

Leah and Nassib: Jerusalem through a Forgotten Story

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Abstract

A beautiful building at the entrance to the Rehavia neighborhood in Jerusalem, named “Villa Leah,” is a monument to an unusual love story from the early twentieth century – one that gives us insight into discrete social realities of the “Holy City” apart from oft-repeated historical narratives. Nassib Bey Abcarius, the grandson of an Armenian bishop, born in Beirut, arrives in Jerusalem after years studying law in Paris, working for the British army in Cairo, and becoming a judge in Khartoum, and enjoys a lucrative career as a private lawyer. At the age of 54, he falls in love with Leah Tennenbaum, the daughter of a Jewish real estate agent. During World War I, the teenaged Leah had become a focus of celebrity scandal, as the reputed concubine of Cemal Pasha, the Ottoman ruler of Greater Syria. After the war, she had a brief marriage to an officer in Britain’s Jewish Legion with whom she had a son, and returned to Jerusalem after her divorce. Nassib and the 30-year-old Leah wed in Paris in a civil marriage, settled in Jerusalem and quickly had two daughters. Five years into the marriage, the Bauhaus-styled Villa Leah was inaugurated but the couple lived in it only a few short years before Leah escaped with her children to Cairo in 1937, never to return. She died in 1967 in Montreal, surviving Nassib by twenty-one years.

Keywords

Jerusalem; cosmopolitanism; intercommunal relationships; social mobility; family history.

The month is ending, but not the more or less naughty comments being made about the projected wedding of Djemal Pasha with a beautiful Jewish lady named Leah Tannenbaum. The news seemed so unlikely to me that I gave it the least importance, but it persists, and there is no one in the city who is not commenting on it.

– Consul Conde de Ballobar, Jerusalem, 31 May 1915¹

This article recounts the unusual lives of Leah Tannenbaum and Nassib Abcarius, two forgotten Jerusalem figures from the early twentieth century. The article also tells the story of their home, Villa Leah, the beautiful residence that Nassib built in 1934 to celebrate Leah. The accounts in this essay demonstrate that the history of Jerusalem, even if told through its houses, is connected intrinsically to the agency of its inhabitants, since a history of a city without its people is an incomplete one. The stories also reveal the ways in which Palestine has been a setting for dramas propelled by main actors who were not Palestinian. Indeed, of the characters that appear in this history, Leah was the only one born in Jerusalem, pegging her fortunes to men who came to Palestine from elsewhere. Ultimately, the forgotten story of Leah and Nassib, as well as that of their stately house, narrates an untold history of Jerusalem as a cosmopolitan city home to diverse, complicated and controversial characters.

The Tannenbaums

Leah (also called Lisa) Tannenbaum, the eldest child of Israel Mordechai Tannenbaum, was born on 1 September 1899, although she would later revise this to a date several years later. The Tannenbaums arrived in Jerusalem in 1861 or 1862, when Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Tannenbaum, a shochet (kosher butcher) from Stropkov, in present-day Slovakia, immigrated to Palestine.² Avraham settled in Jerusalem, where he married and had two children, and where he was registered as a Talmud student. Avraham's son Elhanan was a founder of the Nahalat Yitzhak Jewish settlement on the periphery of Jaffa and co-owner, with his brother-in-law, of the Sasson Brothers printing office.

Elhanan's son Israel was Leah's father. Sometimes described as an Orthodox Jew from Mea She'arim, one of the oldest Jewish settlements outside Jerusalem's Old City, Israel Tannenbaum was in fact a traditional Jew holding some liberal ideas. As a real estate agent, he arranged the purchase of Ahuzat Beit, a Jewish colony on the outskirts of Jaffa that paved the way for the establishment of Tel Aviv as a Jewish city. Israel Tannenbaum was sociable with his Palestinian neighbors, and spoke some Arabic. One of his friends was 'Arif al-'Arif, the Palestinian historian and nationalist politician (figure 3). Israel must have developed close relations with the Ottoman authorities, which may explain why the British, after conquering Jerusalem in December 1917, exiled him along with his entire family to Egypt – a punishment reserved mainly for the Germans of Jerusalem and Jaffa.³



Figures 1 and 2. Israel and Haya Tannenbaum, Leah's parents; Israel States Archives.



