

Migrants, Residents, and the Cost of Illegal Home-Making in Mandate Palestine

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Abstract

This article seeks to underscore the need for a broader historical framework for understanding belonging in Mandate Palestine in order to incorporate non-settler migrants. Using the notion of “home” and situating physical houses and structures of home, I investigate the stories of certain migrants who came to Palestine not as part of the settler-colonial, Zionist movement but nonetheless with the hope to settle and reside there alongside and within Arab societies and communities. These individuals, from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds and situations, positioned themselves as “indigenous” in order to maintain their homes and residences in the territory. I interrogate the physical realities and emotional sentiments of “home” as Palestine transitioned from an imperial to a national space. As part of this transition, many of these migrants came to be classified by the British authorities as illegally resident in Palestine. Unable to claim any legal status of indigeneity and not entirely able to integrate themselves as settlers, both more prosperous migrants and more marginalized migrants made articulated intimate pleas and legitimizations of belonging. Ultimately, the histories here lead to the question of how historians of the Mandate can know who is “at home” in Palestine during the decades before the Nakba and who gets to make that determination.

Keywords

Mandate; immigration; settler colonialism; deportation; residence; petitions; Syrian Arabs; orphans; gender.

In 1946, Muhammad Mustafa Y., a native of Hama in Syria and a resident of Jaffa for the previous sixteen years, received a deportation order issued by the Palestine government. Muhammad had arrived in Palestine in 1930, joining his mother and brother who had lived in Jaffa since the 1920s. According to the Mandate's attorney-general, the police and government based the deportation order on Muhammad's lack of respect for the law "since he has obviously been evading the frontier controls for many years."¹ In other words, the government deemed Muhammad an illegal migrant, having entered Palestine without legal permission. Addressing the Mandate's high commissioner in a response to the deportation order, Muhammad refuted the notion he was a migrant, illegal or otherwise, and insisted, "I am [of] Palestinian nationality at present." He begged the authorities to postpone the order, arguing that his wife had just given birth and the family could hardly be expected to return on foot to Syria, a place where they had no family, job prospects, or house. The emotional struggle against the prospect of deportation impacted Muhammad's wider family, too. His brother, 'Abd al-Ghani, a lawful permanent resident of Palestine, submitted an appeal to the high commissioner and the colonial secretary in London. 'Abd al-Ghani wrote that although the family originated in Syria, he and his mother had permanent residence in Jaffa. He owned a barbershop and another commercial storefront there, and Muhammad worked as his brother's "right hand man" in both. Referencing the brothers' elderly mother, 'Abd al-Ghani stressed: "We live here as one family and one heart." If Muhammad had to leave Palestine, he would be ruined financially and materially, especially since he had no ties to anyone living in Syria nor a home there.²

Muhammad's story is one of many varied and striking pleas by migrants to remain at "home" during the Mandate period. Palestine became a magnet for temporary laborers from Syria and Egypt after 1918, but the history of migration for manual, agricultural, or infrastructure work between regions in Greater Syria and throughout the eastern Mediterranean stretches back further.³ From the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, migrant workers and refugees not only made their homes in cities and towns across the Levant, but "made" cities and towns themselves. From villages such as Samakh and Caesarea settled by Algerian and Bosnian Muslims respectively, to Amman, settled by Circassian refugees, "homeland" became a flexible concept for individuals and communities on the move in the industrialized late nineteenth century.⁴

The rapid industrialization in Palestine's coastal cities contributed to new labor migration patterns after 1918, and the British Army regularly employed Iraqi and Egyptian Arabs for infrastructure projects. Older migration patterns continued to ferry non-Palestinians, such as Druze and other Arabs from the Hawran (southern Syrian region east of the Golan), into Palestine for seasonal agricultural work.⁵ The booming citrus industry required agricultural labor and labor in the form of lightermen and stevedores to load cases of the fruit to export after the harvest. Often the migration patterns of Arabs born on the other side of the post-World War I borders were not so different from those of rural Palestinians who traveled to the coast for work.⁶ Meanwhile, Armenians and other refugees and displaced migrants also came to

Palestine to settle with relatives or to start life anew, and Middle Eastern Jews came for employment prospects, familial ties, or refuge.

Some migrant laborers who came to Palestine for employment spent their formative late adolescence and early adulthood living in mostly rented homes or rooms in villages, towns, and cities. With the transition in the early twentieth century from seasonal, male-dominated labor migration in the agricultural sector to longer-term, low-wage employment spurred by industrialization and urbanization along the coast of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, male workers more frequently brought wives and children with them or married and settled in host territories. Refugees, too, such as Armenians and, later, Greeks settled in Palestine and took on jobs. Displaced persons and entire families, such as Middle Eastern Jews from Iraq, did the same. Like migrant workers, these individuals made their home in Palestine while the Mandate administration viewed their presence as contrary to immigration laws, categorizing them as illegal immigrants unauthorized to reside in the territory and thus liable for deportation.

In this article, I interrogate the physical realities and emotional sentiments of “home” in Palestine as this territory transitioned from an imperial to a national space, using microhistories to understand how migrants and deportees who were part of this nationalizing-space defended their connection to it. Despite the romanticization and sensationalism that can characterize stories of immigrants and deported migrants, I am concerned with such individuals as “ordinary” people. The homes described here belonged to less prosperous migrants and refugees who settled in Palestine. The article addresses how these individuals and families dealt with the administrative structures of the state in the 1930s and 1940s even as the government classified them as “illegal.” It is concerned with the sense of home as the place *for which* – rather than *from which* – migrants left. Maggie Leung eloquently describes the multiple tangible and metaphorical notions of “home” as

particularly intriguing for those who are often *en route*, crossing borders, embedded in webs of always transforming social relations . . . who are identified with multiple places. For some in migrancy, “home” is where they originally come from, a place of nostalgia; for others, “home” is the place for which they have left, a new way of life; some make home in their migrancy . . . while some have multiple homes.⁷

Home, in the cases I describe, is to be distinguished from *homeland*. For migrants, these two places are not one and the same.⁸

The migrants whose histories are explored here cannot be neatly identified as Zionist Jews or as Palestinian Arabs. Yet, they identified with the *space* of Palestine as its rightful residents. I argue that neither nationalist narratives (in which Mandate Palestine is inhabited by Jews and Palestinians) nor settler colonial narratives (in which Mandate Palestine is inhabited by settlers and indigenous Arabic-speakers) fully account for the complexity of lives lived in Palestine in which Armenians, Syrians, Lebanese, Iraqis, Greeks, and others participated in social, economic, and

political spheres. These people were not at home in Palestine because they were not its native sons (*abna' al-balad*), nor were they colonists (who crafted themselves as natives through their settlement of Eretz Yisra'el). Rather, they made their homes there out of choice or necessity and appealed to a notion of citizenship and belonging that was not rooted in historical connections or birth but rather their residence in and use of Palestine's space.

