# JERUSALEM QUARTERLY

## Jerusalem's Interrupted Futures

## INSTITUTE OF JERUSALEM STUDIES

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* (*JQ*) is the leading journal on the past, present, and future of Jerusalem. It documents the current status of the city and its predicaments. It is also dedicated to new and rigorous lines of inquiry by emerging scholars on Palestinian society and culture. Published since 1998 by the Institute for Palestine Studies through its affiliate, the Institute of Jerusalem Studies, the *Jerusalem Quarterly* is available online in its entirety at www.palestine-studies.org/en/journals/jq/about.

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# Jerusalem Quarterly

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**\*** Peer reviewed article.

# Jerusalem's Paths Not Taken

This issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* brings into sharper focus, and elaborates on, a familiar theme in writings on Palestine and on the condition of Palestinians in Jerusalem and elsewhere: a theme of lost opportunities, miscalculations, lack of vision, and unrealized plans. Inevitably, the responsibility for such failures and unfulfilled projects has been placed on the various powers that have colonized or ruled Palestine, as well as on Palestinian ruling circles and interests. In much of this kind of writing, the agency of ordinary Palestinians, whether individually or collectively, has not been given much prominence.

Guest editor Falestin Naïli frames the issue differently, starting out with this observation: "Focusing on unimplemented projects entails the application of a type of historical analysis and historiographical method which has thus far not been largely employed in the study of Palestine." She goes on to single out the concept of the horizon of expectation, designated as "that which is not yet but is expected." What this means to Naïli is "seizing elements of history – plans, projects, programs – and saving them from oblivion, so that new generations might base their understanding of their history on a more complete panorama of the past than that created by the victors."

We leave it to our readers to imagine what this means as they contemplate the turbulent history of Jerusalem in the twentieth century. What elements in the unfulfilled plans and projects examined in this issue, if rescued from oblivion, would be potential sources for writing a more inclusive history? How can the

agency of ordinary Palestinians, whether individually or collectively, figure here, especially since much of the material historians use was produced by the victors?

Another challenge facing historians is overcoming the inevitable elite bias in archives. How can we identify potentialities that were unrecorded or unrecognized? Is the history of Jerusalem only available through the writings or records left behind by Palestinians with a voice, either as religious leaders, educationalists, intellectuals, planners, or entrepreneurs? How do we begin to effect a shift in the "balance between the victors and the vanquished," as Naïli puts it?

The educational scene in Jerusalem, examined in this issue, is an example. What do we know of the imprint of educational experiences at second- and third-tier educational institutions on the lives of graduates who did not become professionals or intellectuals? We note schools such as Bishop Gobat's "Sahyun" school and the Schneller vocational school and orphanage, both of which were instrumental in providing education to the children of less privileged Palestinians in Jerusalem and surrounding areas.

Keeping these challenges in mind is necessary as we revisit Jerusalem's "past futures" – the ways in which the city was at various points imagined as a future hub of Palestinian economic growth, educational opportunity, representative government, and human connection. It can be tempting to feel nostalgic about the paths not taken, to yearn for a time when other futures seemed likely. We must keep in mind that all of the plans examined here were also embedded in structures of inequality; none was the panacea that would have cured or staved off Palestinians' past or present ills. Yet, returning to the ways in which Jerusalem's future was variously imagined at different times in the past can also help correct against an analysis of past events that is overdetermined by the present – a point raised by Roger Heacock in his review of the Jerusalem Story website. Not only were different futures believed to be possible, but the outcomes of decisions, whether to continue or abandon certain plans or projects, were never fully known in advance.

As *JQ* 92 goes to press, Palestine is witnessing yet another wave of resistance and repression, this time with new Palestinian faces and forces. This most recent surge has given attention once again to the incomplete nature of the Zionist project in Palestine: Palestinian resistance continues to evolve and transform itself, and the inability of the Palestinian "self-rule" authorities to realize a state or even to provide basic safety and security is ever more starkly demonstrated. Some are beginning to interpret the upswell of resistance in class terms. The host of a local radio talk show said recently, "These are the children of the oppressed, the downtrodden." And there is much discussion of the supporting role of families and neighborhoods in refugee camps and poor areas of urban centers, including in Jerusalem's Shuʻfat camp and ʻAnata. The idea of an enabling and protective social and popular base (*hadina shaʻbiyya ijtimaʻiyya*) is back on the agenda. Under what conditions are potential social bases reactivated? How might the echoes of past struggles – seemingly abandoned or incomplete – return in new forms and with new actors to mobilize Palestinians in the present and the future?

## INTRODUCTION

# Reclaiming the Past, Disrupting the Present

*Falestin Naïli, Guest Editor*

The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "emergency situation" in which we live is the rule. We must arrive at a concept of history which corresponds to this.

Walter Benjamin,
*On the Concept of History*[1]

The recent history and current reality of Jerusalem are characterized by an ever-increasing number of facts on the ground, from the demolition of Palestinian homes to make space for Israeli settlements, to the move of the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The crushing weight of these facts creates a situation in which Palestinians "can't breathe" anymore, which is why the last words of George Floyd, murdered by racist U.S. police officers in Minneapolis in 2020, resonated so powerfully among them.

But knees on necks and facts on the ground are not the only constitutive elements of history, and we would indeed be well advised not to focus solely on cement blocks, checkpoints, and walls. As the historian Reinhart Koselleck pointed out, history may be made by the victors in the short run, but ultimately, historical gains in knowledge stem from the vanquished.[2] And more than that: history contains many threads of unfulfilled alternative futures that need to be uncovered and unmuted.

The analysis of interrupted futures[3] proposed in this special issue is not counterfactual history that consists of imagining other outcomes. While that is also an interesting historiographic exercise, the approach used here is not speculative, but rather interpretive. It is based on rigorous archival work, very

much in the spirit of philosopher Jacques Derrida's conception of the archive as a store for the future:

> The word and the notion of the archive seem at first, admittedly, to point toward the past, to refer to the signs of consigned memory, to recall faithfulness to tradition. . . . As much as and more than a thing of the past, before such a thing, the archive should call into question the coming of the future.[4]

Focusing on unimplemented projects entails the application of a type of historical analysis and historiographical method which has thus far not been largely employed in the study of Palestine: the exploration of past futures in the sense in which Koselleck proposed it, and the writing of a history of possibilities which "restitutes the dignity to each time-space position" and emphasizes what the philosopher Hans Blumenberg called the radical potentialities of humankind.[5]

One of the key categories developed by Koselleck is the horizon of expectation. This metahistorical category designates that which is not yet but is expected. It is the horizon for political projects, projecting the ultimate goal, but also for daily practice in times of change. This horizon of hopes and plans needs to be contemplated in the context of its time, as part of a reassessment of Palestine's past. This renewal of perspectives is opposed to the notion of a dead-end in history. It entails seizing elements of history – plans, projects, programs – and saving them from oblivion, so that new generations might base their understanding of their history on a more complete panorama of the past than that created by the victors. This impetus is a reaction to a perceived danger, as the philosopher Walter Benjamin asserted so poignantly in his unfinished theses on the philosophy of history:

> To articulate what is past does not mean to recognize "how it really was." It means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger. . . . The only writer of history with the gift of setting alight the sparks of hope in the past, is the one who is convinced of this: that not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious.[6]

In this issue, the authors take hold of threads of unfinished schemes conceived just before or during important moments of rupture: the end of the Ottoman Empire (Campos), the termination of the British Mandate (Wallach and Cirujano; Ford; Gökatalay; and Pappé), the abrupt close of the Jordanian administration of Jerusalem (Lemire and Rioli; and Dukhgan and Naïli). The plans and projects presented in several of these articles were the result of governmental initiatives at various levels. Some plans, such as the British Mandate scheme to build a parliamentary building in the city, point to the vivid contradictions of the colonial political structure. By contrast, it is important to remember that in the case of the Ottoman and the Jordanian administrations of the city, Palestinians were key political actors on the local level, something that was less the case during the Mandate period.

Michelle Campos emphasizes in her article comparing the Ottoman tramway

scheme to the existing Israeli light rail that the plan for a tramway in the early twentieth century was intimately linked to the particular form of Ottoman urban citizenship existing in Jerusalem during that period, including a "modernist discourse that underscored Jerusalem as a city of all its residents." By contrast, today's Israeli light rail "signals the limits of Jerusalem as a shared city in both practice and imagination."

In a similar vein, Yair Wallach and Julio Moreno Cirujano analyze several British plans to build a parliamentary building in Jerusalem in the context of evolving approaches to representative government in Palestine, including the 1939 White Paper, which charted a way towards a binational state. None of these plans had materialized by the time the Mandate ended, and so: "The absence of central government headquarters, and even more so, the absence of a legislative assembly building, made it much easier to pretend that a unitary Palestine never existed, that partition was always the natural and inevitable outcome of the Mandate, and that representative politics had always been impossible." This is precisely where writing the history of past futures shows its importance, because it attests to the fact that the eventual outcome was neither natural nor inevitable, and that alternatives have always existed.

Harris Ford in his article explores the origins and dimensions of another alternative that began to circulate in the final days of the Mandate – the plan for an internationalization of Jerusalem under the umbrella of the UN: "This plan would have seen Jerusalem become a distinct enclave outside of any Palestinian, Arab, or Zionist governmental sovereignty. Also known as *corpus separatum* (separate entity), the internationalization of Jerusalem was championed by various religious figures around the world, especially Christians, and ultimately came to represent the larger imperial position of the United Nations and the members comprising its General Assembly."

Beyond these governmental and international schemes, the contributions of Gökatalay, Sharkawi, and Pappé point to the role various segments of Palestinian Arab society played during the Mandate years. Revisiting the two Arab Fairs of the 1930s in Jerusalem, Gökatalay asserts:

> A transnational analysis of trade fairs in the post-Ottoman countries . . . suggests that Arab businesspeople in Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine could have benefited from the continuation of the Arab Fair even though it was not a financial success in the first two years. . . . Like the Arab Fair, the international scope of the Cairo, Izmir, Plovdiv, Tel Aviv, and Thessaloniki fairs was initially very limited – only after several unsuccessful attempts did they become commercially successful.

He also emphasizes the particular importance this fair could have had for Jerusalem, which could have been placed on the larger region's economic map through a thriving national economy: "The discontinuation of the Arab Fair thus speaks to the economic future foreclosed by the British Mandate and, eventually, the Nakba."

Maissoun Sharkawi, in her review of the recent exhibition about the Arab Fairs titled "al-Ma'rad" (curated by Nadi Abusaada and Luzan Munayer at the Khalil

Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah), provides additional context concerning the obstacles faced by nascent Palestinian Arab efforts at small-scale industrialization and expansion of trade during the Mandate period. She points out, "The Arab and Palestinian industries including small-scale emerging industries such as textiles, souvenir industries, and agricultural products could have flourished to a much greater extent under more favorable political and economic conditions. The decline of most small-scale industries in Palestine was due to the disproportionately heavy taxes that were imposed by the British regime."

A new attempt to create a place for Jerusalem as an economic hub – in the reduced framework of the West Bank – can be seen in the "Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals" submitted by town planner Henry Kendall to the Jordanian government in the mid-1960s. This unrealized plan was based on a comprehensive study and urban plan produced by Brown Engineers for the Municipality of East Jerusalem in 1963, which Jawad Dukhgan and I analyze in our contribution.

In relation to education, Ilan Pappé analyzes the different attempts to create an Arab or Islamic university in British Mandate Jerusalem. While none of them succeeded, there were institutions such as al-Kulliyya al-'Arabiyya (the Arab College) that played an important role in creating a cultural capital and a national consciousness. Pappé writes that these institutions "would contribute to the resurrection of Palestinian education, scholarship, and cultural life following the horror of the Nakba in 1948. This continuity meant that Palestinian culture was not obliterated by the Nakba and that those who survived it could build on a legacy forged during the Mandate period of continued cultural resistance along with political struggle." Pappé thereby introduces the individual and social dimension of the history of possibilities.

Vincent Lemire and Maria Chiara Rioli compare the potential of two underexplored sets of archives: the municipal archives of Jerusalem, particularly for the Jordanian period, and the UNRWA archives. While the first highlight little-known efforts at rehabilitating and restructuring the eastern part of the city, the latter "contain the genealogical, demographic, and social history of Palestinian refugees as well as traces of their political and individual ambitions, efforts, and potentialities."

Indeed, the history of possibilities is not an abstract approach pulled out of the historian's toolbox; it is a lived reality. The story of all displaced Palestinians who have carved out an existence for themselves where they took refuge might reveal the future they could have had in Palestine, as an individual or as part of a collective, and the future they could have contributed to. The vast majority of people left Palestine only with the few belongings they could carry, but they were resourceful. Some had significant cultural capital – diplomas, craftsmanship, creativity, intellectual faculties – and all gained extreme force of will in the moment they lost everything. This force then helped to shape their destiny and that of their children far away from home.

Digging in archives – private and public – in order to find traces of plans and projects that were prevented by the course of history also means realizing the extent of the loss that the tragic moments of Palestinian history have produced, because it brings into focus the potential that existed before those moments, be it a cultural

project, a business plan, or a political program of action. The realization of the extent of the loss is thus simultaneously the realization of the extent of the potential that existed, and that still exists. And with this realization, the balance between victors and vanquished begins to shift.

**Endnotes**

1   Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," *Gesammelte Schriften* [Collected writings], vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974 [1940]), 2, VIII, trans. Dennis Redmond, online at (marxists.org) bit.ly/3NEKLKb (accessed 27 October 2022).

2   Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft, Zur Semantik historischer Zeit* [Past future, on the semantics of historical time] (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2015), 10.

3   Taking a cue here from Lena Jayyusi's edited volume titled *Jerusalem Interrupted, Modernity and Colonial Transformation, 1917–Present* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2015).

4   Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 25.

5   Hannes Bajohr, "Hans Blumenberg's History of Possibilities," *Journal of the History of Ideas* blog, 8 July 2019, online at (jhiblog.org) bit.ly/3FO9FFy (accessed 27 October 2022). One of Blumenberg's most important works is *The Genesis of the Copernican World*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987). For recent publications breaking a path in this direction for Palestine studies, see Issam Nassar, Stephen Sheehi, Salim Tamari, eds., *Camera Palæstina: Photography and Displaced Histories of Palestine* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2022). See also Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019); and Gil Z. Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

6   Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," VI.

# Submissions General Guidlines
# The *Jerusalem Quarterly (JQ)*

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* accepts author submissions of original contributions about Jerusalem, its social and political history, and its current realities. Occasionally personal memoirs or works of fiction are accepted. Submissions are received throughout the year; specific deadlines for special thematic issues may also be announced.

*JQ* sends all manuscripts to designated readers for evaluation. <u>Authors may also specifically request that their article be peer-reviewed</u>. Authors should allow four to eight weeks from the date of submission for a final evaluation and publication decision.

Please direct submissions or queries to the *JQ* team: jq@palestine-studies.org

## General Guidelines

Material submitted to *JQ* for consideration should adhere to the following:

- **Length**: Articles for peer-reviewing should not exceed 8,000 words; essays should be between 3,500 and 5,000 words; "Letters from Jerusalem," reviews, and submissions for other sections should not exceed 3,000 words. All submissions should include an abstract of a maximum of 200 words; a list of up to 10 keywords; and a brief author's biography of a maximum of 25 words. NOTE: the above word-count limits exclude footnotes, endnotes, abstracts, keywords, and biographies.
- **Spelling**: American English according to Merriam-Webster.
- **Text style**: Refer to *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS) for all questions regarding punctuation, capitalization, and font style.
- **Transliteration** of names and words in Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish should follow the style recommended by the *International Journal for Middle East Studies*, but modified for Arabic transliteration by omitting all diacritical marks except for the 'ayn (open single quotation mark) and hamza (closed single quotation mark). No right-to-left letters are allowed, except for very limited instances of crucial need.
- **Citations** should be in the form of endnotes and written in full (CMOS), as in the original source, with transliteration as needed.

- **Book reviews**: a high-resolution photo of the book cover should be included, as well as a scan of the copyrights page.
- **Visual material**: any photos, charts, graphs, and other artwork should be of high resolution. For details, please see the section below.

## Guidelines for Visual Material

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* encourages the inclusion of visual material, wherever possible, for articles, essays, and for other sections submitted for publication. Visual material can be photographs, scans, charts, diagrams, graphs, maps, artwork, and the like (hereafter called 'figures').

When including any figures, please keep in mind the following guidelines:

- **Rights**: it is imperative that authors obtain appropriate rights to publish the figure(s). *JQ* is willing to assist in this in any way possible – for instance, by providing a letter from *JQ* supporting the application for rights, and providing more details about the journal—but it is the authors' responsibility to actually obtain the rights. An email giving *JQ* the rights to publish the figures suffices as proof of rights. Please let us know what copyright acknowledgment needs to accompany the figures.
- **Resolution**: any figure should be in camera-ready format, and should be saved as JPEG, with a minimum resolution of 600 dpi (or 700 KB). Please do <u>not</u> send the high-resolution figures by email, which can degrade the quality. Instead, upload figures to WeTransfer, Google Drive, or the like, and provide a link. It is also advisable to embed a low-resolution copy at the chosen place in the Word file, as guidance to editors and the designer.
- **Captions**: authors should provide full captions (including, when applicable: source, credits, dates, places, people, explanation of content, etc.).
- **Color Figures**: thus far, *JQ* has been more inclined to publish photos in black and white mainly because of the subject matter of the articles and essays, but for some time now we have been accepting both options. Since printing in full color is more costly, we sometimes opt to publish in black and white figures submitted in color. <u>If this is not acceptable</u> in the case of a specific figure, we kindly ask authors to notify us in writing.

# "I Won't Say I Wanted the Job"

## The United Nations' Search for a Special Municipal Commissioner in Jerusalem, 1948–49

Harris Ford

**Abstract**

As the British Mandate drew to a close, the future of Jerusalem was brought into full focus. The newly formed United Nations tasked itself with creating a solution for its own constructed problem: how the city ought to be administered. The findings of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) delivered the ever-familiar two-state solution, but also included a third, lesser-known aspect of post-British Palestine. Through the employment of a Special Municipal Commissioner for Jerusalem, the United Nations attempted to not only bring the Holy City under its purview, but also to implement the internationalization portion of its partition plan for Palestine. Despite its unsuccessful endeavor to install a commissioner in the city, the United Nations did manage to sow the seeds of resentment at a crucial stage of proceedings immediately before and after the Nakba. Through acts of continued imperialism, and under the facade of eventual self-determination as outlined in its charter, the United Nations sought to implement its mandate in Jerusalem while disregarding the desires of Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists of the region. The result, ultimately, was a continuation of the British Mandate under a new name.

The photo chosen for the front page of the *New York Times* depicted a man unequivocally thrusted into an undesired responsibility: a truncated neck, an oversized tie, a smile signifying the last remnants of a hope soon to be dashed entirely.[1] A similar photo in the *London Times* was relegated to page eight surrounded by a litany of words and an overall lack of pomp or celebration.[2] Calling the new position a "thankless job," his words were surrounded by advertisements for fashions and fur storage services, and a New Mexican senator describing U.S. actions in Palestine as "un-American."[3] Harold Evans was now the public face for the United Nations' internationalization efforts in Jerusalem – although his path to the Holy City, and even out of the United States, was anything but smooth.

This is the story of the United Nations' search for a Special Municipal Commissioner for the city of Jerusalem. The position was essentially a quasi-mayor – even dubbed an "emergency mayor" – and was to be part of the UN's internationalization scheme for Jerusalem and its environs.[4] No municipal commissioner ever arrived. Multiple abortive missions, along with the failure of the United Nations' other endeavors in the Holy City, marred any chance of success for this position to be filled. By ignoring voices of Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists against the municipal commissioner position, and toward internationalization in general, the United Nations continued a lineage of imperial being in its Palestine mandate inherited from Britain. The bungling of this project quickly became a microcosm for the struggles faced by the UN in the late 1940s in Palestine. Building from archival materials from the United Nations and the American Friends Service Committee, this paper aims to illuminate a crucial moment at the genesis of the Arab-Israeli peace processes, as well as problematize the role of the UN's place in Palestine through the organization and its General Assembly's quest for control over Jerusalem. Furthermore, this article argues that the search for a municipal commissioner for Jerusalem was an imperial act undertaken by Western imperial powers under the guise of the United Nations to further subjugate Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists to foreign rule.

## UN Involvement in Jerusalem

On 15 May 1948, the British Mandate in Palestine ended, and the United Nations took control of the region. The British governed the territory since 1923 through the League of Nations mandate system, but after World War II decided it could no longer solely rule over Palestine.[5] Frequently referred to as a "problem," Palestine, with its wide religious importance, constructed political binaries, and economic opportunities, proved to be too much for a single country to administer. As a result, the newly minted United Nations took charge to find a peaceful solution with itself as the governing force behind the new administration.

One of the key aspects of the United Nations plan for Palestine centered on Jerusalem. The famous UN Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 partitioned the region into Arab and Jewish areas, but it also created an unusual third zone: an

international one.[6] This "Special International Regime" was to be governed by the United Nations effectively to ensure the safe passage of all peoples to and from the Holy City regardless of religious or political affiliation.[7] This plan would have seen Jerusalem become a distinct enclave outside of any Palestinian, Arab, or Zionist governmental sovereignty.[8] Also known as *corpus separatum* (separate entity), the internationalization of Jerusalem was championed by various religious figures around the world, especially Christians, and ultimately came to represent the majority imperial position of the United Nations and the members comprising its General Assembly. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a Quaker social justice action organization based in Pennsylvania, wrote of the committee's desire to see Jerusalem become an international zone with a neutral governor in order to "preserve . . . Jerusalem from the horrors of civil war."[9] Pope Pius XII penned two encyclicals calling for Jerusalem's protection by promoting a "united effort of nations" to see Jerusalem reunited with "tranquility."[10] Various dioceses and patriarchates also contributed to the conversation by writing to the United Nations to implore a safe future for the Holy City.[11] The global Christian community, and to a much lesser extent Jewish and Muslim believers, looked toward the United Nations to be a mediating presence in the city that would put an end to the protracted violence.

Religious cooperation in Jerusalem was not a new concept, and a long history of past attempts at internationalization made Arabs particularly hesitant to welcome the United Nations to the city. A legally binding decree (*firman*) known as the Status Quo uniquely governed the Ottoman area of Jerusalem for nearly two centuries. As noted by the United Nations in April 1949, the Ottoman decree was created to ensure a peaceful state in the Holy Places.[12] Instituted by Sultan Osman III in 1757, this royal ruling legislated free access to the Holy Places and its vicinity for all religious denominations, local and foreign.[13] Ottoman authorities reaffirmed the Status Quo decree in 1853 under Sultan Abdul Majid I in the wake of European imperial encroachments in the Holy Land.[14] Attempts to sidestep Ottoman sovereignty in Jerusalem enforced a growing sentiment in Western imaginations that the Holy City held a special international status in relation to other urban centers. The Ottoman decree represented the only official "international arrangement" concerning the Holy Places, even after the United Nations included *corpus separatum* in multiple resolutions.[15] The reaffirmation of the Status Quo in 1853 by the sultan continued the official policies of open access while simultaneously fostering greater disdain toward the Ottoman governmentalization of Jerusalem.

A common trope in Western imaginations concerning the Israeli-Palestinian peace processes is that the two sides were, and remain, irreconcilable foes. Yet what the Ottoman Status Quo showed, and what was missed by the United Nations, is that conflict between Muslims and Jews (as well as Christians) has never been inevitable, nor has religion always been the primary marker of difference in the region.[16] Only with the advent of Zionist settler-colonialism did the strength of religious pluralism in Palestine morph into a perceived weakness as the Israeli state served as a fulcrum to the dissolution of relative Ottoman-era coexistence.[17] There was certainly violence

in the region as the UN took over; yet the idea that conflict was an inexorable aspect of Palestinian- and Arab-Zionist relations severely damaged perceptions of the international organization in Palestine, and hampered any success that may have been found had there been a more open-minded approach to the region's complexities. It was from the notion of constant conflict and of the safety of the Holy Places being in jeopardy that the need for a municipal commissioner came into vogue for the United Nations and its General Assembly.

In these initial stages of United Nations involvement in Jerusalem, the role of the municipal commissioner, or even how the city was to be governed, had not been fully conceptualized. Ideas of internationalization were nearly the exclusive purview of Western powers and served as a test of European imperial enterprises under a new likeness.[18] This international form of governance was intentionally muddled to keep imperial rule hidden behind the veneer of eventual local self-determination.[19] Ideas for internationalization in previous international treaties and agreements all guided Jerusalem toward an international status among Western imperial powers.[20] Backed by this diplomatic momentum, the report by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to the General Assembly on 3 September 1947 promoted partition and a three-state solution in Palestine: an Arab zone, a Jewish zone, and an international zone focused on Jerusalem and governed by the United Nations. Jerusalem would be home to a so-called international government in this iteration of the plan. Although members of UNSCOP debated the extent of internationalization, none outwardly refuted its necessity.[21] Not once did UNSCOP consider supporting independence for Palestinians, in Jerusalem or Palestine more broadly, despite the express intent of the mandate system to prepare nations for independence.[22] UN Resolution 181 formally took the whispered claims of Jerusalem's exceptionality and codified them into a new kind of mandate.

The General Assembly inherited the framework for acquiring a leader of the internationalized territory from its British predecessors; the organization did not merely state Jerusalem was going to be under its purview. The role of the municipal commissioner, and the terms of office that individual held, were clearly laid out in the Jerusalem Municipal Government Order of 1948 by the British high commissioner for Palestine. John Fletcher-Cooke, a member of the United Kingdom delegation to the United Nations, noted in a telegram to Andrew Cordier, the executive assistant to the secretary-general, in mid-May 1948 that "the Jerusalem Municipal Commissioner may take any action and give any directions which in his [sic] absolute discretion he [sic] deems appropriate for the Municipal Government of Jerusalem."[23] The *New York Times* reported the commissioner held "wide powers," and the post was "anomalous," or unprecedented, in the Palestinian context.[24] Clarence Pickett, executive secretary of AFSC, referred to the position as diplomatic speak "which really means the person in charge of the city of Jerusalem."[25] Semantic pedantic musings aside, the post of municipal commissioner clearly came with considerable clout and had a large bearing on the future of Jerusalem in its transition from British Mandate to United Nations international enclave.

The bulk of the action regarding the municipal commissioner occurred in a relatively short time, in May and June 1948. This flurry of activity not coincidentally occurred with the departure of Britain and the formal arrival of the United Nations into Palestine. Despite the Mandate ending, Britain was still very involved in the area and quite invested in the search for a new governing force through the proposed commissioner. For a commissioner to be appointed, the person had to be accepted by the United Nations, Arab delegations (a vague conglomeration of representatives primarily from Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, but importantly not Palestine), the Zionist government, and the British high commissioner of Palestine.[26] Britain's inclusion and Palestine's exclusion in these discussions further elucidated an adamant Western-leaning geopolitical viewing of the Jerusalem "question."

The cementing of an imperial way of being – in other words intentional imperial actions – regarding the United Nations governance in Jerusalem went back to at least the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916.[27] While brief in its commentary about the city itself, Sykes-Picot was a clandestine agreement between Britain and France dividing Ottoman territory before the Ottoman Empire capitulated. The agreement spoke of a "brown area," coincidentally covering Jerusalem, which was to "be established [as] an international administration," ambiguous language open to interpretation and strategic maneuvering.[28] Seeing as neither of the two imperial powers wanted to see the city in the hands of the other, internationalizing the region became a method of compromise.[29] Building off Sykes-Picot and other international agreements in the 1920s to early 1940s, the General Assembly recommended that the Mandatory power appoint a municipal commissioner before 15 May – a move that ran counter to every notion of self-determination and respect for local autonomy.[30]

The intent of naming and employing a municipal commissioner loomed large as the United Nations continued to push actions of internationalization onto Jerusalem. Abba Eban, a liaison officer of the Zionist government and later the first Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, asserted that the UN claim of legitimacy and sovereignty in Jerusalem was ridiculous and a shameful aim. A vote on the General Assembly floor on 14 May 1948 – the day before the Mandate expired – attempted to establish United Nations sovereignty in Jerusalem and empower the office of the municipal commissioner to fruition. The vote establishing sovereignty failed to pass, leading Eban to claim there was no legal basis for the United Nations to govern Jerusalem, let alone have the authority to appoint an overseer figure like a commissioner to the city.[31] Arab governments were also skeptical of the municipal commissioner idea. The Transjordanian prime minister Tawfiq Abu al-Huda questioned the legal basis of the commissioner's appointment, especially as the United Nations had not succeeded in internationalizing Jerusalem at that juncture.[32] Abu al-Huda thought Jerusalem should be internationalized first, and the appointment of the commissioner was a preemptive way to establish an international presence in the region and push an already unsuccessful agenda.[33] In a conversation with Pablo de Azcárate, the then secretary of the Consular Truce Commission in Jerusalem, King Abdallah of Transjordan reportedly launched into a "tirade" declaring that the United Nations had

no right to be so active in Jerusalem.[34] The firmly held position was a clear signal from the international organization that neither Palestinians, Arabs, nor Zionists had the capacity to govern the Holy City. It was also a continuation of foreign entanglements seemingly rescinded with the departure of the British Mandate. This retreat was meant to signal the end of a Western presence in Palestine; instead, the Western-guided mandate merely took on a new name.

