

**Abu 'Awda, Ali. *Qariyat Hammama: Tarikh wa Turath wa Ansab. Gaza: Samir Mansour Library, 2015 (pp. 582-599). Translated by The Palestinian Revolution.***

## *Attack Against the Village: The Battle of Steadfastness*

On the evening of 16 May 1948, the Arab armies entered Palestine. The areas they moved into had not been occupied by the Zionists prior to 15 May 1948, the day on which the British withdrawal was completed. That night, the city of Majdal witnessed the arrival of the front columns of the Egyptian army, which had crossed the border immediately following Britain's exit and the declaration of the State of Israel. Jewish forces attempted to hamper the Egyptian advance, so they attacked the village of Hamama on 16 May from three directions:

1. The north via the country road
2. The east via the paved road that connects Jaffa to Gaza
3. The west via the sea

As for the southern front, they left it open so as to encourage people to leave. Nevertheless, the people of the village, along with refugees that had arrived in Hamama from other villages, refused to leave, and the fighters of the village attacked the advancing enemy forces. A raging battle took place, during which the fighters from Hamama fought bravely alongside the fighters from the northern villages who had sought refuge in Hamama after the fall of their own villages. But the pressure from the enemy forces substantially increased due to their large numbers and modern weaponry. They arrived at the northern edges of the village, although they could advance from neither east nor west. Faced with this situation, some of the notables and youth of the village went to meet with the Egyptian army. These included:

- Mohammad al-Khawaja
- Uthman Abu Sultan
- Al-Abed Mahmoud al-Habaash
- Mahmoud al-Haj Miqdad
- Abdel Wahhab al-Far
- Mustafa al-Qarm
- Yahya Abu Yahya

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- Hassan Abu Safiyeh

The Egyptian army was stationed no more than three kilometres away from the village, and the village delegation was able to reach it and ask for assistance, as the road between Hamama and Majdal was safe. However, the Egyptian commander refused their request, citing reasons he considered to be strategic, but that disappointed the village men. That being so, the fighters from Hamama resolved to pursue self-reliance to the maximum, and they decided to produce fishing bombs with which to confront the Jewish forces. Those that were involved in the production included:

- Mohammad al-Akhsham Miqdad
- Mahmoud al-Haj
- Al-Abed al-Qouqa Salah
- Ismail al-Najjar
- Ahmad Abu Oudeh
- Hassan Kaskeen
- Abdel Hadi al-Akhsham
- Ali al-Akhsham
- Khalil Insyo
- Mohammad Abu Abdallah Ashour
- Thiab Abu Sultan
- Misbah Abu Safiyeh
- Rabah Abu Safiyeh
- Khamis Qaoud

Within a few hours, the fighters had hundreds of bombs in their possession, which they began to throw at the enemy from a close distance after exploding them in the air. The powerful noise they made spread fear amongst the ranks of the enemy forces, who thought that reinforcements and heavy weapons had been delivered to the village fighters with the arrival of the Egyptian army. So they withdrew to their nearby station, the colony of Nitzanim, which was located approximately six kilometres to the north of the village.

#### *Hamama Battles After the Entry of Egyptian Forces*

Egyptian forces entered Palestinian territory on May 15, 1948 under the command of Major General Ahmad Ali Al-Mawawi. These forces were ignorant of the villages and towns that they entered, to the extent that they

announced in their military communiqué that they had occupied the “city of Al-Jourah” and “the village of Majdal” under the moonlight!<sup>2</sup> This announcement was made despite the fact that these areas were free, since their own inhabitants were defending them. The Egyptian forces went from Rafah to Gaza, and from there to the Majdal countryside, entering the city following the siege of the Yed Mordachai (Deir Sneid) settlement on 19 May 1948.

The Egyptian forces were welcomed warmly, and a large celebration was organised for them in the middle of the main market in Majdal city. Al-Sayed Taha, who was known by the local inhabitants as Al-Beik Taha and appointed as a governor of the city, gave a speech from the municipality balcony, greeting all those welcoming the Egyptian army. He was followed by General Mohammad Naguib, who later became the leader of the 23 July 1952 revolution in Egypt and the first Egyptian President. The latter asked the people to hand over their weapons to the Egyptian army, guaranteeing that these would be returned so they could fire celebratory shots into the air after the victory. He also asked the people to inform the Egyptian army of all those collaborating with the enemy.

