity, I found contemporary author and journalist Julian Sayarer, who writes that modern society uses imagery of indigenous life to cling to some sense of awe at humanity.[122] In his article "Do We Fetishize Indigenous People?" Sayarer accuses the BBC's Human Planet of presenting indigenous peoples "within the 'noble savage' role of a simple mind aligned with nature."[123] Although the article is about the Moken, a people indigenous to a group of islands claimed by both Myanmar and Thailand, his words ring true to

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[120] Gerda L. Cohen, "Beduin Medicine Man," *Jerusalem Post,* April 26, 1954.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Julian Sayarer, "Do We Fetishize Indigenous People?" *New Internationalist*, January 14, 2019, https://newint.org/features/2018/12/17/do-we-fetishize-indigenous-people.
[123] Ibid.

the Bedouin as well: these depictions of their "simple" life in the desert undermines "claims and expectations that they should have social, economic, and human rights."[124] The *Jerusalem Post*'s reporting on the Bedouin as desert trackers or technologically unsophisticated people - no matter the intentions of the authors - served to solidify the portrait of Bedouin as stuck in another time, unworthy of recognition as equals to either author or reader.

D. Bedouin as Impoverished Beneficiaries of Israeli Aid

Another trend in *JP* reporting centers on the idea that Israel brought medical care to the Bedouin. The patronizing manner in which the Bedouin are described is palpable in articles about medical aid for Bedouin. An article titled "'Operation Needle' in Negev: Nomads and Settlers Get Anti-TB Injections" shows an image of a Bedouin woman receiving the BCG shot - a tuberculosis vaccine.[125][126] The fetishizing language in this article is overt: "Shrouded in black from top to toe, the Beduin women parted voluminous folds to thrust out arms for the injection of BCG vaccine. They jangled and clanked as they shuffled past the nurse."[127] The anti-tuberculosis campaign launched in 1954; the Israeli Ministry of Health was hopeful to examine all Bedouin tribes, all Negev settlements, and Be'er Sheva and Eilat.[128] Despite the language of the article about Bedouin women, the tuberculosis vaccine was relatively new to the whole world, and all of southern Israel - "nomads and settlers" alike - were receiving vaccination and treatment.[129]

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[124] Sayarer, "Do We Fetishize Indigenous People?"
[125] I considered including this image in my thesis because of how striking it is, but decided against it because it felt disrespectful; the photograph was clearly not taken with the consent of the woman receiving care.
[126] Gerda L. Cohen, "'Operation Needle' in Negev: Nomads and Settlers Get Anti-T.B. Injections," *Jerusalem Post,* April 14, 1954.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.

The *JP* also reported on the "pioneer drive to bring modern medical methods to the Beduin."[130] The reader learns of the difficult medical conditions facing the workers tasked with vaccinating the Bedouin: "the heat, the swarms of small children, and the meanderings of donkeys and goats, lent colour and odour, if not order, to the scene."[131] However, the author speaks to how the orderliness and patience of the Bedouin men and women receiving treatment allowed for the medical team to act quickly and vaccinate over 1,000 patients in one day.

When discussing the medical aid provided to the Bedouin, the *JP* often falls into referring to the Bedouin as in dire need, especially before 1948:

> For over 30 years the Beduin of the Negev had begged the Mandatory Government (meaning the British) for just two things, schools with their own teachers and a doctor to visit them from time to time. But it was left for Israel to provide these services. Almost immediately on the establishment of peace in the area, two carefully selected young men from each tribe were sent to Jaffa for teachers' training courses, and a doctor was appointed to make periodic visits to the nomads…It appears that the illnesses most prevalent among the beduin are those directly connected with sand, lack of water and irregular diet.[132]

This mention of Bedouin life under the British Mandate helps add to the representation of Israel as a savior of the Bedouin. The end of the same article describes how thankful the Bedouin were to the doctor: "The Beduin did their utmost to load us with gifts, including a goat kid, daggers, and other things for which there is unfortunately little use in town."[133] The last few words denigrating the "useless" Bedouin gifts from the needs of those living "in town" further solidifies the divide between the savage Bedouin and the modernized Israelis. One can also imagine that these reports of medical aid to the Bedouin helped foster national pride among Israelis about their young state taking on this "civilizing mission."

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[130] H. Ben Adi, "Modern Medicine for Bedouin," *Jerusalem Post*, February 16, 1951.
[131] Ben Adi, "Modern Medicine For Bedouin."
[132] M.Y. Ben-Gavriel, "New Services for Israel Beduin: Negev Doctor Follows Nomads," *Jerusalem Post*, June 26, 1950.
[133] Ibid.

In 1950, it was reported that the Ministry of Agriculture was allocating money to the Bedouin for the ploughing of 50,000 dunams (~19.3 square miles) in order to help tribes hit badly by a drought. In this report, the author wrote:

> While coffee was being served in a large black tent pitched on a hilltop not far from the Hebron border, the primitive and the modern methods of agriculture could be seen side by side: on one slope of the hill a long line of camels was pulling primitive wooden ploughs along the surface of the ground; not far away a group of tractors roared by digging the teeth of modern ploughs deep in the earth.[134]

The aforementioned tractors were provided for the Bedouin by the government. Again, the primitive-modern dichotomy is overt: readers of this piece are supposed to venerate the Israeli government as modernizing the un-modern.