## The Search for a Commissioner

Despite reservations with the UN plans for the city, Arabs and Zionists did approve several people for the municipal commissioner post, respectively. Percy C. Clarke, the general manager of Barclay's Bank in Jerusalem, was recommended by United Nations secretary-general Trygve Lie for the position, but was not acceptable to the British high commissioner.[35] Sir Hugh Dow, a name put forth by the British government, was vetoed by the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem as an unfit candidate.[36] The first name that all four parties – Arabs, Zionists, the United Nations, and the British high commissioner to Palestine – approved was Clarence Pickett of the American Friends Service Committee.[37] This nomination was not terribly surprising as the U.S.-based group had already set a precedent in Palestine.

The Quakers, and more specifically the American Friends Service Committee, had been active in Palestine before one of its members was shoulder-tapped for the job of commissioner. While the initial foray into Palestine occurred in 1889, the work began in earnest with humanitarian efforts in Gaza during the Nakba.[38] The Friends sent a mission to Palestine from April–May 1948 to aid in Arab-Jewish relations and securing a truce for the Old City of Jerusalem.[39] With the pending British withdrawal from Palestine, a third mission goal emerged: to see an immediate appointment of a governor to supervise an international enclave which the Friends called a "Truce of God."[40] This set the Friends up nicely for any future appointment of a governor – or commissioner.

Due to the complex – and troubling from an anti-imperial standpoint – position of the United Nations vis-à-vis the British Mandate, the desire to have a commissioner in place before 15 May became a crucial goal for the UN. With 15 May as a pivotal date since the Mandate and the high commissioner still officially held governing power in Palestine up to that date, after midnight it would hold no power whatsoever in governing the region. As such, the United Nations worked in close tandem with the departing imperial power to secure the governance of the region. Unfortunately for the United Nations, the commissioner search was subject to procrastination and no serious attempts were made until 7 May, a week before the deadline. That evening, UN executive secretary Cordier called Clarence Pickett of AFSC to ask him about the Jerusalem post.[41] From Pickett's perspective, it seemed he was merely a recognizable name among the Friends and his nomination was based more on his position as executive secretary of AFSC than on any individual merits.[42] His name was forwarded to Cordier by Rufus Jones, a Friend's member who was instrumental in calling for

a truce in Jerusalem during the 1947–49 war.[43] Since he was acceptable for all four parties needing to sign off on the position, it seemed as though the commissionership was decided.

But Pickett ultimately did not accept the post. Pickett himself was vague about his reasons for declining the esteemed municipal commissioner job, claiming he "would be of greater use in the scene" through his administrative role in the United States than working in Palestine.[44] Instead details came from Julia Branson, associate secretary of the Foreign Service Section at AFSC, who remarked in mid-May 1948 that Pickett had a doctor's appointment on the afternoon of Cordier's call. The physician instructed Pickett "to go a little slow" on account of waning physical fitness.[45] Heeding his doctor's advice, Pickett determined his health insufficient to take on the international position. Cordier was hoping for an immediate positive response to get the commissioner job settled and was reportedly quite distraught at Pickett's decision.[46] The process of name giving having begun, with Jones giving Pickett's name to the United Nations, now it was Clarence Pickett's turn to pass the metaphorical baton.

The name he passed along for consideration was Harold Evans. Pickett assumed the United Nations wanted a member of AFSC, and Evans's history within the organization made him a suitable candidate. A Friend since the U.S. chapter was founded in 1917, Evans attended AFSC-run schools, worked as a humanitarian in Europe after World War I helping with German child nutritional needs, and practiced law out of Philadelphia.[47] Sixty-one years old, he had plenty of experience and was the next choice for all four parties to consider. Evans received the greatest consideration for the position from the United Nations regarding the municipal commissioner post. His selection set into motion a month of confusion, of reneged assurances, and backpedalling leaving all involved confused and searching for new solutions to already solved problems.

At this juncture the tunnel vision of the United Nations became clear. The instant pivoting from one member of AFSC to another signaled the importance of the Quaker organization before the acumen of the individual appointed to govern the city. Jerusalem was going to be internationalized by UN rules, and this stance proved to be detrimental to all involved – within and outside the city.

Unfazed by the top-down approach to choosing the commissioner, the UN proceeded with the newest name of ASFC garnering attention. After Pickett's refusal of the position on a Friday, Evans attended a series of meetings in Lake Success, New York, with United Nations personnel the following Tuesday.[48] The vice-chair of the Arab Higher Committee, Jamal al-Husayni, happened to be in New York on that day and gave his approval of Evans's appointment.[49] Evans wrote to Cordier on 13 May to formally pass his name for consideration to the British High Commissioner "in view of the emergency situation which has arisen."[50] The Jewish Agency, through a telegram from Arthur Lourie, confirmed the appointment on Friday, 14 May.[51] Seeing as the British high commissioner had already confirmed the appointment of Pickett, Evans was automatically accepted by the British representative of the foursome. With

all four parties in agreement, Evans did "a good deal of deep searching of the heart" and decided to take the job as municipal commissioner on the evening of 14 May, before the Mandate ceased.[52] Thus ended the search for the commissioner. Yet the activities surrounding the post had yet to reach a zenith.

## Harold Evans as Municipal Commissioner

A day after Evans was featured on the front page of the *New York Times*, Clarence Pickett remarked that at his appointment, Harold Evans's post "permits him to be almost a dictator – to run the city in any fashion he desires."[53] This was a peculiar moniker to bestow upon a pacifist lawyer from Philadelphia, and an even more bizarre statement considering that his post was granted by the United Nations. For the new international organization, this was meant to be the opening salvo in a series of well-timed and well-executed strikes to make Jerusalem an international enclave and an international city. Evans never took up the post, however; and neither did the General Assembly have an insider governing the city in the way once hoped.

Immediately following Evans's acceptance of the post of municipal commissioner, the geopolitical landscape of Palestine dramatically shifted. As 14 May transitioned into the fifteenth, and the Mandate left Palestine, the state of Israel was announced with the military and political leader David Ben-Gurion serving as prime minister of the new country. Famously, the United States recognized Israel a mere eleven minutes after its creation; a decision that was contested at the time and continues to draw scrutiny.[54] This decision was particularly frustrating for Transjordan who had been asking for official recognition from the United States for over three years.[55] As with many issues surrounding Jerusalem and Palestine, concerns expressed by Arab countries were as much about individual goals as they were about Arab unity for Palestinian causes.

Even within the United States the choice was hardly united. Internal strife among U.S. advisors either cautioned against recognition as a matter of U.S. prestige in the world, or advocated for it on account of staying firm on Palestine's partition and discouraging Israel from turning to communism.[56] President Harry S. Truman received a telegram from Eliahu Epstein of the Israeli government on 14 May asking for swift recognition upon independence, and the U.S. president responded the same day that the United States recognized the provisional government as the de facto governing force in Israel.[57] When news of U.S. recognition reached the U.S. delegation at the United Nations, there was "pandemonium," a strong sense of disbelief, as well as threats from other nations, such as Cuba, to withdraw from the United Nations entirely, although that never came to pass.[58] Arab personnel were "deeply disappointed," "shocked," and responded that U.S. recognition of Israel "had crushed the hopes of the Arabs."[59] Britain realized that if the Israeli state received global endorsement the prospects of peace in Palestine were jeopardized. Britain sought to delay the outpouring of support for the new country as best as possible, albeit without much success.[60] The U.S. under-

secretary of state Robert Lovett remarked a few days later how political advisors failed in making Truman "a father of a new state," but were determined to "at least make him the midwife" via the quick recognition.[61]

The action of recognizing Israel, while innocent on the surface, had seismic impact on the myriad of overarching political and conciliatory actions ongoing in Palestine. This move not only signaled to the United Nations that a major ally was operating on a separate agenda, but also told Palestinians that the promises of previous administrations – and in turn the opportunities for self-determination – were being discarded.[62] Evans being a U.S. citizen only complicated matters for himself and the optics of the United Nations in Palestine. For the Quakers, having an internationalized Jerusalem was crucial for any support of the mediation processes – municipal commissioner or otherwise. If the city became either Palestinian, Arab, or Zionist territory, and Quakers were present, the image of the Friends in the region could be misconstrued as favoring one side over the others.[63] This worked alongside calls for a truce before Evans took up the commissioner's position and his desire to be a mediating actor rather than a puppet to larger imperial actions through the United Nations. Much had transpired in a short time. Britain had absconded from Palestine, a new country governed by settler-colonialists had been founded and ratified by the Western hegemonic power, and a pacifist-inclined lawyer was en route to Jerusalem to preside over the city under the guise of an imperial collection of countries in a so-called postcolonial world led by the United Nations.

The following weeks were a cacophonous affair with a flurry of telegrams, meetings, and confusions. Even though the post had been filled, Evans could not immediately be present in Jerusalem due to the intensity of war that arose following the British departure and the creation of the state of Israel. The United Nations appointed Pablo de Azcárate, a Spanish diplomat already in Jerusalem working for the UN, as interim municipal commissioner until Evans reached the city. Azcárate began his duties as commissioner, though word did not trickle down to Arab or Jewish authorities who were expecting Evans to be at the helm.[64] The U.S. government received word that the actions of recognizing Israel had made Evans apprehensive about assuming his position. Rumblings in Washington wondered if he would ever make it to Jerusalem.[65]

Due to his Quaker beliefs of pacifism, Evans refused to enter Jerusalem in a military convoy or have any sort of military protection as part of his job.[66] Evans contacted Azcárate and informed him he intended to remain away from Jerusalem until the fighting stopped, which Azcárate deemed to be "curious" and an "impossibility."[67] The situation in Jerusalem, according to the new interim commissioner, needed to be met with people holding more than nominal authority.[68] Quietly, Azcárate seemed to question the logic of the United Nations promoting a pacifist to oversee the governance of a city embroiled in conflict.

Another event shook the confidence of the new municipal commissioner before he set foot outside of the United States. On 20 May, as conflict continued in Jerusalem, the United Nations appointed Count Folke Bernadotte as its mediator for the Palestine "question."[69] Since the fighting was concentrated in Jerusalem, the city was a large

component of the Swedish national's efforts.[70] Both Zionist and Arab forces sought to stamp authority onto the city and saw Britain's departure as a chance to reclaim previously-ignored pleas for sovereignty.[71] The appointment of Bernadotte, it was surmised years after the fact, must have hit Evans hard, as it seemed as though the United Nations pivoted from his appointment so quickly and created another similar position in the region.[72] The United Nations successfully installed two people of power to oversee peace in Jerusalem in less than a week, and neither with Palestinian consultation. Bernadotte's mission was to negotiate a truce between warring Arabs and Zionists and bring peace back to Jerusalem.[73] Evans voiced his view on numerous occasions: he would only set foot in the Holy City if no military protection was needed, and if a truce had been successfully signed and continuously adhered to.[74] Until then, Azcárate acted as the municipal commissioner while the newly appointed mediator Bernadotte worked to establish the truce needed to get Evans to Jerusalem.

During this period, the United Nations was more focused on the bigger goal of an internationalized Jerusalem than the success of the chosen commissioner. Even without a truce in place, and with wider UN intentions beyond himself in mind, Evans travelled closer to Palestine and the city he was assigned to govern. On 23 May, he arrived in Cairo to be near Jerusalem when the ceasefire arrived.[75] In retrospective foreshadowing, Cordier informed Evans that "no constitutional difficulty" would arise should Evans have to leave the post.[76] By the time he reached the Egyptian capital, coincidentally, his tenacity in pursuing the post waned as Evans deemed Bernadotte effectively took his role.[77] Evans was accompanied by another Friend, James Vail, who was a part of AFSC's recent mission to Palestine, serving as the personal advisor to the municipal commissioner.[78]

With Evans and Vail holed up in Cairo awaiting a ceasefire agreement, the United Nations sent Taylor Shaw, a UN staff member, to Amman to speak with King Abdallah about the prospects of the municipal commissioner's success in the near future. Shaw reported bluntly: "There is no hope for normalcy in Jerusalem for some time."[79] That same day, 5 June, Azcárate relayed communication of a meeting with the prime minister of Transjordan, Tawfiq Abu al-Huda, in which the Transjordanian government feared a recognition of the municipal commissioner would set a problematic precedent for the future governance of Jerusalem.[80] Azcárate travelled to Cairo and reported this to Evans in person as well, indicating the importance of the news for both Evans and the UN more broadly.[81] Evans was viewed as "a U.N. man" and came to represent "the thin edge of the wedge" bringing about the actualization of the internationalization scheme for the United Nations and a further infringement upon the sovereignty of Arabs.[82] All the while Azcárate, when not travelling between Arab states, had to run a "sniper gauntlet" and travel "on a goat track with a donkey" under the cloak of darkness to remain safe in Jerusalem.[83] With the prospects of stability in Jerusalem slim, the United Nation's dreams of governing the city seemed to be a distant memory only weeks into its tenure.

Looking from afar, the United Nations botched the job rather spectacularly up to this point. There had been frequent appointments of people with very similar tasks,

movements toward internationalization without much in the form of legally binding rights, and a government structure where the leader was not physically in the city due to religious beliefs made very clear from the outset. Bernadotte and Azcárate continued moving around the region talking to governments and officials attempting to scramble together some form of legitimacy in a quickly brewing quagmire. Examining the actions of the United Nations, the notion of Jerusalem being a "problem" was exacerbated by the incessant drive of the UN to see the city become part of a "special international regime," and even through the very structuring of Jerusalem as a "problem" only it could solve.[84]

These actions engendered animosities among Palestinians and Arabs, and made Zionists more skeptical of what the prized city might look like moving forward – especially with the strength of U.S. backing by recognizing Israel. The United Nations touted Evans's position as a Quaker and his inherent neutrality as incentive for locals to latch onto the internationalization plan, but his appointment was still seen as unnecessary and as a UN attempt to place someone of the General Assembly's choosing at the head of an unwanted government.[85] Even as a Christian, the UN vaunted Evans – and more specifically Quaker impartiality – to assuage the constructed fears of unavoidable religious turmoil in the city. Lost on the UN, however, was the fact that neither Palestinians, Arabs, nor Zionists were in a position to give up claims to the city in 1948, for reasons beyond religiosity. As such, the United Nations did not have the leverage needed to pry any side far enough away from the city for a permanent substantive stamp of authority.

Still, the desires and the governance of the United Nations in Jerusalem rested on the shoulders of a Quaker awaiting peace in the Holy City. While this unfolded, another member of the United Nations in Palestine began to grow restless. Ralph Bunche, a United States diplomat, was on the Greek island of Rhodes negotiating an armistice between Zionists, Palestinians, and Arabs, and was generally unsympathetic to Evans's concerns. Bunche thought the nominated commissioner should go to Jerusalem as soon as a truce was called, and ideally before.[86] It was Bunche's opinion that peace was not an option in Jerusalem or Palestine in the short term, and a ceasefire was a best-case scenario.[87] According to Bunche, everyone involved in Palestine should be prepared to operate under the auspices of at least some hostility.[88] Evans commented how Bunche was the only one not supporting him and James Vail as the pair waited in Cairo for peace to be reestablished.[89] Bunche believed there needed to be people on the ground actively working toward a settlement rather than waiting for peace to fall into place.[90] Evans, then, had come to represent a latent aspect of the United Nations: maybe things would improve without doing much work, and then all would be suitable for the scheme. As Bernadotte and Bunche worked to make Jerusalem governable, and while Azcárate skirted danger in the city, Evans and Vail waited in Cairo for a cessation of hostilities and for settlements of peace. While justifiable through the lens of Quaker ethics, the practicability of hiring compromised members of government seemed to have delegitimized the reputation of the United Nations for Palestinians, Arabs, Zionists, and for UN members working without any moral restrictions.

In lieu of being completely stagnant, Evans began a series of correspondences with 'Abd al-Rahman 'Azzam Pasha, the secretary-general of the Arab League in Egypt, to ascertain the prospects of a peace from the broad Arab perspective. This was suggested by Cordier, who stated that despite decisions about a truce taking place outside Jerusalem, contact should be made for when the United Nations inevitably situated itself in the city.[91] Evans, seemingly oblivious that his position was directly linked to the United Nations' goal of a "permanent international regime," stated to 'Azzam Pasha that his role had no future implications on the governance of the city.[92] This gulf in understanding, or even the discrepancies in communication between Evans and the wider United Nations, indicated a growing divide between the individual and the organization. Relations with other Arab countries proved difficult for the United Nations in internationalization efforts as well. Transjordan's head of state King Abdallah intended to become the "King of Jerusalem."[93] Furthermore, Transjordan had not yet been admitted into the United Nations, or received official recognition from the United States, which hampered the view of the government toward a UN-backed administration scheme with a U.S. citizen at the controls.[94] Evans stated how he envisaged the municipal commissioner as a symbolic role uniting the city as one despite the ongoing divisions: divisions aggravated by the very position he occupied.[95]

Two letters were sent to 'Azzam Pasha. Bernadotte approved of these dispatches while Bunche did not.[96] Evans thought the best way to get support for the municipal commissioner, and in turn discover a peaceful environment in Jerusalem, was to circumvent Transjordan and instead focus on other Arab governments and organizations, hence the communication with the Egyptian delegate, and by proxy the wider Arab League.[97] Notably, however, there is no indication in the archival records of Evans or anyone affiliated with the municipal commissioner speaking directly with Palestinians or the Palestinian leadership. From the outset of the search for a commissioner, Palestinians were passengers rather than participants. The would-be commissioner was not idle in Cairo, though he was absent from his intended placement and not speaking to all of the region's relevant parties. Writing in lament years later, the former British high commissioner Fletcher-Cooke described the Cairo days with retrospective melancholy, stating that it seemed "as though the dove I had so hopefully launched would never spread its wings over Jerusalem."[98]

The geographic space separating the decision makers played a massive factor in proceedings. People in Jerusalem saw a real immediacy for executive action; Evans and Vail saw a less intense but still time-sensitive project from Egypt; and those at UN headquarters in Lake Success took a full diplomatic mediation approach to the pertinent issues. Azcárate soon became critical of actions undertaken by the United Nations. He felt Palestine was heading for destruction just like his home country of Spain.[99] The frequent moving of personnel and the lack of communication between UN members on the ground gave Azcárate the impression of a ramshackle and unprofessional operation.[100] AFSC head Clarence Pickett recommended Evans and Vail cease communications with 'Azzam Pasha and return to the United States to

mediate.[101] The United Nations, meanwhile, wanted Evans close to Jerusalem for when the truce was signed and the armistice enacted.[102] Evans wrote to Pickett in June: "With all due respect to those of you in the USA, we believe this is a case where decisions can best be made on the field."[103] The varying opinions, from across oceans and in Palestine, brought confusion and strife to an already tense situation, and seriously hindered the ability of the United Nations to function as a cohesive unit and operate as the global stabilizing force its General Assembly imagined itself to be.

Even with the ongoing war, and internal squabbles of procedure, Evans, Vail and Bernadotte travelled around the Mashriq in June 1948.[104] On 12 June, the trio left Cairo for Jerusalem – the first and only time Evans ever set foot in the city he was assigned to govern. Azcárate claimed this brief stay in the city was more about the Quaker moral position than any municipal commissioner business.[105] The air to Azcárate's writings weave less than subtle frustrations that this sojourn to the city had no proper diplomatic mission. Evans expected to be in the city for only a number of hours. He assured 'Azzam Pasha of the Arab League that his visit had no bearing on the overarching question of his role as commissioner, but rather for him to gain an in-person view of the city.[106] Evans met with the Arab Legion authorities, the Jewish Agency, and the United Nations Truce Commission while in Jerusalem before continuing onto Tel Aviv, Haifa, Damascus, and Rhodes.[107] There were discussions of potentially returning to Jerusalem, but Evans nixed these notions thinking the Zionists and Arabs might play him for individual political means.[108] The lone three-day excursion, and more importantly the few hours spent in the Holy City, fully articulated the futility of his mission as municipal commissioner. Within days of returning to Cairo Evans submitted his formal resignation.[109] In a statement released through the United Nations, he claimed he could provide no help in solving the Jerusalem "problem." As a result, he asked to return to the United States, which was approved by the secretary-general, Trygve Lie.[110] Lie, for his part, communicated with Evans an appreciation for his attempts in the matter, and noted the "real contribution to the efforts" undertaken by the United Nations in Palestine.[111] Evans left for Philadelphia a few days later.

Despite relinquishing his post, Evans remained on the financial books of the United Nations for several months despite not fulfilling any duties. The lack of official resignation was noted by the legal advisor to the chief of staff, H. Courtney Kingstone, in February 1949.[112] Cordier contacted Evans again on 24 March 1949, when Evans's formal letter of resignation was finally accepted by the United Nations.[113] Lord Cadogan, the United Kingdom's permanent representative to the United Nations, called Evans "a transient, embarrassed phantom" due to his lack of service as municipal commissioner and his prolonged compensation for duties never undertaken.[114] Evans did not really want the commissioner job in any event. His actions indicated a hesitancy to go beyond established comforts and assume the post, and as such he never occupied the sole role to which he was entrusted.

# Alberto Gonzalez Fernandez and Another Attempt

Following Evans's withdrawal, the United Nations began the process anew of making Jerusalem an international enclave. The passing of UN Resolution 194 and the creation of the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) ushered in a new phase of proceedings with an eye to the establishment of a "permanent international regime" for Jerusalem and the surrounding area. The main PCC task, alongside working with the ongoing refugee crisis, was creating a draft statute for the General Assembly outlining the procedural necessities of making and keeping Jerusalem a UN-governed space.[115] Along with this draft statute came a reengagement with a familiar governmental strategy: the special municipal commissioner.

The UN's desire for a municipal commissioner did not end with Evans's return to the United States. Alberto Gonzalez Fernandez, a Colombian diplomat who had been present for a number of conversations about Palestine at the General Assembly, was chosen for the post more than a year after Evans's departure, on 10 September 1949.[116] Azcárate retained his position as interim commissioner during this extended period. Much like Evans, the appointment of Gonzalez Fernandez was not lacking for dramatics. UN actions between June 1948 and September 1949 made the realities on the ground all the more complex for the incoming commissioner.

By the time Gonzalez Fernandez received the call for the commissionership, the United Nations had established and nearly completed another commission: the PCC. The commission had been created to, among other tasks, present the General Assembly with a draft instrument for the establishment of a permanent international regime for the city of Jerusalem. With this presentation on 1 September 1949, the commission's role was essentially finished.[117] The creation of the draft instrument meant the United Nations continued so-called international designs on the city, which angered other political figures, especially Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists who sought the city under different domains. Israel's Moshe Sharett noted how the UN instrument infringed on the sovereignty of the city and essentially froze the citizens of Jerusalem under an international mandate.[118] Arab delegates asked what was meant by the term "final settlement" and pressed the PCC to elaborate more on what its intentions were in Jerusalem, as Arab leaders across the Mashriq, broadly speaking, were focused on the refugee crisis facing the region more than territorial disputes.[119] It was from this continued pursuit of Jerusalem's internationalization that the idea of the UN municipal commissioner was once again brought to the fore. It was hoped – by relevant UN personnel – that this period from early September to the presentation of the draft statute and new political maneuvering might be smooth and seamless for the United Nations. It was not by any metric.

The other major event between Evans and Gonzalez Fernandez was the assassination of Count Bernadotte on 17 September 1948 in Jerusalem. Carried out by members of the Stern Gang, or Lehi – a Zionist paramilitary terrorist group – the assassination was a clear message against international meddling in Jerusalem specifically and Palestine more broadly.[120] The United Nations was on guard, not only for the safety of its

members in the region but also governmental claims of Jerusalem made by Zionists in the wake of Bernadotte's death.[121] Numerous delegations at the UN voiced displeasure at Israel for its "lukewarm attitude" in searching for the perpetrators of this murder.[122] Ralph Bunche was appointed the new mediator for Palestine. Yet the tensions between locals and the United Nations were no longer on the periphery.

On the day of Gonzalez Fernandez's appointment, 10 September 1949, with the memory of Bernadotte's assassination still in mind, Cordier was warned by UN spokesperson George Barnes that the naming of a new municipal commissioner could incite strong responses from Zionists and Arabs both for and against internationalization.[123] Naming another mediator-type almost one year to the day after Bernadotte's killing gave cause for alarm for UN personnel with knowledge of recent history. Increasing the number of guards in the city was discussed, and the "adequacy [of] security conditions" in Jerusalem were checked.[124] There was an impression of more eyes being placed upon the city as yet another political move was made. Israel advanced toward making Jerusalem the capital of the Zionist state, albeit cautiously, as there were still ambitions of being admitted into the United Nations and Zionists did not want to throw away that possibility by rashly acting on territorial desires.[125] These ambitions notwithstanding, the Israeli government renewed vocal displeasure at the appointment of a new commissioner.[126] Eban cabled his reluctant support for the appointment while stating how the notion of a municipal commissioner superseded the terms of the initial resolution of December 1948.[127] With the PCC nearing a completion of its mandate and disdain shown by supposedly cooperative governments, the post seemed to be in even more doubt than in 1948.

Gonzalez Fernandez never served as municipal commissioner and only held the title for nine days. The Colombian wrote the secretary-general on 19 September officially declining the offer bestowed upon him. He believed the appointment was "belated," that another plan for the governance of the city was announced almost simultaneously with his promotion, and the prospects of limited cooperation between the office of the commissioner and the Jewish Agency made the appointment irrelevant.[128] All these factored into his hesitancy. Gonzalez Fernandez also cited his wife's illness as a reason for spurning the job.[129] Concluding the long list of reasons for turning down the offer, the recently named commissioner believed he could do little for the prestige of the United Nations and that his post ultimately proved to be "of no avail" in the bigger Palestinian picture.[130] The failure to appoint yet another commissioner, according to the U.S. consul in Jerusalem William Burdett, strengthened the belief among Israelis that the United Nations lacked the fortitude to actually enact internationalization.[131]

No other municipal commissioner was named by the United Nations. The fourth progress report of the PCC, released three days after Gonzalez Fernandez's resignation but obviously written beforehand and unedited, stated: "The Commission is convinced that Dr. Gonzalez Fernandez will receive, on the part of the Arab and Israeli authorities, the assistance necessary for the accomplishment of his task."[132] Even the United Nations could not keep up to date with its activities.

# Conclusions and the Demise of the Internationalization Scheme

A combination of United Nations' imperial ambition, Quaker morality, U.S. recognition of a settler-colonial state, and wavering truce negotiations doomed the Jerusalem municipal commissioner mission for Harold Evans who never stood a legitimate chance of becoming commissioner in any meaningful way. Alberto Gonzalez Fernandez's appointment never had much helium either due to the continued insistence of the United Nations on forcing a governing scheme that was antithetical to local calls for self-governance. The actions of the United Nations in Jerusalem regarding the municipal commissioner set a damaging precedent of ignoring the desires of local leaders, infringing upon the sovereignty of Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists, and cementing the imperial ways of being carried over from the British Mandate. The commissioners were either vetoed before being appointed or accepted the post and retracted employment due to the unworkable conditions, be it religious-based, tardy appointments, or the recent assassination of a similarly tasked member of the international team. The issues with the commissioners themselves were real and corrosive, but the bigger repercussions – and the larger overall ramifications – came from the consistent calamities of the United Nations. The UN and its member states on the General Assembly floor were so determined to make internationalization a reality that it appointed people with abandon until the region was saturated with folks tripping over themselves unable to operate as initially planned.[133] This confounding choice can be attributed to the rush of settling the region after the Mandate's retreat and the feigned fears of religious strife inherently present in the region, but the impact had a wide reach beyond its intentions. Already dubious Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists used the municipal commissioner fiasco as ammunition in the opposition to further United Nations presence in Jerusalem.

Arab governments remained vocal against internationalization in the immediate aftermath of the 1949 commissionership failure. Referred to as the "Jerusalem scheme," the Jaffa-based newspaper *al-Difa'* concluded that the West, writ large, had actively discarded Palestinian rights and infringed on Palestinian sovereignties through continued efforts in Jerusalem.[134] Some Arab representatives, including Iraq's Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali, pointed to Israeli favoritism enacted by the United Nations as further justification for Palestinian and Arab leeriness of UN designs on Jerusalem.[135] The cognizant, intentional choice by the United Nations to leave Palestinians and Palestinian leadership out of the commissioner discussions led to other Arab countries needing to be the de facto voice for the stateless nation. As such, Palestine could not directly express its opinions as countries such as Iraq and Transjordan had other ideas about Jerusalem's future aside from Palestinian interests. Furthermore, and equally detrimental for all involved, was the homogenization of Arabs and Arabness adopted by the United Nations during the commissioner business. The dichotomous creation of Arabs against Israelis set a precedent for skirting complexity, and the legacy of this decision continues to haunt the region.

Tangible internationalization fizzled out soon after Gonzalez Fernandez rejected his appointment. The Palestine Conciliation Commission produced the draft instrument and handed over the tactical planning of internationalization to the Trusteeship Council – the United Nations' equivalent of the League of Nations' mandate system – that found little success. After 1952, the UN found the task was stagnant unless Palestinians, Arabs, and Zionists drastically changed their respective positions on the issue of United Nations presence in the city.[136] Jerusalem never became the international enclave the United Nations desired, or how UN resolutions 181, 194, or (eventually) 303 envisioned. Instead, in part because of the failure to have the municipal commissioner govern on the ground, the plans remained merely plans. There was never any substantive action taken to make them a reality.