This call was directed to the inhabitants of all the villages, as well as the people of Majdal city. Nevertheless, some kept their weapons, and a majority began to join the Egyptian army, including the following from Hamama:

- Mahmoud al-Haj Miqdad
- Mustafa al-Qurm
- Sulaiman Breis
- Abdallah Hamto al-Habbash
- Mohammad Tbeish
- Faris Shihadah
- Abdel Wahhab al-Far
- Juma Fatah
- Mahmoud al-Dush
- Hassan Balouq
- Mohammad Muslih
- Saleem Barakat

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<sup>2</sup> In fact, Al-Majdal was the city and Al-Joura was the village.

These volunteers, after completing landmine and explosives training, helped clear the roads for the Egyptian army and participated in the fighting and the strikes against the settlements...

## *The Battle of Nitzanim (7 June 1948)*

This colony is located in the area between the villages of Hamama and Isdud, seven to eight kilometres north of Majdal. The colony used to disturb the local residents of the area, attacking farmers and sniping at fighters. Once Egyptian forces had arrived in Isdud, this colony posed a major threat to them, so they decided to attack it. Accordingly, it was important to clear the way for the Egyptian army, so Mohammad Naguib came to Hamama. He invited the *Mukhtars* of the village to meet with him in the house of Idris Sheikh Mahmoud, the Mukhtar of the Kalalba family, and asked them to invite the sons of Hamama to participate in capturing the colony. Confirming their reputation for heeding the call of the homeland, the Hamamis volunteered individually and collectively to participate in the assault on the colony, led by Mohammad Hussein (Zteim Miqdad). The fighters included:

- Abdel Wahhab al-Far
- Subhi Abdel Bari
- Ahmad Abu Oudeh
- Mustafa al-Qarm
- Suleiman Breis
- Mohammad al-Sheikh Ali
- Mahmoud al-Haj
- Mahmoud al-Dush
- Mustafa al-Zaim Miqdad
- Mahmoud Abu Ryala
- Mohammad Ahmad Ibrahim Harb
- Al-Abed al-Jubairi
- Mohammad Hussein Salem Abu-Sheir
- Mohammad Tbeish Shehadah
- Faris Shehadah
- Subhi Abdel Nabi Dahlan
- Hassan Balouq Miqdad
- Mohammad Shehadah Shamyeh
- Juma Fatah
- Mahmoud al-Haj Amin

- Mohammad Muslih Abu Shanab
- Mohammad al-Akhsham
- Arafat Al-Abed Abu Sultan
- Ali Shehadah Shehadah
- Farhat Abu Safiyeh
- Uthman Abu Sultan
- Mahmoud al-Zahar

All of them returned safely except for the martyr Ahmad Abu Oudeh. Additionally, the following sons of the village were wounded in the colony:

- Mohammad al-Akhsham
- Mahmoud Abu Ryala
- Arafat Al-Abed Abu Sultan

As the Egyptian forces were breaking the enemy's back and draining its energy, the Palestinian and Arab people were surprised by the Arab League's acceptance of the first ceasefire, and military operations stopped after 26 days. It is beyond our scope to comment on the acceptance of the ceasefire, but we know from the Israeli version of events that it fell on Israeli forces like refreshing drops of dew from the sky at their direst moment. These forces managed to recover their strength and were resupplied with the latest land and air weapons and ammunition, as well as volunteers who had arrived in large numbers from the United States and Europe to support the Israelis.

The ceasefire ended on 8 July 1948 and fighting resumed for another ten days. At this time, the Majdal area witnessed several military battles with the Israeli forces... The most important achievement that the enemy secured during this period was the growth of its airpower and the arrival of its fighter planes, which were referred to as "flying castles"...

### *The Battle of Tibat Al-Kheish (Kawkaba Roundabout) 16-19/10/1948*

This battle, which took place no more than four kilometres east of Majdal, is considered to be one of the most decisive battles in 1948. After constant targeted attacks, the Zionist enemy was able, between 16 and 19 October 1948, to occupy Kawkaba roundabout and the hills around it, as well as the village of Hleiqat and the surrounding hills. By doing so, they managed to paralyze the forces that were stationed to the east of this area and cut off their supply lines. They were also able to cut off the transport links of the forces stationed in Majdal...

