

Jaffa . . . as It Was

Yousef Heikal

Yousef Heikal, a member of one of Jaffa's prominent families, was the town's last elected mayor before the establishment of the state of Israel. "Jaffa as It Was" is excerpted from the first volume of Mr. Heikal's memoirs, written in Arabic, as he remembers the life of his family and his town under Ottoman rule and then under the British Mandate.

Our house stood in the northeastern part of Jaffa, east of the railroad, and west of the orchard of the Haidar family and parts of the orchard of the Abu Qaoura family. Further east was the Jaffa-Tel Aviv highway. To the south was the house of Mr. Hochau and his large tile factory whose products were exported to all parts of Palestine. Mr. Hochau was a German businessman who lived in our neighborhood with his wife and children. Between Hochau's land and the railroad was the street that led to our house. The street started from a large gate that led to the land on which our house was located. Walking down the street for about 100 meters, one would come to a large iron gate in the railroad wall. Right opposite to it, on the other side of the railroad, was an identical gate. We used these gates to cross over to the Arshid neighborhood. The railroad company built the two gates especially for us, in fulfillment of one of the conditions my father

insisted upon when he sold that piece of land to the French company that built the railroad in 1892.

The piece of land that contained the two buildings of our house was rectangular in shape, its northern width being much shorter than the southern one. Its area was around 12 dunums [one dunum=1,000 m²]. Our house was built on the southern half of this piece of land, right next to Mr. Hochau's land. On the other half were the gardener's house, a barn, the pigeon house and chicken coop, rabbits' cages, a well, and a pond. Between the pond and the well was an elevated courtyard in the middle of which was another small pond that received water from the well and sent it through a tiny canal to the larger pond. The water then left the larger pond to irrigate the orchard's orange and fruit trees.

Behind our house there was a sand dune that we called the "hill." There was also a mulberry tree here similar to one in front of the house. At the end of the dune, on the eastern side, were the borders of our land along which grew several fig trees. On the north the orchard was separated from the "hill" by a wall because the "hill" was higher than the orchard grounds. To the south was Hochau's land. We approached the "hill" by way of a special door in the house. We often played on the "hill" on summer afternoons.

My brother Mohammed and five of my sisters, Shahrat, Nafissa, Munira, Fatmi, and Saadiyeh occupied the larger building, two rooms of which were set aside for entertaining visitors. Our maid had a room near the kitchen. My mother received visiting relatives on the porch in front of the larger house. This, in fact, was a large balcony covered with a red-tiled roof, overlooking the house's inner garden. The maid would spread out a mat over which she would lay mattresses and cushions for people to sit on. My sisters would serve the guests orange juice and lemonade and then coffee and sweets.

My father was very keen about our education. He sent my brother Mohammed to the French "Frères" school in Jaffa, then to the "College" which later came to be known as the American University of Beirut. He was a student there when World War I broke out. My father also sent my sisters Asya, Shahrat, Nafissa, Munira, and Fatmi to the English Girls School in Jaffa, from which they graduated at different times since there was a two-year age difference between each of them. Sending girls to school in those days was rare. Some people considered it unacceptable.

We used to play in the shade of the mulberry tree in front of the house. The gardener took good care of the ground under the tree, collecting the

leaves and keeping the area clean. The whole family often spent summer evenings under this tree. They would spread the mat on the ground and put mattresses where my mother and sisters and their guests would sit. The maid served coffee and mixed nuts to the adults. We could have our share of the nuts.

The First Exodus

In 1914, I was in the first grade in the Dar al-Uloun school. I used to go to school in the morning carrying my books and my lunch. When I came back home in the late afternoons, I would play rather than study. The only thing I remembered from school was whatever registered in my memory by listening to the explanations of my teacher Issa Assifri in arithmetic and science, and the stories of the prophets as told to us by the scripture teacher. As to reading, dictation and the memorization of verse, those classes that required the use of my eyes, my teacher Jamil Khalidi was not pleased with me on their account.

I made it successfully through that academic year. During the summer I stayed at home playing with my sisters and other young relatives and neighbors. At the same time, I took care of our mule, the chickens, pigeons and rabbits. I also used to go to the orchard with my father, riding the mule behind him.

It was at that age that I acquired the hobby of flying kites that I used to make of sticks, paper and thread. I made beautiful kites, big ones for myself and smaller ones for my nephew Rushdi, the son of my sister Asya who lived with us.