The failure to secure a municipal commissioner for Jerusalem was not the sole culprit of the United Nations' failure to internationalize the city. The lack of a commissioner only abetted the demise of intentions. Appointing Azcárate as an interim commissioner filled the position, but not the void. The connection between the departing British Mandate and the municipal commissioner signaled a clear continuation of a previous regime detrimental to the aspirations of self-determination harbored by both local and settler populations. Furthermore, the recognition of Israel and the lack of unity within the United Nations and its member states placed the Quakers in an unbalanced position and promoted the continued stagnation of Evans and his party from entering the city and governing it. Jerusalem would never be closer, or farther, from having a stable, unified government than when Harold Evans was waiting in Cairo – a government of top-down, imperial-promoting, self-serving intentions perhaps, yet a government that could have been a voice in the myriad of disputes gripping the city down the decades: a voice to comment on embassies, on walls, on holy sites and on water supplies. Instead, the United Nations fostered images of checkbox consultation and an inability to follow through with stated aims. The municipal commissioner could not have fixed the Palestine "problem," or solved the Jerusalem "question." Rather, the United Nations' plan to install a special municipal commissioner complicated the quandary without providing any semblance of a resolution.

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## Endnotes

1   "Harold Evans, Quaker, Gets 'Thankless' Jerusalem Post," *New York Times*, 14 May 1948, 1, online at nyti.ms/3DIG4KK (accessed 20 October 2022).

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# Fair Competition? The Arab Fair in Mid-1930s Palestine

Semih Gökatalay

## Abstract

This article explores the Arab Fair that took place in Jerusalem in 1933 and in 1934 from the economic and political perspectives. It foregrounds the reasons and results of the absence of a continuously held international trade fair by Arabs in Palestine within the schema of Mandatory Palestine in particular and of the post-Ottoman Balkans and Middle East in general. Although it was successful in bringing businesspeople from various parts of the Arab World together, the lack of official support, broad participation, international recognition, and promotional efforts abroad, as well as strong Zionist propaganda campaigns against it, adversely affected the progress of the Arab Fair, and it did not take place after 1934. Unlike most other post-Ottoman states where collaboration between business groups and political elites gave rise to international fairs in the interwar period, Palestinian Arabs could not enjoy any official endorsement from the British to organize and sustain such a business gathering. In contrast with the Arab Fair, the Levant Fair in Tel Aviv in the same period grew in size and popularity and evolved into an international spectacle thanks to the contribution of Zionist leaders, enterprises, business associations, and journalists in and outside Palestine and the considerable support of the British and other colonial governments.

## Keywords

Mandatory Palestine; Arab Fair; Levant Fair; Zionism; pan-Arabism; British Mandate; trade fairs; chambers of commerce; colonialism.

This article navigates the tensions surrounding transnational commercial gatherings in interwar Palestine by investigating the Arab Fair, held in Jerusalem in 1933 and 1934, in relation to the Zionist-organized Levant Fair. As with many other aspects of life, trade fairs reveal the multi-layered and complicated economic situation in interwar Palestine. The origins of the Arab Fair lay in the rivalry between Arab and Jewish national representations of "Palestine" in trade fairs. Arab producers participated in Zionist-organized exhibitions and fairs in the 1920s.[1] By 1932, Palestine's Arabs – led by a call from members of the General Islamic Conference that had convened in Jerusalem in December 1931 – boycotted the Levant Fair: a manifestation of "passive resistance" that reflected the political discontent brewing in Palestine, exacerbated by the Great Depression.[2] This decision resonated with the press, and nationalist newspapers called on all "honorable" Arabs to boycott the fair and warned Arab businesses against taking part in it.[3] Trade fairs continued to reflect the tension between Zionists and Arab nationalists in Palestine until the outbreak of the Great Revolt in 1936, which made the organization of a trade fair by either group impossible.

Scholars have displayed a lively interest in the Arab Fair in recent years. Nadi Abusaada's comprehensive account of the little-understood Arab Fair, based on several Palestinian periodicals, explained its organization and operation in 1933.[4] Nisa Ari compared the Levant and Arab fairs from artistic and cultural perspectives.[5] Indeed, even if the Arab Fair was not successful from an economic or political perspective, it could be considered an achievement from an artistic viewpoint.[6] Yet, the Arab Fair – like the Levant Fair – was first and foremost an economic effort, whose patrons were businesspeople seeking close connections to foreign capitalist classes and powers. Although, as will be discussed below, the cultural and propaganda aspects of these fairs cannot be divorced from their economic aims, this article centers on the economic dimensions of these fairs, situating them within colonial, regional, and global economic relations.

Beyond comparing the Arab and Levant fairs, this article also places them in a transnational and regional context. Fairs held throughout the Balkans and Middle East were seen as economic engines, helping cities grow economically, generating revenues for businesses, and providing opportunities for local and foreign enterprises to connect and build relationships. Beyond countering the Zionist-organized Levant Fair and displaying Palestinian Arabs' productivity, this would have been the economic vision of the Arab Fair's organizers: to build a thriving national economy that would put Jerusalem on the region's economic map. The discontinuation of the Arab Fair thus speaks to the economic future foreclosed by the British Mandate and, eventually, the Nakba.

## The Economy of Trade Fairs

Historically, exhibitions and fairs in the United Kingdom and the United States were organized by private entrepreneurs, whereas fairs in continental Europe were arranged by a partnership of public and private enterprises.[7] In the first model, although there was a close collaboration between fair managers and government authorities, especially

to facilitate foreign participation, government intervention in administrative issues was minimal. In the second model, local and national governments bore the fairs' financial burden, such as the costs of construction, operation, electricity, publicity, and other incidental costs. Taking place under British rule, both the Arab and Levant fairs followed the first model.[8] Their patrons sought to raise money by forming chartered corporations and selling shares in them. In the absence of official financial backing and the possibility of compensation for any loss by local and central governments, managers sought to profit by renting pavilions to local and foreign enterprises and selling tickets to visitors. If attendance measured up to organizers' expectations and revenue exceeded expenses, the fair became a financial success and its organizers had sufficient money to pay employees and shareholders and accumulate resources to continue these meetings.

The Arab Fair was less successful than the Levant Fair in terms of participation and longevity, with significantly fewer visitors, exhibitors, and foreign countries represented. Attendance in the Levant Fair even in 1924 (eighteen thousand visitors) was higher than that in the Arab Fair in 1934.[9] The Levant Fair had more space for exhibits and attractions. Due to domestic and foreign demand, the size of the Levant Fair's exhibition area grew over time, from 25,000 square meters in 1929 to 130,000 square meters in 1936.[10] In 1933, the organizers of the Arab Fair had initially wanted to hold it in Jaffa.[11] After consideration, however, they decided that it was "impossible" to hold the fair in Jaffa and settled for renting a single floor in Jerusalem's Palace Hotel instead.[12] Whereas exhibitors had their own pavilions and stands at the Levant Fair, firms displayed their products collectively at the Arab Fair. The international level of the Arab Fair likewise failed to meet that of its counterpart. Even in 1936 when the Great Revolt curtailed the number of foreign attendees, the Levant Fair was among the Middle East's leading international commercial meetings.[13] The international scope of the Arab Fair, however, was very low. All these factors contributed to the business success of the Levant Fair, strengthening its draw to foreign firms and investors.

Table 1. Comparison of the Levant Fair and the Arab Fair, 1934

| Criteria | Levant Fair | Arab Fair |
|---|---|---|
| Exhibitors | 2,821 | 182 |
| Visitors | 600,000 | 13,000 |
| Exhibit area | 100,000 m$^2$ | Palace Hotel |
| Foreign countries represented | 31 | 5 |

A major reason for the difference in commercial success between the two fairs can be seen in the contribution of business associations and groups. The Palestine Exhibitions and Fairs Corporation, the organizer of the Levant Fair, was an international enterprise that pooled the capital of Jewish enterprises from Europe, Palestine, and the United States. By 1926, the company had an authorized capital of one million

dollars.[14] The company increased its capital over time with the involvement of companies, cooperatives, and industrialists from different parts of the world.[15] In the 1930s, the organizing committee of the Levant Fair began to include more individuals and enterprises, such as chambers of commerce, leading banks, and other economic bodies based in Palestine and abroad.[16] The Arab Fair, meanwhile, was organized by a corporation whose capital was five thousand pounds (somewhere between fifteen and twenty-five thousand U.S. dollars in 1933, depending on the month), only £1,825 of which was fully paid.[17] This illuminates the relative collective power of Arab and Jewish private enterprises, a discrepancy that becomes clearer when looking at the institutional bases of the fairs.

The Levant Fair brought together an increasing number of Jewish business associations. For example, the vice presidents of the organizing committee included the general managers of Anglo-Palestine and Barclays Banks, as well as presidents of the Tel Aviv and Jaffa Chamber of Commerce, the Palestine Manufacturers' Association, and the Jaffa Citrus Exchange.[18] The Levant Fair also facilitated collaboration among various enterprises and organizations. For instance, the Anglo-Palestine Bank and the Tel Aviv Chamber of Commerce worked together to form a Special Information Center for Trade and Industry where foreign spectators could make commercial inquiries.[19] Other Jewish chambers of commerce took active parts and opened pavilions that showcased the industrial and trade capabilities of their respective members.[20]

Chambers of commerce had been reorganized soon after Britain established colonial rule in Palestine[21] to serve as advisory committees for colonial authorities in "all matters of trade and commerce."[22] Although membership was open to any businessperson, the representatives of British firms, Zionist-owned joint-stock companies, and members of Arab notable families dominated these associations. After the Jaffa riots in 1921, Arab and Jewish businesspeople in Palestine began to form separate chambers.[23] The 1929 uprisings further divided business groups along ethnoreligious lines. By 1931, the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce was the only chamber in Palestine composed of different nationalities and ethnicities.[24] Jewish chambers advanced the interests of their members by serving as an institutional connection between economic elites and colonial authorities.[25]

In contrast, the Arab Fair received only limited support from the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce. Although the Arab members of the chamber supported the Arab Fair, British businesspeople and firms dominated this chamber's administration.[26] Indeed, Edgar Shelley, the president of the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the organizing committee of the Levant Fair, and A. P. S. Clark, the Jerusalem chamber's vice president, was also a vice president of the Levant Fair organizing committee. Even though the Arab press urged the Jerusalem chamber to boycott the Levant Fair, it did not take any such action.[27] Instead, most foreign banks and members left the chamber in protest of the Arab boycott of Jewish businesses in 1936.[28] This led to the establishment by Arab merchants of their own chamber of commerce in Jerusalem under the presidency of Ahmed Hilmi Pasha.[29] This chamber worked with other Arab chambers of commerce in 'Akka, Gaza, Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, and Nazareth,

holding conferences to facilitate connections between Arab businesspeople within and outside Palestine and presenting their concerns to the British high commissioner, but with little effect.[30] Thus, Arab business associations lacked the political power to continue the Arab Fair throughout the Mandate.

## Official Support

One major reason why the Arab Fair ceased to operate was the absence of official support. Despite claims that the government "supported" both the Arab and Levant fairs, a close assessment of the historical record presents a remarkably different picture.[31] As this section reveals, the British authorities clearly favored Jewish enterprises and the Levant Fair and made only negligible contributions to the Arab Fair.

The British endorsement of the Levant Fair was vital to its success and Meir Dizengoff, the mayor of Tel Aviv, played a key intermediary role between the fair and the British. As a politician, businessperson, shareholder of the fair company, and head of the fair committee, Dizengoff devoted considerable energy to obtaining official support for this meeting, especially after his reelection as mayor in 1927.[32] He actively interacted with colonial authorities in Palestine and went to London to meet British politicians and businesspeople and secure the participation of British firms.[33] Dizengoff's efforts were not fruitless: from its emergence in 1922 to its final stage in 1936, the Levant Fair was held under the patronage of the high commissioner of Palestine. High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope laid the cornerstone of the new fairground in 1933, and opened the fair in 1934 with "official state ceremonies" that featured "all the heads of Palestine Government Departments."[34] British official involvement was not only ceremonial: Wauchope and other colonial authorities held frequent meetings with the fair committee and paid visits to the exhibition area.[35]

Wauchope's support and actions were more than a symbolic gesture. Although the Levant Fair was a private enterprise, the Palestine government officially participated in the fair in the 1930s.[36] The scope of official involvement increased yearly, raising revenue for the fair organizers.[37] The officially endorsed Palestine pavilion featured hundreds of exhibits from a variety of official and semi-official institutions and organizations, including: the Department of Customs, Excise, and Trade; the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries; the Department of Police and Prisons; the Department of Posts and Telegraphs; the Palestine Railways; and Haifa Harbor.[38]

Colonial authorities abroad, meanwhile, enthusiastically supported the Levant Fair. Pro-Zionist British politicians such as Barnett Janner and Robert Morgan put pressure on the British government to officially take part in the Levant Fair, increase the Palestine government's participation, and assist the organizers of the fair.[39] Philip Cunliffe-Lister (secretary of state for the colonies), Walter Runciman (president of the Board of Trade), and John Colville (secretary of the Overseas Trade Department) became honorary presidents of the fair in 1934.[40] British officials who could not attend the fair in person delivered speeches in England and sent congratulatory messages to

the organizing committee that were broadcast to the British public via the BBC and to thousands of attendees in Tel Aviv.[41]

Undoubtedly, the self-interest of British politicians and firms guided policy toward trade fairs in Palestine. By transferring scores of exhibits, firms, and visitors to the Levant Fair, the British not only realized the ambitious dreams of the Zionist leadership but significantly contributed to the business success of this spectacle. With the support of their government, a large number of British firms participated in the Levant Fair and erected a "General British" pavilion after it became an international meeting in 1929.[42] The Federation of British Industries and other business associations sponsored the pavilion, which included goods from British firms that operated in Palestine, the rest of the Middle East, and Europe.[43] In his opening speech in 1936, High Commissioner Wauchope stated: "The British Pavilion and the Palestine Government Pavilion stand as symbols of the important economic connections between Palestine and Great Britain."[44] Although the fair was not a British colonial but a Yishuv-led initiative, the British saw the fair as beneficial in allowing colonial capital to penetrate into new markets. Unsurprisingly, British support pleased the Levant Fair organizing committee.[45] The alignment of the Levant Fair with colonial expansion, whether in the form of British business expansion in the region or in articulating Jewish settlement "as a modern Western colonial project in the East," was thus a win-win situation for British colonialism and the Yishuv.

Like the Levant Fair, the Arab Fair was the result of a close and complex collaboration between businesspeople and politicians. The Istiqlal Party in particular played a key role in the Arab Fair's formation.[46] In stark contrast to the Levant Fair, however, there were virtually no British-sponsored incentives for the Arab Fair. High Commissioner Wauchope and Private Secretary Christopher Gilbert Eastwood, together with other colonial officials, visited the Arab Fair in 1933, but neither news of their visit nor speeches of Arab leaders were broadcast in England or covered by the British press.[47] According to the British, the lack of official support was due to the exclusion of Jews from the Arab Fair. In 1934, the British consented to cooperate with Arabs on the Arab Fair on the condition that Jews would be invited.

The Arab press criticized the British for their discrimination, since their endorsement of the Levant Fair was unconditional.[48] In *International Affairs* in 1936, Emile Ghuri, general secretary of the Palestinian Arab Party, called out the double standard of British policy toward the competing trade fairs:

> The Arabs thought of having an exhibition in Jerusalem. We had one in 1933 and one in 1934. We pleaded for government help. The Government gave us a deaf ear, as we say in Arabic. The Jews had an exhibition in Tel-Aviv, and that was more than helped by the British Government, not only by the British Government in Palestine but here also.[49]

Further, the Arab press argued that the British had not only failed to facilitate, but had actually attempted to thwart the Arab Fair. According to Iraqi newspapers, the British Consul in Iraq did not grant visas to Iraqi journalists who wished to travel to

Jerusalem "apparently by instructions of the British government."[50] The Jerusalem-based newspaper *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* published an editorial that derided the British government and requested an official explanation for the refusal of visas.[51]

Although the British practically played no role in the organization and operation of the Arab Fair, they took credit for it in the League of Nations as if they had given solid support to Arabs.[52] The hypocrisy here echoed British and international claims to "neutrality" despite the structural marginalization of Palestine's Arabs and support for Zionism. As Michael Provence has observed, neither the British nor the League of Nations officially recognized the Palestinian Arab Congress and its product, the Arab Executive, whereas they assigned an official representation to the Zionist Executive (later the Jewish Agency).[53] The Levant Fair's success thus mirrored and was legitimized by the League of Nations' mandate system: while Zionists used the Levant Fair to cement their relations with colonial authorities, the Arab Fair only further alienated Palestine's Arabs from the British.

## International Participation

International participation was vital to the economic success of trade fairs because the arrival of buyers and sellers from other countries increased the profits of fair organizers and facilitated mercantile activity between host cities and foreign markets. Foreign enterprises made purchases from local producers who mailed their goods to different countries during and after the fair.[54] The organizing committee of the Levant Fair advertised for, and solicited, the participation of foreign governments and business associations to gain a larger international presence.[55] As a result, foreign exhibits formed the preponderant feature of the fair, opening up new markets and forging durable partnerships for Jewish entrepreneurs throughout the 1930s (see table 2).

Table 2. Geographical Origins of Firms Participating in the 1936 Levant Fair[56]

| Country | # of Firms | Country | # of Firms | Country | # of Firms |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Palestine | 698 | Romania | 78 | Finland | 15 |
| England | 180 | Switzerland | 64 | Lebanon | 9 |
| Czechoslovakia | 179 | Holland | 60 | Sweden | 8 |
| United States | 135 | Norway | 43 | Egypt | 6 |
| Belgium | 130 | Austria | 40 | Latvia | 6 |
| France | 122 | Hungary | 28 | Lithuania | 5 |
| Poland | 118 | Yugoslavia | 26 | Estonia | 4 |
| Turkey | 86 | Cyprus | 20 | Canada | 4 |
| Bulgaria | 78 | Denmark | 16 | Others | 21 |
| Total | | | | | 2,179 |

By contrast, international participation in the Arab Fair was very low. By definition, it was an "Arab" meeting. The fair administration did not invite Jews and Jewish exhibits were ineligible for the fair.[57] While the Levant Fair pulled exhibitors and visitors from a much wider area, almost all of the companies with stalls at the Arab Fair were from the Arab Middle East. The key nexus between the Arab Fair and the outside world was pan-Arabism. The fair administration sent a guide of the exhibition to Arab newspapers that included the history of Arab countries.[58] Arab countries prepared for the fair by forming committees, which created forums for dialogue for businesspeople and politicians from different parts of the Arab World.[59] There were about 150 firms among exhibitors from Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, and Trans-Jordan in 1933.[60] The number of enterprises only rose to 182 the next year.[61] There were only two non-Arab exhibitors: Karakashian and the German Schneller Orphanage. All brochures, captions, and catalogs were in Arabic, which generated little publicity for potential foreign customers; at the Levant Fair, all captions, speeches, and publications were given in Arabic, English, and Hebrew, which made the comprehension of content by foreign audiences easier. All these factors hampered international attendance at the Arab Fair. Further, the economic development of participant countries in each fair differed markedly. In addition to Zionist enterprises, non-Jewish industrialists from economically developed countries outside the Middle East hired pavilions in Tel Aviv and sent samples to be displayed. The participation of the nascent industries of Arab countries could not render the Arab Fair a success.

The degree of official Arab support for the Arab Fair varied considerably. Syrian businesspeople and politicians were most visible. Several leaders of the National Bloc, including Shukri al-Quwatli and Jamil Mardam Bey, a former minister of finance and a future prime minister of Syria, respectively, came to the inauguration ceremonies.[62] The aspirations of Syrian attendees were not only political but also economic. The Syrian business community felt threatened by the rise of Zionist enterprises and the growth of the port of Haifa at the expense of that of Beirut in the 1930s.[63] The competition from Jewish textile sectors in Palestine and the smuggling of Jewish-produced goods into Syria further jeopardized the interests of Syrian industrialists.[64]

Other countries showed less support. In 1933, Iraq did not officially take part in the Arab Fair due to "lack of time."[65] Ibn Sa'ud, the king of Saudi Arabia, and his sons sent a letter and two books to the organizers of the fair, wishing them success and promising to encourage participation from Hijaz.[66] The state-controlled Saudi newspaper *Sawt al-Hijaz* promoted both Arab fairs.[67] There was, however, no visible Saudi participation at the fair itself. In 1933, Egypt officially participated in the Arab Fair and the Egyptian Department of Commerce and Industry sent Egyptian products to Jerusalem.[68] Its participation, however, was private and smaller in scale in 1934. Economic and political elites from other Arab countries supported the Arab Fair, albeit in different ways and to different degrees. Nevertheless, their efforts were not enough to help it match the splendor and influence of the Levant Fair, nor to sustain it after 1934.

The Arab leadership and press in Palestine not only encouraged other Arab countries to participate in the Arab Fair, but also called on Arab governments and businesspeople not to attend the Levant Fair.[69] Outside Palestine, this call was only faintly heard. Iraq participated in the Levant Fair in the early 1930s.[70] When Haifa-based *al-Karmal* heard that the Egyptian government was planning to attend the Levant Fair in 1932, it called Egyptian Prime Minister Isma'il Sidqi Pasha a "dictator."[71] This did not stop him from coming to the opening of the fair, nor did such protests prevent Egypt from officially participating in 1934.[72] While Palestinian Arab exhibitors and visitors opted out, a number of commercial visitors from Egypt and Syria were present at the fair in 1936.[73] British colonial economic and political influence in these countries helps explain their reluctance to abstain from the Zionist-led and British-supported Levant Fair.

Outside the British sphere of influence, Lebanon exemplified the limits of the Arab call to boycott the Levant Fair. From the 1920s, Lebanese officials attended the fair and, unlike the press in other Arab countries, Lebanese newspapers promoted the benefits of Lebanese participation.[74] In 1934, the Lebanese government granted free visas to any Lebanese merchant who wished to display their items at the Levant Fair.[75] More strikingly, in 1936, when the other Arab governments did not take official part in the Levant Fair and Arab nationalist papers in Lebanon protested it, the Lebanese government sent a collective display to the fair.[76] The Lebanese president intended to travel to Tel Aviv for the inauguration of the fair but had to cancel his visit because of the outbreak of the Great Revolt.[77] Lebanon's official attitude to trade fairs in Palestine was in part related to the disinterest of many Lebanese Christians in the idea of Arab unity.[78] Moreover, Jewish and non-Jewish merchants in Lebanon had close commercial relations with Jewish producers in Palestine and sought to formalize ties with the Yishuv in this period.[79] By 1938, Palestine became the "most important export market" of Lebanon.[80]

## The Battle of Propaganda

Trade fairs became a propaganda battlefield between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and abroad. Zionists used the Levant Fair as a media opportunity to highlight the achievement of Jewish colonization.[81] The battle of propaganda intensified after the inauguration of the Arab Fair. Although the Arab Fair served as a better demonstration of Arab producers' role in the national economy, Zionist journalists used the exclusion of Jews from it as a propaganda tool.[82] They claimed that the exclusion of non-Arab participants from it gave rise to a "poor" representation of Palestine.[83] When *Filastin* criticized Jewish journalists for not devoting space to the Arab Fair in their columns, the latter replied hastily.[84] The *Palestine Post* sarcastically asked its Arabic counterpart how Jews could write about an event to which they were not invited.[85] At the same time, the Zionist press claimed that the Arab boycott of the Levant Fair did not hold back the international progress on display there, and reported the arrival of hundreds of Arab visitors from Palestine and surrounding countries despite the boycott.[86]

Arabs faced a struggle regarding Western media outlets, which attracted a far broader audience than local periodicals and publications in the Middle East. Speeches that glorified the Levant Fair were broadcast in several European countries, including Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland.[87] Western media unreservedly promoted the Levant Fair, while most newspapers provided no coverage of the Arab Fair. The few accounts that mentioned the Arab Fair generally found it regressive and unmodern. According to the *Times*, Arab exhibits were "by their modesty a pathetic contrast with the startlingly grandiose display" at the Levant Fair.[88]

One of the few Western countries where the Arab Fair was portrayed in a positive light was Italy. Italy held its own Levant Fair (Fiera del Levante) in Bari beginning in 1929; in 1934, as part of these proceedings, Radio Bari gave a favorable appraisal of the Arab Fair, reflecting the Italian desire to appeal to Palestinian Arabs to carve out its sphere of influence in the Eastern Mediterranean.[89] Several Arab merchants and politicians from Palestine visited the Italian fair in the 1930s.[90] Still, Italy had stronger relations with Palestine's Jewish population through trade fairs. Scores of Italian firms sent their samples and hired stands in the Levant Fair in the 1930s. Jewish producers from Palestine also took part in Italian fairs and the Zionist movement established a Palestine Pavilion at the Bari Fair, which Benito Mussolini visited in 1934 and "displayed deep interest" in its exhibits.[91] Italian papers likewise commended the pavilion. According to *La Stampa*, it "documented the effort of the rebirth of the ancient land."[92] King Victor Emanuel III inaugurated the Palestine Pavilion at the same fair the following year.[93] The Italian government continued to invite Jews from Palestine to trade fairs in Italy for the remainder of the decade.[94] Even in the countries where the press and officials did not overlook and undervalue the Arab Fair, it seems that Arabs were not able to counter the Zionist claims of supremacy in the realm of trade fairs.

The propaganda battle had far-reaching implications when it came to the business world. As Anat Helman put it, the Levant Fair was not only a tool of public relations but also possessed economic value.[95] Its organizers skillfully promoted their scheme abroad by establishing bureaus in foreign countries, sending delegations to business associations and political organizations, and publishing catalogs in different languages.[96] These bureaus and delegations contacted enterprises in their respective countries and secured the participation of national pavilions at the Levant Fair.[97] The economic potential of the fair formed an integral part of propaganda outside Palestine. The official brochure of the Levant Fair in 1936, for instance, advertised Tel Aviv as "the commercial and industrial hub of Palestine and the most modern and rapidly developing city of the Middle East."[98] Zionist newspapers translated news items and articles that appeared in American and European presses to prove the economic value of this gathering.[99]

As the Levant Fair offered business circles insight into the Yishuv, foreign audiences came to perceive it as an auspicious international meeting. U.S. senators and politicians such as Royal S. Copeland, Warren Robinson Austin, and Daniel Oren Hastings wrote that the Levant Fair "promises to do for Palestine what Leipzig does

for Germany and what Nizhni-Novgorod used to do for Russia once – to serve as a mart for far-flung traders."[100] Thus the patrons of the Levant Fair enlisted foreign public figures in the Zionist propaganda campaign.

This campaign bore real economic fruit. The success of propaganda drew an increasing number of foreign merchants, investors, and entrepreneurs to Tel Aviv seeking to exploit the opportunities that the fair offered. Even the Soviet Union, the only socialist power at the time, actively took part in the fair to boost its commercial relations with Palestine. The managers of the Soviet Pavilion met representatives of the Tel Aviv and Jaffa Chamber of Commerce several times to achieve this purpose. The Soviet leadership considered their participation a commercial success, as the pavilion generated sales of Soviet products that amounted to more than one hundred thousand pounds.[101] The meetings between the Soviet delegation and Jewish chambers of commerce during the fair also gave a push to the marketing of oranges and manufactured goods from Zionist enterprises to the Soviet Union.[102]

## The Arab Fair in Comparison

The Arab Fair was unique among fairs in the post-Ottoman world at the time, since it took place without royal and governmental patronage. The crowned and elected heads of states played a key role in the establishment and expansion of international fairs in the rest of the post-Ottoman world. For example, King Faysal I of Iraq, King Fu'ad I of Egypt, and the Crown Prince Paul of Greece opened the Baghdad, Cairo, and Thessaloniki fairs, respectively.[103] The organizing committee of the Cairo Fair operated under the chairmanship of King Fu'ad I of Egypt.[104] Queen Mary of Yugoslavia "honored" the Ljubljana Autumn Fair with her visit, and spectators celebrated the tenth anniversary of King Alexander's accession and the crown prince's birthday with public ceremonies in 1931.[105] The Arab Fair, however, did not benefit from any royal or official endorsement.

Although such involvement might be dismissed as merely ceremonial, it served several purposes. First, it served to legitimize and glorify those in political power. Importantly, especially in newly independent states, international trade fairs served as emblems of sovereignty and economic strength and assertions of a bright future ahead. The experiences of Iraq and Cyprus demonstrate the relationship between trade fairs and political independence. Iraq, as soon as it gained its nominal political independence, set about organizing an international fair in Baghdad under the auspices of King Faysal I that drew thousands of local and foreign visitors.[106] Meanwhile, when Cypriots intended to organize an agricultural and industrial exhibition in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, British authorities and anti-colonial resistance on the island prevented its realization.[107] Having been officially recognized by the British and the League of Nations, the Jewish Agency for Palestine overcame its nominal political dependence to organize an international trade fair, while the country's Arab majority, denied a similar institution, struggled to compete on the same terms.