In this context, the enemy was able to take over the Kawkaba-Beit Tima-Hleiqat juncture, connect its northern and southern colonies, and bring its forces from north to south. The Egyptian units stationed on the Iraq Sweidan-Beit Jibreen line were rendered useless, as the Egyptian military commander informed his government in a telegram. They were moreover vulnerable to enemy attacks. In this light, the military commanders decided to withdraw Egyptian forces stationed between Isdud and Majdal, and to operate against the Jewish forces in the place of their choosing between Majdal and Gaza. This was despite the consensus on the misconduct of the Egyptian commander in Majdal, for the situation required using the Isdud troops as a strike force to recover Tibat al-Kheish, and to reconnect with Iraq Sweidan, Faluja, and Iraq al-Manshiyya. This, however, did not happen and the Egyptian forces withdrew instead from Majdal and the surrounding villages, completing their withdrawal on 15 November 1948.

The rural masses, who were unarmed, moved behind the Egyptian forces so that they could be protected from the horrors of the Zionist gangs. They believed that they were going to reside away from their homes for a short while, recovering their breath before re-launching the resistance and returning to their villages. In the meantime, the Israeli naval vessels that were stationed next to Asqalan began bombing neighbouring villages including Hamama, as well as the city of Majdal and the various residential concentrations in the vicinity. The Jewish raids persisted against the villages, and the Israeli pursuit of their residents intensified. The latter were chased into the groves and the vineyards, after leaving their villages to escape the dangers confronting them night and day. Many men were martyred in individual clashes, or as a result of refusing to leave the village.

*The Martyrs of Hamama Village Up Until 1948/1949*

| Name                            | Place of Martyrdom | Date | Source of Information       |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|-----------------------------|
| Khalil Hussein Shamyeh          | Jaffa Market       | 1938 | His son Ismail al-Sir       |
| Theeb Ahmad Salamah             | Jaffa Market       | 1938 | His nephew Attiyeh Salamah  |
| Al-Abed Hassan Khalil al-Najjar | Nitzanim           | 1939 | His cousin Hassan al-Najjar |
| Mohammad                        | Hamama             | 1943 | His cousin Mohammad         |

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|--|--------------------------|------|---------------------------------------|
| Musa Ali Dahlan                                    |                          |      | Hussein Dahlan                        |
| Abdel Hadi<br>Mohammad al-<br>Farrani              | Al-Maghar                | 1943 | His sister, the wife of Ismail al-Sir |
| Shehadah Ali<br>Shehadah al-Saqr                   | Ramleh                   | 1947 | His grandson Mohammad Faris           |
| Ibrahim al-Far                                     | Ramleh                   | 1947 | His cousin Mustafa al-Far             |
| Abed Shaker<br>Abdel Nabi<br>Dahlan                | Al-Maghar                | 1947 | His cousin Mohammad Hussein Dahlan    |
| Hassan Salamah<br>Salmi                            | Hamama                   | 1947 | Mohammad Shehadah Shamiyeh (Mukhtar)  |
| Hussein Abdel<br>Rahman al-<br>Lahham<br>(Manasha) | Khassah                  | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Al-Abed Yahya<br>Awadh                             | Khassah                  | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Yousef Abu<br>Sama'an (Al-'Eis)                    | Khassah                  | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Uthman Khaled<br>al-Khawaja                        | Khassah                  | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Mahmoud<br>Ibrahim al-<br>Khawaja                  | Khassah                  | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Ahmad Ibrahim<br>Harb                              | Battle of the<br>Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Abdel Rahman<br>Mahmoud Abu<br>Al-Omrein           | Battle of the<br>Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |
| Theeb al-Haj Hadi<br>Radwan                        | Battle of the<br>Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                    |