This article traces three main understandings of this belonging to "home." First, migrants laid claim to residence and belonging by virtue of civic participation: individuals identified as productive members of society through employment, trade, or ownership of businesses and thus their payment of taxes and contribution to the economy and society. Second, they understood Palestine as their home simply because they had been there a long time and put down roots by having children and owning houses. Finally, displaced migrants, especially refugees and orphans, had no other "home" whether in physical reality or in their memories with which to associate themselves. Darryl Li has pointed out with regard to the Bosnian population of pre-1948 Palestine that such migrants "enriched" the category of "Palestinian."⁹ Accounting for these lives troubles nationalist assumptions of a natural link between people and their home(land). Through migrants' responses to deportation and removal as chronicled through documentary material, the following sections interrogate who decides how one's place of residence in Palestine can actually become home. Meanwhile, both migrants' evocations of home and the Mandate legislation targeting and differentiating migrants were inflected by gender and class.

A growing historiography of late Ottoman and Mandate Palestine devotes attention to groups who do not fit into the Palestinian Arab/Jew dichotomy, including Sephardim and Middle Eastern Jews.¹⁰ While Palestinian and Arab historians and sociologists have long used the framework of settler colonialism to demonstrate the development of structures of power and dispossession before and after 1948, this framing obscures a plethora of experiences, histories, agencies, and meaningful interactions by Palestine's residents with each other, with outsiders, and with those structures of power.¹¹ More recent approaches emphasize and are threaded through with the narratives and consequences of settler colonialism, including its impact on peasants, Bedouin, urban-dwellers, the middle classes, and citizenship as a legal status.¹² Yet, as nationalist and settler-colonial approaches remain the hegemonic and dominant counter-hegemonic terms of reference, respectively, in histories of the Mandate and 1948, the experiences of individuals who straddle or fit outside of their categories of analysis remain obscured, or at best ill-defined.

Finally, this article considers larger questions of how the history of Palestine and settler colonialism are written and why these questions matter. How might expanding the category of "indigenous" help us try to understand *non-settler migration* into Palestine? Indigeneity here does not only correspond to birth in Palestine nor to genealogy and ancestry. Rather, the non-migrant and non-settler, whether born in Palestine or not, maintains a connection to the land itself and a belonging to social formations that operate exclusively in places considered Palestinian or part of

Palestine. At the same time, the settler/indigenous binary is not black and white; it is a historically imposed structure rather than an essential characteristic of Palestine's societal makeup and relations. Indigenous and non-indigenous are imperfect terms because most of the migrants under consideration were local to different parts of the Ottoman Empire, and so are not settler-migrants in the traditional sense, but integrated into Palestinian localities and defined themselves in relation to these localities' existing social and cultural landscape, rather than a settler one.

Yet the terms do matter here, in part because Mandate officials' understanding of who could claim indigenous status in Palestine shaped the distribution of rights to reside there, and in part because this distribution of rights produced the settler-colonial structure into which migrants were absorbed. Thus, I ask to what extent formerly-Ottoman Arabs from Syria, for instance, who appear in the cases presented below, present themselves as *indigenous* in the context of their residency in Palestine. What of Iraqi or Egyptian Arabs or Armenians from Anatolia? None are indigenous to Palestine in the sense that it was their birthplace, and this left them vulnerable to deportation even after decades of residence. More complex still is the situation of Jews from Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kurdistan, and elsewhere who came to Palestine for work, as refugees or to be near family. Their migration was not motivated by Zionism and they, too, faced deportation for illegal residence. Should we view these individuals and families as settlers or migrants?¹³ As Jewish migrants, many inevitably became part of a settler society even as others' experiences of deportation and losing homes can be viewed in the same light as those of Armenian or Syrian migrants.¹⁴

The efforts of Mandate authorities to remove from Palestine those deemed to have no legal claim to residency produced a paper trail of petitions, letters, court cases, and transcripts of in-person pleas against deportation orders. These sources communicate knowledge gained through visceral experience by marginalized migrants, what Joan Scott calls "evidence of experience."¹⁵ They allow for a reassessment of the relationship between mobile persons and the state, including how states differentiate between migrant groups and how this difference operated in terms of policies on residence and deportation. Such documents also illuminate migrants' views of the colonial state in Palestine, as they assumed roles as advocates to make claims on houses and homes. In doing so, they offer a counterpoint to the bureaucratic classifications that British officials inscribed onto migrants in order to separate them from indigenous Palestinians and Zionist settlers. Petitions also contained personal and intimate details, painting a picture of everyday life and the realities faced by migrants.¹⁶ Responses to petitions, letters, and court cases also offer opportunities to examine the ways in which Palestine's officials used language and imagery to legitimize the legislation on citizenship and residency and to unpack Mandate officials' interpretations of their own legislation.

The article first briefly contextualizes the link between immigration and deportation policies in British-administered Palestine, and how these together impacted migrants. I then turn to the invocations of "home" – in both its physical and emotional meanings – in the testimonies and pleas of migrants facing deportation. The article assesses the

ways class, gender, and extended family structures were intimately linked to the kinds of belonging articulated by those seeking to remain in Palestine. Here, home is evoked in varied ways by workers and capitalists, pregnant women and single men, parents and their children, as well as by different communities. Homes appear in archival documents as material structures of belonging, emotional and physical investments, and manifestations of livelihoods. After the inauguration of deportation policies in the 1930s, homes and storefronts also became sites of potential incrimination; applications for permits to build, repair, or extend such structures inadvertently exposed applicants as residing in Palestine without permission. These sites also politicized the home for migrants and noncitizens.¹⁷ Such insights have been difficult to recover in colonial settings generally, and in the case of Mandate Palestine have often been subsumed within the struggles within and between nationalist movements.¹⁸

Immigration, Residency, and Deportation

Deportations served several purposes across the colonial world beginning in earnest in the late nineteenth century. Deportation functioned as a practice of power, as well as a form of social engineering in settler colonial states.¹⁹ They also established deported individuals as unfit for citizenship or continued residence in a particular territory.²⁰ The increased mobility of peoples across the Middle East and North Africa in the years before and after World War I, meanwhile, clashed with new methods of controlling mobility in the region, and across Europe and the Americas, too. From 1920, deportation policy in Palestine evolved to reinforce immigration regulations and citizenship legislation in keeping with the British commitment to favor the establishment of a Jewish national home, first articulated in the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and later written into the Mandate charter.