Beyond the symbolic resonance of such fairs, political leaders hoped that they

might secure economic benefits and important revenues for host cities and countries. The money that flew into Tel Aviv during the Levant Fair in 1929 exceeded £150,000.[108] The business transactions at the same meeting increased to £175,000 in 1932 and £500,000 in 1934.[109] Likewise, the business transactions exceeded £106,666 at the Thessaloniki Fair in 1929.[110] An important source of revenues came from foreign fairgoers. For instance, international customers spent £160,256 at the Izmir Fair in 1937.[111] Trade fairs further boosted municipal revenue. For instance, the Izmir Fair created an additional £744,736 for the Izmir municipality in 1939.[112]

The continuation of fairs elsewhere also facilitated commercial and cultural links between the post-Ottoman countries, while Turkey showed a keen interest in fairs in surrounding countries to increase its sphere of influence in the Middle East in the mid-1930s.[113] Turkish participation fostered bilateral economic and diplomatic relations between Turkey and host counties. For instance, the Turkish delegation met politicians and business representatives at the Levant Fair and secured the participation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine in the Izmir Fair in 1936.[114]

Unlike its better-funded and officially supported counterparts, the Arab Fair came about through the efforts of a handful of merchants who put up their own money to finance the venture, but their economic power was not enough to keep the fair alive. As an avenue to build links across the new borders of the post–World War I Middle East, the Arab Fair struggled to secure participation from other Arab states, lagging behind other regional fairs. The Damascus Fair in 1936, for example, brought official attendance from Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, and Turkey.[115]

Table 3. Number of Visitors to the Izmir Fair, 1928–38[116]

| Year | 1928 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| # of Visitors | 86,908 | 240,000 | 286,500 | 311,009 | 361,000 | 608,000 | 727,000 |

A transnational analysis of trade fairs in the post-Ottoman countries further suggests that Arab businesspeople in Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine could have benefited from the continuation of the Arab Fair even though it was not a financial success in the first two years. Annual commercial gatherings elsewhere in the region were not necessarily successful at the beginning. Thanks to the persistence of businesspeople and the support of politicians, however, they were able to survive. Like the Arab Fair, the international scope of the Cairo, Izmir, Plovdiv, Tel Aviv, and Thessaloniki fairs was initially very limited – only after several unsuccessful attempts did they become commercially successful.[117] For example, the Izmir Fair was suspended in 1928 because of financial issues and the Great Depression, but was revived as a national fair in 1933 and entered a golden era as an international meeting point in the mid-to-late 1930s (see table 3). Likewise, the international fair in Plovdiv dated back to 1892 but the political turmoil in Bulgaria, the Balkan Wars, and World War I interrupted it. In collaboration with the Plovdiv municipality, state departments, and other business

associations, the Plovdiv Chamber of Commerce and Industry revived this meeting in 1933. Although the first meetings were national in scope, the Plovdiv Fair grew to be an international gathering by the middle of the decade (see table 4).[118] Like the Arab Fair, the number of exhibitors and visitors was low at the beginning. Unlike the Arab Fair, however, the Plovdiv Fair continued to expand in size and scope in 1935 and 1936. Likewise, the Cairo Fair had its origins in the late nineteenth century but was interrupted in 1917 by World War I. The initiative of Fu'ad I and the Wafd party revived it in 1925. Although there were a handful of foreign exhibitors that year, the Cairo Fair became a financially successful venture in the next decade, with the active participation of state actors and private enterprises.[119]

Table 4: The Progress of the Plovdiv Fair, 1933–36[120]

| Year | Buildings | Pavilions | Space (m²) | # of Exhibits | # of Visitors |
|------|-----------|-----------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1933 | 1 | – | 3,150 | 434 | 120,000 |
| 1934 | 3 | 3 | 8,050 | 880 | 150,000 |
| 1935 | 7 | 3 | 17,000 | 1,400 | 180,000 |
| 1936 | 10 | 4 | 21,000 | 1,700 | 200,000 |

## Conclusion

From an economic view, the Arab Fair paled in comparison with the Levant Fair. The Arab Fair's limited funds, governmental support, preparations, and publicity undermined its grand vision. The real strength of the Levant Fair lay in the support it received from British authorities and the international networks and propaganda campaigns of the World Zionist Organization. By comparison, international media showed relatively little interest in the Arab Fair – what international coverage it did receive was often negative, coming from anti-Arab Western journalists. Palestinian Arabs struggled to combat the idea that Jews were implicitly in a better position to hold trade fairs. However, it is important to view the Arab Fair not only through the lens of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism, but within a broader regional context in which trade fairs were a core performance of legitimacy and sites of business.

When contrasted with fairs in other Arab countries and in post-Ottoman countries in general, one can appreciate the relative importance of governmental support for the success of international trade fairs. Unlike other Arab countries in the region, the interwar years did not lead toward political independence for Palestine's Arabs.[121] Other states in the region – even those under European control – saw the emergence of institutions by politicians, bureaucrats, and military officers who had gained experience in the Ottoman Empire, but Palestine's Arabs lacked a similar apparatus.[122] While the Yishuv formulated its own social and political institutions, Palestinian Arabs were prevented by the British from initiating similar institutions.[123] The limited political power of the Palestinian nascent bourgeoisie cannot be disconnected from its economic

weakness.[124] As elsewhere in the Eastern Mediterranean, the interwar period saw the rise of new middle classes from the Arab population of the country. The acceleration of Zionist colonization, British colonial policies, the crushing of the Great Revolt, and World War II undermined their power.[125] As a result, they were in no position to revive the Arab Fair. Placing them in comparison not only with the Levant Fair, but with regional trade fairs, helps illuminate both the Palestinian Arabs' attempts to build the economic structures that, throughout the region, came to symbolize independence and international recognition, and the ways in which Palestine remained distinct from the post-Ottoman states and the colonial mandates surrounding it.

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**Endnotes**

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2   "Ijtima' a'da' al-mu'tamar al-Islami al-'amm" [Meeting of members of the General Islamic Conference], *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, 20 March 1932, 1; Aaron S. Klieman, ed., *The Rise of Israel – Great Britain and Palestine, 1920–1939* (New York: Garland, 1987), 81. On "passive resistance," see "Arab Resistance to the Balfour Declaration," *Arab Palestinian Resistance* 10, no. 9 (1978): 47.

3   "Al-muqata'a ma'rid Tal Abib – bayan ila al-umma al-'Arabiyya al-karima" [Boycott of the Tel Aviv fair: a statement to the honorable Arab nation], *Filastin*, 10 March 1932, 5.

4   Nadi Abusaada, "Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (2019): 122–35.

5   Nisa Ari, "Competition in the Cultural Sector: Handicrafts and the Rise of the Trade Fair in British Mandate Palestine," in *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 213–46.

6   For details, see Kamal Boullata, *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (London: Saqi, 2009), 70–75.

7   Burton Benedict, "The Anthropology of World's Fairs," in Burton Benedict, Marjorie Dobkin, Gray A. Brechin, Elizabeth Strong, and George Starr, *The Anthropology of World's Fairs: San Francisco's Panama-Pacific International Exposition, 1915* (Berkeley, CA: Scolar Press, 1983), 24.

8   *Bulletin of the Palestine Economic Society*, February 1934, 31.

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10  J. Adler, "Die Levante-Messe in Tel Aviv," *Palästina*: *Zeitschrift für den Aufbau Palästinas* 5 (1936): 255.

11  "Al-ma'rid al-'Arabi" [The Arab Fair], *Filastin*, 27 July 1932, 1.

12  "Ijtima Majlis Idara al-ma'rid al-'Arabi" [Meeting of the organizing committee of the Arab Fair], *Filastin*, 18 March 1933, 5.

13  See, for example: "Survey of Participation," *Levant Fair News Bulletin* no. 5, 15 March 1935, in "Levant Fair," Israel State Archives (ISA) 35/1-M.

14  "Palestine Investments Safe," *Jewish Daily Bulletin*, 17 September 1926, 3.

15  *Do'ar ha-yom*, 1 November 1933, 3.

16  Fair Organisation, 1936, 36, in "Levant Fair," ISA 643/39-M.

17  Jerusalem, Press Reports on Palestine,

Folder: 003103-007-0409, 30 June 1932, 11–12, in *Confidential U.S. Diplomatic Post Records, Middle East, 1925–1941* [microfilm], ed. Paul Kesaris (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984). The calculation of U.S. dollar equivalent of the Arab Fair's capital is based on David Challis, "Archival Currency Converter 1916–1940," online at (unimelb.edu.au) bit.ly/3EdYODL (accessed 29 September 2022).

18  "Levant Fair Committee," *Palestine Post*, 24 May 1934, 10.

19  Services and Facilities, 1936, 40 in "Levant Fair," ISA 643/39-M.

20  "Irguni ha-tsibur li-kerat Yarid ha-Mizrah" [The public organizations in preparation for the Levant Fair], *Haaretz*, 10 January 1934, 5.

21  The only chamber of commerce in Ottoman Palestine was in Jerusalem. This chamber ceased its operations during World War I.

22  *Chamber of Commerce Jaffa and District Quarterly Review*, September 1919, 14.

23  Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 68.

24  Department of State. U.S. Consulate General, Jerusalem, Palestine. 1928–1948, 867N.50/1-23 (1931), 14, National Archives (United States).

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28  *Palästina: Zeitschrift für den Aufbau Palästinas* 11 (1936): 594.

29  *Dalil al-tijara wa al-sina'a wa al-hiraf wa al-mihan al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin wa sharqi al-Urdun* [Guide to Arab commerce, industry, trades, and crafts in Palestine and Transjordan] (Jerusalem: Ghurfa al-tijariyya al-'Arabiyya, 1937), 50.

30  See: District Commissioner's Offices, Southern District, Jaffa, 23 June 1936, 13, in "Application by the Presidents of the Arab Chambers of Commerce for an Interview with his His Excellency," ISA, 39/15-M; Chamber of Commerce, Jerusalem, 4 June

1937, 7, in "Request by the Chamber of Commerce, Jerusalem, for an interview with the Chief Secretary," ISA, 4316/14-M; Office of Executive Committee Conference of the Arab Chambers of Commerce of Palestine, 3 October 1940, 15, in "Representations by Arab Chambers of Commerce," ISA, 65/15-M; Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 151–52.

31  See, for example, Roza I. M. El-Eini, "Trade Agreements and the Continuation of Tariff Protection Policy in Mandate Palestine in the 1930s," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (1998): 186. El-Eini cited one contemporary source that did not mention any government endorsement behind the fairs but rather wrote about their contribution to "creating interest and promoting activity in Palestine's trade." See B. Veicmanas, "Internal Trade," in *Economic Organization of Palestine*, ed. Sa'id B. Himadeh (Beirut: American Press, 1938), 383.

32  Alfred Bonné, "Zum Lohn-und Teuerungsproblem in Palästina," *Palästina: Zeitschrift für den Aufbau Palästinas* 2/3 (1929): 56.

33  Levant Fair (Tel Aviv), 10 May 1933–27 June 1933, The National Archives (TNA), Records of the Colonial Office, Commonwealth and Foreign and Commonwealth Offices, Empire Marketing Board, and Related Bodies (CO), 733/239/1.

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36  *Bulletin of the Palestine Economic Society*, February 1934, 31.

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# The Jerusalem Light Rail in Historical Perspective

## Urban Transportation and Urban Citizenship between Ottomanism and Apartheid

Michelle U. Campos

**Abstract**

In the summer of 2014 during riots that broke out in Jerusalem after the kidnapping and murder of a Palestinian boy, Muhammad Abu Khdeir, by Jewish settlers, three stations of the Jerusalem Light Rail were vandalized and set on fire; their destruction targeted the fantasy of a united, modern, and conflict-free Jerusalem that the light rail sought to embody. Since its opening in 2011, proponents of the light rail have held it up as an example of Jewish-Arab coexistence in the city; after all, according to company reports, almost a quarter of the rail's daily passengers are Palestinian. Despite this statistic, however, the light rail is instead an embodiment of the long-term failure of urban citizenship in Jerusalem. Examining the light rail in historical perspective against the plans for a tramway in late Ottoman Jerusalem sheds light on a very different moment in which the tramway represented aspirations for and interest in a shared Jerusalemite urban identity. Over time, however, urban segregation, political sectarianism, and colonialism transformed the possibilities for urban citizenship in Jerusalem.

**Keywords**

Jerusalem; urban transportation; urban citizenship; intercommunal relations; urban segregation.

In the summer of 2014, during riots that broke out in Jerusalem after the kidnapping and murder of a Palestinian boy, Muhammad Abu Khdeir, by Israeli

Jewish settlers, three stations of the Jerusalem Light Rail were vandalized and set on fire.[1] The stations were all located in northeast Jerusalem across the Green Line in the Palestinian neighborhood of Shu'fat up to its border with Bayt Hanina, and their destruction targeted the fantasy of a united, modern, and conflict-free Jerusalem that the light rail sought to embody.

Since its opening in 2011, proponents of the light rail and urban boosters alike have held it up as an example of Jewish-Arab coexistence in the city; after all, according to company reports, almost a quarter of the rail's daily passengers are Palestinian. However, as the events of 2014 showed, this is a superficial and decontextualized vision of the light rail in a more complex urban landscape. Instead, the nascent scholarship has examined the light rail as a tool and symbol of urban colonial rule over Jerusalem, an example of infrastructure violence, a performance space selling the "modernization" of Jerusalem, and a smokescreen promoting and concealing normalization of the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem.[2]

The light rail is also an embodiment of the long-term failure of urban citizenship in Jerusalem. Other than historians in the field, few people know that the Jerusalem light rail is a twenty-first-century realization of a twentieth-century modernist plan that emerged in the last decade of Ottoman rule. Elsewhere I have written about some of the local urban actors and institutions behind the tramway proposal and related concessions, and two recent articles on the rise and fall of the tramway concession based on Ottoman archival documents have added a great deal to our understanding of this important effort in the context of Ottoman urban development.[3] In this article, I expand on the local conditions that precipitated and shaped the tramway proposal and discuss more broadly what it would have meant for the city and its residents and visitors at the time, an effort which I see as an expression of Ottoman urban citizenship. This urban citizenship was facilitated by a tradition of municipal governance, common residential and commercial life, and a modernist discourse that underscored Jerusalem as a city of all its residents.

Even so, urban citizenship in Ottoman Jerusalem was challenged by the growing development of segregated *extramuros* settlements and the growing impact of the Zionist movement on urban politics and governance. Although the tramway's failed implementation was most directly due to problems with capital, elite rivalries, the outbreak of World War I, and the dismantling of the empire, the aborted Ottoman tramway as seen in the reflection of the extant Jerusalem light rail also signals the limits of Jerusalem as a shared city in both practice and imagination.

## The Ottoman City

It is a cliché among popular authors and journalists to refer to Jerusalem's Ottoman era (1516–1917) as one of decay and stagnation, but in fact throughout its rule the Ottoman state invested significant attention and resources in the city and province.[4] Moreover, a tremendous amount of original research in recent decades shows that nineteenth-

century Jerusalem was a dynamic, modernizing city firmly rooted in a forward-looking and globally-oriented Ottoman Empire.[5] Jerusalem's incorporation into the global economy, facilitated first by steamship travel and then by the construction of the Jaffa–Jerusalem railroad in 1892, further accelerated urban development, demographic growth, and geopolitical investment in the city.

For the Ottoman state, transportation projects linked remote parts of the empire together, provided the state with additional tools for population surveillance and control, and presented evidence of imperial progress to its population and to the world.[6] By the turn of the twentieth century, there were urban tramways, first horse-powered then electric, in the capital Istanbul as well as in the large cities of Damascus, Salonica, Beirut, and Izmir. For the Ottoman urban elites and aspiring middle classes, these tramways represented urban modernization and development, and they contributed to complex and wide-ranging physical and social urban transformations at the dawn of the twentieth century.[7]

In addition, by the second half of the nineteenth century, new state institutions such as the municipality (*baladiyya*) and local and provincial councils (*majlis 'umumi* and *majlis idari*) were created as part of the Tanzimat imperial reform project, giving local elites an active and institutionalized role in local governance.[8] Although this role was undoubtedly circumscribed by the political authoritarianism of the Hamidian era, these reforms regularized Muslim, Christian, and Jewish urban residents serving together in the municipal and provincial councils throughout the empire. Furthermore, top-down and bottom-up ideas and practices about vertical and horizontal imperial belonging [Ottomanism/*Osmanlılık*] emerged, albeit unevenly. New public spaces of leisure and civic celebration also took root in the city.[9]

Put together, these institutions, practices, ideas, and – invariably – struggles characterized urban citizenship.[10] While the historian Nora Lafi correctly cautions us against nostalgia, Ottoman urban governance undeniably was a "negotiated urban balance based on the coexistence of communities," what she calls an "Ottoman *pax urbana*."[11] As is clear from the Jerusalem municipal council minutes recently digitized and translated by an international team of scholars, from the 1890s to the 1910s the municipality saw its task as serving residents of the city irrespective of religion or ethnicity.[12] Municipal tenders and leases were issued regularly to tax-farmers and tenants from different religious groups, street cleaning services were contracted for the various quarters of the city regardless of the composition of its residents, and policies relating to urban services were applied to the city as a whole – and with Jerusalemites as a unit – in mind. For their part, Jerusalem residents made their own demands of the municipality, shared ideas about city life, and competed with each other over urban rights and responsibilities.[13]

It is unclear when the idea of a public tramway system for Jerusalem first emerged, or who initiated it.[14] Jerusalem notables who traveled to the imperial capital as well as migrants to the city would have had first-hand experience with urban tramways, and it is clear that they often drew on regional and global precedents for their ideas about modern urban life. The first mention of a tramway for Jerusalem that I have found

was in a letter exchanged in 1905 between Zionist officials discussing an anticipated increase in land prices outside the city walls, the apparent cause being rumors of a new tramway that would service the area. However, no other sources from around that time have been found yet indicating the origin of those rumors.[15] Two years later in 1907, a French company proposed establishing electric transportation between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, to no end.[16] In the aftermath of the 1908 Ottoman revolution, however, a messianic new era of progress and development captured the imagination of the empire's elites and masses and ideas of a broad public works overhaul in Jerusalem emerged.

The first documented discussion of plans for an electric tramway in the city appeared in early October in the newspaper *al-Quds,* when the paper reported that a group of notable merchants had gathered to discuss the establishment of a commercial company and a "patriotic Ottoman Palestinian bank" that would seek concessions for a tramway and running water and "anything that is of national, commercial, and public good."[17] Another notice on the same page mentioned that the new governor, Subhi Bek, had called on commercial notables to establish a commercial chamber in the city; while the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture did not receive its official license until January 1909, it worked behind the scenes throughout the fall.[18]

The chamber saw its goal as broadly serving as an intermediary between the government and the city's merchant, industrial, and financial classes to work for the "economic development of the country." It attracted fifty-seven registered members in the city, primarily Ottomans but also a few foreign citizens belonging to the various resident religious groups.[19] Its members included merchants of various kinds, industrialists, landowners, bankers, but also a tailor, goldsmith, and supplier to the Ottoman military.[20] Among its numerous interests, the chamber listed projects relating to public works.

Between fall 1908 and 1910, the tramway and related urban development projects primarily swirled around the municipality, the Chamber of Commerce, the bank established by the chamber members as shareholders, and the city's multireligious urban elite involved in these organizations. Although the municipality did not have the legal authority to sign concessions and large public works projects without the permission and approval of the other imperial bodies, this was a period of far more active involvement on the local level. In an issue of *al-Quds* that appeared early in Governor Subhi Bek's tenure, the Jewish bank clerk and former government agricultural inspector Dr. Yitzhak Levi penned an extraordinary open letter, challenging Subhi Bek as the city's first "constitutional pasha" to work as a faithful public servant in true partnership with the city's elites to reform and develop the city.[21] One week later, Subhi Bek published his response that outlined his vision for the city's development, reminding Levi and other readers that in his first week on the job he had already ordered a study on bringing running water to the city, among other initiatives.[22]

Around the same time, the Jewish vocational school director and public figure Albert Antébi mentioned in a letter to a colleague that Subhi Bek had tasked him

with researching a number of topics dealing with Jerusalem's development, including the potential tramway.[23] No doubt Antébi was asked to contribute due to his active role in the nascent Chamber of Commerce; he was officially elected secretary in December, and later the Chamber claimed authorship of this study and others.[24] By early December 1908 one of the Hebrew newspapers publishing in the city, *Ha-Zvi*, finally reported on the establishment of a "shares company" led by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian elites with the aim of building a "municipal electric train."[25] What *ha-Zvi* and (two months prior) *al-Quds* were referring to was the newly established Société Commercial Palestine (SCP), an arm of the new Chamber of Commerce.

On 1 January 1909, *al-Quds* reported that two prominent Jerusalemites, the Hijaz railway engineer Muhammad Nazif Bek al-Khalidi and the doctor Niqula Effendi Esperidun, had petitioned the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works to construct an electric tramway between Jaffa and Jerusalem and to provide both cities with electricity.[26] In response, the government had requested a study of the viability and necessity of such a concession, involving both the local governor and the municipality. Jurji Habib Hanania, the editor of *al-Quds*, praised al-Khalidi and Esperidun's initiative aimed at "broadening civilization" in the province and bringing Jerusalem to the level of other "advanced and progressive cities." Later that same month the SCP submitted a formal bid to secure a concession for developing running water, electricity, and a tramway in Jerusalem.[27]

## The Tramway as a Site of Urban Citizenship

The proposed tramway was intended both to modernize the city and to address the transportation needs of its residents and visitors. Beginning in the 1860s, construction in Jerusalem had expanded the city's size dramatically. In seven decades, the city grew almost six-fold from approximately seven hundred dunams of built-up land in 1838 to 4,130 dunams on the eve of World War I.[28] The great majority of this expansion took place outside the city walls. As a result, while in the 1860s the earliest *extramuros* buildings were constructed within one kilometer of Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) (including the Russian Compound, the Jewish philanthropical Montefiore/Mishkenot Sha'ananim houses, and the German Templar Colony), over the subsequent decades construction went out farther and farther. By the early 1910s, the farthest buildings and neighborhoods were almost two and a half kilometers from Jaffa Gate, twice as far as before.

Foreign, Jewish, and Zionist institutions are often credited with this *extramuros* expansion, but in fact the Jerusalem municipality itself played a key role in institutionalizing core civic spaces and municipal institutions outside the city walls.[29] In addition to new municipal offices, the municipal garden, hospital, and pharmacy were also constructed on Jaffa Road. The municipal building and municipal garden were built just outside the city walls, but the hospital and pharmacy were located on the western edge of the built city at the time, 1.7 kilometers from Jaffa Gate. In the early 1890s, a municipal council meeting labeled this an "inconvenient" and

"distant place" that serviced mostly villagers in the adjacent lands rather than people from the city, and a satellite pharmacy was opened within the city walls.[30] Despite this description, however, the 1894 Conrad Schick map makes clear that the hospital was far from isolated, as it was flanked by several schools and other buildings in addition to new neighborhoods on both sides of Jaffa Road. However, at a time when all commercial, religious, and public works needs could be met within the one square kilometer area of the walled city, the fact that it was *perceived* to be so distant tells us a great deal about daily circulation in Jerusalem.

This area west of the *intramuros* city expanded steadily in the subsequent years. In fact, according to the Ottoman census returns from 1905, the Ottoman population living outside the walls had almost reached parity with the *intramuros* population, with approximately fourteen thousand residents living in twenty-three neighborhoods outside the city walls.[31] Since the vast majority of non-Ottoman foreign citizens were reported to be living in the *extramuros* city, it seems clear that the demographic weight of the city overall had shifted outside the walls. Residential sorting patterns throughout Ottoman Jerusalem were varied, but about two-thirds of the city's population lived in mixed neighborhoods with populations of different religions, denominations, ethnicities, and classes living closely together.[32] Most of the *extramuros* compounds, however, were more ethnically and religiously homogeneous, particularly those that were constructed by philanthropic associations, Jewish religious denominations (*kollel*s), and Zionist building associations.

While these homogeneous compounds were neither autonomous nor isolated in the city's landscape, many of them were constructed with bakeries, ritual baths, and synagogues, services that would give residents fewer reasons to circulate in the city. Many of them also were constructed with walls around the neighborhood, a practical defense in a time when jackals and robbers could be found, but one that also visually blocked it off from the city. If the *intramuros* city was characterized by regular encounter and shared spaces in close proximity, important elements of urban citizenship, then the growth of these segregated compounds challenged this.[33] The one-third of Jerusalem's population that lived in homogeneous neighborhoods at the turn of the twentieth century would continue to grow in subsequent years.

Furthermore, because Jerusalem is a hilly terrain without asphalt-paved streets at that time, relatively short distances were considered more remote and with rough terrain at the turn of the century. Some people used donkeys and other beasts of burden for travel outside the city walls.[34] The municipality even set aside funding to pay the traveling inspector his transportation costs associated with renting a "beast" "because of the long distance between places" outside the Old City, whose perimeter spanned 2.5 kilometers.[35] More commonly, wagons and carriages for hire were stationed at Jaffa Gate and regularly carried passengers along Jaffa Road to the westernmost neighborhoods, but the poor road conditions meant that their wheels would get stuck in the dirt road and passengers would be choked by dust clouds on the journey.[36] In addition, intra-city wagon or carriage travel was an added expense for individuals that restricted their mobility throughout the city and limited the connectedness of the more

distant *extramuros* quarters.[37] The municipal council more than once intervened to regulate the fares being charged by intracity wagons and carriages.[38]

It was the city's size as well as the relative inconvenience in reaching all parts of it that led the municipal council to support the tramway proposal. In mid-January 1909, the Jerusalem Municipal Council minutes recorded:

> The number of buildings and constructions increases day by day all across outside the city; these are expanding at the moment, with completed houses at an approximate one hour distance from the town wall; hence, transportation must be facilitated to the houses outside the wall, which are located in a space transformed into a fully-fledged town, and comfort must be provided for the people. It is thus obvious that it is necessary to expand a tramline outside the town and that this would bring benefits.[39]

The SCP's tramway proposal in 1909 included three lines that would originate at Jaffa Gate, the commercial and transportation hub of the city. The longest line of over two kilometers would follow Jaffa Road to the west, passing the municipal public garden, the Russian colony (including hospices for pilgrims and a church), various schools (the Sisters of Saint Charles, the Alliance Israélite Universelle), hospitals (the municipal hospital, the German and Jewish hospitals), and numerous stores, markets, and businesses. In addition, nine new neighborhoods straddled both sides of Jaffa Road, together housing over five thousand residents.[40] Many of these residents were Jewish, although there were also large numbers of Christians and smaller numbers of Muslims residing along this stretch of the city.

The second planned line ran south almost a kilometer and a half to the Jaffa–Jerusalem railroad station, which would have been its primary purpose. As it was, travelers arriving from Jaffa to the train station had to secure wagons, donkeys, or porters to help them uphill to the city with their luggage; a tram stop there taking them directly to Jaffa Gate would greatly facilitate their arrival in the city. In addition, the line would pass by Montefiore neighborhood with over fifteen hundred Jewish residents, and the stop at the train station would have shortened the distance to the city for Baqʻa neighborhood further south, already home to over six hundred Muslims and Christians. Future expansion of this line all the way to Bethlehem would have served both foreign pilgrims and tourists as well as commercial relations between that town and the city.

The third proposed line is somewhat puzzling, as the map shows that after initially passing through some Christian churches and religious institutions just south of the Mamilla cemetery, it would wind through orchards before ending up at the train station, just north of the German colony. The Mamilla and Talbiyya neighborhoods it would pass were small, with only about seven hundred largely Christian residents between the two of them. Perhaps the vision was that this area too would be built up in the future (and indeed it was, only a few decades later).

The SCP's proposal was ambitious: in addition to the future expansion of the second line to Bethlehem, the proposal also outlined plans to build a new tram line to the Mount of Olives, another key pilgrimage and tourist destination and thus important

to the Jerusalem economy.[41] The tramway would have had both passenger and cargo cars, further underscoring the economic incentive of transporting goods arriving at the train station from the Jaffa port as a key concern for the Chamber of Commerce and its constituent members.

Ultimately, the SCP's bid fell through due to insufficient funding, rivalries between the chamber and the municipal council, and imperial administrative hoops, but the tramway concession idea did live on for another four years and through several additional iterations. In the summer of 1910, the Jerusalem municipality announced a call for applications for four public works concessions, including the tramway.[42] A few months later close to the deadline in October, a tramway concession proposal template was circulated that almost tripled the SCP's 1909 proposed track length to over 15.5 kilometers.[43] Some of the important changes included a rail line in the northeast of the city, an area that was previously neglected in the SCP plan, a second line in the northwest, and a tramway all the way to Bethlehem, nine kilometers to the south. The northeast line would go to the Shaykh Jarrah mosque and would service an area of the city with more than fifteen hundred primarily Muslim residents, connecting to the main Nablus–Damascus road; another line would go to the Schneller orphanage, the farthest building in the northwest of the city while passing through several new neighborhoods with over twenty-five hundred Jewish residents.

Importantly, this proposal template also included a future tramline from Jaffa Gate to the Mosque of Omar (referring to the Haram al-Sharif), pending the municipality's successful application of eminent domain to secure the land needed for the track. In addition to underscoring the importance of the third holiest site in Islam (and the holiest Muslim site in Palestine), this tramline would have aided Muslim pilgrimage and reasserted Ottoman imperial patronage over the city; this line also would have passed by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, of course one of the most important destinations of thousands of Christian and European tourists and pilgrims visiting annually. Measuring only 650 meters long, this proposed line was a challenging addition, however, since the line would go through the heavily built-up *intramuros* city.[44] It also would allow passengers to bypass important markets that they otherwise would have passed through, with a certainly negative impact on those vendors.

