



JERUSALEM QUARTERLY

74
ملف القدس

Summer 2018

Narrating the Self

Biographies II

Yusuf al-'Isa: A Founder of Modern Journalism

Emanuel Beška

The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs

Taufiq Canaan

The Books in My Life: A Memoir

Tarif Khalidi

Ali Za'rur: Early Palestinian Photojournalism

Rona Sela

Sir Charles Tegart: The "Counterterrorism Expert" in Palestine

Richard Cahill

Haile Selassie in Jerusalem

Vicken V. Kalbian

On the Wings of Memory: Schmidt's Girls School

Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout

Adele Azar - Public Charity and Early Feminism

Salim Tamari

POLICY REPOER: The East Jerusalem Municipality

Walid Salem

**POLICY BREIF: Empowering Jerusalem's Most Marginalized
Palestinian Women**

Juzoor for Health & Social Development



INSTITUTE OF JERUSALEM STUDIES

Editors: *Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar*
Associate Editors: *Penny Johnson and Alex Winder*
Managing Editor: *Carol Khoury*
Communication & Outreach Officer: *Ulla Munding*

Advisory Board

Yazid Anani, *A. M. Qattan Foundation, Ramallah*
Rochelle Davis, *Georgetown University, USA*
Beshara Doumani, *Brown University, USA*
Michael Dumper, *University of Exeter, UK*
Rema Hammami, *Birzeit University, Birzeit*
George Hintlian, *Christian Heritage Institute, Jerusalem*
Huda al-Imam, *Palestine Accueil, Jerusalem*
Omar Imseeh Tesdell, *Birzeit University, Birzeit*
Nazmi al-Jubeh, *Birzeit University, Birzeit*
Hasan Khader, *al-Karmel Magazine, Ramallah*
Rashid Khalidi, *Columbia University, USA*
Roberto Mazza, *University of Limerick, Ireland*
Yusuf Natsheh, *al-Quds University, Jerusalem*
Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Mada al-Carmel, Haifa*
Tina Sherwell, *International Academy of Art Palestine, Ramallah*

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* (JQ) is published by the Institute of Jerusalem Studies (IJS), an affiliate of the Institute for Palestine Studies. The journal is dedicated to providing scholarly articles on Jerusalem's history and on the dynamics and trends currently shaping the city. The Quarterly is known both for its pioneering social history and for its contemporary analyses of Jerusalem from writers on the ground, covering Palestinian lived experiences in the city, analyses of land appropriation and settlements and formal and informal negotiating strategies on, and visions for, the future of Jerusalem. Ranging from Ottoman and Mandate times to the complexities and dangers of the present, we offer incisive articles that analyze the role of culture, media, religion and politics in the struggles to claim the city.

This journal is produced with the financial assistance of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Palestine/Jordan. The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do therefore not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, nor those of the editors or the Institute of Jerusalem Studies.

www.palestine-studies.org

ISSN 1565-2254

Design and Printing: Al Nasher



Jerusalem Quarterly

Summer 2018 — Issue 74

formerly the Jerusalem Quarterly File

For local subscriptions to JQ, contact:

The Institute of Jerusalem Studies

P.O. Box 21649, Jerusalem 91457

Tel: 972 2 298 9108, Fax: 972 2 295 0767

E-mail: sales-ijs@palestine-studies.org

For international or US subscriptions, contact:

The Institute for Palestine Studies

3501 M Street, N.W.

Washington, DC 20007

Or subscribe at the IPS website:

www.palestine-studies.org



Table of Contents

Editorial	3
Yusuf al-‘Isa: A Founder of Modern Journalism in Palestine	7
<i>Emanuel Beška</i>	
The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs	14
Part 1: The Formative Years, 1882–1918	
<i>Taufiq Canaan</i>	
The Books in My Life: A Memoir (Part 2)	30
<i>Tarif Khalidi</i>	
Ali Za'rur: Early Palestinian Photojournalism	48
The Archive of Occupation and the Return of Palestinian Material to Its Owners	
<i>Rona Sela</i>	
Sir Charles Tergart: The “Counterterrorism Expert” in Palestine (Part 1)	57
<i>Richard Cahill</i>	
Haile Selassie in Jerusalem	67
Sanctuary for the Lion of Judah in the Holy City	
<i>Vicken V. Kalbian</i>	
On Wings of Memory: Schmidt's Girls School	86
<i>Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout</i>	
Adele Azar: Public Charity and Early Feminism	104
<i>Salim Tamari</i>	
POLICY REPORT	
The East Jerusalem Municipality	120
<i>Walid Salem</i>	
POLICY BRIEF	
Empowering Jerusalem’s Most Marginalized Palestinian Women	137
<i>Juzoor for Health and Social Development</i>	
Markings of a Jerusalemite Life	144
<i>Reviewed by Saliba Sarsar</i>	

Cover photo: St. Paulus Hospiz, ca. 1898, opposite Damascus Gate. The Schmidt's Girls School moved here from west Jerusalem after the Naqba of 1948, and later became known as Schmidt's College for Girls. Source: G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection. (broken glass negative, cropped for detail).

Editorial

At the time of the writing of this editorial, it seems likely that Jerusalem is not going to figure in the Trump administration's so-called "deal of the century." All evidence suggests that Jerusalem – including the Old City and the eastern part of the city annexed by Israel after the 1967 occupation – will remain under full Israeli sovereignty. Jerusalem has for millennia had an enchanting hold on imaginations as an eternal sacred city, inspiring people in the old world and, with colonialism's spread, the new. During its long history, with brief exceptions (most notably the Crusader period), Jerusalem was an open city to the followers of the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), all of which have important holy sites in it.

Under Israel's occupation, however, access for Muslims and Christians from many countries, and since 1992 for Palestinians in the occupied territories, has been restricted. Settlement activities within and around Jerusalem, coupled with severe restrictions on Palestinian life in it, continue to change its face and landscape. And although the city has been subject to political debate and negotiations since the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, the Trump administration's latest steps, including the relocation of the U.S. embassy and the long-sought recognition of the city as Israel's capital, have undermined all such efforts. Donald Trump himself and, even more notably, his vice president Mike Pence gave the embassy move a biblical significance that contributed to the strong sense among the Christian right in the United States that the announcement was a step toward Armageddon and the coming of the Messiah.

Not only will such steps lead to even greater restriction of access to Jerusalem for Palestinians, but they will accelerate Israeli plans to empty the city of its native inhabitants.

Attempts to strangle the Palestinian presence – through revoking residency rights, denying building permits, and confiscating land and houses – and Judaize the city through various policies that only benefit Israeli settlers continue on a pace faster than ever before. These developments raise serious concerns about access to the city for non-Jews generally and in particular for Palestinians, who view the city as their own and declare it as their future capital. When Israel seized and occupied the West Bank from Jordan in June of 1967, the world community viewed the occupation as an illegal act and took no position that would exclude Jerusalem from being a part of the occupied territories, as evident by numerous UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, including the pivotal Resolution 242 passed in November 1967. Moreover, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947, the city and its environs were designated a *corpus separatum*, conferring on it a special status due to its shared religious importance and recommending that it be placed under an international regime. The concept of *corpus separatum* remains the basis of the international community’s perception of its relationship to the city. The Trump move to “remove Jerusalem from the table,” as he put it, violates these two resolutions as well as the U.S. position maintained since the occupation of Jerusalem’s eastern part in 1967.

Consistent with *Jerusalem Quarterly*’s goal of highlighting the city’s past and present, and considering its future, this issue includes a number of forward-looking studies and documents. In our documentary section, we are publishing recommendations for empowering women of East Jerusalem as proposed by Juzoor for Health and Social Development. The document highlights the necessity of addressing issues of gender equality in terms of education and work, as well as the need for greater coordination among civil society organizations in Jerusalem. Walid Salem, meanwhile, suggests reviving the idea of a Palestinian municipality for Jerusalem as a step toward empowering the people of the city. In light of the Israeli municipality’s supremacist and discriminatory practices, Salem suggests a number of possibilities for recreating a meaningful Palestinian municipality.

This issue also continues *JQ*’s commitment to resurrecting the Palestinian history of the city, here as in the preceding issue, by focusing on life narratives (biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, and the like). Five essays focus on the lives of Jerusalemites or individuals who spent significant time or shaped life in Jerusalem. Emanuel Beška contributes a biography of the pioneering journalist Yusuf al-‘Isa, coeditor of the newspaper *Filastin*, established in the last decade of Ottoman rule in Palestine. Beška highlights the exceptional role al-‘Isa played in Palestine (despite often being overshadowed by his cousin, and partner in *Filastin*, ‘Isa al-‘Isa), pointing out that his writings reflected progressive modernist thinking and an aversion to dogmatism. Yusuf al-‘Isa, according to Beška, was an Ottoman and a Palestinian patriot and an advocate for religious tolerance and inclusiveness, first within the empire and then within Palestine after the breakup of the former. In his essay on early feminism in Palestine, Salim Tamari examines the life of Adele Azar, a forgotten figure from the 1920s and 30s, who fought for the education of girls and their vocational training in post-World War I Jaffa. Known as “Mother of

the Poor,” Azar revitalized charitable orthodox associations in Jaffa and Jerusalem, and transformed them into instruments for serving the education and training of families devastated by war and exile.

Rona Sela writes about another pioneering figure in Jerusalem, the photographer Ali Za‘rur, who photographed events during the British Mandate period and the war of 1948 and continued his work during the Jordanian period in Jerusalem and the early years of the Israeli occupation of 1967. His collection was looted by the Israelis and was unearthed later in the Israeli military archives. Vicken Kalbian narrates the visit, and then the exile, to Jerusalem of Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie during the British Mandate period. Kalbian’s contribution is not only significant for the wealth of knowledge that it presents about the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem and its religious connection to the city, but also for its inclusion of rare photographs of the Ethiopian presence in Palestine. Richard Cahill, meanwhile, examines the biography of the British colonial police official Charles Tegart, whose reputation in Palestine lives on after him in the various police buildings called Tegart forts; these were conceived during Tegart’s stint as a counterinsurgency advisor to Mandate authorities during the 1936–1939 Revolt and three decades later became Israeli security headquarters and prisons in which Palestinians were detained and tortured. This is the first part of a longer biography of Tegart, the second part of which will be published in *JQ* 75 focused on policing.

This issue also includes memoirs of a number of Palestinian Jerusalemites, including historian Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout’s recollections of her years at Schmidt’s Girls College outside of the walls of the Old City in Jerusalem. Al-Hout attended the school in the pivotal years of the 1940s, just before Palestine was dismembered and the city partitioned between Israel and Jordan. Fauzi Mantoura transcribes a selection of the memoir of his grandfather, the renowned Palestinian physician and ethnographer Taufiq Canaan. Canaan has already been the subject of a number of studies published in previous issues of *JQ* (see, for example, *JQ* 20, *JQ* 22, *JQ* 24, and *JQ* 56–57), and this part of his memoirs – which will be published in multiple installments – covers the last Ottoman decade in Jerusalem and Palestine. In an unusual autobiographic narrative, Jerusalemite historian Tarif Khalidi continues his life’s journey through the books that influenced him and which he himself produced – the first part of these memoirs was published in *JQ* 73 and a third and final part will appear in *JQ* 75. The issue closes, appropriately enough, with Saliba Sarsar’s review of a recent autobiography – Bernard Sabella’s *A Life Worth Living: The Story of a Palestinian Catholic* (2017).

Editor’s note: In the paper-issue of *JQ* 73, some paragraphs are missing from the Editorial. The mistake was corrected in the online version, which can be reached at: palestine-studies.org/jq/issue/73.

**Announcing the 2019 Round
Ibrahim Dakkak Award
for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem**

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem will be awarded to an outstanding essay that addresses either contemporary or historical issues relating to Jerusalem. The winning submission will receive a prize of U.S. \$1000 and will be published in the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

Essays submitted for consideration should be 4000 to 5000 words in length (including footnotes), should be based on original research, and must not have been previously published elsewhere. Preference will be given to young/junior/aspiring/emerging/early career researchers and students.

Please submit essays and a short bio (including current or previous affiliation with a recognized university, research institution, or non-governmental organization that conducts research) via email to

jq@palestine-studies.org

Any images should be submitted as separate files with resolution of at least 600 dpi if possible. Submitted images must have copyright clearance from owners.

The deadline for submissions is **31 October 2018**. A committee selected by *Jerusalem Quarterly* will determine the winning essay.

Yusuf al-'Isa: A Founder of Modern Journalism in Palestine

Emanuel Beška

Yusuf al-'Isa was an early pioneer of modern journalism in Palestine which began to flourish during the second Ottoman constitutional period. During the years 1911–14 he worked as the editor-in-chief of the Arabic newspaper *Filastin* (Palestine). The texts written by him reflect his broad cultural horizon, progressive modernist thinking, open-mindedness, and aversion to dogmatism. These writings also manifest his commitment to secularism, Ottoman and Palestinian patriotism, and religious tolerance, as well as a respect for and inclusive approach to other religious and ethnic communities within the Ottoman Empire.

Beginnings of the Arabic Periodical Press in Palestine

The history of the private Arabic periodical press in the Ottoman Palestine began only after the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. Thereafter, the autocratic rule of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (1876–1909) came to an end, the constitution was restored, a new parliament elected, and press censorship significantly eased. In Palestine this spurred a sudden boom in newspaper publication. While previously no private Arabic newspapers had existed in the *sanjaqs* of Jerusalem, Nablus, and 'Akka, more than thirty Arabic periodicals were established in the years following the revolution until the outbreak of World War I. This was a development of crucial importance, which led to an accelerated flow of information and had a momentous impact on the identity of Palestine's inhabitants. Many of the newly founded periodicals had a very short lifespan, and only a few became well established. Among the most long-lived were *al-Karmil* (1908–1914) published in Haifa by Najib al-



The team of the Arabic newspaper *Filastin*, Jaffa, 1993. Yusuf al-'Isa might be the first person from left in the middle row. Photo published in 'Isa al-'Isa's memoirs by Noha Tadros Khalaf.

Khuri Nassar and *al-Quds* (1908–1914) published in Jerusalem by Jurji Habib Hananiya. Most of the newspapers of this era were either weeklies or biweeklies and contained four pages. All pre–World War I Arabic Palestinian periodicals were printed in Jerusalem, Jaffa, or Haifa.¹

The newspaper *Filastin* was established in January 1911 in Jaffa, and continued until the end of October 1914. In total, 367 issues were published during the second Ottoman constitutional period. Unfortunately, not all issues of the newspaper are extant. Of the first fifty issues from the first half of 1911 only one has been located;² the last twenty-two issues printed after mid-August 1914 are also missing. The owner and managing director of *Filastin* was 'Isa Dawud al-'Isa (1878–1950) and its editor-in-chief, his older cousin Yusuf al-'Isa (1870/74–1948). The biweekly appeared always on Wednesday and Saturday and for most of its pre–WWI existence it consisted of four pages (in mid-June 1914 its size was enlarged to six pages).³ It was a truly modern newspaper with a wide network of contributors and correspondents. Most of its coverage focused on the Jerusalem mutasarrifate, but it was also concerned with the neighboring districts, the Ottoman Empire, and the wider world, drawing extensively on reports from other newspapers and several news agencies.⁴ With more than a thousand subscribers, *Filastin* was one of the highest circulation Arabic periodicals in Palestine.⁵ In 1913, the editors adopted the innovative approach of sending free copies of the newspaper to the villages of the Jaffa subdistrict in order to disseminate information in the countryside.⁶ However, this was a short-lived attempt which ended in failure.⁷ *Filastin* was suspended three times by the government in the Ottoman era, once in 1913 and twice in 1914. The third hiatus lasted all through World War I. The al-'Isa cousins spent most of the war in exile in Anatolia and towards its end Yusuf al-'Isa settled down in Damascus,

where he later founded the newspaper *Alif Ba'*. *Filastin* was only reestablished in March 1921, this time with 'Isa al-'Isa as its editor-in-chief.⁸

The main reason behind the establishment of *Filastin* was to serve the Orthodox Renaissance [*al-Nahda al-urthudhuksiyya*]. This was a movement that strove to empower the native Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians in the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, which was monopolized by the clergy of Greek ethnic background. Many issues of the newspaper contain columns entitled "Orthodox Matters" [*al-Shu'un al-urthudhuksiyya*] and "Orthodox Renaissance" [*al-Nahda al-urthudhuksiyya*] which were dedicated to this cause.⁹ Furthermore, the newspaper focused on diverse subjects including reforms, modernization of agriculture, conditions in the countryside, trade, security and education. Other important topics were concessions and infrastructural projects; in this regard, the insufficiency of port facilities in Jaffa was frequently discussed. During the wars that occurred throughout the years of *Filastin's* publication (Italian invasion of Libya, Balkan Wars, World War I) much space was given to their coverage. Finally, gradually more and more space was devoted to Zionism and Zionist colonization, which by 1914 became the most discussed subject in the periodical.

The Life of Yusuf al-'Isa

Yusuf al-'Isa, an Arab Orthodox Christian, was born in the Palestinian port city of Jaffa, between 1870 and 1874. His brother, Hanna 'Abdallah al-'Isa (d.1909), was the founder of one of the first periodicals in Palestine, the short-lived semimonthly journal *al-Asma'i* (1908–09). Not much is known about Yusuf al-'Isa's childhood and youth. Later on, he was employed at the Jaffa–Jerusalem railway company. He was an active Freemason and a member of the Barkai lodge in Jaffa. After the revolution, he joined the Committee of Union and Progress and acted as a member of its leadership committee in his hometown. What is more, *Filastin's* editorial office served as the seat of the Committee of Union and Progress in Jaffa. Yusuf al-'Isa actively participated in the Orthodox Renaissance, was one of the leaders of the movement, and was elected as a member of the mixed council which consisted of twelve members drawn equally from among the Greek clergy and the native laymen. The council's responsibility was to take care of social services, healthcare, and education for the Orthodox community. Already before *Filastin's* establishment he contributed to various periodicals including *al-Asma'i* and *al-Taraqqi*. In addition, in 1912 he became the editor of a short-lived comical newspaper *Abu Shaduf* founded by Wahba Tamari.¹⁰

Yusuf al-'Isa and the Newspaper *Filastin*

Yusuf al-'Isa played a very important role as one of the founders of modern journalism in Palestine. As the editor-in-chief of a leading Palestinian newspaper he exerted a strong influence on a large number of people. *Al-Muqattam*, one of the most widely

read contemporary Egyptian dailies, reportedly described his journalistic standing in the following words: “Heads of Arabs in all major cities bend to the editorials of *Ustadh* Yusuf al-‘Isa.”¹¹ The majority of *Filastin*’s editorials were written and signed by him. In these, Yusuf al-‘Isa discussed a broad range of subjects. He criticized the passivity of the Palestinians, pointed frequently to various social and political problems, censured those who caused them, and berated officials who ignored them. In spite of being an admirer of European culture and civilization, it was not an uncritical appreciation as he castigated the Western powers for their expansive policies, predatory intentions, and acts of deceit aimed at non-European countries. He pointed out the double standards of the Europeans. For example, when an act of injustice had been perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire against a Christian, it caused a great commotion in Europe; however, when a European had committed such an act on Ottomans, it was met with silence.¹² Moreover, he also upbraided Europeans for their haughty attitude towards the Ottoman Empire and its inhabitants. He argued that Europeans should be prevented from buying land in the Ottoman Empire unless abolition of the Capitulations¹³ takes place; cooperation should be based on equality not domination of one over the other.¹⁴

The editor-in-chief was conversant with both European and Arab cultural and literary heritage. His writings contain references to various pieces of mythology, literary works, and their “authors” among them Aesop’s fables (“The Ant and the Grasshopper”), Honoré de Balzac’s *Labors of Heracles*,¹⁵ William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*,¹⁶ and al-Hariri’s *al-Maqamat*.¹⁷

Yusuf al-‘Isa was a staunch secularist and an Ottoman patriot and it seems that he developed this perspective under the influence of Western education, literature, and press:

They [Europeans] have told us in their schools, they have explained in their books and newspapers, that religion belongs to God and that there is no bond that links the nations [*al-umam*] and no association that unites the peoples [*al-shu‘ub*] apart from national unity [*al-wahda al-wataniyya*]. ...[W]e have started to understand that, and the adherents of the three religions in our country have agreed to revere patriotism and to dedicate themselves with heart and soul to love of the homeland.¹⁸

The editor-in-chief did not distinguish between Jews, Christians and Muslims in this regard, and he saw religion as a private matter separated from the state, race and nation. Furthermore, he was convinced that all ethnic and religious communities living in the Ottoman Empire are equal members of the Ottoman nation, and he considered both Ottoman Jews and Muslims his brothers [*ikhwanuna al-Isra‘iliyyun*¹⁹ and *ikhwanuna al-Muslimun*²⁰]. In another editorial, published at the end of 1912, Yusuf al-‘Isa once more openly and unequivocally demonstrated his secular spirit. After emphasizing the religious tolerance of the newspaper, he continued by saying: “We endeavor ... to allocate to the religions two noble places, appropriate to their sublimity, whose borders should not be overstepped, and these are [the people’s] hearts and places of worship.”²¹

Filastin’s coverage of Zionism clearly demonstrates the openness of its editors to

discussion, their readiness to listen to different opinions and to modify their view under the mounting weight of evidence. As already mentioned above, with the passing of time this subject was discussed with increasing frequency on the pages of the periodical. At the beginning, the editors maintained neutrality in this regard, offering space to both supporters of Zionist colonization and to its opponents, but avoiding taking part in these discussions. Surprising as it may seem, the way the al-‘Isa cousins treated the subject implies that they at first considered Zionist colonization beneficial to the rural areas. In June 1912 Yusuf al-‘Isa wrote: “[W]e have said and are still saying that we do not believe in the existence of danger in the Israelite colonization of our vast open country; no, we even see some benefits from it.”²² At that time the editors apparently thought that the positive example of the Jewish settlements and exposure to modern agricultural practices could help the Palestinian peasants to improve their situation. However, from mid-1912 Yusuf al-‘Isa’s attitude began to change as he started to consider Zionism as economically and socially detrimental to the native Arab Palestinians. Furthermore, in the latter part of 1913, his position went through another, even more radical change as he arrived at the conclusion that Zionism poses a political, demographic, as well as existential threat to the native Arab Palestinians. This gradual, but profound transformation occurred under the impact of several events and affairs.²³ By mid-1914 the editors of *Filastin* had already forgotten their previous, more ambivalent attitude as manifested by the following statement: “The newspaper *Filastin* since its establishment has continued to emphasise the Zionist danger for the country and to warn the people [*al-ahlin*] about it and to alert the natives [*al-wataniyyin*] to what threatens their existence.”²⁴

In 1911, Menachem Beilis, a Russian Jew from Kiev, was detained and subsequently falsely accused of ritually murdering a Christian boy. Two years later, in the autumn of 1913, he stood trial in his hometown which was covered by the media from around the world, among them *Filastin*. Yusuf al-‘Isa showed strong professionalism in writing about this affair.²⁵ Even though the newspaper’s editorial line had by that time become clearly anti-Zionist, he did not use this event to criticize the Jewish community. Moreover, the editor-in-chief did not remain silent vis-à-vis this injustice. Quite the contrary, more than ten articles discussed the trial and its aftermath in which both the editors and the contributors unequivocally rejected the accusation and voiced support for Beilis, Judaism, and Jews. In his editorial “The Disgrace of the Twentieth Century,” published during the trial, Yusuf al-‘Isa wrote:

We said in the previous issue and repeat that their accusing the Jews [*al-Yahud*] of shedding blood to perform a religious ritual is a fabrication with regard to those who believe it; an abomination with regard to those who spread it; and a disgrace to the twentieth century, during which, if minds are not liberated from the shackles of ignorance, God will never liberate them.²⁶

Similarly, on other occasions he stood for the oppressed and exploited. In the summer of 1914 he criticized two prominent notables from Gaza, Sa‘id al-Shawwa and Ahmad ‘Arif al-Husayni,²⁷ for taking advantage of the poverty of the Bedouins in the Beersheba

subdistrict and of their problems with the authorities in order to buy their land for a fraction of its real value.²⁸

Yusuf al-'Isa and his journalistic legacy have been to a large degree forgotten. This was likely caused by the relative brevity of his journalistic work in Palestine and his post-World War I absence from the country after his move to Damascus. In addition, the memory of his activities had been overshadowed by the fact that his cousin 'Isa al-'Isa acted subsequently for many years as the editor-in-chief of *Filastin* which after World War I became the preeminent Arabic newspaper in Palestine.

Emanuel Beška is a research fellow at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, focusing on the history of Late Ottoman Palestine and Arab responses to Zionism. He earned his PhD in 2008 at the Faculty of Arts of Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia. He is the author of the monograph From Ambivalence to Hostility: The Arabic Newspaper Filastin and Zionism, 1911–1914 (Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press, 2016). The research underlying this paper was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency, project no. APVV-15-0030.

Endnotes

- 1 Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 1–3; Ya'qub Yehoshua, *Tarikh al-sahafa al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin fi al-'ahd al-'Uthmani (1908–1918)* [The History of the Arabic Press in Palestine in the Ottoman Era (1908–1918)] (Jerusalem: Matba'at al-ma'arif, 1974); and Yusuf Q. Khuri, *al-Sahafa al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin, 1876–1948* [The Arabic Press in Palestine, 1876–1948] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1986), 3–26.
- 2 To the best of my knowledge, issue number 16 is the only complete issue which is available from the first half of 1911 and is located in the Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office, Istanbul (BOA)/Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (DH.MTV/52-1/49). I would like to thank Zach Foster for pointing out the existence of this issue and for sharing it with me.
- 3 The first expanded issue consisting of six pages was published on 17 June 1914.
- 4 For a discussion of *Filastin's* geographic scope of interest, see Johann Büssow, "Mental Maps: The Mediterranean Worlds of Two Palestinian Newspapers in the Late Ottoman Period," in *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day*, ed. Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 100–115.
- 5 "Ahsan tariqa li al-i'lan" [The Best Way of Advertising], *Filastin*, 18 December 1912, 3. All translations from *Filastin* are by author.
- 6 "Jaridat Filastin" [The Newspaper *Filastin*], *Filastin*, 11 June 1913, 3.
- 7 "Batilan yat'abu al-banna'un" [The Builders Toil in Vain], *Filastin*, 28 August 1913, 3. For a short analysis of this attempt and its termination, see Emanuel Beška, *From Ambivalence to Hostility: The Arabic Newspaper Filastin and Zionism, 1911–1914* (Bratislava: Slovak Academic Press), 2016, 19–20.
- 8 Yehoshua, *Tarikh al-sahafa*, 116–120; Beška, *From Ambivalence*, 25–26, 30–31, 67.
- 9 For a comprehensive discussion of *Filastin's* coverage of this issue, see Evelin Dierauff, "Negotiating Ethno-Confessional Relations in Late Ottoman Palestine: Debates in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper *Filastin* (1911–1914)" (PhD diss., University of Tübingen, 2018), chap. 4.
- 10 Yehoshua, *Tarikh al-sahafa*, 28, 108, 110–11, 113, 118; Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 98, 107, 187; Johann Büssow, "Mental Maps," 104; "Surat

- al-khitab” [A Copy of the Speech], *Filastin*, 27 March 1912, 2; “al-Majlis al-mukhtalat” [The Mixed Council], *Filastin*, 8 November 1911, 3.
- 11 Quoted according to Yehoshua, *Tarikh al-sahafa*, 118–19.
 - 12 “La yakhlus al-ghariq bi al-ghariq” [A Drowning Person Cannot Be Saved by Another Drowning Person], *Filastin*, 9 September 1911, 1.
 - 13 Capitulations were treaties between European states and the Ottoman Empire which conferred extraterritorial privileges and tax exemptions on the subjects of the former. The cornerstone of the capitulatory regime with European countries was the accord concluded with France in 1535. The capitulations were abolished by the Ottoman government after the outbreak of World War I. Jacob Coleman Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record: 1535–1914, Volume I* (New Jersey: D. van Nostrand, 1956), 1. For the text of the treaty with France, see Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, 2–5.
 - 14 “Istimlak al-ajaniib” [Acquisition by the Foreigners], *Filastin*, 20 September 1911, 1.
 - 15 “La tansana ya Basha” [Do not Forget Us, Pasha], *Filastin*, 19 August 1911, 1.
 - 16 “A wujud am la wujud” [To Be, or not to Be], *Filastin*, 2 August 1911, 1.
 - 17 “Wa fariq abaka idha ma abaka” [Leave Your Father if He Disdains You], *Filastin*, 30 September 1911, 1.
 - 18 “Man huwa al-muta’assib?” [Who Is the Fanatic?], *Filastin*, 8 November 1911, 1.
 - 19 “al-Quds – li murasilna: Ruhi al-Khalidi” [Jerusalem – by Our Correspondent: Ruhi al-Khalidi], *Filastin*, 6 March 1912, 2; “al-Sharif Ja’far Basha wa al-Isra’iliyun” [Sharif Ja’far Pasha and Israelites], *Filastin*, 30 March 1912, 3; “‘Id al-fish ‘inda al-Isra’iliyin” [Passover among the Jews], *Filastin*, 23 April 1913, 3.
 - 20 “Shahr Ramadan” [The Month of Ramadan], *Filastin*, 30 August 1911, 1.
 - 21 Yusuf al-‘Isa, “al-Walad al-mash’um” [The Sinister Son], *Filastin*, 7 December 1912, 1.
 - 22 Yusuf al-‘Isa, “Naskut wa yuntiqunana” [We Are Silent and They Make Us Speak], *Filastin*, 5 June 1912, 1.
 - 23 For an extensive analysis of the transformation in the editors’ attitudes towards Zionism, see Emanuel Beška, “*Filastin’s* Changing Attitude toward Zionism before World War I,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 72 (Winter 2017): 86–101.
 - 24 “Ta’til jaridat Filastin wa muhakamatuha: muhakamat jaridat Filastin” [The Suspension of the Newspaper *Filastin* and Its Trial: The Trial of the Newspaper *Filastin*], *Filastin*, 6 June 1914, 7.
 - 25 For a detailed examination of *Filastin’s* treatment of the Beilis affair, see Emanuel Beška, “‘The Disgrace of the Twentieth Century’: The Beilis Affair in *Filastin* Newspaper,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 66, (Summer 2016): 99–108.
 - 26 Yusuf al-‘Isa, “Ma’arrat al-qarn al-‘ishrin” [The Disgrace of the Twentieth Century], *Filastin*, 25 October 1913, 1.
 - 27 It is noteworthy that the two most prominent and influential Gazan families, al-Husayni and al-Shawwa, whose relations were very strained and who were engaged in a prolonged factional conflict for power in the city, managed to overcome their differences and cooperated in order to gain the ownership of these lands. For a treatise on the internal political strife in Gaza at the turn of the twentieth century, see Yuval Ben-Bassat and Johann Büssov, “Urban Factionalism in Late Ottoman Gaza, c. 1875/1914: Local Politics and Spatial Division,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 61 (2018): 606–49.
 - 28 Yusuf al-‘Isa, “Aradi al-Sirr – aw – kitab Allah wa kitab al-Walid” [The Lands of al-Sirr – or – The Book of God and the Book of al-Walid], *Filastin*, 22 July 1914, 1. For a discussion of this case, see Emanuel Beška, “The Lands of as-Sirr Affair in 1914: Its Reflection in the Contemporary Palestinian Arabic Periodical Press,” *Asian and African Studies* 27, no. 1 (2018): 1–20.

The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs

Part 1: The Formative Years, 1882–1918

Taufiq Canaan

Editor's Note:

In September 2016, Fauzi C. Mantoura decided to transcribe the memoirs of his grandfather, physician Taufiq¹ Canaan (1882–1964), which had been in the archives of his late mother, Layla N. Mantoura (nee Canaan). The text of Dr. Taufiq Canaan's "Family Story" spanned 284 pages, which he had handwritten in a Eupharma pharmaceutical diary issued in 1957. Therefore these memoirs were written in the period after 1957, when Dr. Canaan was retired and residing in a guest house of the Augusta Victoria Hospital compound on the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem. During the summer holidays of 1955–1963, which Dr. Fauzi Mantoura spent with his grandfather in Jerusalem, he recalls seeing Dr. Canaan methodically writing these memoirs every evening. The diary, excerpted by Carol Khoury and annotated by Andrea Sakleh, cover up to the end of World War I. Part 2 will be published in a future issue of *JQ*.

Parents and Childhood

My grandfather, Hanna Canaan, came from Kfar Shima [Lebanon] with his three sons and two sisters (Martha and Christina) to Jaffa. He had to flee from Lebanon, as the persecution of the Christians was very severe, and he was a very brave young man who fought against the killing of Christians [by Druze in sectarian battles in the area]. Two of his sons, Anton and Bishara (my father) entered the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem,² while the eldest son Habib remained with his father. Father was born in Kfar Shima on 6 August 1849. His mother died soon afterwards.

My mother Katherina was also from Lebanon. She was born in Bhamdun and was a member of the Khairallah family. She lost her mother at the age of about 4 years. Her father remarried soon, but as her stepmother treated her harshly and badly, her father brought her to the girl's orphanage in Beirut. This was a Kaiserswerther Deaconesses institution. When she finished the prescribed course at the school, she remained in the orphanage first as a teacher and later as a deaconess. A few years after her dedication as deaconess, she was sent to Talitha Kumi in Jerusalem. This was another orphanage for girls established by and belonging also to the Kaiserswerther Deaconesses.

Father got to know mother while she was at Talitha Kumi. He was very scrupulous in choosing his life companion, and took always the advice of the Director of the Syrian Orphanage, who loved him as a son. The director thought this young deaconess was the most suitable companion. She had, as he did also, a German education and was as engaged as he in missionary work. She was Lebanese and a Protestant as he was. Mr. Schneller blessed his choice. After marriage she went to Bayt Jala with him.

I was born on 24 September 1882, as the second child. My sister Lydia was one and a half years older. As I was the first male child in the family, the joy of the congregation was exceptional. A male child perpetuates, according to Arab customs, the name of

the family and the clan. At my birth we lived in the house of Abdullah Toa, which lies in the eastern part of the village. As the customs of the Arabs dictate, everyone who came to congratulate brought something with them. Usually such presents were intended to help the receiver reduce his expenses down. Every person who came to congratulate had to be served with sweets, coffee, cigarettes, and in Christian families, with arak. Such presents were brought on the birth of a child, the marriage of a member of a family, the return from a long “journey,” and at the death of a member of the family. All such presents had to be repaid, as the Arab proverb teaches: *Kul shi fi dinyadayn, hitta dumu’ al-‘anayn*, that is, everything in this world is a debt, even the tears of the eyes: كل شي في الدنيا دين حتى دموع العينين

A few words have to be said about my other brothers and sisters. In all we were six children, four boys and two girls. According to our age, we were Lydia, myself, Wadi’, Badra, Hanna, and Nagib. As I was the eldest boy my father was called Abu Taufiq. From our youth, father gave a lot of time and energy to bring us up in the right Christian spirit. He told us Biblical stories and other stories, putting especial stress on morals. Whenever it was possible, we were allowed to accompany him on his official walks and visits. On summer vacations, he took us on excursions to historical sites around Bayt Jala. This ensured we got to know the topography the surroundings of Bayt Jala, all while visiting such sites as Solomon’s Pools, St. George’s Convent, Bethlehem, Artas. During our walks, he related to us the life history of important men in religion and politics, speaking simply to showcase the history and traditions of the place.

During summer vacation, he arranged for long tours to Tannur, Battir, Bayt Sahur, al-‘Arrub, etc., where we rode on donkeys. Such tours planted in me the love for country and the *fallah*. In the summer, father leased a vineyard. We had to get up early and walk to the field and bring figs and grapes for the day. These had to be ready for breakfast. It was a nice custom to have, while carrying the fruits home, acquaintances whom we met on our way would help themselves. In most afternoons the whole family went again to the vineyard to spend one hour in the fresh air. Nothing was lost of the fruit we brought home. Berries which were not suitable for eating were pressed for vinegar. We made our own wine; as we had no wine press, the grapes were crushed by treading upon the vats after washing all our feet.

The missionary work grew quickly. A big terrain was bought in 1882 and a beautiful but simple church was erected in 1886. Thus the congregation could now boast like the Orthodox and the Latin congregations of having a good and spacious church. On both sides of the church two buildings were erected, the one to the south was a school for the boys and the one to the north was partly a school for the girls and partly the



Figure 1. Taufiq Canaan with his wife Margot Eilender. IPS collection.

living quarters of the teacher. Within the boys school was a second story that was built for the quarters of the pastor. We moved into those quarters and for the first time we had a comfortable living space.

Father was one of the very first Arabs in Palestine who learned to play the organ. When we were still young he began to teach us and gave us lessons. He was strict in his teaching. In order to teach us not to move our hands unnecessarily, he used to place a small coin on the back of our hands. Whenever it fell down he beat us on the hand. Of course, the beating was not hard.



Figure 2. From left to right: Dr. Saphra, Dr. Canaan, Marogt (Canaan's wife), and Moshe Krieger. Courtesy of Norbert Schwake.

Schooling and Medical Training

When I was six years old I entered the primary school of our mission in Bayt Jala. I still remember when the school comprised only two rooms. As these were in no way sufficient for the number of applicants which increased yearly, the Jerusalem Verein built on the southern side of the church a hall and two rooms. When I entered school there were already three teachers and my father. The subjects taught were: Arabic, reading, writing, composition, elementary mathematics, geography, singing, drawing, and Bible history. Physical education was introduced for the first time in southern Palestine in our school.

Beside our work in school we had special lessons at home in German, music, and grammar. At the age of eleven, I was taken by my father with my brother Wadi' to the Syrian Orphanage where I finished elementary school and three and a half years of teachers' seminary before going to Beirut. No English was taught in the Syrian Orphanage. We learned French but advanced very slowly in this subject. The subjects taught in the seminary were: algebra, geometry, physics, history, advanced German and Arabic, music, history of the Bible, religion, and pedagogy. The method of teaching was good and the teachers thorough, thus a thorough training was given. The moral standing of the institution was very high and this was an important cornerstone for future study and work.

A few words have to be said about the training in the Syrian Orphanage. All the children had to get up at half past five, dress, and wash so that everyone could do his daily house work between six and seven. Every student had a specified chore: the cleaning of the dormitory, of the courtyard, one of the class rooms. These duties were changed every few months so that the student rotated to different house duties. After breakfast, the boys went either to their classes or to the workshops. Following lunch there was a short break, after which the lessons began again and remained to four o'clock. At this time the general work began in the garden, the building, etc.

Every Sunday afternoon the children would go on an outdoor walk where they could enjoy themselves in the fresh air. Flowers were gathered and we would bring them to Mrs. Schneller, who was called by everybody “Mamma Schneller.” In return she would give us a handful of dried figs. Every Sunday after supper there was a religious meeting held by “Papa Schneller.” Most of us slept for he spoke long.

During the harvest time, all the children had to get up at “five” in the morning and go to help in harvesting the crops. We worked until “eight” in the morning and then came back to breakfast and to begin our studies or work. I remember so well how my hands were wounded, as we harvested with our hands. On these occasions, I gathered beetles, scorpions, small serpents, etc. and put them in bottles of alcohol. We sold them to German teachers who then sent them to Germany. After the harvest, the whole institution was granted a three-day picnic to ‘Ayn Far‘a. This was one of the best periods in the school year. Another lovely period, but much more tiresome, was our 4–5 day trip to Jericho. This was done in the spring time. At four in the morning, the boys walked down, rested at the Samaritan inn for several hours, and resumed their walking in the afternoon. We arrived exhausted in Jericho and camped in Wadi Qilt. On these occasions, my father would allow me and my brother to hire a donkey.

Medical Schooling in Beirut

One afternoon on one of the summer vacations my father had to make a visit to the neighborhood of Rachel’s tomb. I accompanied him. On our way back he asked, “What do you like to study and what profession have you chosen?” I answered “a physician.” It seems that the sight of the doctor coming from Jerusalem to the French hospital in Bethlehem made a deep impression on me. He always rode on a beautiful horse with a white ‘abaya. Father kept my answer in mind and soon sent me to American University in Beirut. It was called in those times the Syrian Protestant College and Dr. Daniel Bliss was the president.

In the winter of 1899 I arrived in Beirut. The journey was very tiresome. One had to go on the railway to Jaffa, and then on the steamer to Beirut. I journeyed in third class, that is, deck passenger. Although the next morning I was in Beirut, the journey was very hard and I was terribly seasick.

I had to begin from the bottom, that is, class D in the preparatory, for I knew no English whatsoever. However, I studied very hard and in three months I advanced to the third class. In the second school year it was possible for me to go through classes B and A. I advanced to the Collegiate Department, having studied hard all vacation. I took an examination and was able to skip the freshman class and enter as a sophomore. This required continuous and strenuous work the whole year to satisfy my professors.

Reverend Fritze, the German pastor of Beirut, whom I had already visited a few times, brought me the news of the death of my father in the latter part of February 1899. The news broke me down, for I did not know how it would be possible to continue my studies. He wisely said, “... my dear Canaan, trust in God, everything will be arranged.” He rose up, asked me to play on the piano, gave me a choral book, and left the room saying, “music is the best comforter.” This I found to be true in every difficult occasion. The pastor personally went to the president of the college and arranged that the whole tuition fee was granted.

The death of my father imposed upon me great restrictions. I looked for some ways to earn a few pennies. Thus, I helped some of my co-students in their lessons regularly. To others, I gave German lessons. In the German Girls Orphanage, I taught

two deaconesses Arabic. I imposed a strict economy on myself making it possible for me to somewhat assist my mother with my heavy expenses. The death of my father also meant putting a greater investment in my studies. As we were not allowed into the preparatory department to study later than 10 p.m. and as everything had to be darkened at this time, I used to wait until the supervising teacher went through the dormitory and retired to his room. Then I lit a candle and continued my studies.

Medical school lasted four years and at the end of the fourth year we received our diploma. I studied very hard and was always the first in the class. In the practical work in anatomy, that is, in the dissection of human bodies, I had the greater chance of doing my part and that of many students who did not care to do their work. In this way I had the exceptional opportunity to thoroughly study anatomy. On vacation, I anesthetized cats and dissected them, thus studying anatomy in a living animal. On commencement day I received honors in anatomy, chemistry, physiology, histology, internal medicine, surgery, ophthalmology, dermatology, therapeutics, ear-nose-throat diseases, and hygiene

Augusta Victoria and the Beginning of My Medical Career

After receiving my diploma, I hurried back to Jerusalem and rested for one month before I took on my duties at the German hospital.³ During this period I had to search for quarters to live in. But the month came to an end before a house was found. I had to live for about two weeks with my cousin (the son of father's sister), Mr. Bishara Fata. My mother moved to Jerusalem when a house, composed of a big hall and three rooms, was found. The greater part of mother's furniture was moved to the new quarters.

My decision to go to Jerusalem and to work in the German hospital decided my whole future. I never was sorry for this decision. Jerusalem lived mainly from the tourists and pilgrims who used to flock yearly in great numbers, especially during the two main Christian feasts. Due to the troubled condition of the country caused by political unrest, only very few dared to come. Another important source of income was the work offers by many Christian institutions. Their number decreased greatly after the Arab-Jewish war. Add to these causes the poverty of the refugees, who had lost all their possessions and means of living, one can understand the abnormal position of the country. Thus, every woman who could find employment snatched at it. However, the Augusta Victoria Hospital⁴ and the other few institutions could employ only a small number.

My working hours in the hospital were officially from 7 a.m. to 12 or 1 p.m., and two hours in the afternoon. The work was so extensive that I had to put daily three to four hours more to be able to finish it. As assistant, I had to examine every new patient, to write the history, make the morning rounds with my chief, conduct evening rounds alone, assist in the operations, hold the greater part of the polyclinics, and perform the laboratory work. My chief, Dr. Grussendorf, was a very conscientious and good surgeon. He became the best known one in Palestine. His fame was so wide that people from all directions came to him for consultation. His private polyclinic was always full. He was at the same time asked by the chief of the Shaare Zedek hospital⁵ to conduct all the operations in this hospital.

