

Self-Portrait of a Nation

The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34

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On 1 July 1933, a large crowd gathered outside the impressive arched entrance of the Palace Hotel building in Jerusalem. The crowd had arrived from various parts of Palestine and the Arab world with the purpose of attending the inauguration of the First Arab Exhibition in Palestine. The exhibition showcased the agricultural and industrial advancements taking place in the Arab world and displayed products manufactured across the region. It was the first of two Arab exhibitions organized in Mandate Jerusalem; the second opened its doors the following April (figure 1).

The two Jerusalem exhibitions were held during a critical political period, as several Arab countries were at the height of their struggle against British and French colonial rule. In Palestine the timing was all the more acute. Executed between the two major Palestinian revolts of 1929 and 1936, the exhibitions were held at a time of direct and violent Arab confrontation with the Zionists and the British, but also at a formative moment when Palestinians were articulating their national identity and making real attempts to establish national institutions.¹

The two Jerusalem exhibitions were events of profound importance for both Palestine and the Arab region. As this article will show, the exhibitions were intended to demonstrate that Arab countries were witnessing remarkable innovations in the industrial and agricultural sectors despite, and not because of, European colonization. Additionally, the pan-Arab nature of the exhibitions facilitated an exceptional opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and expertise among the Arab countries in the face of their geopolitical division following the Great War.

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem is an annual award launched in 2017 to commemorate the memory and work of Ibrahim Dakkak (1929–2016), former chairman of the Advisory Board.



Figure 1. Inauguration of the Second Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem, 1934. Source: Sa'ïd Husayni Collection, the Palestinian Museum.

Despite their importance, the Jerusalem exhibitions remain absent from the historical literature on the 1930s in Palestine and the Arab world. This is not surprising, given the fragmented nature of the historical materials on Arab society in the Mandate period more generally and the two exhibitions in particular. Hence, this paper is based on a disjointed collection of textual and visual remains, including personal memoirs, Arabic newspaper archives, two exhibition handbooks, and photographs, with the aim of piecing them together to reconstruct a coherent history of the Arab exhibitions in Jerusalem.

Focusing on the First Arab Exhibition of 1933, this paper traces: first, the original conception of the idea of an Arab exhibition and the historical and political context in which it emerged; second, the progression of the exhibition to its planning phase and the obstacles its organizers faced; and third, the process of constructing an image of the Arab exhibition as a project of national significance through discursive and visual representations, and the implications of this image. Crucially, while acknowledging the primacy of the colonial context in which the two exhibitions were envisioned, planned and realized, this essay grants special attention to the inner dynamics of Palestinian and Arab society and their influence on these processes.

Conceiving the Exhibition

By the 1930s, multinational industrial and agricultural exhibitions were not a new phenomenon globally, regionally, or even for Palestine. The story of multinational industrial and agricultural exhibitions of this kind originates in nineteenth century

Europe, parallel to the transformations of the economic and political world order that accompanied competitive industrialization and the rise of modern nation states. The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, often labeled as the “first world’s fair,” took these exhibitions to a new level and claimed to represent the works of industry of all nations.² Such exhibitions served, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm, as “giant rituals of self-congratulation” and as platforms for competing European nations to display their industrial superiority and wealth acquired through colonial possessions.³

The colonies were not absent from the universal and multinational exhibitions held in European capitals. The exhibitions often included a “colonies section” where pavilions were built to represent the different colonies and their cultures. “The placement of pavilions,” as Zeynep Çelik has shown, “revealed the world order as mapped by Western powers.”⁴ Inside, the colonies and their cultures were represented as inferior and abstracted through neat and consumable objects that fitted this idea. The piecemeal representation of the colonies at these exhibitions played an important role in disseminating the political agendas of British and French “mission civilisatrice” to a European public.