It is not clear what happened in this round of proposals, or whether the municipality even received any applications. The next archival documentation comes only four years later, in January 1914, when a concession was signed with the Greek Istanbulite Evripides Mavrommatis. At that time the American consul in the city observed, "From a municipal point of view, there is no doubt that these concessions will be of great benefit to the city. . . . The tramways will no doubt open up the suburban sections and relieve the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions prevailing in within the walled part of the city.'"[45]

This final round resulted in the most ambitious tramway proposal yet: six lines that would link the city to neighboring towns (Bethlehem) and villages (Shaykh Badr and the Mount of Olives), go deeper into the *intramuros* city than previously planned, and more fully connect sacred and secular, local and foreign interests.[46] Moreover,

the proposed lines would have serviced Muslim, Christian, and Jewish sites and heterogeneous as well as homogeneous neighborhoods. However, World War I broke out only months after Mavrommatis signed the concession, and within a few years the arriving British were adamantly opposed to such an image of visual modernity that would mar the Jerusalem landscape. Mandate-era British electricity concessions to the Zionist industrialist Pinchas Rutenberg in the 1920s did not result in tramways being constructed in either Jerusalem or Jaffa/Tel-Aviv.[47]

It is telling that the main agents in the tramway concession hunt had shifted sharply from local Jerusalemite business and civic leaders in 1909, to imperial citizens and international bankers by 1914. At the same time, the tramway concession that Mavrommatis ultimately received was far more responsive to the city's geography and transportation needs than the first one proposed in 1909. Unfortunately, surviving primary sources do not allow us enough insight into the negotiations that took place behind the scenes in the tramway proposals, so we cannot know the role of Jerusalemites in pushing for or against the specifics of the proposed lines. Other aspects of Jerusalem life in these years, however, reveal some of the ways that its residents struggled over competing visions of and claims to the city. For example, bourgeois urbanites sought to clamp down on peasants selling their goods on the streets; foreign residents refused to pay street cleaning fees; urban crime led to increased fears and tensions in various parts of the city.[48] Given this, it is reasonable to assume that residents would have had competing interests and aims with the tramway proposals.

More pointedly, urban administration became more politicized with the question of Zionist influence in the city. The municipal elections of 1910 that resulted in the election of two Jewish council members – at least one of whom, David Yellin, was affiliated with Zionist institutions – were critiqued by the local newspaper *al-Munadi* as corrupt. The questions of Zionism and European colonialism increasingly impacted civic life in a variety of ways, among them contributing directly to the splintering of the local Masonic lodge, an important site of Ottoman intercommunal sociability, in 1913.[49] These struggles over urban citizenship nevertheless remained structured around a shared, if negotiated, city in which daily encounters across religious groups continued.

During World War I, civic leaders in the city cooperated to distribute grain and humanitarian relief and to combat the locust plague, but they also clashed over the relative contributions of each to these efforts as well as to the broader wartime context.[50] Within a few years, though, the conditions of the Balfour Declaration and British marginalization of the Jerusalem municipality, which did not hold elections until 1927 (a full decade after the city's occupation by British troops and officials), coupled with the sharp increase in Jewish immigration to Jerusalem and the increasing urban segregation and urban violence that developed meant that the preconditions for the Ottoman *pax urbana* had already been destroyed. By the mid-1920s, a Jewish group called "ha-Toshav" (the Resident) emerged to propose separating Jerusalem into Arab and "Hebrew" municipalities; among its supporters was the former Ottoman municipal council member, David Yellin.[51]

# The Apartheid City

If "a picture is worth a thousand words," then the twenty-first century equivalent would be the social media feed; the Hebrew and Arabic language Facebook pages of the Jerusalem light rail operator are reflections of the divided city and the hierarchical publics that the train purports to serve. On the Hebrew page run by the current operator of the light rail, the Cfir company, in between operational announcements and job advertisements they publish regular Shabbat and Jewish holiday greetings, one of the most recent of which, Purim, included instructions for crafting a face mask with the logo of the light rail. On International Women's Day, company employees distributed flowers to female passengers and featured a video celebrating the work of female employees. On Valentine's Day, the page featured the heartwarming story of a young Jewish couple's engagement on the train where they had met four years prior. These posts regularly receive dozens of likes, hearts, and other emoji reactions in addition to comments from the Hebrew-speaking public.[52]

In contrast, the light rail's Arabic language Facebook page has not been updated in over a year, since 14 April 2021, when the former operator of the light rail, CityPass, posted its last announcement; the new operator Cfir has not bothered to open an Arabic-language Facebook page at all. Even when the CityPass Arabic page was active, it contained none of the human-interest stories or community and culturally embedded posts that are common on the Hebrew page. Instead, its posts consisted entirely of operational announcements, with little to no attempt to tailor them for the Palestinian audience. One post, from 12 April 2021, announcing the train schedule changes for Israeli Memorial Day (Yom ha-Zikaron) illustrates the shocking dissonance that the light rail was asking its Palestinian passengers to ignore: the post casually referred to the holiday as the "Day of Remembrance for the [Jewish] Martyrs of Israel's Conflicts [with Arabs] (*yawm dhikra shuhada' ma'arak Isra'il*)."

Whether no one challenged this terminology at all or whether any criticism was scrubbed from the page is unknown, but it would not be surprising if no one even noticed, since in general there was very little public engagement with the Arabic Facebook page aside from the occasional request for employment or questions about the schedule. One uniquely substantive and critical comment was written by Umm Karim Sanduqa who complained about light rail inspectors regularly targeting Arab passengers, just one sign of the structural racism that the company – like the city which issued its tender – practiced.[53] In other words, the fact that Palestinian passengers like Umm Karim utilize the light rail on a daily basis occurs in spite of their surveillance and discrimination in its train cars and stations, reflects rather their limited access to convenient public transportation that links their residential areas with other parts of the city where they need to travel to work, study, shop, or take care of bureaucratic matters.

Indeed, one cannot understand the Jerusalem light rail without recognizing the deeply segregated urban landscape in which it functions and which it serves – and which it seeks to obscure all the while reinforcing it. This segregation is measured

not only in terms of the almost total residential segregation of Jews and Arabs in Jerusalem, but also in terms of the division of public spaces in the city as well as the role of the transportation infrastructure in maintaining this segregation.[54] Prior to the construction of the light rail, intra- and inter-city bus transportation in Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem was largely provided by Palestinian buses and informal shared van lines, a legacy of the pre-1967 infrastructure. The Israeli bus company, Egged, had few stops in Palestinian neighborhoods even while Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem expanded and was fully integrated into the city's bus lines.[55]

The light rail's construction slightly changed this policy, as the original red line has three stops in Palestinian neighborhoods and one stop adjacent to the Old City walls and downtown East Jerusalem, out of twenty-three stops; however, the three stops in Palestinian neighborhoods (al-Sahil, Shu'fat, and Bayt Hanina) are the only stops which do not connect to any city bus lines, underscoring the limited and isolated nature of the light rail's integration of Palestinian neighborhoods into Jerusalem's transportation infrastructure.[56] The second planned (green) rail line includes one stop serving the Palestinian neighborhood of Bayt Safafa in southern Jerusalem out of the planned forty one stops. Further, according to the transportation master plan, of the ten total lines planned for the light rail, only one, the brown line, would primarily serve Palestinian neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, despite the fact that they comprise more than one-third of the city's residents.[57]

This transportation situation reflects the broader structural discrimination embedded into urban governance, urban planning, and the urban experience of Palestinian Jerusalemites. Although they comprise more than 37 percent of the population of the city, Palestinian Jerusalemites are woefully underserved by the municipal government, receiving only about 10 percent of its allocations on an annual basis.[58] Since Palestinians do not recognize Israeli sovereignty, East Jerusalemites boycott participation in the municipal elections and have no role in the municipal government.[59] In any event, the majority of policies impacting East Jerusalemites are made at the national, not municipal, level, including Israeli national policies targeting Palestinian Jerusalemites' residency rights, their access to building permits, policing, and mobility.[60] Furthermore, ministry-level, legislative, and judicial collaboration with the Jewish settler movement has resulted in widescale and ongoing land expropriation and expulsions of Palestinian Jerusalemites from their homes, and only a miniscule percentage of land use permitted to them in the city.[61] Most prominently, the 202 kilometers of the Israeli "Separation Wall" built around Jerusalem beginning in 2002 transects a number of East Jerusalem neighborhoods and separates them and their Palestinian residents from the rest of the city.[62]

Due to all of these metrics, scholars have labeled contemporary Jerusalem variously a "colonial city," an "urban ethnocracy," or a case of "urban apartheid."[63] What each of these terms captures is the structural role of Israeli institutions working in concert to implement the "Judaization" of the city and to consolidate Jewish political, territorial, demographic and economic control at the intentional expense

of Jerusalem's Palestinian residents. In this context we can also view the recently approved plans to construct a cable car connecting the New and Old City (from the Ottoman railway station to the Dung Gate) that would cater to the desires of Jewish Jerusalemites and foreign tourists as well as serve local and state officials with a vested interest in shaping a particular vision of a "modern" Jewish Jerusalem. The cable car would whisk visitors from the commercialized and sanitized "First Station"[64] over the Hinnom Valley to the City of David archeological site in Silwan, leading to the further expropriation of Palestinian lands and marginalization of Palestinian presence.

The fact that over one third of the residents in contemporary Jerusalem have no say in what happens in their city is reflective of the city as a "gray space" of contested, informal, and inferior urban citizenship.[65] Not only do residents not have a role in the formal institution of governance, but they also have a precarious participation in informal institutions affiliated with the municipality.[66] Palestinian freedom of cultural expression, historic preservation, and even everyday use of the city is all contingent on Israeli decisions, subject to Israeli restrictions, and subservient to Israeli narrations. Nevertheless, East Jerusalemites actively struggle to reclaim their rights as urban citizens not just as occupied residents. Independent NGOs and VGOs (voluntary grassroots organizations) based in East Jerusalem also struggle to shape the city, and a few joint civil society organizations give voice to Palestinian claims.[67]

## Concluding Thoughts

On 3 April 2022, the light rail operator Cfir published a post on its (Hebrew) Facebook page addressed to "the Muslim residents of Jerusalem" with "Ramadan Karim" greetings in both Arabic and Hebrew.[68] Within several weeks, 445 people "liked" the original post, but several public comments posted in response undercut the holiday greetings aimed at reflecting a united Jerusalem. The first comment by a Jewish passenger sarcastically prayed, "May the Creator of the Universe protect your [Cfir's] windows on this holiday," a reference to the attacks on the train infrastructure that broke out in 2014 and periodically since then in times of tension. Fifteen people liked or laughed at this comment, while another Jewish passenger added, "I'm dying [of laughter]." A comment by a different Jewish passenger retorted, "To the PA is the place for them," but a typo in the original post [*le-reshutz* instead of *le-reshut*, for the Authority] made his meaning opaque; two Palestinians "loved" or laughed at his comment.

Cfir's public relations holiday greeting and the public comments posted in response unintentionally allows us to shine light on the deep racism, suspicion, and separation in contemporary Jerusalem, one that of course predates and goes far beyond the light rail. And yet it also highlights the large gap between the Jerusalem society of the late Ottoman period and today's Jerusalem. Then, the city was one unified political and geographic entity, despite the religious, class, and nationality differences of residents and visitors alike, and despite the urban struggles and tensions that emerged. It was commonplace to read holiday greetings to the various religious groups in the city in

both the Arabic and Hebrew language press, often prefaced with thoughtful reference – and deference – to "our brothers" of the different faith. The municipal government, despite being the object of at times sharp criticism in the pages of the Jerusalem press, also worked to represent and develop the city as a whole, with no permitted divisions based on religion or ethnicity. Ottoman urban citizenship was at times unifying and at other times fragmenting – but it was always active and negotiated.

Today, there is no pretension that Jerusalem's Jewish and Arab residents share the same political, social, or spatial frame. The light rail's Palestinian riders might very well be paying *passengers*, but as they travel through the tramway's various stops, surrounded by evidence of their residential and commercial segregation as well as their political disenfranchisement and erasure, they surely know that they are far from being urban *citizens*. Scholarly debates about whether or not urban tramways can provide positive means for connecting cities and their residents continue, but the reality in Jerusalem is on a completely different track.[69]

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Endnotes

1   "The Heavy Presence of Jerusalem Light Rail: Why Palestinian Protesters Attacked the Tracks," Open Democracy, 6 July 2014, online at (opendemocracy.net) bit.ly/3t3A6iS (accessed 26 October 2022); "Riot-Damaged East Jerusalem Light Rail Station Won't See Service for Months," *Haaretz*, 7 July 2014, online at (haaretz.com) bit.ly/3FOf0wk (accessed 26 October 2022); Jodi Rudoren, "In Divided Jerusalem, Rail Line for Arabs and Jews is Among the Fractures," *New York Times*, 13 July 2014, online at nyti.ms/3FJ9Gul (accessed 26 October 2022); Steve Inskeep, "A Light Rail that Crosses Jerusalem's Divide, but Can't Unite It," NPR Morning Edition, 16 March 2015, online at n.pr/3NBYYri (accessed 26 October 2022).

2   Amina Nolte and Haim Yacobi, "Politics, Infrastructure and Representation: The Case of Jerusalem's Light Rail," *Cities* 43 (2015): 28–36; Hanna Baumann, "Infrastructural Violence in Jerusalem," in *Reverberations: Violence Across Time and Space*, ed. Yael Navaro, Zerrin Özlem Biner, Alice von Bieberstein, and Seda Altuğ (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021);

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3   Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); Sotirios Dimitriadis, "The Tramway Concession of Jerusalem, 1908–1914: Elite Citizenship, Urban Infrastructure, and the Abortive Modernization of a Late Ottoman City," in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, ed.

Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Yasemin Avcı, "Jerusalem and Jaffa in the Late Ottoman Period: The Concession-Hunting Struggle for Public Works Projects," in *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

4    See, for example, the documents in Ömer Faruk Yilmaz, ed., *Vesika ve fotoğraflarla Osmanlı devrinde Kudüs* (Istanbul: Çamlica, 2009) and Şerife Eroğlu Memiş, *Hurûfât defterlerinde Kudüs-i Serîf kazası: vakiflar, görevler ve görevliler* (Istanbul: Yeditepe Yayinevi, 2017).

5    Among other works, see Yasemin Avcı, *Değişim sürecinde bir Osmanlı Kenti: Kudüs (1890–1914)* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2004); Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem, 1872–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*; Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Vincent Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities* (University of Chicago Press, 2017); Roberto Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009); Musa Sroor, *Fondations pieuses en Mouvement de la transformation du statut de propriété des biens waqfs à Jérusalem (1858–1917)* (Beirut: Institut français du proche-orient, 2010); Yair Wallach, *A City in Fragments: Urban Text in Modern Jerusalem* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020); Salim Tamari, "Confessionalism and Public Space in Ottoman and Colonial Jerusalem," in *Cities and Sovereignty: Identity Politics in Urban Spaces*, ed. Diane E. Davis and Nora Libertun de Duren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Dalachanis and Lemire, eds., *Ordinary Jerusalem*.

6    Avcı, "Jerusalem and Jaffa in the Late Ottoman Period."

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8    Yasemin Avcı, Vincent Lemire, and Falestin Naïli, "Publishing Jerusalem's Ottoman Municipal Archives (1892–1917): A Turning Point for the City's Historiography,"

*Jerusalem Quarterly* 60 (Autumn 2014); Haim Gerber, *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890–1914* (Berlin: K. Schwarz, 1995); Avcı, *Değişim sürecinde bir Osmanlı Kenti*.

9    See the discussion in Salim Tamari, *The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2017), ch. 3.

10   See Malek Sharif, *Imperial Norms and Local Realities: The Ottoman Municipal Laws and the Municipality of Beirut (1860–1908)* (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2020); Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840–1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber, eds., *Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut: Orient Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft, 2002); Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi, eds., *Urban Governance under the Ottomans: Between Cosmopolitanism and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2014).

11   Nora Lafi, "Mediterranean Cosmopolitanisms and Its Contemporary Revivals: A Critical Approach," *New Geographies: Journal of the Harvard University Graduate School of Design* 5 (2013); Freitag and Lafi, eds., *Urban Governance under the Ottomans*.

12   Avcı, Lemire, and Naili, "Publishing Jerusalem's Ottoman Municipal Archives." Because the municipality was the lowest level of imperial government, it often deferred questions, problems, and budget shortfalls to the higher-ranking administrative council.

13   Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*.

14   The current Jerusalem master plan for transportation credits Theodor Herzl with this vision, as his utopian novel *Altneuland* referenced a tramway. "History," online at jet.gov.il/light-rail/ (accessed 26 October 2022). This, of course, denies all Ottoman and Palestinian initiative and agency in urban development and modernization.

15   26 March 1905. Palaestina Immobilien Gesellschaft, Central Zionist Archives L18/5457. That summer, the Seventh Zionist Congress declared acquiring concessions in Palestine as one of their four goals, alongside industrial and commercial development and "exploration." Fredrik Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 45.

16 Avcı, "Jerusalem and Jaffa in the Late Ottoman Period."

17 *Al-Quds*, 3 October 1908.

18 The official name was the *Kudüs-ü Şerif tijaret sanaet ve-ziraat odası* (Jerusalem commercial, craft, and agricultural chamber). For more on the chamber, see Joseph B. Glass and Ruth Kark, "The Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture, 1909–1910: An Early Attempt at Inter-Communal Cooperation," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 2 (2018).

19 *Al-Quds,* 11 January 1909. Meiton notes that the Zionist movement sought to place members on the chambers of commerce in the country. Meiton, *Electrical Palestine*, 239–40n128.

20 *Bulletin de la Chambre de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Agriculture de Palestine*, 1, no.1 (July 1909).

21 *Al-Quds*, 7 October 1908. The open letter was translated and republished in the Hebrew-language *Ha-Zvi*, 9 October 1908. For more on this exchange, see Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 166–67. (At the time, I was only aware of the Hebrew and French language versions of the letter.)

22 *Al-Quds*, 14 October 1908.

23 Glass and Kark, "The Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce."

24 *Al-Quds*, 11 January 1909. See also *Bulletin*, July 1909.

25 *Ha-Zvi*, 7 December 1908.

26 *Al-Quds*, 1 January 1909.

27 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 173–82; Dimitriadis, "The Tramway Concession of Jerusalem."

28 Ruth Kark, *Jerusalem Neighborhoods: Planning and By-Laws, 1855–1930* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 11.

29 Falestin Naïli, "The De-Municipalization of Urban Governance: Post-Ottoman Political Space in Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2018); and Yair Wallach, "Jerusalem's Lost Heart: The Rise and Fall of the Ottoman City Centre," in *Urban Neighborhood Formations*, ed. Nazan Maksudyan and Hilal Alkan (London: Routledge, 2020).

30 "Request to warn the hospital officials about their duties, 11 April 1892 (Gregorian calendar) – 30 Mârt 1308 (Ottoman fiscal calendar (Rumi)," Open Jerusalem archives, JM-AIY/OttomanRegisters/Vol1/p4a/item24, online at (openjerusalem.org) bit.ly/3E5TfH2 (accessed 4 November 2022). In particular, it

was noted that women and the poor were not able to access the distant city hospital.

31 According to Schmelz, 44 percent of the city's population lived in the *extramuros* neighborhoods. Uziel O. Schmelz, "The Population of Jerusalem's Urban Neighborhoods according to the Ottoman Census of 1905," in *Aspects of Ottoman History: Papers from CIEPO IX, Jerusalem*, ed. Amy Singer and Amnon Cohen (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994). Figures for non-Ottoman foreign residents are sketchy, but a conservative estimate would place them at around 10,000.

32 Michelle U. Campos, "Mapping Urban 'Mixing' and Intercommunal Relations in Late Ottoman Jerusalem: A Neighborhood Study," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 63, no. 1 (2021): 133–69.

33 Campos, "Mapping Urban 'Mixing.'"

34 See, for example, Gad Frumkin, *Derekh shofet bi-Yerushalayim* [The Path of a judge in Jerusalem] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1954).

35 "More supervision needed outside of city walls, 4 June 1910 (Gregorian calendar) – 22 Mayîs 1326 (Ottoman fiscal calendar (Rumi)," Open Jerusalem archives, JM-AIY/OttomanRegisters/Vol16/p18b/item139, online at (openjerusalem.org) bit.ly/3DFxPzd (accessed 4 November 2022).

36 Roads were wet down by municipal crews to tame the dust at regular intervals.

37 Intracity wagon travel was taxed, adding to the cost for drivers and their passengers. For discussion of wagon travel, see Yehoshu'a bar David Yellin, *Zichronot le-ben Yerushalayim* [Memories of a son of Jerusalem] (Jerusalem: Zion Press-Ruhold Brothers, 1923); and David Yellin, *Kitvei David Yellin* [The writings of David Yellin], vol. 1–2 (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1972).

38 "Decision to Fix Carriage Fares," 26 May 1892, Open Jerusalem archives, online at (openjerusalem.org) bit.ly/3WAliFV (accessed 26 October 2022). "Upon a Ministry of Commerce and Public Works' letter regarding electricity in the cities of Jaffa and Jerusalem, 11 January 1909," Open Jerusalem archives, online at (openjerusalem.org) bit.ly/3WMxHqD (accessed 26 October 2022).

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40 Schmelz, "The Population of Jerusalem's Urban Neighborhoods," 112.

41 Dimitriadis, "The Tramway Concession of Jerusalem."

42 "Announcement of four major municipal projects: water supply, tramway, sewage system, telephone lines," 21 July 1910," online at www.openjerusalem.org/ark:/58142/3P9d0 (accessed 26 October 2022).

43 "Acting Consul Morgan to Ambassador Lowther," 5 November 1910, the National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA), Foreign Office (FO) 195/2351/312–91.

44 Earlier communication between the British acting consul and the ambassador indicated that the *intramuros* line would terminate near the Jewish quarter, possibly at Bab al-Silsila. "Acting Consul Morgan to Ambassador Lowther," 12 August 1910, TNA FO 195/2351/167–73.

45 24 January 1914, quoted in Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British*, 187 n75.

46 Line 1: through Jaffa Gate to Souk et Allor, the bazaar of the Jewish quarter. Line 2: Jaffa Gate, Me'ah She'arim, Ecole Schneller, Shaykh Badr, Municipal Hospital, Jaffa Gate. Line 3: Jaffa Gate east to Nikoforiya, New Palace. Line 4: Jaffa Gate to Bethlehem. Line 5: Jaffa Gate to the Mount of Olives. Line 6: Jaffa Gate to Saint Croix and Shaykh Badr. President of the city council, Central Zionist Archives (CZA), A153/143. See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 181–82.

47 After the war, the Greek government sued the British on behalf of their new citizen, Mavrommatis, for his rights to the concessions in Jerusalem. Meiton writes that the British received a request in 1920 from a Mr. Dabdub and a Mr. Handal to be considered for future concessions on, among other things, tramways, but this appears not to have been followed up. Meiton, *Electrical Palestine*, 239–40 n135. For more on the British partnership with the Zionist movement on the economic development of Palestine, see Lilach Barak, "The Anglo-Jewish Economic Board for Palestine – The First Decade," *Israel Studies* 26, no. 3 (2021).

48 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*.

49 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*.

50 Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*.

51 Yehoshua Ben Arieh, *Yerushalayim ha-Yehudit ha-hadasha be-tkufat ha-Mandat* [New Jewish Jerusalem in the Mandate Period], vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi).

52 Cfir, online at www.facebook.com/cfirjer/ (accessed 23 March 2022).

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54 Ghazi Falah, "Living Together Apart: Residential Segregation in Mixed Arab-Jewish Cities in Israel," *Urban Studies* 33, no. 6 (1996); Oren Shlomo, "Sub-formality in the Formalization of Public Transport in East Jerusalem," *Current Sociology* 65, no. 2 (2017).

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56 See online at jet.gov.il/light-rail/, red line map accessed 24 April 2022.

57 See online at (jet.gov.il) bit.ly/3T7u3Va (accessed 24 April 2022).

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# The Unbuilt Parliament

## British Colonial Plans for a Legislative Assembly in Jerusalem

Yair Wallach
and Julio Moreno Cirujano

**Abstract**

The deliberations over the establishment of a legislative assembly in Mandatory Palestine have long been dismissed by the historiography as one of many failed ideas of the Mandate. Yet the legislative assembly was not a mere concept thrown around in pointless rounds of negotiations; it was also an architectural project that came remarkably close to being built, involving several plots of land in Jerusalem, countless architectural drawings, and clay models, designed primarily by the Mandate's celebrated architect Austen St. Barbe Harrison. The legislative assembly chamber was, as of the early 1930s, a central element in the design of the central government offices – the most ambitious unfulfilled scheme of the British Mandatory Palestine government in Jerusalem, aiming to accommodate all executive and legislative bodies in a single building. The deliberations over the scheme remained restricted to the top echelons of the Palestine government, with no involvement of Arab Palestinians or Jews. The project, which was derailed and revived several times in the 1930s and 1940s, was finally abandoned only in early November 1947. The project and its design throw new light on colonial state-making in Palestine and its flaws.

**Keywords**

British Mandate Palestine; Jerusalem; legislative assembly; architectural history; urban planning; Austen St. Barbe Harrison; Arab Revolt; colonial architecture.
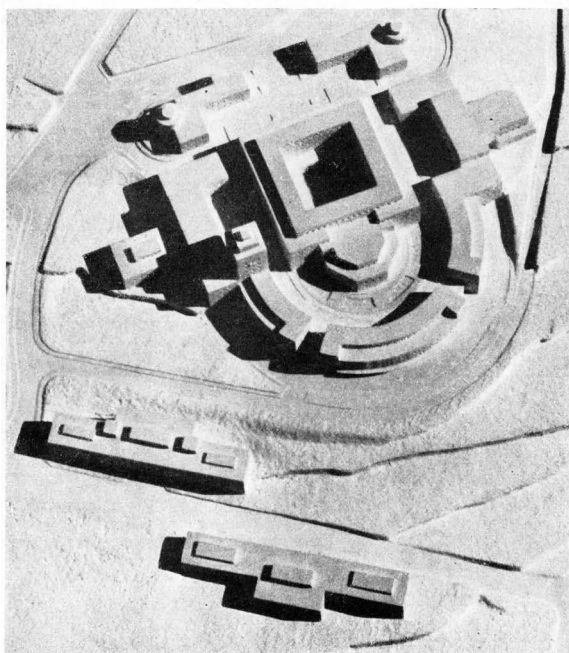
# Introduction

> Next Saturday Britain terminates her mandate over Palestine, and the present is therefore an appropriate moment to reproduce Austen St. B. Harrison's design for a central group of Government buildings near Jerusalem . . . When the partition of the country between the Arab inhabitants and the Jewish immigrants was decided, the project (which included a general legislative assembly) became obsolete. This partition scheme has been abandoned, but even if some central government emerges from the present chaos, it is unlikely that this project will ever be realized.[1]

On 13 May 1948, two days before the British Mandate high commissioner left Palestine, the *Architects' Journal* published the plans and images of the model for Palestine's central government offices (CGO) and legislative assembly. The piece, under the title "Abandoned Work," appeared alongside adverts for flooring material and an article on a conversion project in Eaton Square. This was the final resting place of a twenty-five-year project that had incurred significant costs in purchased land and architectural fees, and involved endless deliberations, several potential sites, and at least four developed architectural schemes. Its failure was far from a foregone conclusion. It was, in the words of one of its architects, a "Jack-in-the-box" project, which accompanied the Mandate from its very beginning to its very end, jumping out at key moments only to be put back into the box.[2] From 1935 to the mid-1940s the project vacillated between moving steadily and confidently towards construction and, in other moments, languishing or put on hold.



*Abandoned Work : Palestine Government Buildings*

Figure 1. "Abandoned Work: Palestine Government Buildings," *Architects' Journal* 107, no. 2779 (13 May 1948): 430.

Of all the unfulfilled schemes of the British Mandatory Palestine Government in Jerusalem, the construction of central government offices was undoubtedly the most ambitious, expensive, and time consuming. Officials began discussing it even before

Figure 2. The two main sites considered for central government offices by the British Mandate government, circled on "Measurement Map of Jerusalem," Survey of Palestine, 1937; National Library of Israel, online at (nli.org.il) bit.ly/3UuEZxa (accessed 31 October 2022).

the 1922 approval of the Mandate and continued to work on it until November 1947, months before Britain's departure from Palestine. The failure to build the CGO cost the British dearly, in expenditure for rented offices, in government efficiency, and in human lives, as they discovered when the poorly secured King David Hotel was bombed by Jewish insurgents. The failure also cast a long shadow on the memory and understanding of Mandate Palestine. The absence of central government headquarters, and even more so, the absence of a legislative assembly building, made it much easier to pretend that a unitary Palestine never existed, that partition was always the natural and inevitable outcome of the Mandate, and that representative politics had always been impossible.

Our interest here is in the legislative assembly chamber, and in what we can learn from the unbuilt building about the political and constitutional history of Mandate Palestine. The legislative assembly is typically described in the historiography as a doomed prospect, one of the Mandate's many cul-de-sacs.[3] Few historians studied the deliberations over the legislative council in detail, and those who did, were apparently unaware of the extensive planning activity for the actual construction of an assembly hall.[4] The central government offices project received virtually no interest beyond a few architectural historians. The only detailed discussion is found in Ron Fuchs's unpublished PhD thesis in Hebrew on the British architect Austen St. Barbe Harrison.[5] Fuchs's focus is on Harrison's architectural oeuvre, but his thoughtful analysis pays attention to political and symbolic dimensions.[6]

Palestine's status as a Class A Mandate (that is, sufficiently "advanced") required the British to facilitate the establishment of self-governing institutions, as was the case in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Throughout British rule, the native Arab Palestinian majority demanded representative institutions with powers over immigration and land: they called for a local government with executive powers, answerable to an elected parliament.[7] However, this was at odds with British commitment to establish a Jewish national home in Palestine. The Zionist leadership strongly opposed the development of representative institutions with real powers, at least as long as Jews were in a minority.

