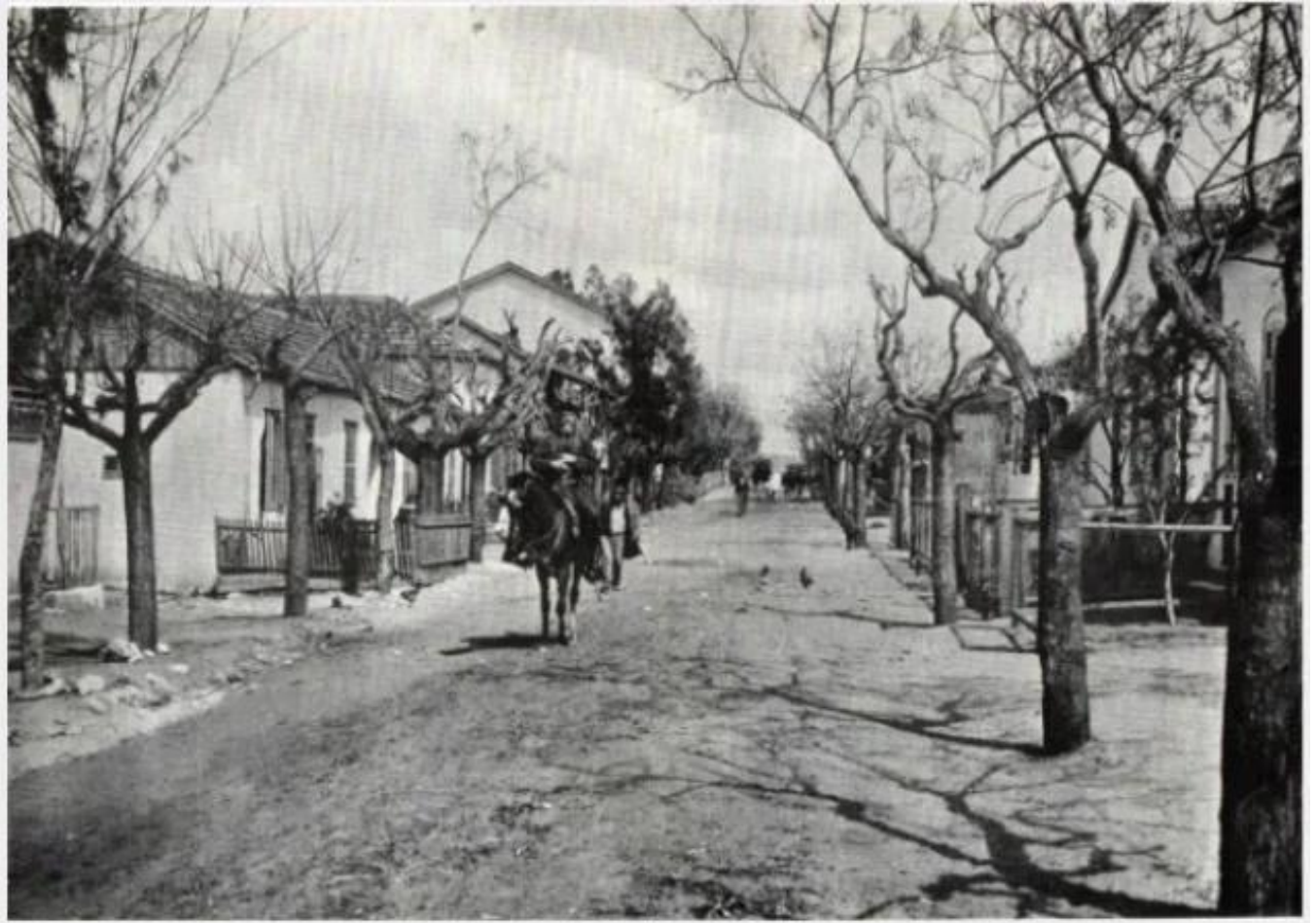


Fajja



Subdistrict: Jaffa

Palestinian population in 1945: 1,200

Estimated Palestinian population in 1948: 1,392

Date of final depopulation: 15 May 1948

Military forces involved: Haganah, Palmach and Irgun units

Settlements established on the village lands before 1948: Petah Tikva had expanded near Fajja; some local compilations associate the Belinson area with its lands, although the principal Palestinian references do not establish the precise cadastral relationship.

Construction on the village site after 1948: The ‘Ammishav transit camp was established on the site in the early 1950s. The area was subsequently incorporated into the eastern suburbs of Petah Tikva, including the present-day ‘Ammishav–Hadar Ganim area.

Fajja was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Jaffa Subdistrict. It was situated approximately 15 kilometres northeast of the city of Jaffa, on relatively level ground in the central coastal plain.

The main road connecting Jaffa and al-Lydd passed near the village. Fajja stood about one kilometre east of Petah Tikva, a Zionist settlement established in 1878 west of the village. In the late nineteenth century, Fajja was described as a small settlement whose houses were built mainly of adobe. During the British Mandate, some newer houses were constructed of concrete. The village’s Palestinian inhabitants were Muslims, and it had an elementary school.