Another example of the Israeli savior complex over the Bedouin is found in a handful of articles detailing how the Bedouin were freed from what the *JP* refers to as a "feudal system" by the foundation of the state of Israel. Under British rule, the sheikhs served as intermediaries between the government and members of their tribe, often filling roles regarding tax collection and maintaining law and order.[135] This is the extent of "feudalism" that I have seen in secondary literature for Bedouin life, although the *JP* reports that "tribesmen possessed very little and had to work for their landlords (sheikhs or other tribal notables), receiving as payment a small share of the crop."[136] The article continues to discuss the desire of the Israeli government to change this system, by giving any Bedouin "as much as he can work for a nominal rent of 80 pruta (pre-1960 form of currency) a dunam. If he has no money for seeds, he is given a loan…should he want to try his hand at [modern farming] methods, a tractor is placed at his disposal."[137] Again, Israel is

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[134] Hugh Orgel, "Drought-Stricken Beduin Get Aid to Plough Land," *Jerusalem Post*, March 9, 1951.
[135] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 60.
[136] H. Ben Adi, "Israel Breaks up Feudalism," *Jerusalem Post,* May 4, 1950.
[137] Ibid.

held up as "fixing" the Bedouin's primitive way of life and replacing these systems with new, more modern ones. Instead of sheikhs being in charge of their tribe's crops, the government is providing a different route.

Throughout this period, the *JP* continuously upholds the idea that Israel is the benefactor of the Bedouin, providing medicine and modern technology. While Israel was indeed providing these services, it is also true that Israel had completely erased any opportunities for Bedouin self-determination: at this time, the Bedouin were unable to leave the Restricted Area without permission from the government, and still they were not safe from drought, violence, or illness. The presentation of Bedouin as beneficiaries to Israel's seemingly charitable aid is yet another way in which the *JP* successfully portrays the Bedouin as an undeveloped people.

E. The Urbanization of the Bedouin

While Bedouin are presented as beneficiaries of Israeli aid, they also had the potential to be labeled as an issue: whether it was their mistreatment of the Dead Sea Scrolls, their clothing getting in the way of medical treatment, and even the mere fact that they lived in the Negev. The process of forced sedentarization was described as a chore for the state, again presenting an image of Israel as providing necessary aid to the seemingly helpless Bedouin: "The process of settling the Beduin was begun during Aref Bey's (a military governor) regime, but today, with the constant danger of infiltration, smuggling and espionage, in the wide, difficultly-controlled desert, settlement is a vital necessity."[138]

Although the Bedouin never requested to be placed into the Restricted Area or forcibly urbanized, the Israeli government was hard at work providing services and laying out

[138] Gideon Weigert, "Israel's Beduin: Negev Nomads Becoming A Museum Piece," *Jerusalem Post*, April 25, 1952.

infrastructure for the future of Bedouin in the Negev. During the reign of the Military Government, Israel was initiating public works projects for the Bedouin; this process is cogent through a number of *JP* reports. In 1960, there were only seven schools for the Negev Bedouin; by the beginning of the following school year, there were an additional six constructed.[139] At the time, only one-third of Bedouin boys attended school, and very few girls did, but the Ministry of Education and Culture was hopeful these numbers would rise in the face of additional funds and the hiring of more female teachers.[140]

In order to sedentarize the Bedouin, the government parsed out the Negev and registered it in varying zones. One journalist describes the way in which Bedouin used to determine land usage: "In Mandatory days, it was officially estimated that 60,000 Bedouin worked and grazed three million dunams (~1,158 square miles) in the Negev. But they owned very little of it, for it was free for the taking…one tribesman got himself 1,000 dunams (less than half a square mile) for the price of one camel."[141] Although the *JP* quoted a spokesman for the Department of Agriculture as saying "no one is out to expropriate Beduin lands," the Bedouin would not be released from the Restricted Area for another 13 years, at which point they would be strongly discouraged (if not prevented) from moving anywhere not directly sanctioned by the state.[142]

F. Conclusion

This chapter has used *JP* reporting between 1948 and 1967 to illustrate the patronization of Bedouin and their fetishization as pre-modern people to allow Israelis to call on the Jewish past. Portraying the Bedouin in this way also helped to justify Israel's unjust treatment toward

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[139] "Beduin School Network Doubled," *Jerusalem Post*, August 4, 1961.
[140] *Jerusalem Post,* "Beduin School Network Doubled."
[141] H. Ben Adi, "Registration is Beginning of Beduin Land Reform," *Jerusalem Post,* November 11, 1954.
[142] Ibid.

them. The depiction of the Bedouin in this newspaper fits into a larger pattern of how modern societies depict indigenous groups as noble savages. In the early Israeli state, these representations served a purpose: to establish Israel as a steward of Jewish history and legitimize it as a Jewish state and to prop up the new state as a mechanism for positive change for all its citizens.

Despite writing them off as unromantic occupants of a desert wasteland, the *JP* also reports on the Bedouin as participants in the complexities of Israeli politics. The next chapter will use articles from the same period to demonstrate the way that the *JP* contradicts its treatment of the Bedouin as savages.

# Chapter Three - A Portrait of the Bedouin in Politics

## A. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the methods by which the *Jerusalem Post* manifested an image of the Bedouin as un-modern beneficiaries of state assistance, who gave birth in dirt and did not know how to behave properly in the Post Office. Yet, the *Jerusalem Post* contradicts itself, and in juxtaposition to this image of simple Bedouin pastoralists, it simultaneously reports on the political actions of the Bedouin in the new Israeli state: their voting habits, petitions to the state, and even espionage. In these dual roles of primitive burden on the state and independent political actor, it becomes evident that the history of Bedouin in Israel is incredibly nuanced. While the depiction of indigenous groups as primitive is nothing new, the reason the treatment of the Bedouin as such is interesting is due to the fact that the demeaning depictions forced upon them did not preclude them from finding a political niche.

