

A Farcical Moment? Nabulsi Exceptionalism and the 1908 Ottoman Revolution

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Throughout the twentieth century and most of the nineteenth, the city of Nablus (“Little Damascus,” as coined by Maqdisi) evoked images of soap, *knafeh*, and tolerance of homosexuality. It was also a region of sporadic rebellions by its surrounding peasantry. The epitaph *Jabal al-Nar*, “the Mountain of Fire” (acquired during the 1936 Revolt), has become synonymous with the city of Nablus and its history, evoking the 1834 rebellion of Qasim al-Ahmad against the Egyptian armies of Ibrahim Pasha as well as a series of revolts that punctuated the Ottoman, Mandate, and Israeli periods after that.¹ Ahmad’s peasant rebellion is often seen, with some exaggeration, as a turning point in the formation of Palestinian nationalism and a separatist Palestinian identity.² Little is known however of the city as a bastion of conservatism and a center for counter-revolutionary activities. Local historians have keenly observed this other side of Nabulsi temperament, mainly through their preoccupation with the stable, the continuous, and the quotidian. In this historical note, I will examine a short and crucial episode when the city rallied *against* the overthrow of the autocratic regime of Abdulhamid II and *for* the restoration of Hamidian despotism.

By most contemporary accounts, the Young Turk Revolution and the (re) adoption of the suspended constitution (*İkinci Meşrutiyet Devri*) in April 1908 was a pivotal moment for the Arab provinces, and for Palestine in particular. It heralded the end of despotic rule by Sultan Abdulhamid II; it put an end to press control and press censorship, and made possible a renaissance of publishing and dissemination of newspapers, books, and pamphlets; and it allowed for the freedom of assembly and, within limits,

the formation of political parties in Syria and elsewhere – including parties calling for regional autonomy. Finally, it reintroduced the system of qualified democratic participation of all regional and ethnic groups in the parliament within the context of the idea of *Osmanlilik* – common Ottoman citizenship. Mass celebrations of *Hürriyet* (the “declaration of freedom”) were widely reported and photographed in the public squares of Beirut, Damascus, Jaffa (in front of the city *saraya*), and Jerusalem, as well as in a large number of district centers such as Tripoli, Nablus, Latakia, and Zahla. Although regional officers orchestrated many of those celebrations, many were spontaneous expressions of support for the rebellion. Nevertheless, a number of accounts diverge from this seeming consensus on the significance of these celebrations. At least one case, Ihsan al-Nimr’s history of Nablus, stakes out a strident position of dissent, seeing the revolution as a retrogressive event, a stab in the back, and even a *farcical moment*. The new regime under the aegis of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and its successors in 1913 was described as having introduced, instead of freedom and decentralization, increased centralization, standardization of bureaucratic governance, and Turkification of the administrative apparatus.

Support for the CUP in southern Syria (i.e., Palestine and Transjordan) seems to have been based in the Jerusalem district. Its leaders included the commander of the Jerusalem gendarmerie, Sami Bey al-Halabi, and Shaykh Musa al-Budayri, a prominent teacher in the Sultani schools. The link with the Anatolian CUP was Amin Beyk, a clerk in the Jerusalem post office and the brother of Tal‘at Pasha, who later served as minister of interior. In Nablus, the local CUP was made up of mid-level government officials, urban clerks, and officers in local armed forces. They established what, according to Ihsan al-Nimr, was the first modern revolutionary organization in Palestine, known as Nadi al-Qalb (the Heart Club). Its leadership committee was made up of Husni Bey, commander of the Nablus garrison; Amin Bey al-Squlelli, head of the Radif forces (military auxiliaries); Hajj Muhammad ‘Abduh, the mayor of Nablus; ‘Abd al-Fattah Malhas and Haydar Bey Tuqan, both city merchants. They were subsequently joined by Raghīb Agha al-Nimr, who became the chief inspector of the party organizations in all of southern Syria.³

When news of the revolt of the Third Army in Macedonia and the subsequent proclamation of the constitution in Istanbul reached Nablus in mid-April 1908, the governor, Amin al-Tarazi, refused – in a display of loyalty to the Sultan, to announce it. The decision to celebrate the event was taken by the mayor, Hajj Muhammad ‘Abduh, who initiated the celebrations from the Nadi al-Qalb headquarters. Celebrations were muted in Nablus, but wildly enthusiastic in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Acre.

Revolutions are continuously being re-examined by historians, with the Ottoman revolution even more so in light of the circumstances of Great War, and the aftermath of the Sykes-Picot arrangements. The centennial recollections of the 1908–1909 events, and the attempts made at restoring the ancien régime of the sultanate, leading to the devastating years of war in Syria, Iraq, and Anatolia, has rekindled interest how these events were written in local histories, shedding new light on what was happening at the regional level and in the countryside. Here we examine the treatment of those momentous events by two local histories of Nablus, written by Ihsan al-Nimr and Muhammad

‘Izzat Darwaza, respectively. Their significance, in part, lies in their claim for Nablus of an exceptional status within the rebellion, that of a bulwark for Hamidian support in Palestine, and partly in their postulation, especially in the case of Nimr, that the Young Turk “revolution” was a marginal, if not contrived, event as far as the local population was concerned. In addition, as we shall see, both historians claim that their version of events constitutes a *national history* seen from a local perspective, rather than an isolated micro-history of a city.

What gives potency to these two accounts is the solid amount of investigation invested in them by the authors (who were political actors as well as self-defined historians), and the fact that they were both eyewitnesses and participants in the political struggles of the period. Despite the significant overlap in their accounts, Darwaza and Nimr stood at opposite sides of the ideational divide in Ottoman Syria. Ihsan al-Nimr, a descendent of the most feudal of the landholding families in Nablus, was a solid supporter of the Islamic *salafi* currents and Hamidian Ottomanism; meanwhile, Darwaza, the plebian militant, adhered briefly to the ideals of the CUP, and subsequently moved to the Ottoman Decentralization party, and later to the Freedom and Accord party, also known as the Liberal Union (*hizb al-hurriya wa-l-i’tilaf* in Arabic, *hürriyet ve itilâf fırkası* in Turkish). I will examine Nimr’s and Darwaza’s accounts here and contrast them with the view of the events from Jerusalem, as recorded and analyzed by Ruhi al-Khalidi, a prominent Ottoman civil servant and deputy to the Ottoman parliament.