As with the other colonies, Palestine received its share of representation in universal and colonial exhibitions in the Mandate period. Palestine pavilions were constructed in several exhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s, including the 1924 British Empire Exhibition, the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition, and the 1939 New York World’s Fair. In these exhibitions, representations of Palestine were particularly distinct from those of the other colonies. This was, in part, due to the religious symbolism associated with Palestine as the biblical Holy Land.⁵ However, it was mainly because these pavilions did not serve British interests alone but were usually based on a British-Zionist partnership.

Juxtaposing the biblical historicity of the Holy Land (and its native population) along with, and against, the modern agricultural and industrial “progress” of the Zionist movement became a standard representation of Palestine in the universal exhibitions of the 1920s and 1930s.⁶ Both Palestine pavilions at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition and the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition reflected this contrast. The two pavilions, whose exteriors were similarly designed in Arab-style domed structures with arched windows and entrances, were intended to represent “characteristic” native Arab buildings.⁷ Meanwhile, their interiors included objects that highlighted modern Jewish developments in Palestine including photographs of Jewish colonies and factories and architectural models of the Rockefeller Museum and the Rutenberg power stations.⁸

The idea for the establishment of an Arab exhibition in Palestine was not disconnected from the legacy of universal and colonial exhibitions. In 1931, ‘Issa al-‘Issa, a leading Palestinian journalist and co-founder of *Filastin* daily newspaper, visited the Paris Colonial Exposition. Inspired by the exhibition’s grandiose and the breadth of the showcased objects, “it was there,” al-‘Issa records in his memoirs, “that [he] began to articulate the idea of holding an Arab exhibition in Palestine.”⁹

Upon his return from Paris, in October 1931, al-‘Issa mentioned his idea of holding an exhibition of Arab products in an article in *Filastin* for the first time.¹⁰ But it was after al-‘Issa was invited to attend the 1932 Iraqi Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition



Figure 2. “The Levant Fair in Tel Aviv, 1932,” G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/matpc.15189 (accessed 13 May 2019).

in Baghdad that he began pushing for his idea more systematically. In Baghdad, al-‘Issa managed to meet with King Faysal I and members of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce with whom he shared his idea for an Arab exhibition in Palestine.¹¹ The meeting left al-‘Issa more optimistic regarding the exhibition project and it did not take him long to begin advocating for his idea in Palestinian circles.

The Paris and Baghdad exhibitions may have inspired al-Issa in his original idea of the Arab Exhibition, but equally important to him was the political atmosphere of Palestine during the 1930s. A few kilometres away from al-‘Issa’s residence in Jaffa, in Tel Aviv, the Zionists were in the process of organizing the 1932 Levant Fair (figure 2). This was not the first agro-industrial exhibition to be held by the Zionists in their newly-built city. It was preceded by a series of exhibitions and fairs in 1925, 1926, and 1929. However, the 1932 exhibition was arguably the most ambitious and regionally-oriented, as its name “The Levant Fair” explicitly indicates.¹²

By the time plans for the Levant Fair were announced, Arab-Zionist antagonism in Palestine had escalated to a new level. This antagonism, which had originated with the beginning of Zionist colonial settlement in Palestine in the late nineteenth century, had been exacerbated in the British endorsement of the “establishment of a Jewish national

home” in its Mandate for Palestine. In the 1920s, clashes between Arabs, Zionists, and the British in major Palestinian cities became commonplace, and by 1929 these tensions crystallized into the nation-wide Buraq revolt.

While Palestine remained a unified geopolitical territory for the entirety of the Mandate period, in social and economic terms it was slowly turning into two separate entities: Arab and Jewish. These two entities were not equal. British policies disadvantaged the Arab population in both economic and political terms, and allowed Zionists to establish what was practically a ‘state within a state’ with their own military organization, and political, social, and financial institutions independent from the British administration and the country’s Arab majority.¹³ Naturally, these discrepancies led to major antagonism between the Arab and Jewish populations in Palestine.