At the end of that academic year, my brother Mohammed came back from the American College of Beirut. Two days before he arrived, my sister Shahrat, who was ten years older than Mohammed, decorated the house with colored paper festoons as an expression of joy at his imminent return. At one point, while decorating the house, she said to me, "When you go to the college, I will decorate the house with thorns for your return." She said that because I used to annoy her and my other sisters.

During that summer I noticed that my brother-in-law, Yusuf Hannoun (Abu Rushdi) started talking with my father and brother about the possibility of war in Europe. He talked about the possibility of the Ottoman Empire going into the war with Germany against France and

Britain. Yusuf Hannoun had gone to school at the Dar al-Funoun in Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, of which Palestine and all other Asian Arab countries were parts, ruled directly by the Ottoman cabinet of Turkish and Arab members. We, the children, used to call him "Uncle Abu Rushdi."

One evening, Uncle Abu Rushdi came to visit us. After we had offered him lemonade and coffee with pastries, he said to my father, "Today, Turkey declared war against the Allies, on the side of Germany. Only God knows when this war will end and who will be the victor."

That day was October 29, 1914. A few weeks later, my brother Mohammed was drafted and taken to Damascus where he attended the military school as a non-commissioned officer, graduating six months later as an officer. One of the Jaffa people drafted with my brother was his friend and colleague at the American College, Hasib al-Darhali, who was also admitted to the military school in Damascus.

The day my brother was drafted was a day of great sorrow at home. My parents knew that the commanders of the Turkish army cared nothing for the soldiers. Rather, they stole some of their salary, provided them with the worst kinds of food and gave them the worst clothes. I used to notice the great joy and happiness in the family when we received a letter from my brother. My sister Shahrat would read the letter aloud because my mother could not read. We all listened to what she read, although I did not understand what she was saying.

Abu Rushdi came to our house one afternoon, not in the evening as usual. He talked with my father for a long time. As I understood later, he was telling my father that the Allies, especially Britain, were planning to hit the Ottoman ports, including Jaffa. He thought my family should leave Jaffa and go inland, to Tulkarm, his city, out of reach of the bombs and cannons of the naval ships. He advised my father to keep our plans secret so that the [Ottoman] authorities would not prevent us from leaving.

One day I saw my mother telling our maid that she would not be working for us anymore. She was very generous with her, and she sent her back to her family. I was sad that she had left because she was a serious, dedicated person.

My mother and sisters started piling clothes into bags, arranging silverware and dishes and similar utensils in boxes, and taking down curtains to be stored in closets. I watched my father rolling mattresses, blankets and quilts into big bundles, wrapping them in mats and tying them up with strong rope. He did that alone, though I tried to help him. He

did not ask the gardener for help so that he would not divulge the plan.

One afternoon, two long carriages belonging to the Hannouns in Tulkarm pulled up in front of our house. Each was drawn by two horses. In the evening, a third carriage also arrived at our house loaded with the things that Uncle Abu Rushdi wanted to take from his house. The carriages and horses were brought to the front lawn of our house. After dark, the three drivers piled the bags, boxes and bundles into one carriage. We all went to bed after a light dinner, and after feeding the horses.

My mother woke us up in the early morning. We put on our clothes and ate a quick breakfast. My father did not get dressed and did not eat breakfast with us. He asked us all to go to his room to drink tea with him. After drinking the tea, my father kissed each one of us goodbye. He had planned to stay back in Jaffa. He walked with us to a carriage whose floor was spread with mattresses and blankets to make our ride easier. We climbed into the carriage, my mother, my six sisters and I, and sat on the mattresses. As we drove away, we looked back at my father who was standing there watching us. The gardener had opened the main entrance to our house to let the carriages out. We drove down the street, then through other streets until we were out of our beloved Jaffa.

My sister Asya, her husband and their children had left one hour earlier in a small two-horse carriage. It was one of the passenger carriages that were used for transportation in Jaffa. At that time, my sister had four children, Rushdi, Rasha, Hilmi and Awni. The last was still an infant, and there was one year between each of them.

We crossed the villages of Milkan, Saroutah, Jreishah and other smaller villages until we reached Qalqilya. My sisters were singing sadly and crying. I still remember the first line of their song even now: "The time of departure from my beloved home has come." The carriages pulled over to rest at a place on the outskirts of Qalqilya. We ate some food and drank some of the water we had brought with us. One of the drivers went into the town and brought back a coffee-pot with cups. My mother and elder sisters drank coffee. We rested for an hour before resuming our journey. At one point, our driver hit his two horses with the whip to speed them up. My sister Nafissa got angry and screamed at him to stop beating the horses. He said the horses would slow down and we would arrive late. But she told him that there was no need to hurry. The driver stopped whipping his horses.