Figure 3. From left, brothers Sa'id and 'Arif al-'Arif; Haya Tannebaum, with her daughter Leah, and her youngest two sons (possibly) Elkhanan and David, and Israel, 1918. Photo courtesy of 'Arif Family Photo Collection, Institute for Palestine Studies Archives, Ramallah.

Following the outset of World War I, Leah became a veritable local celebrity as a result of the persistent gossip insinuating a romantic relationship between her and Cemal Pasha, the commander of the Fourth Ottoman Army and wartime governor of Greater Syria.⁴ Indeed, one wonders if the rumors of their relationship reached British ears. Often described as a handsome man and a womanizer, Cemal Pasha was a highly controversial figure, partly because of his cruelty but also because of his visibility and unpredictability. Likewise, Leah had an aura of her own among residents of Jerusalem. Known locally as *bint Allah* (the daughter of God), Leah was considered a beauty who became active in the Red Crescent and somehow, not yet sixteen, became Cemal Pasha's mistress.

In May 1915, rumor spread in Jerusalem that Cemal was about to marry her. As the Spanish consul Conde de Ballobar insinuated in his diary on 31 May 1915, this sounded unlikely and unbelievable to most ears due to her religion, yet the rumor did not stop. One local conscript, Ihsan Turjman, was critical of the "well-known" relationship between the two to the extent that he believed Cemal was not worthy of a leadership role.⁵ In his diary entry of 7 September 1915, Conde de Ballobar, who was on close and friendly terms with Cemal Pasha, wrote that Cemal Pasha had asked him: "Do you know that I have married an Austrian Jewess?" Ballobar added that all of Syria already knew this news and that even the French newspaper *Le Temps* had reported it.⁶

Along with Leah, other European Jewish female activists in the Red Crescent also became the lovers of Ottoman officers in the army headquarters. This was arguably an effort by the Ashkenazi Jewish community to find favor and gain influence with the Ottoman establishment. Alternatively, it was a way to escape wartime poverty and guarantee themselves and their families the possibility to survive the war.⁷

Cemal Pasha's whereabouts after the war are unknown until his death in 1922, and gossip surrounding his relationship with Leah faded away. Leah's intimate life, however – as turbulent as the early British rule of Palestine – remained a topic of interest in Jerusalem, where it became intertwined with the story of Nassib Abcarius, an important lawyer in Jerusalem who later married her.

After the Great War

After the war, Leah's life in Jerusalem began to take a turn. In 1921, she married Captain Israel Jaffe of the British Indian Army and an important officer in the Jewish Legion. Jaffe was born in 1888 in Belfast to a family of Jewish immigrants from Russia. Before the war, he had moved to Rhodesia, where he worked as a farmer in Old Mutare (Umtali) in Manicaland, near the border with Mozambique. Rumor had it that he was deeply in love with Leah, but that it was unreciprocated. Nonetheless, they wed and had a son, Leon (Len) Jaffe, born in December 1922 in Lausanne, where the couple had married and lived at the time.⁸ In 1925, it seems that Jaffe left Switzerland for the United States, without Leah or Leon, before returning to Africa and his smallholding in Manicaland.⁹ While it is unclear when and why Leah and Jaffe divorced, Leah returned to Jerusalem with Leon.