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|--|---------------------------|------|---|
| Sabha Atiyeh<br>Abu Sultan             | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Fatima Musa Abu<br>Riyala              | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Mahmoud Jafar<br>Abu Oudah             | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Rateb<br>Mohammad al-<br>Sukar Harb    | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Sha'ban al-Najjar                      | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Taha Abu Foul                          | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Mohammad<br>Ahmad Darwish              | Landmine<br>Explosion     | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Mohammad Ishaq<br>al-Farrani           | Landmine<br>Explosion     | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Mohammad al-<br>Gharib Abdel Bari      | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Abdel Salam<br>Shehadah Fatiha         | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Ahmad al-Tabsh                         | Battle of the<br>Village  | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |
| Salim Hassan<br>Saleh Shamiyeh         | Nitzanim                  | 1948 | Mohammad Shehadah<br>Shamiyeh + His daughter<br>Aysha |
| Ahmad Ibrahim<br>Mohammad Abu<br>Oudeh | Nitzanim                  | 1948 | Said Abu Oudeh +<br>Mahmoud al-Tabsh                  |
| Zuhdi Orouq<br>Salah                   | Hamama, Al-<br>Hareeriyah | 1948 | Mahmoud Hassan al-Tabsh                               |
| Al-Abed Shaker                         | Battle of the             | 1948 | Historical Sources                                    |



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|------------------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------------|
| Dahlan                       | Village               |      |                            |
| Mohammad Abdel Hadi Dahlan   | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Ali Mohammad Mohammad Dahlan | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Abed Rabo Mahmoud al-Habbash | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Khamis al-'Azazi           |
| Hamto al-'Azazi              | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Idris Ibrahim Ka'abar        | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Mohammad Shehadah Shamiyeh |
| Fakhri Younes Awadh          | Battle of Isdud       | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Ismail Shaaban Insio Miqdad  | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Ahmad Juma Jafar Miqdad      | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Abdallah Eid Miqdad          | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Hassan Balouq Saleh Miqdad   | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Mahmoud Ibrahim Saqer        | Battle of Beit Dras   | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Imran Khawaja                | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Abu Salim Khawaja            | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |
| Shaker Khawaja               | Battle of the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources         |

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| Mahmoud Aram Klab                   | Battle of the Village          | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Mohammad Ahmad Abu Oudeh            | Battle of the Village          | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Fakhri Abu Younis Awadh             | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Youssef Abed Rabo Awadh             | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Darwish Abed Rabo Awadh             | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Mahmoud Al-Muqazmer Awadh           | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Omar Abdel Rahman Abu al-Omrein     | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Shaaban Mohammad Inshasi            | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Ibrahim Hamdan Miqdad               | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Hamdan Hamdan Miqdad                | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Ibrahim Salim Abu She'ir            | Deir al-Balah, Airstrike       | 1948 | Mohammad Hussein Salem Abu She'ir |
| Mohammad Abdel Rahman Abu al-Omrein | While Returning to the Village | 1948 | Historical Sources                |
| Juma Yahya Awadh                    | While Returning to the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources                |
| Salem Taha                          | While Returning to             | 1949 | Historical Sources                |

|                                     |                                   |      |                    |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------|
| Awadh                               | the Village                       |      |                    |
| Mohammad<br>Mohammad<br>Abdel Samad | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |
| Mohammad<br>Ismail Al-Qouqa         | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |
| Mohammad al-<br>Zahhar              | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |
| Mahmoud al-<br>Zahhar               | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |
| Ali al-Zahhar                       | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |
| Omar Youssef al-<br>Far             | While Returning to<br>the Village | 1949 | Historical Sources |

... Amidst the imbalance of power in numbers, equipment, and ability to apply military science, the Zionist organisations were able to take over 80% of Palestine. The second ceasefire was imposed, and the war that created the tragedy of Palestine as a homeland and a people ended. That war started as a broad Arab one in its external appearance and ended with separate truces signed with individual states; it was the war of Arab regimes for which the Palestinian people paid with its homeland, being, and blood. The United Nations intervened to shelter the refugees, and the people of Hamama village moved to the refugee camps in Gaza, especially the larger ones, which are Jabalya, al-Shatei, Khan Younes, and Rafah.<sup>3</sup> A smaller number of Hamama villagers also went to the smaller camps such as Nusseirat, Breij, and Deir al-Balah, and a new stage of resistance began.

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<sup>3</sup> The majority of the inhabitants of Hamama ended up in the Gaza Strip after 1948, except for a few individuals: Mohammad Awad who went to East Jerusalem, Mohammad al-Najjar who went to Aleppo, Ibrahim Abel Rabo who went to Latakia, and Mohammad Abu Shareb Miqdad and his brothers who went to the Jordanian East Bank.