In contrast to the previous chapter, many of the articles from 1948-1967 depict the Bedouin as political actors, as people who demand to be able to return to their lives and land before the war, as seekers of government defense or aid, and as participants in the Israeli judicial system. This delineation between indigenous pastoralists and modern citizens is never expanded on in the *Jerusalem Post* itself, but in close reading of the *JP* archive, this complicated position of the Bedouin becomes salient. Scholarly literature about the Bedouin does not typically analyze their status as members of the Israeli body politic. Although my work is preliminary, many of the articles I read contained information I have not encountered in any of the secondary sources I have consulted. In secondary scholarship Bedouin have frequently been written off, either as part of the greater Arab minority in Israel, or as victims of an oppressive state that refuses to

recognize Bedouin land rights; while both of these are true, the Bedouin both participate in and protest against the Israeli government, which stands not only in the face of the primitivist view thrust on them in the articles laid out in Chapter Two, but also complicates the understanding of Bedouin in Israel as merely an oppressed minority population with little agency. Against these oversimplified understandings thrust upon them, the Bedouin managed to manifest their own political identities the way citizens of any other state with their government.

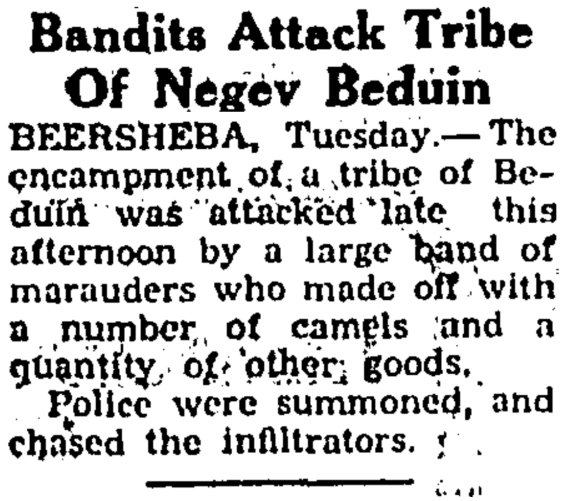
While many of the articles below may seem to contradict each other – some tribes are seeking help from the police due to border attacks, while others serve as spies for Egypt, and yet others meet with foreign delegations – all this evidence points to the fact that there is much left unsaid about the varying political roles of the Bedouin. In seeking protection from law enforcement, demanding land recognition in the courts, and performing civic duties, the Bedouin developed their own political positions in the fledgling state of Israel.

B. Bedouin Responses to Violence

As the Bedouin lived under the Military Government, their nomadic way of life continued to dissolve. Despite an armistice agreement between Israel and the surrounding states in the wake of the 1948 War, border raids from all sides were fairly common; the *JP* reported on the Bedouin struggle against these raids. Many of these are presented in short-form sidelight-style articles: "Jordan Thieves Wound Negev Beduin"[143] and "Egyptian, Israel Beduin Clash."[144] The latter article states that Israel submitted a protest to the Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission (MAC)[145] calling on Egypt to stop its aggressive border crossings.

[143] "Jordan Thieves Wound Negev Beduin," *Jerusalem Post*, April 10, 1957.
[144] "Egyptian, Israel Beduin Clash," *Jerusalem Post*, February 8, 1954.
[145] There are many articles discussing the MAC's actions; it appears to have played a role in the mediation of Bedouin who fled Israel during the war but were trying to return after. I did not include an analysis of these articles - despite their frequency - because Israel's ultimate decision was unilaterally not to allow the return of these Bedouin, so there was nothing more to say on their role regarding Israel.

The frequency of marauder attacks on Bedouin becomes evident through *Jerusalem Post* coverage; over 100 articles mention the terms Bedouin and marauder. Many of these pieces are short - generally only a few lines, but they paint a larger picture of the violence the Bedouin experienced at this time. These attacks were usually small-scale thefts of camels or other resources, but they occasionally broke out into violence.[146] In one instance, the Abu Yahiyah tribe was attacked by a group of 50 bandits from the Gaza Strip, and were tormented for two hours by "heavy automatic weapons and rifles."[147] This was the second time the tribe of around 150 had been attacked and unable to defend themselves, due to a lack of weapons in their possession.[148] Two casualties resulted from this attack, and the tribe fled to Be'er Sheva seeking protection. These attacks continued for years after 1948: in a 1955 article titled "Is This an Armistice?" the *JP* outlines all the border attacks it reported on in the month of July. Of the 18 reported attacks, Bedouin were the targets of at least two.[149]



**Bandits Attack Tribe Of Negev Beduin**

BEERSHEBA, Tuesday.— The encampment of a tribe of Beduin was attacked late this afternoon by a large band of marauders who made off with a number of camels and a quantity of other goods.

Police were summoned, and chased the infiltrators.

Figure 3.1, from "Bandits Attack Tribe of Negev Beduin," 1951.

Violence from border raids was not the only threat facing the Bedouin. Despite harsh environmental conditions, various groups Jewish immigrants to Ottoman Palestine and the Mandate found themselves settling in the Negev. The first kibbutz in the Negev was settled in 1939.[150] Although it has been argued that Bedouin who sold land to the JNF (the Jewish National Fund - an organization responsible for buying much of the land used for early Jewish

[146] "Bandits Attack Tribe of Negev Beduin," *Jerusalem Post,* April 11, 1951.
[147] "Bandits Kill Two Beduin," *Palestine Post,* April 10, 1950.
[148] Ibid.
[149] "Is This an Armistice?" *Jerusalem Post*, August 3, 1955.
[150] Ruth Kark. "Jewish Frontier Settlement in the Negev, 1880-1948: Perception and Realization." *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 3 (1981): 349.

settlements) pre-1948[151] "generally showed readiness to cooperate with the Jews," relations between kibbutzniks (members living on kibbutzim - the plural of kibbutz) and Bedouin were not always peaceful.[152]

