



The Coverage of Sports News in “Filastin” 1911 – 1948

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Without a doubt, the establishment of *Filastin* newspaper by ‘Isa al-‘Isa and his cousin Yusef al-‘Isa in 1911 is considered to be the cornerstone of sports journalism in Palestine. It is no coincidence that the most active newspaper reporting on sporting events was the daily newspaper *Filastin*, which played an important role Palestinian nation building.¹ Coverage of sport news in *Filastin* went parallel with the sports movement: it reflected the growth of the athletic movement which played a role in shaping the modern Palestinian citizen, it brought the villages and cities together, it shaped the national consciousness, and it deepened and maintained Palestinian national identity.

Coverage of sports and the athletic movement were not isolated from the political conditions in Palestine. Both were a mirror which reflected the political conditions since the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine up until 1948. Sports news did not differ in its essence from the

Football Game, Bab as-Sahira, Jerusalem 1910. Source: Khalil Raad, *Library of Congress*.

other news in *Filastin* in general, as it took the line of anti Jewish – Zionist domination over the sports movement. Moreover, as part of *Filastin*, sports news added enormous value to the paper especially when the sport column was issued on a daily bases after the re-establishment of the Palestine Sport Association in 1944.

Filastin by itself could be considered a historical document which refuted the Zionist claims; such claims alleged that the Palestinians lacked a cultural, social and athletic background. Examining *Filastin* one could confirm that prior to 1948 there were some 65 social athletic clubs in Palestine. Approximately 55 of them were members of the Arab Palestine Sports Federation, which was established in 1931 and re-established in 1944, and included athletic clubs from all over Palestine.

Despite the harsh censorship that was imposed by the British authorities on the Palestinian press including *Filastin*, sport news in this newspaper in general maintained a stable and steady path: challenging and criticizing the authorities for its negligence of Arabic sport and its support for the Jewish sport activities.

Sport was a mirror which reflected the political conditions in Palestine; therefore, this essay attempts to examine the link between sport, political conditions and *Filastin*; it also attempts to demonstrate the evolution of sport news in *Filastin* between 1911 until 1948.

***Filastin* 1911-1914**

The first football team in Palestine was formed in 1908. Information on this team was rare up until April 1912. Some of the sports news appeared in *Filastin* before World War I. The scarcity of news was due to the modest number of sports activities which were in their infant stages. One of the earliest news items which reflected sports in its primitive essence was published on April 1912, when *Filastin* stated that:

The bet started on the game football [فوت بول]. The youth of the college school from Beirut attended with their teachers, specifically for this game. At four o'clock the college students and the Israeli youth and some of the Jerusalemite Youth School appeared in the stadium which was prepared especially for this reason. The College Students won the game. On Wednesday they to play against with St. John's School students."²

In 1911, a group of Arab and European residents in Jaffa founded a social athletic club called Circle Sportive [al-Muntada al- Riyadi]. *Filastin* published information about this club which was located at the end of the Old City's Ziqaq al-Batma.³ One of the club's main goals was the development of games that would strengthen the body and enhance the spirit, which resulted in the staging of a 1,800-meter race through the streets of Jerusalem. Seven of the club's members participated. However, there was some controversy over which types of games fell under the group's mandate. An article in *Filastin* accused the club of advocating gambling, while another piece

written by a club member eschewed gambling but promoted card-playing in the dreary winter months.⁴

The founders of Zionism saw sport's emphasis on organizational unity and physical fitness as a tool for fulfilling its goal of creating a new society. From the beginning of the 20th century they established sport clubs and athletic organizations. The Maccabi organization which was found in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century opened its first club in Palestine in 1912.

From the beginning of the 20th century, as a way of promoting the national sentiments of the Jewish people, the Zionists used scouts and athletic parades and festival (including flying flags, national anthems) as a tool for achieving their goals.

A letter sent to *Filastin* on April 20, 1913 by an observer described one of the annual celebrations which was held by the Jewish settlers in the colony of Diran. It states:

*“At one o'clock in the afternoon the celebration procession came parading around the streets of the colony led by a musical band and flying Zionist flags. They proceeded until they reached the house of the colony president, who came out onto the colony of his house and gave a long speech in Hebrew. I understood from the numerous interruptions of applause that he was very well-liked. After that the procession marched in formation through the streets of the colony, and it was an amazing spectacle due to the large number of participants... I was given the impression that this was a well – organized army, considering their skillful movements and discipline. Then they reached the field, and the formation halted. At the front of this (agricultural) field a large area was designated for athletic events. A number of speakers gave enthusiastic speeches and were met with approving applause by the crowd... then the sports competitions and weightlifting started, and then horse racing, in which both men and women participated. Most of them wore Bedouin clothing: you would have thought they were Arabian knights.”*⁵

After World War I, the number of Palestinian social clubs, including charitable societies, women's groups and young people's organizations such as the Scouts, grew exponentially. Their appearance as social institutions reflected the growing advancement of nationalist sentiments by elites in light of British Mandate and Zionist expansion. In the 1920's, most of these clubs assumed a civic social character, incorporating athletic activities into their programs as sports began to be viewed as an important element in building social consciousness and nationalist culture. The Dajani Sports Club of Jerusalem and some of the Orthodox clubs that grew out of church affiliation are prime examples of this theme. Still other teams were established as athletic organizations, and later incorporated social and cultural activities. As 'sport' took its place among cultural and social activities, city and village football teams transformed into athletic clubs, changing their names accordingly. In Palestine at the start of the 1930's, Arab social athletic clubs numbered about twenty.⁶

The British Mandate warned about the expansion of the national tendencies of the social athletic clubs, *Filastin* in April 1921 published this excerpt:

*Last Saturday was the inauguration of the cornerstone of the Sports Club in Jerusalem. The Palestine Weekly mentioned that Mr. Stores, the Governor of Jerusalem, insisted on the participation of everyone regardless of his religion or beliefs. The Weekly added that the partisan athletic clubs in Egypt were a factor in the turmoil there, so this mistake must not be repeated in Palestine.*⁷

From the early 1920's, *Filastin* started to follow the news of the social clubs.. Although the cultural elite lacked complete awareness of the role of sports in different spheres of Palestinian life, however establishing new clubs and setting up sports activities and competitions made big contributions to the culture in Palestine in general. At that time, *Filastin* started publishing reports about School festivals,⁸ and about the birth of new clubs in different cities of Palestine. But in general news was rare and not reported on a daily basis.

During the period referred to sport was not institutionalized. Tamir Sorek suggests "Although Palestinian Arabs in the large cities participated in several branches of modern sport, at least from the beginning of the twentieth century in particular football and boxing, the institutionalization of sport did not begin before the mid-1930s. One theme that consistently shaped the ways sport was perceived and interpreted by Arab Palestinians was the way it lagged behind Jewish/Zionist sport. (Sorek)⁹ The Zionist sports movement was strengthened by the financial support of the Jewish Agency, included funding for players, coaches and other resources.¹⁰ However there are few other sources from that era from which to glean a picture of sports in Palestine apart from the reports in *Filastin*.

Orthodox Clubs

Filastin was known for its support of the Orthodox movement, While Zionism was one of the central issues on which the newspaper's owners and editors, Yusuf and 'Isa – al – 'Isa, focused, other issues were also important. There included the encouragement of education, the struggle of the Arab Orthodox to free their church from domination by the Greek clergy, and the poor condition of the peasantry.¹¹ The first conference of Orthodox Christian clubs and societies held in July 1923 played an important role in advancing the growth of athletic programs in Palestine. The conference was held to protest what the Orthodox community perceived as the dominance of foreign churches in local spiritual leadership. To balance this control, it advocated the establishment of new societies and clubs throughout Palestine and Transjordan. Among these new clubs were Orthodox clubs established in Jaffa (1924), Jerusalem (1926), Lod (1927) and Akko (1927).