Throughout the 1920s, calls for boycott became an effective strategy for the different Zionist parties and for the Arab Executive Committee (AEC), the supreme executive body for Arabs in Mandate Palestine. With the events of 1929, whatever was left of Arab-Jewish intercommunal trade in Palestine had gradually faded. Thus, in 1932, when al-Issa began advocating for the Arab exhibition in *Filastin*, he expectedly framed his exhibition in contrast with the Levant Fair in Tel Aviv and in line with the AEC’s calls for boycotting Jewish products and supporting national industry.¹⁴

But while al-Issa and those who echoed his idea presented the Arab exhibition as an adversary to the Levant Fair, this was hardly the only or main reason why they thought the exhibition was necessary. Equally significant, they considered the exhibition as a platform to develop the regional connection between Arab nations that had disintegrated in the Great War. “An undertaking of this kind,” an article in *Filastin* postulated, “would encourage national production and establish a strong economic bond between Arab nations.”¹⁵ The establishment of an “economic bond” was intended to offer a new way of upkeeping inter-Arab relations. “One exhibition,” the article added, “is capable of achieving over a few days what politics have failed to deliver over years.”¹⁶

Within weeks of publishing these initial articles, al-‘Issa’s idea of establishing an Arab exhibition in Palestine became more widespread. Other Arabic-newspapers in Palestine and the Arab world echoed their support for an Arab exhibition. An adamant supporter from the outset was the Jerusalem-issued *al-Jami‘a al-‘Arabiyya* newspaper, closely affiliated with the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) led by Hajj Amin Husayni.¹⁷ Within only a few months, the conversations regarding the Arab exhibition began to shift from the realm of ideas into organized action.

Planning the Exhibition

With all the enthusiasm that the idea for an Arab exhibition in Palestine had generated, al-Issa realized that an organizing committee had to be formed while the momentum for its support was still high. A temporary organizing committee for the Arab exhibition led by al-Issa was formed in May 1932. In its first two meetings, the committee came up with the initial, but primary, decisions regarding the exhibition’s planning process.

These decisions reflected much of the vision for the Arab exhibition and clarified the questions regarding its structure, financing, location, and timeline to the public. On 27 May 1932, a list of these initial decisions was published in *Filastin*:

First; the exhibition is held by a shareholding corporation officially registered with the government; second, this corporation's initial capital is 5,000 pounds divided into 5,000 shares; third, the exhibition is held in Jaffa; fourth, the exhibition is held on 1 May; fifth, those who contribute with 50 shares are considered founding members; finally, the dividends are distributed as follows: 50% to shareholders and 50% equally distributed between the Arab Executive Committee, the Arab National Fund, sport groups, scout groups, and the Youth Congress Executive Committee.¹⁸

This organizational structure for the Arab exhibition, emanating from these decisions, was not coincidental. It was one made possible, if not necessary, by transformations in the Palestinian political and economic landscape in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As recent works have shown, this period was marked by the rise of new modes of "mass politics" that challenged the monopolization of elite politicians and the politic of notables.¹⁹ Nonetheless, as Sherene Seikaly asserts, this should not lead to the assumption that elites themselves were unchanging.²⁰ Instead, Seikaly explains through her study of *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya* (the Arab Economic Journal), in the mid-1930s, a new class of commercial and manufacturing elites who began to envision nation-building in distinct terms than those of the landowning notables, that is, through the lenses of capitalist progress and development.²¹

The corporate terms in which the Arab exhibition was formulated in the early 1930s, shows this process in its initial articulations before *al-Iqtisadiyyat* (1935–37) was published. The exhibition was to be registered as a private shareholding limited company and its shares were to be collected from private money. Nonetheless, the organizers also understood that balancing the exhibition's public and private components was necessary given the project's national outlook. Splitting the dividends equally between private shareholders and incumbent national committees and organizations can be read as an explicit strive for this balance.