One article details how Sheikh Suleiman el-Azail and his tribe claimed that the members of Kibbutz Shuval had launched a "campaign of terror" against them, threatening the Bedouin in an attempt to scare them into voting for the party Mapam.[153] The Bedouin went to the police seeking protection from the settlers, alleging that they had opened fire on the tribe, hurting two children, killing a cow, and wounding a camel.[154]

Clashes between settlers and Bedouin were not contained to the Negev. In Afula, a city just south of Nazareth, a peace parley was held between "members of settlements in the Jezreel Plain" and members of the El-Saʿidiyieh Tribe, after mounting tensions between the two groups.[155] The parley was spurred by the recent shooting of two Bedouin calves by a member of a local kibbutz, and "steps were discussed to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents and for the betterment of relations."[156] Similarly, in Haifa, a city on the northwest coast, police had to intervene in a dispute between Bedouin and members of Kibbutz Ramat Yohanan.[157] The kibbutzniks laid claim to around 1400 dunams (~0.54 square miles) of grazing land, leaving very little for the Bedouin, who were concerned their cattle would go hungry without access to the land.[158] Furthermore, the Bedouin "were ready to pay the Government the same rentals as the

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[151] Land deals took a different form after the war.
[152] Kark, "Jewish Frontier Settlement," 346.
[153] "Beduin Claim Election Fraud," *Jerusalem Post,* July 30, 1951.
[154] Ibid.
[155] "Settlers and Arabs Hold Peace Parley," *Jerusalem Post,* March 9, 1959.
[156] Ibid.
[157] "Beduin and Kibbutzniks Clash Over Pasture Near Haifa," *Jerusalem Post*, February 9, 1960.
[158] Ibid.

kibbutz," demonstrating the strength of their need for access to this land, and willingness to do so legally.[159]

In a 1958 instance of mistrust between the two communities, a Bedouin tribe in Galilee called upon members of neighboring Kibbutz Hakouk to swear an oath that they were not involved in the disappearance of a tribesman, Muhammed Mussa El Hassan Salah.[160] Fortunately, this episode ended with members of the kibbutz participating in a reconciliation ceremony, attended by local police, the family of the missing man, and the tribe's elders. The *JP* reported that the ceremony closed with "a festive meal," and that the kibbutz believed that Muhammed had crossed the border into Syria.[161]

At first, these forms of violence may not seem pertinent to the political roles of the Bedouin; however, these articles reveal more than just the vulnerability of the position of the Bedouin. As cited above, there is evidence of the Bedouin requesting aid from local authorities in protecting their tribes and communities. This is highly relevant to the place of the Bedouin as political actors in Israeli society: in facing violence from many fronts, the Bedouin saw themselves as citizens of the state, with access to routes through their government to help protect themselves.[162]

C. Bedouin Demands

Along with recourse to law enforcement, the Bedouin were quick to reach out to the various governmental bodies of the new state of Israel. Only months after the establishment of the state of Israel, the *JP* reported that 16 sheikhs from the three largest tribes - Tiyeh, Azazmeh,

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[159] "Beduin and Kibbutzniks Clash."
[160] "Beduin Make 'Peace' At Galilee Kibbutz," *Jerusalem Post*, April 2, 1958.
[161] *Jerusalem Post,* "Beduin Make 'Peace' At Galilee Kibbutz."
[162] Whether these state bodies were receptive to the plight of the Bedouin is a separate inquiry that is outside the scope of this thesis. I would be happy to see research into primary sources on ways in which state bodies interacted with the Bedouin; here, I am focusing on the inverse.

and Tarabin - went to Be'er Sheva to request to be taken under Israel's protection and granted citizenship.[163] After the war, the remaining Bedouin in the Negev were evicted from their land and concentrated in the Restricted Area.[164] This did not happen immediately, and it is difficult to gauge the exact day that all the Bedouin had finally been collected into the area – fighting was not even fully finished by the time this was reported. It is likely the sheikhs were seeking direct protection from attacks for their people, which they continued to do as border raids persisted for years after the war.[165]

A main stage for the Bedouin fight for rights has always been the Israeli courts, even as early as the 1950s. Musa'a al-Guran, a member of the Abu Arbiya tribe in the Negev, was able to obtain an order from the High Court granting him an identity card that would prevent his forced deportation.[166] The court order called on the Ministers of Defense and Interior to show why al-Guran should not be issued a card; unfortunately, the *JP* did not report further on what happened in al-Guran's case.

In 1963, a sheikh named Jaber Nasser had established a new tribe and was suing for a home address.[167] The Court responded that the Ministry of Interior did not recognize tribes outside the 18 pre-established ones, and that none of them had specific addresses, "in view of the Beduins' nomadic life."[168] Although the Court did not respond in the way Sheikh Nasser had hoped, it is significant that both the Court and Ministry of Interior entertained the demands of the same people the government was forcibly containing in the most remote region of the country.

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[163] "Beduin Sheikhs Sue for Peace," *Palestine Post*, November 19, 1948.
[164] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouin*, 120.
[165] The Israeli-Arab armistice agreements were not signed until 1949, the last of which being with Syria in late July.
[166] "Beduin Obtains Order On Identity Card," *The Jerusalem Post,* June 23, 1957.
[167] "Beduin Insists On Home Address," *Jerusalem Post*, March 3, 1963.
[168] *Jerusalem Post*, "Beduin Insists On Home Address."

Despite the Negev Bedouin living with state-restricted rights, high government officials were still taking them seriously enough to merit a response to a situation like that of Sheikh Nasser's.