The Causes of the Ottoman Revolution and the Young Turks by Ruhi al-Khalidi, published in Cairo immediately after the event, was probably the earliest assessment of the rebellion and its potential impact on Palestine and the Arab provinces.⁴ The author saw the April events as the culmination of the post-Tanzimat struggle for democracy, constitutionalism, and decentralization. On the centenary of its appearance, historian Khalid Ziyada issued a retrospective assessment of its impact and the lasting legacy of its author.⁵ Published as a serialized series of articles in Rashid Rida’s *al-Manar*, the book was released before the sultan was deposed in 1909, the seizure of power by the CUP, and the attempted restoration of the ancien régime. Khalidi uses the term *inqilab* (“overturning”) for the Ottoman Revolution to distinguish it from *thawra*, which in his usage had the connotation of agitation, mutiny, and insurrection.⁶ For Khalidi, the movement realized the long awaited restoration of the democratic freedoms and reforms launched by the first Ottoman Constitution of 1876, and a vindication of the ideals of Midhat Pasha, governor of Syria, who came to be known as the “father of the constitution.” Attacking the repressive state apparatus of Sultan Abdulhamid II (though without directly naming the sultan as a culprit), Khalidi anticipated the ushering in of an era of federalism, constitutional freedoms, autonomy for the provinces, and guarantees of equality for ethnic and national groups. He (mistakenly) foresaw the CUP as an advocate for decentralization. On the future of Palestine, despite his well-known criticism of Zionism, Khalidi compares the achievements of the German and Jewish colonies favorably with the corrupt Ottoman administration, saddled by fiscal debt.⁷ To him they were European challenges to the modernist claims of the ancien régime, which the CUP ultimately would be able to fulfill – or at least strive to realize.

Khalidi's *Causes of the Ottoman Revolution* provides an overarching and historical overview of the Ottoman Revolution that is both utopian and positivist. In his view, the second Constitutional Revolution performed, or rather sought to perform, for the Ottoman realm what the French Revolution did for France: ushering in modernity by overthrowing feudalism and absolutist despotism in Islamic reformist garb. To Khalidi, Islamic reform allowed the Ottomans to avoid the class violence of the French revolution. His perspective was an imperial one and Palestine was a footnote in this scheme. His distance from the region at the moment of writing (he was by then Ottoman consul in Bordeaux) and his early death in 1913 prevented him from examining the changes exacted by the revolution at the local level.

But not all Arab observers were enthusiastic about the events of April 1908 and the promises of the Young Turks. The historian 'Adel Manna' notes that partisans of the CUP in Syria and Palestine exerted great efforts in order to mobilize public celebrations in support of the rebellion, while in inland cities, especially Nablus, support continued to be expressed for Abdulhamid and the *ancien régime*, even after the sultan was deposed.⁸ This was in contrast to the situation in Jaffa and Jerusalem, where local political figures and the intelligentsia were substantially, if not solidly, behind the constitutional movement. One reason for this divergence, Manna' suggests, was the considerable penetration of European interests, economic and cultural, in the coastal cities, and the relative economic autarky of Nablus. Jerusalem and Jaffa also had large Jewish and Christian populations with important connections to Western official and charitable circles.⁹ In Nablus, on the other hand, both Christian and Jewish (Samaritan) populations were marginal.

Khalidi's celebratory view of the 1908 events was meant as a general assessment of the Young Turk revolution. To understand what was happening on the local level we must now turn to the writings of local historians, Ihsan al-Nimr and Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza.

"I Can Hardly See Palestine on the Map"

Ihsan al-Nimr's family background and his early education were crucial in molding his worldview. The Nimrs were a patrician family of tax farming *aghas* in Syria and Palestine and one of the most prominent clans of tax farmers (*multazimin*) in the Nablus region. Ihsan's great grandfathers were guardians of the hajj routes in the Karak region. Other ancestors included a series of judges and Ottoman bureaucrats, including the *daftardar* (treasurer) and chief *waqf* administrator of Damascus. During the lifetime of Ihsan's father, Najib Agha, and uncle, Husayn Agha, the family lost its status as the major tax farmers in the region to local competitors, the Jarrars of Sanur and 'Abd al-Hadis of 'Arraba.¹⁰

Ihsan grew up in the Nimr family compound in old Nablus, where he received a traditional Qur'anic *kuttab* education with his sisters Shamsa and Nabiha and his primary education at Maktab al-Khan and the Maktab Rashid Sultanic school. His secondary education ("the worst years of my life") was undertaken at al-Najah College, where he was a student of 'Izzat Darwaza and an agitator for "idealistic causes."¹¹ As a student leader he was so self-confident as to be insufferable. Nu'ayma Ziyad narrates an amusing episode

where, after hearing him in a public debate, Darwaza and another teacher, Shaykh Fahmi Hashim, praise him as the “future orator of Palestine.” Nimr responded to this praise by telling them: “‘I do not accept, for if Palestine is large in your eyes, I can hardly see it on the map.’ They said: ‘then you are the orator of the Arabs’ [*khatib al-‘Arab*]. ‘Now I accept,’ he said.”¹² He was expelled from Najah for his clashes with students and teachers over “religious issues and his zealotry,” and continued his education in National College at Shwayfat in Mount Lebanon.¹³ He tried to study history at the American University of Beirut but was unable due to financial reason. From then on, Nimr was self-taught, or, as Ziyad puts it, “he graduated from his own university,” which explains his eclectic writing style. Nimr immersed himself in classical historical writings such as those of Ibn al-Athir, Ya‘qubi, and Ibn Khaldun. After the Great War, he established contacts with Saudi scholars in Najd and adopted a Wahhabi perspective on religious interpretation. He read and internalized Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Qayyim, and, especially, the work of Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab and Sulayman ibn Samhan al-Najdi.¹⁴ But he was also influenced by Islamic modernists whose writings he received from Egypt: these included Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad ‘Abduh, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi, Mustafa al-Ghalayini, and Mustafa Lutfi Manfaluti. He also wrote extensively in Islamic journals such as *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (edited in Jaffa by his friend ‘Abdallah al-Qalqili) and *al-Tamadun al-Islami* (Damascus) on the twin themes of moral rearmament of youth and jihad.¹⁵