In 1920, the new head of the civil administration in Palestine, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, issued the first Immigration Ordinance. Although successive Mandate administrators amended the 1920 ordinance, its core retained the preference for European Jewish immigrants over others (including Jews and non-Jews from Arab or former Ottoman territories). The most secure path to immigration was laid out for those of certain independent financial means – measured by holdings in land, business, stocks or savings – as well as members of certain professions, as long as they, too, proved financial independence and the existence of jobs in their sector.²¹ Through a quota system, Jewish workers with employment prospects in Palestine could apply for immigration certificates whose number was determined each quarter. British authorities granted the Zionist Organization the exclusive right to manage the approval and distribution of permits to Jewish applicants.²²

This left Arab and other non-Jewish workers with limited legal routes to enter and remain indefinitely in Palestine. Most foreign laborers and travelers could not legally settle in Palestine for more than three months.²³ Once in Palestine, temporary workers and travelers who met one of certain specific immigration categories could apply for

permanent leave to remain, offering a chance to naturalize as a Palestinian citizen. How many did so is uncertain: naturalization records do not show whether applicants came to Palestine initially as workers or travelers, although their visa class is often given. Some migrants, alongside refugees and extended family of Palestinian citizens, simply overstayed their permission and made Palestine their home.

A new legal framework imposed throughout British colonial territories by the early twentieth century required documentary proof of citizenship (such as birth certificates or passports) to legally enter a country for either travel or work.²⁴ Manual laborers did not normally carry birth certificates, let alone passports, when they crossed Palestine's borders. When found in Palestine without these documents, they could be deported. Similarly, when noncitizen residents left their homes in Palestine and crossed borders to visit family or conduct business, for example, they forfeited their legal claims to habitual residence.²⁵ In Palestine, deportations increased after 1933 when the government, on advice from the police and the Department of Immigration, began prosecuting persons for undocumented presence. Migrants apprehended by authorities soon after crossing a frontier could be expelled without any legal proceedings, even though this did not necessarily mean that they had only just entered Palestine. In cases of residents of long standing who had merely traveled to a neighboring territory, the quick deportation left no time to inform family or employers, gather belongings from their homes, or arrange for those homes (or other property) to be sold or looked after. In most cases, swift police and Immigration Department action meant that deportees would be removed to a neighboring country where they had no home.

To be lawfully settled in Palestine, and thus eligible for naturalization, an individual needed to have a valid visa that allowed for settlement, and must have lived in Palestine for an uninterrupted period of at least two of the three years immediately preceding their application. Immigration officials meticulously checked applicants' passports to verify whether they had resided elsewhere during that timeframe or held travel documents issued by another state.²⁶ For those unable to naturalize, the administration in 1941 instituted an amnesty for all "illegal" migrants who had entered Palestine before August 1933, had no police record, and had never left the territory since first entering. While in theory the amnesty was a step toward regularizing the status of thousands of long-term resident migrants and their families, in reality it did little to prevent deportation. Migrants and displaced persons who had entered Palestine without permission before August 1933 had no record with frontier control officials that could verify their dates of arrival. Anyone caught without proof of continuous and uninterrupted residence faced removal. In addition, any migrant convicted of even a minor infraction was not eligible for amnesty.

Documentation was thus central to the government's attempts to deport migrants from Palestine, as well as migrants' attempts to mediate social and political relationships with the state and local authorities. In cases of deportation, individuals presented a range of documents to argue against their removal: deeds to show ownership of their homes or storefronts, identity cards (although cards did not come into wider use until after 1938), birth certificates, mukhtars' certificates, statements from employers,

colleagues, religious authorities, and neighbors. Migrants produced documents not only to try to satisfy the letter of the law, but to make emotional and commonsensical arguments about their establishment of Palestine as their home, and to evoke the loss (material and affective) if they were to be removed from that home.²⁷ Socio-economic background played a significant role here: migrants who could not produce deeds of homeownership, or who could not afford lawyers to help gather pages of paperwork to back up petitions, could not mount successful cases against removal. Labor migrants who overstayed work visas or entered Palestine without permission may have had nothing to prove “connection” with their residences. Even though their petitions demonstrate a desperate reliance on meager incomes, immigration officials easily dismissed their pleas to rescind deportation orders.

Evocations of Home, Livelihood, and Family

Migrants from varied backgrounds perceived and argued on behalf of Palestine as their home for different reasons. Class, gender, and family situation were all intimately linked to the articulations of belonging by actors who sought to remain in their homes legally. The following section introduces the “belonging” discourses mobilized in migrants’ petitions, letters, and statements made to Mandate authorities. In doing so, it also underscores the motivations that led migrants of different backgrounds, including ethno-religious backgrounds, to make Palestine their home.

Noncitizen Arabs and non-Arabs, including Middle Eastern Jewish migrants, built their homes, businesses, and families in Palestine despite lacking legal permission to reside within the Mandate’s borders. The experiences of the journey to Palestine, and of building homes and houses once settled, differed for migrants according to class, family ties, and financial situation. As elsewhere, power differentials within migrant communities ensured that wealthy migrants, displaced migrants, and seasonal or unskilled laborers did not share homogenous goals, outlooks, or perceptions of their original or adopted homes.²⁸ Yet, neither the more affluent nor the less prosperous migrants whose stories are cited here expressed a desire to return to the places that the Palestine authorities insisted to be their homes. Over time, noncitizens’ structures of home acquired financial, personal, and social meaning as they also offered their inhabitants a direct connection with the physical space of Palestine. This link, as well as the time, money, and care devoted to homes, businesses, and the local economy – in other words, migrants’ contributions – manifested itself in the language of citizenship, belonging, and homeland in migrants’ and residents’ challenges to deportation orders.

More affluent migrants who entered Palestine without a legal visa, or who overstayed their temporary visa, often had the means to set up their homes with larger families, while they also sought permission to remain in Palestine in order to tend to their businesses. It was not uncommon for these individuals to have children while in Palestine. They raised young families in the social and educational landscapes of towns and cities, thus creating familial as well as employment roots in those places.

Some of them promoted their “capitalist” skills and backgrounds and their civic participation to demonstrate their contribution to the Palestinian economy and society.

Muhammad J., a Syrian merchant who came to Palestine in 1939, applied for naturalization in 1942. As evidence of his residence for two out of the preceding three years, he submitted to the Department of Immigration the birth certificates for three of his four children born in Palestine and a certificate of lease for his house in Haifa. A mukhtar in Haifa and a building materials merchant company provided letters of recommendation for Muhammad to the effect that he had resided continuously in Palestine for two of the previous three years. But by his own admission, Muhammad had been outside of Palestine for 279 days over the previous two years.²⁹ This should have disqualified his application since immigration regulations stressed continuous residence during applicants’ time in Palestine. Muhammad’s application, however, was approved and he received naturalization even though he did not meet the residency qualifications.