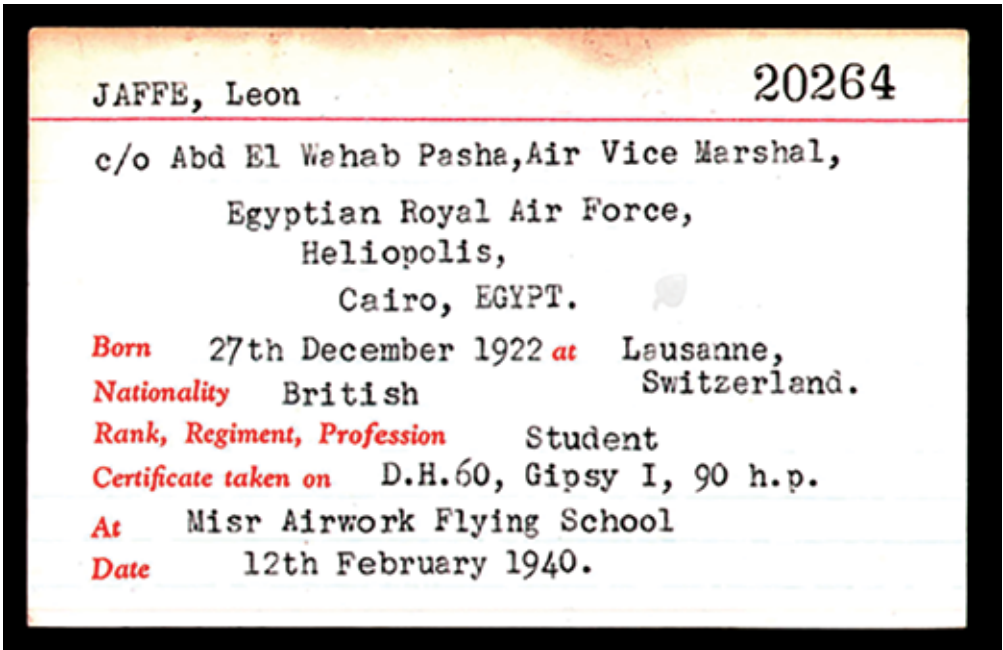


Figure 4. A biography card on Leah's son, Leon Jaffe. Photo courtesy of Carole Düster-Boucherot.

As a divorced woman with a child, Leah likely faced difficulties in Jerusalem and this may explain Israel Mordechai Tannenbaum's willingness to accept a marriage proposal on her behalf from Nassib Abcarius Bey, a lawyer with whom he had established good business relations. The Abcarius family's ties to Jerusalem were both older and more recent than the Tannenbaums' ties. Hagop Abkarian, Nassib's grandfather, was born in 1781 in Akşehir, a city between Afyon and Konya at the Akşehir Lake in present-day Turkey.¹⁰ As a young man, Hagop entered the Armenian St. James Monastery in Jerusalem; in 1818, he was ordained a bishop in Vagharshapat, Armenia. Shortly after, however, Hagop, along with two other bishops, renounced the priesthood, converted to Protestantism, and moved to Beirut sometime before 1824. After he arrived in Lebanon, Hagop married Hawa Mas'ad, a Maronite from Beirut, with whom he had seven children.¹¹

Their son, Johannes (Yuhana), born in 1832, went to a Greek Orthodox school where he learned Greek, Armenian, Turkish, and Arabic; at the age of thirteen, he was sent to a "diplomatic school" in Britain for two years. Shortly before the 1860 atrocities unfolded in Lebanon, Yuhana and his family moved to Egypt.¹² Eventually, Yuhana returned to Beirut and became the dragoman (interpreter and chancellor) of the British consulate. He also joined his older sister, Mariam (b. 1824), and brother, Iskandar (b. 1826), in working with American missionaries. It is unclear whether Yuhana's first wife, Zubayda, died in Egypt or Lebanon, but in 1871, he was married a second time, to Afifa Kanawati.¹³ Yuhana and Afifa had eight children, the third of which was Nassib.¹⁴

According to the *Registro dei Morti* (Death Registry) of the Franciscan Parish of Jerusalem, Nassib was born in Beirut on 1 May 1875. He and his brother Amin studied pharmacology at the Syrian Protestant College (later the American University of Beirut). Nassib went on to study law in Paris and apparently, in 1898, he went to Egypt. There, he joined British troops as a pharmacist and participated in British-Egyptian colonial battles in Sudan.¹⁵ He was appointed as a judge in Khartoum by the British and received the title *bey* from King Fu'ad of Egypt – a title that he apparently valued more than any other professional title.

After World War I, the British sent him to Palestine to work in the Mandate's legal department. Eventually, he left his government position and embarked on an independent career as a private lawyer. Out of an office located at 10 St. Paul Street (today's Shivtei Yisrael Street) in western Jerusalem, he specialized in criminal trials and property contracts (working in the same office as David Goitein, who came to Palestine from England in 1924 and in 1953, was appointed to the Israeli Supreme Court).

Nassib was multitalented: a successful lawyer, fluent in Arabic, English, French, and Hebrew, with some knowledge of German, and reportedly a good violinist. His status and qualities – in addition to Leah's vulnerable state – likely helped Israel Mordechai overlook the couple's considerable age difference (Nassib was fifty-four and Leah was thirty). The matter of their different religions was overcome through marriage by civil ceremony in Paris (there was no civil marriage in Palestine), probably in 1929. While Christian-Jewish intermarriage may have raised some eyebrows in Jerusalem, given Hagop's conversion from Armenian Orthodoxy to Protestantism and Leah's previous relations with men outside her community, it may not have presented a significant issue for the couple.