Filastin followed the news of the Orthodox Club in Jaffa for example It reported on

the national tendency of this club which achieved success by forming a qualified football team and adopting boxing as a second sport.

When the Egyptian team came to Palestine in January 1931 and played only with the Jewish teams, *Filastin* published an article criticizing the Arab teams for not being of equal standard as the Egyptian team and praised the Orthodox Club of Jaffa as the only team that was able to compete with them:



This and the following facsimiles are from The *Filastin* newspaper from the 1930 and 40s.

The team of the Egyptian University came to Palestine and played with the Jewish teams, no Arab team applied to compete with them, except the Orthodox Club. The result was better than the game with “Maccabi”. So it made us proud and made everyone understand that there are Arabic teams in Palestine who are skillful in this game and have the same level as the British and Jewish teams.”¹²

In another article, praising the Orthodox Club, *Filastin* describes its success and called upon the owners of the newspapers to promote its activities.¹³

We do not exaggerate if we say that the Orthodox Club (in Jaffa) has made an important contribution to the progress of soccer in the country. In 1924 this club formed an athletic team, especially for this purpose. It rented a field, and all its members promoted sports among the people, so even those not interested in sports became interested. Many started to attend all the matches, encouraging the players with enthusiasm. Since it's founding its team played against many other teams both in and outside of Jaffa such as the Jerusalem Orthodox Club, Jerusalemite Baqa'a [alBaq'a alMaqdisi, Carmel Club – Haifa, Arab Club in Nablus. It also played against British military teams in Ramla and Sarafand. The last team who hosted them was the Gaza Sports Club which was covered in the paper. We congratulate the team of Orthodox Club on its achievements who have become as a national team. We wish it continuing success. We ask the owners of the newspapers to support them for the benefit of the country.¹⁴

In the early 1920's *Filastin* started to publish news about horse racing. It was one of the only sources which covered news on this sport. In September 1931 an article “A Club of Sports Promotion or a Horse Racing Club?” appeared in *Filastin* criticizing the Nadi Tashji al-Riyada (The Club of Sports Promotion) and showing the dangers of betting on horse racing.¹⁵

I and the other Akka people know that this Club was founded five years ago for promoting sports. Since its founding it has organised an athletic festival that included horse racing, cycling, rope pulling, jump, etc. We will be thankful if this club really wants to promote sports especially horse racing. But it is clear that what it is attempting is to fill its pockets. How does it fill its pocket? from my pocket, from the miserable worker and poor villager. This worker returns to his family every day with empty pockets; his children are waiting for him to bring them some food.

We read previously on the pages of this newspaper a series of articles by the author Asma Toubia one of the famous authors in Akko, and by the Lebanese writer Mustafa al-Aris and from the editor of Filastin. All the articles were about the tragedies of gambling on horse racing in Beirut and other cities.¹⁶

Jizawi

In the late 1920's the Palestinian community in Santiago in Chile sent several letters to *Filastin's* editor informing him about of a young wrestler and boxer who left Palestine for Chile at the age of 20 – Abdel-Rahman al-Jizawi became a major national symbol for Palestine in that decade,. Upon his arrival, he met a leader of the Arab community, who took it upon himself to introduce him to Chilean media and coaches. Al-Jizawi demonstrated great feats of strength – he was able to bend metal bars and challenged and defeated an Italian wrestler 20 kilograms above his weight class. His Arab fans went wild that day, carrying him on their shoulders and chanting, “Long live Palestine, Long live the Arabs, Long live al-Jizawi.” The wrestler was lauded in Chilean newspapers and he soon became a household name.

Between 1929 – 1936 sport played a pivotal role in the early Zionist movement. It was a tool for national regeneration, and great efforts were made to create ‘Jewish sports’ that inspired Zionist feelings. Terms denoting religious-historical (but secular) symbols were superimposed onto the athletic playing field. Teams were named ‘Maccabi’, reminding fans of the years of Jewish independence in the second century BCE, ‘Betar’, signifying the Jews’ last stand against the Romans, and ‘Bar Kokhba’, connoting the Jewish rebellion against tyranny.¹⁷

An article appeared in *Filastin* describing the conception of the Maccabi, and the reasons behind the utilization of this idea by the Zionist:

The idea of the Maccabi goes back to one century b.c, when the Roman Empire saw for its own safety that the Jews have to (assimilate) in the Roman Empire, so they could become Romans, but the Jews refused; they decided to maintain their national identity. The idea was in the beginning religiously ethical, so were their ways to achieve their goals. Later the concept was reduced from the realms of religious and ethics to the ground of nationalism and weaponry. The war was ongoing between the parties. The Romans

were defeated more than once by the Maccabians. The Jews remained nationally independent. We have no objection to see the Jews struggling for the sake of their unity and independence. The most we can prove here is that the Maccabi movement was a military struggle, but not an athletic movement as many Jews want to suggest to the world. What has been mentioned was proved by history.¹⁸

Sport was used as a cover for paramilitary activities especially by the Betar organization. Under the title (Jabotinsky's Program: "Shooting" a Jewish army was initiated under the cover of clubs). *Filastin* published a translated article from the newspaper Ha-Mishkov that talked about the question of Palestine, It was argued in the article that establishing a military unit was difficult in the circumstances but imperative and sport clubs for youth could serve as a venue for military training.¹⁹

During that period, *Filastin* published a number of articles about Maccabi and Hapoel clubs, including accounts of their trips to Syria and Lebanon which indicated that the goals of these trips were to sustain the relationship between the organizations in these three countries.²⁰

One of these articles under the title "Insulting the Zionist Flag" described an incident when the Hapoel Club won a football match in Damascus. Its fans were carrying the Zionist flags and singing their national songs. This display

نادى الملاكمة
والرياضة العربي
جاهنا من هذا النادي في حيفا
ما يلي
تم انتخاب هيئة ادارة لنادي الملاكمة
والرياضة العربي بحيفا ففاز باكثرية
الاصوات كل من السادة
رئيس : اديب كمال : نائب رئيس
جوودة ترك سكرتير : واكيم نوفي
امين صندوق : توفيق البعقوب اعضاء
ادارة : شريف حبشي نعيم ابو النصر
امين مراسل
وقد ارسلنا تهريرا الى سعادة
قائم مقام حيفا نعلمه بانتخاب الهيئة
الادارية الجديدة
يستعد اعضاء الهيئة الادارية
لنادي الملاكمة والرياضة العربي بحيفا
لاقامة حفلة تذكيرية يوم الجمعة القادم
الواقع في ١- ايلول الساعة السادسة
مساء يدعى اليها وجاه البلد ورؤساء
الجمعيات المسيحية والاسلامية ورؤساء
النوادي الرياضية لافتتاح النادي الذي
هو اول ناد من نوعه في فلسطين
اقسم اعضاء النادي صغيرهم
وكبيرهم عليهم ومسيحيهم القسم الاتي
اقدمهم بشرف في الرياضة دمع حفظ

provoked the Arab crowd and a fight broke out during which the Arab fans tore the Zionist flag.²¹ Also, some news was published about skirmishes between Jewish and Arab fans during the matches because of the bias of the referees.²² Most of this news carried a nationalistic undertone and aimed to reveal the rejection toward the Zionist project and its policies towards Palestine.

