

## Episode 15: Adel Manna: The Nakba as History and Trauma

**Guest:** Professor Adel Manna – Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

**Hosts:** Yusuf & Mert

**Bio:** Professor Adel Manna is a leading scholar of modern Palestinian history, renowned for integrating meticulous archival research with Palestinian oral histories and family narratives. He is the author of the landmark study *Nakba and Survival*, and together with Jewish-Israeli historian Prof. Motti Golani, co-authored *Two Sides of the Coin: Independence and Nakba 1948*, a seminal work exploring the contested history of Israel's independence and the Palestinian Nakba. His research exemplifies how sensitive historical truths can be approached with rigor, empathy, and respect for multiple perspectives.

**In this Episode:** Recorded in Berlin's Neukölln district, home to Germany's largest Palestinian diaspora, this episode explores the most painful chapter in Palestinian history, preceding the current devastation in Gaza. It opens with Prof. Adel Manna's family history, beginning with his father, who as a child witnessed an atrocity in his Palestinian home village of Majd al-Kurum. Prof. Manna reflects on growing up navigating conflicting narratives as a Palestinian in Israel. The conversation traces the events of 1947 and 1948 from a Palestinian perspective, focusing on the Nakba - its causes, consequences, and lasting impact on Palestinian families and collective memory. Key topics include the displacement and dispossession of communities, Palestinian refugees, and the contested interpretations of Plan Dalet - seen by most Israeli scholars (e.g. Benny Morris) as a defensive military plan, but regarded by many Palestinian historians as a blueprint for displacement. Prof. Manna also discusses the preservation of memory through family stories and oral histories. Listeners gain insight into why the Nakba remains deeply significant for the Palestinian community today, how historical truths are contested and negotiated, and why these stories continue to be vital in contemporary discussions of justice, identity, and memory in the region.

### Links:

Manna, Adel. *Nakba and Survival: The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948–1956*. University of California Press, 2022.

<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/c752e846-c389-4714-a6bc-e534697c8f25/nakba-and-survival.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

Zurayk, Constantine K. *The Meaning of the Disaster*. Translated by R. Bayly Winder, Khayat's College Book Cooperative, 1956. <https://archive.org/details/zurayk-nakba> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Review of Adel Manna's *Nakba and Survival* by Israel's groundbreaking historian of 1948 Benny Morris:** [https://www.haaretz.com/life/books/2017-07-29/ty-article/.premium/israel-had-no-expulsion-policy-against-the-palestinians-in-1948/0000017f-eab3-d639-af7f-ebf779a50000?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.haaretz.com/life/books/2017-07-29/ty-article/.premium/israel-had-no-expulsion-policy-against-the-palestinians-in-1948/0000017f-eab3-d639-af7f-ebf779a50000?utm_source=chatgpt.com) (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Reactions to the review of Benny Morris by other leading Israeli historians:**

**Prof. Dr. Ofer Ashkenazi:** <https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2019/5796> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Full article:** <https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/3-2019/5796> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Prof. Dr. Daniel Blatman:** <https://www.haaretz.com/life/books/2017-08-04/ty-article/for-the-nakba-theres-no-need-of-an-expulsion-policy/0000017f-e768-df5f-a17f-ffe44d00000> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

An essential resource is also the seminal study by **Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2004.** In chapter 2 he also discusses the particularly contested issue of „The ‚idea‘ of transfer in Zionist thinking before 1948“ (39-64): <https://yplus.ps/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Morris-Benny-The-Birth-of-the-Palestinian-Refugee-Problem-Revisited.pdf> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

The atrocities in **Majd al-Kurum** that Prof. Manna is referring to are also discussed in the same work (e.g. pp 481f.,).

**A more recent statement of Benny Morris on 1948 and the contested Plan Dalet:** <https://www.bpb.de/themen/naher-mittlerer-osten/israel/44999/der-erste-arabisch-israelische-krieg/> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Other important resources of 1948:**

Flapan, Simha. *The Birth of Israel: Myth and Realities*. Pantheon Books, 1987. / Segev, Tom. *1949: The First Israelis*. Free Press Macmillan, 1986. / Schlaim, Avi. *Collusion across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement and the Partition of Palestine*. Clarendon Press, 1988. / Pappe, Ilan. *Britain and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948–1951*. I.B. Tauris, 1992. / Morris, Benny. *1948 and After: Israel and the Palestinians*. Clarendon Press, 1990. <https://mondediplo.com/1997/12/palestine> (Last accessed on October 21, 2025)

**Please also check out our other episodes to explore multiple perspectives:**

**On 1948 and the Nakba:** Derek Penslar, Muriel Asseburg and most comprehensively Gudrun Krämer

**On the refugee problem:** Gudrun Krämer

**On the question of the indigenous population:** Simon Fuchs, Gudrun Krämer

**On the Settler Colonial Paradigm:** Simon Fuchs, Michael Brenner, Awad Halabi, Victor Kattan, Derek Penslar, Omri Boehm, Gudrun Krämer

**On the formation of Israeli military forces during the Mandate period:** Oren Kessler, Victor Kattan

**On the legal recognition of borders:** Eyal Benvenisti

**On Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem:** Oren Kessler, Norman Stillman, Awad Halabi, Gudrun Krämer

### ***Dedication:***

*We dedicate this Podcast to all victims and survivors of October 7, the hostages and their families, to all innocent civilians killed in Gaza and their grieving families and friends. To our dear guests Udi Goren, Khalil Sayegh, Sima and Mai who shared their losses so powerfully with us. To their families: Tal's wife Ella Haimi, their children Nir, Einav, Udi and Lotan, who never got the chance to meet his father. To Khalil Sayegh's mother and siblings, to Mai's and Sima's family, to her mother Bushra.*

*To the blessed memory of: Tal Haimi, Lara Sayegh, Jeris Sayegh, Mahmoud, Danny Darlington and Haim Perry.*

### **Disclaimer:**

In each episode of this podcast, the invited guests speak on their own behalf. They share their experiences, assessments, and expert perspectives. These contributions are central to the multiperspectivity of the project but do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial team or producers.

### **Legal & Historical Anchor Episodes:**

This podcast may include controversial legal terms of specific technical significance. Their legal applicability requires a thorough expert contextualization; for this, we refer to our legal chapter. All relevant terms of international law, its institutions, current controversies, and the state of jurisprudence are explained in the anchor episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. Claus Kreß LL.M. (Cambridge) (Episode 36). He is co-author of the Rome Statute, Special Advisor to the International Criminal Court, and Judge at the International Court of Justice in the parallel Gambia vs. Myanmar genocide case.

Historical matters are discussed from multiple perspectives in this podcast. Please check the cross-references in the shownotes of the respective episodes for details. All historically contested issues are addressed in the history anchor

episode with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Gudrun Krämer (Episode 21), author of the comprehensive work *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel* (Princeton 2008), a standard reference in the field. For her scholarly achievements as a historian, she was awarded the *Preis des Historischen Kollegs* in 2025, the highest distinction in her discipline in Germany.