In ideological terms, Nimr continued to praise the Ottoman regime in his writing for many decades after its fall. Among several issues, he refers to the Hamidian justice system, which allowed litigation against the High Porte, and contrasts it with Mandate courts. He illustrated this by recalling the court case raised, and won, by the Daraghma family in Tubas, in partnership with the Hafiz and ‘Abd al-Fattah Tuqan, against the confiscation of their land by the sultan’s agents in the Ghawr region. The confiscation was annulled and the litigants’ rights to the land restored.¹⁶ He remained politically active during the Mandate period, but refused to belong to any mainstream nationalist or Islamic party. Instead was involved in local activities against Zionism and the British administration. In the 1920s, he collaborated with the trade union movement in Nablus to establish the syndicate of Nablus shoemakers, in order to combat the import and sale of Bata shoes from Czechoslovakia, which he saw as undermining the local shoe industry.¹⁷ In 1929, he was arrested and sentenced to three months’ imprisonment for leading anti-British demonstrations.¹⁸ In 1933, he collaborated with Nabulsi nationalists to found the Youth party (*munazzamat hizb al-shabab*) to combat Jewish immigration to Palestine. During the 1936–1939 Revolt, he escaped to Damascus and participated in the mobilization of Syrian volunteers to fight in Palestine under the leadership of Fawzi al-Qawuqji. With the failure of the rebellion, he returned and turned to the politics of Islamic moral rearmament, founding the Society of Islamic Guidance (*jam‘iyat al-hidaya al-Islamiyya*), which failed to establish any branches outside Nablus. After the 1948 war, Nimr withdrew from political activities and confined himself to writing. A rabble-rouser who “could hardly see Palestine on the map” in 1917 became known by others primarily for his work on the local history of Jabal Nablus.¹⁹

Nablus as the Center of the World

The work for which Nimr, deservedly, became best known was his four-volume *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa-l-Balqa'* (a History of Mount Nablus and al-Balqa'). In this wide-ranging study, Nimr shows considerable skill in the use of court records and family papers in delineating the social history of Nablus in the early and middle Ottoman periods (volumes one and two). His work is exceptional in assessing the system of governance and the achievement of local independence by Nabulsi dynasties;²⁰ in examining how common law (*qanun 'urfi*) was integrated with Islamic law;²¹ and in interpreting how brigandage became a factor in consolidating a system of internal security in Nablus.²² Despite his erratic and eclectic style, his work in these sections would not be out of place in the Annales School of historical interpretation, of which he can be seen as an unconscious practitioner.

Nimr's work is particularly valuable, as well as original, in his depiction of the autonomy of Jabal Nablus and southern Palestine during the era of military fiefdoms (*timar sipahi*) in the eighteenth century, and its linkages to the administration of hajj routes.²³ Much of later work in his monumental *Tarikh Jabal Nablus* deals with the triadic struggle during the Tanzimat period between the central Ottoman government; the feudal lords (*shuyukh al-nawahi*) who controlled the collection of agricultural revenue, such as the Jarrars and 'Abd al-Hadis; and the urban aristocracy of Nablus, the Nimr-Aghas and the Tuqans in particular. A turning point in this conflict was the Egyptian campaign of Ibrahim Pasha (1830–1840) accompanied by several peasant rebellions (such as that led by Qasim al-Ahmad) and the rise of the 'Abd al-Hadi clan as a hegemonic force in the Nablus province. The restoration of Ottoman rule in Syria in 1841 introduced an era of centralization of government control and the weakening of rural feudalism in favor of urban dynasties, a landlord class that integrated its rural wealth with investment in manufacturing (in particular, textiles and soap), and merchant capital.²⁴ Cognizant of the rebellious nature of Nablus from the days of the Egyptian campaign, "the Sublime Porte began to weigh their appointments in the province from people of high caliber and expertise."²⁵ One cannot help but feel that Nimr was making parallels between the restoration of Ottoman rule in the post-Egyptian era of Muhammad Ali and the attempted counter-coup aimed at restoring the Hamidian regime.

Nimr devotes almost the entire third volume of *Tarikh Jabal Nablus* to the events leading up to the Ottoman Revolution of July 1908 and its aftermath. His account of the counter-revolutionary coup and its Nabulsi reverberation raises issues with the credibility of Ihsan al-Nimr as a local historian, both at the level empirical details, as well as with his interpretive schema. While the rest of his magnum opus is based on meticulous reading of the city's history from probate court records and the family papers of the Nimrs and other notable families of Nablus, this volume is based on extended interview with local participants, city council records, and his own eyewitness recollections of events. In contrast to the first and second volumes, Nimr's account of events is a mixture of anecdotal narrative and polemical discourse against nationalist anti-Ottoman accounts. He reminds the reader that Ottoman rule in the Syrian provinces was not based exclusively or even

mainly on Turkish personnel, but on a mixture of Arab, Turkish, Circassian, Kurdish, Armenian, Balkan, and Jewish elements. The nineteenth-century governors of Nablus were a succession of predominantly Arab figures: Diya' Bey al-Masri was Egyptian, Sa'id Pasha and Hulu Pasha al-'Abid were Kurds from Damascus, 'Aziz Bey al-'Azmeah was also from Damascus, and Husayn Bey al-Ahdab was a Beirutite.²⁶

Nimr traces the incidents of 1908 and 1909, discussed here, to the establishment of the city's first advisory council (*majlis al-ishara*) in 1848, in line with Ottoman urban municipal reform. It was this advisory council which in 1869 evolved into the elected municipal council that became an arena of conflict between the central government's attempts to increase rural revenue and the reconstituted urban elites of Nablus, who resisted these incursions. Beshara Doumani's pioneering work on the history of Jabal Nablus provides an important interpretation of Nimr's rather convoluted narrative of these events.²⁷

[Nablus urban] notables used the council to bargain with the Ottoman government over the boundaries of political authority and tried to promote their own interpretations of the meaning of citizenship, identity, custom, and tradition. The central government had little choice but to cooperate. It could not even replace the tax-farmers with a salaried expatriate bureaucratic cadres of its own, much less abolish the tax-farms as the reforms publically intended to do.²⁸

One feature of this conflict between the central government and the city's elite was the ability of the local lords, Nimr keeps reminding us, to interpret the imperial circulars and bend government directives in the interest of the local elites. They also succeeded, much more so than in Jerusalem and other provincial centers, to ensure the appointment of local figures, rather than outsiders, to the administration of district affairs.²⁹ In Nimr's view, the Ottoman revolution and the new CUP regime threatened this autonomy.

Nablus in Support of the Restoration

Within less than a year of the rebellion, while the new regime in the capital was consolidating its linkages and control over Syria, news of the 18 April 1909 counter-coup (known as the 31 March Incident, in reference to the Rumi calendar) reached Nablus, announcing the suspension of parliament and the restoration of the sultan's rule. Nimr used the term the "restorative movement" in reference to the counter-revolution.³⁰ "With the formation of the Mohammadan Shari'a Society [*jam'iyat al-shari'a al-Muhammadiyah*] against the constitution,"³¹ he wrote, "all segments of Nabulsi society rose calling for the abolition of the constitution. The populace marched on the Nimr compound [*diwan*], where they swore loyalty to Sultan Abdulhamid and expressed their wrath at the CUP, cursing its leaders, Anwar [Enver] and Niyazi. The movement was headed by Hajj Tawfiq Hammad and his party, against Mayor Muhammad 'Abduh and his supporters."³² The

“restorative movement” was short-lived, and the rebels soon returned to power after contingents of the armed forces, dispatched from Salonika by Mahmud Shevket Pasha, defeated the insurrection and deposed Sultan Abdulhamid.