Starting in the 1920's, Jewish clubs in Europe and the region began to come to Palestine to compete with Jewish clubs. They flew flags that resembled the Zionist flag, a provocation that local Arabs vigorously protested against to the British authorities. The executive committee of the Muslim and Christian Association sent the High Commissioner for Palestine protested against the flying of the Zionist flag at a football match held in Jerusalem on January 12, 1925, asking whether the ordinance regulating the flying of flags issued by the Government of Palestine in August 1920, had been abrogated.²³

This protest was published in *Filastin* on January 20 1925, mentioning the name of the Jewish team – Ha-Koah (in Vienna) and stated that the Zionist flag was flown beside the British flag in Jaffa also. It added that “there were more Zionist flags flying around the court. So what does his honor the High Commissioner think about it?”

The Zionist leadership viewed the establishment of athletic federations and committees as a means to achieving overall Zionist goals of creating and legitimizing Zionist claims to Palestine. These official organizations helped represent Palestine as “Jewish,” both regionally and internationally, and were seen as instrumental in achieving the leadership’s national and political goals.

In 1924, the leadership of the Jewish Maccabi Athletic Organization attempted to gain membership to the International Amateur Athletic Federation. This initiative ended in failure, as it was determined that Maccabi did not represent Arab, British and Jewish sportsmen in Palestine equally. However, this unsuccessful attempt did not discourage Maccabi’s leader Josef Yekutieli, who, in early 1925 attempted to gain Maccabi membership in the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). Yekutieli decided to employ a different tactic this time -- he first established the Palestine Football Association.²⁴

Arab members claimed that they had entered this Association in good faith for the sake of cooperation and there was no ill will for standing alone with it. It is true that this Association was formed by the Arabs, Jews, and the British – however, they believed its exploitation by the Jewish athletic leadership and the continued marginalization of the Arabs was among the Zionist goals, especially after joining FIFA in June 1929. The Palestinians announced their dissatisfaction with the Zionist practices in seizing this Association.²⁵

The reaction to Zionist domination increased especially after the 1929 Revolt. Social / athletic clubs and the sports movement in general were connected to the national movement in the country which was struggling against the Zionist expansion in Palestine. *Filastin* published news that warned about the Jewish immigration and warned about Zionist domination and its cooperation with the British authorities. At the same time *Filastin* published translated news from the Jewish newspapers

in Hebrew about sports. In the early 1930's one could notice the growth in sport activities, especially after the 1929 Revolt and the attempt of marginalization of the Arabs from the PFA by the Jerusalem.

A March football match in 1931 between the Egyptian University team and a Jewish -British team representing the PFA (Palestine Football Association) illustrated the frustration of Arabs concerning another match between the Jews and British Army and the Egyptian Tarsana Club. A letter to the editor of *Filastin* newspaper criticizes this match and the raising of the Zionist flags:

A mixture of soldiers of the British Army and Jewish youth... [T]hey were photographed; between them stood the Governor of Jerusalem and the Egyptian Consul... The flags that were raised on the sides of the stadium were the Egyptian flag, between the English and the Zionist flags... Around the stadium were many British soldiers and the Palestine police maintained security.²⁶

As a result of the gross transgressions by the Jews in the Palestinian Football Association and following the 1929 Revolt, many of the sport leaders decided to establish the Arabic Palestinian Sports Federation (PSF) (or Palestine Sport Association – PSA) in April 1931. Dr. Daoud al-Husseini was elected to be the secretary of PSF. It immediately called for a boycott of Zionist teams, athletes and referees.²⁷ One of the achievements of this PSF (PSA) was the organization of The Tournament of The Armor of the Youth Conference [Dir' Mu'utamar al Shabab]. As a reaction to the Maccabiah Festivals in 1932 and 1935, this Federation held the Great Scouts Athletic Festival on July 14, 1935, in cooperation with the Youth Conference.

The period between 1931 to 1936 was characterized by a moderate coverage of current events in sports, the youth movement, PSF in *Filastin*. More attention was paid by *Filastin* to the activities of the sport movement; it reflected that the media (*Filastin*) could be a successful tool for promoting a sport's progress. After the establishment of the PSA, sports became more institutionalized. This is attributed to the organizational and national tendencies which characterized sports at that time. These two tendencies were a result of the Jewish domination and the pressures of the 1929 Revolt. Moreover, sport found its way into social-cultural consciousness of the Palestinian people.

Maccabiah Games (1932 & 1935)

Filastin publicized Zionist attempts since 1924, for admitting more Jewish immigrants to the country; They have pretended to submit to the restrictions of the immigration laws [while] transferring Jews to illegal resident status in Palestine by hiding them in the settlements. The Maccabiad was one of the ways of achieving these tasks. Al-Sifri reports that for the three years following 1933, Palestine saw an average of 60,000

new Jewish immigrants each year. “The Zionist organizations used three ways of smuggling in these illegal immigrants: the Maccabiad, exhibitions and the power of absorption,” he claimed. The Maccabiah Games and the Levant Fair were considered perfect opportunities to gain entry to the country, bypassing British immigration restrictions.²⁸

Filastin had opposed to the Maccabiah Games; it published articles which confronted the Maccabiah events and warned of its dangers.²⁹ The Maccabiah Games became a good example of how athletic events (with marches and flags) were exploited in order to achieve political goals. The Maccabiad was held in Tel Aviv in 1932 and 1935, hosting thousands of Jews from dozens of countries. The event stirred Jewish nationalism and provided a means of introducing Jews to the future homeland.³⁰ It was also a means of normalizing the coming of the Jewish state in Palestine. Marches which looked like paramilitary displays with the flying of Zionist flags were considered as a main ceremonial part of the Festivals.³¹ Yakutieli, a leader of the Maccabi World Organization wrote in *Haaretz* on March 29, 1935, “The recognition of Eretz Israel sports by the international federation can be seen as a direct result of the Maccabiah Games”.³²

An invitation was sent to the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) in Jerusalem to participate in these games. However under pressure from the national movement the association decided to withdraw its participation. *Filastin*, covered this with the article “Boycott of the Maccabiah Games in Tel Aviv: Nationalism Triumphs over the Zionist Machinations” reported upon this withdrawal.

We published news, stating in it that the administrative council of one of the groups in Jerusalem decided to participate in the Maccabi Games that the Zionists would be holding in Tel Aviv with their exposition, according to the latest information we had.

We are pleased to announce that the organization will not be represented in those games in any fashion because some of the members who had wanted to participate in the Maccabi Games indeed changed their position.

An informed source told us that when the group was invited and agreed to honor the invitation, it based its decision (far from political consideration) on the belief that sports does not enter into such matters and they never thought they would hurt anyone’s feelings.³³

Filastin expressed its frustration toward this festival especially its semi-military parade:

“And the pseudo army walked through the streets of Tel Aviv until it arrived at the new Maccabi stadium where the Maccabiah Games took place. And for “today only” the British flag was raised alongside the Zionist, for the occasion of placing the festivities under the auspices of the High

Commissioner who did not attend. The Maccabi Marches were held in front of the Mayor Tel Aviv – Dizinkov.”³⁴

In the Zionist strategy, the Maccabiah Games transcended its position as a sporting event and assumed much greater significance. The actual number of active foreign sportsmen involved in the festival was relatively small, and ranged (according to some estimates) between 350 and 500.³⁵ Maccabi aimed to secure group passports and group visas. To reduce the cost of the journey for the participants and visitors, and, more importantly, to bring as many Jews as possible into Palestine by circumventing the immigration restrictions imposed by the British administration.³⁶

In the article (Jewish Methods in Palestine for the Jewish “Tourists” to Remain) *Filastin* reported:

When it came to our knowledge that the Directorate of Immigration in Palestine gave permits to 15, 000 Jews for entry to Palestine with the description of “tourist” under the pretext of visiting the Jewish exhibition in Tel Aviv.... We put together several articles, expressing our fears that this “tourism” and the “visit” would be a means through which the Jews would seek for this huge number of “tourists” to stay in this country on a permanent basis.