Our operating days were Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. But we had many emergency operations which were performed whenever they came. At seven, we began to operate and I assisted Dr. Grussendorf. He was kind to explain to me the anatomy of the surgical field and the different stages of the operation. After a few months he allowed me to operate under his supervision. Slowly I mastered the most important



Figure 3. Dr. Taufiq Canaan's laboratory with Ms. Elisabeth Hegler to the left and Dr. Bader to the right. Courtesy of Norbert Schwake.

operations and methods. I used to wonder about how quiet and sure he was. It must be said, in his honor, that he endeavored to never cut a fiber when it was not absolutely obligatory. In internal medicine, he was not so sure. Dr. Grussendorf was influenced by the practical physicians in Jerusalem, especially by Dr. [Adolph] Einszler, who thought that by far the greatest part of all diseases in Palestine was malaria or the results of malaria. Dr. Grussendorf adopted this theory. As a result, we had many disputes in the diagnoses. Thus he did not believe that we had typhoid, tubercular peritonitis, muscular rheumatism, etc.: everything was malaria or one of its consequences.⁶

One day while making the morning round I read the history of the woman who was admitted the day before. In conclusion I said the diagnosis is tubercular peritonitis. He was excited and said all the symptoms cited are the consequences of chronic malaria. No discussion was allowed. He turned to the deaconess and said, "To prove to Dr. Canaan that his diagnosis is not correct I will operate on this woman tomorrow." The method of treating tubercular peritonitis at these times was laboratory. I was greatly perturbed to be the cause of an operation when my chief thought it was not necessary. But the operation showed the best tubercles I had ever seen. He turned to me and said, "I am thankful that you were so positive in your diagnosis. Now I see how often I made faulty diagnoses." The same difficulties in diagnosis were present with typhoid; nobody could convince physicians in Jerusalem of the enteric fever's existence. Even though repeated blood tests did not reveal any parasites and there was a lack of medicinal effectiveness, physicians were still not convinced that the disease was not malaria. They believed that continuous fever, bleeding from the intestines, peritonitis (after perforation) were all results of intestinal malaria. Only when Professor [Peter] Mühlens came to Jerusalem to study the diseases of the Holy Land, did the scientific research (agglutination and culture) prove the correctness of my observations.

On operating days I made the rounds alone between 11 and 13, while Dr. Grussendorf continued operating. On every operating day, five to eight operations were performed.

The evening visits were made by me alone. Dr. Grussendorf visited only the bad cases and the newly operated. Slowly I mastered the German methods, of which I had seen none in university. Dr. Grussendorf lent me German books where I found a mine of treasures. At the same time, I subscribed to German medical journals to expand my knowledge. Due to all of my extra work, I was able to abstain completely from the first year of private practice. My monthly salary of gold francs (at this time there were no paper money in circulation in Palestine) sufficed for any living, and I could lay a few pennies on the side.

The work in the hospital, especially my close connection with the patients, gave me great experience with the folklore of the country. This interested me so much that I began to enquire about the amulets, which most of the patients carried: how they were thought to act, how they have to be carried, who makes them, etc. All of this information was put on record. This was the stimulus which made me so interested in the customs and beliefs of the people and which allowed me to write many articles and books.

Just before Professor Mühlens arrived to Jerusalem in 1912, we had an epidemic of cerebrospinal fever. Hundreds died. The epidemic began in the Jewish quarter and raged frightfully amongst the Jews, especially amongst children and young people. It spread slowly among the whole population of Jerusalem and the villages around it. The disease was known as the "Jewish disease." Dr. Grussendorf, Dr. Wallach, and I recognized the character of the disease. Our treatment was repeated lumbar puncture and serum. All the other physicians laughed at our diagnoses and assured that it was nothing but severe cerebral malaria. Their standpoint was held firmly in an assembly of physicians, arranged by the Turkish government, and to which physicians from Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Nablus were called. My studies of this epidemic gave rise to my first lecture at the Medical Congress at the university in Beirut which was then printed by the university in their bulletin, *al-Kulliya*. My professor in internal diseases, Dr. Graham, congratulated me on the publication.

In my contract with Kaiserwerth, we had agreed that if no party announced three months before the end of the year the annulment of the contract, it would continue for a second year. Two months after the first year elapsed Kaiserwerth announced that the contract would be terminated, giving as cause that there was a young German physician, a relative of the old director of the hospital, who had applied for the post. I was deeply hurt, not only because my contract was broken without any cause, but for the preference of a European to an Arab. Due to the fact that I had dedicated my whole time to the work in the hospital, I was unable to build up a private practice.

In the year 1906, I got sick with appendicitis. At midnight the pain began and got more and more severe, until I had to awaken Dr. Grussendorf at 5 am. He was angry, but came and although he did not diagnose the disease, he gave me a morphine and left. At 9 am., he was recalled. I begged him not to give any morphine for it caused very severe vomiting. After I was slightly better and I could not feel the pain, I took a carriage to the hospital. Dr. Grussendorf knew now that there must be something serious. He called a consultation of Dr. Wallach, Dr. Jamal and Dr. Hoffman. Dr. Grussendorf and Dr. Jamal were not in favor of an operation. Wallach and Jamal asked, "What do you expect to find?" I, however, insisted on an operation. They found an appendix full of pus that burst before it could be removed. Unfortunately, the course of my recovery was complicated due to acute dysentery. My operation was the first appendectomy made in Jerusalem. The Arab population in Jerusalem was very irritated. They accused Dr. Papiona of poisoning me. He had to hide himself for a few days in his house.

During the First World War, I had typhoid and later cholera. Both were very severe. (In 1954 I had an operation for an enlarged prostate. Dr. Sami Khouri made the operation

at the AVH. Soon after, and with no known cause, I was diagnosed with thrombosis in the posterior wall of the heart. This forced me to live a quiet and careful life.)

When I left the German hospital I had no income whatsoever, except what could be earned by private practice. However, my practice was just in its very beginning and could not support me. My mother had moved to Jerusalem to live with me. Thus, I was forced to look for another house. My brother Hans was teaching in the Syrian Orphanage and he had to accumulate whatever he earned for his future education.



Figure 4. Dr. Taufiq Canaan and Dr. Nashat Bey in Russian Hospital in Jerusalem. Courtesy: Library of Congress.

Slowly, my private practice increased so that my time was filled with work. This put me in a position not only to live well, but help my brother Hans, who had gone to Germany to study engineering, and my sister Badra, who was studying to be a kindergarten teacher in Dresden. My increased work necessitated my buying a donkey for riding. In those days it was à la mode to ride on a donkey.

At this point some description must be made about the prevailing conditions of the country under Turkish rule. I spent fifteen years as an Ottoman subject and the conditions were primitive. No asphalted roads existed in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. The carriage roads were few in the Holy Land. Such roads connected Jerusalem with Nablus, 'Ayn Karim, Jericho, Hebron, and Jaffa. In the summer, the desert clouds from the streets were bad, while in the winter the roads were muddy. These terrible conditions increased during World War I, when tanks used the roads.

To reach any city, the inhabitants had to use a donkey, or a horse. Most peasants around the main cities came walking whenever they had anything to do. Early in the morning one could see groups of peasant women carrying baskets full of vegetables or fruits on their heads and coming to the cities to sell them.

There were government schools only in the cities, however, and these were only primary schools. If anyone wanted to have a higher education he had to go to Constantinople or to Beirut. Most of the Muslim young men went to Turkish universities in the first city, while most of the Christians went to Beirut. After the First World War, Muslim and Christian went to the Beirut, either to the American or the French university. There were no schools in the Muslim villages. In most Christian villages, missionary day schools were to be found. If there was a school in a Muslim village, it was a private one led by a shaykh.

There was always a slight misunderstanding between the socio-political stance of the Muslims and the Christians. The Muslims felt themselves and behaved like the ruling class. The Christians were despised. They were protected by the different convents. The Latins [Roman Catholics], as well as the Orthodox, supported their congregations. They gave them free quarters and bread was distributed amongst them. The military fee was

also paid for every male member after reaching the age of seventeen years. While every Muslim had to serve three years of military service or pay a large sum of fifty Turkish pounds, the Christian was exempted from such a service on paying two yearly sums.⁷ The system of continuous help from the convent was a drawback for the members of the Latin and Orthodox Churches. The Protestants, who had no such help, became more independent and better workers.

The sanitary conditions in Palestine were very backward. The Turkish government had only three hospitals in Palestine, one in each of the main cities: Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Nablus. The latter was built by donations of the inhabitants of the city itself, and was taken over by the Turkish government only in the last year of the First World War. The Latin and Orthodox convents had their own physician who cared for the sick of the congregation. Besides a polyclinic, the physicians visited the sick in their own houses. Such a treatment was never thorough or scientific. The different Christian communities had several hospitals in the country. The Orthodox Church had only two: a Russian hospital and one directed and supported by the Orthodox Convent.

Till Death Do You Part

When I had established a good reputation in Jerusalem and my income was good, I began to think about finding a suitable partner for my life. My ideal was to find a healthy girl who had a good education and an agreeable character. As I did not mix much in general society, I knew only a few. Therefore I made a list of girls, and began to study secretly every one. One after the other was taken away until only three remained. Two were Protestant and one was a Catholic. One of the Protestants had to be eliminated as she still was, according to my idea, young. With the names of these two I went to Miss A. Landau, an elderly Jewish lady and a good friend of mine. She at once said she knew both and I believe that Miss Margot Eilender is a fine young lady, who is the most suitable one for you. Asking Miss Landau to introduce me to her, she said: "Miss Eilender comes twice a week for an Esperanto class. Come and study this language and I will then ask you to bring her home." In this way we got to know each other more and more. I thought Miss Eilender to be a most suitable life companion. I opened my heart to my mother and asked her for advice. She agreed to my choice but thought that I should take more time to know her better.

Therefore, I went to Mr. Eilender and asked him to give [me permission to] come to his house to better know his daughter, for I intended eventually to ask for her hand. I said she should also have the chance of getting to know me better, in order to decide if I am a suitable person. Mr. Eilender was happy for the idea. A few days later and after having discussed the question with his wife, he sent me an invitation for dinner. In welcoming me in his house he said: "Dear Doctor, excuse us that we have yet shown our gratitude for your professional help." After dinner it was agreed that we should have two evenings for chess. A few weeks later, I asked Miss Eilender while we were walking on the roof and in the moon light, if she would accept to be my wife. She accepted. We descended and announced our engagements. Two days later engagement cards were sent to all friends. Amongst the Germans, the news exploded like a bomb.

4 January 1912 was fixed for our marriage. Propst Jeremia held the ceremony in the Church of the Redeemer. My brother Nagib and her brother Roland were the best men. My sister Badra and Margot's sister Nora were the bridesmaids. The ceremony was the best I had seen in Jerusalem. A big reception was given for all those invited in St. John Hotel (adjoining the church). After the reception we went to Jericho.

Medical Work in Jerusalem during the Mayoralty of Husayn al-Husayni

The London Jewish Society engaged me to work in its hospital – also known as the English hospital. One of its physicians took his vacation and went to England. I worked here for eight months and had the magnificent opportunity to learn the English methods. The next year I worked again for eight months, as the same doctor had his vacations. In the third year after leaving the German hospital, I had the exceptional opportunity to work at the Shaare Zedek hospital alone. Dr. Wallach, the physician of the same, went ten months to Germany to rest and to raise money. This opportunity gave me the chance to do many operations and to introduce me among the Jewish population. My work in the London Jewish Hospital paved the way for working among the Jews and the Shaare Zedek increased it more.

The mayor of Jerusalem, Husayn al-Husayni, who was a dear friend, gave me, in 1910, the position of Municipality Doctor. My duties were to inspect the sanitary conditions of the city, to treat the prisoners and to act as the medico-legal advisor. Every day I made a round in one of the quarters of the city and reported officially to the mayor. The sanitary inspector who accompanied me promised on every occasion to do what I proposed, but he rarely did it. The municipality had its own difficulties; I could not remain more than 1 3/4 years in this position, as my private work increased so much that I had to buy a horse.

In the year 1910, I and some graduates of the Syrian Protestant College founded the Alumni Association of the Syrian Protestant College. We met every month in the house of one of the members. I was chosen as the president. At the same time, the graduates of the Syrian Orphanage organized the Brotherhood of the Syrian Orphanage. The founder was the late Pastor Esber Donnet. He was the president for three years after which I was chosen as the president. The YMCA in Jerusalem was founded under the British Committee and in the second year after its formation, Dimitri Salami, who was the



Figure 5. Dr. Taufiq Canaan at the Ottoman Military Hospital in Jerusalem. Courtesy of Norbert Schwake.

Secretary, had to hide all the documents in order that we should not be accused by the Turks as Anglophiles.

In the year 1911 a pious Muslim, Ibrahim Kleibo, opened the first private Muslim polyclinic. He appointed me as the physician and I found a pharmacist. Three times a week the clinic was opened. As it was situated inside the Old City, and not far from the Dome of Rock, the attendance was very great, the number of patients in the summer reaching 100 a month. This polyclinic made me a very good name amongst the Muslims of the city and the villages around Jerusalem. However, the polyclinic had to be closed at the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1912, Professor Mühlens arrived to Jerusalem. He was sent by a committee to investigate the diseases of the Holy Land. The German consul general introduced him to the German institutions, and to the doctors. He brought him to me saying this young doctor can help you more than any other one. I still remember his visit on a hot summer day. When I asked the consul general if he would prefer beer or Arabic coffee, he answered, "Of course, beer – in this heat." Professor Mühlens and I became good friends. On the one side, he taught microscopy, while I introduced him to most of the schools. This was very important for his work, for he wanted to examine the blood of the greatest number of people, to determine the rate of infection. At the same time, the two Protestant German educational institutions, the Syrian Orphanage and Talitha Kumi, put their children who had parasites in their blood for treatment, at his request. In a short time the professor had examined several thousand inhabitants of Jerusalem. The infection rate with malarial parasites was found to be high (*ca.* 22 percent).

As I mentioned, he taught me the microscopy of blood. I used to ride three times a week to the Augusta Victoria Stiftung, where he lived, to examine the blood films for parasites. Soon I was an expert in microscopic diagnosis of malaria, and he employed me in his laboratory. A big house outside the New Gate, and to the east of Notre Dame de France, was rented and laboratories were arranged. It has to be mentioned that a few months after the arrival of Professor Mühlens to Jerusalem, he had to go back to strengthen the institution, to gather a library and to secure quinine for the treatment of malaria. Before he went, I showed him some cases of *Typhus exanthematicus*. There was a small epidemic in the local prisons. Professor Mühlens had not yet seen a case. Later, during the First World War, he saw very many.

World War I

In 1914 the First World War broke out. I was at once appointed as the doctor of the 27th Infantry Regiment, which was made of two companies. The first company which was under my direct care was situated in Nazareth. All orders received from the headquarters had to be communicated to the 2nd Battalion of my regiment. According to Turkish regulations, I tried first to pay the prescribed fifty Turkish pounds to be released for one year from military service. This is because I was the only male member in the family who could earn a few pennies for the upkeep of the family. Further, my son was only a few days old and he suffered from acute dysentery which he had caught most probably from his mother during birth. But a new Turkish regulation excluded physicians and pharmacists from this privilege. Thus I had to enter service and was sent to Nazareth. I lived in a room situated on the second story and had an excellent view of Nazareth and its surroundings.

After two months stay, our division was ordered to move to Ma'an, to prevent English troops from landing in 'Aqaba. We camped to the south of Ma'an in the desert.

Happily, at the end of one week of my stay in Ma'an a cable came to the commander-in-chief in Ma'an ordering that I should proceed at once to Damascus to the headquarters of the army.

As soon as I could journey, I was given the order to go back to Jerusalem to recuperate. I journeyed with the train and arrived after two and half days to Sileh [Silat al-Dahir], a village to the north of Nablus. This was the end station of the railroad. From here I had to use a carriage to Nablus and to Jerusalem. That night at 2 am we continued our journey to Jerusalem. The two sisters took utmost care of me. It was cold. In the afternoon we reached Jerusalem. My people were very happy to see me. Professor Mühlens, who happened to be in Jerusalem, visited me at once and said, "We need you badly for the desert. We must have laboratories and you should take me over."

In two weeks, I was sent to Bir Sab'a where I organized a laboratory. After a few months of work in Bir Sab'a, I was ordered to Hafir al-'Awja. During the years 1915–1918 I was in several places. My last position in the Sinai front was in Bayt Hanun. While I was in the Sinai Peninsula I could buy for my family many provisions. These were sent by German military truck to Jerusalem. Wheat, butter, eggs, and chicken were sent. The eggs (100–120 every time) were put in a tin filled with a contracted solution of lime.

After Sinai was lost, I was ordered to go to Nablus. While in Nablus I was imprisoned by the Turks and sent to Damascus to the chief doctor who was from Aleppo. This man ordered me to work in a laboratory, where I had nearly nothing to do. This doctor, who was more of a Turk than the Turks, was very mean in the method he used and I suffered much from him. After a few weeks, he ordered me to go to Aleppo, where I had the biggest laboratory in southern Turkey.

It was agreed between Prince Faysal and the British that no Arab soldiers captured in Damascus and north of it, could be taken as prisoners by the British. All Arab soldiers were his prisoners, whom he at once set free. Thus I was not taken by the British.

Theo and My Children

Up to 1912 I lived alone with my mother. Our home soon became the assembly place of the Protestant congregation. All my brothers and sisters were away. Lydia married soon after my graduation. Wadi' was teaching in the Armenian orphanage, "Armenische Waisenhaus." Hans (Hanna) and Nagib were studying in Germany. My sister Badra was in the Frohlininsitute in Dresden and later in Koln. Before marrying, I took the advice of the German consul general about the nationality of my wife after marriage. I asked if it is not preferable to leave her as a German subject. He advised strongly that she should become an Ottoman subject. This is best for her and her children's future. Thus soon after my wedding I inserted her as an Ottoman subject. Her name was officially taken off the German subject register, when we had our civilian marriage in the consulate.

This step saved so many difficulties at the time of the British Mandate. The harmony at home was the greatest blessing. My mother became slowly the centre of the whole family, not only to its members, but to the whole circle of friends. Mother and my wife complemented each other. My brothers and my sister Badra lived permanently with us, whenever they were in Jerusalem. God blessed us with four children: three daughters and one boy. The first born was Yasma (21 November 1912). My mother was so happy and she called her always "*binti habibti*," or "my beloved child." Yasma, thinking that this was her name, answered whenever she was asked about her name: "*binti habibti*."

A few days before the beginning of the First World War, my son Bishara-Theo was

born (26 August 1914). My wife was at the time suffering from dysentery. He was born very small and weak. The two others, Nada (10 October 1919) and Layla (4 June 1919) came after the end of the First World War. The following anecdote happened at the birth of Yasma. I had called a German midwife during the delivery of the child. When the child was born, my wife bled much, and while I was occupied with her the midwife said in Arabic, "Dr. Canaan, do not get angry." I of course thought that something had happened to the child and shouted: "What is the matter, is the child dead?" She answered: "No, but it is only a girl." She was following the local custom of wishing always for a boy.

When Yasma was born, I asked my wife, "What name shall we give her? Do you not think that a German name would be best?" I asked this question to see her ideas. She answered at once: "No, Taufiq, you have in Arabic the most beautiful names. Further, you are an Arab and the children must have Arabic names." Thus all my children are given Arabic names. Yasma is the abbreviation of Yasmin; Bishara means "good tidings," Nada means "dew," and Layla is the name of a renowned Arabic woman. Bishara was also the name of my father, and it is an Arabic custom to give the first born boy the name of his grandfather.

We were the happiest family. The boy developed slowly, as he was sickly for the first two years. When he began to talk he brought new life in the house. We had a maid servant from Bayt Jala, called Mariam. Bishara was greatly attached to her. When she died and he was told that Mariam would never come any more to us, as she went to God, he cried bitterly and said: "What does God need Mariam for – this old lady. I need her so very much. I am angry with God who took away my Mariam."

We made many excursions with the children, who spoke all week of the coming Sunday and the picnic we would make. Such excursions were made especially after the First World War, as I had a carriage, which was the best one in Jerusalem. A few years later, I got a car. It is interesting to note the change I had during the years: I began my practice walking, and when the work increased I bought a donkey, later I had one, then two horses, and after the First World War I had a carriage and then a car. In 1948, when the Arab-Jewish war had broken out, I lost my car with my house, and all my furniture and I, again, began to do my visits on my feet.

Our picnics were often to far places: Jericho, Nablus, Jaffa, Hebron, 'Ajjur, Tiberius, Bisan, Transjordan, and so forth. In such excursions our food was prepared, packed and taken with us. Nearly always friends who accompanied us were from the Gmelin family, Propst Herzberg, German Consul [Eric] Nord, some deaconesses, etc. In this way [it became possible for us] children to know the whole country. I received many invitations to far places for taking lunch. As a rule the food was first class. The host always served food and never sat with us. Friends were always invited to accompany us. In such excursions we inspected the archaeological remains in the vicinity. For the children, it was a great day. Thus, we were invited to 'Ajjur, Bayt Dajan, Bab al-Wad, Dayr Naja, Jericho, Hebron, Nablus, Wadi Qilt, Tal al-Safi, Bayt Jala, Artas, and so on.

Sharafat was never to be forgotten. The children clung to it. In the summer and autumn months we went nearly every Sunday to our vineyard. It was only 20 minutes by car. We always asked the sisters from the hospital Tabitha Kumi to come. It was a very great joy. My wife always prepared coffee and cake for these occasions. After having grapes which everyone cut for themselves, coffee was served. My friend Faydi al-'Alami, a rich and respected Muslim, had a very big garden in Sharafat. One day he said: "Doctor, I will give you a small piece of land, if you promise me to buy a few dunums and add them to it." I accepted thankfully his proposition. He bought me seven dunums. Thus I was his neighbor in Sharafat and in Jerusalem.

Our family life changed slowly. First, our circle of friends – especially among the better classes – increased and, secondly, the house got richer in children. We had nearly daily visits. Our friends were: Husayn Salim al-Husayni (the mayor of Jerusalem), Faydi al-‘Alami (a member of the Ottoman parliament), ‘Ali Hasna, ‘Abd al-Razaq Kleibo (both in the government), Nakhlé Trek (the Arab Head Teacher in the English College), Rev. H. B. Haddad, Direkt Schneller, Propst Jeremias, Consul General Dr. Gmelin, Dr. Biskin, Theo Fast, and so on.

Yasma and Theo went to the German school. Soon my son had a very good companion in Alfred, the son of Dr. Emil Farah, from Nazareth. Alfred’s mother was a German. She wanted to give her son a good education and thus sent him to Jerusalem. Alfred lived with us. He and Theo understood themselves well and remained always friends. Christmas Eve was an important day. The children sent, already a week in advance, their wishes to “Christkindlein.” After the death of our servant Mariam, Theo wrote to the Christchild, “I want to have nothing for Christmas but my Mariam.” St. Nicholas came regularly. The children were at first afraid of him, but later they expected him with impatience. On Christmas Eve, we always had a beautifully decorated tree. Only in 1947 did we stop putting up a Christmas tree. The children sang, told some Bible verses, and then enjoyed themselves enormously. The same joy and happiness took place on Easter Sunday, when early in the morning they went to the garden to search for the eggs. In all these days of joy and happiness my dear wife would arrange everything nicely.

In the German school there were no Arabic courses. I hired an Arab teacher to give them private lessons. Theo, however, did not show a special interest. All other studies



Figure 6. Cnaan’s house in al-Musrara. The third floor was added by the occupying Israelis after 1967. Located within the Armistice Zone in the No-Man’s Land just below the Notre Dame de France, the house was damaged and inhabited between 1948 and 1967. The street’s name during the British Mandate was Godfrey de Bouillon Street, while the present Israeli name is Ha’ Ayim Het Street. Photo taken in 1998, courtesy of Fauzi Mantoura.

were given in the German school. He also had lessons in the English language. In order to master the English language, I sent Theo, after attending the German school, to St. George's. At the age of nineteen he went to London's university to study architecture where he graduated from the Architectural and City Planning Department. It was easy for me to place Theo in the university. Sir [Henry] Wellcome,⁸ whose medico-historical museum I had sent 230 amulets,⁹ helped me. He was accepted at once on the recommendation of Sir Wellcome. As it was not easy to call him by his first name "Bishara," he was called by his second one, "Theo." This name with time took the place of the first one.

Yasma went, after finishing the German school in Jerusalem, to the Paulinen Stift in Friedrichshafen, where she remained four years. Later I sent her to London to take a course in office work. When she arrived in London, the following anecdote took place: She had on arrival to present herself to the police office with her passport. As soon as the police officer went through her passport, he fixed her with his eyes and asked: "Is your father Dr. Canaan?" Yasma answered, "yes." "Have you a brother called Theo?" Yasma answered, "yes." "Is your house to the East of the Notre Dame de France?" "Yes," said Yasma. "Don't you remember me? How often did we come to your house and had tea. I belonged to the formation who lived just beside your house. If you should have any difficulties come always to me."

While in London, Yasma lived in a house of a Moravian Pastor Wilson. He had no children and wished so much to adopt her. She was very happy to come back home. Arriving she looked very emaciated, and we had to feed her slowly until she regained her health.

Nada went to Germany after finishing her studies at the German school of Jerusalem. In a school in Stuttgart she learned the domestic sciences. From there she went to London for a visit. Her chances were really not good. She married a Spanish gentleman whose family was good. However, after two years, she found out that he was a rascal and had to leave him. She came back from Madrid with her daughter.

Layla finished the kindergarten of the German school. The school had to close due to the Second World War. She was put by Yasma in Talitha Kumi and later in the Schmidt School, for I, my wife and sister were in the concentration camp. As soon as it was possible, she went to Cairo to the American College and finished her studies in the Girls College in Beirut. She was more talented than any of her sisters, but not as persevering. Layla taught after graduation in the Girls Friends' School in Ramallah.

Of the three daughters, Yasma was the hardest worker and she was an expert in what she did. Soon after she returned from England, she became the secretary of the YMCA general secretary, Mr. Miller. In her gratitude to the Almighty, she gave the first monthly pay to the mission and the following one to her parents. Only later she kept the money for herself. She bought with the money dedicated for her parents a divan and two easy chairs. After several years with in the YMCA, she opened a pension [hostel], first in the house of her grandfather, Mr. Eilender, in the Greek Colony and later in my house in Talbiyya. Business went on very well. The pension was called "Jasmin House."

Theo came back from England just before the outbreak of the Second World War. He taught English in an Arab private school and later he took over a position in the archaeological department where he had to rearrange the fallen stones of Qasr Hisham, just north of Jericho, in order to give an idea just how it was. He had also supervised part of the excavations. Later he was employed by the PWD [Public Works Department under the Mandate] to build large caserns which were scattered all over the country (Tegart forts).¹⁰ In the year 1943 he decided to open a separate architectural bureau with his friend George Reyes with whom he had studied in London. They began their work in

Haifa and moved when the troubles began to Beirut. It is astonishing how Theo gained the confidence and love of the people. Everywhere he was highly esteemed. In Beirut, he was the friend of high class circles. His attainment in architecture was first class.

The three daughters married. It is curious that the three husbands were British subjects; one of them was an Arab whose father had acquired British nationality. Another curious thing was that the three sons-in-law had their birthdays on one and the same day – on 10 September.

Endnotes

- 1 It is now more common to find the name spelled Tawfiq, but he himself spelled his name Taufiq.
- 2 The Syrian Orphanage was established by Johan Schneller in Jerusalem originally for Christian orphans from Lebanon; it later became known as Schneller School and enrolled both Moslem and Christian boys.
- 3 The German Deaconess Hospital.
- 4 The Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, was established in 1910 as a guest house and hospice for malaria sufferers, and later became a hospital complex.
- 5 Shaare Zedek in Jerusalem, established in 1902, is a private hospital in West Jerusalem.
- 6 “Malaria shaped and influenced the history of Jerusalem and Palestine in the early twentieth century....The Ottomans only employed token efforts to control this widespread disease,” see Vicken V. Kalbian, “Reflections on Malaria in Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 67 (2016): 82–96.
- 7 See Erik-Jan Zürcher, “Mobilizing Military Labor in the Age of Total War: Ottoman Conscription Before and During the Great War,” in *Fighting for a Living: A Comparative Study of Military Labour 1500–2000* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013).
- 8 Sir Henry Solomon Wellcome was a founder of the pharmaceutical company Burroughs Wellcome & Company and formed the Wellcome Trust, one of the world’s largest medical charities.
- 9 Part 2 of Canaan’s memoirs, which will be published in a future issue of *JQ*, has a detailed account of his amulet collection.
- 10 A reference to the scores of police fortresses built on the recommendation of Sir Charles Tegart, the British Mandate advisor on counter-insurgency, in the wake of the 1936–1939 Revolt.

The Books in My Life: A Memoir

Part 2

Tarif Khalidi

My journey of publication began at the American University of Beirut, which imposed on its professors a dictum imported from the United States – “publish or perish.” This made publication, especially in foreign journals, the most important standard for climbing the academic ladder toward full professorship. The motto became like a sword hovering over our necks. Academic research is undoubtedly necessary for teaching, but the basic characteristic of a good teacher is the ability to relay academic material to students in a way that awakens their minds and curiosity; regrettably, this was not taken into consideration for academic promotion. My dear friend Kamal Salibi once told me:

When I published my first article, which included a list of the greatest judges during the Mamluk period, in a French Orientalist journal, I was overwhelmed by euphoria and went about sending copies of the article to my relatives and friends. One of my friends told me: All you have done is transfer this information from one obscure location to another.

Editor’s Note:

This is the second of three installments of Tarif Khalidi’s memoir in *JQ*, published here with permission from the author. It was translated from Arabic by Zahra Khalidi, and excerpted, edited, and annotated by Alex Winder. It was originally published (in Arabic) in installments in *al-Akhbar* newspaper, the first of which appeared on 17 December 2016, and collected in a monograph published by Mansurat al-Jamal.

A somewhat harsh judgement, but does it not apply to innumerable “academic” articles, in both the humanities and the sciences? Are not skillful and creative teachers at any university few and far between? If Socrates or Jesus himself taught at a university, they would have received the lowest standing among the professors – if the university would have kept them on at all – since they never published anything: “Dear Professor Socrates, We regret to inform you that the university’s administration has taken a decision to terminate

your services due to . . . with our best wishes for your academic future.”

One of my first published articles was “A Mosquito’s Wing: Al-Jahiz on the Progress of Knowledge.”¹ Several years later, I wrote a more comprehensive article, “The Concept of Progress in Classical Islam.”² I no longer remember the reason for this interest in the idea of progress. I may have been prompted by the books of Orientalists like Bernard Lewis and Gustave von Grunebaum, among others, who asserted definitively that no concept of progress or development existed within Arab thought, which in their view was essentially conservative, opposed to innovation, and sought wisdom only in the Qur’an. They emphasized the superiority of past generations, conveying the political message that Arabs and Muslims refuse enlightenment, preferring to wallow in a quagmire of backwardness, degeneration, and fatalism. These and other such notions of the “Arab mind” were popular among Orientalists of that time and, unfortunately, even filtered into the writings of some modern Arab “intellectuals.” These fatuous generalizations, though they have waned in the West, still thrive within Israeli Orientalism – the last bastion of Orientalism in the world today. In any case, my articles were not intended to “defend” the history of Arab thought, but only to push the boundaries of the issue and explore its facets. This journey of discovery is the one that motivated all of my subsequent research efforts, despite their various trajectories.

Because I focused my first article on al-Jahiz, I read almost all of his books and letters, concentrating on *Kitab al-Hayawan* (The Book of Animals), which stands at the apex of our intellectual works. It is not so much about animals as about human beings and nature in general, and one returns to it time and again, discovering with each reading new issues to explore. According to al-Jahiz, knowledge is achieved through experiences accumulated by an individual, which he or she then revisits more deeply in the mind. The mind of an infant is finite, but a mind challenged by experiences has no boundaries. Further: “It should be that our relationship to the generations that follow us is like that of our forefathers to us. That is, we are able to borrow from experience more than they have, as those after us will take more from experience than we have found.” Though the transmission of knowledge, according to al-Jahiz, has its failings, its situation within the past and future clearly indicate his belief in cumulative intellectual progress from one generation to the next.

I must also mention al-Jahiz’s intellectual milieu and reference the intellectual conversation taking place during his time, as I was, and remain, enamored of Michel Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.³ I only understood approximately one-tenth of Foucault’s book, but even this had a deep impact on my understanding of the history of thought. One of the main questions raised in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* remains fixed in my mind: What made this text possible? It is, on its surface, an innocent question. Yet it imposes upon the historian an obligation to search for a text’s relationship (in multiple dimensions) with the larger discourse within which it is situated. The historian thus comes to resemble the archaeologist who digs in various strata in any particular location, looking not only for what is common among the strata, but also what differentiates one stratum from another – or in the case of the historian, one discourse from another. I also found

in Foucault ideas in common with Ibn Khaldun, who emphasizes that people “adopt the qualities of their environment and company, even though they may be people of noble descent and ancestry.”⁴ That is, in the history of thought, one should avoid looking backward for origins and instead pay greater attention to the contemporaneous. Did I understand Foucault properly? Perhaps not, but a misreading or misunderstanding can often offer more benefit than a good one.

Geography and Biography

Just as al-Jahiz led me to al-Mas‘udi,⁵ al-Mas‘udi – with his deep interest in geography – led me to a number of Arab geographers. Three of the most distinguished and, in my view, most enjoyable to read are al-Muqaddasi al-Bishari, al-Sharif al-Idrisi, and Yaqut al-Hamawi. Al-Muqaddasi’s *Ahsan al-taqasim fi ma ‘rifat al-aqalim* (The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions) could have been written today; throughout this travelogue, he often discloses his innermost feelings and personal opinions in a humorous and, at times, self-deprecating style. He mentions, for example, that in the Islamic kingdoms he was addressed by a number of different names: Jerusalemite (al-Muqaddasi), Palestinian (an epithet worthy of emphasis), Egyptian, and Moroccan; Qur’an reciter, jurist, Sufi, imam, muezzin, and theologian; rider, messenger, stranger, worshipper, hermit, bookbinder, and merchant. The total number of appellations reaches thirty-six. It is like a tour of Abbasid identities, or a series of comic identities adopted as needed, in the manner of the character Abu al-Fath al-Iskandarani in the *Maqamat* of Badi‘ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani.

Al-Muqaddasi’s accounts combine statistical accuracy and literary spirit, providing vibrant depictions of cities – including Jerusalem, his birthplace, and other major Palestinian cities – and the countryside. He interweaves dialogues between him and people from the various regions he visited, giving his text a personal and vividly human touch. It is as if he is bringing the reader along with him on his travels, to see what he sees and hear what he hears. Al-Muqaddasi was particularly interested in definitions of the city, and of what we would now call “capital cities,” as well as the relationship between the city and the countryside, and so on, in order to abstract from his observations theoretical definitions for geographic terms.

As for al-Sharif al-Idrisi, his *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtirak al-afaq* (Entertainment for He Who Longs to Travel the World) may be the most important medieval book on world geography. It is known as the Book of Roger after Roger II, king of Sicily, in whose court al-Idrisi served and to whom he dedicated the book. Roger was an enlightened king with great respect for Arabo-Islamic civilization, and during his reign Sicily attracted a number of Muslim scientists, poets, and architects. In 2000, I travelled to Sicily and visited the Palermo Cathedral, upon which is inscribed Surat al-Fatiha. I found this a moving example of coexistence and dialogue between Islam and Christianity, one I wish would be taken as an example in the present.

Al-Muqaddasi's book, despite its importance, is limited to the domains of Islam, whereas al-Idrisi traverses the seven regions of the ancient world, describing each in great detail, based either on his first-hand knowledge or information derived from merchants. Whereas many books of geography devote significant attention to the great wonders – as indications of the Creator's marvelous capabilities, meant to raise the reader's admiration of the divine, and perhaps as subjects of literary entertainment – al-Idrisi is discerning in selecting his material and does not include them. Rather, he moves like a traveler from one place to another, defining the spaces between them and describing the nature of each city and region, including the characteristics and conditions of their people – their bodies, clothing, and languages. He also details flora and fauna, mineral wealth, and prevalent industries and trade. This wealth of information attracted the attention of researchers from both the East and the West, who examined various aspects of al-Idrisi's account, from his descriptions of Scotland, Poland, and Finland, to those of Bulgaria, Italy, and Andalusia, his treatment of India, not to mention his valuable – and understudied, in my view – portrayal of the kingdoms of Africa, including Malabo Island.

Yaqt al-Hamawi, meanwhile, wrote his *Mu'jam al-buldan* (Lexicon of Countries) in an era when the lexicon became a prominent form in multiple fields. The proliferation of lexica may be attributable to the fact that the Arabo-Islamic sciences of the time – that is, the sixth and seventh centuries AH (twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD) – had reached one of their historical peaks, spurring impulses toward comprehensiveness, arrangement, classification, and correction. Perhaps most famous are the linguistic lexica, of which Ibn Mansur's *Lisan al-'Arab* is the crowning achievement. Each lexicon typically specified the need that it sought to address, followed by chapters arranged alphabetically. In the introduction to his masterwork, Yaqt mentions multiple fields that would benefit from a comprehensive and authoritative lexicon of geographic names: hadith and jurisprudence, biography, history, philosophy, medicine, astrology, literature, language, poetry, and so on. This is followed by a lengthy narration of the achievements in the field of geography, including the latest theories at the time of Yaqt's composition, such as those put forward by al-Biruni, Hamza al-Isfahani, and others, with a lengthy review of the accomplishments of the Persians and the Greeks.

Another of my early articles – originally a research paper for a PhD seminar, later revised and published – was on biographical dictionaries. When I return to some of these articles published four decades ago, I recall what one of my professors at the University of Chicago told me: be wary of publishing early, or what al-Jahiz calls “the unleavened view.” Am I truly satisfied today with the articles I published then? I find solace in al-Mutanabbi: “I was created one devoted, were I returned to youth / I would leave my old age tearful, with aching heart.”⁶ That was the extent of my knowledge in those days. There is nothing to be gained from the devoted one grieving; still, I always warn my students today about “unleavened views.”

As for biographical dictionaries, they should be acknowledged as being among the greatest inheritance of our Arab civilization. They record the histories of tens (perhaps hundreds) of thousands of people – private and public, men and women – giving

this civilization a human dimension of which there is no comparable source in other civilizations. The sheer quantity of individual biographies is like a vast showroom displaying images pulsing with life, almost cinematic, of Muslim men and women (as well as Christians, especially among the ruling class) in various times, places, and walks of life. Some document particular groups, such as the companions and followers of the Prophet or luminaries in particular fields,⁷ while others document notables in all fields.⁸ Others focus on particular cities, as al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's *History of Baghdad* or *The History of Damascus* by Ibn 'Asakir, or particular periods, like *al-Durar al-kamina* (The Hidden Pearls) of Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani. There are also those with more unusual content, like al-Safadi's *Nakt al-himyan fi nukat al-'umyan* (Extracting Precious Anecdotes about the Blind) and *al-Shu'ur bi-l-'ur* (Perceptions of the One-Eyed).

These books are full of social data, which demand digital tools to decipher and classify. They offer much to the modern researcher examining, for example, the zeitgeist of a particular era, its prevailing virtues and defects, norms or discursive frameworks. However, the turn of the nineteenth century brought profound social and economic transformations in the Arab world, disrupting communication networks between scholars, and putting an end to biographical dictionaries. My hope is that such works experience a rebirth – especially having entered the age of global information networks, which will undoubtedly facilitate the collection of information about their subjects.

The War in Lebanon Raises Questions of Palestine

In 1975, war broke out in Lebanon, my second homeland, where I – like other Palestinians – had planted deep roots of affection, friendship, and memories. This war dragged me back to the harrowing present: How had we arrived at this disaster? My thoughts and sentiments returned to the calamity of Palestine and its history in the twentieth century, during which the beginnings of the Zionist project in the Arab world became apparent. How did Palestinians understand their history from the beginning of the century until the catastrophe of 1948? How do we assess the historiography of Palestine in the period before the rupture?

I found no specialized history other than Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh's *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine* and a 1977 article by the Israeli Orientalist Yehoshua Porath, titled "Palestinian Historiography."⁹ Porath's article is characterized by generalizations about Arab historical writing, describing historiography in Palestine as lacking "maturity."¹⁰ Yet upon examination, historical writing in Palestine was pioneering within the Arab milieu because of its early awareness of European Orientalism, of which Zionism continues to be a central feature. Palestinian historical writing in the twentieth century can be traced back to two intellectuals of the nineteenth-century Nahda: Ruhi Khalidi and Bandali al-Jawzi. The Nahda had brought Arab intellectuals into closer contact with European issues, and of course with European colonial expansion, including the Zionist movement. The first critical analysis of Orientalism in the Arab world – analysis developed later in *The Arab*

Awakening by George Antonius and articulated fully in *Orientalism* by Edward Said – is to be found in the writings of these two Jerusalemites, namely Khalidi's *al-Muqaddima fi al-mas'ala al-sharqiyya* (Introduction to the Eastern Question) and al-Jawzi's *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyya fi al-Islam* (A History of Intellectual Movements in Islam).¹¹ Khalidi and Najib Nassar, meanwhile, produced the first scholarly studies of Zionism and the acute dangers it posed to Palestine and the Arab world.¹²

By the time the British Mandate for Palestine – and its commitment to the Zionist project – was established, a new Palestinian generation began to understand this reality and to put it in its historical and legal perspective. The historians of this generation were prominent in fields of education, law, and the press. Men like 'Arif al-'Arif, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, As'ad Mansur, Father A. S. Marmarji, and Ihsan al-Nimr wrote histories of Palestine and Zionism; Islam and the Arabs; Palestinian cities like Gaza, Jerusalem, and Nazareth; and the Palestinian countryside.¹³ Like a survey of the history and geography of the land of Palestine, they include valuable topographic and ethnographic information. They also preserve important historical documents, which thereby survived the systematic destruction and looting of texts and archives belonging to the Palestinian people.

Palestinians also wrote and published on Palestine's cultural heritage. Although ethnographic studies do not fall directly under the category of historical writing, they hold deep historical significance with regard to understanding Palestinian rural and village life. In the writings of Tawfiq Canaan, Stephan Hanna Stephan, and 'Umar al-Salih Barghuthi, for example, we can discern the voice of the cultural historian, documenting the deep roots of Palestinian society, whose entire culture Zionist propaganda sought to undermine.¹⁴

What galvanized Palestinian historical writing, beyond the burden of the Anglo-Zionist Mandate, was the Arab struggle for independence. Perhaps the most important historical record of this struggle, and within it the struggle for Palestine, is the memoir of Muhammad 'Izzat Darwarza (discussed below).¹⁵ In *The Arab Awakening*, too, George Antonius chronicles the emergence and march of Arab nationalism, and successive colonial betrayals, while warning the Arabs of the explosion to come. Antonius concludes *The Arab Awakening*: "the logic of facts is inexorable. It shows that no room can be made in Palestine for a second nation except by dislodging or exterminating the nation in possession."¹⁶ It is natural to find in this historical writing an inflamed tone, for it was written as though at the foot of a volcano, whose rising flames and spewing lava only intensified with time. It was necessary to draw the Arab world's attention to the fact that this volcano threatened them as much as it did Palestine and its people.