The Bedouin also reached out directly to the press to speak on their own behalf. In 1953, Sheikh Salman el-Ukbi, former leader of the el-Ukbi (al-Oqbi) tribe, wrote to the editor of the *Jerusalem Post* detailing his dismissal by the Military Governor and subsequent replacement by his younger brother.[169] Sheikh el-Ukbi's purpose in writing the letter was to correct the *JP*'s claim that he was dismissed for dividing up lands of his tribesmen and gaining from it. The Sheikh posits that he was dismissed for objecting to the transfer of his tribe from its lands, and that he, "as a loyal citizen of the State of Israel," even fought against members of his tribe who engaged in smuggling.[170]

The Bedouin continued to make demands of the government over the years, despite little governmental cooperation or response, and the persistence of restricted rights under the Military Government. In 1966, 40 sheikhs from all 18 Negev tribes demanded that the government delay construction of the planned Bedouin resettlement projects until they were properly compensated for the lands that had been confiscated from them over 15 years prior.[171] The *JP* reported that the sheikhs consistently affirmed their loyalty to the state, and said "they had made more progress over the 18 years than during the three centuries before," but warned they would fight for justice over their stolen land.[172]

The Bedouin also weaponized civil unrest in their fight against forced relocation. In 1965, more than 41% of eligible Bedouin voters refused to cast their ballots in what was reported as a protest against forced relocation, specifically due to the placement of feuding families near

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[169] "Negev Beduin," *Jerusalem Post,* December 15, 1954.
[170] Ibid.
[171] "Beduin sheikhs demand compensation for land," *Jerusalem Post*, June 30, 1966.
[172] Ibid.

each other.[173] This issue was heightened around election season, because tribes were together in the same polling stations. The *JP* reported that "many more Bedouin" voted in 1961, when more polling stations had been provided.[174]

D. Bedouin as Participants in & Aids to the State

The relationship between the Bedouin and Israel is not always depicted as negative or tenuous. The *JP* reported that many Bedouin joined in on the celebration of Israeli Independence Day in 1950. The mayor and the military governor held a celebration in Be'er Sheva and were joined by 30 sheikhs and at least 200 tribesmen.[175] The Military Governor announced that Bedouin prisoners were to be released and that the Bedouin were to be allowed to begin the harvest, to which "spokesmen of the Bedouin expressed gratitude and loyalty."[176]

The political situation in Israel evolved rapidly during the early years of the Israeli state, and the Bedouin were not idle when it came to getting involved. In 1955, when the Centre Party, a new Arab party, was looking for supporters, it turned to Sheikh Suleiman el-Huzei'l (al-Huzayil) to garner Bedouin support.[177] Although the Bedouin had little ability to travel outside the Restricted Area, they were still viewed as an important voting demographic by other Arab populations in Israel.

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[173] "Beduin avoid feuds…and ballot boxes," *Jerusalem Post*, November 4, 1965.
[174] Ibid.
[175] "Desert Horsemen Join in Celebration," *Jerusalem Post*, April 24, 1950.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Gideon Weigert, "Separate Arab Centre Party Promoted by General Zionists," *Jerusalem Post,* March 3, 1953.

Bedouin in the Negev did not have the ability to vote until 1951,[178] when the process of giving them government identity cards to replace their military identity cards began. By the 1951 elections, 2,400 Bedouin were able to go to the polls with their new identification cards.[179] It is difficult to find quantitative data on how many Bedouin voted during this period, but there are multiple articles that mention Bedouin performing their civic duty alongside fellow citizens. A 1955 article out of Nazareth, which has a much less significant Bedouin population than the Negev, reported that 6,000 Bedouin who were eligible to vote at the time, "completed their voting in 20 polling stations."[180] A 1959 article stated that there were over 6,000 Negev Bedouin voters, who were provided with 18 polling stations.[181]

In Section A of this chapter, I mentioned that a Bedouin tribe was threatened in order to coerce them to vote for Mapam. I found this threat strange considering Mapam was the second-highest represented party in the first Knesset,[182] and the third-highest after the 1951 elections.[183] Also, Mapam favored Arab rights, including an Arab right of return after the war, so it was a popular party among Arab populations in Israel. In fact, the *JP* documented 500 Bedouin in attendance at a 1959 Mapam rally.[184][185] Mapam members also aided the Bedouin in their fight against relocation; in 1964, a Mapam MK and city councilor spoke for the Sawaʿeed tribe (from

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[178] This is difficult to fact check. I read this specific evidence in the cited JP article, but the majority of secondary sources I read generally only say something to the effect of "Arabs who remain[ed] in [Israel after the 1948 War] were granted full citizenship, including the right to vote and be elected." I think the fact that Bedouin did not obtain full voting rights until a few years later, if it is even 100% true, is more likely due to lack of organization at the state level than anything else. (Elie Rekhess, "The Arab Parties," in *Israel's First Fifty Years*, ed. Robert Owen Freedman (Gainesville, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 2000) 182).

[179] "2,400 Beduin to Cast First Votes," *Jerusalem Post,* June 21, 1951.

[180] "Nazareth Keeps Open Extra Hour," *Jerusalem Post*, July 27, 1955.

[181] H. Ben-Adi, "Ben-Gurion Voting at Sde Boker," *Jerusalem Post,* November 3, 1959.

[182] "Israeli Electoral History: Elections to the First Knesset," Jewish Virtual Library, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/elections-to-the-1st-knesset-january-1949.

[183] "Israeli Electoral History: Elections to the Second Knesset," Jewish Virtual Library, https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/elections-to-the-2nd-knesset-july-1951.

[184] Mapam came fourth in the Knesset that year.

[185] "500 Beduin at Mapam Rally," *Jerusalem Post,* October 29, 1959.