We arrived in Tulkarm in the late afternoon. The carriages pulled up in the middle of the city's main street that ran along the market place. The

street was flanked by two rows of shops and stores, over which were apartment houses. We entered one building through a door on the western side of the street, climbed a straight staircase and entered an apartment that had been rented for us. Inside, we met my sister, her husband and their children, who had arrived there before us. The drivers moved the luggage in. We entered the kitchen and washed our hands, faces and feet. Then we moved into the living room. A lady who had been there when we arrived brought lemonade, followed by coffee. I asked for a cup of tea and she brought three cups, one each for me, and my sisters Saadiyeh and Dunia.

My mother and sisters started arranging the house, unpacking the luggage and putting things in their places. We had a new home.

Shortly after sunset, two men came into our house with two large trays. One was full of *musakhan* bread, the other was piled with about fifteen broiled chickens. This meal had been prepared by Um Raouf, the wife of Mohammed Hannoun, the eldest of the Hannoun brothers. *Musakhan* is a very well-known dish, especially in the Tulkarm area. The bread is specially prepared from a thin, circular dough baked in the *taboun* (rural oven) found in every house. After it has been baked, it is arranged on a tray, covered with olive oil and sprinkled with *summaq*, pine nuts and chopped onions cooked in oil. The chickens are broiled separately in the oven and arranged on another tray. To eat it, you put pieces of chicken meat on the oil-soaked bread. It was in Tulkarm that I tasted this dish for the first time, and I loved it.

My brother-in-law Yusuf Hannoun had five brothers who lived with their families in Tulkarm and the neighboring town of Dhanabah. The first, second and fifth brothers lived in Tulkarm. The third and fourth lived in Dhanabah.

The first four brothers wore the traditional outfit of the *qumbaz* (long robe) and jacket. Two brothers, Abu Rasuf and Abu Salim, covered their heads with the fez with a band of white cloth embroidered with yellow silk. The other two, Abu Hassan and Abu Musleh covered their heads with the *kufiyeh* (the headscarf) and *aqal* (the black circular rope). The two youngest brothers, Abu Rashid and Abu Rushdi, wore European suits and the fez.

Dhanabah was just a few miles from Tulkarm, separated from it by a small grove of old olive trees. Today, however, the two cities have spread toward each other with new buildings and they have become like one city.

A few days after we came to Tulkarm, Um Raouf invited us, my sister Asya and her family, and her other sisters-in-law to a huge welcoming

feast. She had prepared two whole stuffed lambs, broiled chicken, rice topped with fried pine nuts, various kinds of vegetables, stuffed or cooked with meat, in addition to fruit and *kanafeh* for dessert. The food was arranged on two large tables in the hallway of Abu Raouf's house, so that all could serve themselves.

With the advent of the new academic year, I was sent to the *al-Maa'ref* (government) school. However, I did not stay there for a long time. I had a severe fever. Dr. Abu Ghazaleh used to visit me at home. It was malaria, and the fever would recur day after day. Sometimes I would bleed severely from the nose. I became very thin and weak. My mother took very good care of me and would sit next to me most of the time, putting a handkerchief soaked in cold water and vinegar on my forehead to bring down my temperature. A few weeks later, I recovered.

We moved from the house which we had been living in since we had come to Tulkarm to another house owned by Abdurrahim al-Jayyusi (Abu Hassan). It was on a street that branched off the main street and led to the railway in the western part of the city. It was in a two-story building, the ground floor of which was the al-Jayyusi house, and we lived on the second floor.

One winter evening in 1915, I heard a knock at our door. When I opened it, I found myself face-to-face with my brother Mohammed. He embraced me for a minute and I ran back to my mother, shouting, "My brother Mohammed is here." The whole house was suddenly filled with excitement and joy, and everybody ran down the stairs to welcome Mohammed. He looked extremely tired. After bringing him lemonade, then food and coffee, my mother asked him a few questions before Abu Rushdi advised him to go and have a good night's sleep.

The following day, my brother told us his whole story. As I understood it later, this was what happened. He attended the military academy in Damascus. The military instructors, both Turks and Arabs, treated the students very badly. Food was so bad that many students, including Mohammed, became ill. Several students fled from the school. Mohammed and his friend Hasib al-Darhali decided to escape from the academy to save their lives. When my brother was sick, Hasib bought him a *qumbaz* and a *kufiyeh*. He had learnt that a train carrying tobacco, animal feed and cattle would leave Damascus one night on its way to the front,

passing through Tulkarm. So, on that night, the two friends sneaked out of the academy and went to the railway station. They entered the station through a back door. My brother took off his military uniform and put on the *qumbaz* and covered his head with the *kufiyeh*. His friend then helped him up onto a wagon where he hid between bales of hay. Hasib waited until the train pulled out before he went back to the academy. Hasib also escaped later using a different method.