The Idea of History among the Arabs

I spent the 1985–1986 academic year as a visiting scholar at my old university, Oxford, determined to embark on a comprehensive book on the concept of history and its writing among the Arabs, from the Qur'an to Ibn Khaldun. In my humble opinion, what had been written on this subject to that point, in both the East and the West, was lacking. Previous

studies were limited to individual historians¹⁷ or specific periods,¹⁸ presented a parade of historians (first came the historian so-and-so, followed by the historian so-and-so, and so on),¹⁹ or, the product of international conferences, collected articles on disparate historical topics.²⁰

Was there another way to comprehend this massive quantity of histories and historians? How should we classify them? Was it possible to group them into intellectual trends rather than reproducing lists of names, one following the other, like a caravan? My readings of Michel Foucault, Paul Veyne, Jacques Le Goff, Michel de Certeau, and Fernand Braudel were crucial in shaping my answer to this question, which came as a revelation one sunny day in Oxford. Perhaps the vaults of the colleges and churches in front of my window inspired my contemplation of the metaphorical vaults in which historians take refuge – the intellectual or ideological “domes” that encompass them. Historians, generally speaking, derive their theoretical analysis from proximate scholarship or the prevailing intellectual climate. Unlike other natural or social sciences, history is a discipline largely without technical terminology of its own. Historians in search of theory or methodology, therefore, often turn to adjacent disciplines. Thus, the structure of the domes under which historians work begins to take shape.

Having arrived at the concept of domes, what was now required was a description or designation of them. It was clear to me that most historians until the time of al-Tabari wrote under the dome of *hadith*, meaning that the horizons and methodologies of *hadith* determined form, function, and significance in that period. It also became clear that, chronologically, the next dome was that of *adab*, under which historians like al-Ya‘qubi and al-Mas‘udi wrote.²¹ Historians then proceeded to work under the dome of *hikma* (sound judgment or wisdom) and then finally under the dome of *siyasa* (governance or administration). These domes – which are naturally somewhat arbitrary – are not discrete, but are more like overlapping penumbrae; we may find historians who fall under more than one dome or we may find these domes themselves overlap temporally. Still, I found this classification was able to elicit a new debate on the subject and move away from previous categories.

The Dome of Hadith

I was drawn in particular to the introduction of the hadith collection of Muslim Ibn al-Hajjaj, in which he determines with precision the methodology of accepting conflicting hadith and establishing what we might call the consensus of scholars on fundamental matters, such as chains of transmission (*asnad*). Muslim believed that the number of hadith had reached its maximum and there was no need to accept hadith previously unknown to scholars. This led to the regulation of the total quantity of hadith and its gradual distinction from the genres of *akhbar* (annals) and *tarikh* (history), a distinction whose beginnings we see in the works of Ibn Ishaq, al-Waqidi, and Ibn Sa‘d. Al-Waqidi moved away from Ibn Ishaq, who put Muhammad’s prophecy in a larger prophetic context, and placed history on a new course toward precision and accuracy, contributing

toward its development as a specialized field of its own. Al-Waqidi's *Kitab al-Tarikh wa al-Mughazi* (Book of History and Campaigns) resembles an administrative historical record, chronicling the Prophet and his community in a clear political context, whose full significance is best understood in the context of the prevailing Abbasid discourse, which dominated knowledge production in that period. Ibn Sa'd built upon al-Waqidi's book, rejecting accounts that did not satisfy him, correcting details, and returning to written collections and archives to date incidents precisely and distinguish between history and popular memory.

Al-Tabari – who bequeathed to us not only a history whose value only seems to increase with time, but also a magnificent exegesis of the Qur'an that is like a complete record of the views and interpretations of scholars preceding him – is undoubtedly the dean of historians within the dome of hadith. Al-Tabari claimed that historical knowledge came only from “what has been transmitted to me by way of reports which I cite therein and traditions which I ascribe to their narrators, to the exclusion of what may be apprehended by rational argument or deduced by the human mind.”²² Scholars of theology (*kalam*) subjected the adherents of hadith (ahl al-hadith) of al-Tabari's time to serious attacks, which in particular criticized their methods of evaluating accounts (*akhbar*) and challenged their theory of transmission. Al-Tabari claimed that it was not possible to deduce *akhbar* by reason; rather, accounts were accepted based on only one factor – the reliability of those who recounted them. Al-Tabari's great virtue for the historian, therefore, was his fidelity, without exception, to including a precise chain of transmission for each account. Wading into the controversy over hadith and *akhbar*, generally speaking, there is in my view no stronger defense or more rigorous and substantive methodology of hadith than in al-Tabari's history.²³

The Domes of Adab and Hikma

This methodology did not, however, find favor with the generations of historians following al-Tabari. First, attribution (*asnad*), so foundational to hadith scholarship, was neither available nor appropriate for the histories of other nations, in which this generation began to take interest. Second, with the emergence of *adab* among Umayyad and Abbasid scholars, chains of transmission came to be seen as excessively long and ungainly, particularly as the basic substance of *adab* was the coherent narrative – narratives of moral significance, for entertainment, for sharpening of the mind, of ancient or contemporary poetry, none of which required attribution via chains of transmission. Third, *asnad* had no place within the emerging fields of philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences, all of which drew upon reason. Influenced by these factors, historical writing thus moved from the dome of hadith to the dome of *adab*.²⁴

Al-Jahiz, too, undoubtedly influenced the general stylistic transformation from compilation to composition. Put simply, the historian became an author in the modern sense – deleting and inserting, weighing and ordering, summarizing and elaborating, scrutinizing and avoiding, enumerating and linking, explaining and adjudicating – rather

than merely a collator of narratives. Thus, when we read al-Ya‘qubi, al-Mas‘udi, and al-Daynuri, among others, we emerge from the constricted corridors of al-Tabari to the vast open space of narrative history, guided and shaped by the individual historian. One cannot claim that al-Tabari’s history is a pleasurable read for the modern reader. But when we read al-Mas‘udi, for example, we find history laid out like a fine carpet, its various accounts and narratives like colored threads woven together into patterns.

The dome of *hikma*, which encompassed a number of prominent historians in the centuries that followed, was built upon philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences. We can perceive this dome’s shadow as early as al-Ya‘qubi, who systematically noted the “ascent” of each caliphate, writing, for example: “the sun was that day at twenty-six and twenty degrees and twenty minutes in Aquarius, and the moon was five degrees in Virgo, and Earth was four degrees in Capricorn, and Venus . . .” and so on. These ways of marking historical time were borrowed from astrology, seen in that period as determining prosperity, disaster, or other fates. The works of al-Mas‘udi and Mutahhar bin Tahir al-Maqdisi, for example, feature Mu‘tazili theology and natural sciences prominently in their evaluation and acceptance of narratives. Al-Mas‘udi, for example, lays out a logical method for evaluating the existence or nonexistence of fantastic beings such as the *nisnas* or the ‘*anqa*’.²⁵ First he states that accounts conflict: people in the east claim that these beings exist in the west, while those in the west say they exist in the east. He continues:

We have not been able to establish the existence of the *nisnas*, the ‘*anqa*’, and others of this kind of rare and unusual species by way of reason. This does not mean that it is beyond capability [meaning divine capability]. But we have established this because there did not exist an unimpeachable account [*al-khabar al-qati‘ li-l-‘udhr*] of the existence of this [kind of species] in the world. This is a field within the domain of what is possible and what is permissible . . . It is possible for these rarely-mentioned animal species . . . to be animal species that nature brought from potentiality into actuality [*min al-quwwa ila al-fi‘l*] imperfectly . . . so it remained an anomaly . . . seeking parts remote from the lands afforded the rest of the animal species . . . which nature made expertly, and devoid of resemblance and compatibility between them and other kinds of animals.²⁶

First, al-Mas‘udi uses theology to prove that creation of this kind is within divine capability; then, he employs the concept of the “unimpeachable account” to arrive at the Aristotelian theory of potentiality and actuality, using this for a possible interpretation of the existence of the *nisnas* or other such fantastic creatures.

Historians’ growing interest in the natural and rational sciences was matched by scientists’ and theologians’ increasing interest in the evaluation and analysis of historical evidence. The Mu‘tazili qadi ‘Abd al-Jabbar, for example, put forth detailed analysis of different kinds of evidence – for example, *khabar mutawatir* (an account handed down in uninterrupted sequence) and *khabar al-ahad* (an account attested only once)

– to distinguish between inherent truths and truths determined through inference. ‘Abd al-Jabbar’s student Abu Husayn al-Basri called for the examination of the conditions surrounding an account and its source. Moving from the realm of jurisprudence to the quotidian, he writes that it is possible that a particular source:

is generally averse to lying or that he is a messenger from a ruler ordering the army to proceed to its master, the ruler’s punishment being sufficient deterrence against lying . . . Another example would be for a man to be preoccupied in other affairs and then be asked suddenly about something where he responds at once, it being known that he had no time to devise an answer.²⁷

Al-Basri goes on to note that such circumstances do not prove the truth of an account, only determining what is likely. Such examples from daily life, naturally, resemble those a historian typically deals with.

The brilliant thinker Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi analyzed the problem of collusion in the fabrication of accounts and reached a method we might call independent verification:

If two or more people come forward, after we have ascertained that they never met or communicated secretly with one another and had no vested interest in, and no fear of what they report and each was then to report separately a long report which no two people can possibly concur in the imaginative fabrication thereof, and each was to mention his having witnessed or met a group who witnessed or reported from another group that they had witnessed this report, this would be a true report which anyone who heard it would doubtless be obliged to believe.²⁸

Perhaps the clearest example of a scholar writing within the dome of *hikma* is al-Biruni. In *al-Athar al-baqiyya ‘an al-qurun al-khaliyya* (Chronology of Ancient Nations), al-Biruni used the latest findings in astronomy and mathematics to bring order to chronologies produced by historians of various nations on the basis of their internal coherence. His masterful work on India, *Tahqiq ma lil-Hind min maqula ma ‘qula fi al-‘aql am mardhula* (An Examination of What Is Said of India, Whether Reasonable or Repudiated), meanwhile, debunked falsehoods about Indian religions, using Indian sources, in the manner of an impartial and scholarly comparative study of cultures.

The Dome of Siyasa

Lastly, we arrive at the dome of *siyasa*, in the era of the Seljuk, Zengid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk dynasties of the eleventh to sixteenth centuries. These dynasties built centralized states of a new type, mobilizing society in full, focusing it and militarizing it, with a particular religious ideology, whose primary engine was, more often than not, jihad

against enemies. The *Siyasatnameh* of the Seljuk minister Nizam al-Mulk is perhaps the most eloquent expression of this new sultanic state, and emblematic of its historical writing. The *Siyasatnameh* is like a kind of constitution that proposed how the sultan should properly order state affairs. It deals with the management of armies and feudal lords, the policing and regulation of money, the treatment of moral and religious issues, the definition of justice, the interests of all strata of society, and the sultan's responsibility with respect to God and religion.

These new states, which we might call totalitarian, produced discourses that prevailed throughout their civilization. This civilization (or *'umran*, in the language of Ibn Khaldun) is reflected not only in texts, but also in the arts, including monumental architecture that reflected the prestige of the state. We also see its impact in efforts by these sultanic states to control education and to create new "cadres" of state employees through schooling (as, for example, in the Nizamiyya of Baghdad). Likewise, these states sought to organize the schools of jurisprudence (*madhahab*), to integrate Sufi orders into society and mobilize them for its defense, and to exert the sultan's total control over feudal institutions (*iqta*). The turn toward totalitarianism was, in part, a reaction to two great dangers facing the Islamic world in this period: the Crusader threat, first in al-Andalus and then in the Levant; and later, the more significant and sustained Mongol threat from the east. Ibn al-Athir, for example, puts forward a profound strategic analysis of the convergence of these two threats and their pincer-like incursion, from the west and the east, on the Islamic realms.

These components strengthened the structures of social hierarchy, and heightened historians' sense that they were living in a profoundly meaningful era, no less significant than the past. For example, 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani opens his history with a description of the vaulted arches of Jerusalem restored by Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi, writing:

We began with the history of [the conquest of Jerusalem] because it is common for histories to open with the creation of the first human beings or otherwise with a lineage of states . . . I have experienced a second hijra that attests to the first hijra [of the Prophet Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina] . . . This is the hijra of Islam to Holy Jerusalem, established by Sultan Salah al-Din . . . and on the whole it is better to construct history . . . and this hijra is the more permanent of the two.

These are very bold words!

This sense of the dawning of a new era coincided with the emergence of massive encyclopedic histories, that sought to be comprehensive in their coverage. These histories came to resemble the sultanic bureaucratic system of "sectoral surveys," keeping a detailed record of every incident, whether minor or major – what we now call "saturation coverage" in journalism. Among the most famous of these histories is *al-Suluk li-ma'rafat duwal al-muluk* (A Voyage of Knowledge of the States of Kings) by al-Maqrizi, in which history is divided into years, and events listed not only by month and day, but even by hour. This is accompanied by economic information such as the rise and fall of prices;

news of popular movements and exchanges of letters between rulers taken from the courtly registers; news of earthquakes and volcanoes, epidemics and plagues; and precise physical descriptions of leading figures, such as al-Malik al-Salih Ayyub, one of the last Ayyubid sultans before the rise of the Mamluks. Al-Maqrizi is joined under the dome of *siyasa* by others of similar style, including Ibn al-Jawzi, Ibn Wasil, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi, Abu Shama, and Ibn Taghribirdi.

Looking back at the divisions I proposed, now more than twenty years ago, in *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period*, I find some arbitrariness. However, I still think it useful to propose something similar that links historical writing to the social and intellectual environment in which it takes place. It is not enough to list the names of historians as a chain of transmission, an index, or a “catalogue,” where each successor receives the flag from his predecessor, the focus remaining on the influence of one on the next. The same method of “domes” may also be useful in thinking about litterateurs, philosophers, theologians, natural scientists, and others. In this regard, we may draw inspiration from Ibn Khaldun: “Man is the child of customs, not the child of his ancestors.”²⁹

Ibn Khaldun

Indeed, Ibn Khaldun, the imam of historians, is unavoidable. Having been discussed by so many scholars, in both East and West, what can possibly be said of Ibn Khaldun that has not already been said before? I am always puzzled by this position. Ibn Khaldun’s place in our intellectual history is like that of Karl Marx, for example, in Western thought. Precisely because of his status, each generation is inspired to find in his thought new interpretations and meanings. Italo Calvino wrote: “A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.”³⁰ This encourages one to make his or her own contribution, lowering a bucket even if many others have drawn from the same well. In my repeated attempts to convey the thought of Ibn Khaldun to students, I ultimately found some use in starting with the title of his historical work: *Kitab al-‘ibar wa diwan al-mubtada’ wa al-khabar fi ayyam al-‘Arab wa al-‘ajam wa al-barbar wa man ‘asaruhum min dhawi al-sultan al-akbar* (Book of Allusions and Register of the Subject and Predicate Regarding the Days of the Arabs, the Foreigners, and the Berbers, and Those of Their Contemporaries Who Possessed the Greatest Authority).³¹

Let us begin with *kitab al-‘ibar* (Book of Allusions), *‘ibar* meaning instructive examples from history or the past. This is a word frequently used in the Qur’an, accompanied by *uli al-absar* (for those who have eyes to see), meaning that the lesson is understood only by those who contemplate the events of history and derive their profound significance. The root of the word (*‘ayn-ba-ra*) is linked to crossing or moving from one bank to another, as across a river. If we combine the Qur’anic meaning with the literal meaning, we arrive at Ibn Khaldun’s intention, which is to draw a lesson from the past and to cross from the riverbank of historical events to that of their significance – from

the superficial manifestation of history to its core substance. For Ibn Khaldun, history as a series of events, without knowing their direction or meaning, is of no use except as entertainment. (And indeed, he viciously attacked historians he saw as mere storytellers.) To take history seriously requires going further (or crossing over) to explore the principles that determine its path.

Second, let us take the phrase *diwan al-mubtada' wa al-khabar* – Register of the Subject and Predicate. *Diwan* implies a comprehensive, encyclopedic register, a notion elaborated by the terms *mubtada'* and *khabar* – subject and predicate. Ibn Khaldun suggests that his book will be comprehensive and complete, just as the predicate completes the subject. History itself is only the subject and cannot be comprehended unless paired with its predicate. In Ibn Khaldun's view, this understanding required “numerous sources and much varied knowledge.”

It also requires a good speculative mind and thoroughness, which lead the historian to the truth and keep him from slips and errors. If he trusts historical information in its plain transmitted form and has no clear knowledge of the principles resulting from custom, the fundamental facts of politics, the nature of civilization, or the conditions governing human social organization, and if, furthermore, he does not evaluate remote or ancient material through comparison with near or contemporary material, he often cannot avoid stumbling and slipping and deviating from the path of truth.³²

Historians accepted events and stories as reported and “did not probe with the yardstick of philosophy, with the help of knowledge of the nature of things, or with the help of speculation and historical insight.”³³ Translating this into the present, this means that aspiring historians must first obtain advanced degrees in political science, economics, ecology, sociology, biology, philosophy (especially logic), theology, law and jurisprudence, comparative history, geography, and literature.

Ibn Khaldun called his new discipline, which he claimed to be unprecedented, the “science of human civilization” (*ilm al-'umran al-bashari*). In it, he turned the conceptual frame of medieval civilizations, both Eastern and Western, on its head. Previously, scholarly and religious texts had largely focused on the micro to explain the macro, centering individuals and their issues – the human spirit, destiny, the conduct of men toward God and toward each other, human obligations, good and evil, the meaning of heroism, love, and so on. Ibn Khaldun saw human civilization as the matter that required examination. To understand the individual, first we must understand his environment and society; we should expand our scope, not narrow it. Only once the broader framework becomes clear will the individual come into focus. Thus, the individual is the subject (*mubtada'*) and his environment is the predicate (*khabar*) that gives him his complete meaning. In contemporary terms, we might say that Ibn Khaldun emphasized nurture over nature – one's environment was more influential than one's lineage, heritage, or other such notions.

What, then, was Ibn Khaldun's understanding of this "environment"? Ibn Khaldun proposed two basic environments – the wild or untamed environment (*al-'umran al-wahshi*) and the settled environment (*al-'umran al-hadhari*). These lie outside of time, in the sense that their essence remains constant, even if they undergo some changes, slowly and according to certain laws. The relationship between them is, to a certain degree, dialectic. There is an element within the untamed environment that always yearns to become settled, if circumstances permit. However, "unsettled" people differ from those of the settled environment politically, economically, socially, and even psychologically. Returning to subject and predicate, we could say that the untamed society is the subject and settled society is the predicate; the former can exist in isolation from the latter, but its meaning and significance are only completed when it becomes settled.

Let us examine the third part of the title, *fi ayyam al-'Arab wa al-'ajam wa al-Barbar* – Regarding the Days of the Arabs, the Foreigners, and the Berbers. The term *ayyam al-'Arab* (the days of the Arabs) generally refers to the heritage of popular and poetic stories that fashioned for the pre-Islamic period what we might call an epic history of invasions and wars – reminiscent, at times, of Homer's Iliad. But this is not what Ibn Khaldun means here; rather, *ayyam* refers to momentous events experienced by these nations. The Arabs are his nation, which built the great Islamic empire, but whose political star has faded. Foreigners (*'ajam*) comprise all other nations living around the Mediterranean and to the East, or the totality of what Ibn Khaldun knew of the world. The Berbers are the people of North Africa, with whose history and dynasties Ibn Khaldun was deeply familiar. This part of the title thus indicates that Ibn Khaldun intended to apply the laws of his approach as widely as possible to the histories surrounding him.

The fourth part of the title is *wa man 'asarahum* – and Those of Their Contemporaries. Ibn Khaldun sees man as shaped not only by a particular environment but also by a particular period. In his attacks on earlier historians, Ibn Khaldun offers a number of reasons for why they introduced inaccurate material into their histories, including the rivalries of different *madhahab*, excessive trust in transmitters of accounts, ignorance of the significance of information, and attempts to ingratiate themselves with rulers for reward. But most important, in his view, is "ignorance of the nature of the various conditions arising in civilizations. Every event (or phenomenon) . . . must inevitably possess a nature peculiar to its essence as well as to the accidental conditions that may attach themselves to it."³⁴

Since transformations of human society determine the course of historical events, then it is these transformations – that is, events in the context of their era – that the historian must understand. We cannot understand history, therefore, as a sequence of individual events but rather as a series of contemporaneous periods, a horizontal rather than a vertical series. If we take two contemporaneous societies, is there not more that links them to each other than each to its history? For example (and this is, obviously, not Ibn Khaldun's example), do not Greece and Lebanon today share more with each other than present-day Greece with tenth-century Greece or present-day Lebanon with tenth-century Lebanon? Are not the different institutions, lifestyles, relations of production, and even

modes of thought in Lebanon today closer to those of contemporary Greece than to those of previous periods in its history? It seems that Ibn Khaldun recommends that we first understand that which belongs to the same period, in order to later distinguish what is possible from what is impossible in various accounts.

Here we reach the end of the title, *min dhawi al-sultan al-akbar* – Who Possessed the Greatest Authority. Many of the laws of Ibn Khaldun’s science of human society are closely linked to authority (*al-sultan*) – political, economic, military, social, demographic, ideological, tribal, or otherwise. Authority is most often manifested in states, and a strong and dominant state is one that wields the most suitable array of its components, the most important among them being social cohesion (*al-‘asabiyya*). Let us take, for example, an athlete at his or her peak. (This example may have pleased Ibn Khaldun, who often drew upon analogies from the life sciences to illuminate society.) This athlete is muscular; fleet of foot; of sharp sight, hearing, and mind; of strong heart and intestinal fortitude; focused; with quick reflexes; and all of these strengths are consistent and balanced. This is like the state at the height of its power.

Indeed, states also go through phases similar to the stages of youth, maturity, and decline. As the behavior of youth differs from that of adults and the elderly, the same applies to states. The state, like the athlete, is most dominant as it reaches maturity. In old age, states suffer from afflictions like fatigue, sluggishness, and loss of concentration and social cohesion, leading to excessive reliance on mercenaries, the hoarding of money, and monopolistic market practices, all of which signals the nearing end of the state.

Thus, historical events must be considered in context: is this event likely to have taken place in this phase? For Ibn Khaldun, the most prominent example of this law of civilizational cycles is the catastrophe that befell the Barmakids. Earlier historians had explained their fall by claiming that Ja‘far al-Baramki and al-‘Abbasa, sister of al-Rashid, fell in love contrary to al-Rashid’s wishes, inflaming the caliph’s rage and prompting him to order the Barmakids’ destruction. Ibn Khaldun, however, argued that such an explanation was incongruous with that particular phase of the Abbasid caliphate, then at the height of its power. A state at the height of its power, Ibn Khaldun claimed, does not permit the establishment of a state within a state, as the Barmakids had done. Further, by comparing a young state, a mature state, and an elderly state, we can arrive at a scientific measure to distinguish which historical accounts are true and which are false.

What, then, explains historical change? How does one era transition to another era? Ibn Khaldun put forward a number of laws – about 120 in all – to answer such questions. The most significant are the following: First, unsettled nations will conquer the settled ones, given the right circumstances, because social cohesion is stronger among the former than the latter. Second, the natural lifespan of states does not exceed three or four generations, or about one hundred years, as states in the elderly phase become vulnerable to attacks from enemies who possess greater social cohesion. Third, social cohesion can take a number of forms, but the strongest are those based on kinship and religion; further, religion cannot spread without strong social cohesion. Fourth, science, literature, and arts flourish in cities, but they do not differ essentially from other trades and industries.

The scholar, jurispudent, or philosopher is a craftsman just like a carpenter, blacksmith, baker, or the like, and subject, for example, to similar laws of supply and demand.

It is often said that Ibn Khaldun's history is not deserving of its famous introduction (*al-Muqaddima*), that he does not apply therein the laws that he sets forth and nothing distinguishes it from other histories written in the same period. I do not know how many of those who hold this view – common in particular among Orientalists – have read Ibn Khaldun's history carefully or accurately. Having examined the text, I find this assessment baseless and utterly false; it is replete with Khaldunian gifts, interpretations derived from the theories and laws that he developed for his science of human society.

Tarif Khalidi is the Sheikh Zayed Chair in Islamic and Arabic Studies at the American University of Beirut. He is the author of several books, including Images of Muhammad (Random House, 2009), The Muslim Jesus (Harvard University Press, 2001), and Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Endnotes

- 1 Tarif Khalidi, "A Mosquito's Wing: Al-Jahiz on the Progress of Knowledge," in *Arabic and Islamic Garland: Historical, Educational, and Literary Papers Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi*, ed. Riadh el-Droubie (London: Islamic Cultural Center, 1977), 141–46.
- 2 Tarif Khalidi, "The Concept of Progress in Classical Islam," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40, no. 4 (Oct. 1981): 277–289.
- 3 Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).
- 4 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N. J. Dawood (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 287.
- 5 See Tarif Khalidi, "The Books in My Life: A Memoir, Part 1," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 74 (Spring 2018): 63–78.
- 6 *Khuliqtu alufan law raja'tu ila al-sabba / la-faraqtu shaybi muwaja'a al-qalb bakiya*. From al-Mutanabbi's first panegyric to Kafur, "Kifa bika da'an" (It Is Disease Enough . . .).
- 7 The biographical dictionaries of Ibn Sa'd, who laid the foundations for later biographical dictionaries, are dedicated to the Prophet's companions and followers. Ibn Abi Usaybi'a's *'Uyun al-anba' fi tabaqat al-atibba'* (Historical Accounts of Physicians' Lives) is dedicated to physicians, while the focus of *Akhhbar al-'ulama'* (History of Learned Men) by al-Qifti is the learned: men of philosophy and the natural sciences.
- 8 See, for example, Ibn Khallikan's *Wafayat al-a'yan wa anba' abna' al-zaman* (Deaths of Eminent Men and History of the Sons of the Epoch) and al-Safadi's *Kitab al-wafi bi-al-wafayat* (The Complete Book of the Deceased).
- 9 Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973); Yehoshua Porath, "Palestinian Historiography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1977): 95–104.
- 10 More recently, Zachary Foster's 2011 master's thesis at Georgetown University, "Arab Historiography in Mandatory Palestine, 1920–1948," argues that "not until the late 1920s and early 1930s did Palestine [as a locus of territorial identification] triumph over broader territorial identifications such as Syria and not until the mid–late 1930s and 1940s" – that is, during and after the Great Revolt – "did this territorial identification with Palestine emerge as a key source of loyalty for many of the region's inhabitants." The underlying political goals behind such studies are obvious. Zachary J. Foster, "Arab Historiography in Mandatory Palestine, 1920–1948" (MA thesis, Georgetown University, 2011), 2.
- 11 Ruhi Khalidi, *al-Muqaddima fi a-mas'ala al-sharqiyya mundhu nash'atiha al-uwla ila al-rub' al-thani min al-qarn al-thamin 'ashar*

- [An Introduction to the Eastern Question from Its First Formation to the Second Quarter of the Eighteenth Century] (Jerusalem: Matba'at madrasat al-iytam al-Islamiyya, n.d.); Bandali al-Jawzi, *Min tarikh al-harakat al-fikriyya fi al-Islam* [A History of Intellectual Movements in Islam] (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Muqaddas, 1928).
- 12 Ruhi Khalidi's book on Zionism, *al-Siyunizm aw al-mas'ala al-sahiyuniyya* (Zionism, or the Zionist Question), includes a brilliant history of the Jews of Eastern Europe and the Ottoman Empire, as well as his personal impressions of Zionist activity in Istanbul at the time, defining Zionists as "Jews of the Hereafter" (*yahud al-ukhrawiyya*) in a reference to the end of the world. See Walid Khalidi, "Kitab al-Siyunizm aw al-mas'ala al-sahiyuniyya li-Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi al-mutawaffi sanat 1913" [*The Book of Zionism, or the Question of Zionism* by Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi, d. 1913], in *Dirasat Filastiniyya: majmu'at abhathin wudhi'at takrimiyan li-l-duktur Qustantin Zurayq* [Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honor of Dr. Constantine K. Zurayk], ed. Hisham Nashabe (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1988), 37–81.
 - 13 See, for example: 'Arif al-'Arif, *Tarikh Gaza* [The History of Gaza] (Jerusalem: Matba'at dar al-iytam al-Islamiyya, 1943); Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, *Ahl al-'ilm wa al-hukm fi rif Filastin* [Men of Learning and Governance in Rural Palestine] (Amman: Da'irat al-thaqafa wa al-funun, 1968); As'ad Mansur, *Tarikh al-Nasira: min aqdam azmaniha ila ayyamina al-hadira* [The History of Nazareth: From Its Ancient Period to Our Present Day] (Cairo: Matba'at al-hilal, 1923); A. S. Marmarji, *Buldaniyyat Filastin al-'Arabiyya* [The Palestinian Arab Village] (Beirut: Matba'at Jan Darak, 1948); and Ihsan al-Nimr, *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa al-Balqa'* [The History of Mount Nablus and al-Balqa'] (Damascus: Matba'at Ibn Zaydun, 1938). Further Palestinian historians can be found in Ya'qub 'Awdat's *Min a'lam al-fikr wa al-adab fi Filastin* [Intellectual and Literary Notables in Palestine] (Amman: n.p., 1976), an important modern biographical dictionary that some friends are working to expand and reprint.
 - 14 See, for example, Tawfiq Canaan, Stephan Hanna Stephan, and Omar Barghuthi, *Studies in Palestinian Customs and Folklore* (Jerusalem: Palestine Oriental Society, 1922–1923). For more on Canaan and Barghuthi, see: Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 93–112, 133–149. On Stephan, see: Sarah Irving, "'A Young Man of Promise': Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (Winter 2018): 42–61. See also works like: Husayn 'Ali Lubani, *Mu'jam al-hayawan fi al-turath al-sha'bi al-Filastini* [Lexicon of Animals in Palestinian Folklore] (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan nashirun, 2009); and 'Arif al-'Arif, *al-Qada' bayna al-badu* [Justice among the Bedouin] (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Muqaddas, 1933).
 - 15 Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, 1305 h.–1404 h./1887 m.–1984 m.: sijill hafil bi-masirat al-haraka al-'Arabiyya wa al-qadiya al-Filastiniyya khilala qarn min al-zaman* [The Memoirs of Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, 1305 AH–1404 AH /1887 AD–1984 AD: A Full Record of the Course of the Arab Movement and the Palestinian Issue throughout a Century] (Beirut: Dar al-gharb al-Islami, 1993).
 - 16 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938), 412.
 - 17 See, for example, my work on al-Mas'udi or Muhsin Mahdi's study of Ibn Khaldun. See Khalidi, "The Books in My Life," part 1.
 - 18 Such as the great 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri's scholarship on the beginnings of Arab historical writing. 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri, *Bathth fi nash'at 'ilm al-tarikh 'inda al-'Arab* (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-Kathulikiyya, 1960), translated into English by Lawrence Conrad and published as *The Rise of History Writing among the Arabs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).
 - 19 See, for example, Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1952).
 - 20 See, for example, *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and Peter Malcolm Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).
 - 21 "In any European histories of Arabic literature the word *Adab* is translated as 'Belles-Lettres.' One could argue that the classical Greek 'Paideia' is a more accurate rendering of the term since *Adab*, like Paideia, refers to a process of moral and intellectual education designed to produce an *adib*, a gentleman-scholar, and is thus intimately concerned with the formation of both intellect and character. In its earliest days *Adab* meant education. With time it came to mean a *special* kind of education, a moral and intellectual curriculum aimed at a particular

- urban class and reflecting the needs and aspirations of that class.” Tarif Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83.
- 22 Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 74.
- 23 Close behind it, I might add, would be *Ta’wil mukhtalif al-hadith* (The Interpretation of Conflicting Narrations) by Ibn Qutayba (d. 889 AD).
- 24 The use of *asnad* did not disappear overnight, of course, and we find it in books of *adab* such as *Kitab al-aghani* (The Book of Songs) by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, but its atrophy is evident in history books from the fourth century AH (tenth century AD).
- 25 The *nisnas* is a fabulous creature of the woods having one leg and one arm; the ‘*anqa*’ is a great mythological bird, sometimes associated with the phoenix or griffon.
- 26 Abu al-Hasan ‘Ali bin al-Husayn bin ‘Ali al-Mas‘udi, *Muruj al-dhahab wa ma‘adin al-jawhar* [The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems], sec. 1344. See also Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 134–35.
- 27 Abu al-Husayn al-Basri, *al-Mu‘tamad fi usul al-fiqh* [What Is Reliable in the Principles of Jurisprudence], vol. 2, 568–70, as quoted in Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 148–49.
- 28 Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *al-Ihkam fi usul al-ahkam* [Exactitude in the Principles of Judgement], vol. 1, 107–8, as quoted in Khalidi, *Arab Historical Thought*, 149–150.
- 29 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 300.
- 30 Italo Calvino, “Why Read the Classics?” *New York Review of Books*, 9 October 1986, online at www.nybooks.com/articles/198609/10//why-read-the-classics/ (accessed 12 June 2018).
- 31 The title of Ibn Khaldun’s work has been translated numerous ways. Here it is translated in the manner proposed by Waseem El-Rayes, who fully explains his choices and their significance in: Waseem El-Rayes, “The *Book of Allusions: A New Translation of the Title to Ibn Khaldun’s Kitab al-‘Ibar*,” *Religious Studies and Theology* 32, no. 2 (2013): 163–184.
- 32 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 11.
- 33 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 11.
- 34 Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, 36.

Ali Za'rur and Early Palestinian Photojournalism

The Archive of Occupation and the Return of Palestinian Material to Its Owners

Rona Sela

Various research has been written about Palestinian photography¹ but little is known about Ali Za'rur,² one of the pioneers of Palestinian photojournalism. This article aims to expand information in this area, especially with regards to Palestinian history, culture and knowledge – archives and materials – that are controlled, manipulated and erased by Israeli colonial archives in repressive ways to benefit the colonizer.

Za'rur (1901–1972) was born in the village of al-'Ayzariya (figure 1), in the region of Jerusalem, to a family of farmers and sheep breeders. Seeking an urban environment, and disliking village life, he moved to Jerusalem. There he met a photographer named Hananiya from whom he learned the art of photography. Very little is known about Hananiya's work, other than his studio was located at Jaffa gate outside the wall, an area where many non-Jewish photographers had shops – Palestinians, Armenians and others, such as Khalil Ra'd, Garabed Krikorian,³ Miltiades Savides, and, inside Jaffa Gate, the American Colony photographers. This area thus served as the first Palestinian visual arts center (figure 2), and it is reasonable to assume it had an influence on Za'rur.

Between 1936 and 1942 Ali Za'rur photographed for the British, first in the Jerusalem area and then from 1942–1945 in the Gaza area. Around 1947 Ali Za'rur began working for the Associated Press and the Jordanian Army. He was the photographer for the Jordanian military during the life of King Abdullah, which allowed him to photograph and move about freely.⁴ In 1948 he photographed the battle in Jerusalem, mainly in the Old City, giving witness to the events and consequences from an Arab-Palestinian perspective. After 1948, Za'rur moved his photography studio into the Old City, close to

the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and today the studio still operates, managed by his grandchildren. In the late 1950s, Ali Za'rur began photographing pilgrims and tourists at the church, which his son and grandchildren continue to do.⁵ After the Israeli army occupied the Old City in 1967, Za'rur, according to his son Zaki, continued to work for the Associated Press as well as to make studio portraits and documentary work. Ali Za'rur died on 1 April 1972.

In 2000 I presented the work of Ali Za'rur in a group exhibition, which was accompanied by a book. The show and the book were entitled *Photography in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s*, the first time Za'rur's work has been published in book form. I had learned of Ali Za'rur a year earlier when Ami Steinitz introduced his photographs in an exhibition and later in an article, both named "Region of Distance."⁶ Soon after, I met his son Zaki Za'rur (figure 3), and viewed prints from his original negatives taken in Jerusalem during the 1948 war. Before, during, and after the Nakba, as well as other wars, Palestinian archives, albums, and images were seized by Israeli forces, looted by individuals, or lost.⁷ In 2007, in the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archive (IDFA), the central military archive in Israel which manages the various military archives in the country,⁸ I discovered four hundred of Ali Za'rur's original photographs. They were photographed during the 1948 war, bound in four photo albums. The photos had been censored after being put into the archive. Thirty-five years later, in 2002, they were declassified after the period of restriction ended,⁹ and following approval by the legal advisor for the IDFA. The photographs were opened together with a large group of other photographs from the 1948 war, among them photographs by Khalil Rissas.¹⁰ According to Zaki Za'rur, the albums had been bound originally into a single thick album containing his father's finest work from the war, and up until 1967 had been in the possession of the photographer's family. The album was then, according to some accounts, obtained by an The Jerusalem Foundation, which transferred it to the IDFA. The large album was separated at the IDFA into four smaller albums, rearranged and catalogued according to



Figure 1. "Al-'Ayzariya at the beginning of the twentieth century." Photo by Khalil Ra'd, courtesy of Ra'd Family.



Figure 2. "View looking down Jaffa Road, 1898–1914." Photo by American Colony Photographers: left: the studio of Krikorian; right: the studio of Ra'd and Savides. Matson collection, Library of Congress.

their norms and procedures, and the Israeli perspective. There are a number of versions of how the album first reached the reached The Jerusalem Foundation in 1967, as we will see below.¹¹

This article continues my ongoing research into the way Palestinian history and culture is concealed, reinterpreted, and written in the Israeli colonial archives for the benefit of the colonizer, subjugated to colonial norms and patterns. It charts the methods used by Israel to control Palestinian historical and cultural materials and documentation (but also materials of importance to Palestinians taken by Jewish/Israeli sources), erasing them from the public sphere by repressive means, censoring and restricting their exposure and use, altering their origin and identity, controlling their contents and subjugating them to Israel's laws, rules, and terminology.¹²

The Albums

In 2007 I reviewed files bearing the heading “Jerusalem” and classified as “Arab sources” in the IDFA. After close examination I realized they were reproductions of photographs; many of them I recognized as Ali Za'rur's photographs that I had exhibited or seen in 2000. I asked the IDFA photography archivist whether the original photographs used for the reproductions were still in the archive. After a lengthy and complex process and repeated



Figure 3. Zaki Za'rur and author at Za'rur's home, with a portrait of Ali Za'rur at top left, al-'Ayzariya, 2007.

requests, a dusty box with a label imprinted with the word “Jerusalem” was “found.” Inside were four cloth-bound albums containing Ali Za'rur's original photographs.¹³ The 8 cm x 13 cm photos carried the stamp – “Ali Za'rur, Press Photographer, Jerusalem” – and substantially matched the negatives held by Zaki Za'rur.¹⁴ The albums in the archive had been altered by IDFA workers: they were renumbered and recaptioned with an Israeli narrative of the war in Jerusalem, and the photographer's name deleted.¹⁵

Examination of the albums shows that they had been reviewed apparently by Jewish soldiers who had fought in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1948, to identify details. Probably the albums had been investigated because they documented the battle in the Jewish quarter. In a number of cases, information was written in Hebrew on the photographs, notes were affixed below the pictures, or corrections were made in Hebrew in ink to a handwritten list that unidentified person/soldier/archivist had edited. The former soldiers signed their names next to the comments they made,¹⁶ thus marking the photographs as having completed the occupation process.

In my experience, the fact that the archived Palestinian photographs were researched is unusual. Generally, the IDFA does not investigate Palestinian materials or concern itself with examining their context and contents or their sources. It seems the archive's interest in these photographs was entirely from a Zionist perspective, that is, to subjugate them to tell the Israeli narrative; any other information of Palestinian importance, such as the photographer's identity, the world he sought to represent, or the context of the photographs, was not investigated, and was deleted deliberately. For example, the IDFA staff did not bother to document the photographer's name in the archive catalogue although the photographer's stamp was clearly on the back of the photographs. The Hebrew descriptions that deface the Palestinian photographs symbolize a statement of ownership.¹⁷ Moreover, the Zionist terminology used to describe the Palestinian photographs demonstrates again how their original history was erased and replaced by a new narrative. The original contents were reinterpreted and matched the narrative of the occupier. Za'rur did prepare a typewritten list of his work, but only a small part of it survived, or was utilized in the occupation archive. The title “Jerusalem” imprinted on the new box looks as if it was taken from the old album which, according to Zaki Za'rur, was black.

An examination of the IDFA records reveals that in April 1977 the album was received as a donation from the Jerusalem Foundation.¹⁸ At the same time, the foundation forwarded other photographs of Palestinians to the IDFA, for example, of the Palestinian resistance in Jaffa in 1933. How did the album reach the Jerusalem Foundation? Over the years there have been a number of different answers. According to the first version, after the occupation in 1967, a member of the Za'rur family gave the album as a gift to Teddy Kollek, then mayor of Jerusalem, and he apparently transferred it to the Jerusalem Foundation. In another version, the family member gave the album to a friend in Talbiyya, who transferred it to Teddy Kollek, or directly to the Jerusalem Foundation at that period.¹⁹ Whatever the case, Kollek and the Jerusalem Foundation were interested in the photographs detailing the battle in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1948, as described below.

For thirty years, the albums lay in the IDFA gathering dust, without anyone locating or



Figure 4. “Palestinian Refugees, 1948.” Photo by Ali Za’rur.

seeking their owner or giving him an appropriate credit, mute and subject to censorship and the strict laws of the IDFA and its Zionist lexicon. The original photographs were reproduced, and the reproductions were made public in 2002, the captions subjugated to the Zionist narrative. The original photographs in the albums, with the photographer’s stamp, catalogue number, and description, continued to be buried in the IDFA. In 2007, after the original photograph albums were “discovered,” as well as the name of the photographer, the albums were closed to review. Upon the request of the Za’rur family, the IDFA returned the albums to their owners. Although Za’rur’s album was not seized or looted, this is an important precedent, when discussing the necessity to demand the return of Palestinian archive materials held by Israel, based on the moral, ethical, proprietary, and legal rights of the Palestinian over the materials.²⁰

The Battle over Visual Representation of the 1948 War in Jerusalem

The battle for Jerusalem was the longest running in the 1948 war and lasted for approximately one year (December 1947 to December 1948). The Arabs placed significant importance on Jerusalem and saw it as one of the main arenas in the struggle. Thus, already in the first few months they began gathering many forces from Palestine in the city and from Mount Hebron, and from other Arab countries – mainly Arab Legion fighters. Za’rur photographed in Jerusalem throughout the war and documented almost the entire campaign. His work is unique in that it allows us to see for the first time the documentation of the battle for the Old City of Jerusalem, especially in the vicinity of the Jewish Quarter, and the various events in Jerusalem during the 1948 war, from the

Arab-Palestinian perspective. His photos show that he photographed the war mainly in the city of Jerusalem. Another Palestinian photographer, Khalil Rissas, worked in and around Jerusalem but unlike Za'rur he photographed wider areas of the Jerusalem region, not only the city, but the mountains, Dayr Ayyub, and Bethlehem. Until my exhibition that includes the work of Ali Za'rur and Khalil Rissas in 2000, most of what was known about the visual representation of the battle for Jerusalem was primarily from two sources: photographs taken during the war by the Welsh photographer John Phillips, and the film *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*, a reconstruction of the battle for the Old City of Jerusalem, described by Jack Padwa and produced with the assistance of Israel military in 1955.²¹ Both are sympathetic to the Zionist cause. Za'rur's photographs expose additional documentation of the period from an entirely new perspective.