Meanwhile supporters of the CUP in Nablus (still an underground movement), whom the Arabic press referred to as “unionists” (*ittihadiyyun*), called for volunteers to fight for the constitutional government in the capital. Nadi al-Qalb became the center for mobilization and based on initial enthusiasm the unionists telegraphed Istanbul claiming that sixty thousand volunteers were on their way – presumably from Palestine – in support of the revolution. According to Nimr, of that number only five fighters materialized from Nablus, including the head of the population registry, Sa’ib Effendi, and Dhahir Effendi ‘Abduh. By the time they reached Jenin, the counter-revolutionary movement was defeated and they had to return to Nablus on foot, where they were mocked and pelted with stones and mud.³³

Once the restorative movement was defeated, the unionists moved to punish the supporters of the old regime and “restore law and order.” The magnitude of support for the Hamidian regime can be gleaned from the amount of force used to discipline the city. Four battalions had to be brought to Nablus, according to Nimr, to suppress the supporters of the sultan and the *shari‘a* movement.³⁴ Governor Amin Bey al-Tarazi was removed and replaced by Fathi Sulayman Pasha. An investigative committee was established to prepare a report and recommend punitive measures. As a result, loyalist members of the Tuqan, Hammad, and ‘Abd al-Hadi families were deported, and their kin were banned from public employment during the CUP’s reign.³⁵ Nimr’s reference to four battalions might be an exaggeration, but his description of the city’s divisions and the punishment meted to the Hammad leadership is corroborated by Darwaza.

Nimr’s work suffers, however, from a rather simplistic handling of the post-Tanzimat era, and in particular his treatment of the second constitutional era leading up to World War I. His account of this period is dominated by a Manichean opposition between the forces of law and order (Hamidian rule) and what he sees as the secular and destructive CUP. He highlights this opposition in terms of a factional conflict between segments of the Nabulsi elite – pitting the ‘Abduh and Malhas families against the Tuqans, Nimrs, and ‘Abd al-Hadis. The closer he gets to the events of 1908–1912 (the reign of the CUP), the more he relies on his personal recollections and interviews with local informants, rather than on court and municipal records. The dizzying list of personal actions, personal careers, and rise and fall of family fortunes is cited with little reference to social content – their context is either assumed to be self-evident, or explained simply as an abandonment of the Ottoman-Islamic bond. Thus a major strength of Nimr’s historical contemporary narrative – namely his extensive personal interviews with “actors and participants in events” – is rendered as a rather incoherent pastiche of family squabbles. Framing all of this incoherence is a likely recognition, on the author’s part, of the decline in the status and power of the Nimrs’ family fortunes as a leading base of Ottoman administration in Nablus.³⁶ In illuminating the local history of Nablus for this period, therefore, we are lucky to have an alternate account in the work of Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza.

‘Izzat Darwaza’s Vision

Darwaza’s account of Nablus (and Palestine) during the second constitutional period and World War I is undertaken with a keen sense of integrating biographical trajectories with class analysis of the forces involved. Like Ihsan al-Nimr, Darwaza – a copious diarist and chronicler – was an eyewitness of the great transformations at the local scene, albeit a more mature and, therefore, engaged observer. Darwaza, a junior officer in the Ottoman postal civil service, was involved directly in the apparatus of governance and as a partisan in the momentous political struggles in Beirut and Nablus. He was an active member of several Ottoman oppositional groups, the CUP, the Entente party, and later the Faysali movement and the Istiqlal party – of which he was a founding member.

Darwaza draws the social map of Nabulsi society through the new formations of the city’s elites. At the turn of the nineteenth century, a rising commercial bourgeoisie posed challenges to the region’s feudal families – the Tuqans, ‘Abd al-Hadis, Nimrs, and Qasims – who continued to amass wealth from the control of the regions’ landed estates in the post-Tanzimat period.³⁷ The main arena for this struggle was the city’s municipal council, which in 1911 witnessed the defeat of Bashir Tuqan, “representing an alliance of the city’s feudal elements,” by Hajj Tawfiq Hammad. The mercantile bourgeoisie of Nablus coalesced around the party of the ‘Abbasi Society, named after ‘Abbas Effendi al-Khammash. The ‘Abbasi Society, and later “the Hammadi Society” as it became known, united the forces of the Zu‘aytir, Shak‘a, and Masri families, and a small faction of the ‘Abd al-Hadi family.³⁸ Tawfiq Hammad was the head of the provincial registry (*katib qalam al-mutasarrifiyya*). In addition, he succeeded in being appointed head of the Nablus council, and shortly thereafter was elected to the new Ottoman parliament. His party was able to rally the rising “anti-feudal figures” in Jenin, Tulkarm, and Qalqiliya (that is, in the whole region) against the influence of the Tuqans and Nimrs. Their power was mobilized against the CUP in Palestine, which, according to Darwaza, based its support on military officers and the cadres of the Ottoman civil service.³⁹

The power of the Hammadi Society, the “bourgeois party” as Darwaza calls it, rested on Tawfiq Hammad’s leadership and organizational skills in bringing together a wide network of commercial interests together against the old guard (the Tuqans and their allies). They were able to compete successfully for collection of the rural land revenue (*daribat al-‘ashar*, or tithes), which was now collected by public auction after the dissolution of the tax farming system – or, more accurately, after the *iltizam* system was no longer in the hands of feudal landlords.⁴⁰ Their ideological position was strongly supportive of Sultan Abdulhamid II and the short-lived counter-coup aimed at restoring the caliphate in 1909. Later, most of their elements joined the Ottoman Decentralization party.⁴¹ An anomaly in this class analysis of Nablus’s politics was the alliance between the Hammadi Society and the ‘Abd al-Hadis of Jenin, headed by Sa‘id Pasha and Hafiz Pasha ‘Abu al-Hadi – arguably the feudal family with the most extensive land holdings. Darwaza refers to this alliance as a paradox (*mufaraqa*), one which was a powerful tool in the hands of the society, he claims, but created few problems.

