



# Historical

## The Rise and Fall of the Husaynis, 1840-1922 (part 1)

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### Preface

The local notables in the Arab provinces, the *A'ayan*, became the social leadership in their localities due to the double-edged legitimacy granted to them both by their society, which respected the notables' religious standing, and by the central authority in Istanbul, which vested the notables with important positions within the provinces. This impressive position required navigating and balancing skills which became the essence of what the late Albert Hourani called 'the politics of notables'. These tactics were the ethical and political code of the urban society in the Arab world during the Ottoman period and remained so during the transitional era,

leading to the emergence of local nationalism and eventually to independence.

This article examines this *modus operandi* in Jerusalem's leading family, the house of the Husaynis. It argues that this code saw the Husaynis through dramatic upheavals including the two major revolutions in Palestine's fortune: the end of Ottomanism in 1908 and the termination of Islamic rule altogether in 1918. It was not however sufficient in the face of Zionism. It was a code that enabled adaptation to every new regime, provided it was not intent on depopulating the country or cleansing it for its own purposes. Against such an ethnic or national ideology, the notables did not carry the authority nor the abilities to save themselves and their own society, as became painfully clear in 1948.

The essence of the 'Politics of Notables' was a careful mediation between the society that the *Aa'yan* represented, and the authority that appointed them. The notables' peculiar position enabled the central government in Istanbul to administer the provinces from afar and at the same time this position provided a buffer for the local society, albeit not always a resilient one, against the whims and caprices of the regional or central rulers. The key to the notables' success was moderation which, when it worked, enabled this elite to remain in a paramount position throughout the political dramas of the 18th and 19th centuries, a time when the area became an arena for colonial competition and a stage for insurgent local rulers.

The leading families of Jerusalem in the 18th and 19th centuries practiced to a certain extent this set of political rules; or at least a local version of it. We are particu-

larly interested in their behavior as a social unit towards the end of the Ottoman era. The developments within this phase posed the greatest challenge to the old Ottoman political code and to the rules underlining the 'Politics of Notables'.

In the case of Jerusalem, however, this article will argue that the code remained intact and effective until the outbreak of the First World War. The 'Politics of Notables' was a successful means in the hands of the Husaynis for preserving their status and position in the city of Jerusalem and even in the independent *Sanjaq* of Jerusalem which was established in 1872. The Husaynis sustained their position in the city and even strengthened it by employing the traditional rules of the game. These rules were even helpful in digesting the newest of all human ideological inventions nationalism. The same dexterity that characterized the Husaynis' navigation skills in between the society and the external authorities could be seen at work once again in the twentieth century, as late as the first decade of British rule in Palestine. They proved, however, useless in the face of Zionism and pro-Zionist British policy.

### **Historical Background**

The Husayni family in around 1860 was divided into two branches. One was descended, but not directly, from Hasan al-Husayni, a reputed scholar of the eighteenth century. Hasan's position was transferred to his nephew Tahir al-Husayni. Hence, the branch which held successfully the position of the Hanafi Mufti stretching until Haj Amin al-Husayni, is referred to as either the Hasani branch or the Tahiri one. The family's adherence to the Hanafi

*Madhab* was a fortunate coincidence since it became in 1785 the favorite *Madhab* of the sultans in Istanbul.

The second was those in the family who had held in succession the *Nikaaba*, the title of *Naqib al-Ashraf*. This post declined in importance by the mid-nineteenth century and was replaced by the mayorship of the city. This branch is referred to as the Omari branch, after another eighteenth century Husayni who was one of the first in the family to hold the title.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the family began establishing itself as a leading force. In that phase old challenges met new ones. The family's agenda consisted of internal struggles with other rival families for keeping the three posts of *Naqib al-Ashraf*, the Mufti and *Sheikh al-Haram* in its hands. Simultaneously, the family had to cope with the aggressiveness and greediness of local Ottoman governors of the city and particularly with the regional governors in Damascus, Beirut and Acre who all strove to control Palestine in the name of the Empire on the one hand, or in the case of the Egyptians, in the name of a new political entity. These political developments intertwined with the mundane business of running the religious institutions of the city for those who were in the *Niqaba* branch or enjoying the richness of theological and literary debates and discussions for those holding the chain of *Ifta*.

