

## Secrets of the Olive Trees

**Note:** This article by Tom Segev in Haaretz looks briefly at the famous artist's village of Ein Hod, which was once the Palestinian village of Ayn Hawd. It is just one example of the way that the history of the Palestinian people has been suppressed in Israel, even when the physical foundation of their former villages were eagerly taken over. Noga Kadman, who is a member of Zochrot, which documents the Nakba in Hebrew ([www.zochrot.org](http://www.zochrot.org)) discusses this phenomena in her new book "On the Road Side, On the Mind Side," which was just published in Hebrew.

For an in-depth look at Ein Hod as a microcosm of this suppressed history, the 2002 movie "500 Dunam on the Moon" explores it to great effect. If you can't get your hands on a copy, the website summarizes the story of the former and current villages (<http://www.500dunam.com/links.html>).

I have a personal connection to this story. Family friends have a house in Ein Hod, and last year they explained to us sheepishly that during the olive harvest residents of Ayn Hawd, who are the remaining refugees from what is now called Ein Hod, are paid to come to harvest the olives from the trees for them, trees that used to be their own.

—Rebecca Vilkomerson

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### **The Makings of History / Secrets of the olive trees**

**By Tom Segev**

The Ein Hod artists village describes itself on its Hebrew Internet site as "an ancient Israeli environment." It belongs to "a Middle Eastern culture from other times" and, according to the English-language site, visitors can "discern in the old structures the many textures and architectural forms of earlier occupants - from the Christian Crusades to the Turkish Empire."

The houses of the Arabs who lived there until 1948 are not mentioned. This is an unusual case: A recently published study shows that the kibbutzim and moshavim that arose on the ruins of Arab villages do not usually omit this fact, even if the Arab residents themselves, who were expelled and fled, are almost never mentioned, as if they had never existed.

When writing her book "Beshulei haderekh uveshulei hatoda'a" (On the Road Side, on the Mind Side), published by November Books, geographer Noga Kadman began with the assumption that the Arab villages were pushed to the margins of Israeli discourse. But when she examined internal newsletters and anniversary publications put out by kibbutzim and moshavim that had been established on the remains of these villages,

she discovered an attitude of possessiveness and few moral qualms: There is no shame in living in Arabs' houses, but it isn't pleasant to mention the Arabs themselves. It is as though their history and their way of life had never existed. The takeover of the abandoned villages is often described as part of the effort to make the wilderness bloom.

"There was nothing there," members of Kibbutz Barkai write in one pamphlet that is quoted in the book. There was some mention here and there of the Arabs "bequeathing" their lands, their homes and even their furniture and household goods to the new settlers.

"Our central clothing warehouse was adorned with a number of mahogany closets from the abandoned property," states a Kibbutz Kabri publication. "Thus, we gradually equipped ourselves with a minimum of comfort."

The Arabs who came back to rescue some of their property were considered thieves, and hunting them down was a source of income, as stated in a book that Kibbutz Carmia published on the occasion of the 35th anniversary of its establishment: "They came at night to steal fruit from the orchards and go back to Gaza laden with loot ... We guarded the area of the kibbutz from them ... We would catch prisoners, bring them back to the kibbutz and the army picked them up every morning and paid us ... Inside the kibbutz there was a kind of 'jail' - a small tin shack - where they would keep the prisoners until the army took them."

Kadman found evidence of pangs of conscience in the publications of only two kibbutzim, Yiron and Sasa. A Yiron bulletin from 1949 states: "The facts show that men, women, old people and babies were murdered, villages were destroyed and burned down, with no justification."

One of the members of Sasa wrote: "I am thinking about the abandoned village Sa'sa that we entered this morning with pride and energy, and about the lives of the Arabs who lived here. I wandered through some of the decrepit houses. I looked at jugs that had been turned upside down, harvested grains, books, baby shoes, and I smelled the odor of destruction ... The comrades debated what to do about the mosque. The army had destroyed it and most of the comrades agreed that this was 'inevitable.'"

At Kibbutz Beit Ha'emek, someone wondered about the ancient olive trees, asking himself what the trees would have related about "different people and many harvests," if they had been able to speak.

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