Mohammed somehow knew when the train pulled up in Tulkarm station. It was dark, and he jumped out of the train and came home.

My brother stayed at home for several days and my mother took care of him until he was better. After that, Abu Rushdi arranged for him to stay in one of the Hannoun's orchards in the plains near Natanya. There was a big, many roomed house in the orchard. Close by were the houses of the orchard's foremen and their families. They looked after him. He lived in the orchard all throughout the year. He would visit us in Tulkarm now and then, coming and going by night.

One spring day in 1915, my father came from Jaffa on his mule. We were overjoyed. The mule was sent to the Hannoun orchard where my brother lived.

The Hannoun men came to welcome my father. I would sit with the visitors because I loved to sit with adults more than with children. When I grew older, this preference was reversed. I came to like young people's meetings rather than those of the old.

The Hannouns made a welcoming feast for my father. The six Hannoun brothers were there and some of their elder sons, such as Taher Hannoun, Hassan, Salim, and Musleh Hannoun. Also invited were some Tulkarm notables, among whom I still remember Sheikh Said al-Karmi with his engaging personality, although I did not understand what he was saying. Sheikh al-Karmi was a prominent scholar and preacher in Palestine. His sons, Mahmoud, Ahmed, Hassan, Abdulkarim (Abu Salma) and Abdulghani, became well known literary figures and poets. My father, Sheikh al-Karmi, Mohammed Hannoun and Yusuf Hannoun stayed in the orchard for three nights and I stayed with them. We saw my brother Mohammed all the time. Then we returned to Tulkarm, where my father stayed for one month.

While leading our new life in this exodus, my mother received news

from Nablus that her mother was very ill and wanted to see her. My mother decided to go to Nablus, and take me with her. We rented a passenger carriage and left the following day. I sat with my mother in the back seat of the carriage, and the driver sat in the front seat. Thus, we started our journey towards Nablus.

We passed through the town of Annaba and several hours later we were on the outskirts of Nablus. When we entered the city, the driver started asking passers-by about the address given to him by my mother. We rode through narrow streets between old houses, small and large, built in the well-known Nabulsi white stone. The carriage pulled up in front of a large, two-story house, where we were welcomed by my Uncle Mustafa, his wife Fatmi Heikal and their children Darwish, Afifeh, Najieh, Thurayya and Suad. They also had an infant son named Mohammed.

My uncle took my mother to the room where their mother was lying. My mother took her mother's hand and kissed it and then she hugged her and started to cry. Her mother calmed her down. I kissed my grandmother's hand, and she kissed me. I could sense how weak she was, and I felt the tears streaming down my cheeks.

We stayed about ten days in my grandmother's house. Every afternoon, my cousin Darwish used to go to a café in a small park called al-Manshieh. Most times, he would take me with him. We would sit in the garden with some young men from Nablus. I could not figure out most of their conversations. They would drink coffee, tea or lemonade. My cousin would buy me a cup of light tea and sometimes he would order a narghileh for himself and his companions.

Days passed very quietly around the house because everybody was careful not to disturb my ailing grandmother. The doctor visited her every other day. Every morning, I would enter her room and kiss her hand. I noticed that she was growing weaker and weaker. Two days before my grandmother died, my mother asked me not to go into her room. My cousin took me to the Ashours' house so that I would be away from home when she died.

The Ashours of Nablus and the Heikals of Jaffa had been related in marriage for some time. Two of the Ashour men were married to two of my father's cousins: Badawi Ashour married Aisha (Um Afif), the daughter of Ibrahim Heikal, and Abdul Halim Ashour married Louloua (Um Moussa), daughter of Haj Ali Heikal.

I returned to my uncle's house the day after my grandmother's funeral. Everybody there was engulfed in sorrow. My mother was sad, distressed

and tired. The Nablus ladies came to my uncle's house to offer their condolences. All of them covered their heads with soft white scarfs, a garment of mourning. One week after the funeral we went back to Tulkarm, carrying the sad news to the family.