At that time, one additional concern required the family's wits and tactfulness in order to be able to stride safely into the Tanzimat period (1840-1876), after surviving Egyptian rule (1831-1840). During the Egyptian period, the family was a leading factor in the rebellion against Muhamad

Ali, but was able to mend fences with the Egyptians and nonetheless retain a solid relationship with the returning Ottomans. After the Ottoman rule was reestablished in Palestine in 1840, the family was embroiled in an ancient rivalry in the vicinity of Jerusalem between the clans of Qais and those of the Yaman allegiances. This division between local clans went back to the rivalries between the Northern (Qais) and Southern (Yaman) tribes in the formative years of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula and their resettlement in the Fertile Crescent later on. On the basis of this coalition, the Husaynis, with Yamani affiliations, kept allegiance to the rural lord of the Jerusalem mountains, Mustafa Abu-Ghosh who was in constant friction with Qaisi coalitions for control over land and villages. There is a debate among the scholars of the period on the duration of these feuds. There are those who claim that this sphere of loyalty still existed in 1920, while others see them as of secondary importance ever since the second half of the 19th century. Miram Hexoter sensibly remarks that overall this rivalry was a rural phenomenon and since Jerusalem was more urban in nature it mattered less in this city's affairs.<sup>1</sup>

None the less conflicts remained in the 1840s and did affect the city's life. The Khalidis led the Qais faction and the Husaynis the Yamani one within the city's parameters. However, the competition between the families was for contemporary positions and not in the name of that or other coalition. The Yamani allegiance was used by the Husaynis as a mediating facility between feuding rural lords or for widening its influence beyond the city's

walls. This patronage connection, for instance, strengthened the Husaynis' influence in the Beit Lehem area, as the town was mainly Yamanite.

The role of mediation was a dominant feature in the politics of notables towards the end of the 1850s. In the spring of 1855, there was widespread unrest in Jabal Nablus. The Jarars and the Tuqans collided with the Abd al-Hadis. This was a feud aggravated by the policies of Ibrahim Pasha during his short reign in Palestine where he exercised to perfection the old style *divide et impera*. The central government failed constantly to appoint a neutral ruler, each coalition wishing to install its own candidate. The Pasha of Jerusalem and the notables intervened and convinced both sides to accept a compromise candidate, Sheik Darwish of Nabi Daud. The Tuqans were connected to the Husaynis in marriage and thus the Husaynis could induce them to consent to the compromise and were on cordial relations with the rivals and for a while pacified the otherwise turbulent area of Nablus.<sup>2</sup>

But this seemed to be the last meaningful involvement of the family in such feuds. By the end of the Crimean War, these local conflicts were marginalized in the family's agenda giving way to more serious threats to the family's prestige: foreign intervention, the reformist zeal of the last Ottoman rulers culminating in the secularization and Turkification of the Empire after the Young Turk revolution, and finally the Zionist movement's appearance in Palestine.

### **The Perils of Foreign Intervention**

The Napoleonic invasion in the beginning of the 19th century left little impres-

sion on Jerusalem. Bonaparte regarded the city as of secondary importance and hence the Ottomans ruled the city more or less uninterruptedly ever since the 16th century. The delegates who ruled in the name of the Empire, and at times challenging its authority, alternated in amazing frequency during the 18th century. None of them was too keen on allowing Europeans to settle in Palestine. It was only during the reign of Sultan Mahmud the Second that some sort of foreign presence was tolerated. In 1823 the first British missionaries arrived to convert the Jews, with the aim of precipitating the second coming of the Messiah. But this was a minor development, and not a very successful one at that, in the Europeans' position in the city.

A considerable improvement of foreigners' status in the city of Jerusalem occurred only during the reign of Muhammad Ali in Palestine. It had been preceded by Ibrahim Pasha's insistence on equalizing the status of Jews and Christians with that of the Muslims. This was the first time the Husaynis were faced with such a social reality. Tahir al-Husayni, the Mufti, and Muhamad Ali al-Husayni, the *Naqib al-Ashraf*, were included in a new *Majlis al-Shura* that included non-Muslims. Their inclusion in the *Majlis* was, in fact, the result of the leading roles they played in the 1834 Palestine revolt against Egyptian rule.

