

In Marj Na'je too, the war had a heavy toll on farmers' lives. Ten families, out of thirty-three households, left the village. Their property, amounting collectively to 220 dunums was requisitioned by the Custodian of absentee property and leased, on an annual basis to new tenants. Subsequently, 39 dunums of those were fenced-off as a Security Zone by the army and farmers were prohibited from tilling it. (The Security Zone can be seen in Map 11:2, cutting across the lower quarter of the plots -- from parcel #6 on the right to parcel #31 on the left). Altogether there are 23 households left in Marj Na'je today. They own a total of 437 dunums, 113 dunums of which (i.e. 26% of the area) have been fenced off (UNRWA, 1969:memor.). Of the 23 families currently living in the village, five do not own any land in Marj Na'je; four are tenants who rent their land from the custodian of absentee property, and one is a full time mechanic taking care of the two pumps in the village.

Marj Na'je, the once thriving and dominant senior sister of Zbeidat has now become subordinate -- in current size and economic vitality -- to Zbeidat. The latter's composition, its tribal organization and kinship structure has equipped the village with a renewed strength to withstand the impact of war and land dispossession in a manner the Marj Na'je population could not.

Demography and Social Structure

The secret of Zbeidat's vitality lies in its collective identity rooted in the tribe's common origin and its traditional leadership-by-consensus as an effective mechanism of social organization. An examination of Zbeidat's demographic and occupational composition will clarify this claim. By the end of 1980 there were 55 households living in Zbeidat of which 32 were residentially extended (several married sons and their fami-