Figure 5. Passport photo of Dr. Nassib Abcarius Bey; Israel State Archives.



Figure 6. The Abcarius Family: Nassib Bey, Ruth, Tina, Leah, and Leon, c. 1937. Photo courtesy of George Napier.

Soon after their marriage, Leah gave birth to two daughters: Tina (Leontine Dora, b. 1929) and Ruth (Helene Sara Ruth, b. 1930). Nassib and Leah spent time in Jerusalem but also in Abu Ghosh where they had a summer residence probably shared with Nassib's brother Michel. In Jerusalem on 1 May 1934, the couple's grandiose new residence, Villa Leah, was inaugurated (the same day as Nassib's mother Afifa passed away). Villa Leah is located on Ben Maimon Avenue 6, at the entrance to the Rehavia neighborhood in western Jerusalem. The villa was intended to be the expression of Nassib's adoration of Leah. The architects Dan and Raphael Ben Dor designed it in the "international style" (Bauhaus) of the period, with Art Deco gates and windows. The land had been purchased from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and was registered in Leah's name. Next to the house, Nassib built another house, also registered in Leah's name, to be used as a rental.

When in 1936 Italy's occupation of Ethiopia drove the emperor Haile Selassie and his family into exile, he stopped in Jerusalem on his way to Geneva and Nassib invited him to stay in his modern house.¹⁶ The Negus accepted the invitation, bestowing on Nassib the enormous honor of hosting an emperor. Haile Selassie left Jerusalem after two weeks, but the imperial family stayed on at Villa Leah for months. Despite the prestige that such guests must have conferred on Nassib and Leah in Jerusalem society, by April 1937, the furniture of Villa Leah had been boxed up and shipped to Cairo; it seems that Leah had grown tired of Nassib's adoration and the splendid villa in Jerusalem and left with her three children to reunite with her sister, Rebecca (Bella). The immediate impetus for Leah's departure was likely Bella's marriage to Edward Thomas Guy, a British officer serving in Egypt, which took place in Cairo in 1937.¹⁷



Figure 7. Tina and Ruth in Villa Leah, 1934 (still one story, the Terra Santa College can be seen in the background). Photo courtesy of George Napier.

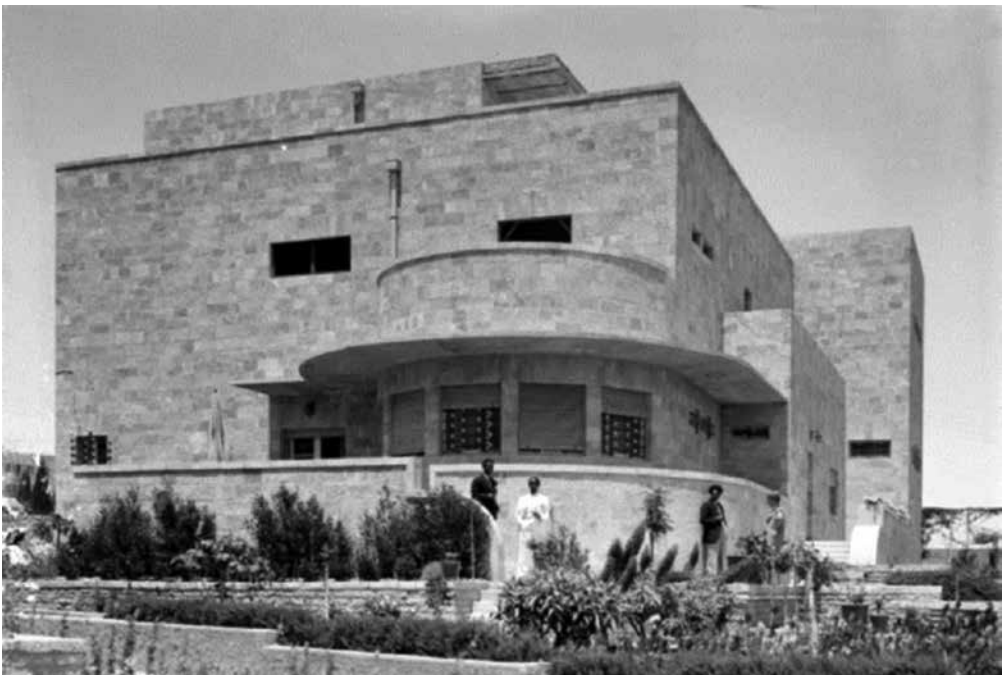


Figure 8. The exiled Ethiopian imperial family in Villa Leah, 1936 (with two stories plus roof top apartment). Photo courtesy of George Napier.