It appears that our fears are about to be realized and that the “tourism” alluded to is nothing but a trick intended to cover up the entry of a large number of Jewish immigrants to the country. Under the description of tourists (they are granted permanent residence) in addition to the thousands upon thousands that enter by way of illegal immigration or trafficking.

We discovered this information in the following statement announced by the Jewish Monetary Council in Tel Aviv: “The Minority Council of Jaffa and Tel Aviv is honored to announce to the distinguished tourists and guests that the Office of Immigration of the Council is prepared to present the tourists free of charge all the necessary immigration information, specifically that which is related to applications to remain in Palestine...”

“Therefore, we turn the attention of the distinguished tourists and guests to this and to the fact and act to the contrary, and not support the tourists in remaining in Palestine!”

*“The Council, in its description as a national institution, is always ready to provide the people with proper services.”*³⁷

Under the pretext of encouraging tourism the British Foreign Office helped to facilitate the processing of visa application and even to ease up certain restrictions for participants and visitors to the Games. The article (Ten Thousand Jewish Athletes: By What Right Are They Permitted to Come?) said:

The citizens of Tulkarm sent a letter to *Filastin* denouncing these kind of games, expressing their surprise at the attitude of the Government toward these “military plans” which were intended to provoke the feelings of the Arabs. It asked “If the Arabs

planned to set up such games in these critical times, will the Government keep silent as it is doing now, or will it consider it as a violation to its security”.³⁸

Israeli sports historian George Eisen, in his dissertation “The Maccabiah Games: a history of Jewish Olympics” 1979, describing the reaction of the Arab Media (especially *Filastin*) to the Maccabiah Games wrote, “A particularly irritating element for the Arab leadership was the flood of visitors arriving daily to Jaffa, a dusty Arab town near Tel Aviv, the number of which (15,000 according to *Madaat El-Sharak* and *Filastin*) was highly inflated by the hostile Arab news media. However, their perception as to the real purpose of the Jewish influx was quite accurate”.³⁹ Eisen also states that *Filastin* bitterly complained about the reception of the arriving Maccabiah who were encouraged by Zionist spokesmen to settle and conquer the land through work. The paper (owned and edited by Christian Arab) pointedly asked whether the authorities were “taking sufficient precaution to ensure that the tourists entering the country would leave at the end of their stay under the visas granted, or whether it knew that many contemplated remaining permanently as residents.”⁴⁰

Eisen also states that the local Arab press expressed a marked interest in the Games long before the opening day, demanding the prohibition of the “Zionist indolence.”⁴¹ This vocal propaganda campaign had far-reaching consequences. Although the opening ceremony was to begin as planned, at 3:00 pm on April 2, 1935, the parade of athletes through the streets of Tel Aviv was abruptly canceled at the last moment by the British Police.⁴²

Filastin and *Difa* (established 1934) took a strong position against the second Maccabiah.⁴³ It is true that *Filastin* could not stop the games; however its protest constituted part of the general political resistance toward the Zionist plans and domination. In general, its attitude toward these Games was more reasonable than the National Leadership’s, who had to hold responsibility for not doing enough, not only to stop these Games, but to show its protests against them.

1935 Festival

As a reaction to the Maccabiad Festival, the youth movement which was represented by the Youth Conference and the Athletic leadership decided to prepare a festival similar to the Maccabiad. The British authorities put numerous obstacles in the way. In a special column *Filastin* expressed its opposition to this policy.

The Youth Conference had a vision a few months ago of setting up a Scouts parade. The Mandate Government obstructed this task and fiercely resisted it..... it prohibited the participants to walk in groups, and only let small teams parade in succession and from different directions. When the Festival finished the participants were prohibited to leave in groups but forced to leave as individuals. This is how the Mandate Government treats the Arab Scouts.

The reader has to compare the intransigence towards the Arabs with the tolerance shown towards the Jewish Maccabi, these people who come from different parts of the world to settle in (the Land of Israel) and gather as trained soldiers, enthusiastic to build their national home on the ruins of the Arabs. ⁴⁴

It was clear that The British Mandate saw in these parades a threat to its authority and the strengthening of the youth movement provoked the fear of the British authorities. ⁴⁵

Unfortunately, instead of concentrating its attention on the potential of the youth generation, sports and scouts, the national movement always put personal and partisan interests before national interests. In addition to the obstacles faced the festival, a new problem appeared that drew specific attention. The festival's organizing committee sent invitations to members of political and social elite, yet excluded others. The following is from the article "The Sports Federation and Partisanship" by Khalil Mazin in *Filastin*:

"The people heard that the Sports Federation sent an invitation for attending the great scouts' festival to his honor Hajj Amin al-Huseini and his honors Raghیب Bek Nashashibi the President of [Hizb Addifa'] (The Defense Party). They have been glad that the festival's organizers had distanced themselves from the partisanship pride, so they could maintain the values of real sportsmanship. But the people were greatly surprised when they knew that his honor Raghیب Bek did not attend the festival. I went today to Jerusalem and met with Mr. Rashad Shawwa, and I asked him if Raghیب Bek had received an invitation, he definitely denied. In the evening when I met Raghیب Bek in Jaffa, he repeated and assured me that he did not get an invitation." ⁴⁶

In the same issue on the front page another article "The Sports Federation and Partisanship" [*al-Ittihad Arriyadi wal-Asabiyyat*) argued:

The sports federation in Palestine or in any other country in the world is one of the first who is isolated from Partisanship, because the ethical goal of the sports movement contradicts this trait, you will see that a people like the British who are famous for their love for sports as an example, are the most distant from partisanship. When the PSF called for its parade which was held last Sunday, the country received it as an athletic phenomenon, far away from partisanship. The press – no matter what party it belongs to – also welcomed it..... We hope that the PSF will take these comments into consideration and accept them as they are concerns of the people who are concerned about the importance of impartiality of PSF and the need to move away from partisanship tendencies, which will affect everyone negatively." ⁴⁷

1936-1944

The national movement decided to set up a second festival in April 1936, but it postponed it because of the 1936 Revolt. In 1937, a committee was formed, and discussed a new Festival which was planned to take place at the end of 1937. Under the column (Jewish News) *Filastin* quoted from ha-Boker that the Mufti's Party (Hajj Amin al-Husseini) was organizing a strong youth movement in different cities and villages in order to set up a general parade in Jerusalem. It added that many meetings were conducted in Jaffa by Dr. Daoud al-Husseini and Ya'coob al-Ghusein, and that Husseini was to travel to Tulkarm to organize a youth movement there and select a few of them to participate in the parade. It added that Mr. Robert Young would supervise the organization of this parade, which was expected to draw a minimum of 5,000 people.⁴⁸ *Filastin* responded that the parade which ha-Boker was talking about and claiming to be organized by the Mufti [Hajj Amin al-Husseini], was in fact an event organized by the youth from different partisanship.⁴⁹

Because of the 1936 Revolt, the activities of the PSF were delayed, and the function of PSF was totally paralyzed by the end of the 1930's. A few of its members joined the Jewish PSA. *Filastin* covered news on matches between the Arab clubs -- especially the Orthodox clubs in Jaffa and the British Mandate teams. At that time when soccer suffered from the absence of the PSA, boxing (though not connected to the PSA), was promoted and took its place among other sports. *Filastin* extensively covered news about matches and the developments in boxing. In general, until the end of 1930s, sports news in *Filastin* was able to portray a clear picture about sports and its growth in Palestine. However at the same time Jewish sports were progressing and they particularly exploited the opportunities presented by the 1936–1939 Revolt – by increasing their matches and competitions with the British Mandate teams – during which time Arabic sports and sports coverage suffered a recession.