Unlike Napoleon's *tour de force*, the Egyptian conquest was felt with all its onus in Jerusalem; even more so when the city became the center of the 1834 revolt. The Egyptian period integrated Palestine and Jerusalem into the sphere of the 'Eastern Question' of Europe. Ibrahim opened the

way for substantive foreign invasion by allowing European missionaries and consulates to be posted in Jerusalem.

Istanbul followed suit after its re-conquest of Palestine. Immediately after the eviction of the Egyptian forces the central government in Istanbul altered its policy vis a vis foreign intervention in Jerusalem. As usual in the Ottoman-European relationship it were the physical state of the churches in the Empire which indicated how far the Porte was willing to go. By 1841, the *Wali* of al-Quds was ordered to approve any restoration works needed in the churches of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

Sultan Abd al-Majid the Second tried to balance these moves by showing more concern for the deteriorating exterior of *Haram al-Sharif*. But all in all, he antagonized many of the local notables by increasing the powers of the local governors and allowing a free hand for European Consuls, which explains the low ebb in his relations with the family. The family's fortunes, in political terms, were dwindling during Abd al-Majid's period. It took the Husaynis another fifteen years to restore their former position with an extremely clever exploitation of the 'politics of notables'. It was highly important for them to do so because of the demographic changes in the city. Playing a leading role in Jerusalem became of regional importance as the city became a large populated center, in comparison with former days. When Abd al-Majid returned Ottoman rule to Jerusalem it had 22,000 inhabitants - by 1861 there were about 68,000.<sup>4</sup>

But before attaining such success, the family went through difficult times, particularly vis a vis the European Consuls

and in particular the British Consul, James Finn. Finn is still celebrated to-day in Israeli historiography as a reliable source and as a precursor of pro-Zionist British politicians. However, it seems that the Husaynis' animosity had very little to do with Finn's close relationship with the Jewish community in the city, and more with his tendency to intervene in every aspect of the city's life.

There is in fact contradicting evidence on how involved the consuls were in the city's life. Finn attributes to himself and his colleagues a large measure of involvement, but he never suffered from modesty or low self-esteem. Nonetheless, Finn personified for the notables, and particularly for the Husaynis, the evils of foreign intervention. He meddled constantly in city affairs. He complained regularly to Istanbul about the governor's close association with the 'effendis' in inciting violence against foreign visitors. On one occasion, the governor retaliated by convening an open *Diwan* with the notables, denouncing Finn's allegations as false. As head of the notables, Omar al-Husayni found himself in a direct clash with Finn and found it useful to elicit the French Consul, Bota, on his side. Finn protested in his dispatches to London about the French consul's disruption of his efforts to mediate between warring factions in the city. Incidentally, the French consul himself was deeply involved in the domestic politics of the city, but won more sympathy from both the governor, who had a French secretary, and from most of the notables.

As irritating as Finn must have been, it was typical conduct on the notables' behalf to first resist the consuls, then assess how

far they had been supported by Istanbul, and finally accept them as a fact of life. During the time of Finn's predecessor, Young, the notables produced in the city an antagonist environment against foreign presence. Young reported regularly on a tacit alliance between the notables, particularly between the Husaynis, and the Turkish Garrison which led to occasional attacks on the few British residents in the city. As a result, British residents were advised not to ride alone in the *Suq*. Young succeeded in forcing the governor to publicly whip soldiers on one occasion - an event which stirred unrest and riots in the city against Christians. Many Muslims assembled near al-Omar Mosque chanting against the waving of Christian flags in the city. Omar al-Husayni and others urged the public to take a firmer stand against Christian presence in the city. The French consulate was attacked as it waved its flag higher than any other consulate. The unrest continued for all the summer of 1843 until the autumn of 1844. Five notables were eventually exiled under the pressure of the Europeans. We do not have their names, so we do not know whether the Husaynis were included, but we can assume that the notables as a whole felt offended by these measures, and hence Alexander Scholch may be right in assuming that this kind of European arrogance generated all over Palestine proto-nationalist consciousness aiming at blocking further foreign penetration.<sup>5</sup> However, at the same time, in the case of the Husaynis and other Jerusalemite families it seems that their lesson was adaptation: they learned to live with the new political actor on the scene.