On 14 June, the Arab exhibition was officially registered as a private corporation, and 2000 of its shares were already bought.²² As the original committee was no longer sufficient to lead it, a temporary Board of Directors of eight individuals had to be elected by the founding members. The eight successful candidates were 'Issa al-'Issa, Hamdi Nabulsi, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, Shukri al-Taji, Hasan Arafah, 'Aziz Miqati, Hajj Taher Qarman and Admon Rock. This temporary Board of Directors was set to serve the company until all the shares were sold and a permanent Board was elected. In their first meeting, the Board appointed Hilmi Pasha as its president, Nabulsi as its vice president, al-'Issa as managing director, and Arafah as treasurer.

It is significant that these were the men to lead the Arab Exhibition Company. These men belonged, for the most part, not to the traditional urban notable elite but to the new

Palestinian class of corporate elites. In the late 1920s and 1930s, these individuals were among the main drivers of the process of change in Arab economic thinking in Palestine. The Arab exhibition was not external to or merely driven by this process. It was one of the main initial platforms in which these new figures began to advocate for their vision of the nation. Hilmi Pasha, the elected president of the Arab Exhibition Company, was arguably the country's leading figure in this domain. At the time of his election, he served as the general manager of the Arab Bank. Founded by 'Abd al-Hamid Shuman in 1930, the Arab Bank was the first private sector financial institution in Palestine and the Arab world. As its general manager, Hilmi Pasha ensured the Arab Bank's support for the exhibition in financial terms, purchasing 100 shares, but also in providing the technical knowledge and expertise for the registration and financial operation of the Arab Exhibition Company.

After the Arab Exhibition Company was officially registered, the board realized that they had little time left to plan their project. In early 1933, the permanent board appointed Nabih al-'Azmah, a prominent Syrian nationalist and member of the Syrian nationalist party *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi*, as the exhibition's director. At the time of his appointment, al-'Azmah had already been in Palestine for a few years, which he spent working with the short-lived World Islamic Congress organized by the Supreme Muslim Council, before helping establish the first political party in Palestine, the Arab nationalist *Hizb al-Istiqlal*, which challenged the traditional political elite and the SMC.²³

Al-'Azmah was close to Hilmi Pasha, and it was the latter who facilitated the issuance of his permit to remain in the country in 1931.²⁴ Hilmi Pasha and the board saw al-'Azmah as the perfect man for leading the Arab exhibition, given his long engagement with political organizing and his wide connections across the region. But the task ahead was difficult even for someone like al-'Azmah. By the time al-'Azmah was appointed, only three months were left for executing the exhibition, and the organizers were facing a series of interrelated logistical, political, and financial challenges.

Among the main conflictual issues in planning the exhibition was deciding upon its location and venue. Since the outset, al-'Issa and the temporary committee envisioned that the exhibition would take place in Jaffa, in proximity to the site of the Levant Fair.²⁵ They even had a specific site in mind, al-Bassa, a vacant large property situated between the orchards outside the Old City. In July, Arab engineers were hired to prepare plans for the site, and a committee of representatives was selected to negotiate with the municipality, the Town Planning Commission, and the government to approve the plans.²⁶ The government rejected the plans, which would have involved municipal financial support to the exhibition.²⁷ Later, the organizers decided to relocate the exhibition to Jerusalem, and they chose the Palace Hotel, built by the SMC a few years earlier, as its most fitting venue.

The somewhat abrupt decision to relocate the exhibition to Jerusalem and to the Palace Hotel in particular did not pass without controversy. Some, especially the Jerusalem-based newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* which had been advocating to host the exhibition in Jerusalem for months, celebrated the decision.²⁸ Meanwhile, the Jaffa-based newspaper *al-Sirat* lamented the decision and insisted that neither the city nor the

venue were appropriate: “Jerusalem,” an article in *al-Sirat* maintained, “suffers from a water shortage and is distant from industrial and commercial activity.”²⁹ “The Palace Hotel,” it added, “was unfit for the exhibition [. . .] which demands a spacious open-air site where buildings and shops can be constructed.”³⁰ But while *al-Sirat*’s critique was framed in logistical terms, it is not unlikely that it also stemmed from its political stance which opposed the SMC, and, therefore, saw in hosting the exhibition at the SMC’s headquarters a form of political legitimation for the SMC.