One evening I heard my father telling my mother that the people of Jaffa were no longer in danger because of the war, and that we might be better off if we went back to our city. After he had stayed with us for about a month, he went back to Jaffa on his mule. I understood that he would write us a letter to tell us his final opinion concerning our returning to Jaffa. . . .

The First Return

Several weeks passed before a messenger came from Jaffa with a letter from my father, describing the situation in Jaffa and telling us to return.

My mother and sisters started the preparations. One morning, toward the end of winter 1916, two long carriages parked in front of our house. Mattresses had been laid down in one of them so that we could sit; the other carried our luggage and other belongings.

We bade farewell to my sister Asya, her husband, and children, and left the house for the waiting carriages. We were nine: my mother, my six sisters, Rushdi and I. We started our trip back to Jaffa taking the Qalqilya route.

We were all happy that we were going back to our city. This time my sisters were singing joyful songs in contrast to the sad verses they had sung on our way from Jaffa to Tulkarm. When the horses started slowing down and the driver began to whip them, my sister Nafissa told him: "Please, do not beat the horses at all, even if they slow down. Tell your colleague, the driver of the other carriage, to do the same." The driver complied. The drivers were two of the drivers that had brought us from Jaffa to Tulkarm.

When we reached the outskirts of Qalqilya, the drivers stopped the carriages and we all had some food. My mother asked one of the drivers to go to town and get a pot of coffee and a pot of tea.

After resting for one and a half hours, we resumed the journey. Right before sunset we arrived at the outskirts of our beloved city and approached it through the same road we had taken when we had left.

When the carriages stopped in front of our entrance and one driver went toward our gate to open it, I jumped from the carriage and ran toward the courtyard where my father usually sat. I found him sitting there. When

he saw me, he came toward me and we both walked to the carriages, which were parked in front of the large house, near the mulberry tree. My father told the gardener who had come after us with our dog, Fox, to get the keys of the house. My mother, my sisters and my nephew Rushdi walked toward the house. The two drivers and the gardener started moving in the luggage.

We resumed our life at home as it had been before we left for Tulkarm. Most Jaffa residents had returned to their city. Jaffa was ruled in those difficult days by a military governor with the title of *Qa'immaqam* (caretaker). His name was Hassan Bek al-Jaby from the town of Zabadani, near Bloudan in Syria. This governor built in Jaffa two projects for which he was credited.

In 1915, he built a broad street about 50 meters wide to replace a narrow street that ran through the orange orchards. We used to go through that street when we visited our big orchard, starting from the Nabulsi house to the Jaffa-Damascus road.

The beautiful new street was a two-way street with a very wide divider planted with various trees, such as palm trees, quinine trees and flower bushes. The street had two tiled pavements for pedestrians.

In the middle of the wide street divider, he built a circular wooden kiosk whose floor was one meter high. It had two entrances and was surrounded by a painted wooden railing one meter high. Distributed along the railings were wooden posts four meters high that carried the painted wooden roof of the kiosk. This circular kiosk was a sitting place for picnickers. It also served as a stand for the police band that played every Friday afternoon, attracting people who would sit on benches in the gardens or stroll on the pavements near by. The street became a popular place for Jaffa's young men to stroll before sunset.

Hassan Bek called this beautiful street Jamal Pasha Street. When the British occupied Palestine, they changed the name to King George Street. But people continued to call the street by its original name. It is one of the ugliest turns of history that new rulers try to attribute things made by others to themselves.

The second project implemented was the Hassan Bek Mosque. Hassan Bek built his mosque on the northern coast of Jaffa, away from other buildings. It was a beautiful big building whose floor was two meters above

ground. Below the mosque was a hall with a tiled floor and windows on three sides. The mosque was surrounded by a piece of land bordered with a beautifully designed stone fence. The worshippers entered the mosque through a wide gate on the northern side. They walked along a marble passageway before climbing about fifteen steps to reach a two-meter-wide hallway that led to the mosque through a beautiful large door. The mosque's high minaret overlooked all of the Manshieh neighborhood in Jaffa, and the area built by the Jews to the north, which was called Tel Aviv. From the minaret, one could also see the Old City that stretched like a tongue into the sea. And the orange orchards near the eastern part of Jaffa.

It is people's habit to criticize and comment on new things, even before knowing the details of these things. The mosque was no exception. Jaffa's people started questioning Hassan Bek's intentions in building a mosque in the northern part of the city, away from the houses. "Would it not have been better to have the mosque built on a piece of land in the center of town, especially as there was enough space for such a project?" people asked.