After Leah's Departure

While still married to Nassib, in Cairo, Leah found a new partner, the rich and influential Egyptian officer, Major General Hassan Abdul Wahab, a close friend of King Faruq and, after 1952, of the new rulers Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser. In 1938, seemingly in an effort to sever every contact with her previous life, Leah sent the furniture from Villa Leah back to Jerusalem, and in 1939 she sold the house next to it (though it seems she had considerable trouble receiving the money from the sale). Leon, Leah's son with Jaffe, attended flight school in Egypt in 1940 and became a pilot. In his late twenties, after the establishment of the State of Israel, Leon reportedly flew for El Al, the Israeli national airline.¹⁸ In 1950, at twenty-one, Leah and Nassib's daughter Ruth married Alexander (Iskandar) Nassif in Egypt; they eventually immigrated to France and Canada, where Alexander changed the family name from Nassif to Napier.¹⁹

Leah lived with Abdul Wahab and her daughter Tina remembers that the couple were married, though there are no records of this. Indeed, until Nassib's death in 1946, Leah would have been unable to marry, and Abdul Wahab was already married to several women when he and Leah met. In 1952, by which time they were separated, Abdul Wahab married the famous Czech opera singer Jarmila Krzywa. The same year, Leah married Thasos Ermou, a Greek living in Egypt. The wedding took place in London (marriages between Jews and Christians were not possible in Egypt), where it coincided with Leon's marriage, with Leah, now going by Lisa Ermou, and Bella serving as his witnesses.²⁰ Leon and his wife moved to South Africa, while Leah and Bella returned to Egypt. In 1959, Leah and Bella left Egypt for Canada, where they were joined by their adult children and Leon's six-year-old son, Peter.²¹ Leah died in 1967 and was buried in the Baron de Hirsch Cemetery in Montreal under the name Leah Eden. One year later, Leon Jaffe died of leukemia, and was buried next to his mother in the Hirsch cemetery.²²

Villa Leah

When Leah and Bella lived in Egypt, their parents and their brothers remained in Jerusalem, where they lived not far from Nassib and seemingly maintained a close relationship with him. For example, when Nazi Germany occupied Czechoslovakia in 1938, the Tannenbaums sought to exchange their Czechoslovakian citizenship (which they had received as former Austrian citizens) for Palestinian citizenship – a process they undertook with Nassib's legal assistance. Their citizenship applications give their address as Karm al-Ruhban, a section of Talbiyya just across the street from Villa Leah – where the Israeli prime minister's residence is located today.²³

Nassib apparently kept the empty villa as his official address, but went to live in the fashionable Hotel Darouti (today an office building of the Jerusalem municipality), not far from his law office. He developed a close relationship with its owner, Frida Darouti, who would eventually care for him personally during his illness at the end of his life.²⁴ After 1940, Nassib spent an enormous amount of money to build a huge, terraced orchard near the Abcarius residence in Abu Ghush.



Figure 9. The Abcarius summer residence in Abu Ghush, as it looks today.

In 1946, Nassib, at that time giving his address as Upper Baq‘a, applied for Palestinian citizenship; until then, he had held Egyptian citizenship. At that point, he was gravely ill, and Mandate immigration officials were instructed to present a naturalization certificate to him – “who,” one official wrote, “I understand is dying” – without delay.²⁵ Officials were instructed not to include Leah, and to forgo consulting with a security check by the police’s Intelligence and Criminal Investigation branch. The file contains several errors – Nassib’s date and place of birth are given as 1 May 1878 in Cairo, for example, and the naturalization certificate itself is dated 10 July 1946, two days *before* the application date – and it appears clear that the procedure was hurried with the support of some high-ranking British official in the Mandate administration.