The other main constraint that the exhibition faced was a financial one. With the government’s rejection of allocating any public or municipal funds to the project, which it justified by the fact that the exhibition excluded Palestine’s Jewish population, the organizers had to rely heavily on private shareholders. The organizers struggled to collect sufficient funds. In an interview with *Filastin*, al-‘Azmah explained that “some did not support the project falsely thinking that it was a commercial or private enterprise.”³¹ Meanwhile, many of the shareholders ended up not paying their dues.³² By the end of the sale period, 3,771 shares were subscribed but only 1,994 pounds were received – posing a serious hurdle for organizing the exhibition.³³

Representing the Exhibition

Despite the financial deficit and the challenges that the organizers were facing, they realized that the stakes of executing the exhibition with a minimal budget were less drastic than in not executing it at all. These stakes were not based on a fear of consequential financial losses alone. They derived, for the most part, from what the Arab exhibition stood for in both material and symbolic terms. “Let the Palestinians remember,” a *Filastin* article lamented as shareholders were not paying their dues, “that the idea of the exhibition has become strongly connected to maintaining their national dignity.”³⁴

Parallel to the exhibition’s planning and execution, the organizers were equally involved in framing the exhibition to the general public. Local and regional newspapers played an instrumental role in this process. In Palestine, besides reporting on the decisions in board meetings, several articles were published especially in *Filastin* but also in *al-‘Arab*, *al-Carmel*, *Mir ‘at al-Sharq*, *al-Sirat*, and *al-Jami’a al-‘Arabiyya* newspapers that endorsed the Arab exhibition as a precursor to the larger projects of Arab *wihda* (unity), *istiqlal* (independence), and *nahda iqtisadiyya* (economic renaissance).

The concepts of *wihda*, *istiqlal*, and *nahda* were not unfamiliar in Palestinian national discourse by the time they were utilized to advocate for the Arab exhibition. But in the 1930s, they had begun to ascribe new political meanings and associations: *wihda* became strongly associated with Arab nationalist ideology of King Faysal I and his government; *istiqlal* became a reference to the newly-established Istiqlal Party which adopted an Arab nationalist sentiment and considered Palestine part of Greater Syria; and finally, *nahda iqtisadiyya* signified the new interpretation of the cultural project of the Nahda in economic, and even capitalist, terms.³⁵

The capitalization on these terms as they were acquiring these new meanings did

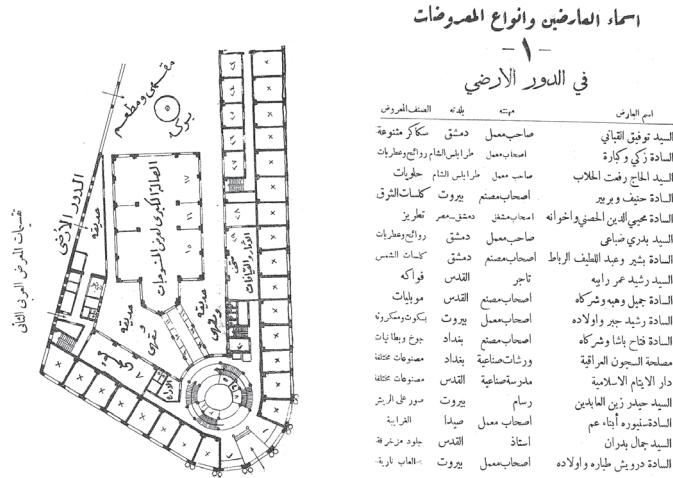


Figure 3. Two pages from the guidebook for the ~~First~~ ^{Second} Arab Exhibition showing an architectural plan and a list of participating companies. Source: Arab Exhibition Company, 1933. 1934.

not mean that the entity of the Arab Exhibition was explicitly associated with these three groups. Nonetheless, the presence of direct links between the organizers and these affiliations attest to the existence of a relationship between the two: al-‘Issa was a supporter of King Faysal I, al-‘Azmah helped establish the Istiqlal Party, and Hilmi Pasha was one of the main businessmen who aspired for an economic *nahda* in Palestine.