But it seems that Hassan Bek had a long-term objective behind this scheme. He had noticed that the Jews were building new houses to the north of Jaffa. The area was part of the Jaffa municipality and the buildings were erected inland, away from the coast. Jaffa's northern coastline was still underdeveloped and Hassan Bek was worried that the Jews might start creeping towards that coastline, thus depriving Jaffa of the possibility of expanding northwards. So he built his mosque on the northern coastline in order to prevent Jewish expansion southwards, and so that the large lands to the northwest would remain for the population of Jaffa to expand along.

This is exactly what happened. When Jewish immigration to Palestine intensified after World War I, the Jews started expanding south towards the Hassan Bek Mosque, while the Jaffans expanded north towards it. With time the new buildings on both sides got closer and closer, and the Hassan Bek Mosque was right in their midst.

Hassan Bek was a short, heavy man, clean shaven except for a thin handlebar moustache. He was almost thirty years old, very active and lively. He spoke in a commanding tone. It was wartime and we were under martial law. The military governor of a city like Jaffa was, therefore, the supreme power whose authority was never questioned.

Hassan Bek did not use public funds to build the mosque and the

street. Instead, he used to collect money from people and materials from merchants, using whatever means he deemed appropriate as a military governor maintaining martial law in a city under Ottoman rule during a world war.

Hassan Bek summoned the rich and the notables of Jaffa and upon each of them he imposed a certain amount of gold pounds to be paid as a contribution to the two projects. Some paid only part of what they had been asked to pay after unsuccessful arguments and negotiations. Others promised they would pay, but tried to stall because they were not able to raise the required amounts. On this issue, however, Hassan Bek was very flexible and would eventually accept any amount those people paid. The idea was to get everybody to pay as much as they could possibly afford.

My father was among those summoned by the military ruler, who asked him to pay five hundred Ottoman gold pounds. This was the biggest amount he asked of anybody. It was quite a large sum in those days. My father's response to that outrageous demand was very firm. "You will never be able to take five hundred pounds from me simply because I do not have that kind of money. Moreover, I am not willing to pay even five hundred *kopecks* (the *kopeck* was the smallest unit of Ottoman currency). My father asked the military ruler, "Why do you take money from people to build projects that should be financed by the government or the city?"

Hassan Bek was furious with my father's unexpected response. He threatened him with exile and the expropriation of his properties. My father kept calm and was not intimidated. He was a man who feared no one but God.

After about an hour of heated argument to no avail, Hassan Bek sent my father to a room next to his office, summoned a few of the city's notables and asked them to persuade my father to pay a mere fifty pounds. They went to my father and tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade him to accept this offer. He stayed there until midnight, resisting pressures both from government employees and from his friends to pay those fifty pounds. Realizing that there was no way of convincing my father to change his position, Hassan Bek gave up and allowed my father to go home. My father left the governor's office with his self-respect intact.

Another encounter was to take place several years later, this time between Hassan Bek and myself. I would have preferred to tell this story in a second book of memoirs about my life after boyhood. But I may not have the chance to live long enough to write those memoirs. Therefore, I will write about this encounter with Hassan Bek here since it supplements, in a

way, his encounter with my father.

In 1939, while I was the administrator of the *awqaf* (religious endowments) of the Jaffa province, Hassan Bek al-Jaby came back to Palestine and met with members of the Higher Islamic Council responsible for all the *awqaf* and Islamic courts. He pleaded with the Council that when he had built the Hassan Bek Mosque in Jaffa, he had also built a few stores whose income was dedicated to the management of the mosque's affairs. He had appointed himself a trustee of this *waqf*. With the end of the Ottoman rule in Palestine, the *awqaf* administration took over the trusteeship of the Hassan Bek Mosque and stores. Pleading financial hardship, Hassan Bek asked the Higher Islamic Council to reappoint him as administrator to that *waqf*, or to compensate him with a certain sum of money in return for his trusteeship.

The Islamic Council's response was that the Hassan Bek Mosque was under the control of the *awqaf* Administration in Jaffa and that he should go and meet the *awqaf* administrator to discuss his case. The administrator would then report to the Council his recommendations on the issue. The Council would study these recommendations and then take a decision. The Higher Islamic Council wrote me a letter asking me to study the case and report back to it.

When Hassan Bek asked who the Jaffa *awqaf* administrator was, and was told it was Yusuf Heikal, he asked if I was related to Mustafa Heikal. He was told I was Mustafa's son and Hassan Bek was worried. Asked why he was suddenly worried, he recounted his experience with my father. The person to whom Hassan Bek was talking told him not to worry because the Jaffa *awqaf* administrator was a fair man who looked at things objectively, irrespective of personal feelings.