On 7 September 1946, Nassib Abcarius Bey died.²⁶ An obituary in the *Palestine Post* recounted his career and listed his accomplishments: “He was Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, Chevalier of the Crown of Italy, and Officer of the Imperial Order of Mejjidieh, and held the Egyptian Nile Medal with seven clasps and the English Medal of the Sudan campaign.”²⁷ Goitein described him as “head and shoulders above all other advocates practicing in Palestine until his retirement” and “very popular with all the judges, and perhaps his greatest asset was the skill with which he could persuade judges of the soundness of an argument that might otherwise have appeared unarguable.”²⁸

After a funeral service at the Latin Patriarchate Church inside the New Gate of the Old City, Nassib was buried in the Cimitero Nuovo of the Franciscans on Mount Zion (Jabal Sahyun) – later completely destroyed during the 1948 war. The astonishing fact that Nassib Abcarius, a Protestant all his life, died as a Catholic and even a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre suggests that his social status and wealth shielded him from criticism or ostracism. But one could also wonder about his relationship with the Catholic Church. Indeed, as a convert and as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre, it is still perplexing how this man, a Freemason, who married and divorced a Jewish woman, was still highly regarded by the Catholic Church.

According to Caesar Abcarius, Michel’s grandson, Michel went to live in Villa Leah after Nassib’s death. However, after the departure of Michel, possibly following the war of 1948, Nassib’s assets in Jerusalem and Abu Ghush were considered as “abandoned” by the new Israeli state and put under the auspices of its newly created Custodian of Absentee Properties. The famous professor of medicine Hermann Zondek and Jerusalem’s first Jewish mayor Daniel Auster both lived in Villa Leah at some point. It was also the residence of Moshe Dayan when he was military commander of Jerusalem. His daughter Yael described the building, but she had no knowledge of its owner Nassib Abcarius Bey, or of Leah to whom the villa was dedicated. Today, Villa Leah is divided into four independent apartments. The late Josef Burg, who for many years was Israel’s interior minister, purchased the additional apartment Nassib had built for Leah at the entrance to the villa, and his daughter Ada Burg and her husband Menahem Ben Sasson live there. Villa Leah is occasionally opened to visitors but a plaque at its entrance offers little about its storied history.²⁹



Figure 10. Villa Leah in Rehavia, west Jerusalem.

History may have forgotten both Leah and Nassib, but Villa Leah is a physical reminder of their lives and legacy. In 2016, Sarit Yishai-Levi published the bestselling book *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem* which was recently turned into a television series by Netflix.³⁰ The book follows the life of several women of the Armoza family in Jerusalem from Ottoman times to the 1948 war. Whether the beauty queen was Rochalim or Luna, these fictional characters have given Jerusalem a different aura, one not anointed by sanctity. While Yishai-Levi's book is not necessarily about Leah, there are some similarities between the various characters of the novel and the real-life characters of our story. Whether intentional or not, it seems possible that facets of Leah's story were picked up and came to shape the novel's characters.

Conclusion

This essay has recounted the unusual and convoluted life of Leah Tannenbaum in order to describe a side of Jerusalem largely unknown in the historical record. We still know very little about the details of her liaisons. Certainly, there are doubts that her relationship with the powerful Ottoman governor Cemal Pasha was freely determined. And while Nassib seems to have been a devoted husband who built a villa for his wife, Leah surely had her reasons for leaving him and Jerusalem for Egypt. As for Abdul Wahab, his pattern of numerous marriages suggests that he left Leah for a younger woman; indeed, Jarmila was seventeen or eighteen years younger than Leah. These missing nuances are important to remember when delving into what life might have been like for a divorced woman (and then a widow) with three children, uprooted (or unrooted, perhaps) in a period of wars, occupations, and massive upheaval in Jerusalem and all of Palestine.



Figures 11 and 12. At left, the grave of Nassib's mother Afifa Abcarius in the Protestant Cemetery, Mount Zion (Jabal Sahyun), Jerusalem; at right, the grave of Leah Tannenbaum Jaffe Abcarius Ermou (Eden) in Baron de Hirsch cemetery, Montreal, Canada.

Norbert Schwake, born in 1939 in Germany, holds a master's degree in theology and biblical studies. Formerly a priest in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Schwake became a medical doctor in 1978, and a researcher of the history of Jerusalem's hospitals and of the Palestine Front in World War I. The author based this essay on the investigations of Carole Düster-Boucherot, a descendant of the Abcarius family; Moshe Hananel's "The Jerusalemites: A Journey through the British Mandate Telephone Book, 1946," published in Hebrew in Eretz Magazine (2007); and the works of Israeli architect David Kroyanker. The author wishes to thank Professor István Ormos of Budapest for his important comments on the draft.