A legislative council was first suggested in 1922 by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel, and its constitution ensured a majority of British and Zionist members. The plan was blocked by a successful Palestinian boycott of the elections. In the 1930s, High Commissioner Wauchope put forward a modified proposal with tentative support from the Arab leadership, but the Zionist leadership was able to scuttle the plan in the UK parliament in early 1936. This failure was followed by the Arab Revolt and the 1937 partition plan recommended by the Peel Commission. The 1939 White Paper charted a path towards a binational state, with an appointed assembly that would be later replaced with an elected one. Such an assembly never convened.

The history of the unbuilt assembly hall sheds new light on this political timeline. It reveals that the legislative assembly was not a mere concept thrown around in pointless rounds of negotiations; it also referred to real plots of land in Jerusalem, countless architectural drawings, and several clay models. Throughout much of the 1930s and 1940s, British officials in Palestine regarded the establishment of a legislative assembly a realistic and necessary prospect. By 1935, the assembly hall became a key design element in the flagship central government offices, so much that when the British government withdrew its support of a legislative assembly, the entire project was derailed. Even more surprising is British commitment to building an assembly hall in 1939. While the White Paper's constitutional proposals have long been dismissed as purely theoretical, we show that in late 1939 an assembly hall was very close to being built; and that in the 1940s, it was planned once again as an integral part of the CGO, in a larger and more prestigious location. The underlying assumption behind these deliberations was that Palestine was to remain a unitary, undivided

state, and that its political and constitutional future inevitably demanded some kind of a representative assembly in Jerusalem.[8] And yet throughout, the planning of the assembly hall remained a British affair, with no involvement or consultation with Arabs or Jews. The plans to incorporate the assembly hall into a government building complex reflected the subordination of local representation to colonial design.

## From the Ottoman Serai to Early British Plans for Central Government Offices

In the final decades of Ottoman rule, the regional government operated from the Serai (Turkish, *saray*, palace) in al-Wad area within Jerusalem's walls. This was a large fourteenth century Mamluk complex renovated for this purpose in 1870, shortly before the establishment of the *mutasarrifate* (independent district) of Jerusalem.[9] The Serai, the seat of the governor and his staff, also served for the meetings of the district administrative council (*meclis-i idare)*, a partly elected executive and representative body.[10] The location deep inside the walled city became inconvenient as the city expanded beyond the walls, and the commercial and civic city center shifted to Jaffa Gate.[11] After 1900, the Sublime Porte planned to move the Serai to a location closer to the new civic heart of the city, and considered a site in Nikoforiya, west of Jaffa Gate (donated by the Greek Orthodox Church).[12] During World War I, when Jerusalem became a regional command center, the military government moved to buildings outside the walls, such as the Notre Dame – a large French Catholic guesthouse north of the walled city, and the Augusta Victoria, a German Protestant pilgrims' guesthouse on the Mount of Olives. With the 1917 occupation of Jerusalem, Augusta Victoria became the residence of British military commanders and, after 1920, of High Commissioner Herbert Samuel. In the immediate term, government departments were housed in rented buildings around Jerusalem.

The construction of the central government offices was first suggested on 20 July 1922 – two days before formal approval of the Palestine Mandate by the League of Nations.[13] The architect who was chosen to design the project was the Department of Public Works' senior architect, Austen St. Barbe Harrison, who had arrived in Palestine in 1921 and would later become the most influential British architect in Mandatory Palestine. The main motivation for the project was economic: "It would be difficult to continue to justify an expenditure of over £3,000 per annum upon hired premises," wrote the director of public works.[14] This expenditure was set to grow much higher during the Mandate, but the disadvantages of rented accommodation went far beyond costs. Rented premises required significant modifications to make them fit for purpose, and they provided no long-term horizon as leases could be terminated. Departments soon outgrew their offices. Moving departments across the city was a relatively common episode, and sometimes even a source of rivalries between heads of departments. The dispersal of departments across the city made internal communication cumbersome.[15] These considerations of cost and efficiency were, initially, the main motivation for

the central government offices project. Security, political and symbolic considerations entered the discussion at a much later stage.

Exactly around that time (1921–23), British policy makers were occupied with plans for a legislative council for Palestine, but there was no plan to accommodate the council as part of the new central offices. A central element in Samuel's proposed constitution for Palestine, the legislative council was due to replace the advisory council of British officials and appointed Arab and Jewish representatives, which had first convened in October 1920.[16] The new council was to include ten British officials, and twelve elected representatives – eight Muslims, two Christians and two Jews. In a marked departure from Ottoman electoral practice, the British created separate confessional electoral registers for Muslims, Christians, and Jews – similar to British policies in India. The advisory council had been meeting in the High Commissioner's residence in the Augusta Victoria, and the legislative council would have likely convened there as well.[17] The absence of plans for a dedicated council hall was an indication of the council's subordinate position and limited powers. The council could not challenge the policies related to the Jewish national home; its makeup ensured British and Zionist representatives had a permanent majority, even though Arab Muslims and Christians made up 90 percent of the population. The Arab Executive rejected the plan and organized a boycott of the elections – the first successful Palestine-wide mobilization against the Mandate. The council never convened, and the advisory council similarly collapsed in 1923.

The central government office project progressed slowly in the 1920s. An olive grove plot was identified in east Nikoforiya, in the same area that was marked by the Ottomans for a government building and quite likely the same plot. The site was close to the Mamilla pool, on Nikoforiya Road, which was renamed "Julian's Way" in the British street-naming campaign of the 1920s (and after 1948, renamed again "King David Street").[18] The plot was not very large and its topographic location in the valley slope was not particularly impressive; it did not offer much view of the Old City, despite its vicinity. However, it was close to the city center of Jaffa Gate and Mamilla Street, and the Nikoforiya area developed considerably in the 1920s, with monumental new buildings such as the YMCA, and the Jewish/Egyptian-owned King David Hotel, just south of the CGO plot. The Supreme Muslim Council's flagship project, the Palace Hotel, was also built nearby. Today, the former CGO plot is the site of the Jerusalem campus of the Hebrew Union College (the seminary of the U.S. Reform Judaism movement), built by Safdie Architects in 1998.

Only in 1929 did the project take a serious turn, and planning started in earnest. Departments were not trusted to provide overall estimates of their office space needs, and were required to prepare detailed and comprehensive schedules detailing staff according to role, seniority, and office needs.[19] As Fuchs writes, the futile attempt to achieve comprehensive overview over all the necessary details from so many departments introduced enormous complexity and chronic delays. Given the slow and interrupted pace of planning and approval stages, and due to the changing needs of a steadily expanding government, the data quickly became obsolete and had to be

recollected. The project files in the Israel State Archives hold hundreds of pages of such schedules, from the 1920s to the 1940s. Similarly counterproductive was the attempt to accommodate all departments in one large building; had the project been divided into several buildings, it is much likelier that some of it would have been realized.[20] A list of departments to be included in the new offices was first decided in 1922, consisting of the high commissioner's office, the secretariat, the treasury, legal departments, audit, department of education, land, health, agriculture, and surveys. However, the list was in constant flux and would frequently change as departments were added and taken off the list, according to budgetary adjustments and available space. The government offices were never a stable and well-defined object, and the requirements of the building (in both functional and symbolic terms) kept shifting, as architects struggled to keep pace with changing government priorities. In that sense, the architects were active participants in repeatedly failed attempts to define the very meaning of the Palestine government and to give it an architectural shape.

## The Legislative Assembly

An assembly hall was first incorporated as an optional element into the design of the central government offices in 1930.[21] Passfield's White Paper (1930) stipulated the establishment of a legislative assembly as part of profound rethinking of the terms of the Mandate. Even after Prime Minister McDonald reversed the White Paper's restrictions on Jewish immigration and land purchasing, the commitment to a legislative assembly remained in place, allowing British officials in Palestine to push in that direction, despite lack of enthusiasm from the Colonial Office in London.

The historiography of the Mandate typically dismisses the 1930s deliberations over a legislative assembly as doomed propositions. "No one wanted a council: both Jews and Arabs were striving for victory, not compromise," notes Tom Segev.[22] Rashid Khalidi writes that these proposals were "fatally compromised" from an Arab perspective, as they involved accepting the terms of the Mandate, which "enshrined their inferior status by comparison with that of the Jews."[23] However, as Ann Lesch and Yehoshua Porath have shown, in the 1930s the Arab leadership was open to compromises, while it continued to advocate for an elected assembly with full powers. The assembly was seen as an avenue for Palestinian participatory representation and formal interaction with the British, with hope that the assembly's powers would expand to include the key issues of immigration and land. At the same time, Zionist opposition to the idea hardened, fearing that it would lead to restrictions on immigration. From the British side, the legislative assembly appeared a way to mitigate and manage Arab opposition to the Mandate – opposition which, officials feared, could take a violent form.[24] The prolonged lack of any self-governing institutions was a break with Ottoman practices, and in regional terms Palestine was fast becoming an outlier. By the mid-1920s, Egypt was nominally independent and had a fully elected parliament; Iraq, under a British Mandate, had an elected council of representatives; in Syria, a new parliament was convened in 1932, with a new building dedicated for this purpose in Damascus.[25]

In 1931, the government architect compiled a list of open questions regarding the central government offices project. The assembly hall came ninth on the list – appearing after questions about the messengers' system, cloakrooms, and lavatories, indicative at that point of the low priority of the legislative assembly as part of the project.[26] Harrison's early designs (the "Square Scheme") took the shape of a large, almost square building to which the assembly hall was added rather unconvincingly at the back. The assembly was first introduced as a boardroom, then as an enlarged semispherical building in the back of the building.[27] Meanwhile, the entire CGO project stalled between 1932 and 1934 because of the global depression.[28]

However, in late 1934, after many delays caused by Zionist objections, High Commissioner Wauchope decided that the time was right to push for the assembly's establishment, and received the backing of the British



Figure 3. Austen St. Barbe Harrison's "Round Scheme," 1935 (?). Israeli State Archives (ISA) 1938 000nmnb – Construction of New Gov't Office Jerusalem, 1938, 64.

government.[29] The need to accommodate the assembly was the reason Harrison recommended the expansion of the site by purchasing a nearby plot.[30] Around that time Harrison abandoned the "Square Scheme," and proposed a new design, the "Round Scheme," in which the assembly took a much more prominent place, as the very heart in the complex. But it remained something which "may or may not be built."[31] Only in June 1935, in a face-to-face conversation with the chief secretary, Harrison received final confirmation for the inclusion of an assembly hall and the exact requirements, some recorded only in handwriting.[32] This is striking compared to the discussions on other aspects of the CGO – discussed in lengthy correspondence with various stakeholders. When it came to the assembly, deliberations were conducted in a very small group, which consisted of the high commissioner, chief secretary, director of public works, the architect, and few other high-level officials. There was
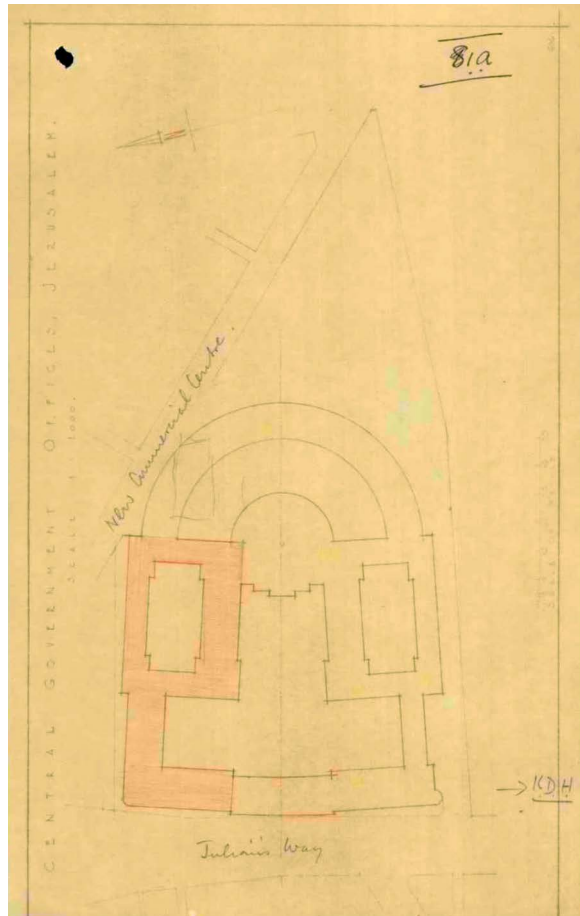
no consultation whatsoever with Arab or Jewish stakeholders. While the constitutional questions around the legislative assembly were debated intensely, in public and behind the scenes, among Arab Palestinians and the Jewish Yishuv, it appears that no Arabs or Jews were aware that an assembly hall was in advanced stages of planning. The announcement of the CGO project in the official gazette, reported in Arabic and Hebrew, did not mention the assembly, and did not attract interest or controversy.[33]

The internal design of the assembly hall, determined by Harrison, was a "well" shape – that is, an elongated, semi-elliptical theater, organized around a central table (where interpreters and clerks would sit) and a throne for the high commissioner. The hall was to accommodate a maximum of thirty members, with space for assistants behind official members.[34] The assembly building also included offices for the executive council, clerk of the council, interpreters, and typists (nine offices in total); two committee rooms; a retiring room for the council president; a common room for members (with lavatory); and a gallery for the press and the general public.[35]

In the second half of 1935, as Harrison was finalizing his design, Wauchope formally presented his plan to the Arab and the Jewish leaderships. Based on his perception of success on the municipal councils of mixed towns, he proposed a legislative council with a total of twenty-eight members: eleven Muslim members (eight elected, three appointed); seven Jewish members (three elected, four appointed); and three Christian members (two elected, one appointed). Additionally, there would be two commercial members and five appointed government officers (British, at least initially). The council would have the same jurisdiction as the 1922 proposed constitution (no powers over immigration and land) and the high commissioner would have veto powers. This was a far cry from Arab Palestinian demands for a representative assembly with full powers, but the makeup was more favorable to the Arabs, who constituted at least half of the council's members. There was a sense of urgency in obtaining official form for Palestinian representation in government, however constrained.[36] This proposal met with complete rejection on the Jewish side. The Zionist leadership had previously floated "parity" schemes with equal representation for Jews and Arabs. Now they refused any form of legislative council. Nazi persecution of German Jews, and antisemitism in Poland, propelled mass Jewish immigration to Palestine, hardening the Zionist position on these issues and making the Zionist leadership's hopes for a Jewish majority in Palestine seem within reach.[37] Elements in the Arab leadership, on the other hand, were cautiously positive. Although noncommittal, there were signs that the Arab leadership was ready to accept the scheme and was negotiating to improve the offer. This was certainly Wauchope's impression. On 22 December 1935, the Palestine government proclaimed the establishment of the Legislative Council. The *New York Times* reported that the Zionists failed to block the initiative.[38] "[A]fter more than fifteen years of rule by British officials, and despite the limited powers of the Council, a definite step is being made toward the main objective set up by the League of Nations for the Class A mandates of Iraq, Syria and Palestine, namely, the development of self-governing institutions," wrote the journal *Current History* in February 1936.[39]

Such enthusiasm, however, was premature. In February 1936, the plan met with overwhelming opposition in the British House of Lords and, a month later, in the House of Commons. Effective Zionist lobbying galvanized overwhelming opposition to the plan. By March and April, Arab parties began to voice publicly their support for the initiative, but it was too late.[40] In political terms, the legislative assembly notion was dead. Arthur Wauchope was dismayed by these developments, and he warned London that Arab riots were imminent. But he understood the decision was irreversible. Less than a week later, he instructed the architect to drop the assembly hall, unless it could be used for other office purposes. But Harrison's scheme placed the purposely designed assembly hall at the heart of the entire complex and changing its use to offices made no sense. Harrison pointed out that the space of the legislative assembly forms "the connecting link" between the building's two wings.[41] Having positioned the assembly hall as the focal node of the entire building, pulling it out was almost impossible. The design had to be rethought.

The Arab leadership was slow to come to terms with the defeat, and continued to seek discussions with British officials. For members of the Istiqlal party, who had opposed the legislative assembly throughout, the failure proved that the only way forward was full non-cooperation.[42] Laila Parsons recently presented the failure of these proposals as the most significant backdrop to the occurence of the Arab Revolt.[43] By mid-April a general strike had broken out. While Wauchope initially pushed for a downscaled version of the CGO building, at the cost of £120,000, this was derailed by the outbreak of the Arab Revolt. In 1937, after the Royal Commission recommended the partition of Palestine and the termination of the Mandate, there was little point in building central government offices, let alone a legislative assembly. The project was formally put on hold in August 1937.[44]

## The Revolt and Its Aftermath: The Death and Resurrection of the Assembly

While the Arab Revolt threw the plans into disarray, it introduced a new motivation to build a central government headquarters: security. The government's most important departments – the secretariat, the attorney general and the treasury – were housed in St. Paul's Hospice (Paulus-Haus), near Damascus Gate, in what was a predominantly Arab area, and was seen as unsafe, particularly for Jewish staff and women.[45] Government departments moved from there to several other locations including the Palace Hotel and the King David Hotel, in what was seen as a temporary measure. The King David Hotel rent was 3,200 Palestine pounds each annum, considerably higher than St. Paul's Hospice (1,950 Palestine pounds).[46] In 1938, as the British government abandoned the idea of partition, there was urgency in finding permanent and secure accommodation. The "Jack-in-the-box" CGO project was ready to leap once more to the top of the colonial priority list.

After the 1937 suspension of the project, Harrison abruptly left Palestine in 1938.

A contributing factor was his uneasy relationship with Wauchope, who handed a key government commission – the Haifa Government Hospital – to a private architect, the world-famous Erich Mendelsohn, who had fled Nazi Germany and had been living in Jerusalem since 1935. Mendelsohn approached the Mandatory government offering his services to plan the new central government offices, but it was the government's new senior architect, Percy Winter, who had already been placed in charge of the project.[47] Winter embarked on a completely new design, with a somber square-shaped structure. Given the escalating revolt and the political uncertainty, the legislative assembly appeared irrelevant and is not mentioned in the correspondence.

In March 1939, however, Winter received new instructions to include a legislative assembly chamber as part of the design. The context of this dramatic U-turn was the preparations for the publication of the White Paper in May 1939. After the costly suppression of the Arab Revolt, and as war in Europe appeared increasingly likely, the British government moved to conciliate Arab public opinion in Palestine and neighboring states with restrictions on Jewish immigration and settlement. The White Paper set out a roadmap towards Palestinian self-rule as a unitary binational state within a decade. While an elected assembly seemed premature, Arabs and Jews (according to their share of population) would be appointed to head all government departments. The enlarged executive council composed of these appointed officials would convene regularly as an advisory council, leading eventually to an elected legislature.[48] A committee was set up to finalize the preparations for the building of the CGO, with special attention to the accommodation of the advisory and the executive councils. As before, the discussion remained confidential and involved only a small number of high-level colonial officials.[49]

The architect was taken aback by this development. "This request so radically changes the conception of the building . . . that the proper and most satisfactory course would seem to be to scrap the present plan and to begin anew," Winter wrote. A legislative assembly must have "dignity and effect" and it was unrealistic – and inappropriate – to incorporate the hall into the existing plan. The difficulty was how to "harmonise the two main elements of the scheme, which appear at first to be in conflict. The Council Chamber unit is the lesser in size and area, but it should not appear subservient to the main block containing the Government offices."[50] The conflict, of course, was not only between two architectural elements, but also between a colonial government and the colonized local population whose rebellion had just been crushed. The contrast between the liberal values embodied in a legislative hall, and the realities of colonial rule, could not be starker. Winter understood that the architecture must give the council at least a semblance of independent standing and stature. His ideal solution was to place the assembly at the heart of the complex, or alternatively, build it in a different site altogether. However, given the urgency of this long-delayed project, and the need to use the existing plot, Winter suggested to allocate a separate wing for the assembly chamber at the entrance to the compound and, by implication, to provide it with a level of independence and its own standing. Yet the assembly wing, which echoed the aesthetics of the main block on a smaller scale, looked like an ancillary and
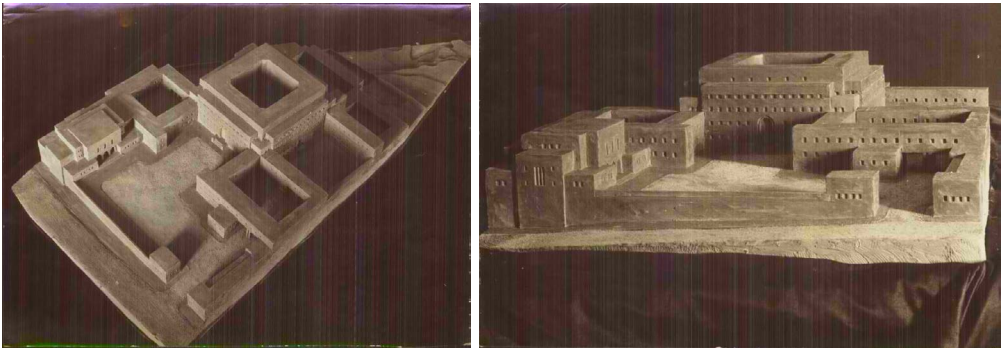
Figure 4a–b. Percy Winter's model with the assembly hall on the left; ISA, 1938 000nmnb – Construction of New Gov't Office Jerusalem 1938, 132–36. a) Overhead view; and b) Front view.
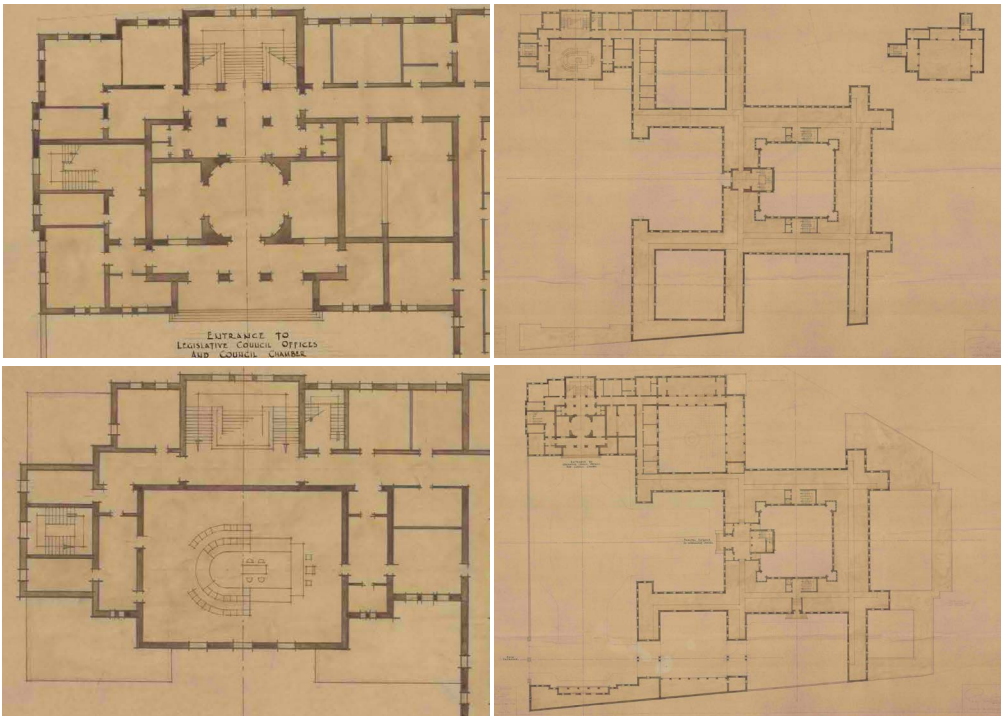


Figure 5a–d. Winter's later design, with assembly, plans (1939); ISA, 1940 – 000uwv1 – Plan for offices for the Palestine government, 3–5. a) Plans for ground floor; b) Plans for first floor; c) Detail, Legislative Assembly Chamber, ground floor; d) Detail, Legislative Assembly Chamber, first floor.

docile body attached to the executive core of the Mandate government. Winter added cautiously that his proposal allowed the construction of the project in stages, with the main building first, leaving the assembly chamber for a later stage – as the political framework was not yet fully clear.[51]

The high commissioner, however, was far more bullish, and appeared convinced that the new constitutional arrangements could be implemented in the immediate future. In June 1939, he pressed London to approve the entire project, his main argument being the need for accommodation for the enlarged executive and advisory councils.[52] Executive meetings were held up to then in the dining room of the high commissioner's residence, which could not accommodate the enlarged advisory council. The high commissioner argued that the assembly hall should be built as a separate wing for political reasons, alluding to the foreshadowed "constitutional development," that is, the future transformation of the advisory council into a legislature. It appears that it was important to communicate the independent standing of the council.[53]

The assembly chamber was a small rectangular building, with a main assembly hall for twenty-eight members (the size remained identical to the 1935 plan). Further detailed requirements included an "ante-room" for the high commissioner; consultation rooms for the chief secretary, attorney general, and the treasurer; offices for clerks, typists, and translators; two committee rooms; a library; a tearoom – opening to a private members' terrace; a press gallery (at least twelve seats); a public gallery (no less than forty seats); air-conditioning; and lavatories. Unlike in 1935, when a single common room was planned for all council members regardless of faith and ethnicity, the members' common room was now to be divided in two: a room for Arab members, and a room for Jewish members. The rigid separation between the Arab and Jewish populations was now taken as a given. The binational state, envisaged in the White Paper, was made of two distinct groups, whose representatives were not expected to share the same common room. The 1937 partition plan had been rejected, but the logic of partition was to become entrenched.[54]

Winter dedicated much effort to the design of the assembly in 1939 and again in 1942–43. His writing on the challenges of designing a legislature as part of a government building reflect the most thoughtful considerations of this question found in the archives. Winter believed that his plans avoided "the pretentious, the novel, or the extreme in design and have relied upon dignity, quietness and good proportions."[55] But his design looked decidedly dull and somber, so much that even the high commissioner pronounced it "rather heavy" and "gaol like."[56] As Fuchs notes, the elevated compound was separated from the street by a wall that created the impression of a fortress or a prison.[57] The design was vetted by Charles Tegart, the government's chief security advisor.[58] Indeed, the CGO's structure and aesthetics dangerously resembled Tegart's police fortresses that were mushrooming in Palestine to crush any future rural rebellion.

The 1939 White Paper (Peel Commission Report) is usually discussed in relation to policies on Jewish immigration, land purchasing, and settlement. Its constitutional aspect receives little attention, and its formula of a binational state is understood as theoretical in nature: a vague vision that was never translated into practical detail. After all, the White Paper was rejected not only by the Zionists but also by the Arab leadership. While most Arab Higher Committee members were initially inclined to accept it, the mufti's opposition prevailed.[59] However, it appears that British officials

were resolved to move ahead, as demonstrated by the detailed planning of the assembly hall, and the robust official commitment to the project. In August 1939, the plan was approved by the colonial secretary, with a budget of £187,000, to include both the main building and the assembly wing.[60] Initial tenders were prepared.[61] It looked as if the building was going ahead. A month later, war was declared in Europe, and priorities quickly shifted. The building of Charles Tegart's network of police forts, with a budget of £2.2 million, took precedence. The project came to a standstill.[62]

## A Final Attempt: The Shift to Legacy

It was not long before the central government offices came back to occupy the attention of British officials. In 1942, as the war's tide appeared to turn, planning began on the post-war reconstruction of Palestine, involving ambitious investments. The CGO appeared at the top of the priority list. At this point, the tone of the discussion shifted from pure economic and practical considerations, to focus on symbolic dimensions, and the question of architecture became tied with Britain's prestige in the region. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, deliberations regarding the central offices show no indication that British officials understood the building as a canvas to project a symbolic image of Britain in Palestine. Only in the 1940s, as the end of the Mandate became thinkable, questions of legacy and stature came to the fore. "We should have the noblest group of buildings in the Near East," wrote the district commissioner Edward Keith Roach in late 1942, recommending the rehiring of Austen St. Barbe Harrison – "the one genius we have had in the Palestine Administration."[63] Key officials concluded that planning should consider future use of the central offices after the formal end of the British Mandate, in view of "the future of Palestine as a strategic entity," as well as "the cultural influence which Great Britain will wish to exert in the Near East bearing in mind that Palestine is a focal point."[64] British officials clearly expected to maintain British influence in Palestine even after the country's independence, just as they did in Iraq and Egypt.