In May 1948, John Phillips, the photographer for *Time-Life*, accompanied the Arab Legion forces commanded by Abdullah al-Tal (under the Jordanian Legion commander General John Bagot Glubb, "Glubb Pasha") in the war in the eastern part of the city, and the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, in particular. The quarter was under siege and Jewish fighters had barricaded themselves inside. Jerusalem was King Abdullah's main priority. The plan of the Jewish Haganah forces to conquer the Old City and the attacks along the line between east and west Jerusalem from May 13 to May 18 prompted the king to act.²² Phillips, because of his good relations with King Abdullah, was attached to the Legion and wore the Legion uniform. "For the first time since February," he writes, "I had no fear that some paranoid Moslem would try to lynch me for taking pictures. I was in the Legion uniform and treated with respect by the populace, who mistook me for a British officer serving in the Arab army."²³ This allowed him to document the battles from the position of the Legion, with the ability to move around freely without fear. However, unlike



Figure 5. "Monastery in the Old City of Jerusalem damaged by shell," 1948. Photo by Ali Za'rur.

British General Glubb Pasha, who was perceived as pro-Arab, Phillips identified mostly with the Jewish side. He explains his choice to identify with the besieged fighters in the Jewish quarter in the introduction to his book *A Will to Survive*: "anyone would assume I must be Jewish to have taken 'such compassionate pictures'."²⁴ He claims:

No Jewish photographer could have shot the pictures I did.... The rampaging Arabs would have killed him. Being a white Anglo-Saxon was no help either. Conditions were such that anyone with a camera was considered a

Jewish spy and promptly set upon. I managed to get the pictures ... only because I was in the uniform of the Arab Legion Aware that the sack of the Jewish Quarter would shock the western world, Arab authorities across the Middle-East tried to prevent the news from leaking out I knew my pictures on the agony of the Jewish quarter would end up in a censor's wastepaper basket. I did not want this to happen and decided to smuggle them out of the Middle East. There was some risk, but I took the chance.

On 21 September 1976, John Phillips's exhibition *A Will to Survive* opened at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, initiated by Teddy Kollek and supported by the Jerusalem Foundation. The selected images and the text that Phillips attached to them and in the accompanying book by the same name expressed open sympathy for the Zionist side. The exhibition featured Phillips's photographs of the battles in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City in 1948. The exhibition also included photographs of the newly renovated Jewish Quarter and people who earlier had appeared in the images from 1948, and were then located and photographed again.

In contrast to Phillips, Ali Za'rur was a Palestinian and the official photographer of the Jordanian king and army. Like Phillips, he also wore the Jordanian army uniform, giving him access to the battles that took place between the Jordanian Legion and the Jewish Haganah forces and, after May 1948, the Israeli military forces, including events and battles in the Old City of Jerusalem. Phillips and Za'rur photographed events at the same crucial moments,²⁵ and many of their images are very similar. However, they tell the events from different perspectives. Phillips photographed the Arabs looting Jewish houses, the famous picture of a Jewish girl crying out, the horror of the Jewish wounded, the helplessness on the Jewish side, and others. Za'rur, on the other hand, exposed the damage to the Palestinian side caused by the war, including photographs of bodies (photographs censored by the Israeli central military archive), refugees and the Palestinian struggle. Years later, Phillips exhibited his images at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, and a few months after the exhibition, the Jerusalem Foundation transferred Za'rur's album to the IDFA.²⁶ Za'rur's photographs were not shown in the exhibition in Jerusalem and were buried for three decades in the IDFA and subordinated to Israel's narrative. They were subjugated, like many other Palestinian treasures, to the authority and procedures of the colonial archive.

Rona Sela is a curator and researcher of visual history and art, whose research focuses on the visual, historiography of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and archiving in colonial contexts. This article could not have been achieved without the essential and generous assistance of Zaki Za'rur (1942–2010) and his family.

The author would like to acknowledge that this research and article could not have been achieved without the essential and generous assistance of Zaki Za'rur (1942–2010) and his family. The images published here were originally published in Photography in Palestine in 2000 with the generous permission of Zaki Za'rur and his family.

Endnotes

- 1 See relevant works by Rona Sela: *Photography in Palestine in the 1930s and 1940s* [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Hakibutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 2000); Rona Sela, *Made Public: Palestinian Photographs in Military Archives in Israel* (Tel Aviv: Helena and Minshar Gallery, 2009) [in Hebrew] and (Ramallah: Madar Center, 2018) [in Arabic]; exhibition catalogue, *Khalil Ra'd, Photographs 1891–1948* (Tel-Aviv: Gutman Art Museum, 2010); “Rethinking National Archives in Colonial Countries and Zones of Conflict: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Israel’s National Photography Archives as a Case Study,” *IBRAAZ* (Contemporary Visual Culture in North Africa and the Middle East) 28 January 2014, online at www.ibraaz.org/essays/78 (accessed 19 June 2018); “Rethinking National Archives in Colonial Countries and Zones of Conflict,” in *Dissonant Archives: Contemporary Visual Culture and Contested Narratives in the Middle East*, ed. Anthony Downey (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); “The Genealogy of Colonial Plunder and Erasure – Israel’s Control Over Palestinian Archives,” *Social Semiotics* 28, no. 2 (2018): 201–229; “Seized in Beirut – The Plundered Archives of the Palestinian Cinema Institution,” *Anthropology of the Middle East* 12, no. 2 (2017); “The Archive of Photo Rissas (Rassas) – Ibrahim and Khalil (Khalil) Rissas – Looted and Controlled in Israel’s Military Archives,” *Intermedialités/ Intermediality* no. 32 (forthcoming). See also Issam Nassar, “A Jerusalem Photographer: The Life and Work of Hanna Safieh,” *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 7 (2000): 24; “Familial Snapshot: Representing Palestine in the Work of the First Local Photographer,” *History & Memory* 18, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2006): 139–55; *Laqatat mughayira: al-taswir al-futugrafi al-mubakir fi Filastin* [Different Snapshots: Palestine in Early Photography] (Beirut and Ramallah: Kutub and Qattan Foundation, 2005) and “Early Local Photography in Palestine: The Legacy of Karimeh Abbud,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 46 (Summer 2011): 23–31. See also Vera Tamari, *Palestine before 1948, Not Just Memory, Khalil Ra'd (1854–1957)* [in English and Arabic] (Ramallah: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2013); *Karima 'Abbud: Pioneer of Female Photography in Palestine* [in Arabic] (Bethlehem: Diyar, 2011).
- 2 The information about Ali Za'rur is taken primarily from my conversations with his son, Zaki Za'rur, between 1999 and 2008, from Ami Steinitz in 1999 and 2000 and from further research. See Ami Steinitz, “Region of Distance,” Ami Steinitz Gallery, May–June 1999, Tel Aviv; Ami Steinitz, “Region of Distance,” *Studio Art Magazine* 113 (May 2000): 45–59.
- 3 Until World War I, Ra'd and Garabed Krikorian worked independently and had their own photography shops. They then joined forces and worked together until approximately 1933 when John Krikorian, Garabed’s son, returned from his studies.
- 4 After King Abdullah was assassinated and Hussein was crowned king of Jordan in 1952, he rarely worked with the monarchy.
- 5 Zaki Za'rur says that his father photographed tourists in the church and worked in the studio between the years 1956 and 1972.
- 6 Steinitz, “Region of Distance.”
- 7 See Sela, *Photography in Palestine, Made Public*, and “Genealogy of Colonial Plunder.”
- 8 See online at www.archives.mod.gov.il/Eng/Pages/geninformation.aspx (accessed 8 July 2018).
- 9 According to the Israeli “Archives’ Regulations Law 2010”, which expands the “Archives Law 1955,” the period of limitation of security materials is between thirty and seventy years, see online at www.archives.gov.il/wp-content/uploads/201603/1/%D7%AA%D7%A7%D7%A0%D795%D7%AA-%D794%D790%D7%A8%D79%B%D799%D795%D7%A0%D799%D79%D_%D7%A2%D799%D795%D79F_2010.pdf (accessed 8 July 2018). According to the IDFA’s “Exposure of Material for the Public Examination,” “Files and documents can be declassified, by regular procedure, after fifty years. The declassification of later files is possible under the authorization of a special committee” see online at www.archives.mod.gov.il/Eng/Pages/geninformation.aspx (accessed 9 July 2018). However, from my experience, the special committee gives permission only to researchers who tell the official Israeli narrative. I never received such a permission (which I applied for at various times). In a meeting of the Israeli Parliament’s Constitution, Law and Justice Committee relating to the study of confidential material on 17 January 2005, as the Association for Civil Rights in Israel reports, one of the security officials said: [The criterion to open restricted material is] “to be one of own. I was editor of *Maarachot* [an official Israeli

- military magazine]. Within this framework, I got it. If I hadn't been editor of *Maarachot*, I wouldn't have got it." See online at www.acri.org.il/he/1062 (accessed 9 July 2018). See also Sela, *Made Public*, 31–32, and "Genealogy of Colonial Plunder."
- 10 The photographer spelled his name as "Khalil Rissas" in English, usually transliterated from Arabic as "Khalil Rassas."
 - 11 The chain of events was first described by the author in 2009; see Sela, *Made Public*.
 - 12 Sela, "Genealogy of Colonial Plunder."
 - 13 The albums that were open for view did not contain those photographs still censored for study by the IDFA. These were mainly photographs of Jewish/Israeli dead, which according to Israeli law cannot be examined or exposed.
 - 14 The original negatives have been always in the possession of the photographer and later his family.
 - 15 The numbering on the back of the photographs is identical to the numbering of Za'rur's negatives, and differs from the numbering at the bottom of the photographs given by the IDFA.
 - 16 A number of signatures were discovered in the album: Dov Steiger later known as Dov Sion (Yael Dayan's late husband), a man named Arieh (no family name), and also the initials: M.T.
 - 17 Copies of Za'rur's original description (his list only partly survived) and his original numbering, as well as comments by the archivists, soldiers and others, were copied by the author and are in her possession.
 - 18 The Jerusalem Foundation is a private nonprofit foundation, founded in 1966 by Teddy Kollek shortly after his election as mayor of West Jerusalem, to fundraise for development.
 - 19 The film *Jerusalem Cuts* (2008), directed by Liran Atzmor, shows that the album was seized from Za'rur's house by Israeli soldiers in 1967, but this version is refuted by Zaki Za'rur. See Dalia Karpel, "Black, White and Bloody," *Haaretz*, 17 April 2008, online at www.haaretz.com/black-white-and-bloody-1.244145 (accessed 8 July 2018).
 - 20 In April 2018 I submitted a paper to a Swiss foundation to establish a project entitled: "Palestinian Materials, Images and Archives held by Israel," to discuss the possibility of the return of Palestinian materials, images, and archives, visual and others, that were seized or looted by Jewish/Israeli forces/soldiers and individuals since the first decades of the twentieth century and now held by Israel in its official archives.
 - 21 Atzmor, *Jerusalem Cuts*.
 - 22 Benny Morris, *The Road to Jerusalem: Glubb Pasha, Palestine and the Jews* (Israel: Am Oved, 2006) [in Hebrew], 159–177.
 - 23 John Phillips, *A Will to Survive – Israel: The Face of Terror 1948, The Face of Hope Today* (New York: Dial Press/James Wade, 1977), 8.
 - 24 Phillips, *A Will to Survive*, 2.
 - 25 Apparently, Phillips and Za'rur knew one another. Za'rur has a photograph of Phillips.
 - 26 In conversations and correspondence in January–February 2008, the Foundation's staff claimed they had no information about the history of Za'rur's album, including how it came into their possession, why they decided to hand it over to the IDFA shortly after the Phillips exhibition, and why they did not show Za'rur's photographs from the album alongside Phillips's work. See also Sela, *Made Public*.

Sir Charles Tegart: The "Counterterrorism Expert" in Palestine

Part 1

Richard Cahill

In the summer of 1937, as the Arab revolt in Palestine entered into its second year, the British government became increasingly desperate to crush it. The Colonial Office in London, reluctant to see the revolt as a politically-motivated national movement, viewed the rebels as “thugs” and “bandits.” The best way to deal with these “bandits,” they believed, was better policing. They therefore turned to an almost thirty-year veteran of colonial policing, and commissioned him to go to Palestine. This was Sir Charles Tegart and he carried out what is seen by many as one of the most influential missions to reshape “security” policy in Palestine. And, as Laleh Khalili has argued, security and counterinsurgency practices in British Mandate Palestine both drew from previous, and contributed to future, imperial domination around the globe down to the present time.¹

This essay is a brief biographical sketch of Tegart’s life until the end of his first tour of duty in Palestine in June 1938.² Tegart was an extremely private person. He never spoke to the press and rarely allowed his photo to be taken. His surviving diary entries read largely like appointment calendars (for example, “10 am – Saunders”) with no mention of a meeting’s purpose, let alone Tegart’s thoughts or feelings on a subject. Tegart also seemed to prefer face-to-face meetings rather than communicating via memos or letters. Notes from his time in Palestine often read something like: “B.– dropped by to see you but you were out. I’ll come by tomorrow. CT.” This biographical sketch thus relies heavily on the notes, letters, and diaries of others who knew or met Tegart.

Editor’s Note:

This article is the first of two about Charles Tegart. The second article will appear in issue 75 of *JQ* and focuses on Tegart’s role in creating the police fortresses that he established across Palestine.



Figure 1. Lady Tegart (left), carrying her fur, with Mrs. Saunders, followed by Inspector-General Alan Saunders (in uniform), walking with Sir Charles; in the back (right), David Petrie, carrying his overcoat.

Early Years

Charles Tegart was born in 1881, in Londonderry, in the north of Ireland. He was the second son of Joseph and Georgina Tegart. His father was an Anglican priest, originally from the south of Ireland. After receiving a parish near Dublin, his father moved the family to Dunboyne, in County Meath, and young Charles spent his childhood in the countryside there, just outside of Dublin. As a child, Tegart would occasionally accompany his father to church services or lectures in Dublin; after he and his father rode home, his father would quiz young Charles on the content of sermon. Tegart's father died when Charles was just 14 years old, and his mother died a year later. At this point he and his brother came under the custody of their uncle, supported by his father's estate, assessed at £2,443.³

Charles first attended a preparatory school at Rathmines, just south of Dublin. His uncle then sent Charles and his brother to the Portora Royal School, a boys' boarding school in the countryside near Enniskillen, in County Fermanagh, northern Ireland. His brother later recalled the austere environment and strict teachers. Charles excelled in his studies and in sports. Perhaps Charles's upbringing in a clergyman's home gave him an aptitude for theology: he did well on his exit exams, and received the "First Class Prize in Greek [New] Testament in the Senior Church of Ireland examination" as well as a School of Divinity prize.⁴

Charles studied theology at Trinity College, Dublin, and, again, excelled in his studies.

But when he saw an announcement for recruits to the Colonial Police in India toward the end of his first year at Trinity, he signed up. He was one of 17 applicants (of some 150) to pass the recruitment and horsemanship exams and be offered a position. He passed the medical examination and enlisted in June 1901.

India Years

Tegart and the other new recruits took the long boat journey to Bengal, India. There, he attended the Police Training College in Bhagalpur, where he studied local languages, as well as criminal law. In his free time, he enjoyed horseback riding and polo. At the polo field, Tegart met Sir John Cumming, the British District Magistrate. When Tegart finished his training, Cumming appointed him in charge of the police in Patna City, which had a population of 200,000. Tegart was twenty-one years old at the time, but could already speak two of the local languages.⁵ He was in charge of the police in Patna City for two years (1903–04), then in Birbhum for a year, and Manbhum for six months. In April 1906, he was transferred to Calcutta and appointed acting deputy commissioner.

In Calcutta, Tegart lived with other bachelors and later recalled how they would pass time shooting at bats. During a fistfight, Tegart broke the jaw of one of his housemates. The male colonial camaraderie also led him, the night before a good friend's wedding, to attempt to ride a bicycle down the stairs of their bachelor pad, breaking his ankle in the process.⁶

From 1906 until the outbreak of World War I, Tegart was a rising star in the Calcutta police force. Tegart was developing into an officer who would be part of a hierarchical network of abuse and segregation in these years. At the start of the war, he helped foil a plot by Germans to supply arms to revolutionaries in Bengal. He then returned to England and joined the Royal Field Artillery in France, where he saw active duty until the end of the war. He served in the army of occupation in the Rhineland until 1919, when he was transferred to a special intelligence branch. He worked in intelligence in England and Ireland from 1919 until he was recalled to India in 1923. Tegart married Kathleen Frances Herbert in 1922. Like Charles, she was the child of a clergyman.⁷ Shortly after their marriage, Charles was appointed commissioner of police of Calcutta. The thirty-year-old Irishman was now in charge of a police force that numbered approximately 2,500 men.

As the Indian movement for independence from British colonial rule spread and strengthened in the early twentieth century, unrest and acts of resistance grew in Bengal. To Tegart and the British, the leaders of the movement were “revolutionaries” and their methods were “terrorism.” Tegart was keen on suppressing such acts of violence and gained a reputation for effectively combating “terrorism” and “revolutionaries.” Several attempts were made to assassinate him, none successful. On an early January morning in 1924, a businessman who resembled Tegart was looking in a shop window with his back to the street. A young Bengali, assuming it was Tegart, shot the man

in the back several times and fled on foot. The man died of his wounds, and when the perpetrator was caught, he was shocked when Tegart walked into the jail to question him.⁸

Tegart's widow later described her husband's ability to "convert" young revolutionaries away from their use of violence, and even his ability to recruit these "converts" into informants for the police.⁹



Figure 2. Tegart's car with holes from bombs, August 1930 (Cambridge, Tegart Photos)

Her naive and sympathetic account must be contrasted with reports of police brutality and coercion during this time period in India; if anything, it shows an astonishing British imperialist self-perception. It is clear from Tegart's own papers that he viewed himself and his tactics as enlightened (however self-delusional we find this to be). A fascinating private meeting in 1925 between Tegart and Mahatma Gandhi will be discussed elsewhere.¹⁰ That same year, Tegart received his knighthood.

In 1930, a serious rebellion broke out in Chittagong, Eastern Bengal, which Tegart and his men tried to put down. On 25 August 1930, as Tegart was being driven to work in the morning, two bombs were hurled at his open convertible car (figure 2). Tegart jumped out to pursue one of the suspects and, according to newspaper accounts, he shot and killed one assailant and captured another. His driver and others were wounded, but Tegart was unharmed.¹¹ Tegart received dozens of notes of congratulations from the British Empire Association to the Muslim Student Association and the Calcutta Stock Exchange.¹²

In early September 1930, Tegart received permission from the French to carry out an attack to pursue some Chittagong rebellion leaders who had fled into neighboring French-controlled territory. Tegart and nine of his men set out after midnight to raid their hideout in Chandernagore. Tegart and his men wore tennis shoes to keep quiet and masks over their faces. They encircled the remote house where the rebellion's leaders were hiding, and successfully captured three of the leaders.¹³ In this we see Tegart willing to use innovative tactics, transforming part of his police force into what today we would call a small SWAT team. Through his years as the head of the police in Calcutta, Tegart's reputation grew due to his successes in putting down "disturbances" and also due to press coverage of the many attempts on his life.

In the photographs that Tegart collected during his years in India and later brought home with him to England, there are many of dead Indian men. He wrote their names on the back of the photos, often noting the crime for which they were hunted down.

London Years

In March 1931, Tegart's brother was diagnosed with a terminal illness and Tegart returned to spend time with him during his last weeks of life. When his brother passed away the following month, Tegart remained to spend time helping his brother's widow and child, and also with his wife's family. After, they drove to France, meandering through the countryside until they reached Cannes on the Riviera, where they vacationed with Lady Yule, widow of Sir David Yule, one of the most important businessmen in India and one of the wealthiest men in Britain. Lady Yule invited them to sail back to Calcutta on her yacht, the largest in the world at the time. Here we see the privilege and prestige that a British Colonial official from a fairly modest background could enjoy. The Tegarts were unable to avail themselves of this offer, however, as Charles fell ill and underwent an emergency appendectomy.

As Tegart recovered, the Secretary of State's office offered him membership in the Council of India. This was a high honor and one that no former police officer had been offered. Tegart hated to give up his post as police commissioner in Calcutta, but ultimately accepted the offer, resigned his police duties, and joined the council before Christmas 1931 to begin his five-year appointment.¹⁴ Early in 1932, Tegart was invited to give a lecture or speech at the Royal Empire Society. Although he generally shied away from anything public, he accepted. His topic was "Terrorism in India" and not surprisingly he advocated for using harsh tactics for fighting terrorism.¹⁵

During his years on the Council of India, Tegart and his wife spent their summers touring Europe by car. In 1934 they went to Austria and Hungary, returning to London via Germany and Belgium and in 1935 they visited Freudenstadt, in Germany's Black Forest. They were troubled by the anti-Jewish sentiment in Germany, seeing signs that read *Juden sind hier nicht erwünscht* (Jews not welcome here) and children giving the Nazi salute as they passed in the British-plated car. By the summer of 1936, Hitler had occupied the Rhineland, and the Tegarts did not travel to Europe.¹⁶ Prior to his time in Palestine, Tegart had developed sympathy for European Jews.

Palestine Years

In July 1937, the Royal Commission, headed by Lord William Peel and which had toured Palestine after the first phase of the Arab revolt, published its report.¹⁷ The Arab reaction to the report was predictably negative. As violence in Palestine continued, and even heightened, the Colonial Office approached Tegart to offer him the position of inspector-general of police in Palestine. Tegart was eager to help, but noted that he was unfamiliar with the country and the language and thus declined the position. Instead, he suggested that he go to Palestine as a counterterrorism expert to inspect the police apparatus and make recommendations for reforms. He also insisted that the Colonial

Office not publicize his mission. The Colonial Office appointed him for a six-month period based on Tegart's suggestion, but failed to keep his mission a secret. Within days, news of his appointment was in the press. In Palestine, the chief secretary heard rumors that "Tegart will be attacked upon his arrival."¹⁸ Tegart thus negotiated a larger salary (£300 per month) and also requested that his former colleague in India, David Petrie, be appointed his assistant.¹⁹ Tegart reasoned, "I'm impulsive and inclined to rush to get things done and impatient if I don't see immediate action. Petrie's hard-headed and arrives at his judgment by slow, logical reasoning."²⁰ The Colonial Office concurred and offered Petrie a commission.

Meanwhile in Palestine, the situation was deteriorating. The high commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, had gone on leave in early September 1937, leaving the chief secretary, William Battershill, as acting high commissioner. On 26 September, the acting district commissioner for the Galilee, Lewis Andrews, and British constable Peter R. McEwan were gunned down outside a church in Nazareth. Andrews was the first senior British official killed in the revolt and his death sent shockwaves through the British administration and community. Battershill ordered the arrest of the Arab Higher Committee the following week; only Hajj Amin al-Husayni and Jamal al-Husayni managed to avoid arrest.²¹

Tegart, still in London and not yet officially employed in his new appointment, met with Wauchope (still in London on leave), Sir Cosmo Parkinson (undersecretary of state for the colonies), and Alan Saunders (the newly appointed inspector-general of the Palestine Police) in preparation. Saunders had served in the colonial police in India (1908–14), and had been in Palestine since World War I, rising to deputy inspector-general from 1926 to 1935, and then served as inspector-general of the Nigeria Police from 1936 to 1937. Wauchope, meeting Tegart for the first time, noted afterward, "I hope he is as good as his reputation credits him. What we need more than any thing is someone who can catch a criminal."²²

The Tegarts and David Petrie sailed for Port Said in late November 1937. From Egypt they travelled by train to Lydda, where they were met by Saunders and his wife (figure 1). By all accounts, Tegart was an intense man and worked hard. Almost immediately upon arriving in Palestine, he held talks with Wauchope, Battershill, and Saunders. He also wasted no time in inspecting police stations and posts all over Palestine. The Criminal Investigation Department provided Tegart with descriptions of various Arab leaders and each district police headquarters sent a detailed list of known or suspected rebels.²³

Within four weeks of his arrival, Tegart had come up with fourteen suggestions for immediate action. On New Year's Eve, 1937, he and Petrie met with Battershill, Saunders, and Assistant Inspector-General A. J. Kingsley-Heath to discuss these suggestions. They were not the recommendations for the reorganization of the Palestine Police for which Tegart had been commissioned; rather they were immediate measures for the government and police to get a handle on the rebellion. At the top of the list was

immediate “enlistment of irregulars” (evidently, Jewish supernumeraries) to patrol the northern and north eastern border. He also recommended to “stop enlistment of regular [Arab] Palestinian Police” and “[e]xtra jail accommodation for terrorist prisoners.” He wanted more dogs, more armored vehicles, and quick and generous cash payments to informants for “results,” a border fence and village registers.²⁴ This was a virtual “short list” of colonial methods of coercion. Within a few days, the high commissioner approved all of his recommendations.²⁵

On 24 January 1938, Tegart and Petrie submitted their report: a list of twenty-eight recommendations, to the chief secretary and inspector-general.²⁶ Among these recommendations, some of which were already being implemented, were reorganizing and strengthening the Criminal Investigation Department and creating a rural mounted police section to strike in the hill country where rebels were active. For this he suggested that the British recruit ex-servicemen, “the tough type of man, not necessarily literate.”²⁷ Several recommendations dealt with infrastructure: constructing roads, border posts, and a border fence.²⁸ Perhaps the most enduring recommendation was for the construction of new police stations or fortresses.²⁹

Petrie returned to England, while Tegart remained in Palestine, actively advising the government and the military. He met frequently with an informal “security committee” of himself, the general officer commanding, the chief secretary, and the inspector-general of police. It was clear to Tegart and others that the rebel movement’s leadership was now based in Damascus, with some elements in Beirut. In February 1938, Tegart and his wife traveled by car to Beirut, where he visited the French intelligence offices. He was given free access to files, which he described as highly disorganized,³⁰ and obtained some commitments of better collaboration between the French intelligence officers in Beirut and their British counterparts in Palestine. Tegart and his wife departed Beirut for Damascus, where they were hosted by the British consul, Colonel Gilbert MacKereth, and his wife. Tegart met several high level officials there, including the head of intelligence, Commandant Bonnet, and the high commissioner, Damien de Martel.³¹ In Beirut and Damascus, Tegart relentlessly pursued commitments for the French authorities to collaborate more with the British in Palestine to stop the flow of rebels across the border.

On the drive from Damascus back to Palestine, the Tegarts’ car slid off the road into a ditch near al-Qunaytra, which Tegart recorded in his diary in his typically understated and impersonal style – “A very wet day and greasy roads” – but they were eventually returned safely to Nazareth by a car sent by the police unit at Safad. That evening and the following morning, Tegart met with Alec Kirkbride, district commissioner of the Galilee, sharing with him what he had learned in Damascus and Beirut. He then met with police officials in Nablus, before returning to Jerusalem. By this time, Tegart had realized that he lost his cigarette lighter in Damascus. He sent word to MacKereth, who replied that police there hardly ever find missing objects. This cannot have inspired much confidence in his counterparts across the border, and Tegart removed the lighter from his list of personal belongings.³²



Figure 3: Farewell table set with replica of “Tegart’s Wall” at King David Hotel, Jerusalem, 11 June 1938.

Tegart’s Wall

Tegart was completely convinced of the need for a secure border with Syria and Lebanon. In his view, the one-time expense of constructing a barrier would save money in the long run. He pointed to a recent attack on Christmas Day 1937, when perpetrators had fled across the frontier to Syria. He believed that if a proper barrier with patrols had been in place, they would have been trapped.

By March 1938, Tegart convinced the new high commissioner, the general officer commanding, and the Executive Council of the need for his plan. The high commissioner then pressed the Colonial Office in London to support this effort. Petrie, Tegart’s former assistant who had returned to London, also met with officials in the Colonial Office in mid-March and “took the occasion to press strongly for the early erection of the proposed fencing.”³³ In early April, news was out that an electric fence was being considered for the frontier. The press rumored that the wall would be thirty feet tall and that trespassers would be electrocuted. Among service members and also in the press, the border barrier was referred to as “Tegart’s Wall.”³⁴

Tegart estimated the cost of the border fence at £80,000. Military authorities adjusted the figure to £300,000, while the high commissioner requested £150,000 for its construction. On 6 April 1938, a telegram sent by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the high commissioner for Palestine “approve[d] expenditure not to exceed £150,000 for frontier fence and re-siting and redesigning of Police Posts.”³⁵ Within weeks of Tegart’s

proposal to build the fence, the Colonial Office had given approval, despite its falling outside of the budget and the absence of a concrete final cost estimate.

Tegart received permission to hire an outside firm (rather than the Public Works Department or other Mandate services) to construct the fence. He contracted with Solel Boneh, the contracting company of the Federation of Jewish Labor. While the high commissioner and the Colonial Officer were still corresponding about the cost, the fence was already being built. The Reuters new agency reported that the Palestine government was using Egyptian labor,³⁶ but the fence was being built by Jewish labor protected by Jewish supernumerary police – paid by the British.³⁷ The Jewish Telegraphic Agency wrote:

The barbed-wire “fence” under construction today along the northern frontier of Palestine will be a barricade such as exists on no other border in the world, not even the most troubled. The “fence” is actually an entanglement of the most substantial and permanent wartime type, over six feet high and six feet deep, strung on stakes set in concrete. There are 200 yards of wire coiled in an impenetrable tangle in every yard of length of the barricade.³⁸

The Federation of British Industries cited rumors that the barbed wire was being purchased from Belgium or, yet worse, from Mussolini’s Italy, while Chief Secretary Battershill claimed it came from Czechoslovakia.³⁹

During and after the fence’s construction, rebels cut the wires, sometimes removing large portions of it. Still, some authorities regarded “Tegart’s Wall” a success. As Sir Charles and Lady Tegart prepared to depart from Palestine in June 1938, a farewell cocktail party and several dinner parties were hosted in their honor.⁴⁰ The most elaborate was a farewell dinner at the King David Hotel, where for a centerpiece, a miniature “Tegart’s Wall,” made from real barbed wire, complete with pillbox guard towers, ran down the center of the table. Tegart’s chair, at the place of honor, was also adorned with barbed wire (figure 3).

At the end of the summer of 1938, Tegart was re-commissioned to continue his work in Palestine. He returned in September and remained in Palestine until May 1939.

Richard Cahill is Director of International Education and Associate Professor of History at Berea College in Kentucky. He holds a PhD in History from the University of California Santa Barbara. His research focus is Palestine during the British Mandate period.

Endnotes

- 1 Laleh Khalili, “The Location of Palestine in Global Insurgencies,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42, no. 3 (August 2010): 413–33; especially 415.
- 2 The author’s description of Tegart’s second stint in Palestine, and subsequent construction of fortified police stations across Palestine, will be published in a forthcoming issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* focusing on police, prisons, and criminal justice in Palestine.
- 3 National Archive, Ireland, Will Calendars, 1895, 00501490900435_005014909/.

- 4 Cambridge, Centre for Asian Studies Archive (hereafter Cambridge CASA), K1, folio 10.
- 5 Cambridge CASA, K1, folio 36.
- 6 Cambridge CASA, K1, folio 64.
- 7 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, vol. 54, 24; J. C. Curry, *Tegart of the Indian Police*, National Army Museum, 1960, 15 and 22.
- 8 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 3, file 1.
- 9 Cambridge CASA, K1, folio 57.
- 10 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 8. The author is working on a separate article that focuses on Tegart and Ghandi's meeting.
- 11 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 1, file 2a.
- 12 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 1, file 4.
- 13 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 1, file 2a.
- 14 Curry, *Tegart of the Indian Police*, 29.
- 15 Cambridge CASA, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 5.
- 16 Cambridge CASA, K1, folia 45–46.
- 17 Lord Peel served as the Secretary of State for India in the 1920s.
- 18 Oxford, Rhodes House, Bodleian Archive, British, Empire, s. 467, Battershill, box 10, file 3 (a twenty-page letter from Battershill to Sir John E. Shuckburgh, 21 November 1937).
- 19 Oxford, St. Anthony's College, Middle East Centre Archive (MECA), Tegart Papers, box 4, file 2b, folia 3–4.
- 20 Cambridge CASA, K1, folio 249.
- 21 Battershill, box 10, file 4, folio 21.
- 22 Battershill, box 10, file 4, folio 32b.
- 23 See, for example, MECA, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3, folio 16.
- 24 MECA, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3, folio 25.
- 25 MECA, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3, folios 26–28.
- 26 National Archive, London, Colonial Office, 7331/383/, folio 66ff; MECA, Tegart Papers, box 4, item 7.
- 27 Colonial Office, 7331/383/.
- 28 For an analysis of Tegart's proposed reforms in comparison with those of Dowbiggin (1930), see Gad Kroizer, "From Dowbiggin to Tegart: Revolutionary Change in the Colonial Police in Palestine during the 1930s," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 32, no.2 (May 2004): 115–133.
- 29 See my article on the "Tegart Forts" in issue no. 75 of *Jerusalem Quarterly*.
- 30 MECA, Tegart Papers, box 3, file 5, folios 25ff.
- 31 MECA, Tegart Papers, box 4, item 7.
- 32 MECA, Tegart Papers, box 3, file 5, folios 26–29.
- 33 Colonial Office, 7333/382/, folio 53b.
- 34 "Fencing-Off an Ancient Land: Trespassers in Palestine to Be Electrocuted," *Cork Examiner*, Cork Ireland, 2 April 1938.
- 35 Colonial Office, 7333/382/, folio 50.
- 36 *Yorkshire Post*, 28 June 1938.
- 37 Colonial Office, 7333/382/, folio 48.
- 38 *Jewish Telegraphic Agency Bulletin*, 10 May 1938.
- 39 Colonial Office, 7333/382/, folios 30–46.
- 40 MECA, GB1650193-, MacGillivray's diary, 8–11 June 1938.

Haile Selassie in Jerusalem

Sanctuary for the Lion of Judah in the Holy City

Vicken V. Kalbian

A weighty, gold-plated dinner knife and fork set emblazoned with a lion – the Lion of Judah¹ – was a constant presence in a locked vitrine in my parents’ pre-1948 home in the Talbiyya neighborhood of Jerusalem. The valuable Ethiopian memento disappeared, along with the rest of my family’s treasured belongings, after the Israeli occupiers ransacked our house in 1948. How did my father come to possess these Ethiopian objects?

The Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie travelled twice to Jerusalem in the twentieth century. This article describes how the long history of the besieged Ethiopian presence in Jerusalem contextualizes the meaning of his visits. My personal connections to these historic events include the role that my father, Dr. Vahan Kalbian, played in Selassie’s 1936 visit, when my father was presented with this impressive royal gift. This essay focuses especially on the Armenian community’s connection to Ethiopia, of which my father’s experience is an important episode.

The Ethiopians and Jerusalem

Modern day Ethiopia, formerly known as Abyssinia (*al-Habasha* in Arabic), is often described as the “cradle of humankind.” In addition to a long and rich history, the modern Ethiopians have a long-standing connection to Jerusalem.² According to the Bible,³ the legendary Queen Makada of Sheba (assumed to be an Abyssinian), visited Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE, a tale also recorded in the Abyssinian myth *Kebra Negast* (“Glory to the Kings”). The purpose of her visit, as described in the Abyssinian legend, was to learn governing skills from the renowned King Solomon. They became intimate friends

and she converted to Judaism.⁴ They had a son, Menilek, who Solomon dreamt was to be the leader of a new order in Israel. After the dream, Solomon sent Queen Makada home and told her to send their son back to Jerusalem when he came of age. When Menilek later returned to Jerusalem as a young man to be taught governance by his father, Solomon offered to make him the prince of Jerusalem. Menilek declined and returned home to become the first ruler of Abyssinia; he was later claimed by the last reigning Ethiopian royal family to be their direct ancestor.⁵ One of the revered titles of the emperors of Abyssinia, “The Conquering Lion of Judah,” was an emblem ever-present on their national flag.⁶

According to legend, the Queen of Sheba pilfered the Ark of the Covenant from Solomon’s temple in Jerusalem on her way out of Judah, although many Ethiopians now believe that it was Menilek who brought the Ark to Ethiopia on his return to Axum after visiting his father in Jerusalem.⁷ The remains of the Ark are now said to be in a small chapel in the monastic complex of Saint Mary of Zion Church in Axum, Ethiopia.

The early influences of Judaism that were brought back by the Queen of Sheba were never abandoned over the centuries. Traditional sources claim that Judaism was practiced side by side with the animism that existed in Abyssinia before the introduction of Christianity.⁸ Ethiopia’s language is Amharic, the second most commonly spoken Semitic language in the world after Arabic, manifesting the country’s close affinity to Judaism. This relationship might lead one to ponder if the current Ethiopian national flag, with its five-pointed star centerpiece replacing the earlier “Lion of Judah,” is a tribute to Ethiopia’s Solomonic connections. Also Abyssinian churches are typically built in a circular shape over a replica of the Ark of the Covenant in the central altar, similar to the Jewish temple.

In the 1980s and 1990s, over 100,000 Ethiopians who claimed Jewish lineage – referred to as the Falash Mura – were airlifted from Ethiopia and relocated to Israel. Several thousand more remained in Ethiopia and engaged in a decades-long battle with Israel for permission to immigrate there. Finally, in 2015, the Israeli government granted permission to the remaining Falash Mura, but their acceptance, according to the Israeli Interior Ministry, was “conditioned on a successful Jewish conversion process.”⁹

Christianity reached Abyssinia as early as the first century ce, as mentioned in the New Testament.¹⁰ However, it was not officially declared the state religion until 330 ce, and only then as an integral part of the Apostolic Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt, established by St. Mark. The Armenians, the Syrian Jacobites, the Copts, and the Ethiopians make up the Eastern Orthodox churches, designated as the monophysites after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 ce.¹¹ The Abyssinian Church was led by a bishop (*abuna*) appointed by the Coptic bishopric of Alexandria.¹² It remained part of the Coptic Church until 1959 when the churches separated due to deteriorating relationships between Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser and the emperor of Ethiopia. Since the Ethiopian church had gained autonomy, the Coptic Orthodox pope of Alexandria granted the church its own patriarch. Numerically it still remains the largest of all the Eastern Orthodox churches, and continues to exert considerable influence in modern Ethiopia.

The Ethiopians and the Holy Sepulcher

In common with the other Christian apostolic churches, the Ethiopian church has had a continuous presence in Jerusalem since the mid-thirteenth century until the present, with a special bond to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The Ethiopians had minor holdings inside the church, but lost them in the nineteenth century. Historically, what were considered the three “minor” churches – the Abyssinian, the Coptic, and the Syriac – had their properties and privileges under the aegis of the Armenian Church, which shares “ownership” of the Holy Sepulcher equally with the Latin and Greek Orthodox churches. The Ethiopians had possession of St. Helena’s Chapel,¹³ but they lost it to the Armenians in 1838 when an epidemic wiped out the Abyssinian clergy. The Egyptian Copts, who had a stronger presence in the Holy Sepulcher, moved in and mistreated the surviving Ethiopian monks, seizing their assets so that currently the Ethiopians have no holdings inside the church.¹⁴ Their sole possession is what remains of a medieval Crusader cloister, now a courtyard, on the roof of the Armenian St. Helena’s Chapel. They also hold two adjoining chapels, strategically situated on the sole access leading down to the main entrance of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The roof/courtyard can also be reached from the major thoroughfare of the Old City, Suq Khan al-Zayt, after Zalatimo’s sweets shop.¹⁵

The Ethiopians named their rooftop area Dayr al-Sultan (Monastery of Solomon). A *Washington Post* article in 1993 described the living situation of the monks and nuns as several primitive, unsanitary, residential cabins. The article elaborates:

The Ethiopians have tried for years to get the Israeli minister of religious affairs to assist them in doing desperately needed repairs on the roofs of the single-level mud huts. Two months ago, the government rebuilt a wall that collapsed during a snow storm last year. Some of the hovels are in such disrepair they have to be cordoned off.¹⁶

Unsuspecting tourists enter the compound unaware of the monks worsening conditions. They are greeted by a foul smell that is masked with strong disinfectant emanating from the broken-down toilets. The tiny courtyard is surrounded by nearly forty makeshift, dingy gray structures. An online petition circulated in 2011 urging Israel’s prime minister to repair the monastery suggests that the poor conditions have persisted.¹⁷ More recently, St. Michael Church closed due to a roof collapse caused by repair work on the Holy Sepulcher.¹⁸

On the other hand, the convent which houses the Coptic patriarchate is an elaborate structure built on an old cistern located on the north side of the rooftop courtyard. Two Ethiopian chapels on the south end of the courtyard, the Chapel of the Angels and the adjoining Chapel of Saint Michael, provide the only access from the rooftop down to the Holy Sepulcher (figures 1 and 2). This posed a predicament for the Coptic clergy who had to cross the Ethiopian courtyard and go through the locked Ethiopian chapels in order to gain access to the stairs leading down to the Holy Sepulcher (figure 3).



Figure 1. Ethiopian property on the roof of the Holy Sepulcher.



Figure 2. Ethiopian monks' rooms on the roof of the Holy Sepulcher.

Another contested issue has been the possession of the keys to these chapels, which most recently ended up in Ethiopian hands. This situation has angered and humiliated the Copts for over a century and has culminated in several bloody confrontations between the two rival clergy, despite the close alignment of their religious beliefs. Their most violent disagreement erupted on Easter Sunday in 1970: while the Coptic clergy were praying in the Holy Sepulcher celebrating Easter mass, the Ethiopians “changed the locks at the ends of the disputed passageway which runs through Ethiopian property.”¹⁹ The dispute was resolved through the Israeli courts in favor of the Ethiopians who now have the keys. The political expediency may have stemmed from concern at the time that “angering Ethiopia could hamper the emigration of the country’s Jewish community.”²⁰

“Ownership in the Holy Sepulcher is not absolute,” according to Raymond Cohen, a professor of international relations at Hebrew University. “Those who reside in it have the right of possession, in the sense that they can hold and use it, but do not have title and cannot dispose of the property, either by sale or gift.”²¹ The overpowering authority of ownership lies in the Status Quo agreement that “all will remain forever in their present state.” The Status Quo arrangement was agreed to as early as 1757, confirmed by the Ottoman sultan in 1852, and by the European powers in 1856 at the Treaty of Paris.²² Since then, whenever an occupying power in Jerusalem would pass legal resolutions, they would be rescinded by the overruling Status Quo. Historically the holdings and privileges of the Abyssinian Church, as well as those of the Coptic and Syriac Churches, have been under the aegis of the Armenian Church. The Armenian Church granted the Ethiopians – who had no preexisting rights inside the Church – certain liturgical privileges based on the Status Quo protocol.²³ The Armenian Church is the only Eastern Orthodox church recognized to have actual rights under the protocol of the Status Quo in the Holy Sepulcher, a concession that is shared equally by the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic churches.

Regardless of the Status Quo, the courts of whatever power was occupying Jerusalem have issued legal decisions in the past. In the second half of the twentieth century, both the Ethiopian and Egyptian governments intervened in affairs, and as a result of their intervention, the Status Quo was bypassed for political convenience. For example, in



Figure 3. Stairs from roof to portico.

1961 the Jordanians formally recognized Ethiopian ownership of the two chapels and the passageway and transferred to the Ethiopians the keys for the passage to the Holy Sepulcher. After official Egyptian intervention, the decision was suspended and the previous situation was restored. As mentioned earlier the most violent disagreement between the Copts and the Ethiopians erupted on Easter in 1970 when the Ethiopians changed the locks to the access route. A fistfight between the two protagonists in June 2002 resulted in the hospitalization of eleven monks: “. . . chairs, iron bars, and fists flew on the roof of one of the most revered sites

in Christianity, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. When the dust cleared, seven Ethiopian monks and four Coptic monks had been injured. The fight started when an Egyptian monk decided to move his chair into the shade – technically, argued the Ethiopians, encroaching on the latter’s jurisdiction.”²⁴

The Ethiopian liturgical ceremonies are especially lively with colorful vestments and some basic African rituals like clapping hands, dancing to drumbeats, and burning incense. As in other Orthodox churches, there is no seating, and shoes must be removed during services. Perhaps the most memorable ceremony is on the eve of Easter, under a bright moonlight, when they celebrate the Resurrection on the roof of the Holy Sepulcher, dancing three times around the chapel under ceremonial umbrellas, searching for the body of Christ. It is a dramatic reminder of their African roots and remains a highly popular ceremony for the intrepid tourists and religious pilgrims in Jerusalem.