Hassan Bek visited me in my office and I welcomed him warmly. He had grown a greyish beard and was wearing an inexpensive suit, the jacket of which was one or two sizes larger than he needed. He carried a large string of worry beads. I could tell from his appearance that he was in financial straits.

After he presented his case to me, I assured him that I would study the matter very carefully before sending my report to the Higher Islamic Council. I said I hoped that he would go back home with no bad feelings concerning his return to Palestine after he had left it for some years. He looked at me with a mixture of doubt, fear and pleading. After drinking coffee, I saw him to the door with due respect.

I studied his case with special care. The core of my report to the

Higher Council was that Hassan Bek had done a service to the city of Jaffa because, by building the mosque, he had stopped the Jewish expansion toward the city. At the same time, however, he had financed the construction of the mosque and the accompanying stores by collecting money from the people of Jaffa. The mosque and stores, therefore, belong to the city and the whole estate belongs to the *awqaf* Administration, and not to a single person. He was, in effect, the trustee of that *waqf*, not its owner. He had the right to finance the mosque's affairs through the income from the stores, but the amount of money the *awqaf* Administration spent on the mosque was much more than the stores' revenues. In addition, Hassan Bek had left Jaffa, and consequently left the management of the mosque and stores to the *awqaf* Administration. By so doing, he had weakened, if not forfeited, his right to manage the *waqf*. Nevertheless, due to the great services he had performed for the city of Jaffa, I recommended that he be paid 500 Palestinian pounds - equivalent to 500 sterling pounds in gold - as a recompense for constructing the mosque and its *waqf*, and for the construction of the Jamal Pasha Street. In return, Hassan Bek should relinquish his trusteeship of the *waqf*, together with any other demands.

The Higher Islamic Council studied my report and thought that the amount of money I recommended paying to Hassan Bek was too high and wanted to pay 100 pounds only. I was summoned by the Council to Jerusalem to discuss the matter. During the meeting, I insisted on the 500-pound compensation, and it was granted.

Hassan Bek changed his 500 Palestinian pounds into 500 pounds sterling in gold. Before returning home, he paid me a courtesy visit in Jaffa. He left Palestine with an amount of money he himself had thought it would be impossible to get.

Hassan Bek spent the rest of his life in his hometown of Zabadani devoted to worship and prayer.

One of the significant events of those days was the visit to Jaffa of Anwar Pasha and Jamal Pasha, and their reception there.

Anwar Pasha was Minister of War of the Ottoman Empire. Jamal Pasha was the General Commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army, headquartered in Damascus. At the beginning of World War I, the mission of the Fourth Army was to conquer Egypt. But it could not cross the Suez Canal. It stayed back to defend Sinai against British troops and

later to defend Palestine and Syria.

When the Fourth Army started retreating in Sinai, Anwar Pasha came from Istanbul to Damascus to discuss war issues with the commander of the front. The two officials came from Damascus to the battle front, and on their way they passed through Jaffa and stayed there for more than a day.

One day, the principal of Dar al-Uloum School, Aref al-Budeiri, gathered the students in the assembly hall and told them that two important visitors were visiting Jaffa the following day. He said we would go to a reception of welcome to be held in the courtyard of the military headquarters in Jaffa. He ordered us to wear our best clothes and polish our shoes.

I returned home from school that day very excited about the event of the following day, especially as we were going to leave school to welcome the visitors. I arrived home at tea time in my father's room. While my father was pouring the tea, and my sisters Nafissa and Munira serving it to us, I told my father what the school principal had said. I asked him who the important visitors were.

My father looked at me and said hesitantly, "They are military people: Minister of War Anwar Pasha and Commander of the Fourth Army, Jamal Pasha." Responding to further questions from me, my father explained what it meant to be a minister of war and what his activities were. He was talking about that with a resentment that was, as I realized a few years later, a reflection of his opposition to Turkish rule because he was a supporter of the Arab national movement and a proponent of the independence of a united Arab nation.

The following morning, I woke up early and put on a beautiful suit that my mother had taken out of the closet the night before. I also wore clean shiny shoes, but I had to wait to eat my breakfast with the family although I tried to eat it before so that I could go to school earlier than usual. After breakfast, I rushed to school carrying my books and lunch box.