For the ‘Abd al-Hadis were the spearheads of the feudal forces. Sa‘id and Hafiz [‘Abd al-Hadi] were the most powerful figures in the Jenin area ... what was more surprising is that the family did not object to being a cornerstone in the anti-feudal party. Their power and status was so entrenched that they did not object to the deal. They saw their alliance with the Nablus-based [Hammadi] society as an instrument in their own factional conflicts with other feudal forces in the province. It seems to me that Salim al-Ahmad [their nephew] had a basic role in resolving these contradiction and providing intellectual formulations for the ‘Abd al-Hadi involvement [in the anti-feudal campaign].⁴²

Darwaza’s interpretation here is both sophisticated and penetrating. While utilizing a materialist and a Marxist frame of analysis, it suffers, nevertheless, from a certain degree of reductionism, by collapsing class categories into political forces, especially in trying to explain the “anomaly” of a feudal family’s interests in the Nabulsi party of the bourgeoisie. A reason behind this so-called paradox lies in Darwaza’s failure to see that large segments of the Palestinian landed elite were already commercialized and “bourgeoisified” through investing land revenue into industry (soap, sesame oil, cotton), creating new avenues for their wealth and new professional horizons for their family members. His general analysis, still, is astute and lends coherence to political conflicts in Nablus that Ihsan al-Nimr subsumed under a Hamidian/anti-Hamidian rubric.

The Farcical Moment Retold: *Thawrat al-Mashayikh*

In Darwaza’s account of the rebellion, contra Nimr, it is the restoration of Hamidian despotism that is the farcical moment, not the rebellion. In June 1907, Darwaza was appointed as a clerk in the Nablus post office, in charge of telegrams (a sensitive post requiring security clearance), with a monthly salary of 300 piasters. His father had to pay 30 Ottoman pounds (a bribe which he euphemistically calls *ma fih al-nasib* – “their anticipated share,” a play on words, negating the Arabic for “lottery,” *ya nasib*) to those in charge of the postal directorate to secure the appointment.⁴³ Darwaza remained in his work with the postal authorities until 1914, first in Beirut then in Nablus, when he was promoted to deputy head, and it was from this vantage point that he witnessed the momentous events that engulfed Nablus during the rebellion. One of his tasks was to intercept proscribed newspapers and journals received by clients in city and confiscate them. The list of banned publications was distributed on a weekly basis.⁴⁴ This gave Darwaza a chance to read and disseminate dissident material mailed from Cairo and Europe, as well as radical Arabic broadsheets that were sent from America.

On 24 July 1908 (4 Tammuz 1324 by the Ottoman fiscal calendar), Darwaza received a circular telegram addressed to the Nablus *mutasarrif* announcing the imperial decree of Sultan Abdulhamid “activating *al-qanun al-assasi*,” the constitution. During the next few days, the “Nabulsi street,” as Darwaza calls it, was flooded with CUP leaflets and

red and white banners carrying the party's slogans – Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood (*hurriyat, musawat, ukhuwat*). The CUP club (referred to as Nadi al-Qalb by Nimr), next to the post office at Nablus's eastern gate, became a magnet for Nablus's youth.⁴⁵ Darwaza joined the party at the age of nineteen, joining his friend and comrade Ibrahim al-Qasim 'Abd al-Hadi:

Ibrahim was a great orator. He would address the gathered masses in the plaza of the *saraya* in the Nabulsi dialect, explaining the meaning of the constitution and its implication for justice and brotherhood, as well as a marker against corruption and nepotism.⁴⁶

Darwaza remained close to Ibrahim during the war years, when they both became members of the Entente, or Liberal Union, party and later the Decentralization party. Here is how Darwaza describes the events of 31 March 1909 – billed in his memoirs as *thawrat al-mashayikh* (rebellion of the religious orders) against the constitution. The reader should remember that Darwaza at the time was a postal clerk in the Beirut Ottoman post office, soon to be transferred to Nablus.⁴⁷

On 31 March 1325 [13 April 1909], the postal authorities in the capital [Istanbul] communicated to their colleagues in Beirut and elsewhere that a group of religious shaykhs commanded by Darwish Wihdati [Dervish Vahdeti] conducted a movement against the constitution, the CUP, and their government. They were able to win the support of segments of the religious public, as well as army officers in Istanbul. Their demands were to annul the constitution, dissolve the parliament, expel the “atheist” CUP, and apply *shari'a* law as the constitution of the realm. They were able to eliminate several ministers and deputies. CUP members went into hiding. Sultan Abdulhamid, who was obviously behind the movement, responded to all their demands, and cancelled the parliament and the constitution.⁴⁸

Dervish Vahdeti was a Cypriot militant, the leader of *al-jam'iya al-Muhammadiyah*, and editor of *Volkan*, an Istanbuli Islamic newspaper.⁴⁹ The movement replaced a large number of governors in Anatolia and Syria with Hamidian loyalists. Festivities were announced throughout the empire to celebrate the restoration of the sultan's rule. In Nablus, the restorative movement was led by Hajj Tawfiq Hammad and his followers. They held a number of mass meetings in the city's neighborhoods and compelled the inhabitants to swear allegiance to the sultan and Islamic *shari'a*. “They accused the unionists of apostasy and atheism (*al-kufr wa-l-ilhad*), and being enemies of the caliphate.”⁵⁰ Both Nimr and Darwaza attended these meetings, the former as a supporter and the latter as a critical observer. Darwaza notes that similar meetings took place throughout Palestine and Syria.⁵¹

When 'Umar Mahmud Shawkat (Shevkat) led the Rumeli army against the counter-rebellion in Istanbul, deposed the sultan, and restored the parliament, the CUP sent a call to its regional branches to mobilize a march on the capital in support of the revolution.

Ten people from Nablus, according to Darwaza (compared to the five according to Nimr), were the vanguard of the march from Palestine. They were led by Yuzbashi Amin, head of the Nablus garrison, Hilmi ‘Abd al-Baqi (a future leader of the Istiqlal party and prime minister of Hajj Amin’s All-Palestine Government), ‘Abd al-Fattah Malhas, and Raghīb Shahin.⁵² When they reached Damascus, the “revolutionary forces” were already in power and the support group went back to Nablus.

The new government began a process of suppressing followers of the Hamidian regime in Palestine and Syria. New governors were appointed. Hajj Tawfiq Hammad and his followers were arrested and exiled to Beirut. Bashir Tuqan was appointed by the Turkish governor of Nablus, Fathi Bey, as the new district governor of Jenin and charged with liquidating the influence of the Hamidian order in the region. The CUP government embarked on a major campaign of insuring the success of its supporters in the new parliament. In the case of Nablus, this brought back the influence of the Tuqan family – with Haydar Tuqan taking the position of his cousin Bashir who died suddenly.⁵³ In this process, according to Darwaza, the CUP used a substantial amount of “vote rigging and intimidation,” since the opposition was still popular among the populace.