The Ethiopian Community Outside of the Old City

In addition to the lanky, austere-looking monks living on the rooftop of the Holy Sepulcher, Jerusalem has also been home to a small community of lay Ethiopians, mostly tradesmen engaged in supporting the monks by taking on odd jobs. I remember from the summer evenings of my childhood, the *habashi* peanut vendors peddling the fresh, aromatic, roasted peanuts on Jaffa Road and in the Old City near the Lutheran church. They carried small portable ovens to roast the peanuts and would dispense them in cones made of old newspapers. We called the tasty peanuts *fustuq abid*, which translates literally as the peanut of slaves.

The main street facing north from Damascus Gate and curving to the west towards Jaffa Road was built in the Ottoman era to accommodate Jerusalem’s expanding population. Several hospitals and foreign consulates were erected on what became known in mandate days as *shari’ al-nabi*, Prophets’ Street.²⁵ It was along this street that the Ethiopian community, urged and supported by the imperial family, settled in the 1880s. A side street, leading north, became known as Abyssinian Street. The land had been purchased

in 1910 and construction begun after Ethiopian empress Taytu Betul had pressured her adviser Katarina Hall, to persuade her son-in-law – Baron Plato von Ustinov, who owned the Hôtel du Parc in Jaffa (figure 4) – to acquire property in Jerusalem.²⁶

After von Ustinov died in 1917 his widow Magdalena sold the inherited property to Ethiopian nobility, encouraged by the empress who was instrumental in completing the buildings. The circular domed Mount of Paradise Church and the convent, which currently houses Ethiopian Orthodox nuns, were built according to plans of the renowned German architect Conrad Schick.²⁷ In 1924, Empress Zawditu of Ethiopia, while on a pilgrimage to the Holy City, expanded the construction. Near the church, a building was erected to house the community of lay Ethiopians. Another elaborate building was built in 1928 and designated as a palace (figure 5). Some of the buildings in the compound are currently rented out and provide much needed income for the maintenance of the monks in the Old City.

Haile Selassie`s First Visit to Jerusalem

Haile Selassie (1892–1975), whose name literally means Power of the Trinity, was born Tafari Makonnen Walda Mikael, from imperial lineage through his paternal grandmother, Princess Tenagnework Sahle Selassie, who was an aunt of an earlier ruler, the Emperor Menelik II. In 1916 at the age of twenty-four years she was chosen to become the regent of Abyssinia, nominally becoming head of state (*ras*) and heir to the throne, which was then occupied by Empress Zawditu who had no offspring.²⁸ Haile Selassie`s education from private European tutors inspired him to modernize Ethiopia and abolish slavery, and allowed him to be fluent in French, which remained his preferred language of communication with foreigners. He was instrumental in having Ethiopia admitted to the League of Nations in 1923, thus acquiring a seat in the highest global forum. In response to invitations from European monarchs and heads of states, the Ethiopian government approved his request to make official visits to Western capitals.²⁹ Previous monarchs had travelled abroad but this was the first time that a regent was requesting to travel as the representative of the state.³⁰



Figure 4. Modern view of von Ustinov`s Hôtel du Parc in Jaffa.



Figure 5. Palace built in 1928 with the Lion of Judah inlay. Photo taken by Carol Khoury in 2017.

In April of 1924 he made his international debut by taking an extensive trip to Europe and the Middle East to establish diplomatic relationships. He travelled by rail to the port city of Djibouti, a French colony in French Eritrea and sailed to Egypt on the SS Porthos of the French Messageries Maritimes shipping line. He then boarded the train at Qantara for Jerusalem. The Abyssinian royalty traditionally has had a strong affection for Jerusalem and members of the royal family had visited the Holy City in the past. He was welcomed at the Jerusalem train station by the British high commissioner Sir Herbert Samuel and reigning religious dignitaries. His first stop was the Holy Sepulcher for which he had a particular attachment. His trip coincided with Easter week so he was able to take part in all of the traditional ceremonies, culminating in the ceremony of the Holy Fire in the Holy Sepulcher on Easter Saturday. He then spent ten days visiting significant holy and historic sites in Jerusalem and the rest of the country.³¹

Haile Selassie had come to Jerusalem with very clear objectives. As a devout Christian he was making a solemn pilgrimage following in the footsteps of his father. He visited all of the venerated sites, genuflected and “kissed every sacred stone.”³² He also wanted to affirm his allegiance to the Abyssinian faith and clear his reputation from allegations in Addis Ababa that he had converted to Catholicism while being tutored by a French Catholic monsignor. Additionally he referred to his visit as a “business trip” specifically to help out the destitute and disenfranchised Abyssinian community, who at the time numbered in the hundreds living in primitive accommodations on the roof of the Holy Sepulcher. He wrote to the Coptic bishop Abuna Timotewos to suggest that on his return from Europe, he would meet with him to discuss Ethiopian–Coptic grievances.

He also negotiated with the Greek patriarch to acquire as outright patrimony a room in the Monastery of Abraham, situated in the courtyard of the Holy Sepulcher, to be converted into a chapel for the use of the Ethiopians to celebrate mass. In return he donated to the Greek patriarch 375 acres of land near Addis Ababa where the Greeks would be allowed to build a monastery.³³ Finally he oversaw the Ethiopian properties on Ethiopia Street outside the Old City, which were generating much needed income to support the monks.

Among the many personalities he called on, one visit led to remarkable consequences. He went to the Armenian convent to pay his respects to the Armenian patriarch Yeghishe Tourian, again as a demonstration of his solidarity with monophysitism, and visited the magnificent St. James Cathedral in the Old City (*Soorp Hagop*). Fully aware of the historic association between the Ethiopian and Armenian faiths and the similarity of their written script, he was impressed by the Armenian community’s achievements and their extended presence in Jerusalem.³⁴

He especially appreciated the music provided for the occasion of his visit by a brass band made up of children aged 15 to 18 years old, from the three Armenian orphanages in the city, who survived the Armenian genocide of 1915.³⁵ They had been brought to Jerusalem in 1922 from the wilderness of Dayr al-Zur province in Syria, via Mosul, Basra, Alexandria, and Jaffa by the U.S.-based Near East Foundation.³⁶ Armenian Patriarch Tourian informed him that the care of these forty talented young musicians posed a large financial burden on the Armenian patriarchate. In response, Haile Selassie, as Ras Tafari, offered

them a permanent home in Addis Ababa as a compassionate gesture. After securing the signed endorsement and blessing of the Armenian patriarch, he invited the whole band of young musicians and their teacher and conductor to move to Addis Ababa and become the resident royal musicians as Ethiopian citizens. A formal five-year contract granting them full residency was signed with the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the agency that had been charged with the welfare of the orphans. The Jerusalem Armenian community enthusiastically acknowledged Haile Selassie's action. On 1 May he took the train back to Egypt and sailed on to Europe where he met with political leaders, including the newly elected prime minister of Italy, Benito Mussolini, with whom he discussed possible use of the port of Assab in Italian Eritrea as an outlet for his landlocked country.³⁷ On his return from the successful European tour, the Jerusalem orphans who waited in Port Said joined him and travelled on to Addis Ababa.

Haile Selassie does not mention the incident of the orphan band in his memoirs but he makes subtle references to their contributions for the betterment of the imperial image in Addis Ababa. Such brass bands, usually supplied by the military, were common in Europe where each country had its own patriotic national anthem. They played a useful role in the protocol of receiving foreign dignitaries as they played the visitor's national anthem on their arrival. Ethiopia had neither a band nor a national anthem. One can assume that his motives were self-serving in view of his need for an official band of musicians at his court to receive and entertain visiting foreign dignitaries. More importantly, Abyssinia did not have a national anthem, an all-important symbol to play for trips to foreign countries. He felt that a national anthem would promote national pride and a greater semblance of modernity.



Figure 6. Armenian Patriarch Tourian and the musicians in front of St. James Cathedral. Haile Selassie is fourth from the right.

Ani Aslanian describes the orphans' reception in Addis Ababa:

The 40 Armenian orphans arrived in the capital on September 6, 1924, accompanied by Father Hovhannes Simonian, and officially became known

as the Arba Lijoch (Forty Children, in Amharic). The Arba Lijoch formed the royal imperial brass band of Ethiopia and the boys were allocated a monthly stipend, provided with housing and trained by their musical director, Kevork Nalbandian, an Armenian orphan himself. Haile Selassie was so impressed with the band's collection, that in 1926 he asked Nalbandian to compose Ethiopia's national anthem. Nalbandian composed the National Anthem, "Teferi Marsh, Ethiopia Hoy," which translates to "Ethiopia, be happy" and it was performed by the forty orphans for the first time in public during Haile Selassie's official crowning as Emperor on November 2, 1930 in Addis Ababa.³⁸



Figure 7. Band in Addis Ababa with their master, Haigaz Boyajian, royal photographer of Ethiopia.

After the emperor's coronation the band disbanded and many of its members remained in Ethiopia. In 1915 there had been only 200 Armenians in Addis Ababa but the community expanded significantly and flourished under Haile Selassie's rule, bolstered by the arrival of the orphans and many more gifted Armenians. He had opened the door for Armenian

survivors of the genocide to settle in Addis Ababa. Their energetic entrepreneurship would contribute to transform and modernize the city into a thriving capital of culture and commerce. There was a steady flow of Armenian engineers, photographers, pharmacists, doctors, accountants, and entrepreneurs. They were well received and were not treated as *franjis* (foreigners). My brother Adom Kalbian, a certified accountant, moved to Addis Ababa in 1954, and soon married an Armenian woman born in Ethiopia. At its peak there were over two thousand Armenians living and working in Addis Ababa with a vigorous church, a high school and a club, but after the Marxist revolution only fifty Armenians remained.

Haile Selassie in Exile

Haile Selassie visited Jerusalem again twelve years later in 1936, but unfortunately the second visit was less auspicious. In 1930 he had been crowned emperor, ascending to the throne as the supreme leader of Ethiopia. The events of the ensuing decade dramatically altered his supremacy as East Africa went through a period of turmoil as a consequence of European colonial expansion. Between 1881 and 1914 the European powers scrambled to seize as much of Africa as they could. Whereas in 1870 only 10 percent of Africa was under European control, by 1914 Europeans controlled 90 percent of the continent, with only Abyssinia and Liberia remaining independent.³⁹

In the 1880s Italy had already occupied Somalia and Eritrea in line with the wave of colonialist expansionism, but it coveted neighboring Christian Ethiopia, with its precious mineral resources. The first encounter between the Italians and the Ethiopians took place in January 1887 when a force of 500 Italians met an army of 20,000 Ethiopians at Dogali in northwest Ethiopia. The Ethiopians wiped out the Italian intruders thus persuading Italy to delay its territorial aspirations for another forty years.⁴⁰ A peace treaty was signed in the ensuing years but skirmishes continued for decades with the Italians unable to gain any foothold in Ethiopia. The Italians vowed to return and incursions persisted until 1934 when the Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini used a border incident between Ethiopia and Italian Somalia as an excuse to march into Ethiopia. All arbitrations to settle the dispute failed, and the Italians invaded Ethiopia on 3 October 1935. The ill-equipped Ethiopians were no match for the modernized Italian army, led by Marshal Pietro Badoglio, and its unchallenged airpower. The Italians used mustard gas against the Ethiopian army and the civilian population, including the royal family. The Ethiopians were defeated and suffered heavy losses, and the fall of Addis Ababa was imminent. On 2 May 1936, the Emperor and his family decided to leave, not only to avoid capture, but also to seek a sanctuary for his family and then proceed to Geneva to personally appeal to the League of Nations. However, in the few days before the Italians occupied the capital Addis Ababa on 5 May 1936, the city was ransacked by its citizenry. On 9 May Mussolini declared King Victor Emanuel III as the new Emperor of Ethiopia and proclaimed Ethiopia as a province of the Italian empire. In celebration, Badoglio returned to Rome and took with him Haile

Selassie's throne as a war trophy; he later converted it reportedly into a bed for his dog.⁴¹

The Ethiopian appeal to the League of Nations amounted simply to a condemnation of the Italian invasion. The League voted to impose economic sanctions on the aggressor but the sanctions were never implemented, and by the end of July were withdrawn. The British, who had the largest stake in East Africa, viewed Mussolini's aggression with a mixed response of consent and disfavor, but they took no action and the sanctions became meaningless because of lack of broad international support from the colonialist-minded Europeans. However, the British remained supporters of the emperor and were instrumental in ousting the Italians in 1941.

The invasion of Ethiopia had significant political consequences. The awkward and indifferent reaction from Western powers to the overt aggression encouraged German dictator Adolf Hitler to plan similar expansionist adventures in Europe. The invasion also became a significant factor in the collapse of the League of Nations, the failure of the concept of collective security against aggression,⁴² and contributed to tensions between the Axis and the Western democracies that would eventually cascade into World War II. In Africa, it served to energize the developing African nationalist movements in the second half of the twentieth century.⁴³

The Departure from Addis Ababa

On 12 May 1936, physically exhausted and disheartened, the emperor finally abandoned Addis Ababa and boarded the train to French Djibouti with his family and entourage carrying all his movable assets.⁴⁴ In his autobiography, Haile Selassie explained that he left his homeland in order to personally present his case in front of the League of Nations and also, with the approval of the British government, find a safe haven for his family in Jerusalem. He knew that they would be welcomed in Palestine as the British had been sympathetic and supportive of his cause, although they had stayed out of the military conflict. Additionally, as Thomas Coffey writes, "he had also escaped the indignity of being captured by the Italians." Coffey portrays the Haile Selassie's final day in Addis Ababa as follows:

With the advice of his beleaguered councilors, the Emperor decided that he should leave with his family and go to Geneva to appeal to the League members for their help and support. So at two pm on May 2nd he and the empress got into their car accompanied by their sons and daughters followed by thirty court dignitaries and started his long exile. They were driven to the train station and boarded the train to Djibouti in French Somalia. After a thirty-hour journey through the hot desert of eastern Ethiopia and Somalia the train reached Djibouti on May 3rd. They were accorded full military honors as three ranks of French soldiers fired a royal salute as he emerged on the station platform. An eyewitness described him as "travel strained,

wearily, haggard and dejected.” The Empress wore a heavy veil and appeared to be “overcome by emotion.” The French governor general, who was at the station to meet the party, drove with them to his executive mansion where a luncheon had been prepared.⁴⁵

The next day, 4 May, they boarded the British cruiser HMS *Enterprise* in Djibouti harbor. The French bid a royal farewell by firing gun salutes as their planes flew over the cruiser as it departed heading north to Egypt. After passing through the Suez Canal, the imperial entourage stopped in Port Said where they were cheered by some of their countrymen living there. They sailed on to Haifa.

Emperor’s Arrival in Haifa

On the morning of 8 May, the HMS *Enterprise* quietly entered the port of Haifa.

It must have been an intimidating moment for the hapless emperor when, at the entrance to the harbor, the Italian passenger liner *Carnaro* suddenly began to blare the Italian national anthem, “Giovanezza,” to celebrate the Italian occupation of Ethiopia.⁴⁶ There was no military salute or fanfare in Haifa to mark the emperor’s arrival, as he was not on an official visit, nor was he a guest of the British administration, although a military band did play the Ethiopian national anthem.⁴⁷ Only the minimal honors were rendered: the British acting district commissioner of Haifa, C. Pirie Gordon, welcomed Haile Selassie and his consort as they disembarked. Hasan Bey Shukri, the Arab mayor of Haifa, also greeted the emperor (figure 8).⁴⁸ They walked to the nearby train station and boarded the train to Jerusalem through an honor guard of the Royal Marines. Only a small crowd of curious onlookers was at hand. In the

meantime cheery British marines were unloading the emperor’s luggage, including one hundred steel cases containing gold and fifteen cases of treasury valuables as well as ten tons



Figure 8. Arrival in Haifa, 8 May 1936. From the Matson Collection, Library of Congress.



Figure 9. Luggage being unloaded, Library of Congress.

of his personal belongings, as the diminutive emperor walked to the nearby train station heading for Jerusalem (figures 9).

The royal entourage of forty-six people travelled with British guards in the private coach of the general manager of the Palestine Railways. At four-thirty on a calm sunny afternoon, they reached their final destination, Jerusalem, a city that from biblical times has welcomed exiles.



Figure 10. Arrival of the emperor in Jerusalem railway station, 8 May 1936.

Emperor's Arrival in Jerusalem

The arrival of the emperor coincided with the Arab Revolt, which had started in mid-April of 1936. The whole of Arab Palestine, under the leadership of the mufti Haj Amin al-Husayni at the head of the newly formed Arab Higher Committee, was engulfed in a general strike and episodic rioting amid heightened tensions. The greeting party (figures 10 and 11) at the station was led by the district commissioner, J. E. F. Campbell, representing the high commissioner who was on a trip to the Sinai,⁴⁹ and by the Arab mayor of Jerusalem, Husayn al-Khalidi (wearing a *tarbush*). The Ethiopian consul in Port Said came down and led the district commissioner onto the train to discuss the details of his lodging with the court advisers. The emperor decided that his family would stay at the King David Hotel while his 30-member entourage would be housed at the Citadel Hotel in the Old City inside Jaffa Gate.

Despite the general strike and risk of sporadic shooting, a festive crowd, estimated at 5,000 people, gathered to watch this historic event. They broke into loud applause as the royal family disembarked from the train. The representative of the high commissioner formally greeted the imperial family (figure 11). The empress, wearing a topee and a long white robe, was the first to emerge, followed by the diminutive emperor, who appeared gaunt and tired. He wore a white robe, white trousers, and white shoes, and was accompanied by his constant companion, an unleashed pet dog, a white and tan Pomeranian. Next came the princes and the rest of the family. They all rode in three Arab taxicabs through the deserted street leading to the King David Hotel about a mile away. The Arab Motor Strike Committee granted a special exemption for the three Arab taxi drivers to break the strike for this special occasion. The head of the committee, the well-respected Arab nationalist, Hassan Sidqi Dajani, "personally supervised the transport arrangements and opened the doors of the motor cars for the guests."⁵¹

At the King David Hotel, the general manager welcomed them and led them to the royal suite on the first floor facing the Old City. They were accompanied by the emperor's English-speaking private secretary and spokesperson, Walda Giyorgis. The rooms were constantly guarded by British soldiers. According to George Ward Price, the London



Figure 11. J. Campbell, facing camera, greeting the emperor, with Jerusalem's mayor Husayn al-Khalidi at left.⁵⁰

Daily Mail correspondent, their suite consisted of a drawing room, dining room, three double bedrooms and two servant's rooms. Reporters tried in vain to access the emperor but they were told that "His majesty is desperately tired." However the correspondent went on to write: "the first act was to send for the hotel hairdresser and get the Emperor's hair cut. Then they sat down to a dinner consisting of vegetable soup, filet of sole, roast chicken, asparagus, ices, and fruit."⁵²

Early next morning, 9 May, he was driven to Jaffa Gate with a small entourage under police escort on motorcycles. His car was surrounded by a curious, but friendly, crowd of men, most of whom were wearing a *tarbush* or *kufiya*.⁵³ He walked down David's Street and on to Christian Street towards the Holy Sepulcher. He took off his shoes as he entered the Holy Sepulcher, and stopped at the Stone of Unction, where Christians believe the body of Christ was laid after the crucifixion. He fell on his knees and kissed the stone repeatedly as he prayed. Then he approached the tomb but had to wait until the Roman Catholics had finished their service before he could enter it for prayer and meditation. After this he was led to the Ethiopian convent of Dayr al-Sultan where he was joined by his extended family and celebrated mass. He returned on Sunday morning where the leading members of the Ethiopian community in Jerusalem joined the imperial family in prayers for the loss of their homeland.

One of his priorities during his time in Jerusalem was the disposition of his treasures.⁵⁴

He consulted the esteemed general manager of the Barclays Bank, A. P. S. Clarke.⁵⁵ The emperor's secretary confirmed the report that the emperor had already deposited from £4 million to £5 million in London banks. He inquired about the Jerusalem bank's ability to store his treasures, and also about the state of the exchange market. It was agreed that the treasures would be kept in the bank's strong room for safekeeping. The empress's own fortune had been transferred to banks in Paris, Cairo, and Jerusalem. The emperor also had with him £1.5 million in gold.

Haile Selassie took walks in the hotel flower garden, and he apparently enjoyed the views of the Old City. He also liked watching cars go by on Julian Way, the street between the hotel and the YMCA.⁵⁶ There were sometimes small, annoying demonstrations outside the hotel, with members of the Italian community chanting "Viva Mussolini." Eyewitnesses described him as feeble, weak, and depressed.

The emperor visited the British high commissioner, Sir Arthur Wauchope, at Government House on Jabal Mukabir to express his gratitude to the British government for their attention. The next day my father, Dr. Vahan Kalbian, the official physician assigned to Government House during the British Mandate, was asked by Sir Arthur to perform a thorough medical examination at the request of the British Foreign office in London and the League of Nations in Geneva, specifically to determine whether the emperor had been exposed to poison gas in Ethiopia as he had claimed.⁵⁷ The London papers, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail*, as well as the *New York Times* and the local *Palestine Post*, all reported the event on that date.⁵⁸ They confirmed that Dr. Kalbian had been officially asked by the Foreign Office in London to visit the emperor at the King David Hotel on 10 May. The following is my recollection of my father's account of the encounter with the emperor:

I was received by the emperor's ADC [aide-de-camp] and his private physician and led to the drawing room of the suite where the royal family was relaxing. The emperor was expecting me and we were able to converse



Figure 12. Excerpt of May 11, 1936 London Daily Mail article "My Death Would Not Have Helped: Negus Explains Why He Fleed," by G. Ward Price. Paragraph about my father is circled.

freely in French. The emperor described his symptoms, consisting of fatigue, a dry cough, anxiety, and the fact that he had not had one good night's sleep for weeks which he blamed on the "poison gas" used by the Italians. Then we went into the bedroom where I was able to conduct a detailed examination, looking in particular for evidence of gas exposure. I did not find the emperor's eyes to be congested, nor was his throat irritated or inflamed, and his lungs were clear. I also examined the empress and found her in good health as well. I told the emperor that I found no evidence of gas exposure but that he was evidently suffering from physical and mental exhaustion brought on by lack of sleep, anxiety, and depression as a result of the catastrophic events that overwhelmed his country. I felt that the emperor needed a good night's sleep for which I prescribed a sleeping pill. As at that hour there were no open pharmacies, I left a vial containing nine capsules of Veronal from my medical bag with the emperor. [This was the first commercially available barbiturate used as a hypnotic and sleep aid in the first half of the twentieth century – ed.] I instructed the emperor and the empress to each take one pill for sleep. I hurried home to write my formal report to submit to the High Commissioner. This report was to be cabled to London and across the world to give me my "fifteen minutes of fame."

I returned to the hotel the next morning for a follow-up and found that the emperor was up and having a hearty breakfast. He was feeling much better, more energetic, and he reported that he had slept through the night. I was asked to join him for breakfast, which I did. After breakfast we went back to the bedroom for another check-up. I reassured the emperor that there was no evidence of gas exposure. He then asked [me] to return for further visits, as it was clear that the emperor wanted to socialize. As I was leaving, I asked the emperor's physician about the fate of the sleeping pills. I had noticed that of the nine pills I had left at the bedside, there were only three remaining in the vial. The emperor's physician was quick to answer with a chuckle that apparently after my visit, the emperor was distrustful of his hosts and their designated physician, and he thought that those pills might be a plot to poison him. He therefore sent for a stray dog. One of his aides went with the hotel driver to the animal shelter near Birkat Sultan and brought back a stray dog. The emperor saw to it that the dog swallowed four of the pills that my father had left. The emperor waited several hours to make sure that the dog was alive and asleep. It was only then that he and the empress each took a Veronal and went to sleep.

On a subsequent visit with the emperor, he confided to me his apprehensions of the first night and was grateful for having been prescribed the right medicine. He trusted me and invited me to visit him again during his two-week sojourn in Jerusalem. Before his departure he presented me with the "gilded fork and knife." From 1941–1948, every Christmas I would

receive a gift of Ethiopian coffee from the imperial palace in Addis Ababa personally delivered by the Ethiopian Consul in Jerusalem.⁵⁹

Epilogue

Twenty-five years later, during Easter week in 1961, I was working at Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem when I received a call from a member of the Ethiopian royal family staying at the National Hotel on al-Zahra Street, asking my father to come to the hotel to treat the visiting empress of Ethiopia who was spending the Holy Week in Jerusalem. All of Jerusalem was aware of the imperial visit as a large Ethiopian Airlines jet was parked at Qalandiya airport in full view from the road to Ramallah. The empress had specifically asked for my father. I explained that my father had retired and that I would gladly substitute. The empress agreed reluctantly, and I presented myself at the hotel. She was disappointed that father had retired and was obviously not too comfortable with a “young doctor.” After taking care of her medical problem, we had a short chat and she recalled her visit to Jerusalem with the emperor in 1936, and the encounter with my father. She expressed her gratitude with kind words of appreciation. I did not tell her of the sad fate of the gilded fork and knife which the emperor had given to my father in 1936!

Dr. Vicken V. Kalbian, a retired physician living in Winchester, Virginia, in the US, was born in Jerusalem. He has published several articles about the history of Jerusalem. The author thanks Professor Peter Garretson for his comments on an early draft of this article, and Professor Aline Kalbian for her editorial assistance.

Endnotes

- 1 The subtitle is from H.V. Morton's account of Selassie's 1936 visit to Jerusalem. See H.V. Morton, "The Defeated Emperor of Abyssinia Seeking a Temporary Refuge among the Abyssinian Community in Jerusalem," *Daily Herald*, 9 May 1936. Morton was a British journalist who wrote extensively about the Holy Land. See, for example, two volumes first published in 1934: *In the Steps of St. Paul* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002) and *In the Steps of the Master* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002).
- 2 The name of the country was changed to Ethiopia in the 1920s. The terms Ethiopian and Abyssinian are used here interchangeably.
- 3 1 Kings 10:2.
- 4 1 Kings 10:13.
- 5 See "Christianity in Ethiopia," *Wikipedia*, online at [wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity in Ethiopia](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_Ethiopia) (accessed 30 March 2018).
- 6 His other titles are King of Kings, Elect of God.
- 7 Bernard Leeman, "The Ark of the Covenant: Evidence Supporting the Ethiopian Traditions," online at www.ethiopianorthodox.org/amharic/holybooks/arkofthecovenant.pdf (accessed 11 February 2018).
- 8 "The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: Ethiopian Church History," online at www.ethiopianorthodox.org/english/history.html (accessed 11 February 2018).
- 9 "Israel Okays Immigration for Last Group of Ethiopian Falash Mura," *Reuters*, 15 November 2015, online at www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-ethiopia-idUSKCN0T411Q20151115 (accessed 12 August 2017).
- 10 Acts 8:26–38.
- 11 The Christological position called monophysitism asserted that in the person of Jesus Christ there was only one divine nature

- rather than two natures, divine and human, as asserted at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. F.L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 916.
- 12 Raymond Cohen, *Saving the Holy Sepulcher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 193.
 - 13 The chapel marks the site where the abandoned cross was found by the Byzantines under Queen Helena.
 - 14 The Coptic Church could count on the support of the Egyptian authorities for protection, especially after the Camp David accords.
 - 15 Jerome Murphy O'Connor, *The Holy Land* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 57.
 - 16 "It is winter here and very, very cold," said Tesfaye Selassie, secretary and spokesperson for the Dayr al-Sultan monastery. "When it rains, the water pours into the rooms." Len Cooper, "Sacred Site Still Grounds for Dispute," *Washington Post*, 13 February 1993, online at www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1993/02/13/sacred-site-still-grounds-for-dispute/6f2d8a29-d797-441d-b97c-a9e317766e4b/?utm_term=.2859281771fa (accessed 4 July 2018).
 - 17 It is not clear whether or not the petition led to any improvements to the monastery. See petition online at www.gopetition.com/petitions/deir-el-sultan-ethiopian-monastery-in-jerusalem.html (accessed on 12 August 2017).
 - 18 See Engidu Wolde, "Structural Collapse Shuts Down Ethiopian Church at Deir al-Sultan Monastery," Ethiopian Satellite Television and Radio (ESAT), online at ethsat.com/2017/10/structural-collapse-shuts-ethiopian-church-deir-al-sultan-monastery/ (accessed 11 February 2018).
 - 19 Cohen, *Holy Sepulcher*, 194.
 - 20 "Jerusalem: Rival Monks Keep Constant Watch over Monastery," *Associated Press*, 26 October 2008, online at www.ethiomeia.com/adroit/deir_sultan.html (accessed 30 March 2018).
 - 21 Cohen, *Holy Sepulcher*, 7.
 - 22 "Cust Report ('The Status Quo of Holy Places, 1929')," online at ecf.org.il/issues/issue/1413 (accessed 30 March 2018).
 - 23 If a visiting ecclesiastic of note of the Coptic, Jacobite, or Abyssinian rites desires to visit the Holy Sepulcher, notification is made to the Armenian authorities, who arrange for the opening of the door, after informing the Orthodox and Roman Catholics, and receive him at the entrance, placing a carpet for him before the Stone of Unction. Two Armenian clergy also accompany the visitor to the Tomb. See "Cust Report, 'The Status Quo in the Holy Places.'"
 - 24 Chris Armstrong, "Divvyng Up the Most Sacred Place," *Christianity Today*, 1 July 2002, online at www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/julyweb-only/7-29-52.0.html (accessed on 31 January 2018). See also Alan Philps, "Monks Fight on Roof of Holiest Place," *Telegraph*, 30 July 2002, online at www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/ethiopia/1403067/Monks-fight-on-roof-of-holiest-place.html (accessed 11 February 2018).
 - 25 The street name was chosen by Sir Ronald Storrs, the first British governor of Jerusalem.
 - 26 Von Ustinov was a Russian aristocrat who came to Jaffa in 1861 for one year to convalesce in a warmer weather from a lung disease. There he stayed with the Metzlers, Protestant missionaries. In 1876, he married their daughter in Germany and then settled in Jaffa where he opened Hôtel du Parc. In 1889, the couple divorced and he married Magdalena Hall (daughter of Katarina Hall, companion of the Ethiopian empress) and had four children. Their eldest son, Jona von Ustinov, was the father of British Russian actor Peter Ustinov. Jonavon Ustinov's sister, Tabitha, married Anis Jamal, a well-known Arab Jerusalem merchant family who were our neighbors in Talbiyya. His daughter Alexandra and son Alex were good friends with the author.
 - 27 Conrad Schick (1822–1901) was a German architect, archaeologist, and Protestant missionary who settled in Jerusalem in the mid-nineteenth century.
 - 28 In the Rastafari movement, he is considered a messianic and holy figure, and the sect adopted his name.
 - 29 Haile Selassie, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress, Vol. 1* (Chicago: Research Associates School Times Publications, 1999), 82.
 - 30 Selassie, *My Life*, 82.
 - 31 Selassie, *My Life*, 85.
 - 32 Selassie, *My Life*, 85.
 - 33 Selassie, *My Life*, 85.
 - 34 Ethiopian links to Armenia go back a very long way. One tradition says that the messenger Sheba sent to Solomon was an Armenian. Many of the diplomats Ethiopia sent to the East and the West beginning in the fifteenth century were Armenians. Also Armenians were the jewelers who made many of the emperors'

- crowns. A number of the translators for and to the Ethiopian court were Armenians. (Personal correspondence with Dr. Peter Garretson.)
- 35 One of the orphanages was in the Greek Monastery of the Cross in the western part of the city (now near the Israeli Knesset) and the others were inside the Armenian convent.
 - 36 The Near East Foundation was then headed by Edward Blatchford, who later became the longest serving U.S. consul in Jerusalem.
 - 37 Selassie, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress*, 294.
 - 38 Ani Aslanian, "In the Company of Emperors: The Story of Ethiopian Armenians," Story of the Ethiopian Armenians," *Armenite*, 6 October 2014, online at thearmenite.com.
 - 39 See "Scramble for Africa," *Wikipedia*, online at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scramble_for_Africa (accessed on 30 March 2018): "The Scramble for Africa was the invasion, occupation, division, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers between 1881 and 1914. It is also called the Partition of Africa and the Conquest of Africa." Consequent to the political and economic rivalries among the European empires in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the partitioning of Africa was how the Europeans maintained friendliness with their neighbors and avoided fighting over Africa.
 - 40 Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail* (New York: Viking Press, 1974), ix.
 - 41 Haile Selassie, *New World Encyclopedia*, online at www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Haile_Selassie (accessed 31 January 2018).
 - 42 Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, xi.
 - 43 Addis Ababa eventually became the headquarters of the African Union.
 - 44 He brought with him more than 100 cases reported to contain gold and fifteen cases of treasury valuables as well as ten tons of other cargo. *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 10 May 1936. Some have contested these figures.
 - 45 Coffey, *Lion by the Tail*, 339.
 - 46 *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 10 May 1936.
 - 47 Selassie, *My Life and Ethiopia's Progress*, 295.
 - 48 For a short newsreel video see: "Empire in Exile: Haile Selassie Arrives in Palestine," *Grumont British News*, online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0vbVAQxnnk (accessed 5 July 2018).
 - 49 Sir Arthur and my father had a good rapport above and beyond the professional relationship. The high commissioner's absence was significant as it indicated that the emperor was not on an official visit.
 - 50 The emperor did not speak English. A translator (possibly the Ethiopian consul in Port Said who had joined the group) who spoke French is seen in photo.
 - 51 *Palestine Post*, 10 May 1936.
 - 52 The emperor apparently liked champagne, which was offered to him on board the British cruiser.
 - 53 During the strike all Arabs were asked to wear a *tarbush* or *kufiya* to be distinguished from hat-wearing Jews. I remember I had to carry a small tarbush and a cap to don depending on which street I was walking. The absence of Jews is explained by the fact that during the strike the Jews stayed away from the Old City.
 - 54 "Haile Selassie's Vast Personal Fortune," *Singleton Argus* (New South Wales), 11 May 1936, online at trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/81889286 (accessed 31 January 2018).
 - 55 A longtime Jerusalem resident and a friend of my father's, Clarke was a distant neighbor who lived just south of Talbiyya across from the leprosy asylum in a walled estate that had a tennis court where I often played with my brothers.
 - 56 After the first day he was moved to a suite on the main road, Julian Way, as he was fond of watching motorcars. He would watch the traffic with field glasses.
 - 57 My father served as the primary physician to all of the British high commissioners in Palestine. See David Reifler, *Days of Ticho: Empire, Mandate, Medicine and Art in the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2015), 211.
 - 58 Archives of the *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mail* and *Palestine Post*, 8–12 May 1936, and *New York Times*, 10 May 1936.
 - 59 As my father was fleeing war-torn Jerusalem, the Ethiopian consul asked to rent our house to use as the Ethiopian consulate to prevent it from being taken over by Israeli forces.

On Wings of Memory

Schmidt's Girls School: Jerusalem's Star School

Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout

Living memory is not what we remember from the past without effort, but it is the events that we intentionally keep alive. Memory is often defined as “the psychological ability to store things in mind and retrieve them when needed.” It is also defined as “the mental capacity to remember things” such as “facial memory” or “spatial memory.” When we say “etched in memory” we are referring to unforgettable events, such as memories from our childhood or adolescence. These definitions, however, do not explain the meaning of “wings of memory” for although memories, by definition, are stored in the human mind, wings of memory are the bits of it that not only live in the human’s depth, but are interwoven in the mind and psyche. These memories eventually grow wings that carry them aloft.

The attack on Palestine is not limited to its identity, history, land, and people, but it also targets the collective and individual memory, and is what gives oral history in Palestine additional importance. The subtitle I chose, “Wings of Memory,” is only an attempt to stress the importance of individual memory, for I think it is time for it to go and breathe life into this group or that, or into this village or that.

These pages describe life in Schmidt’s School,¹ Jerusalem’s first girls school, which dates back to the nineteenth century.

Editor’s Note:

This was originally published in *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya* 112 (Autumn 2017) to mark fifty years of Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem. Translated from Arabic by Samira Jabaly.

One of my most vivid childhood memories is of my older sister Nora, holding my hand and leading me to a room full of little chairs, where three or four little girls, my age, were sitting. She explained to me that this is my classroom, and that the teacher and the rest of the students would be arriving soon. She also promised to come and check on me after the bell rings. The room filled up with students, and the teacher finally entered. That was the first hour I spent in the kindergarten of

Schmidt's Girls School, one October morning in 1941.

Since I found myself in an unfamiliar place with unfamiliar faces, naturally I burst into tears, and everybody began to look at me. The teacher came up to me and said: "Why are you crying, little one?" I answered: "My sister left me here ... I want my sister." She asked:



Figure 1. Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout few years after leaving the Schmidt's Girls School. Amman, 1953. Courtesy of Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout.

"Who is your sister, and where is she?" Welling up again I replied: "My sister, Nora, she is in the big kids' class." She said: "When the bell rings you will see your sister. We are all here now, and we will learn a nice song together. ..."

As I listened to the teacher's gentle voice, I slowly stopped crying, and only then did I notice that all the other students were sitting silently in their chairs. I was the only one crying. I felt very ashamed.

How could I, at the young age of four, have known that my best memories would be within these walls and in this big playground? How could I have known that someday I would be cruelly deprived of my school, my home, and my city?

Schmidt's Girls School in Jerusalem, or Schmidt's Girls College, as it was known since it awarded students an education diploma after high school, was one of the most beautiful schools I have known or visited in my life. The school had one entrance, an iron gate located almost in the middle of the wall, which surrounded the school from one side only, separating it from Mamilla area I remember our short daily trip every morning in the school bus as it drove through the neighborhoods of upper Baq'a and lower Baq'a and Talbiyya, descending slowly down King George Street, and finally turning right to arrive at the school. We took pride in the location of our school and its buildings, which were the most beautiful on the whole street.

I once asked my father²: "Why does the teacher tell us that our school was built next to Jaffa Street, when it is closer to King George Street? My father laughed and said, "And how do you know that, smart little girl?" I replied, "From the school bus. Yesterday the bus dropped off a new student in Jaffa Street ... " He explained: "When your school was built, King George Street was not there yet, and neither were the British. Back then Jerusalem was under Ottoman rule, new construction began to appear outside the old city from the last century, and back then Jaffa Street was the closest to your school."

The gate was usually closed after the students or visitors entered. It was a beautiful iron gate with two stone pillars, one on each side. Once inside, you would see a spacious

unroofed courtyard, with a wall on the side of the entrance, and buildings on each of the three other sides. Then, you would walk in a long beautiful path that separated the garden from the playground. On the left side, a beautiful colorful garden full of flowers and green trees stretched alongside the path, and at the end stood a beautiful building with a rectangular facade stretching alongside the garden. This building, which dates back to the nineteenth century, was one of the oldest in Jerusalem and definitely one of the most beautiful (figure 2). The building was constructed in 1886; back in our days it was a nuns' hostel, with a section of it allotted to the boarding school students. On the right, you could see a big playground and a large building stretched alongside it. This building, constructed in the beginning of the twentieth century when the need arose to expand the school, housed all classrooms; for this reason we called it "the classroom building" or the "teaching building."

Finally, you see the place that was dear to all students, an independent one-floor building that housed within its walls the auditorium. This last building was located at the end of the playground, facing the wall, and stretched vertically alongside the playground. The auditorium was where the end of the year celebrations took place. It was also where we, the non-boarding students, ate lunch every day, and then ran into the big playground.

Every morning, we stood in line in the playground facing the classroom building. We would then head in orderly fashion to our classrooms, one class in turn after the other. Each class with its teacher would enter the building where elementary and secondary classrooms were distributed on two floors. The playground was a few steps higher than

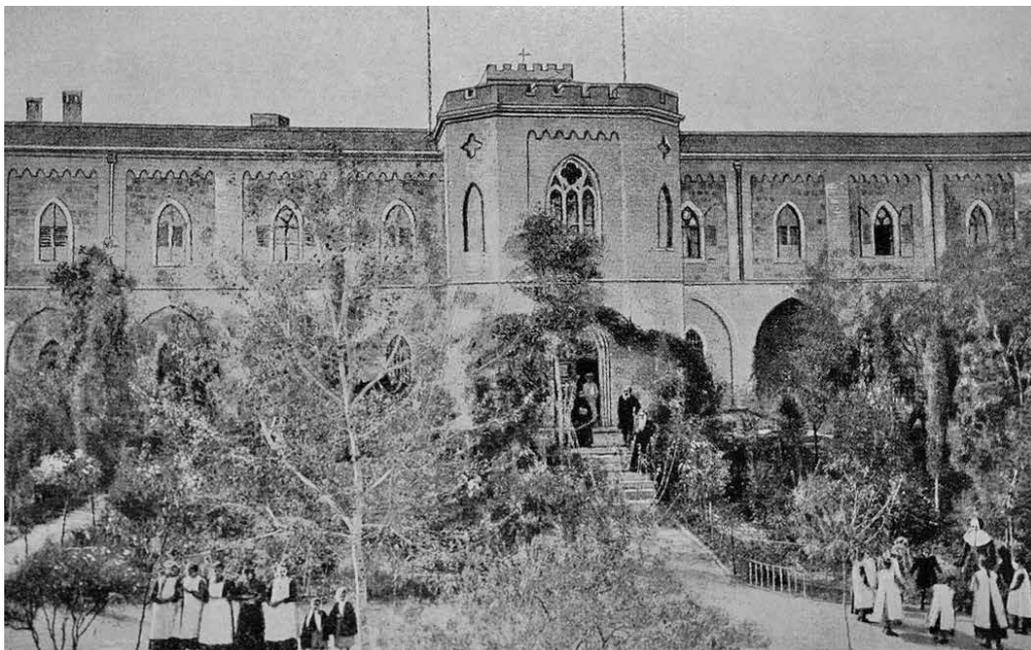


Figure 2. The school building in 1887, one year after it was built. Back then the school occupied only part of the building, later the administration occupied the whole building, and built two additional ones. Online at schmidtschule.schule/index.php/en/schule/schulgeschichte.

the first level. We, the younger students, used to descend the steps with serenity, crossing the path separating the playground from the classroom building, where I spent some of the happiest years of my life. The ground floor included the dining hall for the boarding school students. Next to it was my favorite place in the school, the stationery shop. The nun stationed there would open the window that overlooked the external hallway, so that we could buy supplies we needed during the recess. There we would find the best notebooks, pens and coloring pencils, and all the writing supplies we might need. I loved the place, and buying stationery continued to be one of my pleasures, even if I did not have a real need for them.

I was in the second grade when the math teacher, Mrs. Khoury, who was a new teacher back then, entered our class for the first time. I was startled when she asked me after reading my name: “You, Nuwayhed, do you know Khaldoun Nuwayhed in al-Umma College?” I said proudly: “Khaldoun is my brother.” She smiled and said: “I taught him in al-Umma College, and he was one of my best students. I sure hope you are as hard working as he is. Please give him my regards.” I couldn’t believe what she said. As soon as I got out of the bus with my sisters, Nora, and Sawsan, who was two years older than me, I leapt up the stairs, and there was Khaldoun, the eldest, waiting for us at the end of the first school day. I told him while still gasping for air: “Mrs. Khoury sends her regards ... and she said that she hopes I am as hard working as my brother....” Consequently, Khaldoun diligently helped me study math, until I became, as she hoped, one of her best students.

I also remember Miss Hannoush, my Arabic teacher, from when I was a bit older. She was an excellent and serious teacher who seldom laughed, but I liked her because I liked the Arabic lessons. I also liked English but, unfortunately, I do not remember any of my English teachers. As for German, it was banned under the British Mandate.