With the outbreak of World War II and the introduction of new emergency laws, the British ordered the closure of almost all papers. Only *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* were able to survive by adopting a moderate nationalist tone and publishing censored news.⁵⁰ This tone was noticeable in the coverage of sports news, especially in the reporting on the Jewish Sports Federation, (teams, festival and matches). Anyone could feel the objectivity of the news which was free of nationalistic agitation or enmity against the Zionist manipulation of the sports arena. At that time, as mentioned previously, some Arabic clubs joined the Jewish PFA because of the absence of the Arab PSA. Many matches were held between the Arabic teams and the British mandate and Jewish teams, with *Filastin* giving coverage. *Filastin* published the news of some festivals held by the Jewish athletic organizations, in which some Arab athletes from Palestine and Egypt participated. It also published news about donations which some Arabic clubs and athletes made to the victims of World War II, and to the Red Cross. In the article (Forming a Sport League for the Next Season) *Filastin* announced the formation of a league which consisted of 27 teams - Arabic, Jewish, British and Greek.⁵¹ It continued to cover news about the matches of this league until its suspension in October 1943.

1944-1948

By 1944, aspirations of bringing Arab clubs under one umbrella were solidifying. The clubs were many and varied. The Palestine Sport Federation in Haifa, for example, included 43 teams from various sports. Coincidentally, a football match was planned between the Egyptian army team and the Jewish-dominated PSA. But the Egyptian team refused to visit Palestine unless the Arab clubs also organized a team to play against them. This motivated the Arab clubs to establish their own regional federations so they could also compete against the Egyptian team, like the Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa federations. In May, a team was formed to compete with a select British Army team (which defeated the Palestinians 1-0).

It was these regional federations, along with the Arab Boxing Federation, that decided to reconstitute a national league. At a meeting held at the al-Qawmi Sports Club in Jaffa in September of 1944, the leaders of 35 clubs re-established the APSF.

*Due to the invitation by the Qawmi Club in Jaffa to the athletic clubs' representatives in Palestine, about the establishing of a general football association, we offer our gratitude to this club for its initiatives. For the spread of any game, it is necessary for any country to have its own associations.*⁵²

It was officially registered on September 13, and letters were distributed to all Arab clubs in Palestine, asking them to apply for membership to the federation. The group also sent letters to Arab clubs in neighboring states, informing them that Palestine had registered an Arab athletic federation. The group distributed its flag with an Arabic monogram to all Arabic clubs, which were divided by region.⁵³

The re-establishing of the PSF is considered to be an important stimulator for the sports media. Sports news became more comprehensive, inclusive and well organized. Full coverage was given to the PSA, its activities, and its meetings by regional and branch committees [lijan manatiq wa allijan far'ia].⁵⁴ It followed the news about all the matches and the championship tournaments. *Filastin* published news of the visits of the Arab teams from Arabic countries to Palestine and their visits to Arabic countries. This kind of news reflected national sentiments and the sense of brotherhood within these teams.

The PSA attempted to bring the British Mandate teams to its side, gaining the opportunity of the worsening of their 'relations' with the Jewish teams because of Jewish frustration and anger at the British authorities' refusal to allow Jewish Holocaust refugees from Europe to enter the country, a fierce armed struggle, agreed upon by most of the community's circles, was conducted against the Mandate regime's representatives.⁵⁵ These matches intensified from the end of 1945 until late 1947, and got special notice in *Filastin's* sport column. They were described with sentiments of pride as if competing with the British Mandate teams was one of the main goals for the Palestinian sport leadership.

In February 1946 *Filastin* published news about the formation of a Palestinian national selected team which was ready to play against the Mandate teams.⁵⁶ However, there was no information in *Filastin* about the participation of some of the members of this team in the matches with a selected team which included British and Jewish players, while the by-laws of the PSF prohibited competition and co-operation with the Zionist clubs and players.⁵⁷

At the end of 1947 the Arab PSF had achieved impressive results in various other areas including the organization, the competitions with Arab teams in the regional arena, and the number of clubs which it included. Therefore, the Zionist sport organization which was presented by *Palestine Football Association*, sensing the threat of the new PSF, tried to slow down its effectiveness by attracting the athletic clubs to participate and join its membership. In one of the reports sent by the Central Committee of the PSF to *Filastin*, it was remarked that:

*The Central Committee (of the PSF) has been informed that some of the clubs received reports from the Jewish Association of Soccer (PFA) in Palestine offering them to join this Association. Some of these clubs responded by showing their commitment to PSA, insisting on not joining the Zionist Association. Therefore, the PSA requested from the other clubs to send similar responses, and the Central Committee itself has also prepared these responses and has distributed them to the clubs, in order for them to be sent to the Zionist Association.*⁵⁸

Filastin published news which reflected the tight links between PSA, media and the current events. For example, the treasurer of the PSA got donations from the Palestinian clubs due to the disaster in Syria and Lebanon. The central committee called the athletic clubs – who were members in the PSA to support the Syrian Sport Association by donating money to be spent on the victims of the turmoil (when in 1945 the French raided and occupied the the parliament building and halted the constitutional life).⁵⁹ *Filastin* sport's column sometimes published tributes to Palestinian athletes who were released from prisons (due to their political activities). In November 1947 in its sports column it mentioned the Balfour Declaration – under the title “Sports condemns the Balfour Declaration”.

*Our sports representatives in Palestine in solidarity with all the national and social organizations, including the ASA and the athletic teams postponed their matches that were supposed to be held tomorrow because of the anniversary of the sinister (inauspicious) Balfour Declaration.*⁶⁰

In March 1944 Hussein Husni started to participate (as a co-editor) in the sport column [al-Ala'ab al-Riyadiyyah]. At that time Ibrahim Sakkijha was the editor of this column.⁶¹ Both the Editor and Husni made big changes to this column. At that time the themes in the news were full of indirect courageous critique of the British Mandate

voiced in a national sentiment. The very fact of it exists, as well as its interpretative and pedagogic characteristics, points to a significant development in the Palestinian elite's attitude to sport in this period, especially when compared with the scattered reports of the 1920s and 1930s.⁶²

Filistin's sports writer, Hussein Husni

No historic account of Palestinian athletics would be complete without mentioning the unique role of Hussein Husni, who came to Palestine from Egypt and, as previously mentioned, taught physical education [Kuliyyat athaqafa] in Jaffa and at [Rawdat al-Ma'aref]. He also served at the request of the Higher Islamic Committee as supervisor for the schools of the Islamic orphanage [Awqaf Dar al-Aitam al-Islamiya]. After the re-establishment of the APSF, Husni participated in establishing the track-and-field committee in 1945.

Husni's articles reflected an awareness of the essential role of sports and physical education, something rare at the time. He advocated physical exercise for women; he tried to generate interest in physical activity by pouring his knowledge of the benefits of physical exercise into his articles. He was aware of the health, ethical, national, cognitive, pedagogic and aesthetic benefits of sport at a time when many thought that sport was merely an amusement or recreational activity.⁶³

Husni criticized the department of Physical Education for their neglect of the body and for not having their own curriculum based on national demands.

Isn't it sad that some people who are concerned about the growth of their country – and who are trying to provide constructive ideas, are not getting any response to their calls? No wonder there isn't any response, because the administrators who were responsible for achieving this task were influenced by colonial policy, which deprived us from growth in this vital field (sport). It made us believe that science means stuffing the brains with information and theories. No, you honour, maybe this policy could work in the past, but today it becomes old, and can not be applied to the brains of the new generations. We hope that the department of physical education will have its own curriculum based on national demands. We hope that this department could direct the pupils in the right way. Do you still remember how many times you promised?⁶⁴

The department of physical education did not do enough to improve the health of pupils; the distribution of the physical education in the curriculum had no scientific basis. For example, the first grade did not get an hour of physical education while it had fourteen hours of Arabic language a week. The 4th – 11th grade got one hour of physical education a week,⁶⁵ which was not enough to serve the health and physical demands of the Palestinian pupils.