Newspapers were arguably the most effective platforms where these ideas about the Arab exhibition and its relevance were disseminated, but they were not the only ones. A few days before the launch of the first Arab Exhibition, the organizers issued a guidebook titled *dalil al-ma’rad al-‘Arabi*.³⁶ The guidebook included: first, a general introduction; second, a section on the history what was termed, intriguingly, *jazirat al-‘Arab* (“Arabian Peninsula”), including brief histories of Palestine, East Jordan, Lebanon, Inner Syria, Iraq, Najd, Hijaz, Yemen, and Egypt); third, a general directory for the Arab exhibition (including participation fees, responsibilities of the participants, water and electricity, entry fees, prizes and certificates, the sale of products, general notes, and contacts); fourth, a list of participants and architectural plans for the two floors (figure 3); and fifth, a section for private advertisements.³⁷

While the first two sections reiterated the narratives of unity, independence, and economic renaissance, the third section reveals the more subterranean forms of politics in the planning and execution of the Arab exhibition:

The entry fee for the first two days is 50 mil, during the week it is 30 mil, and on Fridays and Sundays is 40 mil [. . .] It is possible to purchase a monthly ticket for 250 mil [. . .] Students with letters from their schools and Arab scouts pay half the price [. . .] Wednesdays of the first and third week are dedicated to women.³⁸

These guidelines show that whereas the organizers were open to the attendance of different age groups, classes, and women in the exhibition, their inclusion was carefully engineered.

In fact, encouraging the attendance of women in the Arab exhibition had already been addressed months before in *Filastin* before the exhibition's inauguration.³⁹ Remarkably, however, women's participation in the exhibition was not limited to attendance. It was in the First Arab Exhibition that Zulfa al-Sa'di, at the time a young Palestinian female artist and student of the Jerusalemite artist Nicola Saig, exhibited a range of her works: "oil paintings of landscapes, still life compositions, and portraits of Arab heroes as well as contemporary cultural and political figures – the latter, such as King Faysal I of Iraq."⁴⁰ The significance of al-Sa'di's contribution to the Arab Exhibition lies not only in her inclusion as a woman, but also in the high level of aesthetic awareness that her contribution displayed. In his encyclopedic study of Palestinian art from the mid-nineteenth century until the early 2000s, Kamal Boullata refers to al-Sa'di's exhibit at the Arab Exhibition as the "first ever solo exhibition by a Palestinian painter [and] the first to gain public endorsement for an art form that, until then, had been tolerated, but not deemed worthy to represent national culture."⁴¹

The organizers, too, exhibited a sophisticated level of aesthetic awareness in representing their exhibition. The Palace Hotel, where the exhibition was held, was frequently described as an "Arab Style" building. Ironically, the building had been designed by two Turkish architects, Ahmet Kemaleddin and his student and colleague Mehmed Nihad, whose architectural style belonged to what became known as the "Turkish neo-classicism" of the early Turkish republican era.⁴² Further, as the exhibition was taking place, several articles appeared in *Filastin* and *al-'Arab* which included photographs of the venue's exterior and interior, accompanied by textual descriptions of the quality of its spaces (see figures 4 and 5). When the second Exhibition was held in April 1934, similar photographs appeared for both the first and second exhibitions, but also illustrations of the golden and silver medals, certificates of participation,



Figure 4. "The view of the Awqaf Hotel, the building where the exhibition is taking place, built according to the glamorous Arab style. It is four stories high and cost no less than ninety thousand Palestinian Pounds and used to be leased for eight thousand pounds annually." Source: *al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933, 22.