The nuns did not teach elementary classes, but nevertheless I still remember some of their names, faces, and voices because we saw them in the playground every morning, and at numerous events. I will start with the director, Sister Elia.³ She was strict, and her loud voice was often heard resonating in the playground. The school principal Father Sonnen was very quiet, and although we barely saw him, I will always remember him. Neither can I forget Sister Angelina, Sister Ghida, Sister Renata, and Sister Ludmilla. As for the priests, the most famous of them was Father Curles, the art teacher, whose talent and gentleness prompted the girls’ eagerness to learn painting.

When I was in the fourth grade and Sawsan in the fifth, we went home with the first semester’s report card of the three-semester academic year. Our grades that semester were apparently bad – I must admit that actually they were the worst. According to the school system, grades were arranged starting with the best in class, but not ending with the worst as one would expect, as the administration did not write down the grades of the last three or four students, probably to spare them the humiliation. The lack of written grades, however, obviously meant that the student in question was at the bottom of the class.

My mother opened the two envelopes and read the cards. When she found no grades,

her anger became evident on her face. She said sternly: “This is an unpleasant surprise! What shall I tell your father when he gets home? Listen carefully, these marks should change next semester, and until then you are banned from playing with your friends in the neighborhood.”

My brother Khaldoun saved us by helping us with our homework every day. He used to say, for example, “You have two hours to study, a little bit less or a little bit more maybe.” He checked on us every now and then and answered any questions we had. After he made sure that we studied well he would set us free. I couldn’t have guessed the results of the second semester, but given the teachers’ encouraging words I was sure I was doing better. We took our report cards and went home, my performance had improved significantly. I came in fifteenth place out of thirty students. Sawsan also made a significant leap, but I do not remember her ranking. Khaldoun continued to help us with our studies, and when we received our report cards at the end of the third semester, I remember that it was one of the happiest days of my life. How was it possible that I was seventh in class despite the very low marks I got in the first semester? That was definitely my first taste of success.

After this success we were finally allowed to play with the neighbors as much as we wanted. Our home was in upper Baq’a on the street parallel to the railway, and the street separating between our houses and the railway was our main playground. Busses never drove in our street, not even the school bus, which we waited for on the other side of the railway. As for cars, only a few of them drove through our street, which was not paved yet, but the lack of asphalt was not a problem for us. On the contrary, it was a welcomed buffer that spared us many broken bones.

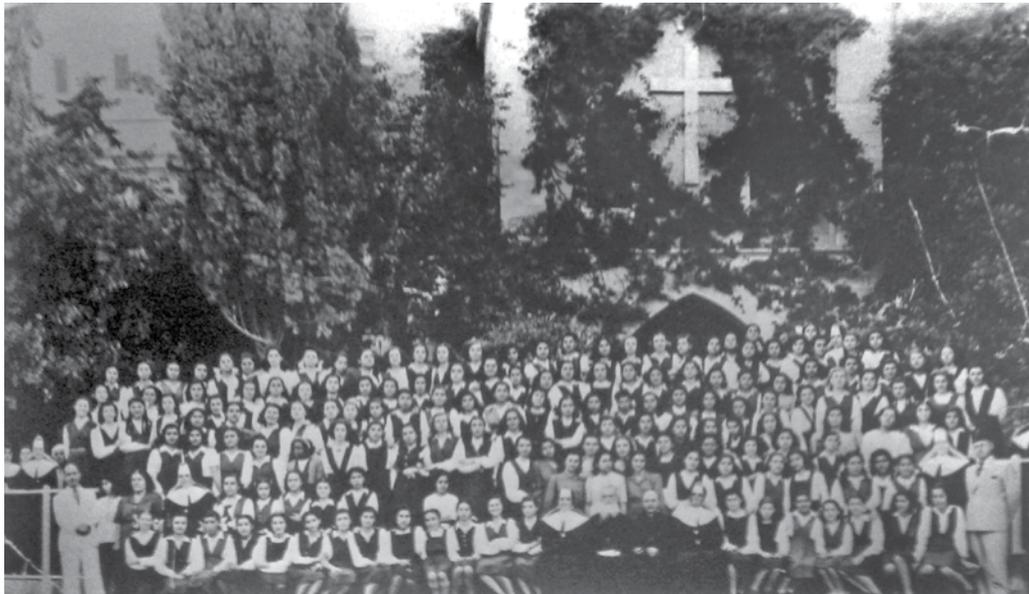


Figure 3. The famous picture that appeared in Walid Khaldi’s *Before Their Diaspora* featuring the principal, nuns, and high school teachers in 1947.

Our favorite game was “Xs,”⁴ and there were different ways to play it. We would draw the shape we wanted with chalk on the ground in one of the gardens. Then we would bring a flat stone, and the winner was the girl who could carry the stone through the squares and other shapes while hopping on one foot without making any mistakes. We also used to play with a metal hoop, very similar to a hula hoop, that we would roll down the street while running next to it, and the winner was the girl who could roll it the longest distance.

The mother of all games, however, was kite flying. We used to make kites with our own hands and tie them to a strong string that rolled out of a string ball. We used to run as fast as we could until the kite would gradually start to rise, the higher it went the more string we pulled until it flew very high. That was our favorite game. We were exhilarated whenever a train passed by while we were flying our kite, the passengers would clap and wave at us from the train’s windows. But we often took a break from playing, and talked about the next year; will the British really leave Palestine in a year as they said? Will the Mandate really end?

October 1947 finally arrived, and we went back to school. I was in the fifth grade now, and I had already tasted success, but I wanted to excel this year. During the first two months it was expected that I would be among the top five students in my class. The competition between us was fierce, and I would have been very angry had I found out that I was the fifth as I was expecting to do much better. But I never got to find out; the UN adopted a resolution on the partition of Palestine on 29 November that year and immediately a country-wide uprising began in protest of this grave injustice. Soon after, schools closed their doors, although the fall semester was not yet over.

At first, we thought that schools would reopen soon, but that was not possible since the whole country was in turmoil. It saddens me to say that we never got to say goodbye to our school, for we couldn’t have imagined that the last day we spent there would actually be our last day forever.

At first I tried to continue my studies alone. That year we had started studying all subjects – math, geography, history, and botany – in English. I liked botany, which was a new subject to me, so for my birthday, my brother got me an English book featuring colored pictures of various trees, plants, and flowers with an explanation of every picture. I always made sure to take the book with me to school to show it off. A classmate of mine, Nelly Albina, who was the best student in class, and who was by nature very calm and well mannered, asked me if she could borrow the book. I was a bit reluctant, but the hopeful look on her face made me agree. I asked her to return the book the next week. Nelly was so happy, and she promised to bring it back. Little did we know that we would never see each other again.

I did not give up hope on going to school again until the Palestinian Broadcasting Service (PBS) started broadcasting lessons, and I still remember the title of the history lesson: “Khufu the son of the Nile and his tomb.” I often thought about my favorite book and said to myself: “I wish I had never lent it to Nelly.” But when I realized that we had become “migrants” like the others or, to be more accurate, “refugees,” I thanked

God that he inspired me to give her the book, for hopefully it stayed safe with her. But if I had refused to give it to her, the valuable book would have stayed in our house in Jerusalem, and the Zionists would have taken it, just like they took my father's library, which contained more than three thousand books. They did not even spare our shelves, the children's shelves, which were placed in different parts of the house –but wait, I think I should apologize, for the word “stole” is more accurate here and rather than “took.”

The question we constantly asked ourselves: Are we leaving Jerusalem for a few weeks or a few months? Are we returning at the end of the summer to our Jerusalem, to our home, and our school? Or did we immigrate like others without even realizing it? What was really happening?

My uncle Nasri Sleem (my mother's brother) lived in Amman, and he visited us several times to try to convince my father to move to Amman, even if it was temporarily, but my father always refused. I still remember what Uncle Nasri said in his last visit: “Abu Khaldoun, there are no houses left for rent in Amman, but I found you a big house in Zarqa. It is very spacious; it has space for all your books and the books of your law firm, too. Jordan is the closest country to Palestine, and as soon as things settle down you can go back to Jerusalem.” But my father refused, and he actually never left Jerusalem. But under the pressure of my mother and the family in Lebanon he was finally convinced to send us, my mother, sisters, and myself, to Ras al-Matn, a quiet little village surrounded by pine trees. Since he insisted on staying in Jerusalem, my brother Khaldoun, and my cousin Adel, who was like a brother to us, decided to stay with him. Nevertheless, Khaldoun accompanied us on our trip. We arrived in Damascus on 26 April, and stayed there at Aunt Anisa's house for four days. We then continued to Ras al-Matn, where we arrived on May 1 at sunset. Khaldoun left on the very next day and went back to Jerusalem on the dawn of 2 May.

Summer was over and we did not return to our Jerusalem. We stayed in Lebanon for three years, during which my sisters and I went to Miss Malek's school, a boarding school in Shuwayfat. During these years, my father moved between Amman and Ramallah, and after he settled in Amman in 1951 we were finally reunited as a family. I graduated from Queen Zayn al-Sharaf School, and then enrolled in the Teachers Training College in Ramallah, which was the only college for girls at the time in Jordan. The college was established a few years after the unification of the two banks of the Jordan river, and it accepted women from both the East and West Banks.

The two years I lived in Ramallah in the midfifties were a golden opportunity for me to learn about the cities and villages of the West Bank, and get to know their people, traditions, and ways of life. I always chose the bed next to the window overlooking Jerusalem to watch the lights glimmering from the city every night. I would be overwhelmed with nostalgia, and I would wonder: Isn't it possible that one of these lights is coming from my house? I knew that the house was occupied by Jews now, but I had no idea what kind of Jews. Were they Zionists, and if they were, from which group were they? Were they Jews misled by Zionists to believe that our country was theirs, and upon arriving they found homes, furniture, and family pictures that belonged

to others? We heard a lot of stories about them – some turned into hardcore Zionists, while others never ceased to long for their homelands.

As for me, my yearning for my own homeland misled me to believe that every Palestinian was a refugee, and maybe even to say that every Arab was. Wasn't Palestine the core of the Arab cause, and the inspiration to Arab poets? But I never understood what being a refugee really meant until that day in my first year in the Teachers Training College.

Ms. Olga Wahbe, the director, came into class with three UN employees. Without any introductions, the director said with her usual dry voice: "Would the refugee students please stand up." At first the use of the word "refugees" alone without mentioning the nationality aggravated me, as if Ms. Wahbe was speaking on behalf of the UN that deliberately dropped the word "Palestinian" and sufficed with "refugees."

Nevertheless, I stood up, thinking that all the students would stand up except our Jordanian colleagues from Salt, Amman, or Madaba. In other words, I thought that all Palestinians would definitely stand up, but to my surprise only four students in addition to me did, while the majority remained comfortably seated in their chairs. I was so furious when I saw Samira Nussaybeh, my best friend, and also a Jerusalemite, sitting there as if the whole thing did not concern her. What is going on? God, was I the only stupid one? It was clear that everyone except me knew the rules of the game and knew exactly what the word "refugees" meant. Of the students who stood with me, two were colleagues from Jaffa, one was from Ramleh, and another was from Talbiyya neighborhood in Jerusalem. I was the fifth one, from the upper Baq'a neighborhood. Jerusalemites from the Old City or Shaykh Jarrah did not stand up, and neither did the students from Nablus, Hebron, Ramallah, or Bethlehem.

I went to the Teachers College to study education, a subject I found myself excelling at, as I was first in my class in both years, but it was obvious that I did not know the A-B-Cs of my people's history. Who exactly were the refugees? Who were they from the Palestinian perspective – not the legal one.

One spring day my colleague in the Teachers College came up to me and said: "There are two visitors here for you." I ran down the stairs to the first floor to find Aida and Buran al-Khadra, my cousins, waiting for me. Aunt Anisa and Uncle Subhi al-Khadra and their children were our only relatives in Palestine. My aunt's house in al-Namamreh neighborhood was not very far away from ours. This pleasant surprise made me very happy. Uncle Subhi's family left Jerusalem after he was appointed as representative of Palestine in the Arab League's Military Committee based in Damascus. I will never forget that cold morning when we stood at the balcony waiting for my aunt and her family. Around 9:00 am a big taxi parked in front of our house and my Aunt and her children Aida, Buran, and Faysal climbed out of it. As for Salma, she had already married, became a mother, and moved with her husband Burhan al-Jayyusi who was working abroad. Uncle Subhi had already moved to Damascus as soon as his appointment was announced. We had breakfast together and then we said goodbye. I accompanied them to the car to say the final goodbye. I held my aunt's hand, as I loved her very much, and seeing her leave was painful for me.

It occurred to me to pull Buran, who was walking beside me, by her coat and ask her without my aunt noticing, about which relatives they had left at home to take care of it, because we heard from the neighbors about the horrors that happened to abandoned houses. But I do not know why I didn't at the end. We were walking together, but the truth is we were each in our separate worlds. As soon as we crossed the garden and reached the street, I felt my aunt lovingly squeeze my hand, which was still in hers. Before she let go of it, she patted me on the shoulder tenderly, turned to look at a big truck parked under the eucalyptus trees and signaled to its driver to come closer. The truck came closer ... and to my surprise it was followed by another one. I thanked God I did not ask Buran – because it was obvious that their house's furniture and everything in it was on those two trucks.

Even after all these years, I still can't explain my feelings at that moment or that day. How can I forget the date? It was 9 January 1948, which was also Jinan's birthday (my little sister). I locked myself up in my bedroom and cried for a long time. I did not cry because we were left alone without any relatives in Palestine, or from the pain of separation. I cried because I couldn't ignore the feelings that suffocated me whenever I heard that another family was leaving town. Moreover, I saw with my own eyes today how the people who were the closest to me left. I did not believe my mother when she said that they were only leaving temporarily because of Uncle Subhi's new job. I knew she was just saying that to calm me down, but to no avail. I remember asking my mother a few days later: "If Uncle Subhi decides to go back to practicing law one day, will he load all the furniture and books and come back again?" My mother's silence was my answer.

To see Aida and Buran that Sunday was a pleasant surprise. I was unaware that they had been visiting my family in Amman, and that they were coming to visit me in Ramallah. Aida asked, "Would you come with us to Jerusalem?" I said in return, "Do you even have to ask?"

Aida was several years older than me. She had been a senior in Schmidt's School when I was in my first elementary classes. I used to intentionally stop her while she walked with her friends in the playground to ask a question or ask her for a piaster or two to buy something from the peddler standing at the school's entrance, and she always showered me with love. The truth is I had no use for the piaster or two, but I wanted my friends Elsie, Nadia, and Widad to see me talking to her, to prove to them that she was my cousin, which means someone I can go to if we fight over who starts in the X game or jump rope. Buran, who was the youngest of her sisters, and almost as old as my older sister Nora, gave me special attention. She often asked my mother if she could take me with her to visit a friend or take a walk. We used to take long walks in the main commercial street in lower Baq'a. I liked the shops there, especially an elegant one that sold books and magazines and another that sold flowers.

The trip from Ramallah to Jerusalem took about twenty minutes by car. We soon got out of the car next to Damascus Gate. My God, how beautiful the place was ... we walked around for a while, and then we stood in front of "Schmidt's School" in its

new location, where it had moved after al-Nakba. I had passed by it several times with my friends from college, but it never occurred to me to go in and announce myself. I feared that I would not be able to hold my tears when I found myself a stranger in a place so dear to my heart. Salma, my eldest cousin, was a Schmidt graduate, and so was Aida. Buran, however, had not yet finished high school by 1948, the year of al-Nakba, yet she was sure the nuns would remember her. I said: "What about me? Nobody will remember me, but at least I remember, and that makes me happy."

We rang the bell because the gate was closed. Soon after a nun came to open the door and asked us what we wanted. Aida told her that we were "Schmidt" students. The nun smiled and led us inside, Sister Angelina was the first to see us, her face shone with happiness and she said: "I am so happy to see you all, very happy. Of course, I would never forget the three Khadra sisters, and the three Nuwayhed sisters. She looked at me and said: "I believe you were the youngest. I remember your sisters, but why can't I remember you? I should though." She started asking me questions about my class and teachers. We were still standing at the entrance, but word got out, and Sister Ghida and Sister Renata came to greet us. I felt like we went back in time on a magic carpet; the faces were the same, and the nuns I knew as a child in school were there standing in front of me. This meeting, full of love and joy, was an unexpected surprise.

They invited us to the reception room, and the nuns started relating in detail how they managed to bring all the school furniture and files from the old location, and how they did not even leave one shred of paper behind. Sister Angelina said that Father Sonnen went through hoops to get a permit from the Israeli authorities to move the school furniture. Sister Ghida added that they needed more than sixty trucks to move the furniture and everything from the school. The only thing they couldn't take with them was a big marble table attached to the floor in the geography room. Some suggested that it should be pulled out in any way possible, and moved to the new location, but others did not agree. Finally, the table stayed alone in the old classroom building, vacant of furniture but not of its eventful past. The table remained there as a witness of the good old days.

Years later, in the twenty-first century, in the age of internet and Google, I read about the first geography teacher in Palestine, Mr. Nicola Qattan from Bethlehem, and the author of the first geography book published in Jerusalem, titled *The Geography of the Near East*. I also learned that in the early 1940s, Qattan was a geography teacher in the Arab College and Schmidt's School. I remembered what Sister Ghida said, and I thought to myself, if I had met Mr. Qattan I would have asked him to describe the contents of the geography room to me: the equipment, maps, and learning tools, and I would have asked him or even pleaded with him to describe the marble table to me.

Suddenly I heard a voice I haven't heard since I was forced to leave my school after the 29 November 1947.⁵ Sister Elia, our director, had suddenly appeared and she was shocked to see us. She greeted us with love, and even spoke in Arabic not English, maybe because her feelings flowed out spontaneously, or maybe because she was the only one whose mother tongue was Arabic. I was very sad when I noticed how much she had aged, and how she looked thin now, unlike her usual round, vivacious self.

Sister Elia asked me: “How is your father? We tried to call him during the last two weeks because Father Sonnen wanted to speak to him, but nobody picked up the phone, neither at the office nor at home. You probably don’t remember anything about these days. We learned that you went to Lebanon with your mother.” I replied:

Well, there was nobody to answer the phone in the law office because it was closed. As for the house, I know that my father spent most of his time in Ahmad Hilmi Pasha’s office, head of the Arab Higher Committee, to work and discuss matters, and he mostly took my brother with him. The committee’s office was in lower Baq’a, not very far away from our house. But you know what, Sister Elia? I can still remember something from these days, an important thing actually. It just occurred to me when you mentioned the phone – our home telephone number was 4702, and the office number was 5155.

Sister Renata said with a sad smile on her face, “War pains are the same everywhere, they are in Palestine just like they were in Germany. Many of us lost their homes after the world war, and they found consolation in their memories, in a telephone number or a post box number.” Sister Angelina looked at me and said, as if quizzing me: “Do you remember the post box number?” I replied excitedly: “Of course Sister Angelina, it was 425. I was in charge of organizing father’s mail, and he usually kept the envelope with each letter.”

Each nun invited us to her room, and offered us beverages and sweets. We were overwhelmed by their hospitality. They were expressing their happiness in remembering with us the “original Schmidt school.” It was noon when Aida said, “We wish we could stay longer, but we must go now. We promise to visit whenever we are in Jerusalem.” Sister Elia protested saying, “I won’t let you go before you see Father Sonnen.” We entered the old priest’s office, his desk covered with books, folders, and papers. He raised his head as Sister Angelina leaned in to tell him who we were. He slowly stood up taken by surprise. We couldn’t hear his voice, as it was clear that he was overcome by emotions and wasn’t able to speak. I will never forget the way he looked that day. In front of me stood a dignified old man, approaching the end of his life, yet he was still working just like he did for more than fifty years. Father Sonnen came to Tabariyya in Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century, and since he settled in Schmidt’s School, he never left again.

There was silence in the room, the priest’s hands were shaking, and he was focusing his eyes on the table. We were not sure what he was trying to do, until Sister Angelina interfered and asked for permission to take over. He was trying to open a box of German biscuits famous for their delicious taste and offer us some. That is how he wanted to express his hospitality. Father Sonnen did not say a single word, and his inability to speak was perhaps the most eloquent representation of his glorious past. For I cannot imagine that it is easy for such a dignified old man to speak about the fear he had felt in front of the threat of closing down the educational institution he devoted his life to build and advance.

If you believe that al-Nakba is a past event, then you don't really understand it. The Nakba is actually ongoing to this day. Whoever thinks that al-Nakba is a catastrophe that hit the Palestinians alone, does not know what intellectual struggle is, as it is the ultimate form of struggle that does not belong to any nationality, for it is above nationalities. Father Sonnen was German by birth and Palestinian in his intellectual struggle and belief in the importance of raising new generations on the land of Palestine, and this is what makes him a unique person.

We said goodbye to the reverend principal and headed to the entrance accompanied by the nuns. I noticed Sister Angelina watching me closely, as if she was trying to trigger her memory. We finally reached the gate, and Buran was telling a funny story about school, the original Schmidt school. We all started to laugh, and it seems that I laughed loudly as I usually do, and suddenly Sister Angelina's face brightened up as she grabbed my shoulder and said quickly: "I just remembered now ... your laugh! Yes, now I remember the youngest Nuwayhed sister."

I always tried to figure out the secret for my love and passion for my school. One incident that further proved my love for Schmidt was during a visit to my friend, Sally Makarem, in Beirut during the late eighties. I met Raghida Sa'adeh there for the first time, and our conversation branched into a discussion about colors, their beauty and how they complement each other. Raghida asked me, "What is your favorite color?" I excitedly replied, "Dark blue." When she asked me why, the question took me by surprise, and I answered after some thought, "Well...I don't know why!" She said, "There must be a reason. Let's see, as a child did you like your school?" I replied that "I actually loved it very much." She said: "I wonder what the color of your uniform was?" I answered smiling: "But of course... it was dark blue with a white shirt". We all laughed at this obvious connection that I failed to see – because I was too close to it.

If I was asked to give concrete reason for this love, I would say it is the connection between my life and the life of my people and al-Nakba. The Nakba deprived me of my home, school, and homeland, and I lived my life longing for this triangle that I had lost. But during my visit to the school and the hospitality and love the nuns showered us with, I found another reason. It is the fact that the love was mutual; it wasn't that only the students loved the school, but the nuns' love for it was indescribable too. They showered us with a love I was not destined to know as a student, but experienced as a visitor. I realized that Sister Angelina's interest in me did not come out of politeness, but because of genuine interest in all students.

Father Johan Sonnen, the school principal and educator, died at the end of 1957, a few years after his eightieth birthday, may God bless his soul.

That visit in the midfifties has a special place in my memories, and it always emerges with the constant yearning for my homeland. We, who lived al-Nakba, understand the meaning of deportation and being away from our homeland, and we always felt genuine happiness whenever we spoke with the people closest to us about our dearest memories, but more importantly about what we left behind ... a picture on the wall, a tree in the garden, the ice cream man who used to call out at the top of his lungs:

“Eskimo, eskimo, eskimo-o-o!” and how we used to run in his direction as soon as we heard his voice to buy the ice cream. What stayed with me from that visit was: it felt like a family reunion. In the reception room and the school’s entrance we were not nuns and former students, we were a group of people who shared the same experiences and hopes. It was the genuine human bond that forged this kinship between us. That is why we loved our school so much: it was not a place for preaching, counseling, and indoctrinating, it was an infinite space for love and friendship.

Almost every year I meet with a friend I knew from Jerusalem. I recall one of those incidents in the early seventies in Lebanon. That day I had gone to the German school in Dawha (Dawhat Aramun) on the beach near al-Na'ama, to watch my three kids perform on stage in school. I had learned a bit of German at the Goethe Institute, hoping to catch up with my kids. I meant to arrive early to find a seat in the front rows, not to see them better, but to make sure that they could see me watching them perform.

I noticed the school’s bulletin board which was elevated from the ground by about three steps. Since I arrived earlier than intended, I climbed up the steps and started reading the announcements that reflected the school’s development in educational methods. I heard a voice asking me about the announcement I was reading. I answered the woman briefly, and went back to reading, but she kept asking one question after the other. Irritated, I turned to face the person, but to my surprise she smiled and said: “Now I’m sure, I recognized you from your voice. You are Bayan, aren’t you? We were together in Schmidt. Don’t you remember me? I am Elsie ...” I gasped, “Elsie ... you are in Beirut, and our children are at the same school?” We hugged each other, and I asked: “Tell me, are your kids as good as you were at playing the X game?”

Elsie Haddad had been one of the boarding students. She was from Jordan, and I remember that her father came to take his daughters to Amman to attend the coronation celebrations of King Abdullah, which took place on 25 May 1946. A few days later, while we were standing in line before going to the classrooms, I heard one of the teachers asking our home teacher: “Are the Haddad girls back yet?” When the answer was negative she said: “I don’t understand how Sister Elia allowed the father to take the girls when exams are coming up so soon. Will they be crowning the king themselves?!” We found it weird that the teacher was making fun of our friend, who was so excited about attending the celebrations in Amman. I wonder if that teacher felt guilty later for mocking her, especially when Elsie passed her exams with honors.

Decades have passed ... al-Nakba’s time for my generation is counted by decades not years, but memories of my school did not fade away. They actually emerge vividly whenever I hear about how well the school is doing in East Jerusalem, or when I see photos of it, like the rare one that appeared in Walid Khalidi’s book *Before Their Diaspora*. Some of these pictures I hadn’t seen before, while others are very similar to ones we had in our family albums in Jerusalem.⁶

The oldest photo of Schmidt goes back to 1887, where some priests and nuns appear on the steps in front of the entrance and on both sides of the garden. Back then, the school was not called Schmidt yet. It had already existed for two years, but was still

known as the German school, and it only occupied part of the historical compound designed by the German architect Theodore Zendel, next to Jaffa Street. The building was constructed in 1886, and the classical facade featured Gothic pointed arches.⁷ The building – one of the most beautiful in Jerusalem – belonged to the German Catholic Institute. Since its construction, it was used as a hostel for German pilgrims, and a center for philanthropic work. The institute allotted part of the compound to the first German school for girls established in Jerusalem, which accommodated students from the German minority population in addition to Arab students.⁸

In 1890, four years after the school was founded, Father Wilhelm Schmidt, who was the head of the Catholic German Society in Palestine, was assigned to run the school, which was named after him. He was responsible for improving the educational level in the school until it became one of the most prestigious in the city, respected and appreciated by Muslim and Christian families alike.

In the summer of 1898 Emperor Wilhelm II journeyed to Palestine, after his famous visit to Sultan Abdul Hamid in Constantinople. The German emperor used to address the Ottoman Sultan as, “Father.” The sultan ordered the demolition of the highest wall in Bab al-Khalil (Jaffa Gate) so that the emperor’s procession could pass. The emperor and his wife spent a week in Jerusalem. During the visit they were very impressed with Schmidt’s School, its accomplishments, and its popularity.

Father Schmidt remained head of the school until his death in 1907, when he was succeeded by Father Ernst Schmitz, who developed the curricula. The latter played a major role in expanding the school and developing it. The German hostel and philanthropic center were moved to a new building that was constructed near Damascus Gate, known as Paulus-Haus, and hence Theodor Zendel’s beautiful and famous compound became used for the school. Soon after Schmidt’s School took over the whole building, it began to expand and a new building was erected opposite the old one for housing the classrooms.⁹

In 1925 a third level was built, designed by architect Heinrich Renard, and although his style was beautiful, it was very different from Zendel’s. The new level was much less elaborate (which appears very clearly from the window style), in order to be able to finish the construction quickly.¹⁰

Schmidt’s School did not close its doors during World War I as other schools did. The good relations between Turkey and Germany allowed it to continue teaching, provided that it taught the Turkish language. However, after the world war, it had to close for three years under British military rule, before it opened its doors again in 1921 to receive students from all over Palestine. Then there was the inevitable suspension of teaching after al-Nakba. The Nakba affected Jerusalem first, as most of the Arab neighborhoods were occupied during the first night of 14–15 May. By the end of the year 80 percent of the city was under occupation; and it has become known ever since as West Jerusalem. As for the Old City and surrounding Arab neighborhoods – that is, what was left of Jerusalem – this became known as East Jerusalem.

Under this partition Schmidt School in Hillel Street was located in West Jerusalem.

Consequently Father Sonnen decided to move the school to East Jerusalem since most of the students came from East Jerusalem and the West Bank. For those students who had lived in what was now “West Jerusalem,” they had to leave with their families and were not able to return to their homes because of the occupation. Father Sonnen, the priests, and nuns had to overcome great difficulties to move all of the school furniture, documents, books and papers, as the nuns told us during our later visit.

Schmidt’s School reopened its doors in October 1951 in Paulus-Haus, the building the Germans built at the beginning of the twentieth century near Damascus Gate. The students went back to school, and more students enrolled every year. After three years the number of students increased to 400, the size the school had been before Al-Nakba.

Schmidt’s School managed to remain standing despite all the difficulties that Palestine was going through, and particularly in Jerusalem. The administration even decided to construct a new building in 1962 to accommodate the growing number of students. The construction began, but the digging that was going on in the neighborhood by the Israeli government caused delays. The construction work was finally resumed and completed, and the new building on Nablus Street was opened in 14 May 1967.¹¹ Nobody could have predicted that a new war would erupt twenty two days later – a war that would swallow what was left of Palestine, and that would yield pain and ramifications worse than those left by al-Nakba. Wasn’t it what the Arabs called al-Naksa (the setback)?

I followed the news of the German nuns, and I learned that some of them moved in the seventies to the German school in Bab al-Luq in Cairo. Later, political and administrative developments that began with Israel’s annexation of Jerusalem in 1980 forced the nuns to say goodbye to their beloved school one by one.

Jerusalem is known for its schools; Sumaya al-Khalidi’s book, one of the latest works on the schools, includes descriptions of them from the Mamluk era to the British Mandate. The book also features a collection of pictures, among them is a photo of Schmidt’s School in its second location near Damascus Gate. Al-Khalidi says in the conclusion: “... In an area of one square kilometer you find dozens of schools and educational institutes. Their architecture is remarkable, unmatched in other cities, and they are impossible to obliterate or ignore, no matter the power of the other. ...”¹²

There is no doubt that the events Jerusalem witnessed since al-Nakba left an impact on its schools and defined their future paths: some had to close down, others managed to overcome all the difficulties and moved to East Jerusalem, while others were originally located there. One of the main signs that prove the greatness of the city and the tremendous love for it is the numerous authorities standing behind these schools. In Jerusalem we find schools associated with various religious bodies, Islamic and Christian, local and foreign, in addition to non-religious bodies, official schools from the various eras, UNRWA schools, and private schools.

We will talk about two schools in particular, as both were established as a result of the bloody events in Jerusalem. Hind Taher al-Hussayni launched her project in 1948, Dar al-Tifl al-‘Arabi, after encountering a group of children who were weary from hunger, fear, and pain. She decided to embrace them and establish an organization

intended to provide care for children orphaned by the battles and massacres in Dayr Yasin and other towns and cities. The orphanage developed in time into a school and humanitarian educational organization interested in science, art, and literature.

Another school was established by Elizabeth Nasser, who was moved by the sight of young girls begging in the streets of Jerusalem in the early 1950s, and established a private organization to accommodate these girls, called Rawdat al-Zuhur (Flowers Kindergarten). The organization grew and turned into a school of which Jerusalem is proud. These two women are a symbol of the bravery, resilience, and humanity of Palestinian women.

Hind al-Hussayni described her institution two years after establishing it: Dar al-Tifl al-‘Arabi started with 30 orphans from Dayr Yasin, two humble rooms in a building in the old city, a capital of 200 pounds and only one care provider. After a few months the institution expanded to accommodate 70 children and occupied the whole building. But this was not enough to realize the organization’s goals. In addition to being small, humidity and lack of sun made an unhealthy environment for innocent children.”¹³

In the mid-1950s, when it was easy to travel from Ramallah to Jerusalem, and when Dar al-Tifl al-‘Arabi was in its seventh year, I had the chance to visit it following the advice of Ms. Labiba Salah, my education and pedagogy teacher in the Teachers College. The premises consisted of two buildings just outside the Old City, and Hind told me that they moved there after less than one year after establishing it. Soon, the children had playgrounds, gardens, and a small pine grove, and with this the humidity problem was solved. But the more complicated problem that required years to be solved was the horrifying nightmares that woke the children screaming at night. Many of them would wake in the middle of the night calling for their mothers. Sadness and grief engulfed Ms. Hind as she spoke, but she soon collected herself, regained her smile and hopeful demeanor, and went back to talk excitedly about the children’s future.

After Ms. Labiba Salah read my essay about Dar al-Tifl, she called me to her office and said, “This essay made me cry ... but I am expecting another piece from you, a piece about the topic you mentioned last month.” I didn’t understand what she was referring to at first and asked, “Which topic?” She smiled and said, “Don’t you intend to write about your visit to “Schmidt’s school?” I replied: “Of course... I remember telling you about it, but that was a personal experience.” She asked me, “How real are boundaries between the public and the personal when Jerusalem is the meeting point for place, time, and human?” I promised her that I would try.

It has been sixty years since that visit. I sat at my computer pouring my feelings, big love, and memories into it, and I do not mean here that I was retrieving deeply buried memories, as we so often say. But I meant to release the wings of my memory, which are looking for a space of freedom to become alive again.

A Star School

As I was reviewing these pages I stopped at the title, and asked myself: “Doesn’t a student from another school have the right to say that her school is the “star school of Jerusalem”? I answered myself saying that she definitely can, but my feelings and my memories were not the only inspiration behind the title. I researched my school’s history and, I have to say, it is an admirable one.

I conclude with ten points that distinguish Schmidt’s School/Schmidt Schule from other schools in Jerusalem:

1. Schmidt’s School was the first school for girls in Jerusalem. It was established during the Ottoman rule in 1886;
2. It focused on scientific advancement and, since the first decade of the twentieth century, it was known for its excellent level in botany, and its rich library;
3. The school was the first to teach education and pedagogy, and began graduating teachers for Palestinian schools since the second decade of the twentieth century;
4. It never stopped except twice under severe circumstances, the first for three years under the British military rule and the second, for another three years, during the Nakba;
5. Today the school is one of the pioneer schools in Jerusalem;
6. Schmidt’s students are allowed to sit for the Arabic tawjihi, the British G.C.E., and the German Abitour;
7. Schmidt students are known for excelling in their studies in Palestinian universities. Among the 15,000 students that graduated from Palestinian universities in the 1980s, five of the top ten students were Schmidt graduates;
8. Its website features pictures and videos of its students. They practice various kinds of scientific, technical, and sports activities with great efficiency and craftsmanship;
9. Throughout its history Schmidt has always been an educational institution with a universal humanitarian message;
10. Moreover, the Catholic Schmidt’s School is a symbol for freedom of religious belief and tolerance.

I am writing these thoughts in 2017, and it has been seventy years since the partition of Jerusalem, since I was deprived of my city, home, and school. May peace be upon my school, and sincere regards from all your students, for despite the distance, the walls, and checkpoints, Jerusalem will always be the capital of all religions.

Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout is a Palestinian historian and author of numerous works, including Sabra and Shatila: September 1982 (London: Pluto Press, 2004). Until her retirement she was Professor of Political Science at the Lebanese University.

Endnotes

- 1 The school was called Schmidt's School, after its principal Father Wilhelm Schmidt (1890–1907), but evolved to Schmidt's Girls College, and more recently, the German "Schmidt-Schule," online at www.schmidt-schule (accessed 23 June 2018).
- 2 The author's father, Ajaj Nuwayhed, was an Arab historian.
- 3 The language of communication and titles used with the German faculty and administration was English. The use of the English titles in this article, whether for the nuns or the teachers, is intended to maintain the atmosphere of the period.
- 4 Similar to hopscotch.
- 5 UN General Assembly Resolution 181, the UN partition plan for Palestine.
- 6 Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians, 1876–1948* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984).
- 7 U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art, "The Story of the Italian Synagogue," online at www.ijamuseum.org (accessed 3 July 2017).
- 8 Schmidt–Schule Jerusalem, "Aspects of the History of the Schmidt School Jerusalem," online at www.schmidtschule.schule (accessed 26 June 2017).
- 9 Schmidt–Schule Jerusalem.
- 10 U. Nahon Museum of Italian Jewish Art.
- 11 Schmidt–Schule Jerusalem.
- 12 Sumaya Mohye al-Din al-Khalidi, *Madares al-Quds min al-ahd al-Mamluki ila al-Intidab al-Britani* [Jerusalem's Schools from the Mamluk Era to the British Mandate] (Jerusalem: al-Risala Press, 2016), 46.
- 13 Dar al-Tifl al-'Arabi, "Mu'assasat Dar al-Tifl al-'Arabi bil-Quds: al-bayaan al-sanawi, 1949–1950" (Annual Report 1949–1950), 7.

Adele Azar: Public Charity and Early Feminism

Salim Tamari

The notebook of Adele Shamat Azar (1886–1968), “Mother of the Poor” as she was known in wartime Jaffa, is an autobiographic narrative of her early struggles on behalf of destitute women in the early twentieth century, written in the form of an extended letter to her grandchildren. The notebook is illuminating in that it sheds light on the linkages between endowed charitable associations, the schooling of girls, and early feminism. It also dwells on the engagement of the Arab (*Rumi*)¹ Orthodox movement in the creation of independent non-sectarian women’s associations. Her struggle on behalf of women, like that of her contemporaries – Qasim Amin and Huda Sha‘rawi – is permeated with a modernist discourse. Her early life and schooling in Jaffa indicates her indebtedness to the Protestant and Catholic mission schools, from which she was later to disengage.

I was born in Jaffa, Palestine, in 1886. My parents, Nicola Bishara Shamat and Asina Yousef Ghandur, were renowned for their piety. Being the only child, my parents sent me to school at the age of two. My school, known as Miss Arnot’s Mission School, was established under the supervision of Ustaz Constantin Azar, and located in al-‘Ajami neighborhood, where we used to live. . . . a friend of the family used to pick me up from home every morning and take me there, thus the love of learning was ingrained in me at such a tender age. . . . after finishing the intermediate education at the age of 14, I was transferred to St. Joseph’s, also in Jaffa, to study

French. I had barely finished my first year, in 1899, when I was engaged to Mr. Afteem Ya'coub Azar. In 1901, two years later, we were married.²

Yet Azar's name is virtually unknown in the annals of the Arab and Palestinian women's movement. She does not appear in the chronicle of the history of early feminism covering the first half of the twentieth century,³ nor in the major compendium of activists in the women's movement for the first half of the twentieth century, published in several volumes by Fayha' 'Abd al-Hadi.⁴ She is also absent from Ela Greenberg's groundbreaking work on female education in Mandatory Palestine,

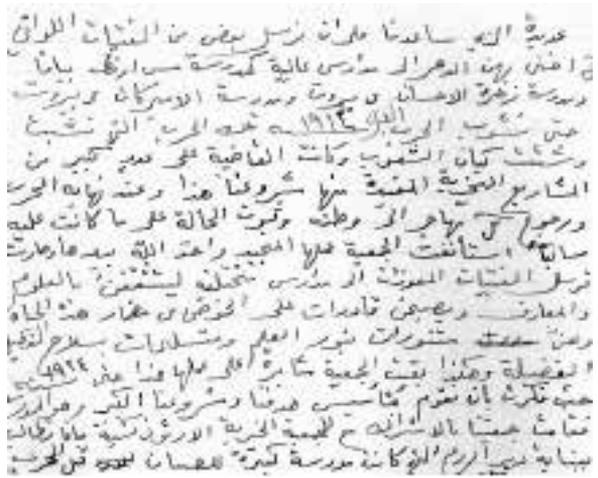


Figure 1. Adele Azar's notebook, Jaffa 1914. Photo from Afteem Azar.

Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow, even though she was a primary force in the creation of local schools for females at the end of the Ottoman era.⁵ Among the multitude of writers on the women's movement I could only find reference to her work in the writings of Asma' Tubi (*'Abir wa Majd*) and Ellen Fleischman (*The Nation and Its "New" Women*).⁷ Fleishman cites the Azar work as a source for a nascent feminist movement at the turn of the century.

There are two reasons for this absence. The first is a predisposition among feminist writers (radicals and avant-garde) to treat charity and charitable associations as outside the domain of the women's movement – or at best, as a precursor to the involvement of “women of leisure” in philanthropic activities that undermined an autonomous consciousness for women.⁸ There is also a tendency to subsume Orthodox women's groups, of which Azar was a pioneering advocate, within the constellation of sectarian and missionary associations. My objective here is to challenge these assumptions, and to demonstrate how the work of Azar and her contemporaries in the schooling of destitute and working class girls was a revolutionary episode in the creation of the women's movement at the turn of the century. A major obstacle in this regard is the limited and incomplete nature for the sources of our knowledge of Azar and her period. Her notebook is fragmentary and a truncated record of her life. Furthermore, her papers and those of her associates were obliterated by the war of 1948, as was the whole population of the city that gave rise her work and ideas. To fill in the gaps we are compelled to examine published material from the press, and the proceedings of meetings and conferences from that period, as well as interviews of surviving members of these groups.⁹

In examining the sources on the history of the women's movement and the emergent feminist consciousness, it is useful to distinguish two types of writings – those who

wrote about women in a new vein, and those who were actively engaged in groups and associations on behalf of women. The former group included literary figures and intellectuals whose careers gained momentum during World War I, such as May Ziade, Sathej Nassar, Malak Hafni, Kulthum Odeh, Anbara Salam, and Asma' Tubi. The latter group comprised the “doers” – activists, patrons, and organizers who were engaged in institutional movements such as Ceza Nabrawi, Zulaykha Shihabi, and Adele Azar – the subject of this essay. Very few women, like Huda Sha'rawi, and possibly Halide Edip (in her early educational career in Syria), combined both tasks: organizational work with women, and a literary career of writing about the emancipation of women.

The Great War engendered major population displacements among the civilian populations with significant impact on the world of women in both rural and urban areas. The most noticeable impact was the absence of the adult male population from urban centers, the creation of war orphans, and the relocation of refugees from Anatolia in the Syrian provinces. Palestine also experienced wholesale evacuation of the civilian population of coastal cities, Gaza and Jaffa in particular, as the war progressed. The impact of these events on women, often left to fend for themselves in the absence of adult males, has been recorded in documents dealing with the famine, the locust attack, and the medical emergencies encountered by the civilian population. Edith Mudeira, a nurse working with the Red Cross and Red Crescent in war-time Palestine, produced a detailed report on the health of the urban population in those times.¹⁰ Kulthum Odeh, the Nazarene writer who was a student in the Russian seminary in Bayt Jala, captured her own predicament, and those of women in traditional Arab society, in that period:

My arrival to this world was met with tears, for everyone knows how Arabs like ourselves feel when we are told about the birth of a female, especially if this unfortunate girl happens to be the fifth of her sisters, and the family has not been blessed by a boy. Such feelings of hatred accompanied me since an early age. I do not recall my father ever being compassionate with me. The thing that increased my parents' hatred to me was the fact that they thought that I was ugly. This is why I grew up to avoid talking, evading meeting people, and focusing only on my education.¹¹

Like many young women of her period, Odeh saw her freedom as coming from receiving an education – often against the will of her family, as Azar will demonstrate. But the period also saw the entry of urban women into the public sphere: enhanced education for girls, and the creation of the earliest women's associations – many of them based on charitable enterprises aimed at taking care of war refugees, and orphans.¹²

Much of the writings on the genealogy of the women's movement in Palestine and the Arab world posit a periodization which sees a progressive evolution from women's involvement in philanthropy and charity, to increased politicization in the struggles of the Mandate period and beyond.¹³ Islah Jad, in the often cited *From Salon Ladies to Popular Committees*, suggested a dichotomy in which upper and middle class women's

involvement in charity and patronage of the poor is contrasted with the later radicalization of religious and nationalist women in feminist movements with a social agenda.¹⁴ Stephanie Abdallah suggests a three- pronged periodization of the movement: the predominance of identity issues and anti-colonial struggles in the 1920s, struggle for voting and citizenship on the 1960s, and the emergence of struggles for social legislation, equality and Islamic feminism in the 1990s.¹⁵ In all of this literature the early years of the war are either ignored, or subsumed under the rhetoric of the single issue



Figure 2. Doctors, nurses, and patients at the Jerusalem Muristan (public hospital), 1898, established by the Ottoman Administration at Prophets Street, off Jaffa Road in Jerusalem. The Muristan included local and foreign female nurses working through the Ottoman Red Crescent Society. Photo from Mona Halaby, private collection.

of *sufur* (unveiling) movements. The earliest memoirs and biographic narratives of May Ziade, Kulthum Odeh, Anbara Salam, and Halide Edip provide a rich alternative to this absence. They expose the significance of war, and the preceding constitutional revolution of 1908, as pivotal moments for new women’s sensibilities.