While some Middle Eastern Jews faced removal from Palestine if they entered without permission, those of a certain socio-economic background had a better chance at convincing immigration and police authorities that their home was indeed in the territory. Dr. Mehdi L., an Iranian Jewish merchant, entered Palestine in 1933 and settled in Tel Aviv. He worked as a merchant, often traveling to Europe on business related to pharmacy stock. In 1948, as violence spread throughout Palestine in anticipation of British withdrawal, Mandate officials frustrated Mehdi’s return after a business trip. Mehdi eventually crossed back in Palestine, but authorities questioned why he should be able to remain there. Finding no evidence to answer the latter query, migration officials emphasized that Mehdi had an established business in Iran as well as a home there. Mehdi, in response, pleaded to be able to continue traveling to and from Palestine. He stressed that his son attended school in Palestine, he owned his house there outright, and had been a resident for fifteen years. As a compromise, the Immigration Department asked that Mehdi promise to liquidate his business in Iran and sell his home there in order to be recognized as a permanent resident of Palestine.³⁰

Less prosperous migrants and manual or temporary laborers were often less successful in their efforts to gain legal residency or citizenship, but they nevertheless made claims based on long-standing residence and contribution to society. The discourse of a right to remain in one’s home on account of long-standing residence is particularly strong in petitions against removal by those who entered Palestine in the mid-1920s or earlier.³¹ Sudanese-born Ahmad K. arrived in Palestine at the end of World War I. He worked for the British Army at Haifa from 1918 until the late 1920s before becoming a storekeeper for the Haifa–Baghdad Road Company, a position he continued to hold in the 1940s. After several applications for recognition as a lawful resident and requests for a Sudanese passport through the Egyptian Consulate in Jerusalem, in 1942 the government issued him a deportation order. In pleading with the chief secretary of the Mandate government to be allowed to stay in Haifa, Ahmad stressed that he had never changed his residence during his long time in Palestine.

In a separate petition to the high commissioner, Ahmad implored that he be granted permanent residency “in the name of humanities and the British Justice [*sic*].”³² In his petitions, Ahmad included declarations from employers and a mukhtar to confirm that, in his own words, “I am in no way an immigrant.” Ahmad, then nearly sixty years old, begged the government to consider that in his twenty-four years in Haifa he “never committed any punishable act whatsoever,” had never depended on “any benevolent institution,” and “always earned my living honorably and by the sweat of my brow.”³³ Through his contributions to Palestine, the place became home. The petitions and evidence came to naught: the deportation order forced Ahmad from the home he had made over decades in Haifa.

Others sought to impress upon Mandate authorities the destabilizing and downright devastating impact that deportation would have on them and their families. ‘Abd al-Hasan A., his wife and their four children, all under thirteen years old, abandoned their home and any possessions they could not carry with them after he received a deportation order from the Palestine Police. ‘Abd al-Hasan entered Palestine from Lebanon in the late 1930s seeking work. He spent ten years employed as a barber in Haifa, where he raised his young family, before going on trial for contravention of the Immigration Ordinance. In 1947, facing the overland return to Lebanon with his children and belongings, ‘Abd al-Hasan begged the Mandate government to understand: “I am a very poor man and there is nothing in this world that I own. All my relations with the Lebanon have been severed since my entry into Palestine.”³⁴ In his petition, he addressed his clean record and that the “inevitable result of my deportation will be the starvation of my family to death.” He pleaded that the government allow his family to remain in Palestine to enable him to earn a living “for this unfortunate family.” Another meaning of home emerges through ‘Abd al-Hasan’s narrative: Palestine became home through establishing a family there, by marrying and having children. Men faced with deportation mention their wives and mothers frequently in their claims to Palestine as home. Men whose wives gave birth in Palestine emphasized this in their appeals to legitimize their *jus sanguinis* connection to the physical space of the Mandate. In some petitions against deportation, children born in Palestine are depicted as Palestinian. Minors, too, used the same argument against forced removal: their birth in a territory entitled them to citizenship. By the 1930s, district officials and mukhtars dutifully recorded births across Palestine and families received certificates. Although they were no guarantee against deportation, birth certificates offered documentary evidence to home that men and women without children could not procure.

Women also migrated to Palestine to make new homes for themselves or with their children. Saltiya B., who faced removal from her home in Palestine in the early 1940s, was, like other women, disadvantaged by immigration, residence, and nationality legislation as she attempted to claim Palestine as her home.³⁵ Saltiya had taken her husband’s Transjordanian nationality upon marriage and, until 1925, lived with her husband and his family in Transjordan. However, her husband disappeared suddenly – supposedly for America – and left Saltiya and her infant child behind.

Saltiya traveled with her daughter to Jerusalem to search for her husband and prevent his departure. Unsuccessful, she remained in Palestine for nearly two decades, raising her daughter and living in her own home in Jerusalem during these years. Since her husband had not legally divorced her before leaving, Saltiya retained Transjordanian nationality. In 1943, she applied for recognition as a Palestinian citizen under Article 1 of the Palestine Citizenship Order-in-Council claiming she was a Turkish (that is, Ottoman) subject habitually resident in Palestine in 1925, the date the order came into effect. However, the Immigration Department declined her request because she was married to a Transjordanian at the time the citizenship order came into law.³⁶ Saltiya fervently maintained her right to remain in her home in Palestine with her daughter as a resident and citizen and used precedents set by other women to advocate for herself. Her petition to the High Commissioner referenced a 1939 case, in which the Department of Immigration granted passports to a woman and her son in a similar situation. The woman's husband had also left the family to travel abroad prior to 1925 and never returned. The department deemed the wife and son no longer "bound" to the husband's nationality due to the lapse of time and lack of contact from him. Saltiya stressed that Nada, her own daughter, had "the full right" to claim a passport and continue to live in Palestine for the same reasons. Despite the appeal, the High Commissioner refused to give the case further consideration.³⁷ Both women were forced to leave the only home they had known for twenty years.

Chahlah S. N., an Iraqi Jewish woman, had entered Palestine on a one-year traveler visa in 1939, but gave birth there before the visa expired. She sent an urgent request for permission to stay for an additional year, insisting that Palestine as her home and, as she wrote, she could not travel back to Iraq so soon after giving birth. Here, though, Chahlah's predicament differs from that of many Arab Muslim migrants, particularly women like Saltiya, who made similar requests to stay in their homes on the basis of long residence in Palestine. And although Chahlah did not have Palestinian citizenship, her husband did. She asked to be exempt from immigration rules meant to prevent the overstay of travelers and promised the government that she intended to legally enter Palestine once she recovered.³⁸ According to later correspondence, Palestine's High Commissioner granted Chahlah an exemption.