The unrest in the city ended in 1844 and

a new political fact was established. Within the balance of power of the city and region one had to consider now the consuls as well. The Husaynis' Yamani allegiance with the dominate lord of the rural areas, Mustafa Abu Ghosh, led them to find some affinity with French interests in the city. Finn's struggle against Abu-Ghosh's control on the pilgrimage roads from Jaffa to Jerusalem, poised him in an antagonist posture towards the Husaynis.

Abu-Ghosh tried during the height of the Turkish reforms in the army to enlist disenchanted segments of the Turkish soldiery in Palestine to support his case. The reform in the Ottoman Army, initiated by Mahmud the second, led to frequent rebellions of the local garrisons all over the Middle East; particularly on payment days, which usually ended in disappointment. In Jerusalem the British consuls avoided intervening in these skirmishes and more or less remained loyal to Istanbul. The French consul, on the other hand, joined forces with the notables of the city, appointing himself as a mediator. Abu Ghosh succeeded only once in establishing such a dangerous alliance. For a while embittered soldiers sided with Abu Ghosh and the Husaynis, but retreated in the last moment before climbing on a mountain too high for them.

Mediation was the key role the Husaynis allocated for themselves on the way to regaining a paramount standing in the city. This was easier to execute after the authorities mounted a ruthless operation against Abu Ghosh in 1846, destroying for once and for all the power of this family in the Jerusalem mountains. Some of the Husaynis sided with Abu Ghosh to the last

moments. Ali, the son of Omar al-Husayni, the *Naqib al-Ashraf*, was found with Mustafa Abu-Ghosh when the latter was caught in the punitive operation of 1846. Ali ibn Omar and Mustaf Abu Ghosh were publicly humiliated when they were paraded through a gathered crowds in Jaffa, after being brought from Jerusalem, on their way to a ship to be exiled outside of Palestine. This would be the last time a Husayni would find himself at loggerheads with the government, until the days of Jamal Pasha in the first world war.

Getting rid of Abu-Ghosh was a financial gain for the Ottomans, as he controlled most of the roads on the way to the city and taxed travellers, as much as it been a diplomatic asset for the consuls, as that tax had been mainly collected from Christian pilgrims. The final showdown between the central government and Abu-Ghosh in 1846 was a milestone which transformed the Husaynis' political approach. Much was to be learned from this event. It seemed that what eventually prompted the government to act was foreign pressure. The might of Europe behind the scenes was no less impressive than that on the ground, as every one learned already at the turn of the century in Egypt. The final settlement was also indicative of the continued value of the 'politics of notables', notwithstanding the new power of Europe. The Ottomans still needed the Husaynis and the Abu-Ghoshs, they had no power to impose a genuine centralized administration. Hence Mustafa Abu Ghosh and Ali al-Husayni were sent to jail in Acre, but not with hard labour. Amir Abu-Ghosh, was appointed the head of Qaryat al-A'nab (Abu Ghosh's headquarters). The governor of Jerusalem

tried further to appease the notables by reducing the level of taxation, although he still reported that he saw them as a danger to the government.

After the Crimean War, the foreigner's role in the city grew even further. This was brought about by the Ottomans' search for new allies in Europe in their attempt to establish an anti-Russian coalition. The new reality was visible everywhere in the city, the first sign was the restoration of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in a festive ceremony in September 1852 (it was burned in 1850). Omar al-Husayni heard Afif Bey, a special envoy from the capital, announced 'the beginning of a new Christian phase in the history of Jerusalem'.<sup>6</sup>

During Abd al-Hamid the Second's period the principal symbol for the increasing influence of foreign powers in Jerusalem were the regal visits by Europe's leading houses, notably the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm the Second. The Husaynis, by then reinstated in their previous advantageous functions, participated in all the ceremonies, and as important members of the municipality and council took active part in the preparations, which included in many cases re-pavement of the city's roads and the installation of new illumination and water infrastructures of the city.

Although Wilhelm declared humbly in the Jerusalem churches that 'I have come only for pilgrimage purposes', the political and economic interests underlying this visit did not escape the attention of notables such as the Husaynis.<sup>7</sup> How could they ignore the significance of such visits which left the city's landscape more Christian than ever before in the last 500 years? Abd al-Hamid gave Wilhelm a plot of two

dunams in Mount Zion for the establishment of yet another church there and so a cornerstone was laid for a building which will pierce the skyline of old Jerusalem - the Dormitian Abby (its construction would be completed only in 1910). The head of the Husaynis, Ismai'l al-Husayni, encountered the strength of the Emperor when he was chosen to present the visitor with expensive gifts on behalf of the city's council during the Emperor's visit to *Haram a-Sharif* (officially still an area closed for non-Muslims, but even the Jewish philanthropist, Moses Montefiore, was invited by the Turks in the 1850s to pay a visit there).