Another source for depreciating the work of these charitable movements in the history of early feminism is related to the presumed elitism and bourgeois character of those pioneers. In most cases the elitism is seen as a derivative of the class privileges enjoyed by women like Halide Edip, Anbara Salam, and Huda Sha’rawi. Yet many of those activists, including Sha’rawi, saw their upper class status as chains on their emancipation since it restricted their freedom of movement under the guise of “protecting the family name.” Some flaunted their bourgeois placement as a marker of modernism, setting them apart from veiled and domestically confined lower classes. A portrait of the Jaffa “rebel” Alexandra Zarifeh taken in 1919 shows her wearing the latest Paris fashion in a coquettish gesture (figure 3). A few writers have pointed out that it was precisely their middle class status, and their ability to have domestic servants, that freed these women from the burdens of domesticity in order to undertake charitable work.¹⁶ In the case of Azar, and Siksik (the leader of the Orthodox Society for the Destitute in Jerusalem), charitable work was aimed at uplifting the poor while patronizing them. In any case this type of criticism is hollow. In Syria and Palestine during and after the war, unlike the situation in Western Europe, there did not exist a popular movement of working women that one can contrast with the work of these charitable societies.

In her history of the early women’s movement in Palestine, Ellen Fleishman lists the Rum Orthodox women’s association – of which Azar was one of the early founders – as the earliest existing native women’s association. Others include the Orthodox Aid Society for the Poor in ‘Akka (1903), the Jaffa Orthodox Ladies’ Society (1910), The Haifa Ladies’

Orthodox Society (1908), and the Orthodox Society for the Destitute and the Sick (1919) in Jerusalem, run by Katherine Siksik.¹⁷ In her history of the Women's movement Matiel Moghanam mentions one Muslim group only, the Mohammadan Ladies' Society, from the World War I period in Jerusalem – apparently a reference to the Arab Ladies Association headed by Ni'mati al-'Alami, daughter of the Musa Faydi al-'Alami, the former mayor of Ottoman Jerusalem, established in 1919.¹⁸ Another Muslim group was the Arab Women's Union Society in Nablus, established in 1921. Those groups were the confessional precursors of the Arab women's associations that emerged in 1929 within the ranks of the nationalist movement. The early groups were confessional, meaning that they served the charitable needs of their religious community, but were not sectarian, since they targeted and served the destitute of all religious communities. Men's nationalist activities were conducted in parallel to women's charitable associations, in a process that Fleischman identifies as “the feminization of benevolence.” This allowed for a niche within the nationalist movement, often initiated by women, giving religious associations the freedom to maneuver independently of men's control, but within the parameters of legitimacy and “respectability.”

Azar became aware before the war for the need of alleviating the conditions of poor women through providing schooling for girls who had no access to mission schools. In 1910 most girls were unable to enter those schools due to the economic crisis at the time. She writes:

At my initiative a number of Jaffa Orthodox women sought to establish a national women's association to educate orphan and needy girls. This association was the first national women's group in Palestine. It was established on 15 February 1910 with the objective of launching schools for the teaching of girls. We called our society the Orthodox Women's Organization for the Support of Orphans in Jaffa [*Jam'iyat al-sayidat al-Urthudhuksiyya li-'adad al-yatimat bi-Yafa*].

In *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow*, Ela Greenberg discusses the impact of the constitutional revolution of 1908 on the establishment of public schools in Palestine by the Ottoman administration (*nizamiyya* schools), as well as by native educators, as a counterweight to missionary educational activities. Of the latter, the Dusturiyya College by



Figure 3. Alexandra Zarifeh, Jaffa, ca. 1919. Hand-colored photo, from the Zarifeh family collection.

Khalil Sakakini, and Dar al-Ma'arif headed by Muhammad al-Salih, were the most noteworthy. However, neither of these establishments provided for girls' schools although they did recruit women teachers. The Ottoman administration established a number of primary school (*al-ibtida'aiyya*) for girls in major towns (Jaffa, Haifa, Nablus, and Jerusalem). Thus the field for girls' education continued to be dominated by Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish



Figure 4. Adele Azar at her son Saba's wedding, Jaffa, 1942, Azar family collection.

(Alliance) foreign schools. This monopoly affected urban society as a whole, since Muslim upper and middle class girls were also compelled to attend these European and Europeanizing schools. The significance of the Arab Orthodox movement was thus in attempting to break the hegemony of foreign missionary control of girls' education.

Adele Azar's deputy in the Orthodox Women's Association was Alexandra Kassab Zarifeh, an activist for women's rights. Born in 1897 in Jaffa, she was the daughter of Jurgi bey Kassab, a Damascene Ottoman civil servant who moved to Jaffa and became engaged in commercial activities. In her early youth she was active in both the Red Crescent and Red Crescent societies, in addition to her charity work in the Orthodox Women's Association. During the British Mandate years, she led women's demonstrations in Jaffa against British policies during the 1936 rebellion. She was particularly opposed to Haj Amin's call for ending the rebellion in 1938. During the 1947 military engagements with the Zionists, *Filastin* newspaper published a satirical list of Christmas gifts for Jaffa figures, in which Zarifeh was given a tank to take her to the Front.¹⁹ Unlike Azar, Alexandra began her early schooling in Zahrat al-Ihsan (Flower of Charity) Orthodox school in 1903.

The Flower of Charity was established in 1880 by Labiba Ibrahim Jahshan by a women's group in Jumayza, Beirut, whose objective was to secure a "modern, scientific" education for females in the Orthodox community.²⁰ The school was inaugurated on 13 August 1881 and headed by Labiba Jahshan and Zarifeh Sursuq. The school consciously saw itself as an indigenous answer to missionary activities in female education:

The success of our project was rooted in its response to a burning need within the Orthodox community to meet [the missionary] challenge. Beirut was in the second half of the nineteenth century experiencing a sudden and speedy growth as a result of becoming the capital of a large Ottoman province which included Mount Lebanon [and Northern Palestine]. Within the Rumi Orthodox community emerged a rich and extended bourgeois class which sought education and scientific knowledge to enter the modern world. The challenge came from the Catholic and Protestant missions that

were heavily engaged in recruiting and mobilizing Orthodox young men and women in their educational establishments. The attraction posed by these missions became a major concern and provocation for Orthodox clerical and lay circles – especially within the middle classes. They rallied to establish modern educational facilities to teach science, technology, and modern languages to their members. Zahrat al-Ihsan was thus established to be the first institute for Orthodox females in Lebanon at the turn of the century. It prided itself for teaching Arabic, French, and English – in addition to the principles of Greek and Russian.

Zahrat al-Ihsan was a magnet not only for women’s education in Lebanon, but also for young women, like Alexandra Kassab Zarifeh, from the Syrian and Palestinian communities, and the school became a model for similar educational groups in Jaffa, ‘Akka, Tripoli, and Jerusalem. Azar narrates how the Orthodox Women’s Association combined their charitable orphanage work with schooling. It was in those years that Adele Azar became known as the “mother of the poor” for her charitable activities and, after the school was established, as *al-za’ima* (the boss). Together with her compatriots they continued to send their girls to Miss Arnot’s school in Jaffa, and to the Flower of Charity School in Beirut. To confront a society that was still hesitant to accept the education of females, “we continued to arm these needy girls with the weapons of science and virtue to face life and find work.”²² The war years disrupted much of their educational efforts, since travel became hazardous, and resources dearth. Immediately after the termination of hostilities, the women’s association shifted their main focus from relief work for the poor to the establishment of their own school for girls in Jaffa.

After the war, the British occupation authorities had requisitioned the Jaffa school to serve as a center for war orphans. Azar found herself negotiating the fate of those orphans with army officers:

The government would not give us this school unless we gave assurances that we would continue to care for those orphans who had no place to go to. Thus we took over the school building. We transferred the school for boys under the tutelage of the Orthodox Charitable Society, while we established a separate section for girls under the control of the Women’s Association. We called the school the Orthodox National School for Girls in Jaffa. At its inauguration in 1924 it contained one hundred local Christian and Muslim girls. They were taught by Najla Musa, Suriyya Battikha, and Lisa Tannus. In the next few years the number of students increased to twelve teachers and 250 students.

The curriculum of the school was vocational in order to prepare the students for employment. The languages taught were Arabic and English – in contrast to French and German which prevailed in girls’ missionary schools. The school included a workshop

for tailoring and dressmaking, and had its own girl scout unit. The main resource for funding the school and the workshops came from Orthodox endowments – mainly the revenue of Orthodox Waqf estates belonging to St. George (*al-Khadr*), and private family endowments from the estates of wealthy orthodox families.²³

Virtually all the women’s associations in the postwar years were engaged in an activism defined in terms of charity, whether involving alleviating poverty, work with orphans, or the teaching of destitute girls. Both Alexandra Zarifeh, and Adele Azar use terms like *'adad* (support), *ihsan* (charity), or *irtiqā'* (elevation [of the poor]), to describe

their activities. Zahrat al-Ihsan, the most prominent women’s organization from the 1880s, took charity as its motto and *raison d’être*. But this was not the charity of endowments – of soup kitchens and *takaya* (hospices) – that continued to follow the tradition of Haski Sultan. Using the language of Christian orthodox benevolence, it was institutional work of middle class women aiming at delivering destitute women from poverty through the education of girls, and their gainful employment, as the road for their independence and elevation. One of their mainly unstated objectives was to save these girls from missionary groups. With few exceptions, their work in the aftermath of World War I maintained a distance from authority and from political confrontations, but they were at the same time keenly aware of the political implications of their work. Fleischman notes that.

Distinctions among [the categories of] political, charitable, and social in Palestinian society, [were] fluid. . . A major dichotomy in the early women’s charitable organizations existed in their maintaining gender subordination though support of the tradition of women’s work in a ‘separate sphere,’ while simultaneously creating power for themselves though collective action that ultimately had social and political implications extending beyond “helping the poor.”²⁴

Charitable work did not cease with the transition of the women’s associations into direct political activism during the 1930s, but the main focus of their activity began to acquire the adoption of objectives and slogans that subordinated their work to the national movement.



Figure 5. A photo from the Library of Congress, with the following caption: Calisthenics at Miss Arnot’s Mission, Jaffa, Palestine. Copyright 1900 by Underwood & Underwood.



Figure 6. Orthodox Women's Association, Jerusalem, in front of the Madaba map, ca. 1929. Photo by Savides, from the private collection of Dr. John Tleel, Jerusalem.

The “Mother of the Poor” Becomes *al-Za‘ima*

The main problem facing the Orthodox Women's Association after the establishment of the girls' school was the securing of work opportunities for their graduates. Except for traditional involvement of rural women in agriculture, there were social pressures against the engagement of urban women in public employment except in the more acceptable arenas such as teaching and domestic tailoring.

It was objectionable in the public mind when our school opened for young women to engage in public employment . . . even needy families who were desperate for income, resisted permitting work to their female relatives. I spent extensive efforts in convincing [those families] that there is no shame in their women seeking gainful employment, as we can witness by then in the neighboring countries of Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon. Eventually I was able to secure employment for these graduates in the departments of postal services, telephone exchanges, and in government civil service. I was able also to find work [for them] in commercial establishments and in hospitals as nurses. For this work I became known as *al-za‘ima* [the boss].

Azar's work with the destitute was an unarticulated emancipatory discourse, similar to what she saw in the work of her contemporary champions of women's rights such as Ceza Nabrawi and Qasim Amin in Egypt, and Sathej Nassar in Palestine. This was expressed in her reference to the need of “catching up” with the situation in Egypt and

Syria, rather than in terms of the struggle for *sufur* (unveiling) which is recurrent theme in the work of Anbara Salam and Sha'rawi.²⁵ This was partly due to early involvement with the Jaffa Orthodox community, where veiling was not an issue, and possibly to the absence of a social agenda in her struggle for women's rights. In her mind working with girls' education and employment was an essential component of her work in charity (*a'mal al-ihsan*) for the poor and destitute.²⁶ During the 1930s she began to appear in public circles as speaker on behalf of the women's and national movements. She also held a salon for literary figures at her home – but this is related in passing and we know very little about the nature of this salon, or the people who used to frequent it.²⁷

Azar's activity in the national movement evolved from her leadership of the Orthodox Women's Association and its linkages during the 1930s with nationalist agitation. In 1931 she was elected chair of the Palestinian Women's Congress, held in Jaffa. During the meeting she issued a call for "Ya nisa' Falastin, sa'idna ummatakunna wa qadimina hilikunna" (Women of Palestine, help your nation, by giving your jewelry).²⁸ During the Arab Rebellion of 1936–1939 the Jaffa branch of the Arab Women's Movement was established. The organizing meeting was held at Azar's home. She was elected deputy head of the association, whose executive by then was evenly divided between Muslim and Christian (mostly Orthodox) members.²⁹

The association was particularly active in Jaffa in support of the rebellion. Azar and Zarifeh, both members of the executive committee, used their experience with the



Figure 7. Adele Azar, "the Boss," in a public rally with the last Arab mayor of Jaffa Yusuf Haykal to her right, 1947. Photo from Azar family collection.

Orthodox Women's Association to establish workshops belonging to the Arab Women's Union to train young "destitute women" in crafts and tailoring. We are not told what crafts these were, but they targeted the "daughters of this suffering humanity."³⁰ During the winter years of 1936–1939 the society began a campaign in support of the militants. Azar details, "We delivered packages of winter clothing – coats, shirts, and woolen pullovers to the fighters (*mujahidin*) in their trenches and in mountain areas. We also sent food packages cooked in our kitchens to the fighters and to their families."³¹

The Association had a mixed and problematic relationship to the British colonial authority. Initially Sa'da Tamari, the first president of the association, and Adele Azar had to negotiate with the British the terms of using the orphanage and the teaching facilities. Azar explains the terms imposed by the military government were acceptable to their movement since it involved accommodating the large number of war orphans that the government was unable to take care of.³² During the 1920s Adele entertained public officials, including the high commissioner, at her "literary" salon (an exaggerated term since she seems to have limited literary talents).³³ The years of the rebellion changed this relationship; the leadership of the Orthodox Association supported the strike and sent material aid to the *mujahidin*.

Several members of the executive objected to the Nashashibi leadership (Defense Party) and its call for the strike in Jaffa port, which – in their view – resulted in moving commercial activities from Jaffa to the newly established port facilities in Tel Aviv.³⁴ Some also distanced themselves from the Husayni leadership. Alexandra Zarifeh in particular objected to Husayni's call for ending the rebellion in 1939, feeling as she puts it, "that he was working at the behest of the British."

A turning point in Azar's career took place in 1944 when she was invited to Cairo to attend the Arab Women's Congress headed by Huda Sha'rawi in 7 December 1944. Six years earlier Sha'rawi had organized the Eastern Women's Congress for Palestine in Cairo (1938). Although Tarab 'Abd al-Hadi was the official head of the delegation, it was Sathej Nassar who stole the thunder, with a long speech on the dangers of Zionism not only for Palestine, but also for the Syria and Egypt. She made headlines in the Egyptian press as an articulate and militant defender of the cause of Palestine.³⁵ But there was very little on women's rights in her speech. Like all her colleagues from Palestine their intervention was political and aimed at mobilizing women from the Arab world, Turkey, and Iran in support of Palestine. Palestine was represented by Tarab 'Abd al-Hadi (Nablus), Zulaykha (Zlikha) Shihabi (Jerusalem), Asma' Tubi (Nazareth), and Sathej Nassar (Haifa). Jaffa was not represented for unknown reasons, but Adele Azar sent a telegram in support of the conference in her capacity as vice president of the Arab Women's Union, and president of the Orthodox Women's Association. In 1944 however Adele was officially invited as a leading representative of Palestinian women, with an agenda in which the social conditions were highlighted alongside the usual political platforms. She saw this as a crowning moment in her feminist career.³⁶

I went to Cairo in my combined role as the head of the Orthodox Women's

Association, and the deputy head of the Arab Women's Union in Jaffa. In my speech to the congress I focused on the call to strengthening "Arab unity," and reinforcing Arabic as the language of education. I also stressed the need for the education of rural and peasant women.³⁷

The delegation used their visit in Cairo to meet with the press, and with other members of Egyptian and Arab women's groups, as well as with political figures, including a meeting with the prime minister Ahmad Maher Pasha. They visited 'Abdin Palace, and were entertained by Queen Farida, and Princess Shwaykar. King Farouk also invited them for a trip on the royal train to Anshas. Azar was in her element with royalty. She also dwelt at length on her reception and public entertainment organized for them by Sha'rawi, including musical concerts with Um Kalthum, and the cabaret performances by Bad'iya Masabni, the "queen of dance." Masabni was well known to the Palestinians, as she had held several summer concerts in Jaffa and Jerusalem.³⁸

During the war of 1948 the Orthodox Association maintained their charitable activities in protecting destitute girls, and worked with the remnants of the Arab community in the deserted city. Alexandra Zarifeh took over as the principal of the girls' school, and maintained the semblance of teaching, but only for a short period.³⁹ Most of the members of the Association became refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, and reconstituted themselves as the Society of Palestinian Women (1949). Their main work was with refugee children, for which they established Dar Is'ad al-Tufula (Institute for Childhood Happiness) in Suq al-Gharb, Lebanon. During the later years of Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, the institute received the children of Palestinian martyrs at the request of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Adele Azar died in 1965. Zarifeh died in 1969 and was eulogized by Yasir Arafat and Shafiq al-Hout.

Conclusion: A Missing Link?

The prevailing view in the literature on the women's movement in Palestine before 1929 is that it was either non-existent or dominated by charitable associations and upper class "ladies' societies." In the words of Hamiza Kazi, "the participation of women was passive, inarticulate and unorganized. Under a strict social order, freedom of movement for women was almost non-existent."⁴⁰ This perspective, as we have demonstrated, is both factually inaccurate and misconceives the feminist content of early charitable associations, especially during and after World War I when charity was linked with the education of girls, and preparing them for employment.

The linkage between charitable associations for orphans and the destitute to religious endowments is very old. In Ottoman Syria these endowments were often patronized by princely families and upper class women since the sixteenth century. Both public and private (*dhirri*) *waqf* were often allocated by propertied women for supporting the education of poor girls. At the turn of the twentieth century education for girls was

mainly confined to foreign mission schools (Catholic and Protestant). Public schooling for Muslim girls was confined to Qu'ranic (*kuttab*) schools, and to the few primary schools for girls launched by the Ottoman *nizamiyya* schools in the second half of the nineteenth century. During World War I native Arab women were involved in charitable work for the relief of famine victims, war orphans, and war refugees. Nursing was one of the few public employment arenas open to urban women. The work of the Ottoman Red Crescent Society allowed for a number of women (and men) to serve war victims, while ostensibly performing a national duty.

In my view the most important feature of Azar's modest diary is that it provides a missing link demonstrating the process by which local indigenous women's associations provided a base for a wider national women's movement. Adele Azar's notebook highlights the significant role of Orthodox women's associations in initiating schooling of destitute girls, and later vocational training for employment in the public sphere. The objective of those associations was to "rescue" the girls from missionary education, and to ground them in a "national" Arabic curriculum – even though many of those activists, including Azar and Zarifeh, were themselves the beneficiaries of mission schools. The Orthodox women's associations were among the first, if not *the* first, indigenous women's groups devoted to the teaching of girls. During the 1930s many of these groups adopted nationalist agendas, against Zionism and for nativist cultural education. A major factor reinforcing this nationalist turn was the internal struggle within the Christian Orthodox community against the Greek ecclesiastical hierarchy for the control of the vast resources of the church. This internal struggle was peculiar to Palestine, since in Syria and Mount Lebanon, the Arabization of the church and control over its resources was resolved earlier without a conflict with the ruling authorities. This brought the Rum Orthodox leadership, including the leadership of women's associations, up against the Ottoman administration, and later the colonial Mandate government. Azar's memoirs also demonstrate the manner in which the Orthodox groups were precursors to Arab women's associations, involving joint Christian and Muslim women activists in the national struggle.

These early associations are often dismissed or marginalized in the history of the women's movement as resting on the preoccupations of "salon ladies" – upper class or bourgeois women divorced from the fate of the working poor. Malek Hassan Abisaab in his discussion of "Unruly Factory Women," for example, questions the feminist credentials of these upper class women. He highlights the manner in which many of them, including the work of Anbara Salam's putative feminism, allied themselves with their patrician families, and with traditional nationalist groups against the working poor, including aiding state repression of labor demands for working women.⁴¹

The problem with this critique is that it conflates class struggles belonging to a later period of the Mandate beginning in the 1940s, with an earlier period at the turn of the century, when the focus of struggle for women's rights was either embryonic or non-existent. It also assumes a non-existent dichotomy – derived from the history of European women's struggles – in characterizing early Arab feminism: one which

posits a radical women's trade union and social struggles pitted against middle class institutional demands. During the constitutional revolution of 1908–1909 and World War I, the only movement for women's rights was indeed a “bourgeois movement” often led by aristocratic women like Huda Sha‘rawi, Halide Edip, and Anbara Salam. The objectives of these women were confined to the struggle for unveiling (*sufur*), the expansion of public education for women, and for public employment – mostly in socially accepted fields. Women who belonged to what later became identified as a feminist genre were intellectuals who lamented the social conditions of women in the Arab East, and aimed at catching up with a European modernity, or an Islamic adaptation to a women's modernity. They were writers such as May Ziade, Kulthum Odeh, Malak Hafni, and Ceza Nabrawi, who – with very few exceptions – did not belong to those associations.

Adele Azar in this context acquired a feminist consciousness before the term was utilized. Her path was that of charity and the utilization of religious endowments for the elevation of the conditions of poor women. There is a distinct difference however between the charitable works of Haseki Sultan on behalf of the urban destitute, one in which upper class women immortalized their names through good deeds, and the charitable associations of Azar's generation. Her work consciously targeted females whose fate was sealed in the domestic sphere and in the poor house (orphanages). The movement she launched was forged while trying to establish alternative educational facilities to mission schools, and developed in the context of the nationalist struggle against Zionism and colonialism, but it had one major focus that constituted its feminist core – the training and teaching of girls to become independent human beings.

One should be cautious, however, about extrapolating too much from the fragmentary diaries of Adele Azar. The terms “feminist consciousness,” “national movement,” “indigenous,” and “sectarianism” are used here retrospectively to describe groups and processes that began to appear during and after the Great War. All of the women's associations that are described were a highly localized endeavor. They emerged concurrently but separately in cities like Acre, Jerusalem, Haifa, Nablus, and Jaffa, where the devastation of war produced a crisis in the traditional social fabric of society. Charitable work which henceforth involved the work of upper class women in benevolent endowments (*waqf*), alms (*sadaqat*), and Christian Orthodox charities (soup kitchens and bread distribution), suddenly was transformed and energized by middle class women who initiated a movement to help the poor through education and the creation of employment possibilities. While using the same vocabulary of benevolence, these women consciously, and sometimes unconsciously, set up radically new forms of women's organizations that did not exist before.

Salim Tamari is co-editor of the Jerusalem Quarterly. This essay appeared in a slightly different version in The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine (UC Press, 2018). Published here by permission.

Endnotes

- 1 I use the term Rum Orthodox, or Arab Orthodox, here rather than the usual Greek Orthodox as a more appropriate reference to the Christian orthodox community in the Arab East, where the term “Greek” refers to the ethnic composition of the patriarchate and its ecclesiastic hierarchy. In Arabic this duality of terms does not exist, since the standard term for the Church is “Rum Orthodox.” An earlier version of this essay appeared in Salim Tamari, *The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017). The author wants to thank Anita Vitullo for her close reading and helpful critical comments on the article.
- 2 “The Notebook of Adele [Shamat] ‘Azar,” (unpublished Arabic manuscript, 2), translation by author. The notebook was written in the mid-1960s and spans the period 1912–1948.
- 3 Yusif Mustafa Rashad Issa, *The Women’s Movement in Palestine, 1900–1950* (Cairo: Arab Union Catalogue, 1997); Izzat Daraghmeh, *The Women Movement in Palestine, 1903–1990* (Jerusalem: Maktab Dia Studies, 1991).
- 4 Fayha ‘Abd al-Hadi, *Adwar al-mar’a al-Filastiniyya fi al-thalathiniyyat: al-musahama al-siyasiyya lil-mar’a al-Filastiniyya, riwayat al-nisa’, nusur al-muqabalat al-shafawiyya* (The Palestinian Women’s Movement in the 1930s: Political Contributions and Oral Histories (al-Bireh: Markaz al-mar’a al-Filastiniyya lil-abhath wa al-tawthiq, 2005); Fayha ‘Abd al-Hadi, *Adwar al-mar’a al-Filastiniyya fi al-arba’iniyyat, 1940s, al-musahama al-siyasiyya lil-mar’a al-Filastiniyya, riwayat al-nisa’, nusur al-muqabalat al-safawiyya* [The Women’s Movement in the 1940s: Political Contributions and Oral Histories] (al-Bireh: Markaz al-mar’a al-Filastiniyya lil-abhath wa al-tawthiq, 2006).
- 5 Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow: Education and Islam in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).
- 6 Jihad Ahmad Salih, *Asma’ Tubi, 1905–1983: ra’idat al-kitaba al-nisa’iyya fi Filastin* [Asma’ Tubi, 1905–1983: Pioneer Woman Writer in Palestine] (Ramallah: Ministry of Culture, 2011).
- 7 Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 104–5.
- 8 See Stephanie Latte Abdallah and Valerie Pouzol, “Citizenship, Gender, and Feminism in the Contemporary Arab Muslim and Jewish Worlds,” in *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations*, ed. Abdelwahab Meddeb and Benjamin Stora (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); see also Ellen Fleischmann, “Nation, Tradition, and Rights: The Indigenous Feminism of the Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920 1948,” in *Women’s Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race*, ed. Ian Christopher Fletcher, Laura E. Nym Mayhall, and Philippa Levine (London: Routledge, 2000).
- 9 I am grateful to Dr. Afteem Azar, Adele’s grandson, who gave me her notebook and a number of photographs from the family collection, during an interview with the author in Amman, 20 December 2014. For published references see, for example, the Association of Arab Women, *Proceedings of the Conference on Women of the East Congress, Cairo, 15–18 October 1938* (Cairo: Modern Press, 1938).
- 10 See Edith Madeira, “Report for Nursing Service, 1917–1918,” Pennsylvania Historical Society, online at discover.hsp.org/Record/ead-2053/Description#tabnav (accessed 27 February 2016). Edith Madeira (1865–1951) served as the chief nurse for the American Red Cross Commission to Palestine from June 1918 to January 1919. The Commission was formed “to look after the sickness and starvation of the civilian population in the occupied area of Palestine.” Her report, detailing the Commission’s work in Palestine, examined the medical and hospitalization conditions in Palestine during World War I.
- 11 Quoted by Iqbal Tamimi in “Remembering Professor Kulthum Odeh, 1892–1965,” in *London Progressive Journal* (17 October 2008), online at londonprogressivejournal.com/article/view/284/remembering-professor-kulthum-odeh (accessed 18 February 2018). The original quote, poignant in Arabic, was taken from Umar Mahamid, *Brufisur Kulthum ‘Awdah Fasilifa: min al-Nasira ila Sant Bitirsburgh fi al-watha’iq al-mahfutha fi arshif akadimiyat al-‘ulum al-Rusiyya* [Kulthum Odeh from Nazareth to St. Petersburg] (Kafr Qara: Markaz abhath hiwar al-hadarat - ma’had i’dad al-mu‘alimin al-‘Arab, Bayt Berl, 2004).
- 12 See Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers of Tomorrow*.
- 13 Fayha ‘Abd al-Hadi, *The Role of Palestinian Women in the 1930s: The Political Participation of Palestinian Women, Women Oral Narratives*

- (Ramallah: al-Nasher, 2015), 11–14. (For Arabic text, see n4.)
- 14 Islah Jad, “From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919–1989,” in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, ed. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990).
 - 15 Abdallah and Pouzol, “*Citizenship, Gender, and Feminism.*”
 - 16 Fleischmann, *Nation and Its “New” Women*, 101.
 - 17 Fleischmann, *Nation and Its “New” Women*, 104–09.
 - 18 Matiel E. T. Moghanam, *The Arab Woman and the Palestine Problem* (Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, 1976).
 - 19 Edward Zarifeh, “Alexandra Kassab Zarifeh, Sirat Munadhila” [A Biographic Note]. (unpublished essay).
 - 20 Jamila Costa Kusti, *Zahrat al-Ihsan: A Historical Study* (Beirut: Rum Orthodox Parish, 1996), 236. See also “Flower of Charity School,” online at ar.orthodoxwiki.org (accessed 23 February 2018).
 - 21 Kusti, *Zahrat al-Ihsan*, 241.
 - 22 Azar, “Notebook,” 3.
 - 23 Azar, “Notebook,” 4–5. Among the family endowments cited by Azar was the religious waqf established by Urjwan al-Far, which came from the revenue of commercial stores in al-‘Ajami, Jaffa.
 - 24 Fleischmann, *Nation and Its “New” Women*, 103.
 - 25 Azar, “Notebook,” 10.
 - 26 Azar, “Notebook,” 4–5.
 - 27 Azar, “Notebook,” 10–11.
 - 28 Hanna Issa Malak, *al-Juthur al-Yafiyya* [Jaffa Roots] (Jerusalem, 1996). Malak devotes a whole page to the life of Adele Azar. In her notebook Azar does not mention this episode of her work.
 - 29 Azar, “Notebook,” 11. Azar lists the executive members as follows: Wajiha Abu S’ud, president; Adele Azar, vice president; Alexandra Zarifeh, Secretary; Fatma Abu Laban, treasurer; Jamila Qunbargi, member; Fortuna Sukkar (Rock), member.
 - 30 Azar, “Notebook,” 11–12.
 - 31 Azar, “Notebook,” 12.
 - 32 Azar, “Notebook,” 3.
 - 33 Azar, “Notebook,” 10.
 - 34 Zarifeh, “A Biographic Note,” 2. “Fakhri Nashashibi initiated the movement to extend the strike to Jaffa port. He was on close social terms with the Zarifeh family, as was his brother Azmi, the *qa’emaqam* [governor] of Jaffa. Alexandra warned him that the Jews will establish [an alternate] port in Tel Aviv, which happened shortly thereafter. He was exposed after the rebellion, and was pursued by a young man from the well-known Madhoun family, Jaffa seamen. He followed him to Baghdad and emptied several bullets in his head.”
 - 35 Association of Arab Women, *Proceedings*, 188–193.
 - 36 Azar, “Notebook,” 13.
 - 37 Azar, “Notebook,” 12–13.
 - 38 Azar, “Notebook,” 13–14.
 - 39 Zarifeh, “A Biographic Note,” 4.
 - 40 See Hamida Kazi, “Palestinian Women and the National Movement: A Social Perspective,” online at libcom.org/library/palestinian-women-national-liberation-movement-social-perspective-hamida-kazi (accessed 17 February 2018).
 - 41 Malek Hassan Abisaab, “‘Unruly’ Factory Women in Lebanon: Contesting French Colonialism and the National State, 1940–1946,” *Journal of Women’s History* 16, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 55–82. See also M. H. Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2010).

The East Jerusalem Municipality

Palestinian Policy Options and Proposed Alternatives

Walid Salem

The Jerusalem Municipality was established by the Ottomans in 1863. At that time it was composed of five members: three Muslims, one Christian, and one Jew.¹ With the start of the British Mandate in 1917, the municipal council was appointed by the British in 1918 to include equal numbers of Muslims, Christians, and Jews.² In 1920 the British decided to establish a Consultative Municipal Council that included ten British officials, four Muslims, three Christians, and three Jews. This composition was changed again to twelve members when elections to the council were conducted in 1927, with five Muslims, four Jews, and three Christians.³ In the following years the number of Jews in the council was raised to six, or half of its membership. In 1945 the British dissolved the council due to Palestinian rejection of the rotation of the mayor between Palestinians and Jews.⁴

After 1948 the Jordanians held four elections for the Jerusalem Municipality (Amanat al-Quds), in 1951, 1955, 1959, and 1963.⁵ The Israeli occupying authorities dissolved this council on 21 June 1967, a few days after they imposed Israeli law in East Jerusalem, and extended the Israeli municipal responsibilities to include East Jerusalem.⁶ Nevertheless the 1963-elected city council continued operating from Amman and until today two members of that council who are alive (Zaki al-Ghoul and Subhi Ghosheh) still represent East Jerusalem in the Arab, Islamic, and international federations of capitals and cities. On other hand, elections for the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem have been boycotted by East Jerusalem Palestinians, with the voting percentage declining from 15–20 percent in the 1969, 1978, and 1983 elections, to 2.75 percent in the 1989

elections, and 7 percent in 1993. In subsequent elections the percentage dropped to 1–3 percent only, according to Israeli data published in *Ha'aretz*.⁷

This policy report summarizes the Palestinian opinions on options and alternatives discussed during ten weeks of intensive debates on the subject of the Municipality of East Jerusalem prior to the local elections in Palestine that had been scheduled to take place on 8 October 2016. The information as it is presented below in the shape of policy orientations might help in providing the raw material required for deeper academic research on this issue.

The 2016 municipal elections were stopped temporarily by the Palestinian Supreme Court on the basis of a judicial challenge to the legitimacy of its administration in the Gaza Strip and exclusion of East Jerusalem. Several months later the local elections were held only in the West Bank and not in either Jerusalem or the Gaza Strip, a matter that raises many questions.

The publication of this policy report in 2018, an election year for a new municipal council for the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem, also aims to highlight the continuing presence of another municipality in Jerusalem – despite all the hardships – that existed from before the 1967 occupation. This report also suggests ways forward for the improvement of the work of this municipality and on how to make it more active and representative, as much as possible, to the Palestinians of East Jerusalem as a democratic alternative towards the fulfillment of their needs, rather than just joining the elections of the Israeli municipality that has been imposed on them against their will in order to meet these needs.

Also it is significant that this policy report is published in the year of the transfer of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, following a decision by U.S. president Donald Trump in this regard on 6 December 2017. The report is another kind of response by showing to the U.S. administration that the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem is not a slogan, but is expressed by Palestinian facts in the ground including on the municipal and administrative levels.

In the course of preparing this report, previous studies, reports, and articles on the subject were reviewed. We relied specifically on the deliberations of more than two hundred Palestinian personalities, mainly from Jerusalem, who participated in three seminars held at the Planning Center of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), in addition to dozens of individual and collective deliberations and meetings, held between July and October 2016. I published two short articles in *al-Ayyam* newspaper in August 2016, and was interviewed by *al-Quds* newspaper on 5 September 2016, about this issue.⁸

This report begins with a brief historical review of the subject of the Municipality of East Jerusalem, its importance, and its lessons during the Palestinian Authority (PA) era, followed by presentation and discussion of alternatives in preparation for the local Palestinian elections, and ends with presenting various options for follow up on this issue.

The Palestinian Experience and Lessons Learned Concerning the Municipality of East Jerusalem

East Jerusalem Municipal elections are of great importance because they reflect the restoration of the right of Palestinian Jerusalemites to vote for their municipality. This right was taken away by the Israeli occupation when it dissolved the Jerusalem Municipal Council in 1967 and imposed the West Jerusalem Municipality on Palestinians – who rejected it, as shown above. Accordingly, it is a priority to give back to Jerusalemites their municipality that was dissolved in clear violation of international law.

In addition, the election, or restoring the Palestinian Jerusalem Municipality in conjunction with the Palestinian local elections, maintains the unity of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. It also reflects the attention of the PLO and the PA to Jerusalemite Palestinians, boosts the confidence between Jerusalemites, the PLO, and the PA, and reinforces the attachment of Jerusalemites to the Palestinian political, social, and economic structure.

In this context, reference should be made to the restrictions imposed by the Oslo Accords on the work of the PA in Jerusalem. The text of the agreements allow the PLO to operate its institutions in East Jerusalem but the text was not respected, as in many other texts that Israel signed and then breached, or did not implement, and is overdue. The restrictions did not prevent the PLO from dealing with the issue of Jerusalem and its municipality, legally and practically. The following events took place during the terms of President Yasir Arafat and President Mahmoud Abbas:

In 1998, during the term of Yasir Arafat, an eleven-member Jerusalem Municipal Council was appointed to include the surviving members of the municipality elected prior to 1967, and additional members. Zaki al-Ghoul, a member elected before 1967, was appointed mayor of Jerusalem (Amin al-Quds), in order to continue representing the municipality in Arab, Islamic and international capitals and cities.

Also during Arafat's term, the Capital Law No. 4 of 2002 was issued which included six articles asserting that Jerusalem is “the capital of the Palestinian state, the main and permanent headquarters of the three legislative, executive, and judicial authorities. The Palestinian state has sovereignty over al-Quds al-Sharif (Jerusalem) and the holy sites, and is responsible for their preservation and for ensuring freedom of worship and the exercise of religious rites.” The law also provides for the allocation of a share of the Palestinian general budget for the city of Jerusalem, and programs and plans are initiated to promote public and private investment in Jerusalem, considered development area “A” for special priority.

In addition to the Capital Law, on 10 June 2001 the Interior, Security, and Local Government Committee of the Legislative Council presented the draft law of Amanat al-Quds. The project was referred to the Legislative Council Committees on 24 June 2001, to the council on 5 January 2002, then for the first reading by the council on 21 July 2003 and finally for the second reading on 5 May 2004.⁹ It was transmitted to the president on 30 May 2004, but never issued. The ten-item draft stipulated the election of the municipality and its appointment in accordance with a proposal by the Minister

of Local Government and by a decision of the Council of Ministers for approval by the president (Article 6). It also stipulated that the boundaries of the municipality should be defined as the borders of 4 June 1967, although the Council of Ministers has the power to extend the boundaries of the municipality (Article 2). Concerning the powers of the municipality, it included, inter alia, the competence of the Organizing Committee for the zoning and construction of cities and villages (Article 9).¹⁰ On the front page of the draft law President Arafat wrote with his own handwriting “temporarily postponed for political reasons.” In view of the importance of this draft law, it was used during the above mentioned discussions as the basis for the drafting of a proposed decree on the Jerusalem Municipality, which was sent to President Mahmoud Abbas. Components of that decree are presented at the end of this policy report.

In the time of President Mahmoud Abbas, an amended law No. 10 of 2005 was passed for the election of local authorities. Article 69 of the law stipulates that “members of the Municipal Council shall be selected in accordance with the Law of the Municipality of the Capital (Amanat al-Quds Law).” This article reflects a problem since, as mentioned above, the Law of the Municipality was not issued after it was referred by the Legislative Council to the President in 2004.

In January 2012, President Mahmoud Abbas issued Decree No. 2 appointing a new municipality for Jerusalem from the seventeen members who comprised the remaining members of the elected secretariat before 1967, in addition to new members. The decree included the subordination of the municipality to the PLO, provided that the National Popular Congress¹¹ carries out its executive follow-up missions. It should be noted that the appointment of this Council of East Jerusalem Municipality came fourteen years after the appointment of the first municipality in 1998 during the period of the PA under President Arafat. A proposal is to give priority from now on to establish a democratic tradition by reallocating the membership of the municipality of Jerusalem every four years.

It should be noted here that: first, two different methods of appointment for the municipality of Jerusalem were adopted, in 1998 and in 2012; and second, the Law of the Municipality of Jerusalem was never issued in 2004 by the president, but issuance is required to address the above-mentioned legal gap.

Further, the Local Authorities Election Law of 2005 was based on the 2004 Jerusalem Municipality Law, which was not issued, and this is another legal gap that requires to be filled. Additionally, the Capital Law of 2002 stipulates that Jerusalem should be regarded as development area “A,” which requires implementation.

In both cases, the municipality was effective only with regards to the representation of Jerusalem by Mayor Zaki al-Ghoul in the Arab, Islamic, and international capitals and cities federations, while the Jerusalemites themselves did not know about the existence of the municipality and there were no actions on the ground. The municipality worked according to the decree of President Abbas under the PLO and not under the PA. In addition, Article 69 of the Law on the Election of Local Authorities for the year 2005 stipulated that the election of the municipality shall be subject to its own law. This legal context shows obvious overlap that needs to be resolved, as will be discussed below.

Options and Alternatives

The options that were considered in the 2016 debates regarding the Palestinian Municipality of Jerusalem ranged as follows:

1. Maintain the current municipality, which was appointed by President Abbas in 2012, and add members to it.
2. Appoint a new municipality.
3. Call for elections for a new municipality.
4. Select a new municipality based on representatives elected by their sectors (trade unions, women, youth, etc.).

In order to arrive at the best options on the subject of the municipality of Jerusalem, the options are presented here as Weberian “ideal types,” and the views that were put forward have been broadened to clarify their hidden and revealed assumptions, and their consequences, to help us select among the options. The names of the people who put forward each idea are deliberately not mentioned, to dismiss the idea of personalization, and to discuss the ideas in a purely neutral, scientific way. However, readers who want to explore the genesis of some ideas, and the people who presented them, can review the minutes of the three seminars at the Planning Center of the PLO.¹² The following is a reading of these options:

Option 1. Maintain and add to the current municipality

Different ideas emerged, and other ideas were unanimous under this option. Overall, those who put forward this option believe that the current municipality that was appointed in 2012 has not had the appropriate conditions and capabilities to enable it to perform its role. In addition to the obstacles by the Israeli occupation, no budget for the work of the municipality has been allocated nor its powers specifically defined. Municipal members were advised by the PLO to work only symbolically and to be invisible to the Israeli occupation (that is, in the shadows), and that the municipality’s role is moral and symbolic only – this enables the PLO to say that it did its best to maintain the representation of Jerusalem despite obstruction by the Israeli occupation

On the other hand, this option is divided into two groups. The first group sees that it is not necessary to announce the existence of the municipality – in order to avoid the arrest and abuse of its members by the Israeli occupation. The external role of the municipality should be fulfilled by representation through the personage of the mayor of Jerusalem Zaki al-Ghoul (and whoever is selected to help him) in the Arab, Islamic, and international capitals. This view was expressed by a minority of those who participated in the deliberations.

The second group sees that the municipality has not been activated in the past because of the absence of an appropriate budget by the PA, necessary to enable the municipality to play its roles. These roles varied according to different views presented, ranging from

roles of a services nature, a development nature, or a “creative character” (as it was called) in the context of the clash with the occupation with the stage of national liberation in which we still live. All of this group’s members who participated in the debate saw that the services role in Jerusalem itself to be a subject of conflict with the occupation, since the Israeli occupation authorities illegalize any attempt to provide services, such as waste collection services using garbage bags carrying the name of the Palestinian Jerusalem Municipality. There is no pure services role in Jerusalem that does not become politicized in light of the policies of the occupation.