In the cases of 'Abd al-Hasan, Saltiya, and others from the late 1930s and 1940s, the chief secretary informed migrants they could submit applications for legal residence through the Department of Immigration after leaving Palestine. This, of course, did not take into consideration the emotional, financial, and personal toll of uprooting one's home and crossing the border to face uncertainty in territories that were no longer familiar (if they had ever been so). The harm that deportation caused to non-affluent migrants likely meant they could not afford to try to return legally to Palestine. For those from neighboring states, proximity did not equate with an easy deportation. Men and women both, especially those with families in Palestine, faced return to towns and villages they had not seen for years or even decades. For others, the very idea of return was precluded by the destruction and mass displacement of war.

Orphans and Refugees

For orphans and refugees – often one and the same – deportation meant statelessness in the most literal sense. Orphan and refugee narratives, including their emphasis on Palestine as “home,” illuminate under-studied complexities of the interwar period’s transition from an imperial to national order, a transition that cannot be neatly contained by nationalist or settler colonial frameworks. Both frames obscure the experiences of orphans and refugees who found homes in Palestine before and immediately after World War I.³⁹ From World War I through the early 1940s, multiple waves of refugees attempted to settle in Palestine. Initially, the largest group were Armenians fleeing war and genocide. Within this group, orphans without documents, families, or homes fled from Anatolia to Syria and Lebanon and on to Palestine. During World War II, refugees from Greece arrived in Palestine for what government and humanitarian organizations anticipated to be a short stay. For wartime and interwar displaced persons, Palestine became home. Moreover, these displaced migrants had no alternate “home” into which to be deported. The following section explores the processes of settlement and the making of home by refugees and orphans.

Unlike in Syria and Lebanon, where the French conferred Syrian or Lebanese citizenship on Armenian refugees from the mid-1920s, the Palestine Mandate authorities did not offer refugees citizenship or automatic permanent residence.⁴⁰ Armenian refugees who came to Palestine received support from the small Armenian community that had existed prior to the large-scale massacres of Armenians during World War I. The Armenian Church, cultural organizations, and political leaders aimed to reconstruct institutions for Armenians in Palestine.⁴¹ This support helped Armenian refugees establish their homes in Palestine, opening small craft shops and integrating themselves into the Palestinian Arab community. Armenians used these institutions and the support provided to them to make claims to Jerusalem and other parts of the territory as home. Even so, many refugees remained poor. Some found work as low-wage craftsmen, but others remained unemployed and the threat of deportation was intertwined with their economic precarity. Unlike poor migrants from other Arab states, the statelessness of Armenians compounded their precarity. They remained outside the nationalizing indigenous community and they could not be incorporated into the settler colonial Zionist one.

While groups of Armenian refugees made their homes in Jerusalem, many had no identity documents to prove they were, in fact, Armenians who fled from Anatolia in 1915. Without such documentation, they faced the threat of deportation – and, thus, loss of their homes and businesses. In the 1930s, some Armenians acquired Palestinian citizenship by naturalization while others requested identity certificates from the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem.⁴² Clearly, however, the question of many Armenians’ status in Palestine remained unresolved. Though the exact figures of settled Armenians deported by the Palestine administration are not clear, that they faced this outcome is in striking contrast to their treatment by the French in Syria and Lebanon.

In 1943, police in Haifa arrested Yacoub T., twenty-seven years old, when he could not produce evidence of what he insisted to be his long domicile in Palestine. While not made explicit, Yacoub appears to have entered Palestine as an unaccompanied orphan. Yacoub claimed that he had arrived in Palestine as a child in 1922 and Haifa's Armenian vicar stated that he lived in Haifa since at least 1925.⁴³ Yacoub first worked as a shoemaker in the market during his teenage years, and then in a repair shop where he slept on the premises.⁴⁴ He wrote to the chief secretary and stressed his continuous residence and roots through his employment in Palestine for over twelve years; the fact that he had no relatives in Syria, Lebanon, or Turkey; and, importantly, that he had no legal right to reside in those countries after a long residence outside of them.⁴⁵ But Yacoub was unable to prove certain details of his residence in Palestine to the satisfaction of the Mandate authorities. According to the police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID), he refused to give details of his country of origin or any references of people known to him in that country.⁴⁶ Of course, as an Armenian refugee born at the time of the genocide, it would have been extremely difficult for Yacoub to produce references from a refugee camp he left at seven years old or from the Armenian region of the Ottoman Empire where he was born. Nor were authorities convinced by the vicar's testimony. According to the CID: "Past experience has shown that the Armenian Shoemakers at Haifa cannot be relied on [*sic*] their statements in so far as illegal immigrants are concerned."⁴⁷ Yacoub continued to argue his case to remain domiciled in his shop. He succeeded after two years of uncertainty and repeated petitions and testimonies: the administration rescinded the deportation order and recognized his long-standing residence.

From the early 1940s, Palestine also served as a place of refuge for thousands escaping the Axis powers' occupation of Greece. Greeks, mainly but not exclusively those from the Aegean, settled in refugee camps in Palestine, Egypt, and Syria under the auspices of the Middle East Relief and Refugee Administration (MERRA). Nusayrat camp, south of Gaza, housed most of these refugees in Palestine, and the Center for Greek Refugees in Jerusalem provided aid and assistance. By the mid-1940s, complaints against the camp's management, the quality of the aid, and the structures themselves flooded in from refugees, including women who, being without work, were forced to remain day and night inside Nusayrat camp. The Palestine Mandate government lamented the shortage of housing for these refugees, as Greek institutions pressed for all displaced persons, but especially women, to be moved from tents into proper houses. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate opened several convents to refugees because the Mandate's director of immigration refused to lease other homes in Jerusalem for their use.⁴⁸ Over time, numerous Greek refugees left the camp to reside with relatives in homes in Jerusalem, contrary to British rules.

Not all Greeks entered Palestine through MERRA channels or settled in Nusayrat. Although Greek wartime refugees could not legally be deported back to Greece, they remained vulnerable if they did not carry documentation that proved their legal residence in Palestine or if their life histories reflected more complex realities of mobility and migration. For example, Costas C., who had arrived in Palestine at age

twenty-five after the German occupation of Greece in 1941, requested an extension of stay in 1944. Costas had been born in Cyprus and the director of migration notified him that he had to leave Palestine and return to Cyprus. Costas explained that, although he held a British passport due to his birth in Cyprus, he had left Cyprus for Greece at age fourteen. While the ongoing war made it impossible to return to Greece, he wished to remain in Palestine. He had no relatives in Cyprus and regarded it “as nothing more than a strange country.”⁴⁹ In Palestine, he supported himself financially and could claim monthly credit. None of this moved the authorities, however, and Costas eventually left Palestine under threat of deportation.