Darwaza suggests that the conflict in Nablus, and Palestine in general, was between two wings of the local elite, with the restorative movement being based on the new mercantile elements (Hajj Tawfiq Hammad and his party), while the constitutional anti-Hamidian movement derived its leadership from the old feudal elements (the Tuqans and their followers). This was a major factor why the radical opposition to the ancien régime turned against both factions and moved in a nationalist direction, supporting the Decentralization party – of which Darwaza would soon become a member.

Darwaza’s Revolution is Nimr’s Farcical Moment

Ihsan al-Nimr perceived the collapse of the Ottoman order as rooted in its attempt at a misconceived modernization and ending with the decline of provincial autonomy, not only in Nablus, but throughout the Syrian provinces. The periodization of this collapse is not clearly delineated in his monumental history of Jabal Nablus, but he does suggest that the abolition of decentralized control by local landlords (*shuyukh al-nawahi*), which saw the hegemony of the Nimrs, ‘Abd al-Hadis, and Tuqans give way to competitive tax farm bidding open to new social forces, which sought personal enrichment and had no compassion for local peasants and their condition. Nimr notes that until the end of the fourteenth *hijri* century (the last third of the nineteenth century CE), rural taxes were still collected by local feudal lords and *sipahis*. These lords maintained social bonds with the peasants and made sure that their household were productive and above subsistence levels.⁵⁴ This process was destroyed by the Tanzimat state in its relentless search for increased revenue, and in the institutionalization of tax farming in the form of open competitive bidding

With the demise of *amirs* of Jabal Nablus and its feudal shaykhs, a new generation of [commercial] entrepreneurs entered the scene, and *iltizam* [tax farming] became a bidding process. The newly rich families began to displace the ruling houses [*buyut al-hukm*] in the tax farming auctions. Gradually finance feudalism replaced prebendal feudalism [*al-iqta* ' *al-mulki*] with important consequences. For those new landlords lacked consensual control [over the peasants], and began to use the whip of the gendarmes and police elements to enforce the collection.⁵⁵

Nimr lists the mode of enrichment by the tax farmers and the addition of new taxes (*werko*, animal head tax, and personal income tax) as measures leading to the pauperization of the Nablus peasants. The gendarmes were now enforcing not only the collection of the tithe, but also the debts on behalf of city merchants and money lenders – leading to the practice of corvée labor for non-payment and widespread corruption. Nimr quotes the dean of the Nimr lords, his cousin Mahmud Agha al-Nimr, as noting: “what destroyed the Ottoman state was the gendarmes and their ruthless financial exactions.”⁵⁶

Nimr portrays an idealized picture of the old feudal order, and laments its demise as exemplified by the demise of his own family, the Nimr-Aghas, and their allies. His lamentation however, is grounded in an acute sense of loss and suffering by the peasantry and the urban poor. He quotes peasant complaints cited in an official report by his Nabulsi compatriot Rafiq al-Tamimi on the difference between the CUP period and the Hamidian regime: “The constitutional gendarmes is a thousand time worse than the police force of the despotic [Hamidian] period. For the old police used to be recruited from the members of neighboring clans, who were known for their good manners and conduct. Their [titular] commander was ‘Uthman Beyk, an outsider, while the actual commander was his deputy, ‘Abd al-Karim Agha al-Nimr, who was a local and familiar with the local traditions and economic conditions of the people.”⁵⁷ In the new era the police force turned to wide-scale bribery and pillage to supplement their income.⁵⁸ The local governor began to recruit “rebels and gangsters” into the gendarmerie, presumably as a means of coopting brigands. These in turn resorted to cruel methods of exacting justice, which turned people from the new regime and undermined the legitimacy of the Ottoman state in its entirety.

Thus, Nimr attributes the popular alienation from the Ottoman state to administrative measure taken during the constitutional period, and not particularly to the regime of Jamal Pasha and the war economy, as observed by Darwaza and others. During the war, these measures were exacerbated and as was hostility to Turkification policies and anti-Arab sentiments emanating from the imperial capital.⁵⁹ In Nimr’s narrative, however, the Nabulsi population, in general, remained loyal to the Ottomans, despite the repressive measures undertaken by Jamal and his officers. This was the case even after the fall of Jerusalem and southern Palestine to British forces in December 1917: Nablus became the relocated center for the Ottoman central military command, with support from the German air force. This was not an accident of geography. Nimr and Darwaza explain how and why Nablus remained loyal to the empire even at the height of Jamal Pasha’s

dictatorship – a support that was both of an ideological and military character. It allowed the Ottomans to retain their control in northern Palestine and southern Syria for almost a full year, until November of 1918.

Nimr describes several meetings in the city called by commander Fawzi Pasha to rally the retreating army and prepare for the defense of the remaining part of southern Syria. He cites as a main reason for the renewed popular support for the army the exposition of Allied schemes in the region, including the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot agreement.⁶⁰ Several hundred deserters and new local recruits were organized into a new Salah al-Din Battalion. School children were taught to sing in Turkish, *Türkler ve Araplar kardeştir – paylaşılan bir vatan var* (“Turks and Arabs are brothers – they have a shared homeland”). This new situation, according to Nimr, delayed and overturned the thrust of the anti-Ottoman nationalist forces, “for people became aware of the impending danger, and that Turkish rule is much more tolerable than the plans of the Allies.”⁶¹ In December 1917, he pointedly wrote, the Arab rebellion of Sharif Husayn and his Syrian nationalist allies had little support in Nablus.⁶² But this new revival of Ottomanism was short-lived. With the collapse of the Bulgarian front, orders were given for the withdrawal of the Ottoman forces from Syria and Palestine.

The claim that in Nablus, and other parts of Palestine, the Arab revolt had little support is verified by several historians, including Darwaza. It contributes to our understanding of the exceptional situation in Nablus, which set it apart from Jaffa and Jerusalem, and explains why the Ottoman army was able to retain its foothold in northern Palestine for over a year after the fall of the southern front.

Conclusion: Local History and Nabulsi Exceptionalism

We have discussed here the narratives of two local historians of Nablus, Ihsan al-Nimr and Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, and their treatment of the events surrounding the constitutional revolution of 1908 and leading to World War I and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The value of local history here lies in uncovering processes that explain the larger picture of what was taking place in the Syrian provinces, at the regional and global levels. It also highlights the exceptionalism and the nuances of provincial forces, which undermine what later became the established Arab nationalist narrative.

A major conceptual issue in the historiography of individual cities here is the question of exceptionalism. This is a recurrent theme in local histories; they highlight the particularism of concrete local identities and isolate the degree of integration of local social organization in the web of national and regional connections. The question here is to what extent are the particularistic social features of the urban scene – necessary for examining urban ethnography – rendered as exceptional and *sui generis*?