Endnotes

- 1 Roberto Mazza, ed., *Jerusalem in World War I: The Palestine Diary of a European Consul* (I. B. Tauris: London, 2015), 67.
- 2 In the Montefiore's list of Hungarian Jews published in 1866, Avraham was recorded as born in Stropkov. The family tradition claims that Rabbi Hayim Elisha, Avraham's father, was the one who received the family name of Tannenbaum (Yiddish: Tenenboim), when Austrian authorities decreed that everyone must have a family name. Tenenboim served as the Yiddish translation of *erez* (cedar), a noble name for Jews, referring to a biblical text – "the righteous will grow like a cedar in Lebanon."
- 3 The lists of the military and civilian prisoners of World War I kept by the International Red Cross in Geneva, and publicly available online, provide an overview of the Tannenbaum family. The list mentions seven of the nine children of Israel (Mordechai) Tannenbaum and his wife Chaia (Haya, née Eisenberg). After Leah, born in 1899, Bella was born in 1902, though like her sister, she later changed the date, to 1913. Their brothers Albert (Abraham Elias) and Edgar are not mentioned in the records. Moses (Maurice) was born in 1906, Isaak (Issie) in 1909, and Joseph in 1912, while David was born in 1914 at the beginning of the war. Elkanan was born in 1918, a short time before the family was exiled.
- 4 In January 1915, Cemal Pasha moved his headquarters from Damascus to Jerusalem in order to be closer to the Sinai Front and, together with his staff, took up residence in the fortress-like Augusta Victoria complex. For details in relation to the Augusta Victoria Complex, see Kobi Peled, "'Germany in Jerusalem': The Inauguration of the Augusta Victoria Church and Hospice on the Mount of Olives in 1910," *Israel Studies* 21, no. 3 (Fall 2016): 69–98.
- 5 Abigail Jacobson, "Negotiating Ottomanism in Times of War: Jerusalem during World War I through the Eyes of a Local Muslim Resident," in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 1 (February 2008): 77; and Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (University of California Press, 2011), 45–46.
- 6 Mazza, *Jerusalem in World War I*, 77.
- 7 See note 50 in Jacobson, "Negotiating Ottomanism," 87.
- 8 It is unclear why they married in Lausanne; however, since it was around the time Jaffe was awarded the Legion of Honor Cross, the two events may be related. See *American Jewish World* 10, no. 10 (11 November 1921): 3.
- 9 A 25 October 1925 ship's passenger list from Southampton, England, to the United States recorded Israel Jaffe (then aged thirty-two), whose last permanent address was Jerusalem, Palestine, c/o Mrs. L. Jaffe, POB 468 Jerusalem, Palestine. An address like this was the address of the American-Palestine Real Estate Agency. Jaffe eventually married Carol Ann Bolton with whom he had three children. He died in 1978 and is buried in Salisbury, Zimbabwe.
- 10 The name Abkarian derives from Abgar, the legendary king of Edessa Abgar V, considered by Armenians the first Christian king. When using the Turkish language, he called himself Apikarios instead of the Armenian Abkarian; the "Westernized" version of Hagop became Jacob (or, in Arabic, Ya'qub) Abcarius.
- 11 Hagop died in Beirut on 29 October 1845, aged 64. He is buried in the Anglo-American cemetery of Beirut. A broken marble table calls him Abcarius Y. Bishop † 1845, and notes that his remains were transferred from the old Anglo-American cemetery.
- 12 Johannes (Yuhana) was married twice, the