In large part, cases of deportation in the 1940s were linked to wider British efforts to prevent unauthorized Jewish immigration.⁵⁰ Yet these seemed to engender a broader anti-illegal immigrant sentiment, and cases of long-term residents whose presence predated the war apparently irked certain British officials. In part, this can be traced to the Foreign Office’s long-standing view that noncitizens drained imperial resources, a cost that should be prevented if at all possible. Refugees and orphans, especially those not claimed by nationalizing states, posed potentially significant drains on welfare, housing, and other forms of assistance. To Mandate authorities, an easy solution was to ensure displaced and stateless persons not settle permanently in Palestine or establish homes or families there. Refugees, for their part, wrote petitions and challenged authorities from positions of individual marginalization. What appears to have bolstered these challenges was the solidarity of non-state actors such as churches to pressure the British to reconsider certain cases.

Conclusion

Syrian-born Muhammad Mustafa Y., whose case opened this article, sought to resist deportation through emotional evocations of Palestine as home to his extended family. The family appears to have worked their way up the socio-economic ladder from working-class origins and, as discussed above, tried to persuade the Mandate administration to rescind Muhammad’s deportation order so as not to ruin their small shops and family life. They hoped to ensure that Muhammad would not be sent to Syria where no home, family, or job awaited him. In fact, Muhammad admitted that his first entry to Palestine in 1930 was unauthorized, but he nonetheless felt entitled to stay due to his decade-and-a-half-long residence there, his marriage to a Palestinian wife, and his three Palestine-born children. Because Muhammad traveled to and from Syria in the intervening years, and the government considered every reentry to be illegal, the authorities determined he could not possibly regard Palestine as his true home. On account of that stance, neither the high commissioner nor the CID would reconsider deportation. For the government, such visits abroad meant that an individual’s connection to Palestine was not strong enough to warrant permanent legal domicile – to allow this space to be “home.” Muhammad’s brother requested the deportation be postponed in order to allow Muhammad to leave Palestine of his own will and apply

to the Department of Immigration to return as a lawful, permanent resident. The plea fell on deaf ears. Rather than face a forced deportation, Muhammad “voluntarily” left his home in Palestine bound for Syria along with his wife and children.⁵¹

Here, we return to the question of how historians can know who is “at home” in Palestine during the decades before the Nakba, and who gets to make that determination. The histories and experiences offered here demonstrate that despite individuals’ efforts to successfully prove that Palestine was their home, ultimately the Mandate bureaucracy determined who could claim home in Palestine. Administrators did this sometimes pointedly and in an intentionally harsh way, and other times detachedly by following procedure and precedent. Those who held identity papers or could articulate capitalist contributions could be at home in Palestine, but those decisions naturally left out precarious migrants and those who had already been displaced previously. At the same time, pleas by working-class or less well-off migrants to houses, storefronts, spouses, children, and parents in Palestine rarely received consideration by colonial officials. Like imperial and national governments across the world, the British in Palestine had no appetite to provide relief for persons they did not consider Palestinian (whether indigenous Arabs or Zionist settlers). Legislation backed up this distaste: immigration and citizenship regulations did not offer displaced persons, refugees, and migrants at the bottom of the economic ladder any route toward legal, permanent residence.

The microhistories of migrants in Mandate Palestine – as individuals, within families, and as members of communities – underscore the fact that struggles for home and questions of homeland in Mandate Palestine did not pertain only to Palestinian Arabs and Zionist Jews. Thousands of noncitizens living in Palestine felt the impact of settler colonialism, manifested in immigration policies and evictions, before 1948. In ways different from those of indigenous Palestinian Arabs, the men and women separated from their homes in Palestine by deportation pushed back against these processes by claiming their sense of identity through their material houses within the physical space of the Mandate, and emphasizing their families living, perhaps even born, in those houses. Most of the time these efforts yielded no positive results, but other times they did. When they succeeded, “home” had the possibility to become a concrete, if temporary, place of belonging for non-Zionist migrants.

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Endnotes

- 1 Muhammad Eil Yasin to Commissioner for Migration and Statistics, 17 May 1946, Israel State Archives [ISA] 256/64-2.
- 2 Abdul Ghani El Yasin to Chief Secretary, 25 June 1946, ISA 256/64-2.
- 3 Susynne McElrone reassesses the historical concept of rootedness of *fellahin* in Ottoman Palestine by using court records and other methods to demonstrate the extraordinary mobility of villagers: Susynne McElrone, "Villagers on the Move: Re-thinking Fallahin Rootedness in Late-Ottoman Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54 (2013): 56–68.
- 4 For more, see Mustafa Abbasi, "Samakh: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Arab Town on the Shores of the Galilee," *Holy Land Studies* 12 (April 2013): 91–108; Nina Seferović and Darryl Li, "The Herzegovinian Muslim Colony in Caesarea, Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 45 (Autumn 2015): 76–83; Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, "Circassian Refugees and the Making of Amman, 1878–1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 49 (2017): 605–623; Kemal H. Karpat, "The Migration of the Bosnian Muslims to the Ottoman State, 1878–1914: An Account Based on Turkish Sources," in *Ottoman Bosnia: A History in Peril*, ed. Markus Koller and Kemal H. Karpat (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), 121–40. A broad study can be found in Ulrike Freitag, Malte Fuhrmann, Nora Lafi, and Florian Riedler, eds., *The City in the Ottoman Empire: Migration and the Making of Urban Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011).
- 5 Lauren Banko, "Keeping Out the 'Undesirable Elements': The Treatment of Communists, Transients, Criminals, and the Ill in Mandate Palestine," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 47 (December 2019): 1153–80.
- 6 One recent study of the rural-to-urban migration pattern by Palestinians can be found in Na'ama Ben Ze'ev, "'I Came Naïve from the Village': On Palestinian Urbanism and Ruralism in Haifa under British Mandate," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47 (2020): 264–81. See also Rachel Taqu, "Peasants into Workmen: Internal Labor Migration and the Arab Village Community under the Mandate," in *Palestinian Society and Politics*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 261–86.
- 7 Maggi W. H. Leung, "Notions of Home among Diaspora Chinese in Germany," in *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity*, ed. Laurence J. C. Ma and Carolyn Cartier (New York: Rowman and Littlefield), 240.
- 8 Takeyuki Tsuda writes that transnational migration and dispersion created the need to separate the meaning of homeland, a place of origin and emotional attachment, from home, a stable residence that is comfortable, secure, and familiar. Takeyuki Tsuda, "When Home is Not the Homeland: The Case of Japanese Brazilian Ethnic Return Migration," in *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*, eds. Fran Markowitz and Anders H. Stefansson (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2004), 125.
- 9 Darryl Li, "Translator's Preface: A Note on Settler Colonialism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 45 (Autumn 2015): 69–75.
- 10 See, for instance, the following newer works in English: Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2016); Orit Bashkin, *Impossible Exodus: Iraqi Jews in Israel* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017); Lior D. Sternfeld, *Between Iran and Zion: Jewish Histories of Twentieth Century Iran* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018); Liora R. Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015); and Jonathan Marc Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors: Religion, Race, and the Early Zionist-Arab Encounter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- 11 Faye Sayegh, "Zionist Colonialism in Palestine (1965)," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2 (2012): 206–25. Gershon Shafir also historicized the Zionist processes of settler colonialism in *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 1882–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), which has since been critiqued by both Israeli and Palestinian scholars including from the framework of capital and class. For instance, see Amir Locker Biletzki, "Rethinking Settler Colonialism: A Marxist Critique of Gershon Shafir," *Rethinking Marxism* 30 (2018): 441–61.
- 12 One should first start with the entire special