At around ten o'clock that morning, we left the school in a double line with students standing according to their height. The teachers walked along side the line. After a few minutes we arrived in the vicinity of the Serail (government headquarters) and we stood at the edge of the courtyard. Behind us were the shops built on the edges of the large cemetery. Next to us stood students of the al-Maa'ref school who were older and more numerous than we were. Facing us on the other side of the pavement was a row of policemen carrying their rifles.

The thing that attracted my attention most, however, was the row of garbage collectors standing in front of us, next to the policemen. They were wearing new, white, one-piece uniforms with new black shoes. Normally, they go barefoot and wear mixed ragged clothes. What astonished me most was that they were carrying new Istanbuli brooms made of long, good quality hay stems wrapped around a long, clean wooden stick. The scene was both astonishing and depressing. It was a sad reminder of hypocrisy and cheating on the part of the officials.

In one part of the courtyard, on both sides of a clock tower in the middle of the courtyard, stood some of Jaffa's people behind a row of policemen carrying rifles and preventing people from walking into the courtyard. A few more policemen stood near the entrance to the complex which was around 10 steps above ground. There were also a number of government officials.

We waited almost an hour for the visitors. We looked every now and then up the northern approach of the street from where the visitors were expected to come. We heard the noise of a car and motorcycles. Moments later the motorcade showed up. Two motorcycles in front of an open-roofed car and two on each side. In the back seat sat the two visitors who were wearing military uniforms and were in their forties. Anwar Pasha was a fair-skinned, handsome man, with a handlebar moustache. Jamal Pasha had a serious look, and a dark beard.

The motorcade was moving very slowly and the students and teachers applauded it as it passed. The two leaders gave a military salute to the policeman and the garbage collectors. The policemen responded by raising their rifles to their shoulders in the usual military move. The garbage collectors did the same with their brooms.

The motorcade pulled up in front of the entrance to the building. The policemen near the entrance gave the military salute and the two visitors got out and walked up the stairs into the complex surrounded by the welcoming government employees.

With the reception over, people dispersed, the police marched towards their barracks facing the Serail complex. The garbagemen walked behind the police toward the barracks where they took off their new clothes and handed them back with the brooms, and put on their old ragged clothes. Our teacher asked us to start walking back to school. We walked back commenting on what we had seen.

As we entered the school courtyard, the principal told us he was giving us the day off and that we could go back home. The students were more

than happy for this gesture. They carried their lunch boxes and rushed back home.

I arrived home before lunchtime, and I told my mother and sisters what I had seen. Sitting at the dining table, I could not stop talking about that experience, and especially the garbagemen's salute with their brooms. My father was listening with a smile on his face. One of my sisters said, "Stop talking and eat your lunch."

One of the things that impressed me a great deal and registered deeply in my memory was the airplane. One day, while I was in our garden, I saw an airplane flying above my head. It had two wings on each side and two pilots in the middle. That was the first time I had seen a plane with pilots flying in the air. The plane flew in Jaffa skies from north to south and back. It would disappear for a while and then reappear. At one point, it disappeared, never to come back. I later learned that it had crashed while flying over the sea. The Jaffa fishermen took their boats and started looking for the pilots. They found them, dead. A big funeral was arranged for the two pilots in Jaffa's Grand Mosque. The government then moved their bodies to Damascus where they were buried next to the tomb of Salah al-Din (Saladin).

In the 1920s, while on a visit to Damascus, I went to the tomb of Saladin, the conquerer of the crusaders. I also visited the tombs of the two pilots. While standing near Salah al-Din's tomb, I imagined something that reflected the West's hatred for Arabs and Muslims, although they try to give the impression that they are civilized proponents of humanitarian love. Standing near the tomb, I imagined the French General Gourand (leader of the French forces) stepping on the tomb's edge, and saying with an ugly voice full of spite and hatred, "Saladin, we are back."

One day, my father told us there was a British battleship offshore of Jaffa and that it was going to shell the Wagner factory that afternoon. He said that the government had imposed a curfew on the street near that factory. It was the Jaffa-Tel Aviv street in northeastern Jaffa.

In the afternoon, I went out to the "hill," the sand dune in the backyard of our house, from which one could see the Wagner factory. Mr.

Wagner was a German industrialist whose factory was essentially a smelter which produced metal spare parts for machines and cars. Most of its work in those days was dedicated for the Turkish and German forces.

I kept looking in the direction of the factory. At one point, I heard a sound like thunder and felt the ground shaking under my feet. I saw part of the factory roof fly up into the air, shattered. I was scared, but I stood there until the shelling stopped. Her mission accomplished, the British battleship left Jaffa's waters. I went into the house, truly shaken.

Translated by Imad El-Haj