It was indeed during the Hamidi period (1876-1908) that by sheer numbers the human panorama of the city changed. 'There are too many foreign medical practitioners in Jerusalem and a young freshman from college will find it hard to set up a practice in the country' warned the British consul in 1899.<sup>8</sup>

The foreign intervention changed the architectural face of the city as well. Economic investment by foreigners in construction, water, road and gardens infrastructures had made Jerusalem more accessible and livable for a larger number of people. In turn, however, prices, although officially under the control of the local *Qadi*, rose steadily reaching a peak during the Young Turk's era. In 1903, the British consul of Jerusalem, John Dickson, reported the increase of the cost of living in the city owing to its growing importance, politically and commercially. He wished obviously to justify his own request for a rise in his salary, but this report is corroborated by other sources. He was mainly,

though, thinking of his official rank as too low for such a central city. He reported a doubling of the city's population, size and trade in comparison to the 1880s. He met, 'proudly everywhere in the market retail and wholesale British products' and noted with satisfaction that 'the Christian holy places are packed with British tourists in hundreds at least twice a year, in the autumn and spring'.<sup>9</sup>

Dickson was particularly delighted with the abundance of missionary building which sprang up everywhere in the city. This may have been an exaggerated picture; the consul was deprived of what was called the Jaffa Allowance which was duly transferred to the Jaffa consulate. But as mentioned it did fit with other descriptions of the city.

The consul attributed much of the change to the visit of the German Emperor in October 1898. But it seems, Wilhelm the Second's visit was only the last phase in the transformation of Jerusalem from an Ottoman town to a regional Mediterranean capital where 'West met East' - a feature which remained intact until 1948 when nationalism would again transform the city this time into a battlefield between three religions and two national movements.

The final proof for the new status of Jerusalem in foreign eyes was the ranks of the local consuls. Since the Crimean War, many powers conferred the rank of consul general on their representatives in Palestine. In April 1853, France raised the level of its consulate in the city. It became a general consulate and announced its new function as the protector of the Roman Catholics. The Austrians followed suit and became the protectors of the Patriarchate.



In 1903, the British Foreign Office was still refusing to raise the status of its consulate, although all the other European powers have already done so.

Britain was less concerned with status, and more with economic concessions, such as the one gained by the British Khedivial line running the steamship route between Egypt and Palestine. The Austrians were running the mail-service and the French ran the train system. The country's and the city's infrastructure was now built and maintained by foreign powers.

Every sphere of life was affected. The country was slowly integrated into the world economy and hence export and import increased dramatically. And with the steady growth of shipping movement in and out of the port of Jaffa, Europeans, members of all persuasions, be they religious or ideological, entered Palestine *en masse* and not only as individuals.

Foreign trade played a major role in introducing modern technology into agriculture. No less important were the invasions of new colonizers and settlers. German and Jewish immigrants brought with them new techniques and equipment, increased the production in their own farms and fields, but did not advance this know-how into the world of the local peasants. They helped integrate the local economy into the global one, transforming the orientation of rural Palestine from subsistence crops into cash crops. This in fact decreased the attractiveness of land as an agriculture asset and as we shall note later, led the Husaynis to sell land rather than invest in it in agricultural production.

Local industry, on the other hand, did not transform dramatically. Foreign trade

increased the need for finance and credit, from the peasant to the traders. Thus more and more branches of foreign banks were opened. The *Sharia'* did not allow interest, but a flexible interpretation of Islamic permission for gift exchange and grants had enabled local entrepreneurs to become bankers with religious legitimacy. With the banking came the mail and the insurance companies. This new sphere of economic activity led some of the Husaynis to venture entry into the banking world - but nonetheless they did not succeed too well. The connection to the outside world, from the family's point of view, was more crucial for its soap factory, which had already been quite famous in the beginning of the 18th century.