- issue of *Settler Colonial Studies* on the topic as an important and nuanced critical inquiry, borne out of a 2011 conference at SOAS, London, beginning with the preface: Omar Jabary Salamanca, Mezna Qato, Kareem Rabie, Sobhi Samour, “Past in Present: Settler Colonialism in Palestine,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2 (2012): 1–9; and Nadim Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, “Settler Colonial Citizenship: Conceptualizing the Relationship between Israel and its Palestinian Citizens,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 5 (2014): 205–25. Even the work of Rouhana and Sabbagh-Khoury on counter-memory of settler colonialism leaves out the memories of groups not explicitly defined as Palestinian Arab or Jewish/Zionist: Nadim M. Rouhana and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury, “Memory and the Return of History in a Settler-Colonial Context: the case of Palestinians in Israel,” in *Israel and Its Palestinian Citizens: Ethnic Privileges in the Jewish State*, ed. Nadim M. Rouhana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 393–432. On citizenship and settler colonialism, recent excellent work includes: Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014); Lana Tatour, “Citizenship as Domination: Settled Colonialism and the Making of Palestinian Citizenship in Israel,” *Arab Studies Journal* 27 (Fall 2019): 8–39; Lana Tatour, “The Culturalisation of Indigeneity: The Palestinian-Bedouin of the Naqab and Indigenous Rights,” *International Journal of Human Rights* 23 (2019): 1569–93; Rana Barakat, “Writing/Righting Palestine Studies: Settler Colonialism, Indigenous Sovereignty, and Resisting the Ghost(s) of History,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 8 (2018): 349–63; Leena Dallasheh, “Troubled Waters: Citizenship and Colonial Zionism in Nazareth,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47 (August 2015): 467–87; and Ronit Lentin, *Traces of Racial Exception: Racializing Israeli Settler Colonialism* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).
- 13 Different historiographies claim Middle Eastern Jews in the context of Palestine. Hillel Cohen argued that Palestine’s indigenous Jewish population became increasingly Zionist after 1929, with the help of Revisionist propaganda; see Hillel Cohen, *1929: Year Zero of the Arab Israeli Conflict* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015). Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor have shown that Sephardic Jews in Palestine swayed toward Zionist ideologies for social and economic reasons even earlier; see Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2016). For Ella Shohat and Tom Segev, they are victims of Zionism, or, as Ehud Ein-Gil and Moshe Machover state, Middle Eastern Jews were “colonization fodder” and “human material”; see Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims,” *Social Text* 19–20 (Autumn 1988): 1–35; Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis* (New York: Free Press, 1986); and Ehud Ein-Gil and Moshe Machover, “Zionism and Oriental Jews: Dialectic of Exploitation and Co-optation,” *Race and Class* 50 (2008): 6276.
 - 14 Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef argue that Jewish natives of Palestine who had experienced a “shared indigenesness” in the pre-Zionist period became, as a result of the structure that Zionism imposed in Palestine, settlers *without* moving. Thus, we might think of some Jewish migrants as fitting into this shared indigenesness, while others following the same path that Evri and Kotef describe. Yuval Evri and Hagar Kotef, “When Does a Native Become a Settler? (with Apologies to Zreik and Mamdani),” *Constellations* (2020): 2–3.
 - 15 Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17 (Summer 1991): 776–77.
 - 16 On reading petitions to colonial authorities for details of everyday life, see, for example, Chima J. Korieh, “‘May It Please Your Honor’: Letters of Petition as Historical Evidence in an African Colonial Context,” *History in Africa* 37 (2010): 83–106.
 - 17 Tanweer Fazal describes how “social exclusion, problems of assimilation, denial of citizenship entitlements . . . become critical ingredients of analysis” of Bihari migrants’ homes; the migrant’s home “is a domain of politics, too, where the worker, denied his or her full citizenship in migrant locations, seeks to exercise in the more familial world of home.” Tanweer Fazal, “Migrant, Home, and Politics: Bihari Labour in the Metropolis,” *Indian Anthropologist* 46 (July–December 2016): 93–95.
 - 18 In her study of the era of decolonization of colonial Africa, for example, Lynn Schler notes that historians have little information on