- first time in 1852 to Zubayda Turk. They had five children: Philipp, a small child whose first name is not recorded, Farida, Negib, and Henri, who also died as a small child. Farida (Fernande) (1859–1933) married a Swiss missionary, Armand Metzinger, in 1897. Their daughter Marie Henriette Metzinger married Alphonse Ernest Alexandre Boucherot. These are the ancestors of Carole Boucherot, who contributed much to this article.
- 13 Afifa, daughter of Raful and Helen Kanawati, was born in 1852 in Beirut.
 - 14 In addition to Nassib, their children were: Amin Samuel (b. 1871); Ramsey Joseph John (b. 1872 in Beirut, d. 1950 in France), who later became a physician; Alfred (b. 1877 in Beirut, d. 1878); Michel, also called “Fred” or “Fritz” (b. 1884 in Beirut); Edna (b. 1879 in Beirut, d. 1884); Nelly (b. 1879, d. 1879); and Alice (b. 1886 in Beirut), a teacher and active proponent of the scouting movement. Nassib’s birth certificate gives his date of birth as 1 May 1871 in Cairo, but this is unreliable based on the date of his parents’ marriage and of Amin Samuel’s and Ramsey Joseph John’s dates of birth.
 - 15 In December 1903, at the age of twenty-nine, Nassib joined the Sir Reginald Wingate Lodge in Khartoum. His profession is given as “Captain Egyptian army.” In 1923, he was still in Khartoum, a member of the Anglo Colonial Lodge and a civil magistrate.
 - 16 According to Moshe Hananel, Nassib Abcarius Bey was then living in the King David Hotel. He probably met the Negus there.
 - 17 Guy (1909–74) claimed that he was Jewish, but there is no evidence other than his word. They had two children, Esme Sarah and Michael James. Guy later left Bella, without divorcing, and lived with her best friend.
 - 18 Two customs declarations from 1950 mention him as member of an El Al crew, living at 33 Ruppin Street in Tel Aviv. His British passport was issued in London on 22 July 1949.
 - 19 Ruth eventually moved to Florida, where she lived for more than twenty-five years before her death in 2009. Tina lived much of her adult life in Cuernavaca, near Mexico City, and died at ninety-two years old.
 - 20 Leon was then twenty-nine years old. The marriage certificate suggests that his bride, Beryl Silansky, was divorced and had two daughters from her first marriage.
 - 21 Beryl and Leon had one child together, Peter Alan Jaffe, born 27 August 1953 in Johannesburg. In 1974, he died in a car accident, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Johannesburg.
 - 22 Line D, Grave 181. Some three decades later, in 1999, Bella died and was buried in the same cemetery as Leah. Her family name is recorded as Tannenbaum.
 - 23 In the citizenship application file, Israel Mordechai Tenenbaum is listed as a landowner. Three of his sons – Joseph (Joe), Isaac (Issie), and Abraham Elias (Albert) – seem to have lived in the same house in Karm al-Ruhban, along with Albert’s wife Debora. Joe is listed as a journalist, and Issie and Albert appear as merchants, proprietors of Tenenbaum Brothers, Ltd. A fourth brother, David, also applied for Palestinian citizenship with his wife Bodana (b. 1914, Lithuania) and his son, Arie Samuel. David applied under the name Tene (a Hebraicized abbreviation of the German/Yiddish Tannenbaum); he, too, was a merchant, giving his address as “Carem el Rouhban c/o Abcarius Bey.” Moses (Maurice), Elkanan (Elcana), and Edgar do not appear in the Israel State Archives. David was the only sibling who remained in Jerusalem until his death (Moses married a woman named Edith and died in Paris; Elkanan studied in England and remained there until his death; Edgar married an English woman named Sara Evens and it seems that he also remained there). Haya, the mother of the nine siblings, died in 1948 in Cairo, likely choosing to spend her final days with her two wealthy daughters there rather than in turbulent Jerusalem.
 - 24 Frida was a recent widow herself; her husband Hanna Jiries Darouti had died in 1934.
 - 25 Application for Palestinian citizenship, Israel State Archives 3234/067-z.
 - 26 The death register at the Franciscan parish of Jerusalem (Nr. 72) reads: “Anno Domini 1946 die 7 Septembris obiit Nassib f. Joannis Alcarius [sic], natus 1. Maji 1875 in Beyrouth, cujus corpus die sequenti sepultum est in Coemeterio Novo in loculo.” The birthplace (Beirut) in this document seems more credible than that on the naturalization certificate (Cairo).
 - 27 Obituary in the *Palestine Post*, September 1946.
 - 28 Obituary in the *Palestine Post*, September 1946.
 - 29 For image of the plaque, see online at (israelandyou.com) bit.ly/3O2DK7R (accessed 7 June 2023).
 - 30 Sharit Yishai-Levi, *The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem: A Novel* (London: Thomas Dunne, 2016).