I received a few complaints from some teachers stating principals in schools do not pay attention to physical education; that they do not provide help or support to the teachers in order to make their work easier. I first hesitated to believe this news, thinking it could be individual complaints, but later I investigated and was surprised to find that there are people who ignore the place of sport. I was surprised also how these people forgot the place of sport in the institutes and universities as evidenced in Egypt, England and America; how in these countries specialities in physical education were included in their institutions. Dear Sirs, maybe you forgot that you teach the “nation’s” pupils every day the wisdom that says (good mind in a good body). In order to prepare the pupil to digest the information we have to strengthen his body and maintain his health, this can be achieved through the sports we provide, even during leisure time. May be you know this very well.⁶⁶

Under the title “Nationalism in our Festivals”, Husni expresses his sadness about how national dignity had been harmed, when some of the educational committees in our schools intended to assign the patronage of their school festival to non-Arabs (The British) according to tradition.

“We claim that we are civilized in every aspect of life; that a big change occurred in our traditions; however, we are still as we are. Isn’t it shameful to our national aspirations to have a non-Arab leading our festivals as long as we are in an Arab land and have Arab participants (pupils)? Isn’t it enough that we still brag about this or that – yet while bragging we still realize its consequences? Isn’t it enough to be characterized with indifference, reliance and the lack of self-confidence? How could we request that other nations recognize our existence without doing anything to make them respect us?”⁶⁷

In one article, Husni described the sorry state of Jerusalem’s athletic facilities, where the city had only six playing fields, four for foreigners and two for the Arabs. One of the Arab fields, that of the YMCA, had been occupied by the army for seven months, he complained ... the second belonged to Terra Santa and was the site of all matches. He remarked, “We all ask: ‘Where is the government?’ Others ask: ‘Where is the municipality?’ I say frankly: ‘They are not ready to offer assistance for the benefit of bodies.”⁶⁸ His and others’ sports articles were published daily after the revival of the APSF, demonstrating the connection between institutional unity and a strong written message.

Husni criticized the municipalities for their negligence. As in other articles he always pointed out the importance of improving the health of the youth generation in defending his country. He believed that one of the main functions of sport is the preparation of the youth to defend their country, especially, when Palestine was surrounded by threats from all directions.

In another article he reflects upon the role of sports in civilization – “The more the Palestinians will sacrifice for the sake of athletic progress, the faster they will reach the level of development and civilization”. The article also reflected his concern about Palestine’s progress and growth. Even today we do not read or hear these words which should be a motto for the progress current Palestinian sport. His awareness of the great potential which lies in sport -- whether it be in health, or pedagogical or social issues – distinguished him as a great national educator and agitator of physical education and sports.

*Why don't we get more benefits from our clubs by improving, stimulating and encouraging their work in order to get a better performance? Every Palestinian has to know that for every penny he will pay for the growth of sport, in exchange he will buy glory and honor for his country, oh how great is glory!*⁶⁹

In order to promote sport and physical activity, Husni called on the Imams and preachers in the mosques to direct the attention of the people to take care of their bodies. A call that even today we don't hear about.

Husni always made visits to various Palestinian cities, he wrote about sport in their schools and clubs; in order to promote sport there, with his own words he described the nature the conditions of sport he found. After a visit to Hebron he wrote:

*Today we see that this city going forward to develop sport. You could not imagine the growth that has taken place in just one year; you will judge with me that this is all because of the strength and active work of the youth. This growth started in 1945 with the formation off athletic clubs and scouts teams . Clubs such as [al-Ayyoobi, al-Thaqafi, al-Shabiba, al-Qawmi and Rabitat al-Muthaqafin al-Arab] all work in a sincere manner in order to promote enthusiasm among their members; we were informed that [Nadi al-Shabiba] is fulfilling its message completely not only in sport, but also in the cultural and social spheres. In order to be on the top of the list, we require that this city has to do more to achieve better results in sports.*⁷⁰

Husni’s ideas and professional support to the sport movement in general and to the PSF made a magnificent contribution to the sport movement; he was concerned that this movement would continue to take the right path in achieving better results and improving the quality of its performance.

The sports association is a result of the fruitful efforts of a number of our best youth, who have strived to promote excellence in sports particularly after they became aware of the difficulties facing Arabic Sports because of Jewish domination. Some of the youth called for a meeting which was the reason for forming our Arabic association which we are proud of. The

Association is on an unknown road in its confrontation with the Jewish Football Association, where it faces different factors which we will not mention here. However, the Association did not stop it kept striving until there were sixty five clubs in Palestine. ⁷¹

In the Court of FIFA

In Palestine the conflict arose over which sports federation bore the right to represent Palestine abroad through joining the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). At the time, the Jewish-controlled PSA had played five international matches representing Palestine, and the Arab-dominated APSF sought to challenge their right to do so. A memorandum sent to FIFA by the APSF gave a brief explanation of the nature of the conflict and increasing Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine. While expressing appreciation for FIFA's persistence in seeking a solution to the athletic problem in Palestine, the APSF suggested that Palestine be represented by two federations, one Arab and one Jewish. "Simply we could say," the group wrote, "that the members of your federation will not succeed in achieving what the British administration could not do."⁷²

The issue of the APSF's membership application to FIFA was discussed at an international conference in Luxemburg in August 1946. A representative of the PSA spoke, saying that his association was democratic, with a Jewish majority. He argued that if Arab clubs would only become a majority in the association, it would prove the group's "democratic" intent. He also claimed that the number of Arab clubs in Palestine did not exceed four or five, and that this was in fact representative of athletic inferiority. He proposed that the application be rejected.⁷³

The delegation of Lebanon supported permitting the APSF entry, arguing that FIFA's goal was to allow representation of every football league and that the presence of two in one country should not pose a problem. It was clear, however, that FIFA members opposed the entry of another league in Palestine, and the motion was rejected.

Seeking to ease the sting of rejection, the Syrian Sport Federation subsequently informed the APSF that it would be included under its umbrella, allowing the APSF to compete more freely in international events. Still the APSF was also excluded from membership in FIFA, a fact that reflected the bias in the organization towards the PFA, the weakness of Arab support for such initiatives, and the Zionist movement's ability to organize support to achieve its goals.

On March 15, 1945, the following excerpt appeared in the sports section of *Filastin* by Husein Husni:

A sports delegation led by the PSA is expected to travel to Egypt in order to plan games between Egypt and Palestine at the beginning of next month. We are asking the delegation to discuss the issue of the Palestinian Football

Association, which is not Arab, and is recognized internationally and representing us against our will. Likewise, we are asking Egypt to intercede on our behalf and insist on the elimination of the PFA. This association (the PFA) does not represent anyone but itself and its community, and not the Arab-Palestinian people. If this is impossible at this time, then we demand two-thirds of its seats, and the last third will remain with it according to the governmental laws of the country. This association was founded in 1922 [sic; 1928] and represented Palestine internationally while the game among the Arabs was still in its formative stage. Twelve members manage this association. None of them are Arab, it is located in Tel Aviv, and until this day still represents Palestine.. As long as this irregular and exceptional situation does not come to an end, efforts must be invested in Egypt in order to establish an Oriental Sports Association that will begin operating immediately.⁷⁴

1947-1948

Mentioning the role of sport in achieving national goals and building a modern state, was the main tendencies which characterised *Filastin's* sport column in the second half of 1940's. In 28 November 1947, (as Tamer Zorek mentions) one day before the United Nations' historic vote on the partition of Palestine, the following excerpt appeared in the sport column of *Filastin*:

Our aim is to make Palestine Arab forever, and that's what every Arab in this land and in the sister land, is hoping for. Then, we want a strong and respected state, abundant with grace and importance. None of this will happen unless all of us become strong and healthy, competent to bear the burden, and confident in our vigor and power as a nation that has to survive. Then, we should be ready to serve our country and the best chosen path that will lead us to this level. If we wish our country to reach this goal, we must look for the best facilities to realize it.