- how the working classes in Nigeria at the end of British rule understood the opportunities for making claims from colonial regimes, especially as they related to identity and mobility. Lynn Schler, “‘The Stated Facts Do Not Seem to Be True’: The Contested Process of Repatriation in British Colonial Nigeria,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 42 (2014): 137.
- 19 See William Walters, “Deportation, Expulsion, and the International Police of Aliens,” *Citizenship Studies* 6 (July 2002): 265–92; and Jean P. Smith, “From Promising Settler to Undesirable Migrant: The Deportation of British-born Migrants from Mental Hospitals in Interwar Australia and South Africa,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46 (April 2018): 502–23.
 - 20 Bridget Anderson, Matthew J. Gibney, and Emanuela Paoletti, “Citizenship, Deportation, and the Boundaries of Belonging,” *Citizenship Studies* 15 (August 2011): 548.
 - 21 Immigration Ordinance amendments, 15 September 1932, ISA 6571/2-ጌ.
 - 22 Moshe Mossek, *Palestine Immigration Policy under Sir Herbert Samuel: British, Zionist, and Arab Attitudes* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 5–6. Middle Eastern Jews occupied a liminal space in Palestine during the Mandate. Except for Iraqi Jews after the mid-1930s and Jews from Yemen, these communities did not generally qualify for immigrant certificates offered by the Zionist Organization. The Zionist leadership in Palestine, especially through the Jewish Agency, did petition for the entry and naturalization of numerous Arabic-speaking Jews, but this was done on a case-by-case basis and the Jewish Agency never called for a blanket entry policy for Middle Eastern Jews. On the other hand, especially during the early years of the Mandate, most had little need to associate with Zionist institutions, as they spoke Arabic and were integrated into regional labor markets under Ottoman rule.
 - 23 Immigration Ordinance, 1941, ISA 223/27-ጌ.
 - 24 Taylor C. Sherman, “Migration, Citizenship, and Belonging in Hyderabad (Deccan), 1946–1956,” *Modern Asian Studies* 45 (2011): 83.
 - 25 In Palestine, as in other cases across the British Empire, Europe, and the Americas, “in the absence of any identity papers, the documentary regime was entirely reliant upon self-identification of individuals,” and when such identifications did not fit legal requirements or could not be verified, their holders faced deportation. Sherman, “Migration,” 101.
 - 26 Instruction, Commissioner for Migration and Statistics, 25 February 1937, ISA 4910/6-ጌ.
 - 27 Sanaa Alimia asks us to consider how documents, especially identity cards, evoke meaning in daily life, and how they are experienced by their subjects, including as mediators of relationships with state agents. Sanaa Alimia, “Performing the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border through Refugee ID Cards,” *Geopolitics* 24 (2018): 22.
 - 28 Leung, “Notions of Home,” 239.
 - 29 Mohamed Jounha Jandali: Application for Palestinian Citizenship, ISA 6924/40-ጌ.
 - 30 Application for a return visa for Palestine, 15 February 1948, ISA 2342/041-ጌ.
 - 31 See, for example, the case of Syrian-born Abdul Rahman Majbur. In February 1948, as violence flared in Palestine, Majbur requested citizenship, arguing: “I am eligible for such Palestinian Title [*sic*] by my said residence” in Palestine since 1926. Petition, Abdul Rahman Majbur to Chief Secretary, February 1948, ISA 244/21-ጌ.
 - 32 Letter, Ahmad Arabi Khalil to Chief Secretary, 13 April 1942, ISA 226/40-ጌ.
 - 33 Petition, Ahmad Arabi Khalil to High Commissioner, 9 March 1942; and Khalil to Chief Secretary, 9 June 1942, ISA 226/40-ጌ. In interwar France, Mary Dewhurst Lewis highlights how long-term immigrants and children of migrants in Marseille contended with the understanding by police officials of nationality as having a “social content.” Antisocial behavior including criminalized acts of petty theft turned working class migrants into persons characterized as rejecting society and social norms and morals. Even unemployment positioned migrants as suspect. Such behavior marked a person as *not* national or natural, turning him or her into a stranger. Migrant-strangers who did not fit what police saw to be a solid national and moral profile became more vulnerable to legal exclusion and, ultimately, expulsion. See Mary Dewhurst Lewis, “The Strangeness of Foreigners: Policing Migration and Nation in Interwar Marseille,” *French Politics, Culture and Society* 20 (Fall 2002): 66.
 - 34 Petition by Abdel Hassan Haji Ali to Chief Secretary, 8 January 1947, ISA 257/40-ጌ.
 - 35 Letter, Office of Commissioner for Migration

- and Statistics to Chief Secretary, 13 October 1943, ISA 252/60-ռ.
- 36 Letter, Office of Commissioner for Migration and Statistics to Chief Secretary, 13 October 1943, ISA 252/60-ռ.
- 37 Petition from Saltiya Abdallah El Baqsa and Nada Elias Odeh Khudari Qaqish, Jerusalem [undated], ISA 252/60-ռ.
- 38 Correspondence from Commissioner of Migration and Statistics, 21 September 1940, ISA 224/38-ռ.
- 39 These frameworks also do little to extrapolate larger historical transformations that refugees both shaped and were shaped by, and readings of refugee positionality, on both the environmental scale and the creation of humanitarian discourses. Readings into these broader reflections regarding Armenian refugees and orphans can be found in Samuel Dolbee, “The Desert at the End of Empire: An Environmental History of the Armenian Genocide,” *Past and Present* 247 (May 2020): 197–233; and Rebecca Jinks, “‘Marks Hard to Erase’: The Troubled Reclamation of ‘Absorbed’ Armenian Women, 1919–1927,” *American Historical Review* 123 (February 2018): 86–123.
- 40 Nicola Migliorino, *(Re)constructing Armenia in Lebanon and Syria: Ethnocultural Diversity and the State in the Aftermath of a Refugee Crisis* (New York: Berghahn, 2008), 54.
- 41 Sossie Andézian, “A New Ethno-Religious Entity in British Mandate Palestine: The Armenian Catholic Community,” *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 9 (September 2017): 117. As Nicola Migliorino has shown, from “the very start of their new life as refugees, the Armenians worked hard to reconstruct an Armenian world in the post-Ottoman Levant,” a world which included new Armenian residential quarters of towns, rebuilt Armenian churches, and new Armenian cultural and social institutions. Migliorino, *(Re)constructing Armenia*, 45–50.
- 42 The Armenian church leaders in Jerusalem stepped in to make certificates confirming individuals’ birth, baptism, and marital status. Andézian, “New Ethno-Religious Entity,” 131–33.
- 43 Correspondence on deportation of Yacoub Krikar Terzakian to Chief Secretary, 21 January 1943, ISA 255/34-ռ.
- 44 Correspondence from Haifa District Commissioner, February 1943, ISA 255/34-ռ.
- 45 Letter from Yacoub Terzakian to Chief Secretary, 12 November 1942, ISA 255/34-ռ.
- 46 CID Headquarters to Chief Secretary, 11 January 1943, ISA 255/34-ռ.
- 47 CID Headquarters to Chief Secretary, 11 January 1943, ISA 255/34-ռ.
- 48 File: Leasing of houses for Greek refugees, 1944, ISA 114/27-ռ.
- 49 Petition Walid Salah, advocate to High Commissioner, 7 January 1944, ISA 224/38-ռ.
- 50 Both academic and personal studies on the 1939 White Paper and its impact can be found in Fritz Liebreich, *Britain’s Naval and Political Reaction to the Illegal Immigration of Jews to Palestine, 1945–49* (London: Routledge, 2004); Arie J. Kochavi, “The Struggle against Jewish Immigration to Palestine,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34 (1998): 146–167; Louise London, *Whitehall and the Jews, 1933–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Stuart A. Cohen, “Imperial Policing against Illegal Immigration: The Royal Navy and Palestine, 1945–48,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 (1994): 275–93; and former High Commissioner Alan Cunningham’s “Palestine: Last Days of the Mandate,” *International Affairs* 24 (October 1948): 481–90.
- 51 Letter in file on deportation of Muhammad Mustafa El Yasin and family, 7 August 1946, ISA 256/64-ռ.