In the case of Nablus, the accounts of Nimr and Darwaza – although radically different in their analysis of events – highlight the exceptional character of Jabal Nablus and its ruling forces, whether in terms of the city’s autonomy (Nimr) or particular class configurations in the late nineteenth century (Darwaza). Their social and class

origins (Nimr coming from a family of landed elites whose hegemony was declining by virtue of Ottoman fiscal reforms, while Darwaza belonged to a new professional and mercantile petty bourgeoisie that had benefited considerably from the new educational system and Ottoman reforms) sheds important light on their respective perceptions of the constitutional revolution. But their diagnosis of events cannot be explained, much less deduced by their class affiliations. Darwaza raises the curious issue of the decision of segments of the old feudal classes to side with the revolution, while the “bourgeois party” sided with Hamidian restoration. Nimr, meanwhile, perceives Nablus’s exceptionalism in its enhanced autonomy within the Ottoman administrative apparatus; the ability of its patrician families to maintain a prolonged hegemony over the rural areas; and the ability of the city’s elite to convert agrarian revenue into commercial and industrial wealth. In many ways, this was true of several Syrian provincial centers, including the *mutasarriflik* of Mount Lebanon, but also Damascus and Aleppo, though especially so of Nablus. Darwaza’s and Nimr’s narratives emphasize the defiance of the city’s local council and its ruling families. This particular configuration of urban power, allowed these families not only to effectively siphon the region’s rural surplus, but also to mediate the relationship of peasants and urban landlords in defense of the Ottoman realm. Nablus was able to retain a substantially higher portion of its rural revenue than other districts in Palestine, allowing for noticeable growth in its commercial and industrial production, while effectively integrating itself into the fiscal reforms of the post-Tanzimat period. In sum, the degree of autonomy exercised by the Nablus municipal council and its ruling families, while exaggerated by both Nimr and Darwaza, had a certain degree of substance compared with other Syrian provinces, in large part due to the persistence of the same hegemonic families in power for an extended period.

The focus on the politics of ruling elites in Nablus allowed both Darwaza and, to a lesser extent, Nimr to transcend the pitfalls of localism in “local history” – that is, the isolation of the city’s social structure from the political economy of its regional setting. This can be seen in a number of references to the city’s external links. For example, Nablus was referred to as Little Damascus by Maqdisi in the tenth century, a term which continues to be used until today due in part to the longstanding ties between the two cities. Nablus was administratively part of the Damascus *vilayat*, not the Jerusalem *mutasarriflik*, for most of the Ottoman period. Trade, politics, architecture, cuisine, and marriage bonds within the patrician families continued to enhance the Damascene link. There are numerous references to those connections in both Nimr and Darwaza.

The Nablus elite was well integrated into the imperial Ottoman bureaucratic regime, through the appointments of local administrators, deputies to the Ottoman parliament, and judgeships, in addition to civil service appointments (in the gendarmerie, municipal government, and schools), the bulk of whom were local people. Tension with Istanbul continued to simmer over the choice of tax farming allotments (*iltizam*) and the allotment of tax shares. Nimr refers to another main source of conflict: the use of the Ottoman gendarmerie in the forceful collection of taxes. In the late nineteenth century, its ranks were recruited increasingly from tribal forces in the Balqa’ region.

But Nimr and Darwaza’s accounts differ in a substantial manner. Nimr’s assessment

of the successful attempt to overthrow the Hamidian regime and the unsuccessful attempt to restore the sultanate as a “farcical moment” was a figure of speech meant to highlight the failure of the CUP coup, despite its apparent success, to penetrate power relations in the Arab provinces and Nablus in particular. He saw this assessment as being vindicated by the unionists’ fall from power in 1912. Palestinian and Arab nationalism were to him retrogressive forces that helped British and French colonialism to control Syria, paving the way for Zionism and the dismemberment of Palestine from the Ottoman Empire – which he saw as the only guarantor of its survival. Nimr’s cosmology was heavily influenced by his Wahhabi sympathies, and he emerges as a consistently anti-nationalist, Ottomanist, and Islamic historian.

Darwaza, by contrast, saw the contestation of power between the unionists and the Hamidian forces as a real conflict, manifested in Nablus as a social and political struggle between the old feudal patrician families and the class of merchants and shopkeepers. His analysis of the 1908–1909 events is highlighted by his focus on the rise of the anti-feudal forces in Nabulsi politics and the role of what he calls the “bourgeois party” of Hajj Tawfiq Hammad. What Nimr saw as a struggle between Hamidian and anti-Hamidian forces for the salvation of the Islamic domain, Darwaza correctly assessed as a conflict between two wings of the local elite. He was troubled by the “messiness” of local class politics, which he considered to be an anomaly, due to the presence of significant landed forces (the ‘Abd al-Hadis – who he saw as the “most feudal” of the feudal forces) at the vanguard of the “bourgeois party.” Those were the precursors of the Masri and Shak’a business imperium that continue to dominate Nablus politics and economy to this day. What Darwaza may have missed was the manner in which landed interests became enmeshed in industrial and commercial investments, as the prominence of land revenue as the major source of wealth and status declined. For Darwaza, the triumph of the modernist forces of the Ottoman revolution, which he enthusiastically supported as an activist in the CUP, and later in the Entente party (Liberal Union), was a pyrrhic victory, because it was undermined by Turkification and centralization. Unlike Nimr, Darwaza refused to ally himself with either the Hamidian regime or its local opponents in Nablus and Palestine. As the war progressed, he quickly shed his enthusiasm for the CUP and the Liberal Union party and gave up all hope in the continued Ottoman presence, joining the Faysali movement for the independence of Syria and Palestine.

For both chroniclers, local history was a window to the larger forces transforming Palestine and Syria at the end of empire. It attempted to examine the exceptional status of Mount Nablus, while underscoring the manner in which these local forces signified the death of the old order.