Western Galilee), who were complaining that the land they were being forced to move to was not suitable.[186]

While the first Bedouin MK was not elected until 1973, the *JP* provides reports of Bedouin being included on various parties' lists. For example, in 1965, the *JP* reported that Rafi, a party founded by Ben-Gurion in 1965, debuted an Arab list in which the second name was a Bedouin sheikh from the Azazmeh tribe, Sheikh Awdah Abu Mu'amar.[187]

Another way in which the Bedouin cooperated with the state was by filling roles specifically designed for Bedouin governance. I found reporting of the "Mixed Bedouin Commission,"[188] a group of two Bedouin sheikhs from Jordan, and two sheikhs from the Negev, as well as the police chiefs of Hebron (part of Jordan at the time) and Be'er Sheva.[189] At the first ever meeting of the Mixed Bedouin Commission, which was "held in a friendly spirit," it was decided that a delegation from a Jordanian tribe would be able to look for items that they believed had been stolen and brought into Israel.[190] From what I could gather, this commission was also referred to as the "Mixed Bedouin Court" in another article released less than a month later.[191] This second article reported that the first session of the Mixed Bedouin Court was to be held the coming Sunday, in a Bedouin hut between Hebron and Be'er Sheva. It was reported that the purpose of the court was to arbitrate cases among Bedouin tribes.

In 1955, a Bedouin tribal court was established through the state, and nine Bedouin judges were sworn in.[192] The establishment of this court allowed another outlet of justice for the Bedouin, making them more likely to seek justice through state-linked legal institutions. This

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[186] "Beduin complain of having to move homes," *Jerusalem Post*, August 30, 1964.
[187] "The four Arab lists," *Jerusalem Post*, September 8, 1965.
[188] I could not find further information about this Mixed Bedouin Commission in secondary scholarship.
[189] "Mine Deaths Beduin Taken up at Parley," *Palestine Post,* December 19, 1949.
[190] Ibid.
[191] "Mixed Beduin Court To Meet on Sunday," *Palestine Post*, January 11, 1950.
[192] "1st beduin Court Opened in Negev," *Jerusalem Post*, May 13, 1955.

court was managed by a secretary and the aforementioned nine judges, who primarily dealt with issues specific to Bedouin law and custom, often outside the scope of Israeli law.[193] It is important to note these instances in which positions were created specifically for Bedouin, simply because it provides yet another side of the multifaceted political position of the Bedouin in Israel. Primary sources like the *Jerusalem Post* may be the only place where scholars can find evidence of short-lived and poorly-documented occurrences like the creation of the Mixed Bedouin Commission, although the lack of reporting does not diminish the value in examining such events.

Another way in which the Bedouin benefitted the early political goals of Israel was through diplomacy. The *Jerusalem Post* recorded that various Bedouin tribes received foreign delegations throughout the period I investigated. For example, Sheikh Oda Mansour Abu Shammar received officials from Western Germany in 1961. It was not specified who the officials from Western Germany were, but they were "important enough to rate three bodyguards," and a Sergeant-Major out of Be'er Sheva.[194] The Germans were gifted a silver dagger, which "quite moved" them, and the reception clearly went well as the journalist recorded that the bodyguards were entirely unnecessary.[195]


Figure 3.2, A cartoon of the Bedouin meeting with a German delegate, from "The Germans and the Beduin," 1951.

The *JP* also documented the Bedouin reception of a delegation from Niger. In 1962, Sheikh Aude Abu Muamr (I can only assume this is the same Sheikh Awdah Abu Mu'amar who

[193] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 123.
[194] LW, "The Germans and the Beduin," *Jerusalem Post*, June 9, 1961.
[195] Ibid.

later ran on the Rafi list in 1965) welcomed eight members of the Nigerian government, and entertained them for lunch.[196] When the guests arrived, they were greeted by "hundreds of tribesmen mounted on camels and horses and bearing aloft large banners of Israel and Niger."[197] Bedouin involvement in Israel's foreign affairs speaks to their nuanced relationship with the state. In these articles, one does not get the sense that the Bedouin are being paraded around *by* the state as members of a minority to be shown off; rather, the Sheikhs give the impression of acting as true diplomats. While the *JP* does not provide context as to what was discussed at these receptions outside of brief, benign remarks, it is clear that the Bedouin occasionally served as diplomats for Israel.

Aside from his role as diplomat, Sheikh Abu Muamr made his affinity for Israel clear in other ways. In 1957, more than 100 families of the Abu Muamr tribe applied for permission to build their own permanent housing.[198] The government's offer to support Bedouin looking to settle had been standing for two years before any tribe accepted it. In response, the Military Governor of Be'er Sheva at the time, Seren Pinhas Amir, "praised the pioneering spirit shown by Sheikh Aude Muamr and called on the other tribal leaders to follow his example."[199] Although this singular instance does not represent the actions of all the Negev Bedouin, it is significant that this occurred, given what the *JP* refers to as the "revolution in a way of life which has changed little in the past centuries"[200] – despite my earlier critiques of the use of language like this, it is true that this sudden move to sedentarize was a drastic shift away from the Bedouins' former way of life.

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[196] H. Ben-Adi, "Beduin Welcome Niger Group," *Jerusalem Post*, January 30, 1962.
[197] Ibid.
[198] "Beduin Want to Settle Down," *Jerusalem Post,* December 6, 1957.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid.