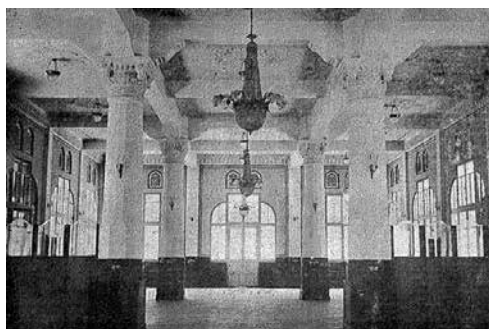


Figure 5. "View of the large lobby on the ground floor before the exhibition occupied the space." Source: *al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933, 22.



Figures 6-7: “. . . two enlarged drawings of the golden and silver medals prepared by the exhibition’s administration to gift to the winning exhibitors. The one on the right contains a picture of the Dome of the Rock in the Haram el-Sherif above which *The Second Arab Exhibition, Jerusalem 1353* is written in delicate Arabic Kufic script. The one on the left contained a picture of the Arabian peninsula to its furthest borders and Egypt. Lines with wonderful symbolism radiate from Jerusalem to the largest capitals and Arab cities. . .” Source: *al-‘Arab*, 14 April 1934, 9.

and a postcard for the second exhibition (see figures 6–8). The textual descriptions supplemented the visual materials presented in the two exhibitions’ guidebooks and in recent newspapers, and together, along with the articles previously published, these helped the solidify the regional and national outlook of the Arab Exhibition.

Afterlives

Soon after the First Arab Exhibition closed its doors to visitors, the idea for hosting a Second Exhibition was underway. The organizers liquidated the First Arab Exhibition Company and registered a new company for the Second Arab Exhibition. The Second Exhibition was inaugurated in April 1934 with higher financial burdens and labor than the First Exhibition.⁴³ Following the Second Exhibition, the organizers were beginning to think of holding a Third Exhibition in al-Bassa in Jaffa, as had originally been planned for the First Exhibition, but financial hurdles stepped in the way of this plan.⁴⁴

When the organizers were about to liquidate the Second Arab Exhibition Company, the prominent Iraqi businessman Norui Fattah Pasha sent a letter to al-‘Azmah advising him not to proceed with the liquidation, for the possibility that the Iraqi government would purchase the company and plan the next exhibit in Baghdad.⁴⁵ In 1935, the hopes of maintaining the Second Arab Exhibition Company as a permanent company faded when the Iraqi government backtracked on its intentions.⁴⁶ Significantly, the decision to liquidate the Second Arab Exhibition Company appeared in none other but the newly-established economic journal *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-‘Arabiyya*.⁴⁷

In a sense, the Arab exhibitions were a prelude to *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya*. They set the stage for an understanding of the nation and nationalism primarily through economic frameworks and corporate approaches. Hilmi Pasha, the president of the Arab Exhibition corporations, appeared several times in the journal and was heroically depicted as the “true intellectual” and “the man of the nation.”⁴⁸ The map on the journal’s cover even echoed the maps of the commercial and industrial networks in the Arab region as they were depicted on the postcards and medals of the Arab exhibitions.

This episode in the history of Palestine and the Arab world opens a series of questions to historians regarding our assumptions about the relationship of the history of capital, economic development, and modernization in the modern Arab world. Tracing the origins, conception, and representation of the first Arab exhibitions provides a preliminary sketch of the nature of and thinking behind these process, and opens the door for further interrogations regarding this process in which ideas, capital, and people moved across the colonial boundaries of the Arab world in the interwar period.



Figure 8. “The third picture is an enlarged drawing of the postage stamps that the exhibition’s administration used for letters. The symbol in it is visible, and he is an Arab with a sure stand, breaking his chains, and raising his hand carrying a ball with the word *Jerusalem* written at its center, and from it the light shines to the rest of the Arab World.” Source: *al-'Arab*, 14 April 1934, 9.

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Endnotes

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- 32 "Al-ma'rad wal-karama al-wataniyya," *Filastin*, 22 July 1932, 1.
- 33 "Ifitah al-ma'rad al-'Arabi" *Filastin*, 8 July 1933, 1.

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- 44 Qasimiyah, *Al-ra‘il al-‘Arabi*.
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- 48 Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 37.