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Endnotes

- 1 A leading Nablusi political satirist muses on the theme of revolutionary Nablus: "During the 1936 revolution, Nablus had been given the name, 'Mountain of Fire', though it is not fiery. It is, rather, a mild baby sleeping on the breasts of his mother. Some anthropologists have indicated that mountain inhabitants have rough and coarse behaviour unlike the easy-going and peaceful valley dwellers; but the behaviour of Nablus people has always been genial. In 1936, it was the countryside of Nablus that was untamed, and the city was contented with taking off the fez and wearing the *kaffiah* to bluff the British forces and distract them from the movements of the revolutionaries." Aref Hijawi, "Nablus: The City of Strong Women," *This Week in Palestine* 107 (March 2007).
- 2 In 1834, Qasim al-Ahmad led a peasant revolt in Mount Nablus against the conscription and taxation policies of Ibrahim Pasha. The rebellion spread to Jerusalem, Gaza, and the Galilee, as well as Transjordan, until it was brutally crushed with considerable destruction to the rebellious towns. Ahmad's insurrection is relevant here, because, like the 1909 restorative movement, it aimed at the return of the old "feudal" regime. See Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882: Studies in Social, Economic, and Political Development* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), 209–227.
- 3 Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa-l-Balqa'* [History of Mount Nablus and al-Balqa'] (Nablus: Matba'at jami'at 'umm al-matabi' al-ta'awuniyya, 1938–1975), vol. 3, 106.
- 4 Muhammad Ruhi Beyk al-Khalidi, *Asbab al-inqilab al-'Uthmani wa Turkiya al-fata* [The Causes of the Ottoman Revolution and the Young Turks] (Cairo: Ru'ya lil-nashr wa-l-tawzi', 2011 [1909]). Khalidi, though he came from a Jerusalemite notable family, had his own Nablus connections. The Khalidi family traces its origins – by some accounts – to Marda in the Nablus district, and Ruhi concluded his primary education in Nablus's Maktab Rushdi school. This was during the tenure of Midhat Pasha, the progressive governor of Syria, who appointed his father Yasin al-Khalidi to be a judge in the Nablus court. Aws Dawud Ya'qub, "Ruhi Yasin Khalidi, 1864–1913: Ra'id al-baith al-tarikh al-hadith fi Filastin wa abraz al-munahidin lil-haraka al-sahiyuniyya fi 'asrihi" [Pioneer of Modern Historical Research in Palestine and the Most Prominent Opponents of the Zionist Movement in His Time], *al-Quds Institution for Culture and Heritage*, accessed 29 August 2014, online at alqudslana.com/index.php?action=article&id=2480.
- 5 Khalid Ziyada, introduction to Khalidi, *Asbab al-inqilab*, 1–28.
- 6 For Khalidi, *inqilab* accurately identified the structural and radical all encompassing features of the movement, while *thawra* was a mere rebellion – short-lived, with little lasting effect. Three decades later, the terms reversed their meaning in Arabic journalistic usage, but in Persian and Urdu the term continued to be used for revolution.
- 7 Khalidi, *Asbab al-inqilab*, 134.
- 8 'Adel Manna', *Tarikh Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'Uthmani, 1700–1918: qira'a jadida* [The History of Palestine during the Late Ottoman Period, 1700–1918: A New Reading] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1999), 242–43.
- 9 Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 242–43. In both cities the majority of the Jews and Christians were Ottoman citizens. In the case of the Jewish population, Zionism had made little inroads except for those who were European immigrants – and both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi religious population were largely anti-Zionist. In the case of Christians, at least within the majority Orthodox community, the major issue was the dispute between the Greek-controlled Patriarchate and the Arab laity. In other words, Ottoman reform and the new definition of Ottoman citizenship exemplified by the constitution mattered for different reasons, for both the Jewish and Christian population in Palestine and Syria.
- 10 Nu'ayma Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr," *Da'irat al-ma'arif al-Filastiniyya* [The Palestinian Encyclopedia] (Nablus: al-Najah University, 2010), accessed 2 September 2014, online at ency.najah.edu/node/23.
- 11 Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr," 5.
- 12 Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr," 7.
- 13 Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr," 7.
- 14 Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr"; Ya'qub 'Awdat, *Min a'lam al-fikr wa-l-adab fi Filastin* (Amman: Wakalat al-tawzi' al-Urduniyya, 1987), 636–37.
- 15 'Awdat, *Min a'lam*, 637.
- 16 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 104–5. No date for the court case is mentioned.
- 17 Ziyad, "Ihsan al-Nimr," 9.
- 18 'Awdat, *Min a'lam*, 636.
- 19 Nimer curiously identified himself as a local historian of Jabal Nablus in the introduction of his third volume, published in 1961. He seemed to think of Lebanese local historians as a model: "I trust the new generation will free themselves from sectarian and clannish perspectives, and ... rise to the level of the Lebanese, who have an elevated appreciation of their local history." Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 4.
- 20 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 520–533.
- 21 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 497–506.
- 22 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 507–516.
- 23 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 520–549.

- 24 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 288–292. See also: Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 46–52.
- 25 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 95.
- 26 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 95.
- 27 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 111–14, 177–78, 241–42.
- 28 Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 241.
- 29 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, 540–48; Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 241–42.
- 30 Nimr uses the term *al-haraka al-raj'iyah*, which in the 1960s came to be used in reference to “reactionary” movements, but at the time of Nimr’s writing in 1938 refers to the act of restoration, both in its derivation (from *raja'a*) and in the context of his analysis.
- 31 Established by Kamil Pasha, the grand vizier, to mobilize Islamic support for the restoration.
- 32 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 107.
- 33 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 108.
- 34 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 109. I could not find an independent confirmation for the figure of four battalions used to suppress the rebellion.
- 35 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 110.
- 36 See Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 2, Chapter 6 (*Thimar al-hukm al-watani wa fadl al-hukkam al-wataniyyin* [The Fruits of National Governance and the Merits of National Governors]), 540–553 and 540–41 footnote 1; Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine*, 210–12.
- 37 Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, 1305 h.–1404 h./1887 m.–1984 m.: sijill hafil bi-masirat al-haraka al-'Arabiyya wa-l-qadiya al-Filastiniyya khilal qarn min al-zaman* [The Memoirs of Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwaza, 1305–1404 hijri/1887–1984 CE: A Full Record of the Development of the Arab Movement and the Palestinian Issue over a Century] (Beirut: Dar al-gharb al-Islami, 1993), vol. 1, 122–24.
- 38 ‘Adel Manna’, “al-Hajj Tawfiq Hammad,” in *A‘lam Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'Uthmani (1800–1918)* [The Notables of Palestine at the End of the Ottoman Period (1800–1918)] (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1995), 133–34.
- 39 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 127–28.
- 40 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 126.
- 41 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 123–24.
- 42 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 124–25.
- 43 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 174.
- 44 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 176.
- 45 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 181.
- 46 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 182.
- 47 Dawazeh, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 187.
- 48 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 197.
- 49 See: “1909: Dervish Vahdeti, for the 31 March Incident,” *ExecutedToday.com*, accessed 23 August 2014, online at www.executedtoday.com/2013/07/19/1909-dervish-vahdeti-for-the-31-march-incident/.
- 50 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 187.
- 51 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 188.
- 52 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 188.
- 53 Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 188–89.
- 54 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 49.
- 55 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 47–48.
- 56 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 50.
- 57 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 48–49.
- 58 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 49.
- 59 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 143.
- 60 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 143–44.
- 61 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 144.
- 62 Nimr, *Tarikh*, vol. 3, 144–45.