So Palestine was better defined and claimed, but not only by locals but also by foreigners. There is hardly any information of popular feelings manifested violently against the growing involvement of the European consuls in Jerusalem (as Scholch reports for instance in Nablus).<sup>10</sup> One would have expected, in the case of Jerusalem, that the arrival of Christian settlers and the drive of the Anglican church to convert Jews to Christianity, by encouraging their return to the holy land, would raise the tension in the city. However, compared with Damascus where for instance in 1848 an anti-Christian campaign and riots was instigated, *inter alia*, by the foreign consuls' policies and attitudes, nothing of this scale and intensity is reported to have ever taken place in Jerusalem. It was probably due to the fact that in Jerusalem the consuls were more restrained by their governments; apart from the American consul who used to irritate the

authorities and segments of the population by waving high the American flag. British consuls reported throughout the second half of the nineteenth century only a few cases in which foreigners were in danger. They did however blame the *ulama*, and among them there were quite a few Husaynis for inciting the population against the Christians in the city.<sup>11</sup> It is however, as we shall see, important to note that the family was not one homogenous unit, and its members, such as Ismail, the head of the family during the last decades of the Ottoman rule, cultivated friendly relationship with both foreigners and Christians - a tendency that would grow during the Young Turk's era.

The place to look for the Husaynis' involvement in possible incitement of anti-foreign attitudes would be the Nabi Musa festivities. The supervision and mastering of this important festival in which the Muslims went in procession to what is believed to be Moses' tomb and stayed there for three joyful days had been entrusted in the hands of the Husaynis ever since the 18th century and probably before. Already at the end of the 19th century, the Nabi Musa ceremony became an event through which the Muslim public could express its protest against the anti-Muslim changes in the city, particularly against the involvement of the Consuls in minor and major matters concerning the community affairs and fate.

Quite often the festival coincided with Easter; a proximity of dates that became more significant with the increasing volume of Christian pilgrimage to the city. Yehosua Ben-Aryeh asserts that it was the Jerusalemite governor Rauf Pasha (1876-

1888) who had been the first to incite the Muslims to use Nabi Musa as an anti-Christian event.<sup>12</sup> It is more likely, however, that the governor and his government were rather apprehensive of such an anti-Christian uprising as it could stir instability and disorder at a time when the central government was trying to pacify the Empire. This had been indeed the impression of the engineer (founder of the Palestine Exploration Fund) Claude Conder.<sup>13</sup> The Hebrew paper, *Ha-havazelet*, at the time blessed the Ottoman government for imposing law and order in the Nabi Musa affair. The travelogues of Francis Newton testify as well to a peaceful execution of the ceremonies. Indeed, the Turkish government must have acted here against popular feelings, shared by the Husaynis as the masters of the ceremony that Nabi Musa was celebrated in the most unfavourable conditions for the Muslims. It was the iron fist imposed by the Turks that prevented the situation from deteriorating into an all out riot.

However, the principal source of friction between foreigners and local would be the land issue, not in the same scope and intensity as it would be during the mandatory period, but in Jerusalem in particular in led to high tensions in the city and its surrounding.

### **The Land Issue**

The bone of contention between the notables and some of the foreign consuls was the land issue. In this sense, Alexandre Scholch's treatment of Zionism as part and continuation of Christian colonialism in the first half of the nineteenth century makes considerable sense. Even before the pur-

chase of land was authorized by the reformers of Istanbul in 1858, we have evidence for foreign procurement of land in Jerusalem in 1850. One of the 'pioneers' in this field was James Finn. He found it difficult to function in a small house within the city's walls: 'there was no room for the servants', he complained. He set his eyes on a plot of land in Beit Safafa and encountered an immediate opposition from the 'Effendie's of the city'. The notables threatened anyone selling land to Finn, with boycott and if necessary, arrest on the basis of the violation of the law. No other Consul was ever resented in such a way in Jerusalem. Finn reported the Greek-Russian church official Nikofors was behind this opposition as he wanted to secure land for his church. Nicofors was an Ottoman citizen and thus could buy land freely.