Given the emphasis on colonial prestige, the chosen site in Julian's Way now seemed too pedestrian, and an alternative site with commanding views over Jerusalem was sought. As the high commissioner put it: "The building of central government offices in Jerusalem is an inescapable commitment whatever the future may hold and it is incontrovertible that they must be erected on a dignified and commanding site worthy of the privilege position which the British Empire holds in the Holy Land."[65]

Another consideration was security, which became a key priority in the aftermath of the Arab Revolt. Keith Roach stressed that government offices in scattered buildings around the city were unsafe. He stated that the city is already de facto divided between Jews and Arabs, and the CGO's location needed to be accessible to both Arabs and Jews, but neither too pronouncedly Arab nor Jewish. While in the late 1930s Arab militants were considered the main risk, in the late 1940s the British faced Jewish insurgency. The King David Hotel, which housed the most important government departments, was a vulnerable target, which the British were unable to protect

even when they had prior information about Jewish plans to attack it. The security concerns proved well founded in 1946 when the King David Hotel was bombed by the Jewish Irgun, killing ninety-one people.[66] The bombing also hampered planning for the CGO project. Detailed documentation of accommodation needs of government departments were destroyed, and the chief secretary had to request departments to resend the schedules, causing further delays.[67] The destruction of the ill-suited King David headquarters illustrated the urgent need for purpose-built government offices, but now the plans were literally buried in rubble.
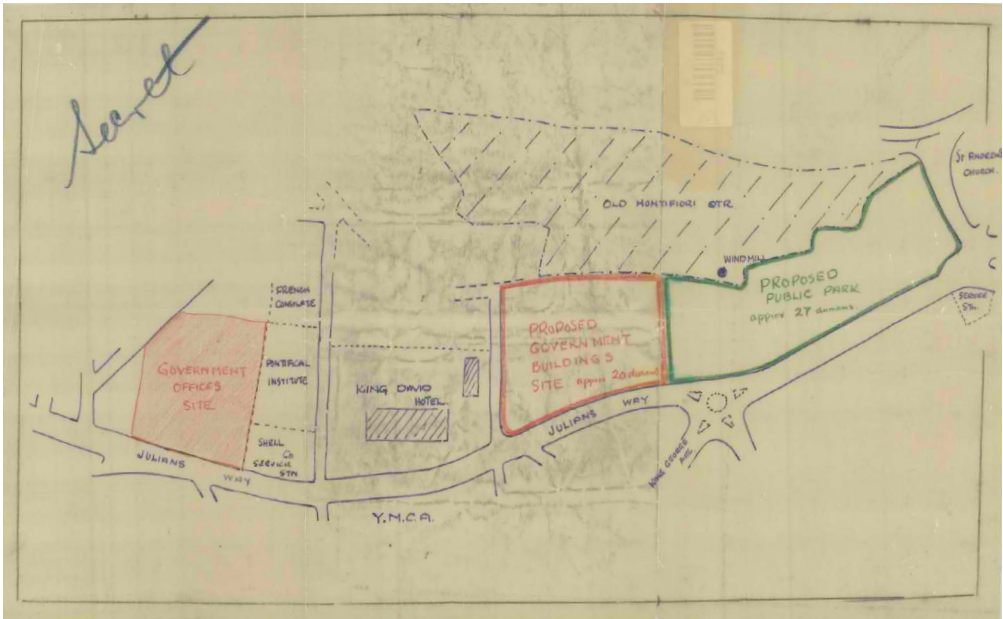


Figure 6. Julian's Way proposed site and nearby alternative, suggested by district commissioner Keith Roach (1944); ISA, 1947 000ndgv – Site of New Government Office, Jerusalem, 1947, 14.

An impressive new site was identified, Karm al-Ruhban (the monks' vineyard), with splendid views of the Old City, and close to the bourgeois neighborhoods of Qatamun and Talbiyya (Arab), and Rehavia (Jewish).[68] Suddenly, money was not an issue. "To the dignity of Government it was not too much to pay £459,000 for the Qatamun site."[69] After all, "[t]he Central Offices should be in the nature of a permanent monument in Jerusalem to the Mandatory."[70]

The reconstruction commissioner publicly criticized the operation of virtually all government institutions from private accommodation "almost grotesquely unsuitable for the purpose which they are now required to serve."[71] Government departments were "scattered widely over the town" in a "vast number" of leased properties, which created confusion, lack of coordination and a waste of time."[72] In the twenty-five years of British rule, there had been a "failure to undertake anything but the minimum construction which an orderly and well regulated Government might be expected to provide."[73]
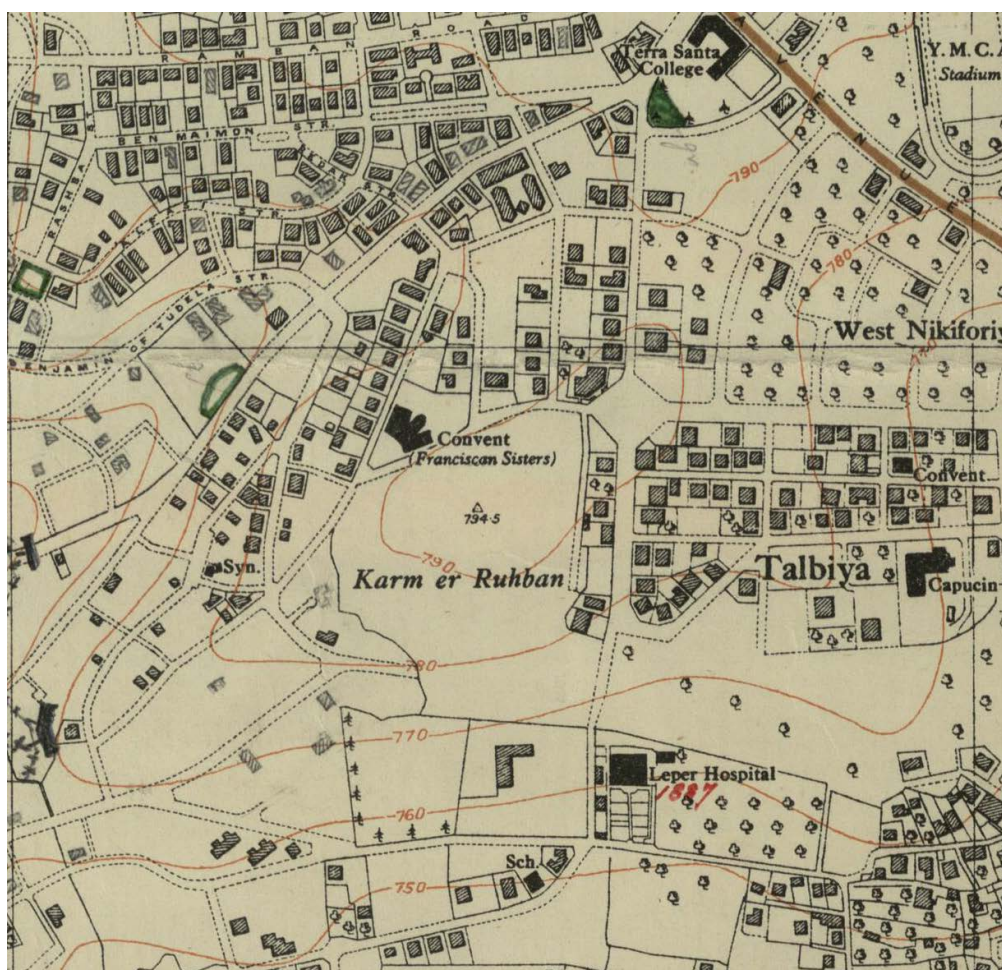
Figure 7. Karm al-Ruhban proposed site – map. Jerusalem, Survey of Palestine, 1937. National Library of Israel.

But this was not just about costs or efficiency. The ability of the British to rule the country and to leave any imprint on it were in doubt. The reconstruction commissioner emphasized that some of the most impressive building projects – the YMCA, the Archaeological Museum, the Hebrew University, and the two state agricultural schools – had been funded by private benefactors and the Zionist movement, and not by the government.[74] The high commissioner complained, "I find it hard to escape the conviction that our continued practice of living in hotel bedroom accommodation . . . is neither impressive nor business-like; furthermore there are some in Palestine who undoubtedly regard us as hotel guests – ready to pack our trunks and depart."[75]

The CGO was one of the three top priorities for the post-war reconstruction. The director of public works cautioned against this approach. He pointed out that it would be better to focus on smaller and more realistic projects – for which plans

already existed.[76] This was to no avail. The high commissioner and reconstruction commissioner were intent to go ahead. The central offices plan was once more "out of the box." Harrison, now a Cyprus-based private architect, was approached again to design it.

By this point, the legislative assembly chamber had become an integral element of the project. The assembly, together with the secretariat and the general attorney office, were in the core building, and marked for the first phase of construction. This time there were no deliberations on whether an assembly hall should or should not be included in the project; it seems that it was a given, despite the political deadlock. This is surprising given the widespread assumption that the White Paper's constitutional vision was "a dead letter" by this point.[77] It appeared that if the building was to be built at all – it had to include a legislative assembly. In other words, any horizon for continuing British presence in Palestine depended on a semblance of local, binational representation in decision making. An imminent British departure from Palestine was far from inevitable; but the Palestine government could no longer continue without local participation in the shape of the assembly.

In November 1945, Harrison estimated a budget of just above one million Palestinian pounds to accommodate virtually all departments, including the legislative assembly.[78] As the project started to take shape, Harrison's instructions became clearer, and more and more details were provided. The building would include a covered garage for officials, with air and water facilities but without petrol. The visiting public would station their vehicles in a public car park, which would have a military guard at its entrance and possibly a police control with facilities to sleep, eat, and cook at the site. A cafeteria for light meals was envisioned to accommodate sixty members of staff at once. The space was not to be segregated by rank, sex, race, or religion; Kosher meals would be provided, but there was no mention of halal meals. Other elements were specified in detail, such as telephone, lifts, and lavatories.[79] However, the task of imagining the legislative assembly was handed over to the architect, with no new instructions or details, as indicated in meeting notes: "[I]t was impossible to give any accurate forecast of what would be required in the way of a legislative council chamber and ancillary offices but it was decided that it should be left to the architect's discretion who would plan on generous scale."[80] On the one hand the Council was essential to the building, on the other its shape and makeup were entirely unclear.

Harrison inherited a figure of 3,500 square meters for the assembly from Winter's design, exactly 10 percent of the total built space, but he offered to expand its share to 6,200 square meters.[81] Unlike Winter, who designed the assembly as a separate element to give it a semblance of independence, Harrison integrated it back into the main building, alongside the secretariat and the attorney general. In the 1947 design, captured in the drawings in the *Architects' Journal,* the assembly chamber was a two-story hemicycle, adjacent to the offices of the high commissioner and the chief secretary. The semicircular hall was surrounded by a lobby, library, restaurant, and a few retiring rooms for members, interpreters, and clerks. A monumental staircase led to a gallery.[82]

From the north-west.
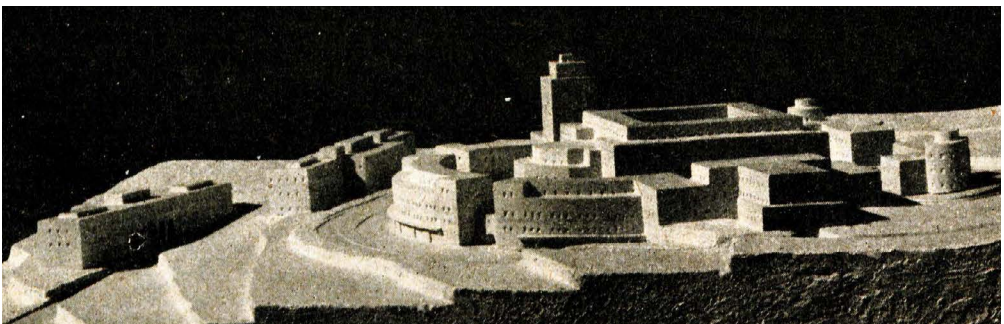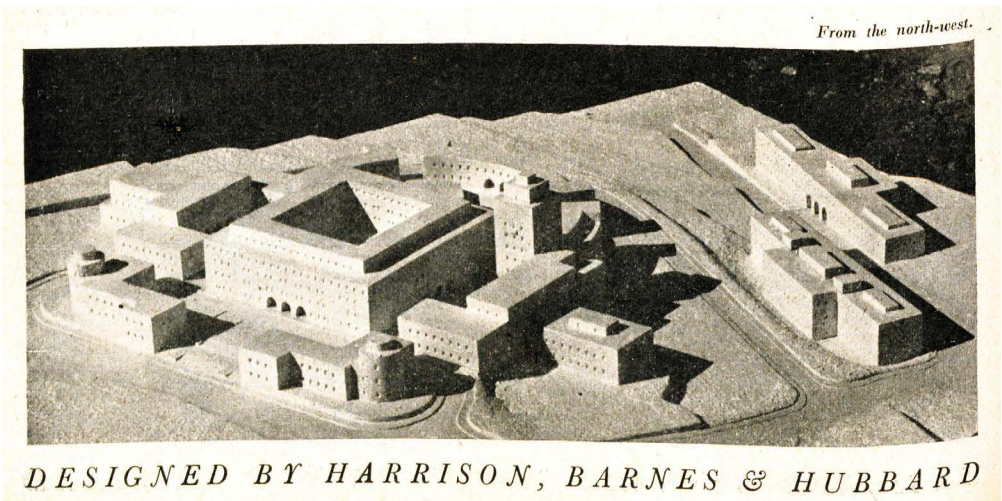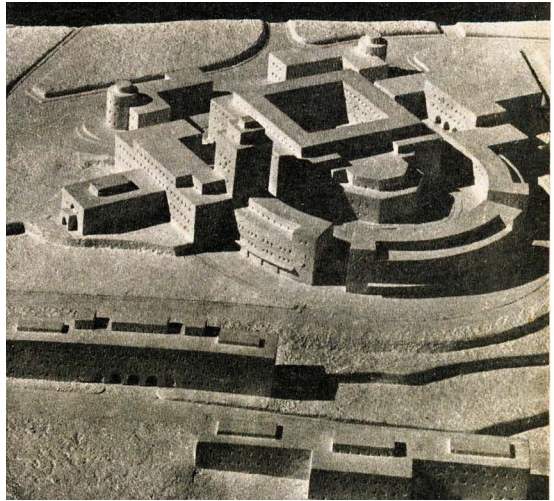
DESIGNED BY HARRISON, BARNES & HUBBARD
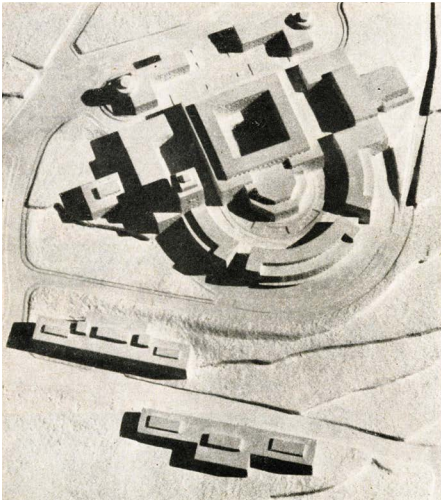
Figure 8. Harrison's 1947 model, *Architects' Journal* 107, no. 2779 (13 May 1948). Four different perspectives: a) Overhead; b) Southwest; c) Northwest; and d) East.
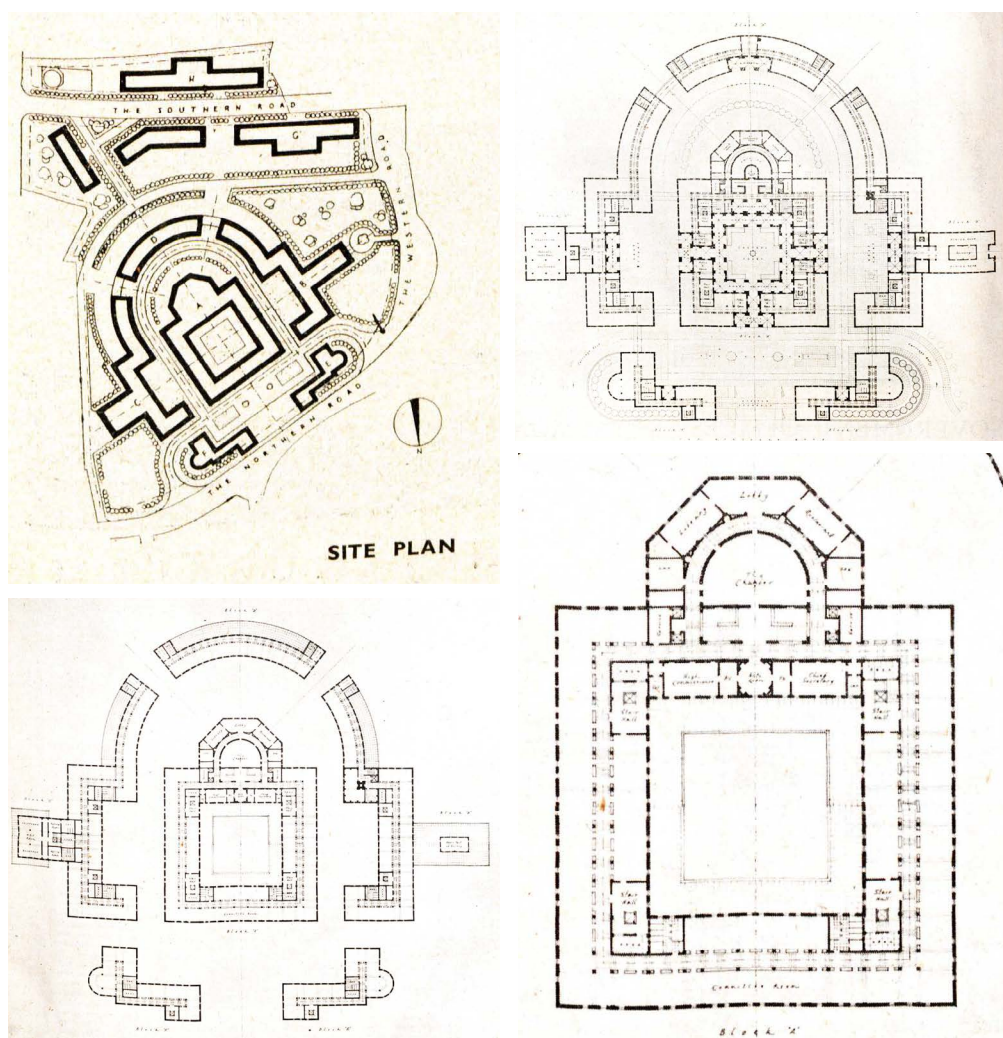
Figure 9. Harrison's 1947 plans, *Architects' Journal* 107, no. 2779 (13 May 1948): a) Site plan; b) Ground floor plan; c) First floor plan; and d) Detail, first floor.

Colonial officials remained committed to the project as late as 1947.[83] Design and internal negotiations continued into the autumn of that year, even after the UN Special Committee on Palestine published its recommendations to partition the country into two states. Only on 6 November 1947, less than four weeks before the UN voted on that partition plan, the chief secretary informed Harrison that "in view of present circumstances government had decided not to proceed with the C.G.O scheme."[84] The project was deferred, as opposed to abandoned, by a beneficial common agreement.[85] Harrison hoped he could continue the project with whichever power came after the Mandate administration, and the British government avoided paying Harrison's fees for the unfinished segments of the project.

In 1948 Israeli forces occupied Talbiyya, and Karm al-Ruhban fell under Israeli rule, in what was to become West Jerusalem. A proposal to build the Hebrew University campus there was opposed by David Ben Gurion.[86] Eventually, the large plot served for the construction of several monumental public buildings in the 1960s and 1970s: the Israeli President's Residence, the Jerusalem (Sherover) theatre, the Van Leer Institute, and the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

## Colonial Aesthetics and Meaning

Beyond the straightforward failure to build the CGO, the project also suffered from significant planning and design shortcomings. This flagship project appeared disconnected from the British's wider urban plan for Jerusalem. Despite the involvement of the Mandate's top officials and architects, the different architectural schemes appeared underwhelming – especially when compared with other monumental buildings constructed in Jerusalem by the British, Arabs, and Zionists. The design of the assembly hall, in particular, failed to articulate a meaningful vision for the country. From the early modern period, houses of parliament were typically characterized by monumental architecture laden with symbolism. Some parliaments used classical style, in reference to the "origin" of democracy in ancient Greece; others attempted to define local national identity.[87] The failure to find appropriate architectural symbolism in Palestine was no accident. It reflected the contradictions of the Mandate itself, and the British preference to present themselves as disinterested custodians of Palestine rather than its colonial rulers.

The British invested considerable effort into town planning in Jerusalem, starting from 1918 and particularly in regard to the Old City.[88] British policies on zoning, street naming, and building regulations, such as the stone facade requirement, played a key role in shaping modern Jerusalem.[89] It is therefore striking that in decades of deliberations, there was hardly any reflection on the place that the CGO would occupy in the city, and how this major development would relate to other parts, transportation routes, and the city center. The locally elected municipal council was never included in these discussions: this was symptomatic of what Falestin Naïli termed the "de-municipalization of Jerusalem's urban governance" under British rule.[90] But British city planners were also hardly involved in this central government project. Jerusalem city planner Kendall was hostile to the project and refused to facilitate zoning changes that would have allowed greater freedom for architects.[91] The CGO project is not mentioned in Kendall's slick volume on British urban planning in Jerusalem.[92]

British public construction was heavily constrained by the requirement to cover expenditure from Palestine's own budget and by the limited access to loans. As Jacob Norris has shown, British investment concentrated in key priorities of colonial development, such as the Haifa port and the railways.[93] Nevertheless, the British left several key buildings in Jerusalem, including Government House (the high commissioner's residence), the general post office, the Palestine Archaeological Museum, the government printshop, the municipality building, and the Arab College.

Most of these were designed by Harrison, as chief architect to the Palestine government between 1921 and 1937. Harrison disliked the use of architecture for what he viewed as crude propaganda: he refused to become city architect of Jerusalem to serve Governor Ronald Storrs's self-aggrandizing civic agenda. He was also scathing about Zionist plans for Hebrew University on Mount Scopus.[94] But Harrison's own work could also be seen as a form of propaganda, as it promoted a colonial narrative about British rule in Palestine. In the words of Fuchs and Herbert, Harrison's architecture presented a sophisticated example of "regional colonialism" – using elements from the local vernaculars to articulate a paternalistic and preservationist conception of colonial rule.[95]

British officials in Palestine preferred to portray themselves not as colonizers but as custodians, who were entrusted with bringing measured development and modernization to the country, while protecting its sacred and ancient character. This rhetoric downplayed the radically disruptive nature of British commitment to the Jewish national home. In his role as the government's senior architect, Harrison was responsible to giving this message an aesthetic shape. Harrison designed the



Figure 10. Palestine Pavilion, British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, 1924; online at (flickr.com) bit.ly/3t2ONmj (accessed 31 October 2022).

Palestine Pavilion for the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in Wembley in the form of a whitewashed Mamluk-styled mausoleum. Behind this Orientalist facade was a display of mostly Jewish arts and crafts, industry, and agricultural products.[96] The pavilion's building paid respect to Palestine's Islamic history, but its content promoted a project of Jewish colonization that threatened to undo that very character. Harrison also designed the coins for the Palestine pound, which were issued in 1927. Working with two scribes, for Arabic and Hebrew, he produced an "austere" design featuring olive tree branches, invoking Palestine's traditional, rural, and biblical nature.[97]

Harrison perfected this colonial aesthetic in two landmark buildings in Jerusalem: The high commissioner's residence (Government House) on Jabal Mukabbir (completed in 1933), and the Palestine Archaeological Museum, north of the Old City (1935).[98] These two buildings went far beyond simplistic Orientalism. Harrison borrowed elements from Byzantine, Crusader, and Ottoman architecture – arches, domes, inner courtyards, towers – and distilled them into abstract motifs. The result was a modern style of elemental geometric forms, which resonated with the stark simplicity of Palestinian architectural vernacular. Vaguely Oriental but not historicist, it claimed a level of hybridity between the colonizer and the colonized, ancient and modern, East

and West. The high commissioner's residence on the outskirts of Jerusalem overlooking the Old City (a location chosen by Harrison), was a palace of an aloof custodian, rather than an engaged ruler.[99] It presented a romantic and self-deluding vision of British colonial rule, which could be seen to correspond to the vague British obligation to protect the rights of "existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine," as defined in the terms of the Mandate. At the same time, the colonial commitment to Zionism received no architectural reference.



Figure 11. The high commissioner's residence (Government House), Jerusalem, 1932; Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3WKSQ4q (accessed 31 October 2022).

It is striking that Harrison refrained from using this rich aesthetic language in his designs for the central government offices and the legislative assembly. His 1930s schemes for the building were characterized by heavy monumentality, reminiscent of Art Deco style, but with few decorative dimensions. They were almost completely devoid of any historical references or Islamic architectural motifs. It was as if Harrison decided that his lofty architectural vision of a modern Orient was inappropriate or irrelevant here. Wauchope's only aesthetic instruction was that the building should be stone clad, as appropriate to Jerusalem.[100] In the 1930s, the Mandatory officials did not acknowledge the high symbolic stakes of the project. Perhaps this was because it was much more inward looking, unlike the high commissioner's residence and the Archaeological Museum, which represented British rule in Palestine to the outer world. The central government offices were to be a site of actual governance, not only by

British officials but also by the local population's representatives, at the center of the city, accessible to the Palestinian public. Here was an opportunity for the government to communicate to Palestine's population its vision about the country's future – but it appeared unable to do so. This may have been because by the mid-1930s, as tensions were rising, it was no longer impossible to conceal the contradiction at the heart of the Mandate, between the vague obligation to local self-rule, and the much more clearly defined commitment to Jewish immigration and colonization.

This very contradiction was the motivation for establishing the legislative assembly, as a forum which could negotiate and contain, if not reconcile, this conflict. Could its architecture embody such a path? The underwhelming architectural design of the assembly hall offered no compelling vision in this regard. As already mentioned, in Harrison's first plan the assembly was an optional addendum. As the legislature became a realistic proposition in the mid-1930s, Harrison's "Round project" (1934–38)



Figure 12. Palestine Archaeological Museum [1936]; Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3T7sO8s (accessed 31 October 2022).

placed the assembly at the core of the government offices, a sort of legislative nexus between the two executive wings, while the rest of the building was arranged in a semicircle around them. The roundness perhaps alluded to the deliberative nature of the building and could be seen to imply that the government's authority and legitimacy depended on the assembly. At the same time, as Fuchs suggests, the assembly hall appeared trapped within the fortress of British colonial bureaucracy.[101] In Harrison's final 1947 design, the assembly hall was concealed inside the large government complex, invisible and inaccessible from the outside. This minimized presence may have reflected Harrison's condescending views on democracy. As he wrote in a letter in 1948: "I don't believe in democracy . . . . All that can be said of democracy is that bouts of it are necessary. The use of democracy, it seems to me, is to remove what is moribund and prepare the ground for a new oligarchy."[102]

Arab and Jewish political elites in Palestine had their own visions for the country, which they articulated in bold architectural language. The Muslim Supreme Council, led by Hajj Amin al-Husayni, built the "Palace Hotel" in 1929 in close vicinity to the CGO site on Julian's Way. Designed by leading Turkish architect Mehmet Nihat Nigisberk, it was built at a cost of seventy-three thousand Palestine pounds in Ottoman Revivalist style, and was a proud statement of Arab and Islamic continuity.[103] The

Figure 13. Palace Hotel, Jerusalem, [1929–33]; Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3E6JFE9 (accessed 31 October 2022).

hotel was built to accommodate the 1930 World Islamic Congress in Jerusalem, and was considered as a key element in an unfulfilled plan for an Islamic university in the Mamilla (Ma'man Allah) area.[104] It soon became a hub of Palestinian nationalism, serving not only Supreme Muslim Council gatherings, but also the larger Arab public.[105] The Arab Fair, which was held there in 1933 and 1934, celebrated the entrepreneurship of Arab capital and businesses, as part of an Arab Middle East – in fitting with the building's own style. As Semih Gökatalay shows in his article on the Arab Fair in this *JQ* issue, the colonial government provided almost no support to the fair, which severely undermined its success.[106] Financial difficulties ultimately led to the Palace Hotel being taken over the Mandatory government, and it was used for temporary accommodation of departments that were slated to move to the central government offices. In 1936, it was used by the Palestine Royal Commission. Poignantly, the flagship building of the Palestinian national movement was the site in which partition was first seriously discussed by British officials.

Figure 14. Zionist Executive Building [1929–1932], 13 May 1942; Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3fDT24K (accessed 31 October 2022).

Not far away, on King George Street, was the Zionist Executive building ("the National Institutions"), a three-story complex, built between 1928 and 1936. As Inbal Bar Asher Gitler argued, the Zionist Executive building, with its straight, simple, and "functional" lines, signaled the Zionist embrace of modernism, and the turn away from the Orientalist style of early Zionist architecture. The Russian-born, German-educated architect, Yochanan Yevgeny Ratner, was consciously searching for a "national style for Zionism and the emerging Jewish nation" that would negate Jewish diasporic identities, and break with local Palestinian architecture. Ratner wrote explicitly against the use of Muslim architectural motifs. The executive's fort-like building was devoid of ornamentation but may have alluded to Jerusalem's Ottoman city walls with its slitwindows, and a slope reminiscent of the Jerusalem Citadel.[107] Ratner was later involved in designing the so-called Tower and Stockade model for Zionist settlements, and eventually became a Haganah (and later Israeli) general.

The executive building housed the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund, as well as the Yishuv's representative institutions, Va'ad Leumi (Jewish National Council) and Asefat ha Nivharim (Assembly of Representatives), which convened there regularly. It also served as a Haganah headquarters and housed two large weapons caches.[108] Despite the low budget (thirty-five thousand pounds) and criticism by key Zionist architects of being too modest, the Zionist Executive building became an important symbolic and political center, as power within the Zionist movement shifted from Europe to Palestine.[109] The large open courtyard between the buildings

became a space for Zionist celebrations and demonstrations. In March 1948, a car bomb delivered by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni's nationalist fighters destroyed parts of the building and killed thirteen people.

