

The Gap between the Map of Palestine and the Nakba Map in Hebrew Fadi Cana'an

(Translated to English by Natasha Roth)

When Eitan brought the Nakba map to my house in Kafr Qara, we realized that our village was missing from the category of Palestinian communities that were partially or temporarily expelled during the Nakba. Never mind, now there's a good reason to do another improved edition of the map, and when I share it I'll be able to say that Kafr Qara is one of the reasons why this map was made.

I learned Arabic from the map of Palestine that was hanging on the wall at home. The map came to light in 1989, made by the NGO Aldirasat al-Arabiya in Jerusalem; on it is written "Palestine as it was in 1934." From the age of 5 I would climb up on the couch every day, point at a word and ask my mother, "What is written here?" The word "Nakba" did not appear on the map, and it didn't have two colors or dots of different sizes according to the size of the settlement, as does the map we are speaking about today. I learned to read it and I knew that it was a map of Palestine, of the reality. All the communities that existed in 1934 are found on the map, with no differentiation between Jewish and Palestinian. Every day I read it. I learned "Kafr Qara" first of course. After that I moved on to the neighbors. I came to Kafr Qannir, over whose ruins Kibbutz Regavim was expanded. Every day I pass by Qannir on the way to the train station in Binyamina. Every day I think about Qannir and the map, and I recall that I learned the word "Nakba" through Qannir, with the help of the map. I asked my mother where Qannir is and she said: "There was a Qannir and now there isn't, go and ask your grandmother." I went to my grandmother and asked her, and she explained what the people of Qannir did in Kafr Qara and what the people of Kafr Qara did in Qannir. She started to tell me about the children she knew during her childhood. To this day when I go for a run in the area I pass by Qannir and imagine to myself... When I see young women going there I think about the beautiful girls of Qannir.

Today I spoke with my grandmother again. I brought her the the Nakba map in Hebrew. She doesn't know how to read or write Arabic or Hebrew. I told her that Jews had created a map in Hebrew and it shows everything that happened in the Nakba. She said: "What - not only are they not ashamed but they even tell about what they did?" (bistahush? okra biharfu 'an halhom) And then she spoke about the destroyed villages in the present tense. I only noticed this after the conversation with her. I spoke with her in the past tense and she answered in the present. I also asked her about the future: "Maybe the refugees will return?" She is completely pessimistic, in her opinion there is absolutely no chance that this will happen.

Similar to her is Abu Issam, the eldest and most esteemed teacher in Kafr Qara, who taught Hebrew. I showed him the map. He opened it, put on his glasses, looked, took his glasses off, and then I noticed that he was raising and lowering the map because he was looking in amazement at the headline "Nakba map" in Hebrew. He asked me: "Nakba' is written here in Hebrew, how can that be?" I asked him who, in his opinion, wrote this map. He said, "It must be the communists." Then he started to tell stories about what he experienced during the Nakba; he was around 20 years old at the time. He and his family were expelled to Ya'bad in the West Bank, not far from Um el-Fahm. And there, because of a mix-up of names, the Iraqi army arrested him along with a few friends on suspicion of collaborating with Israel. He was imprisoned for seven months. His jailing, in addition to his being a refugee that had lost everything, put him into a deep despair and he cut himself off from others. Only after all of Kafr Qara's residents re-

turned in 1949, following 11 months of expulsion, did he reconnect with his surroundings. He didn't have anything positive to say about the map of the Nakba in Hebrew because in his opinion no one will use it. Something else that he and my grandmother share is that from their perspective Jews are a single group whose identity was formed in 1948, with no difference between those in favor of the expulsion and those not.

I asked the taxi driver on the way here about the Nakba map in Hebrew. He said "in my opinion this is a map that will have the power to determine, that they will go to refugees from each village and ask if they want compensation or to return." I asked him if he is in favor of their returning, and he said "yes of course, they need to come back." I was so happy, but then I understood that he himself is a Chechen refugee. He spoke from the pain in his heart, so he didn't really represent all taxi drivers.