Finn claimed Nicofors bribed the notables. Finn was particularly Russophobic in those days and even a parade of 50 Russian navy men in the city seemed ominous to him.<sup>14</sup>

Finn alarmed his government with rumors of a Russian-Greek orthodox scheme to surround Jerusalem with plots of purchased agriculture land. He reported a rumor that every serviceman in Russia set aside a portion from his annual salary for supporting the purchase campaign in Jerusalem. It was a period of extensive purchase of land outside the city; local land owners, such as the Husaynis, benefited from the competition, but foreign intervention also intensified. Nonetheless, personalities, at that stage, counted more than states and the Husaynis selected their business partners according to individual, rather than, national dislikes.

It seems that it was not the Russians who

recruited the Husaynis, and other families, against Finn - it was a local initiative supported warmly by the Ottoman governor of the city. The latter started a campaign against the purchase of land by Europeans, particularly by Finn, if one were to believe Finn's own testament. The governor warned a full forum of the notables' council that a foothold in the door would lead to a complete takeover similar to the one connived by the British in India:

*First there came a street sweeper earning a few paras: he inhabited an old sepulcher: then built a dome over it: then added a chamber: then wrote home to his government, who sent others: and so at last the English conquered India'.<sup>15</sup>*

To us it might seem a description more in the line of a takeover of the Holy Sepulchre but it is quite adequate as a description of the way India became British, although from Finn's report it is not clear whether the notables supported the governor's stance. Some of them, at least, failed to see the wisdom behind his behaviour and in fact the meeting ended with the governor angrily sending off some of the notables.

The Husaynis had a vested interest in safeguarding their rights as land owners. They had become in the beginning of the 19th century property owners, probably, among the richest in the city, by being deeply involved in the process of the dismemberment of Waqfs and as the late Gabriel Baer wrote on the families in general, 'and probably benefited considerably from the transaction in which they

were involved'.<sup>16</sup>

The scope and pace of land purchase of course increased after the law had changed. But even after that it was difficult for foreigners to purchase land without the governor's and the local council's approval. But all of the actors on the Jerusalemite stage had to bow to new rules and codes invented for them by the enthusiastic reformers in Istanbul.

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<sup>1</sup> Miriam Hoexter, 'The Role of Qays and Yemen Factions in Local Political Divisions: Jabal Nablus Compared with the Judean Hills in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century', *Asian and African Studies* 9/3 (1973), pp. 301-4.

<sup>2</sup> PRO, FO 78/1220, Jerusalem to London, 27 April 1855.

<sup>3</sup> Firman from the Sublime Porte to al-Tayar pasha (who was the Wali of Gaza and Jerusalem 1841), Hazik, *Majmu'at al-Muharirat*, (The Collection of Documents) doc. 27 in p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Arif al-Arif, *Tarikh al-Quds*, (Cairo, no date), pp. 118-9.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*, 1856-1882, (Washington: The Institute For Palestinian Studies, 1992), pp. 61-77, 110-118.

<sup>6</sup> PRO, FO 78/913, Jerusalem to London, 18 September 1852.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim al-Aswad, *al-Rihla al-Imbratoriyya fi al-Mamaliq al-Uthmaniya*, (The Imperial Tour in the Ottoman Areas), (Babda: 1898). Al-Aswad accompanied the trip..

<sup>8</sup> PRO, FO78/5352, Jerusalem to London, 20 February 1899.

<sup>9</sup> PRO FO 78/5285, Jerusalem to London, 14 November 1903.

<sup>10</sup> Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation*, pp. 267-283.

<sup>11</sup> Sir H. Elliot to Earl of Derby on 4 January 1876 in document 169 in *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Series B. the Near and the Middle East. part 1 vol., (London 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century*; the Old City, (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi; 1980), (Hebrew) pp. 119,134.

<sup>13</sup> Claude Conder, *Tent Work*, Vol. 1, pp. 334-335.

<sup>14</sup> PRO, FO 78/839, Jerusalem to London, 24 September 1850.

<sup>15</sup> PRO, FO 78/839, 14 August 1850. There is also a letter from Finn to the Governor, Adham Pasha in FO 78/839, 5 August 1850.

<sup>16</sup> Gabriel Baer, 'Jerusalem's Families of Notables and the Wakf in the Early 19th Century', in D. Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1986), p. 114.

صدر حديثاً عن

مؤسسة الدراسات الفلسطينية

## الشريط اللبناني المحتل

منذر محمود جابر

٨٩٠ صفحة

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