The occupying states invest great effort toward

الألعاب الرياضية

منتخب فلسطين

جرت الساعة الثالثة بعد ظهر يوم الجمعة لباراة الكبرى لانتقاء منتخب فلسطين العام لكرة القدم وقد ابدع اللاعبون وعلى الاخص اسادور وهباب وفخري وقابوق وزرقا ونجار وايو حضم وستجتم اللجنة المركزية للاتحاد الرياضي الفلسطيني يوم ٢٢ الجاري لانتقاء المنتخب

مقرارات منظفة يانا

عقدت لجنة منظفة يانا للاتحاد الرياضي الفلسطيني بعد ظهر يوم الثلاثاء الماضي اجتماعها هاما قررت فيه مايلي :

١ - وافقت على اتساق النادي الرياضي الارثوذكسي يانا الى الاتحاد ورفق الامرال لجنة المركزية

٢ - اقرت جدول مباريات تنس الطاولة الدورية التي بدأت مساء الجمعة «امس»

٣ - تقررا انذار النادي الرياضي بالسافرية اندارا نهائيا لسوء سلوك لاعبيه

٤ - تقرر الطلب من اللجنة الداعمة لكرة القدم البدء بمباريات منتخب للناطق في الشهر القادم بحيث تكون دورية

٥ - تقرر الطلب من اللجنة العامة لتنس الطاولة حساب علامات خاصة لكل من المباريات الفردية وللمباريات المزهوجة

٦ - بحثت في نتائج المباريات الدورية بكرة القدم واتخذت القرارات الفناجسة

في تنس الطاولة

كان امس ابتداء للمباريات الدورية في تنس الطاولة لمنظفة يانا وقد جرت اول المباريات بين فريق النادي الاهلي يانا وفريق جمعية الشبان للسلاج، وقاعة الاول الذي تغلب بخصم فقط مقابل اربع احرزها الفريق الثاني وقد ابدع في اللعب كل من بيبي وكياي وبيدس وطباع

في كرة القدم

تجرت بعد ظهر اليوم على ملعب السككية الارثوذكسية بأقالات مباريات في كرة القدم الاولى الساعة الثالثة بين الفريق الاول للنادي الارثوذكسي وفريق اللاسكي للبريطاني والثانية الساعة ١٠٣٠ بين الفريق الثاني للنادي الارثوذكسي وفريق النادي الارثوذكسي بالاحد والثالثة الساعة ١٢١٥ بين الفريق الثالث للنادي الارثوذكسي وفريق خريجي القدس نراسنطة

غزة - لراسنا - جرت بعد ظهر الاحد الماضي مباراة هدية في كرة القدم على ملعب البلدية بغزة بين فريق نادي غزة الرياضي وفريق نادي الاتحاد الارثوذكسي للقدس فتغلب الاول بأصا بين مقابل اصا بواحدة جنين - جرت بعد ظهر امس مباراة في

the corruption of the occupied people, their deflection from thinking about their country's interests and encourages them to think instead about their personal interests and satisfying 'bread and amusements'. If someone is still resistant, the conqueror reacts harshly and punishes him by various means. Thus, the reformers have no escape from finding a way to publicize their ideas among the people and to spread their doctrines and opinions without fear of resistance or oppression.

By way of sport they can reach the target, as occurred in Sweden, Czechoslovakia ... and Hungary, and as we want to occur in Palestine. In the next issues we will discuss what has happened in each of these countries, and then we will talk about Palestine.⁷⁵

In early 1948, during the confrontations with the Zionists in Palestine, members of the athletic clubs sacrificed their life for the sake of their country. A famous athlete such as Zaki al-Darhali, who was playing for the National Selected Team as a left wing, he and his colleague Said Shunneir the secretary of PSF's Jaffa regional committee died in the bombing of the social services centre [Sarai] building in Jaffa by the Zionist gangs. On the first page *Filastin* published the news of this incident and his obituary.⁷⁶

In the condolence column under the title "The Martyrdom [Istishhad] a Youth in the Battle Field", *Filastin* brought up this news:

The Club of al-Ittihad al-Qarawi (The Village Union Club) offers its condolences for the death of its active member and a great athlete the martyr Aref al-Nu'man who died in the public hospital in Jerusalem after he was wounded in the battle field.⁷⁷

In another condolence:

The athletic committee of the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa offers its condolences for one of its members: Muhammed al-Naqa who fell as a martyr while he was accomplishing his national duty in the battle of Abu Kabir, he was 22." ⁷⁸

Conclusion

The sports news in *Filastin* constituted an important part of the news sections; it was a mirror to the growth of Arab sport and to the Arab- Jewish sports competition.

The detaining of most of the Palestinian documents after 1948 by the Israeli authorities caused a huge problem in documenting its history as well as conducting research on this subject. Therefore, *Filastin* could be regarded as an important alternative source for writing sports history in Palestine.

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Endnotes

- 1 Sorek, Tamer, "The Sports Column as a Site of Palestinian Nationalism in the 1940s", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 2007, p. 605-616.
- 2 Filastin 13 April, 1912. Palestine's first football team was organized in 1908 at Jerusalem's St. George School. (Doctor Izzat Tannous, then a member of the Arab Higher Committee, was one of the players.) In 1909, this team defeated that of the American University in Beirut, then considered one of the best in the region.
- 3 In February of 1913, lawyer Francis Khayyat was elected president of the club; Anton Jallad and Alfonse Rok became vice presidents and Alfonse Alonso and Fuad Kassab were selected as treasurer and secretary, respectively.
- 4 Filastin February 23, 1913
- 5 The very first of such sports exhibitions was held in Rahovot colony in 1908. It was held annually until 1914 when it was boycotted by the Maccabi Organization, which opposed the presence of Arab guards and workers who were employed in the colony. During these military – style parades, Zionist flags would be flown while a musical band would lead the marches through town and enthusiastic speeches were given in Hebrew.
- 6 Khalidi, Issam, "Body and Ideology: Early Athletic in Palestine 1900-1948", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 27, 2007, p. 44-58.
- 7 Filastin April 12, 1921.
- 8 Until the end of 1947, *Filastin* continued covering schools' annual festival
- 9 Sorek, Tamer, "The Sports Column as a Site of Palestinian Nationalism in the 1940s", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 2007, p. 605-616.
- 10 Khalidi, Issam, "The Zionist Movement and Sport in Palestine", *Electronic Intifada*, April 27, 2009.
- 11 Khalidi, Rashid, *Palestinian Identity the Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, (NY: Columbia University, 1997) 126
- 12 Filastin March 28, 1931
- 13 Sports news did not go without "flattering" the High Commissioner, this article was sent by a reader who wanted to show how the High Commissioner was concerned about sports.
- Under the title (The Spread of the Sports Movement) in December 17, 1927 *Filastin* brought this news: "The sports movement has been rapidly spread all over the country. Of course it has to be spread fast, especially a country which has a High Commissioner who is excited in sport games. Because of the excitement of his Honor in sports, one day he wanted to attend a football match, but the weather was rainy, the lady Bloomer prohibited him by closing the doors of his residency. However, he surprised her by climbing the wall and jumped outside and ran to watch the match! I suggest to the athletic committee of the Orthodox Club in Jaffa to consecrate its new soccer field under the auspice of his Honor."
- 14 Filastin May 3, 1927.
- 15 In the early twenties, the British found the first horse race club which was called [Jimkhana], and then its name was changed to Jaffa Race Club [Nadi Assibaq al-Yafi] then to [Nadi alIttihad al-Yafi]. In Akko another club was founded in 1926 by the name the (Club of Promoting Sport) [Nadi Tashji Arriyada]. Both of these clubs practiced horse betting.
- 16 Filastin September 22, 1931
- 17 Khalidi, Issam, "Body and Ideology: Early Athletic in Palestine 1900-1948", *Jerusalem Quarterly*, No. 27, 2007, p. 44-58.
- 18 Filastin January 18, 1933.
- 19 Filastin April 6, 1939.
- 20 Filastin May 29, 1931.
- 21 Filastin April 16, 1929
- 22 Filastin April 6, 1926 The title was (A Match which Almost Ended with a Revolt)
- 23 The Palestine Bulletin March 24, 1925. The ordinance in question reads as follows: "The flag or emblem of any state may not be carried or exhibited for the purpose of any partisan demonstrations." The governor of the Jerusalem-Jaffa District replied: I have the honor of informing you that the flag was the club flag of the Hakoah football team (from Vienna)... It is apparent that the Hakoah Club flag is not a state flag, and equally apparent that it was not being carried or exhibited for the purpose of any partisan demonstration, and that the ordinance was therefore in no way infringed.