Boundaries of Fajja

Fajja was situated among the following Palestinian villages and towns:

- North: [al-Mirr \(al-Mahmudiyya\)](#).
 - Northwest: [al-Sawalima](#).
- West: [al-Jammasin al-Sharqi](#).
 - Southwest: [al-Khayriyya](#).
 - South: [Rantiya](#).
 - Southeast: [al-Muzayri’a](#).
- East: [Majdal Yaba \(Majdal al-Sadiq\)](#).
 - Northeast: Kafr Qasim.

Population of Fajja

Year	Palestinian population	Jewish population included in the statistical unit	Total
1922	194	—	194
1931	707	—	707
1945	1,200	370	1,570
1948	1,392 (estimate)	Not included in the Palestinian refugee estimate	—
Estimated Palestinian refugees and descendants in 1998	8,548	—	8,548

The 1945 statistical total of 1,570 combined 1,200 Palestinian Arab residents with 370 Jewish residents recorded within the wider statistical unit. The figure of 1,392 for 1948 is a retrospective estimate of Fajja's Palestinian population and should not be presented as a total that includes the 370 Jewish residents.

Land Ownership in Fajja

Ownership category	Land area (dunams)*
Palestinian ownership	3,215
Jewish ownership	1,580
Public land	124
Total	4,919

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Fajja in 1945

Land-use category	Palestinian ownership (dunams)*	Jewish ownership (dunams)*	Public land (dunams)*	Total (dunams)*
Citrus and banana cultivation	602	166	0	768
Irrigated land and orchards	53	8	0	61
Cereal cultivation	2,457	1,406	0	3,863
Built-up area	7	0	0	7
Cultivable land	3,112	1,580	0	4,692
Uncultivated land	96	0	124	220

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Number of Houses in Fajja

Year	Number of houses
1931	165
1948	324 (estimate)

Education in Fajja

Fajja had an elementary school for boys that opened in 1922. By 1945, it enrolled 181 pupils, including 10 girls. Some reproductions of Walid Khalidi's village entry give the total as 781, but this appears to be a transcription or typographical error; the figure of 181 is reported in the village's statistical summary and is more consistent with its population and school facilities.

Economic Life in Fajja

Agriculture formed the basis of village life. The inhabitants cultivated cereals, vegetables, citrus

fruit and bananas on most of their land. In 1944/45, 602 dunams under Palestinian ownership were devoted to citrus fruit and bananas, 2,457 dunams to cereals, and 53 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards. Cultivation depended on both rainfall and water drawn from wells.

Archaeological Remains in Fajja

Fajja was built over an archaeological site containing fragments of stone columns and capitals, building foundations and a cistern. These remains indicate that the location had been inhabited in earlier historical periods, although the available village references do not provide a definitive date for the site.

Attacks, Occupation and Depopulation of Fajja

Attacks on Fajja began before the broad military campaigns of the Nakba. On 20 May 1947—not 20 May 1948 as stated in some versions of the article—a Palmach unit entered the village, reportedly seeking suspects in the killing of two people from Petah Tikva. The unit approached a village coffeehouse where the suspects were alleged to be present, opened fire and planted an explosive charge that destroyed the building.

Accounts of the casualties differ. The *History of the Haganah*, as summarized by Walid Khalidi, states that two villagers were killed during the shooting. The *Book of the Palmach* claims that no one was injured by the subsequent explosion. A local Palestinian account instead reports that four Egyptian workers were killed and seven villagers wounded. Because these accounts conflict, no single casualty figure should be treated as conclusive.

The Irgun launched another documented attack on 17 February 1948, after which part of the population left. Benny Morris reports that Fajja was repeatedly attacked by Haganah and Irgun forces during the first months of 1948. By May, only several dozen residents reportedly remained.

On 9 May, Haganah intelligence officers decided that the remaining population should be

removed. According to a contemporary intelligence report cited by Khalidi and Morris, the last inhabitants departed on 15 May 1948 under military and psychological pressure, including a Haganah “whispering” campaign. Fajja’s depopulation was therefore a gradual process culminating on 15 May, rather than a single occupation on 1 May.

During June 1948, the Jewish National Fund initiated the village’s demolition. On 14 June, Ezra Danin, a senior Haganah intelligence officer and Jewish Agency official, informed Jewish National Fund official Yosef Weitz of the progress made in destroying Fajja. On 16 June, David Ben-Gurion recorded in his diary that Fajja and two other Palestinian villages had been demolished.

Construction on the Lands and Site of Fajja

Petah Tikva, established in 1878 west of Fajja, expanded eastward after the Nakba and eventually absorbed the village site and much of its surrounding land. The principal Palestinian references identify Petah Tikva as the urban area that now occupies Fajja’s lands.

In the early 1950s, the former village site was used for a transit camp for newly arrived Jewish immigrants known as ‘Ammishav. The site subsequently became part of Petah Tikva’s eastern suburbs. Present-day neighbourhoods associated with the broader area include ‘Ammishav and Hadar Ganim; local compilations also identify Yoseftal and Kiryat David El‘azar. The precise cadastral relationship between every modern neighbourhood and Fajja’s former boundaries requires comparison with detailed Mandate-period land-demarcation maps.

Fajja Today

The village was almost entirely demolished. According to Walid Khalidi’s field survey, only one house and a pond remained identifiable. Eucalyptus trees and cactus plants mark parts of the site. Buildings cover some of the former village land, while the remaining open areas are cultivated.

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