In response to this issue, three trends appeared in the debate: One called for making the work of the municipality a matter of confrontation and friction with the occupation, with its members ready to pay the consequences; the second trend called for avoiding direct and public confrontation with the occupation, and to use long term silent and quiet working methods to create Palestinian facts on the ground in Jerusalem that would accumulate day after day without bringing attention or being promoted by the media; the third trend sees that we need to work within the margins allowed by the Israeli occupation and try to expand them, for this is the only possible way to succeed in doing things and to ensure their sustainability under the heavy restrictions imposed.

As part of the assessment, this option (the option of maintaining and adding to the existing council) has positive features that may include: maintaining and strengthening the work at the international level by the Palestinian mayor of Jerusalem, together with the silent work on the ground to build new projects for the service and development of Jerusalem, once budgets are allocated by the PLO and the PA, as is requested by members of the municipality.

However, there are a number of problems that need to be followed up and resolved in this option:

First, there is a lack of consensus among this group on the functions that can be performed by the municipality. Some want to limit the work of the municipality to the international front only, while the rest do not speak in a unified language on the three options: direct confrontation with the occupation, or work long term silently to build Jerusalem, or work within the margins available by the occupation.

Second, some who support keeping the current municipality and adding to it envisioned that the PLO and the PA would provide the necessary budget for their work, but they did not accomplish their task to identify the developmental needs of Jerusalem and its local communities, develop funding plans for them, and work with available internal and external sources to finance these projects. In contrast, the Municipality Council lacked a Jerusalem development plan and merely devised an administrative work plan for its work. It also lacked follow-up and periodic meetings based on clear agendas and work methodology. It only held some meetings immediately after its appointment but did not follow up afterwards.

Third, the option of maintaining the previously appointed municipal body and adding to it does not raise the issue of periodic power rotation as a popular and democratic right through the reelection or reassigning the authority from time to time, and only maintaining

the idea of adding to the current Municipality Council without clarifying the mechanism and method for the addition.

Fourth, the option raises the method of appointing additional members whose names will be presented to the president. However, this method of appointment may not be the best way regarding the subject of the Jerusalem municipality, as will be clear in the following presentation.

For these reasons, it seems that the option of maintaining the existing municipality, even if it is expanded, does not uphold the democratic principle of the rotation of power. It may be more appropriate to allow for free competition, including granting the members of the two former municipality councils the right to run for the next municipality if they wish or feel that they have the ability to do so.

Option 2. Appoint a new municipality

The petitioners argued that the PLO, being the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and having the unanimity of all the Palestinian people, has the right to appoint a third municipality council for Jerusalem, taking the principle of the rotation of power and not limiting it to individuals previously appointed, especially that there are many among the Palestinian people who are energetic and competent.

In the point of view of the people that presented this option, the appointment should include retaining members of the elected council before 1967, with the addition of new members, some of whom may have been members of the former council.

As in the previous option, this proposal has positive aspects, as well as some shortcomings. On the positive side, this option puts representation in the municipality of Jerusalem outside the realm of political and family rivalries, by giving the final word to the PLO to resolve these rivalries and disputes through appointment.

The second positive aspect is separating the municipality of Jerusalem from subordination to the PA, and keeping it connected with the PLO. This in turn maintains the priority of the issue of the Judaization and Israelization efforts in Jerusalem, and does not limit the work of the municipality to the issue of services. Another point of view is that the municipality should be linked to the PA and its ministries, especially since PA is no longer an authority but the State of Palestine, after recognition by the United Nations in 2012.

However, many shortcomings and questions face this option:

Does the PLO, being “the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people,” have the right to impose from above its directions and decisions on its people as an alternative to democratic participation?

Will the political factions, symbols and figures in Jerusalem be reviewed before the appointment process by the PLO? What are the guarantees that this process will be representative and comprehensive?

The next question is whether this proposed municipality will include independent competencies, as was the case, relatively, when the two previous municipalities were appointed, or would it be formed by representatives of the factions, as a mix of factions

and competencies? Or would it be a competency-based municipality that the factions accept? How can any of these methods be successful?

Then there is the question of powers. The question of whether the necessary budgets will be allocated by the PLO for the work of the municipality, especially in the case of lack of resources of the PLO and its dependence on the PA for funding.

A meeting of Jerusalem figures held at al-Dar Cultural Foundation on 5 September 2016 pointed to the rejection of “attempts to reconstitute the Jerusalem Municipality by a higher level resolution.”¹³

This option requires the consent of the widest possible number of Jerusalemite sectors over the proposed names and a suitable formula for reaching this consensus before the appointment. This option may also be merged with the fourth option (the choice of selecting members of the municipality) to hold an extensive Jerusalem convention for voting for new municipality members that would offer them the basis for community legitimacy to enable them to perform their duties.

Moreover, this option, similar to other options, requires clear terms of reference for the powers of municipality, as well as allocating budgets for their work.

Option 3. New municipal elections

This option stems from the political basis that Palestine became a state recognized by the United Nations in 2012. Accordingly, the State of Palestine, which came into existence from the former National Authority, has to call for local elections in all its territory including East Jerusalem, regardless if it succeeds or not.

Different scenarios were put forward for this option to ensure the success of the municipality election. The first scenario involves elections taking place in the local communities, and making sure to invite the ambassadors of the European Union and others to be present in order to provide protection from interference of the Israeli occupation.

The second scenario suggests that the ballot boxes be set up in the surrounding Palestinian areas of Jerusalem. Jerusalemites would be called to vote for the municipality according to the voter registration of the 2005 Palestinian Legislative Council elections and the 2006 presidency, while finding a way to update and add to these records. This could be done through registration for elections to the municipality in the same period, to coincide with the local elections in the other cities and villages of the State of Palestine, if reopened after the last postponement of the elections.

The third scenario involves conducting elections via electronic voting.

Finally, the fourth scenario, presented by the late Faysal Husayni at the time, provides for the establishment of a joint shareholder company belonging to Jerusalemites where the elected board of directors becomes the municipality council of Jerusalem.

All these scenarios face a major problem regarding the possibility of Palestinian Jerusalemites refraining from participating, especially if they are afraid of possible Israeli sanctions, particularly those related to the loss of residency rights and the withdrawal of identity cards. Some of the people interviewed also pointed to what they called the “Israeli trend,” linked to and benefiting from the occupation authorities. This may even

be directed by the occupation authorities to sort out candidates for the elections of the municipality – and succeeding.

Therefore, this option cannot be established unless the following conditions are met:

- First: Elections cannot be held automatically. Rather they must be preceded by a national campaign among Jerusalemites to be attended by all the activists of the national and Islamic factions in Jerusalem in order to restore the spirit of the Jerusalemite community and restore confidence in the PLO and the factions. In order to ensure the success of this campaign, it is necessary to include concrete proposals for what the municipality can offer to the Jerusalemite citizen in the area of maintaining their presence and endurance in the city. In light of the success of this campaign, the Jerusalemites' engagement will increase – and the opposite is true.
- Second: Formation of a national consensus around electoral lists in order to confront any lists that might be constituted by the Israelis.
- Third: This option should be followed up in dealing with additional issues, such as voter registration and how to prepare it, and how to include the Jerusalem deportees and displaced persons and their descendants who participated in the pre-1967 elections. Other issues concern the inclusion of the pre-1967 elected members of the municipality in the newly elected formation.
- Fourth: Among the above mentioned scenarios, the first one is the option of confrontation. It is desirable not to resort to it without providing the conditions mentioned above in advance, otherwise it becomes a suicidal option. The voting option in the West Bank requires incentive factors that would drive Jerusalemites to go to the polls outside their city. With regard to the option of electronic voting, and while young people can do it, arrangements should be made to enable and encourage older generations, who may not know how to use the Internet, to vote through electronic voting.

Option 4. Select a municipality

This option presents a midcourse between elections and appointments, based on what this option sees as the inability to conduct elections and the undesirable method of appointment. The choice involves selecting the municipality council by various representatives of local geographical communities, plus the representatives of the social groups (such as youth and women), and finally the representatives of the sectors (such as tourism, health, education, and other sectors).

Three detailed ways were suggested for the selection process:

- The first method is to hold an expanded conference for representatives of Jerusalem from current and former ministers, current and former legislators, and Jerusalemite members of the Palestinian Central and National Councils. Other

participants include representatives of local communities and sectors: religious, economic and academic figures; civil society organizations; members of the two former municipalities; and representatives of Jerusalemite refugees and deportees. According to this method, the conference is to be held outside Jerusalem. With this method, the conference elects the members of the municipality and constitutes an expanded council. The municipality's programs and services for the sectors, groups, and geographical locations shall be implemented through this enlarged council.

- The second method involves holding a representative congress outside of Jerusalem, with the participation of a number of Jerusalemite communities, each according to its percentage of Jerusalem's total population, and the congress selects the municipality council.
- The third option is to select a local council in each of the 22 localities in East Jerusalem from the representatives and the sectors and groups in each locality. This will be followed by the formation of a municipal council of 22 people representing all the localities and the surviving members of the municipality who were elected before 1967.

Concerning the mechanisms, it was suggested that the list of members of the municipality be selected in agreement before the conference, so that they win by commendation in the conference. This is to prevent the council and the conference from becoming two platforms for conflict between the candidates, which may lead to failure in sorting out a new municipality for Jerusalem. There are also those who believe that no one should be running for office, but should be nominated by others in order to protect candidates from the occupation. They can claim, when questioned by the occupation authorities, that they did not run for office and that they did not accept the nomination by others.

On one hand, we consider that this option goes beyond the shortcomings and gaps of the option of appointment, but in turn it avoids the option of entering into a clash with the occupation, as could occur in the option of elections.

The third method of this option is the closest to the election option, while the first and second methods have problems relating to how representatives are chosen, who represents, and who does not represent. In the end, there will be those who will challenge the legitimacy of these methods.

Policy Recommendations

This review might lead one to recommend the option of elections as a first option. If it is not possible, and if the means cannot be provided in order to ensure the strengthening of Jerusalem's link to the Palestinian national political, social, and economic structure, this policy report recommends using a bottom-up selection by geographical locality councils to be followed by the formation of the municipal council from representatives of these localities' councils. This policy report does not recommend this option because it is the best option in

the absence of elections, but because it is the least damaging compared to the other methods and options. This option provides the following advantages compared to other methods:

- Geographical locations are also the housing locations for all social groups and sectors, which can therefore enable them to obtain representation from their own locations.
- This method enhances broader democratic participation more so than in the case of the enlarged conference. It forms a broader popular supportive base for the work of the municipality which will be formed, and will strengthen links and trust between the authorities of the State of Palestine and Jerusalemites.
- This method reduces the proportion of those who are dissatisfied because it excludes them from the process.
- The municipal council is constituted by equal representation of all the Jerusalem communities.
- With the reduction of the size of the units to be chosen bottom-up, the ability to cope with obstacles such as the existence of the “Israeli trend” is strengthened since making agreement on local consensus blocs is easier than agreement on Jerusalem as a whole.
- Representatives of the Jerusalemite deportees and displaced persons, as well as the members of the municipality council elected before 1967, may be added to the formed bottom-up municipal council according to this method.

Cross-cutting Issues between All Options

Finally, there are a number of political overlapping issues shared by all the options. This policy report recommends that the Executive Committee of the PLO adopts these issues for study to take the necessary positions and decisions. These issues, along with relevant recommendations, are as follows:

1. The Geographical Jurisdiction

Prior to 1967, the Jerusalem Municipality exercised power over the six square kilometers of Jerusalem which then constituted the borders of Jerusalem. Outside these borders, village councils, such as in the village of al-Tur, al-‘Isawiyya, Bayt Hanina, Bayt Safafa, Sur Bahir, ‘Anata, and Shu’fat, were functioning. The two councils of Shu’fat and al-‘Isawiyya still exist today even though their work has been limited to resolving disputes within their communities.

The Israeli occupation authority created new political and administrative boundaries by annexing areas from the West Bank to Jerusalem in contravention of international law.

On the Palestinian side, the PA has identified two tracks to deal with the question of the geographical jurisdiction of Jerusalem: The first is a negotiating political track that insists that Jerusalem is negotiated as a whole for both East and West Jerusalem, while East Jerusalem is defined as the six square kilometers it was before 1967.

The second track is a service track, to provide municipal services to all the territory that falls within the geographical mandate of the Palestinian Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs and the Governorate of Jerusalem, encompassing the entire governorate according to its Palestinian definition. This is including areas such as al-‘Ayzariya, Abu Dis, al-Sawahira al-Sharqiyya, and villages northwest of Jerusalem, Dahiyat al-Barid, al-Ram, and others. In both tracks, the State of Palestine does not recognize the borders that were created by the Israeli occupation for the city of Jerusalem.

In the deliberations that took place, there are those who see political danger in determining the area of work of the municipality outside the six kilometers occupied in 1967. There are others who believe that the Jerusalem areas forcibly annexed under the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem are the most targeted directly by occupation measures and where the Palestinian municipality should focus its efforts. Finally, there are those who think that the specific Palestinian definition of the governorate boundaries is the limits of the work of the municipality. This is provided that there are several local and village councils in the governorate, but they all follow the Municipality Council as an umbrella. For example, the sign at the entrance of the village council of Abu Dis could read: “The Municipality (Amanat) of Jerusalem – Abu Dis Village Council.”

Based on these views, this policy report recommends the Executive Committee of the PLO to take a political decision in one of two directions:

First: To limit the work area of the municipality to what it was before 1967, with the formation of other village and local councils outside this area while maintaining networking and cooperation relations with the municipality council.

Second: The formation of Greater Jerusalem Municipality, similar to the Greater Amman Municipality, on a governorate-wide basis, to be controlled by all village and local councils throughout the governorate. This idea is consistent with the third method



Figure 1. Map of East Jerusalem extended municipal boundary - after 1967. Courtesy of OCHA.

of selecting the municipality described above, with the addition that whenever it is possible, local elections should be held such as in the case of Abu Dis and al-‘Ayzariya. Where that is not possible, the third method of selection of the municipality described above can be adopted. Finally, this formula will require that the municipality, in the course of the exercise of its work, prioritize the areas that are most directly targeted by the occupation’s measures, while considering them Development “A” areas, as stated in the “Jerusalem Capital Law 2002.”

The second approach will provide for follow-up between the municipality and the local councils better than the non-binding mode of networking and coordination, according to the first approach, which does not provide a framework to solve the intertwined issues between the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings at the county level. This trend goes beyond recognition of the Israeli municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, and provides a framework for confronting Israeli plans to expand Jerusalem through the construction of E1 settlements and others. Meanwhile, the prospective municipality should prioritize its work in the Old City of Jerusalem and its environs, in addition to areas targeted by the wall or that ended up behind the wall. The bill, which was submitted to President Arafat in 2004, reinforces this trend, giving the Council of Ministers the authority to expand the boundaries of Jerusalem as described above.

2. The Municipality’s Authority

The debate on the question of the municipality has raised questions as to whether it is another reference source of legitimacy to be added to the previous sources for Jerusalem; the question therefore is whether there was a need for an additional reference source. Questions about whether the role of the municipality is instrumental in the national struggle, or whether it should confine itself to issues of development or service functions, then become more complicated. Is it necessary to choose a municipality with an external and moral role or a municipality with an active role on the ground?

First of all, the municipality is not another reference source of legitimacy like the series of reference sources of legitimacy that were formed to care for Jerusalem and the Jerusalemites and to take decisions and actions that guarantee their national future, such as the High Presidential Committee for Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Department of the PLO. In contrast to these reference points, the municipality stems from a different role of serving Jerusalemites and their development needs. In this context, the Jerusalemites are the reference for the municipality that they elect and choose, and not vice versa. Other bodies, by the way, such as the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, are also not a reference as they are intended to serve Jerusalemites, while the references for Jerusalem are limited to the two PLO bodies mentioned above. As for the Unit of Jerusalem Affairs in the presidency, it is also not a reference source but an executive tool of the president and the Higher Jerusalem Committee that assists in drawing up plans for the advancement of the status of Jerusalem. The governorate of Jerusalem is also not a reference but an executive body coordinating the work of ministries and security services in Jerusalem. Finally, the National Popular Congress for Jerusalem is not a source of legitimacy, but

a popular tool of the PLO that connects it with Jerusalemites.

As for the general framework of the role of the municipality, in normal circumstances, it carries out service and development tasks as it did prior to the Israeli occupation. It is also essential that the municipality continues to perform these tasks and focus on providing them notwithstanding the occupation. The municipality should not be asked to take on political burdens that, in any event, it could not cope with. The political leadership on the issue of Jerusalem is the High Presidential Committee for Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Department of the PLO, and, above all, the Executive Committee of the PLO.

Therefore, the role of the municipality should be primarily in the domain of services and development. If this role turned out to become political, this is due to the occupation that politicizes development and services. This should not lead us to demand the municipality to play the role of political leadership; this is the role of others and not the role of the municipality.

This leads to an understanding that the municipality should play an active role on the ground and not be a municipality with a moral authority only. In this context, this policy report recommends adopting that the following tasks for the municipality be added and modified:

1. Receiving the developmental needs of the Jerusalemite groups, communities, and sectors, and work to meet them.
2. Representing Jerusalem in the federations of the Arab and international capitals and cities, and lobby these federations to provide funding for the development needs of Jerusalem, in addition to the funding received by the municipality from the budget of the State of Palestine, as well as from its own income.
3. Follow up the needs of Jerusalem with the various Palestinian ministries in coordination with the Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs.
4. Provide some services to Jerusalemites in the form of assistance in providing support for the construction of housing in Jerusalem, even without Israeli permits, to impose Palestinian facts on the ground under the slogan (“We build more than their ability to demolish”).
5. Establishment of community service centers facing and confronting the public centers of the municipality of the occupation.

In order to facilitate its work, the municipality can establish bodies and frameworks such as the municipal court. It can also collect some fees for the follow-up and granting of building permits without Israeli approval and fees to assist associations and companies to register in the PA. The registration for all these institutions shall be through the municipality by a decision of the president.

These tasks include programs implemented by the municipality for youth and women, tourism programs, health, education, and other sectors, and programs for all Jerusalem communities. The municipality shall prepare periodic development plans and follow up the implementation process.

Finally, the powers of the municipality require redefining the powers of the Ministry

of Jerusalem Affairs to relate to the coordination of the work of the Palestinian ministries in Jerusalem, and coordinate the issues of the municipality with the ministries. The ministry's website states that: "It helps those affected by the policies of the occupation, construction violations, total and partial demolition of the buildings, providing support for the engineering clinic, legal clinic, humanitarian assistance, and strengthening the steadfastness of the merchants in the Old City."¹⁴ These are all tasks that should be referred to the municipality. With referral of all these services, the ministry can be transformed into a higher planning and coordinating body that will plan and follow up the work of the Palestinian ministries in Jerusalem, on the one hand, and facilitate the meeting of the municipality's needs from the ministries on the other hand.

3. Sources of Power and Authority for the Municipality

Discussions on this subject involved old and updated debates. The old debate is the one based on the separation between the PA and the PLO. This debate has been subject to new developments: after the United Nations recognized Palestine as a state in 2012, and the PA is no longer an authority, but has become a state government, albeit a state under occupation. In this context, the updated debate suggested that the discussion is no longer the PLO versus an authority, but rather a state that should seek to extract its freedom and its liberation on the ground and to extend its control over all areas of its sovereignty, including East Jerusalem.

As for specific issues, questions of a concrete nature have emerged in the form of which body should follow up the work of the municipality? What is the nature of the relations with the bodies of the State of Palestine, especially the Ministries of Local Government, Jerusalem Affairs and the governorate of Jerusalem?

Regarding the subsidiarity of the municipality, this policy report recommends keeping it as stated in the presidential decree of 2012, where the municipality is subject to the PLO Executive Committee, and to be followed by the National Popular Congress for Jerusalem that was established in 2006 by the late Othman Abu Gharbiyya, the former member of the Central Committee of Fatah, to follow up the popular work in Jerusalem jointly and in coordination with the Ministry of Local Government. The ministry can follow up on the Greater Jerusalem Municipality as mentioned above, and this will involve the arrangement to extend the powers of the Ministry of Local Government of the State of Palestine to Jerusalem, despite the occupation.

The relationship can be coordinated so that the members of the Municipal Council are members of the National Popular Congress, through which they are connected to the PLO, while the municipality is pursuing its services and developmental tasks from the point of view of the Ministry of Local Government. This is a kind of follow-up that the National Popular Congress cannot provide because it lacks the expertise in planning, construction, development, and services. Moreover, some of the local councils that will follow up the municipality in the governorate have been under the supervision of the Ministry of Local Government since the establishment of the PA.

In short, and in light of the new reality, the municipality is following the State

of Palestine through the PLO, and helping the ministries of this state to extend their sovereignty over Jerusalem.

4. Participation of the Council Members

This policy report recommends dealing with the membership of the Greater Jerusalem municipality in the same manner as dealing with the local councils in the northern and southern governorates, by leaving the door open to nominate or choose the competent participants. If factions want to participate, it is through competent people within the factions and not through suggesting political figures that lack professional competence. Besides that, it is appropriate that political figures with high positions in the PLO and the State of Palestine retreat from participating in the membership of the municipality council.

5. Managing the Conflict with the Occupation

This policy report also suggests that the municipality should not be given the task of confronting the occupation. This is a task for the PLO and for the political factions in the national level. The municipality should handle the developmental and services responsibilities. The occupation will undoubtedly seek to obstruct the work of the municipality by multiple means, although the municipality is not assigned the role of political leadership. The occupation will try to confront and prohibit its activities. The members must be ready and can take some actions that will prevent the occupation from disrupting their work, such as working silently and without promotion and media, avoiding declarations about the implementation of their projects, and utilizing the assistance of Jerusalem social groups, local communities and sectors in the implementation of programs and projects as an alternative to direct implementation by the municipality.

6. Coordinating with Jordan

This policy report recommends keeping the door open for Jordan to support the municipality in all relevant Arab and international forums, as well as assisting the General Secretary of the Jerusalem Municipality Zaki al-Ghoul to obtain financial support for the projects of Jerusalem from these forums. It is appropriate to formulate a joint-action method between Jordan and Palestine in this regard.

On the other hand, this policy report recommends asking Jordan to remove the items that are still cited in the Jordanian Municipalities Law for the year 2015¹⁵ regarding the Jerusalem Municipality, since it became the municipality belonging to the State of Palestine as recognized by the United Nations since 2012.

Conclusion

This policy report recommends that the Executive Committee of the PLO takes decisions on the issues discussed above towards their integration within the framework of the 2004 Municipality Capital Law. This should be followed by issuing the law in preparation for

the selection of the municipality of Jerusalem according to the formula proposed above.

The intensive work reviewed in this report was crowned by a resolution of the Palestinian Central Council of the PLO in its last session held in 15 January 2018,¹⁶ followed by a resolution of the Palestinian National Council that was held from 30 April to 3 May 2018 in Ramallah. The resolution of both called for “the re-composition of the Palestinian Jerusalem Municipality in accordance with the best democratic and representative ways possible.” After U.S. president Trump’s decision regarding Jerusalem, this year might be the time for the implementation of the Central Council resolution with the objective of creating Palestinian facts in the ground on behalf of the Jerusalem Municipality.

Walid Salem is lecturer on democracy, human rights, and conflict resolution at al-Quds University. He has published widely on issues concerning democracy, international relations, modernity in Palestine, religious movements, human security, and peacebuilding and conflict resolution. He is currently a PhD candidate in international relations at Near East University in Northern Cyprus.

Endnotes

- 1 Usama Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds al-‘Arabiya* [Arab Jerusalem Municipality], (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 2000), 7.
- 2 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 19.
- 3 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 9–10.
- 4 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 12–14.
- 5 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 24–30.
- 6 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 39–40.
- 7 Halabi, *Baladiyat al-Quds*, 51.
- 8 Walid Salem, “Jerusalem and the local elections,” *al-Ayyam*, 15 August 2016; Walid Salem, “On the need for a new decree for Amanat Al Quds,” *al-Ayyam*, 5 September 2016; and Walid Salem, “Interview with *al-Quds* Salon about Amanat al-Quds,” *al-Quds*, 5 September 2016.
- 9 Website of the Palestinian Legislative Council, online at www.pal-plc.org (accessed 5 July 2018).
- 10 Website of the Palestinian Legislative Council, online at www.pal-plc.org (accessed 5 July 2018).
- 11 Established in 2006 as a result of a congress held in Ramallah with the participation of hundreds of Jerusalemites. This body followed the PLO Executive Committee.
- 12 The PLO Planning Center, “Minutes of Workshops about Amanat al-Quds Elections,” 2016.
- 13 *Al-Quds*, 7 September 2016, 3.
- 14 Ministry of Jerusalem Affairs, online at www.jerusalemgov.ps (accessed 5 July 2018); and www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps (accessed 5 July 2018).
- 15 See the Jordanian local elections law (2015), online at www.mma.gov.jo (accessed 5 July 2018).
- 16 For the text of the Palestinian Central Council resolution 15 January 2018, see online at www.paltoday.ps (accessed 5 July 2018).

POLICY BRIEF

Empowering Jerusalem's Most Marginalized Palestinian Women

Juzoor for Health and Social
Development

Palestinian women share a unique and protracted history of dispossession, occupation, and oppression. The effects of Israeli military and settler violence – checkpoints and related restrictions on movement; reduced access to critical education, healthcare and other services; land confiscation; and home demolitions – are gendered, and disproportionately impact the lives of women. This is particularly true in Jerusalem where Israeli aggression is heightened and unmitigated.

Decades of military occupation, coupled with a confining patriarchal society, have had a profound negative impact on the lives of Palestinian women in East Jerusalem. Each year Palestinian women encounter ever-increasing levels of discrimination, marginalization, and violence, and yet exhibit strength and courage, for which they are admired globally.

“Empowering Women in Marginalized East Jerusalem Communities,” a 2017 research report by Juzoor, a Palestinian public health non-governmental organization, may be one of the first examinations conducted through interviews with Palestinian women themselves on the status of gender equality and women’s empowerment in East Jerusalem.

The report’s research team carried out a cross-sectional study which examined determinants of women’s empowerment and the priority needs of almost 1,000 women from the most marginalized East Jerusalem communities. Study results were striking: Only 18 percent of women saw themselves as empowered. Participants reported severe restrictions on access to resources and services, decision-making, and public participation, as well as a steep rise in child marriages. Most concerning was the widespread prevalence of violence: both state violence emanating from

Editor's Note:

Full report can be reached at
www.juzoor.org.

Israel's militarized ongoing occupation, including a sharp rise in settler violence, and gender violence from husbands or other family members.

Women participants were clear that gender violence, inequality, and disempowerment impact all spheres of life in East Jerusalem and must be addressed by the government, non-government, and private sectors in a serious and systematic way. Proposed policy changes need to be based upon – and fully incorporate – the voiced needs and choices of the women for whom the policy changes are to be designed.

Findings

The experiences of women who participated in the research report documented this reality, adding the related impact of gender violence – ranging from a sharp rise in the incidence of child marriage, to an increase in violence within the home from husbands or other family members. Taken together, these factors are a clear public health crisis for Palestinian women and girls that has serious implications for all of Palestinian Jerusalemite society.

Only half of women in the study finished high school. Factors preventing successful completion of high school included: lack of security in reaching school (checkpoints, confrontation with soldiers), discrimination (preference for educating sons over daughters), and increasing rates of early marriage.

Women's participation in the labor force was very low: only five percent held a full-time job, with 21 percent holding a part-time job. Reasons for unemployment included: lack of job opportunities, political violence, movement restrictions, and gender stereotypes, including a husband's perceived insecurity. Such factors, added together, make Palestinian Jerusalemite women almost completely dependent upon husbands and fathers for income. This situation, in turn, motivated women to seek out small loans for income-generating projects; however, 75 percent were without access to small loans, and 85 percent had no access to income or resources at all. This was due to either the limited number of microfinance programs, absence of national support from the West Bank, or lack of women's awareness of services provided by the banks and organizations regarding small loans and income resources.

Such limited access to employment contributes in high poverty rates for Palestinian East Jerusalemites. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of participants were from families of five or more members with a monthly income of less than NIS 6,000 (about \$1,650) – termed poor by household poverty standards. More than half (58 percent) of participants did not have enough money for living expenses, while 31 percent of women believed their children were deprived in comparison with others.

Such limited income places enormous pressure upon female members of households, who are largely responsible for maintaining home and family. Additionally, women face discrimination and prejudice when acting as decision-makers, with 26 percent not able to make household decisions by themselves.

Prejudice and marginalization extends beyond the home into the public sphere: almost half of women participants not able to join women's organizations or attend training courses. This is despite the strongly voiced opinion of most women (88 percent) that training would enable them to better participate in the economic, social, and political life of East Jerusalem. Overall, 94 percent of women said discrimination against women participating in public life exists, with 40 percent of women completely lacking any access to social or recreational activities.

While Palestinian Jerusalemite women and girls generally had good access to healthcare, access to certain critical services – testing for sexually transmitted disease, family planning, and counseling for mental health issues – was largely absent. The lack of public health attention to mental health is a special concern for Palestinian women and girls, as females were four times as likely to report elevated psychopathology.

Child marriage, a wide societal concern, has increased in East Jerusalem, with more than one-third of women marrying before age 18. Numerous studies have linked a rise in child marriages to times of increased political tension and insecurity – such as Palestinians face in East Jerusalem. Several factors contribute to child marriage: a negative coping response to insecurity caused by protracted Israeli occupation; negative coping mechanisms towards poverty, for example, families having daughters marry at an early age to reduce the economic burden of raising and educating them, passing this responsibility to the husband; and girls are not protected from child marriage by the national law. (Israeli law prohibits child marriage but Palestinian Moslems marry under Sharia law, registering the marriage with Israeli authorities only when the girl becomes 18.) In addition, girls struggle with limited economic opportunities, a general situation of movement restrictions and violence, and parental stress and worry over raising girl children in such an environment. There may also be the girl's wish to escape from father and brother domestic abuse.

Yet these obstacles pale in the face of violence – first and foremost, Israeli-sponsored military and settler violence. While incidents of women's family members being detained, arrested, and injured by Israeli military were widespread, fully half of women participants also had their homes seized, demolished, or under threat of demolition by the Israel government. Virtually all women participating in the study stressed an urgent need to address growing settler violence, with more than three-quarters of women indicating that settler violence was a problem in their neighborhood, causing them to worry on a daily basis about their personal safety as well as the safety of their families.

More than 98 percent of women expressed the belief that gender violence against women and children is one of the most important issues and must be addressed. Gender-based violence was prevalent among women in the study sample, with some incidents happening in the workplace but most incidents stemming from the behavior of husbands or ex-husbands; exposure to physical violence from a close relative increased five-fold among separated, divorced, or widowed women. For half of women exposed to physical or sexual violence, the first exposure was at age 15 or younger. Also many women in

poor neighborhoods in East Jerusalem mentioned that male unemployment often leads to an increase in drug addiction, which increases the violence against women and girls at home. The patriarchal nature of Palestinian society, which maintains a societal structure inherently discriminatory towards women, is slow to address the issue of gender violence.

Although services and legal paths are available to women in East Jerusalem and are much better than for the rest of the Palestinian women, still Israeli services are seen as a last resort to provide services to gender-based violence victims. Lack of trust in the occupying power, and its practices and procedures that are not compatible with Palestinian culture, were mentioned by women who had been in contact with the Israeli system. For example, children were forcibly removed from homes when cases were reported. Services are limited in scope due to the inadequate budgets allocated for East Jerusalem, a complaint mentioned by service providers. Additionally, the language barrier is a deterrent. Women from the West Bank married to Jerusalemites mentioned they were afraid of reporting gender-based violent incidents for fear they would lose their residency permit and thereby have reduced contact with their children.

Current Policy

Palestinian civil society organizations have been advocating for women's rights for decades, but only in the past decade have significant efforts been focused on the issues of gender equality, women's empowerment and gender violence. Their efforts pushed the Palestinian National Authority to adopt a Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy which has served as the government's roadmap for addressing gender-related issues. Also, together with the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations launched a Palestinian National Development Plan 2014–2016 which focused on the promotion of a "rights-based, gender-sensitive, and more inclusive integrated and sustainable social protection system to alleviate poverty, marginalization and social exclusion."

It was hoped that the government's strategy would become the national reference point for the development of gender-responsive policies that could guarantee women's rights throughout Palestine, with related programs, like the National Development Plan, supporting that effort. However, to date, only a limited legal framework on gender equality exists, as the principles of equality between men and women, and non-discrimination, are not embodied in national laws. The lack of gender sensitive legislation, old and outdated legal frameworks, and a predominantly inaccessible justice system are chronic issues that women and girls must face.

For victims of gender violence, while psychological counseling and legal aid services do exist, both are severely limited in number and accessibility, and women and girls are often unaware of their rights, as limited as they are. Women participants in this report were aware of or had experienced the full range of these obstacles.

Policy Recommendations

Gender equality and women's empowerment is a multidimensional phenomenon. Women residing in marginalized communities in East Jerusalem need to be empowered in a wide variety of dimensions, but especially in economic and public participation. Findings from this research study make clear that women are aware of their priority needs for empowerment, both individually and at the community level. Study results also show that planned interventions to promote and enhance gender equality and women's empowerment have a far greater likelihood of success if the approach makes use of an interdisciplinary, cross-sector approach.

Potential areas to pursue are evident and numerous, with the following as starting points for stakeholder and donor discussions:

- Strengthen local and national stakeholder commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, targeting political leaders and parties, non-governmental organizations, and, very importantly, community and religious organizations. Make ending gender discrimination a top priority by creating programs for parents, such as positive discipline to end gender discrimination. Support programs that provide economic, vocational, and social empowerment for women that could give them skills and knowledge to become leaders in their communities. Provide services to women through linking them to organizations that offer a range of different services for women, such as social, economic, mental, and vocational services, and support the protection networks that work directly with women to defend their concerns.
- Mandate quotas on both political and corporate boards to increase women's representation in decision-making positions that would increase their skills and knowledge to become leaders in their communities. Also, involve more women in organizations, especially in decision-making positions.
- Address the rapid rise of child marriage through work to amend the Personal Status Law, in particular, raising the age of marriage for women to 18, raising awareness for parents, encouraging married women to continue their education by providing alternatives for education and learning, increasing awareness in vocational training, and ensuring equitable distribution of opportunities for women in the marginalized areas.
- Design leadership training for women, and support initiatives and working with men in all communities, to decrease child marriage and raise gender awareness issues that will help women in working in different sectors between East Jerusalem and the West Bank.
- Establish an East Jerusalem Coordination mechanism.
- Establish Safe Spaces (one-stop centers) for gender-based violence survivors.
- Support Palestinian health providers to provide specialized services to gender-based violence survivors.
- Create awareness of women's legal rights under the Israeli system by increasing the number of service providers and professionals to deal with women's rights, specifically with victims of violence which prevent them from achieving their rights.

- Design and provide gender awareness training to all law enforcement personnel so as to enhance security and protection for women. Simultaneously, encourage female participation in policing and law enforcement.
- Support and upgrade Palestinian Jerusalemite women’s local production so as to better compete in the commercial marketplace. The Palestinian Authority should also consider a mechanism with the Palestinian Monetary Authority and Palestinian banks to enable those banks to extend loans for investment for women in East Jerusalem or the establishment of a funded agency whose task is to guarantee loans for business and investment projects for women in Jerusalem.
- Enlist active support from both governmental and business sources to increase women’s participation in sectors such as information technology, manufacturing, and tourism. Offer career counseling, as well as vocational education, to make the choice of technical careers more appealing.
- Support school administrators in efforts to encourage girls to finish high school.
- Foster gender-responsive data design, collection, and analysis so that innovative, effective interventions based on sound research can be implemented in the future.
- Target Palestinian men – everyone from family members to high-ranking political and religious figures – with a gender equality awareness campaign, utilizing compelling data proving that women’s enhanced equality and participation benefits all of society, not only women.

Consulted Sources

The document which gave rise to the research study was the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 5: “Gender Equality – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.” Juzoor adopted the UN definition of women’s empowerment, which considers: women’s sense of self-worth; their right to have and to determine choices; their right to have access to opportunities and resources; their right to have the power to control their own lives, within and outside the home; and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order (Secretariat of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, *Guidelines on Women’s Empowerment*). The study’s design and development was based on the World Health Organization *Toolkit for Women’s Empowerment* which outlines eight critical dimensions for assessing empowerment: public participation, familial/interpersonal, economic, access to basic services, freedom of movement, and gender roles. An additional WHO specific tool for assessing women’s felt needs was also utilized. Other UN sources included: UN Women, “Ministerial Roundtable: Enhancing National Institutional Arrangements for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment”; UNFPA, “Palestine 2030: Demographic Change, Opportunities for Development”; “Report of the UN Secretary-General: Situation of and Assistance to Palestinian Women”; and “Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2017.”

Palestinian sources included: Palestinian Authority, Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, “Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics, 2011”; Palestinian Authority, Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, “Violence Survey in Palestinian Society, 2011”; and Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, “Jerusalem Statistics 2016”.

Juzoor for Health and Social Development (founded in 1996) is a Palestinian non-governmental organization based in Jerusalem working at the national level, dedicated to improving the health and well-being of Palestinian families and promoting health as a basic human right. Read more about Juzoor at www.juzoor.org.

Markings of a Jerusalemite Life

A Life Worth Living: The Story of a Palestinian Catholic, by Bernard Sabella, edited by Carole Monica Burnett. Oregon: Resource Publications, 2017. ix + 237 pages. \$50.00 cloth, \$30.00 paper.

Reviewed by Saliba Sarsar

What makes life worth living? Professor Bernard Sabella, a Palestinian Catholic native of Jerusalem and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, provides a clear answer. In a captivating memoir, rich in empathy, honesty, and detail, he invites us to listen to his story and that of his multigenerational family as they live their Christian faith and Palestinian culture in the Old City of Jerusalem and beyond.

In six main chapters, Sabella weaves the personal with the familial, the intellectual and philosophical with the social, and the local with the regional and international. With an authentic voice and a humane touch, he addresses issues of discord and conflict but also argues for faith and putting one's faith into action, pride in Jerusalem and Palestine, enlightened education, justice, nonviolence, healing and reconciliation, and peace.

In the first chapter, "Growing Up in a Refugee Family: Catholic and Palestinian," he tells of how his family became refugees in 1948, which "left a life-long impact on all of us." The intensification of fighting forced the family to leave home in Qatamon (now a West Jerusalem neighborhood) and find temporary refuge in the Old City. But the short term turned permanent as Jerusalem became divided between the western part under Israel and the eastern part under Jordan. The home in Qatamon was expropriated by Israel's Absentee Property Authority and given to a newly arrived Jewish immigrant family. In later years, interestingly, Sabella became executive secretary of the of the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees.

For Sabella, pursuing higher education was never a question, and he chose Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In "College Years: The American Interlude,

Part One,” he explains that although studying there was “exhilarating,” his thoughts were never far from his family in Jerusalem. Tough times occurred in June 1967 when he learned of the war and worried about the safety of his parents, home, and “beloved city of Jerusalem.” Reflecting on both the 1948 and 1967 wars, he argues, “There can never be true reconciliation until the injustice that befell the Palestinians is dealt with in fairness and with respect to their right to dignity through redressing the injustice.”

Living in a foreign land is never easy for anyone. In “Graduate Studies: The American Interlude, Part Two,” Sabella speaks of how hard it was in the early 1970s for a Palestinian, especially one with liberal views, to be accepted in the United States, let alone at a traditional institution such as the University of Virginia. Plane hijackings by some Palestinian factions and the civil war in Jordan between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Jordanian armed forces did not help. Determined to succeed academically, Sabella wrote his master’s thesis on the leading Palestinian families during the British Mandate in Palestine in order to understand “the social dynamics within my own society and how they influenced conflict with the Zionist movement.” The academic challenge, obviously, was and is to remain objective so as “to look from outside at my own society and to override the inherent limitations of an insider’s perspective.” Thinking of home and what separates Palestinians from Israelis, Sabella favored compromise through dialogue initially, contrary to others who believed in liberating Palestine through armed struggle. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly evident that talk is not enough and the steps toward conflict resolution are difficult “because the structural, strategic, international, and internal U.S. factors and considerations are stacked against Palestinians.” Sabella’s return from the U.S. to Palestine with his doctorate in sociology, along with his wife Mary with a master’s in counseling psychology, was exciting as they both began working at Bethlehem University, the only Catholic university in the Holy Land. In “Experiencing Bethlehem University and the Palestinian Rebirth,” he writes of how Palestinians highly value education both as “some sort of security or safety net . . .” and as “the symbol of perseverance and survival against all kinds of odds.” While at Bethlehem, the first intifada (1987–1993) occurred, leading the Israeli military authorities to close Palestinian universities, including Bethlehem. The intifada, or Palestinian uprising against the Israeli occupation, involved Palestinians from all walks of life and led many a Palestinian educator to teach students at their homes. Sabella guided his students to distance themselves from the events outside in order “to assess objectively the social reality and its different aspects,” but that did not sit well with some of them.

In “Church and Civil Society: Striving for Progress,” Sabella makes clear that as a devout Catholic, he respects the religious beliefs of others and advocates for an inclusive religious education. As a sociology professor, the challenge for him is how “to move from a narrow religious pedagogy to a religious education that is open to seeing others on their own grounds rather than from the perspective of our own religious training.” A similar philosophy applies to interfaith dialogue and its necessity. The intent is not only to detect convergence among Christianity, Islam, and Judaism and their respective adherents, but to use faith in support of resolving socioeconomic and political issues as

well. A specific challenge concerns Palestinian Christians, the forgotten faithful, who have been steadfast in the land where Christianity originated. Unfortunately, the political, social, and financial difficulties of the past few decades have led many to leave the Holy Land. Sabella believes that the Church can play a more active role in highlighting the Christian presence, assisting Christian Palestinians, and promoting dialogue.

In the last chapter, “Reflections on the Future of Palestine,” Sabella elaborates on his decision to enter politics. As an academic, he felt free to examine political views and actions “on their own merit and not on the basis of party or factional platforms.” He learned much about human or social relations in high school as a member of JEC (Jeunesse Étudiante Chrétienne or Young Christian Students), which was advised at that time by Father Michel Sabbah (later the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, 1987–2008), who counseled engaging others with “our religious, social, and political convictions without being apologetic about them.” As a Palestinian and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Sabella bemoans the polarization in Palestine, as happened between Fatah and Hamas between 2007 and 2017, or that exists in the Palestinian-Israeli context, including the Separation Wall. Polarization is conducive neither to healing nor to reconciliation. For Sabella, the only way to resolve what is ailing Palestinian society and Palestinian-Israeli relations is through nonviolence. He writes, “The process of making peace is a painful one; pain, nevertheless, should not cause us to give up and opt for further violence and confrontation.”

A servant-leader and a professor, Sabella’s mission is to inspire positive change, replacing dispossession with perseverance, injustice with justice, occupation with liberation, and darkness with light. That’s what truly makes life worth living.

Sabella’s *A Life Worth Living* is highly recommended. In addition to enabling us to witness the life of a Palestinian Christian family in Jerusalem and beyond, it enhances our understanding of Jerusalem, the Palestinian cause, and the urgent need for peace.

Saliba Sarsar, born and raised in Jerusalem, is Professor of Political Science at Monmouth University, New Jersey. He is editor of What Jerusalem Means to Us: Christian Perspectives and Reflections (Bethesda, MD: Holy Land Books, 2018) and author of Jerusalem: The Home in Our Hearts (Bethesda, MD: Holy Land Books, forthcoming).

*“A meticulously detailed and honest first-hand documentation of growing up
blind in pre-partition Palestine.”*
Ahdaf Soueif, novelist and author



**PURCHASE
YOUR
COPY TODAY**



\$24.95 paperback
Available on Amazon and at
www.palestine-studies.org



مجموعة الاتصالات الفلسطينية
PALTEL GROUP

We Invest in People Social Responsibility



www.paltelgroup.ps