- 24 Kaufman, Haim. "Jewish Sports in the Diaspora, Yishuv, and Israel: Between Nationalism and Politics," *Israel Studies* – Vol. 10, No. 2, summer, 2005, p. 147-167.
- 25 Khalidi, Issam, "Palestine Football Association: The Need to Streamline History," *hpalestinesport.net*
- 26 Filastin March 28, 1931
- 27 Filastin January 21, 1933. In this issue, *Filastin* mentioned the conflict which happened between the Orthodox Club in Jaffa and the Arab Sport Club in Jerusalem which lasted for few months. The reason was that the Orthodox Club of Jaffa refused the assignment of a Zionist referee.
- 28 Al-Sifri, Issa. Palestine between the Mandate and Zionism, [Filastin baina al-Intidab wa al-Sahyoonia] Jerusalem Quarterly 27 [57] (Jaffa: 1937) 184-187.
- 29 Khalidi, Issam, "[Al-Maccabiad, al-Sahyooniya wa Istiqlal al-Riyada]," *al-Arabi Monthly* No. 548, (Kuwait).
- 30 *Ibid*
- 31 *Ibid*
- 32 Quoted by Eisen, George. "*The Maccabiah Games: a history of the Jewish Olympics*". Diss., UM, 1979. p. 178
- 33 Filastin March 20, 1932
- 34 Filastin April 1st, 1932
- 35 Eisen, George, p. 170
- 36 Eisen, George, p. 122
- 37 Filastin March 31, 1932
- 38 Filastin March 30, 1935
- 39 Haaretz, April 4, 1932 p. 2. Quoted by Eisen George p. 175 The Jewish press followed with attention the Arab public opinion in this issue.
- 40 Haaretz April 4, 1932, p.4. Quoted by Eisen George p. 176.
- 41 Davar April 3, 1935. Quoted by Eisen George p.240.
- 42 Davar April 1, 1935, p.1 Quoted by Eisen George p. 240.
- 43 Khalidi, Issam, "Sport News in al-Difa 1934-1948 [alAkhbar alRiyyadiyya fi Sahifa al-Difa]", *Hawliyyat al Quds*. No. 9. 2010.
- 44 Filastin July 16, 1935.
- 45 Sifri, Issa, *Ibid*. p.195. In its official annual report in 1935 under the title of "The Youth Elements" the Government states that: "One of the phenomenons which had its essence in the National Movement was the strengthening of numerous scouts and athletic teams, and the enrollment of the youth in organized institutions under different names. As the end of the year approached, the youth cadre has made firm its position and has become so influential to defy the authority of the Palestinian leaders."
- 46 Filastin July 18th, 1935
- 47 Filastin July 18th, 1935
- 48 Filastin June 6th, 1937
- 49 Filastin June 6th, 1937
- 50 Musallam, Adnan, "Turbulent Times in the Life of the Palestinian Arab Press: The British Era, 1917 -1948", http://admusallam.bethlehem.edu/publications/Turbulent_Times.htm
<http://www.ifla.org/files/hq/papers/ifla75/106-matusiak-en.pdf>
- 51 Filastin January 27, 1942
- 52 Filastin April 5, 1944.
- 53 The Federation was represented by a Central Committee that supervised the athletic organizational process. It consisted of Ibrahim Nuseibeh and Roq Farraj for the Jerusalem region, Yunis Nafa'a and Fahd Abdelfattah for the Haifa region, Abdelrahman al-Habab and Spiro Iqdis for the Jaffa region, Rashad al-Shawwa for the Gaza Region, Jamal Yusuf Qasim for the Nablus region, and Muhammad al-Zu'ubi for the Galilee region.
- 54 In October 21, 1946 *Filastin* announced that the branch committees included soccer, basketball, heavy games (weight lifting, box and wrestling), table tennis, track and field, and tennis.
- 55 Haggai, Harrif, Galily, Yair, "Sport and Politics in Palestine, 1918-48: Football as a mirror reflecting the Relations between Jews and Briton". *Soccer and Society*, Vol. 4, No.1, Spring, 2003, pp.41-56
- 56 Filastin February 17, 1946
- 57 The editor of *Difa's* sport column Abu al-Jibin, Khair Addin [Qissat Haiati fi Filastin wa al-Kuwait] Dar al-Shorooq, Amman, 2002, p.442 pointed out that some of the Palestinian soccer players who played in the national selected team (only Arabs) had participated in the Palestine selected team which included the British and Jewish players. The PSF rules prohibited any competition with the Zionist athletic teams.
- 58 Filastin November 20, 1946
- 59 Filastin July 4, 1945
- 60 Filastin October 24, 1946
- 61 Khair Addin, Abu al-Jibeen, [Qissat Haiati Fi Filastin wa alKuwait] (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Shorook, 2002) p. 464 mentions in his book that the editor of this column was Ibrahim Saqqijha.
- 62 Sorek, Tamer, "The Sports Column as a Site of Palestinian Nationalism in the 1940s", *Israel*

- Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 2007, p. 605-616.
- 63 Filastin February 28, 1946
- 64 Filastin February 6, 1946
- 65 [al-Mawsoo'a al-Falastiniya: al-Tarbiya wal Ta'lim] (Lebanon: Beirut, 1990) part 2, Vol. 3, p. 512-538
- 66 Filastin October 25, 1945
- 67 Filastin June 25, 1946
- 68 Filastin August 23, 1946. The football fields in Jerusalem were those affiliated with the YMCA, St. George's, al-Rawda, Terra Santa School, Hashmonai, Zion School, al-Umma School, al-Katamon.
- 69 Filastin March 23, 1946
- 70 Filastin September 3, 1945
- 71 Filastin January 31, 1947
- 72 APSF, Memorandum to FIFA, Jaffa, 1946.
- 73 The number of Arabic clubs in operation in Palestine at this time exceeded 60. On one hand, Zionism used sport to achieve political goals; on the other hand, it also tried to sever any perceived links between sport and politics.
- 74 The translation was quoted from Tamer Sorek's article "Palestinian Nationalism has left the field: A shortened history of Arab Soccer in Israel". *Middle East Studies*, No. 35, (2003), 417- 437.
- 75 Quoted from Sorek, Tamer, "The Sports Column as a Site of Palestinian Nationalism in the 1940s", *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 13, No. 3, July 2007, p. 605-616.
- 76 Filastin January 6, 1948.
- 77 Filastin January 10, 1948
- 78 Filastin February 14, 1948. Al-Naqa was a sport columnist in the [Sha'b] newspaper.