E. Bedouin Espionage

Conversely, the *JP* recorded many incidents of Bedouin participating in anti-Israel actions, including espionage. Frequently, these are reported through military or court reports of trials. The majority of these articles are from the 1960s, which makes sense in the larger context of Israeli history. The 1960s were an era of heightened turmoil in the Middle East between the presidency of Gamal Abdel-Nasser in Egypt (r. 1954-1970) and his aid in creating a strong Palestinian national-political identity, specifically in the form of Fatah (a Palestinian political party at the forefront of Palestinian governance). One *JP* report specifically cites Fatah in its role in the theft of "significant items of military value" by three Bedouin men in 1966.[201] The report continues that it was believed that the men planned to persuade fellow villagers to "give active assistance to el Fatah infiltrators."[202] Similarly, in December 1959, a 21-year-old Bedouin man from the Lod area (in central Israel) was sentenced to three years in prison for "revealing military secrets to Egyptian intelligence agents in the Gaza Strip."[203]

A female Bedouin spy named Khales J'uma'a, who had at least three articles written about her in 1963, received a six-year sentence for five counts of espionage.[204] 22-year-old J'uma'a was a member of the al-Aramshe tribe, located in northwest Israel near the Lebanese border.[205] She was accused of leading a ring of ten spies, who collected information that she relayed to Lebanese agents in bordering villages.[206]

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[201] "Three Triangle villagers held for espionage," *Jerusalem Post*, October 2, 1966.
[202] Ibid.
[203] "3 Years Jail for Aiding U.A.R. Intelligence," *Jerusalem Post,* December 9, 1959.
[204] "Beduin Beauty Gets 6 Years as Spy," *Jerusalem Post*, June 16, 1963.
[205] "Leader of Alleged Beduin Spy Ring Said to Be Woman," *Jerusalem Post*, January 1, 1963.
[206] Ibid.

This is not to say there are no pre-1960s instances of Bedouin espionage. In 1950, the son of a "well-known" Bedouin Sheikh was sentenced to three years in prison for spying for the Egyptian army in Gaza.[207]

Bedouin espionage is important to highlight because it demonstrates yet another overlooked role of the Bedouin. For example, in Nasasra's book, which I reference heavily, there are mentions of Bedouin political resistance, such as refusal to follow military instruction, or boycotting censuses,[208] yet no mention of Bedouin spy activity. Even in their political actions, the Bedouin are not monolithic. Espionage is yet another form in which Bedouin resisted Israel; although this is an example of Bedouin actively working against the state, it is a further demonstration of reported Bedouin political activity that complicates the primitive portrayal of the Bedouin. It is worth noting that these incidents of Bedouin resistance did not seem to cast a shadow over more "positive" reporting of the Bedouin; in my archival research, I did not get the sense that Bedouin as a whole were being cast as a threat to Israel.

F. Conclusion

Despite being unable to travel freely, difficulty in obtaining identification cards, and no permanent addresses, the Bedouin forged a political niche for themselves between the years of 1948 and 1967. There is diversity to be found in the ways in which they took political action: the Bedouin were seen as a key voting group by Arab parties, yet protested elections in order to draw attention to their struggle for land. Some Bedouin spied on the Israeli government, while others received foreign delegations on behalf of Israel. The *JP*'s documentation of these actions stand in

[207] "Spy Given Three Years in Prison," *Jerusalem Post,* November 27, 1950.
[208] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 241.

the face of its own reporting of the Bedouin as incapable of navigating the complications of modern life.

# Conclusion

This thesis is the first piece of literature which utilizes the *Jerusalem Post* as a primary source to study the history of the Bedouin in Israel. Chapter One provides a concise history of the Bedouin presence in Israel, beginning with Ottoman Empire rule over the Bedouin in the eighteenth century and continuing through to today. It is my hope that Chapter One's history provides a succinct yet thorough telling, as much of the secondary scholarship I have consulted for this thesis does not provide nearly enough context to preface the author's discussion of the Bedouin.

Chapter Two lays out the ways in which the *Jerusalem Post* represented the Bedouin as a primitive group in need of state aid from Israel, as well as the way the *JP* used the Bedouin to paint Israel as a steward of Jewish history and culture. The exploration in Chapter Two sets up a contradiction in *JP* reporting for Chapter Three, which explores the political actions of the Bedouin. These political actions belie not only the primitive depiction provided by the *JP*, but also the oppression of the Military Government and Israeli state at large, which limited Bedouin freedom of movement, hindering their ability to own land, raise crops in fertile areas, and connect with tribe members in other parts of the country (and outside the borders of the state). Despite these hardships, the *JP* still creates an image of the Bedouin as political actors, capable of activity ranging from espionage to diplomacy.

Interpreting Bedouin history through the *Jerusalem Post* creates a more complicated understanding than what is found in secondary literature. Some of the articles I read contained details I was unable to find in other sources, such as the Mixed Bedouin Commission discussed in Chapter Three. Looking into newspapers as primary sources for a group's history obviously creates a biased depiction, but it can also fill in details lost to time. I am hesitant to be critical of

scholars who view Bedouin history as solely a fight for civil rights and land recognition; however, this grows complicated in the face of Bedouin participation in the Israeli political scene.

It is impossible to read the *Jerusalem Post*'s archive without noticing the degrading and demeaning language that is often used to describe the Bedouin. The depiction of indigenous people as primitive is not new to a Western audience; growing up, I played basketball against high school mascots such as the Red Raiders and the Warriors (both represented by offensive Native American caricatures), and have been to a few Atlanta Braves games at this point in my Emory career. While the reduction of the Bedouin into the noble savage stereotype is nothing new to the study of indigenous peoples globally, my thesis is the first attempt to focus on the way the *Jerusalem Post* carried out this reduction during the period from 1948 to 1967.

My analysis of these juxtaposed depictions of the Bedouin in Israel as both primitive and political is an important step in progressing the study of the political role of the Bedouin in Israel, when so much academic work on the Bedouin is focused on the nomadic and tribal aspects of their culture. While these facets are crucial to the Bedouin identity, it is important not to dismiss them as unimportant to the political scene of any MENA state, let alone Israel, where Bedouin are one of the fastest-growing subpopulations. In working with Bedouin (and against people trying to deny them their rights) during summer 2022, I saw how much there is to be done in the way of changing people's views of the Bedouin.

Although I limited my research to the reign of the Military Government over the Arab populations of Israel, it is clear that the richness of the *JP* archive goes well beyond 1967. While the government formally announced the end of military rule on November 6, 1966, it simply took other forms that perpetuated the experience of military rule for the Bedouin for years after

the fact.[209] Instead of the Restricted Area, new organizations stepped in to continue the urbanization of the Bedouin, and new agencies took charge of law enforcement over the communities.[210] An article published on June 21, 1967 posits the end of travel restrictions that had been in place since June 5, showing that even after the end of military rule, the Bedouin were not free citizens within the border of their own country.[211] There is much left to be studied about the effects of the Military Government's reign over the Bedouin, and the way this manifests in primary sources.

A. Looking Ahead

In 1952, the *JP* reported that "the special ministerial committee which dealt recently with the problems of Israel's Arabs scarcely touched the issue of the Beduin and their future."[212] This exact sentiment is still being echoed in Israel today. Every few years, the Department for Socioeconomic Development of the Bedouin Society drafts a new plan to uplift the Bedouin population in Israel; the most recent plan was released in May 2022, and its budget was over 5 billion shekels (NIS), or around 1.6 billion US dollars. The problem is once plans like this are released, nothing of substance actually happens. Demolition of non-permanent structures in unrecognized Bedouin villages is continuing in the Negev, but no efforts are being made to positively incentivize the Bedouin to move to a recognized town or village (or recognize the land that many Bedouin already live on). NGOs and other non-profit organizations have a difficult time accessing the billions allocated toward the "development of Bedouin society" because of the complicated legal relationship between Bedouin living on unrecognized land and the

[209] Nasasra, *The Naqab Bedouins*, 222.
[210] Ibid.
[211] "Travel restrictions in force for Beduin," *Jerusalem Post*, June 21, 1967.
[212] Weigert, "Israel's Beduin."

government. I witnessed this firsthand in the work I did this summer for the Sayyid al-Harumi Initiative – in order to access government funding, an organization working with Negev Bedouin must prove that it will not be violating any zoning laws regarding unrecognized Bedouin infrastructure. For example, Bedouin living in unrecognized villages have state-provided diesel generators running the schools in their villages.[213] These generators are not only highly pollutive but also incredibly loud, and tend to be disruptive and dangerous, as they are generally placed in close proximity to classrooms or outdoor play areas. It is one of the goals of the initiative to replace these generators with solar power; this is difficult for many reasons, including the government's expression of concern over the permanent/non-permanent structure issue. All told, those in the know are cynical about government-run improvement for the Bedouin, and the vast majority of Israelis are ignorant to current political, social, and economic conditions in the Negev writ large.

The other, more primary mission of the Sayyid al-Harumi Initiative is to provide economic mobility for Bedouin living on privately-owned (legal) land via solar power. One of the largest issues facing the Bedouin community today is economic stagnation; sedentarization meant less work in agriculture, which led to higher poverty rates. The initiative aims to build solar fields on Bedouin land to be owned and operated by those living there, in order to sell the generated energy to the government, thus providing job opportunities and income to the community. Although most of my work was devoted to the projects on unrecognized land, I was also responsible for researching the history of Bedouin land rights for the purpose of generating

[213] As stated above, the situation between Bedouin on unrecognized land and the state is very complicated legally and often confusing on the ground. In essence, even though the Bedouin are living on this land illegally, they still have rights to specific infrastructure, namely schools, houses of worship, and community centers. Because the Bedouin have rights to these institutions, they are built as permanent structures in many unrecognized villages, compared to the housing in these villages, which is often haphazardly constructed with tin or other found materials. Bedouin are still *technically* not allowed on this land, however, and so the state does not connect them to the electricity or water grid; hence the need for the generators.

educational material, which is what sparked my interest in this topic in general. In creating a research question for my thesis, I reflected on what I had seen over the summer, and the conversations I had heard both among and about Bedouin. The current political situation for Bedouin warrants further research; although a scholarly foray into contemporary Bedouin politics is outside the scope of this paper, I can say that many Bedouin in the Negev are pessimistic about their own current political participation within Israel. When Said al-Harumi was re-elected in 2021, the Arab List (Ra'am) made history by being included in PM Naftali Bennett's governing coalition, the first time an Arab party was ever (successfully) included in the coalition. Unfortunately, Ra'am conceded a great deal in order to gain entry into the coalition, including a grand total of zero cabinet seats for any of its members. This, coupled with al-Harumi's untimely death, dashed much of the Bedouin community's faith in positive change coming from the Knesset. When I was in the Negev last summer, and Israelis were staring down the barrel of the fifth election in three years, almost all the Bedouin I spoke to about the upcoming elections were not planning on voting.

A lack of literature on the Bedouin living in Israel is what drew me to my thesis topic. Although my work looks at a bygone era, the past I write about is present today. The more effort put toward educating others on Bedouin history and society, the more people can gather an accurate understanding of the current Bedouin state of affairs. This thesis could be the beginning of a much larger body of work studying the relationship between the Bedouin and the Israeli press. My research has a very specific inquiry guiding it, but there are hundreds of other lines of questioning one could use to examine the same exact years and articles I collected from the archive. I see my work as not only in conversation with other scholars of the Bedouin and Israel, but with experts of indigenous studies and archivists. It is my hope that my preliminary work

leads to further research on the political roles of the Bedouin in Israel, and what they may hold for the future.

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