It was not lost on the British officials that the Jewish Agency was able to build its own semigovernmental headquarters in Jerusalem, while the Palestine government resided in rented accommodation. High Commissioner Gort found it an unacceptable situation. As he wrote to the Colonial Office in 1944:

> In an eastern country where face is predominantly important it is sad to contrast the accommodation of the Jewish Agency and the Mandatory Power. The former is housed in up to date and spacious building whereas in this year of grace the British Civil Secretariat and the Military Headquarters have still to make do in hired bedroom accommodation on the upper floor of the leading hotel and in close on 90 other hirings mostly quite unsuitable.[110]

The high commissioner wanted a respectable government building to act as the "face" of Mandatory Palestine. But what was that face? Harrison's final 1947 scheme was more impressive and reflected the growing concern to imperial prestige and to the symbolic dimensions of the project. It was a fortress-like complex towering over the city, invoking the metaphor of Jerusalem as a city built on a hill. The *Architects' Journal* noted that the building featured vaults "in traditional Palestinian style"; these vaults also appeared in the monumental arched entrances.[111] One could find, perhaps, in the square inner courtyard references to early modern European imagined reconstructions of Solomon's Temple, or allusions to Andalusian Almohad minarets in the square-shaped tower.[112] Overall, however, it is difficult to discern a clear symbolic and political statement about Palestine.
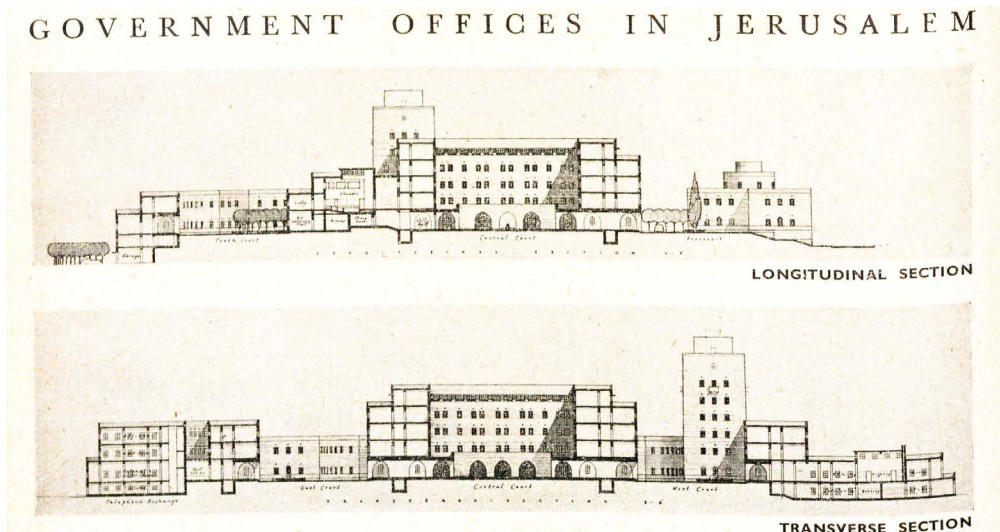


Figure 15. Harrison's 1947 plans, longituinal and transverse sections, *Architects' Journal* 107, no. 2779 (13 May 1948).

# Conclusions

The central government offices project left voluminous files in the colonial archive, but no trace on Jerusalem's urban landscape and almost no discussion in the literature. This lack of interest is striking. With partition and the Nakba so often assumed to be inevitable outcomes of the Mandate, there may be a tendency to view unrealized British initiatives as of little significance, and to assume that a unitary Palestine was never a real possibility. This inability to think of Mandatory Palestine as a state-in-the-making no doubt has to do with the British failure to establish state institutions such as the legislative assembly – a failure we explored in this article in a very material sense. However, this was not a failure of simple inaction: it was a spectacular effort, involving hundreds if not thousands of imperial bureaucrats over twenty-five years. All in all, at least four different projects were commissioned, three plots of land were purchased, and hundreds of thousands of pounds were incurred in direct costs.[113] This project was an active conversation from the onset of the Mandate until its very last breath.

The deliberations over the legislative assembly chamber can be seen as a seismograph of British plans for Palestine's political and constitutional future. The changing place of the legislative council in the CGO project reflected the internal debate about the nature of British presence in Palestine and the tangibility of this political institution at every stage. Paradoxically, despite the continuous failure to establish a legislative assembly, it became increasingly central to CGO planning. Herbert Samuel's aborted 1922 plan for a weak legislative council, dominated by British and Zionist members, did not envisage the construction of a dedicated assembly building. It was unrelated to the central government offices project, which was launched at the same time and aimed to cut rental costs and increase efficiency. The primary aim of the CGO was to house the secretariat and key government departments, and this remained true until the very end of the Mandate. Security considerations became another motivation in the late 1930s and 1940s. The assembly hall, which was first introduced as an optional element, became a central feature, and ultimately a vital component. A "Council Chamber" first appeared as a tentative element in 1930, shortly after the Passfield White Paper. In the mid-1930s, when the Palestine government was moving to establish an assembly with muted Arab support, the assembly hall became a key design consideration, and was placed at the literal heart of the plan. In 1936, Zionist opposition derailed this political initiative, leading to the Arab Revolt and the 1937 Royal Commission partition plan. As a result, the entire CGO project came undone. However, with the 1939 White Paper, and its blueprint for a binational state in Palestine, the assembly was once again integrated into the design. Tenders were prepared, and only the outbreak of World War II stopped it from being built. In 1942 the project returned in larger form, and in a more prominent site, and considerations of imperial prestige and legacy became central. By that point, it was clear that if the CGO project was to be built at all – it had to include a legislative assembly. Overall, in much of the 1930s and 1940s, and as late as 1947, the Palestine government was heavily invested in this project.

All throughout, the discussion over the assembly hall was kept confidential and involved a small group of colonial officials and architects, who did not consult the population of Palestine and its representatives. Both in constitutional and architectural terms, the legislative assembly was a colonial design, whose primary aim was to contain Arab opposition to the Mandate. This was reflected in the enclosure of the assembly hall within the colonial government complex. This subordinate position within the building or next to it demonstrated that the assembly was a far cry from Arab demands for a representative parliament with real powers. And yet in 1935–36 the Arab leadership was willing to accept the scheme on the assumption that, once created, the assembly could transcend and challenge its constraints.

The legislative assembly and the central government offices were never built. At the same time, the Arab national movement and the Zionist movement built monumental buildings that spelled out their contrasting visions for the future of Palestine: the Arab-Islamic continuity of the Palace Hotel, on the one hand, and the Zionist Executive building's modernist break with the country's Arab past, on the other. In contrast to both, the design of the legislative assembly, and of the CGO more generally, offered no clear statement about the future of Palestine. The British did not want the building to express their commitment to Zionism, but also largely refrained from references to Palestinian historical architecture, which they had used elsewhere. This lack of decisiveness, vision, or capacity to overcome the political impasse that they themselves had created rendered the Palestine government an eternally provisional structure that rented its accommodations across the city. In 1948, British administrators departed from Jerusalem after they had been living in a hotel for a decade. Instead of "the noblest group of buildings in the Near East," housing Palestine's government and legislature, they left in Karm al-Ruhban a large empty plot overlooking the Old City, on which the Israeli president's residence now stands.

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**Endnotes**

1   "Abandoned Work: Palestine Government Buildings," *Architects' Journal* 107, no. 2779 (13 May 1948): 430, 435–38.

2   Percy Winter, "A Brief History of the Projected New Government Offices Jerusalem as from the Year 1922," 17 December 1944, 11/3/19, vol. 5, "Roads – New Central Government Offices Jerusalem," Israeli State Archives (ISA) MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zv, 539–52. In this article we included the original Mandatory reference numbers and, on first mention, also the file titles – as well as the digital reference provided recently by the Israeli State Archives, during the digitization process.

3   In the 1922 discussions, the term legislative council is used, while in the 1940s, "legislative assembly" becomes more prevalent, although "council" and "assembly" are used interchangeably. In Arabic both terms were translated as *majlis*, and similarly in Hebrew as *mo'atsa*.

4   The most detailed studies of the legislative assembly deliberations, especially when it comes to British-Arab negotiations, were published four decades ago: Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929* (London: Frank Cass, 1974); Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977); and Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917–1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979). More recently, Nimrod Lin's excellent PhD dissertation looked at Zionist 1930s opposition to the legislative assembly. Nimrod Lin, "People Who Count: Zionism, Demography and Democracy in Mandate Palestine" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2018).

5   Ron Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison: a British Architect in the Holy Land" (PhD diss., Haifa Technion, 1992). Fuchs dedicated twenty-five pages to the scheme, and reproduced dozens of sketches and plans. His outstanding thesis was invaluable for our own enquiry, as it provided not only thorough analysis but also references for the original sources – which, after the digitization of the Israeli State Archives, are sometimes difficult or impossible to find. Fuchs's published work (with Gilbert Herbert) on Harrison does not mention the central government offices and focused on the architect's two large successful projects – the Palestine Archaeological Museum and the high commissioner's official residence. See Ron Fuchs and Gilbert Herbert, "Representing Mandatory Palestine: Austen St. Barbe Harrison and the Representational Buildings of the British Mandate in Palestine, 1922–37," *Architectural History* 43 (2000): 281–333; Ron Fuchs and Gilbert Herbert, "A Colonial Portrait of Jerusalem: British Architecture in Jerusalem of the Mandate 1917–48," in *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 81–108.

6   The CGO project is mentioned briefly, with some illustrations, in David Kroyanker, *Adrikhalut bi-Yerushalayim: ha-beniyah bi-tekufat ha-mandat ha-Beriti* [Architecture in Jerusalem: construction during the British Mandate] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1989), and in David Kroyanker, *Dreamscapes: Unbuilt Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Tower of David, 1993). Most recently, and the only discussion in English, is the brief mention in Adina Hoffman's fascinating portrait of Harrison. Adina Hoffman, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem: Architects of a New City* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016).

7   Laila Parsons is currently researching the Palestinian campaign for an elected parliament and democratic government, and presented her findings in the Institute for Palestine Studies' conference "Reassessing the British Mandate in Palestine": Laila Parsons, "The Palestinian Struggle for a Parliament, 1920–1935," Institute for Palestine Studies, 1 November 2022.

8   The main sources for this article are from the archive of the Mandatory Public Works Department, held in the digitized Israeli State Archives. However, most of the drawings and images, which Fuchs studied in detail and reproduced in his thesis, have not yet been scanned and were unavailable to us.

9   The Serai was relocated to the Khassaki Sultan compound. The compound was originally the Mamluk palace of Sitt Tunshuq, which was transformed into an Ottoman charitable institution and a soup kitchen in the sixteenth century by the wife of the sultan Sulayman al-Qanuni. See the inauguration inscription in Mehmet Tütüncü, *Turkish Jerusalem (1516–1917): Ottoman Inscriptions from Jerusalem and Other Palestinian Cities* (Haarlem: SOTA, 2006), 127–31.

10 For an account of public protests at the site, and a meeting of the administrative council (*meclis-i idare*), see the account of Yehoshua Yellin, *Zikhronot le-ben Yerushalayim* [Memoirs of a son of Jerusalem] (Jerusalem: Dfus Tsion, 1924), 104–6. On the partly elected administrative council, see Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem, 1872–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

11 Yair Wallach, "Jerusalem's Lost Heart: The Rise and Fall of the Late-Ottoman City Centre," in *Urban Neighborhood Formations: Boundaries, Narrations, and Intimacies*, ed. Hilal Alkan and Nazan Maksudyan (London: Routledge, 2020), 165–90.

12 An early mention of this plan appears in *Havatselet*, 16 August 1901, 241. The Nikoforiya plan for a new Serai, with a large square, garden, and a road to the train station appears in *Hashkafa*, 10 January 1908, 1. *Hazvi* reports the plans were put on hold due to protest from Old City businesses. *Hazvi*, 12 June 1910, 3.

13 Two historical overviews of the project were prepared in the 1940s; see Winter, "A Brief History." (Note 4 includes a useful list of relevant files and a chronology of the project until 1944.) See "Note Regarding the Construction of Central Government Offices, Jerusalem," 12 October 1946, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zv, 3.

14 Quoted in Winter, "A Brief History," 2.

15 Harrison to Director of Public Works, 9 December 1930, "Memorandum on the Proposal to Build Government Offices," 11/3/19 (1) "Roads – New Central Government Offices Jerusalem," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-0005up1, 55.

16 For granular analysis of the failed 1922–23 Legislative Council initiative, see Porath, *Emergence*, 123–83; and Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 180–87.

17 "Minutes of the Advisory Council First Meeting," 6 October 1920, CO814/6, "Government of Palestine – Minutes of the Advisory Council meetings," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-HighCommissioner-000x04w.

18 On the 1920s colonial street-naming initiative, see Yair Wallach, *A City in Fragments: Urban Texts in Modern Jerusalem* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), ch. 5.

19 Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 4 June 1935, 11/3/19

20 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 251.

21 A council chamber is first mentioned (without details) in Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 15 December 1930, 11/3/19 (1), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-0005up1, 86–87.

22 Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate* (London: Little, Brown, 2000), 400.

23 Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 43.

24 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 143–59; and Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 192–97.

25 On the Syrian parliament building, see "Adaqq al-tafasil 'an bina' dar al-barlaman al-Suri mundhu 'am 1928 hatta al-an" [The most accurate details about the construction of the Syrian parliament building from 1928 until now], *al-Jamal*, 15 May 2017, online at www.aljaml.com/node/139268 (accessed 31 October 2022).

26 Handwritten notes by Harrison, 16 August 1931. 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 511.

27 Fuchs, *Austen St. Barbe Harrison*, 255–57.

28 Fuchs, *Austen St. Barbe Harrison*, 257.

29 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 149–52.

30 Harrison to Director Public Works, 4 October 1934, 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 401. The additional plot was purchased in 1935 for £25,000. "Special Warrant," 14 August 1935. 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 247. The original plot was purchased in 1928 for £21,300. Note to Chief Secretary, 1930, "New Government Offices – Jerusalem (vol. 1)", ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000mu42, 29.

31 Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 9 November 1934, 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 427.

32 Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 4 June 1935, "Central Government Offices, Jerusalem, Enclosure C, Points for Decision," typescript and comments in handwriting. 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 313.

33 The Hebrew *Doar Hayom* reported on

rumors of a new "10 [sic] floor government headquarters," alongside a report on the intensifying negotiations over the legislative assembly; *Doar Hayom* did not connect the two things, *Doar Hayom*, 23 July 1935, 1. For other press mentions of the CGO, see *Haaretz*, 10 May 1930, 1; *Mir'at al-Sharq*, 2 March 1932, 4; *Haaretz*, 21 February 1938, 3; '*Al Hamishmar*, 16 December 1946, 3.

34 Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 4 June 1935, "Central Government Offices, Jerusalem, Enclosure C, Points for Decision." 11/3/19 (2), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kk, 313, in handwriting. Fuchs read the same number as "50."

35 Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary, 4 June 1935.

36 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 149–51; Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 194.

37 Lin, "People Who Count," 157–60.

38 "Jews Fail to Block Palestine Council," *New York Times*, 23 December 1935, 9.

39 Robert L. Baker, "Self-Government in Palestine," *Current History* 43, no. 5 (1936): 550–52.

40 Lesch, *Arab Politics*, 195–96.

41 "Note on Interview with H. E. on 3. 4. 1936" (3 April 1936). 1/3/19 (3), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8kl, 181. This was a meeting of the High Commissioner with Chief Secretary, Director of Public Works, and Harrison, to discuss the Central Government Offices.

42 Weldon Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris: 2006), 233–63.

43 Laila Parsons, "The Secret Testimony of the Peel Commission (Part I): Underbelly of Empire," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49, no. 1 (2019): 7–24.

44 Winter, "A Brief History."

45 Director of Agriculture and Fisheries to Chief Secretary, 19 January 1937, W/228/36 "Proposed Transfer of Government Offices to Ex-Palace Hotel Building or Elsewhere," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nhos, 56–58.

46 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 26 November 1938, W/15/38 "Construction of New Government Offices, Jerusalem 1938," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nmnb, 26.

47 Erich Mendelsohn to Chief Secretary, 10 January 1940, W/15/38, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nmnb, 185.

48 Great Britain Colonial Office, *Palestine. Statement of Policy*, Cmd. 6019 (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 1939), 6–7.

49 The four-person committee consisted of the Chief Secretary, Director of Public Works, and representatives of the Treasury and the Attorney General. Chief Secretary to Attorney General, 4 April 1939, A.G.1/134 "Administration: New Government Offices," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandateAtrnGen-00063zr, 75.

50 Winter to Director of Public Works, 31 March 1939, 11/3/19 (4), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zu, 302.

51 Winter to Director of Public Works, 1 June 1939. 11/3/19 (4), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zu, 258–64.

52 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 30 June 1939. 11/3/19 (4), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zu, 230–33.

53 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 30 June 1939.

54 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 30 June 1939.

55 Winter to Director of Public Works, 1 June 1939, 11/3/19 (4), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zu, 258–64.

56 Notes on the High Commissioner Examination's of the Model and Plans, 6 June 1939, W/15/38, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nmnb, 25–26.

57 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 262.

58 Handwritten note, 9 February 1939, W/15/38 ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nmnb, 20.

59 Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 115–17.

60 Winter, "A Brief History."

61 "List of Tenderers for CGO, Jerusalem: Excavation and Earthwork," (October 1939), 11/3/19 (4), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zu, 200. The list includes the names of 10 contractors. See also Winter, "A Brief History."

62 After the declaration of war, the Palestine government considered building a downscaled version of the CGO, but this idea was abandoned. Planning work, however, continued slowly until 1943.

63 Keith Roach to Attorney General, 16 November 1942, W/115/47, "Site of

New govt office Jerusalem 1947," ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 29–31.

64 A meeting to discuss sites for CGO, 15 June 1943, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 39–40.

65 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 16 November 1944. W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 48.

66 Steven Wagner, "British Intelligence and the Jewish Resistance Movement in the Palestine Mandate, 1945–46," *Intelligence and National Security* 23, no. 5 (2008): 629–57.

67 Chief Secretary to Director of Public Works, Director of Medical Services. 31 August 1946, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zv, 164.

68 A favored location on Julian's Way south of the King David hotel, with better views over the Old City, proved too expensive. The committee also considered locations outside Jerusalem, in Qalandiya, Biddu, and Qaryat al-'Inab, but decided they were unpractical. Report on a meeting to discuss sites for CGO, 15 June 1943, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 39–40

69 Note of a meeting between Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary, and Reconstruction Commissioner, 8 June 1943. The "Qatamun Site" referred to two plots of fifty-two dunums for the government offices (£210,000) and a nearby plot of 220 dunums for government officers' housing (£249,000). However, by October 1944, speculators had already purchased the larger plot and the high commissioner pressed the colonial secretary to approve the purchase of the remaining plot. High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 24 October 1944, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 44. The government eventually acquired a sixty-six dunum site from the Orthodox Patriarchate for £210,000 in September 1945. CS, Record of a Meeting 17 September 1945, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 68. See the payment warrant in 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zv, 180–82.

70 Unsigned memorandum to Director of Public Works, 10 April 1945, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 54.

71 Reconstruction Commissioner's statement, 29 April 1943, CO733/449/76221/3, quoted in Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 265.

72 G. W. Heron, "Report of the Reconstruction Commissioner" (Palestine: [s.n.], 1945), 16.

73 Heron, "Report of the Reconstruction Commissioner," 8.

74 Heron, "Report of the Reconstruction Commissioner," 8.

75 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 23 December 1944, W/115/47, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 52.

76 Kenniff, acting Director of Public Works to Reconstruction Commissioner, "Architectural Programme," 23 December 1944, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zv, 534–36. The second priority was a large government complex in Julian's Way (on the previous CGO site) to accommodate the Law Courts, Jerusalem District Administration, District Police headquarters and possibly Palestine Broadcasting Service. The third priority was a prison for the south of Palestine.

77 Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 122.

78 Harrison, handwritten note, 17 November 1945, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zv, 298.

79 Note of a meeting, Harrison and Director of Public Works, 14 December 1945, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zv, 271.

80 Note of a meeting, Harrison and Director of Public Works. Harrison was provided specifications from the project's previous iterations (1935, 1939) although it was clear these would need to be updated.

81 Harrison, handwritten note, 17 November 1945, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zv, 298. "Central Government Offices: Appendix A," 4 July 1945, ISA file 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zv, 325.

82 "Abandoned Work: Palestine Government Buildings"; Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 272.

83 Chief Secretary to Director of Public Works, 15 February 1947, 11/3/19 (5), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zv, 66.

84 "Record of a meeting on 6 November 1947," 11/3/19 (6), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zw, 43.

85 Chief Secretary to Harrison, 20 November 1947, 11/3/19 (6), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000t8zw, 18.

86 Marik Shtern, "Between Two Mountains: The Urban Campus of the Hebrew University during 1948–1958" (in Hebrew), in I. Weiss and U. Rebhun, eds., *The History of the Hebrew University, 1948–1967* (Jerusalem: Magness press, forthcoming).

87 Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types*, 5th ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Academic Press, 1997), 35–46.

88 Benjamin Hyman, "British Planners in Palestine, 1918–1936" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 1994), 699.

89 The body of scholarship on colonial urban planning in Jerusalem, particularly under Governor Storrs and his "Pro-Jerusalem Society" is rich and growing. In addition to works already mentioned here, see the works of Salim Tamari, Roberto Mazza, Daniel B. Monk, Max Sternberg and Wendy Pullan, Noah Hysler-Rubin, Inbal Bar-Asher Gilter, and Rana Barakat. However, the CGO was a central government project, in which local planners had effectively no say, so the project does not feature in this scholarship.

90 Falestin Naïli, "The De-Municipalization of Urban Governance: Post-Ottoman Political Space in Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2018): 8–13.

91 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 269.

92 Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem: The City Plan, Preservation and Development during the British Mandate, 1918–1948* (London: HMSO, 1948).

93 Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

94 Hoffman, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem*, 148.

95 Fuchs and Herbert, "A Colonial Portrait of Jerusalem."

96 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 80–85; Hoffman, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem*, 138–39.

97 Hoffman, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem*, 140.

98 Fuchs and Herbert, "Representing Mandatory Palestine"; Hoffman, *Till We Have Built Jerusalem*, 152–94.

99 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 97.

100 Unaddressed note by Wauchope, 12 June 1935. "Construction Of New Government Offices, Jerusalem," vol. 2, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPubWorks-000nmnc, 299–301.

101 Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 258.

102 Harrison to Markus Reiner, 16 November 1948, quoted in Fuchs, 78.

103 Initial sketches were prepared by the renowned architect Mimar Kemalettin in 1925. The full design was conducted by his assistant Nihat Nigisberk. Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, *Architectural Culture in British-Mandate Jerusalem, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020).

104 Gitler, *Architectural Culture*, 452.

105 Nadi Abusaada, "Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–1934," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (Spring 2019): 122–35.

106 Semih Gökatalay, "Fair Competition? The Arab Fair in Mid-1930s Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 92 (Winter 2022): 34–51.

107 Gitler, *Architectural Culture*, 525.

108 See "Binyan ha-mosadot ha-leumiyim" [The National Institutions Building], Irgun ha-Hagana, online at (hahagana.org.il) bit.ly/3T2LZjG (accessed 10 November 2022).

109 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Yerushalayim ha-Yehudit ha-hadashah bi-tekufat ha-Mandat: shekhunot, batim, anashim* [New Jewish city of Jerusalem during the British Mandate: neighborhoods, houses, people] (Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsevi, 2011), 230–33.

110 High Commissioner to Colonial Secretary, 16 November 1944, W/115/47 Site, ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-SecretaryPolice-000ndgv, 48. Annual rental expenditure was £52,000 – "an expensive privilege."

111 "Abandoned Work: Palestine Government Buildings," 438. For a detailed discussion of the arches and other elements in the plan, see Fuchs, "Austen St. Barbe Harrison," 269–71.

112 Spanish Jesuit architect Juan Bautista Villalpando (1552–1608) was the first to visualize the biblical Temple's floor plan as a square inner yard. See Sergey R. Kravtsov, "Juan Bautista Villalpando and Sacred Architecture in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64, no. 3 (2005): 312–39.

113 Direct costs, as mentioned above, involved the purchase of the Julian's Way site in 1928 for £21,300, and an additional plot in 1935 for £25,000. The Karm al-Ruhban site cost PP 210,000, and Harrison's fee in 1948 amounted to £11,503. "Director of Public Works to Chief Secretary," 10 March 1948, 11/3/19 (6), ISA-MandatoryOrganizations-MandatePublicWorks-000t8zw,6.

# Why Only a Hebrew University? The Tale of the Arab University in Mandatory Jerusalem

Ilan Pappé

**Abstract**

This article asks, why was there no Arab university in Mandatory Palestine (while there were two Jewish universities). Apparently, the colonial mentality of the British authorities who deemed the Palestinians yet another colonized people who had to be oppressed, while regarding the Zionist settlers as fellow colonialists, feared that such a university would enhance the Palestinian national movement. At the same time, Zionist pressure, British anti-Arab racism, and lack of resources also combined to undermine the emergence of a proper Palestinian higher education system. Nonetheless, educators, intellectuals and some politicians of the Palestinian community did not give up on the idea. They used several teachers' colleges to provide high quality university-level studies, the most notable being the Arab College (al-Kulliyya al-'Arabiyya) whose graduates went on to pursue careers in universities in the region and abroad. There was also an attempt by the mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, with the help of donations from abroad, to build an Islamic, but open to all, university throughout the 1930s. This initiative was foiled by the British Mandate government despite the willingness both in the Arab and Muslim worlds to support it.

**Keywords**

University; Jerusalem; Hajj Amin al-Husayni; Hebrew University; All-Islamic Conference; British Mandate; Arab College; American University of Beirut; education.

The Anglo-American Committee was, for all intents and purposes, the last international group attempting to find a solution to the Palestine question during the Mandatory years.

It was assembled in January 1946 and was tasked with the mission of examining the impact of the Zionist project on the Palestinians and making recommendations for the future. Its final report recorded the committee's bewilderment at the absence of any proper higher educational infrastructure, including a university, in Palestinian society, and blamed British authorities for this dismal reality:

> We would also stress the urgent necessity of increasing the facilities for secondary, technical and university education available to Arabs. The disparity between the standard of living of the two peoples, to which we have already drawn attention, is very largely due to the fact that the Jewish professional and middle class so largely outnumbers that of the Arabs. This difference can only be removed by a very substantial increase in the facilities for higher education available to Arabs.[1]

Indeed, the absence of a Palestinian Arab university in Mandatory Palestine at a time when most Mashriq countries boasted such institutions is a conundrum. This article poses the question – why, during the Mandatory period, was Jerusalem not graced with a Palestinian university? The city already had a Hebrew university for the small group of Jewish settlers in the 1920s but not one for the indigenous Palestinian population who were the majority in the country. This article examines the reasons behind the absence of a university and assesses the impact that this absence had on the history of Palestine during the Mandatory period and beyond.

British colonialism, Zionist lobbying, anti-Arab racism, and an overall underestimation by both British officials and some Palestinian leaders of the scope and ambition of the settler colonial project of Zionism were among the main reasons for the failure to open an Arab university in Jerusalem. Nonetheless, the local social and educational elite did its best to offer some alternative avenues for higher education, among them developing the Arab College (al-Kulliyya al-'Arabiyya) in Jerusalem into an advanced educational institution. This was done in many ways, as we shall see, openly under the nose of the British.

This local educational energy, which did not always see eye-to-eye with the British Mandate authorities, played a crucial role in nurturing a human capital of knowledge and planting a national orientation in a new generation who would contribute to the resurrection of Palestinian education, scholarship, and cultural life following the horror of the Nakba in 1948. This continuity meant that Palestinian culture was not obliterated by the Nakba and that those who survived it could build on a legacy forged during the Mandate period of continued cultural resistance along with political struggle.

The Arab College stands out in this effort as it worked closely with regional universities, and in particular with the American University of Beirut (AUB), so that its graduates could pursue further education or academic careers there. This was achieved by adapting the Arab College's syllabi to that required by AUB. As Yoni

Furas writes, this cohort of Palestinian graduates who went to AUB (and one could add those who studied at the American University in Cairo) did not always end up as faculty members (in fact very few did). Many of them chose other careers that, had it not been for the Nakba, would have made them part of the core group of the future Palestinian elite.[2] Rochelle Davis points out that many of the graduates found their way to senior banking and government positions; another indication of the human capital Palestine lost in the Nakba, beyond the physical destruction of the country and the ethnic cleansing of half of its Arab population.[3]

## British Educational Policy

For the duration of the Mandate, the British authorities in Palestine were directly responsible for the education of the Palestinians, while the Zionist enclave enjoyed an autonomous status.

Palestine was not administered as a single colony by Britain, but rather as two very different kinds of colonies when it came to the issue of education. The Zionist community was requested, rather than ordered, to follow colonial policy in matters of education. Also, the Zionist educational system received funding from the Mandatory government which enabled it to build itself up as part of an independent infrastructure for a state within a state. This formative stage also included the building of independent military, economic, and political capacities that well served the movement when Britain decided to leave Palestine. Meanwhile, colonial officials heavily micromanaged the public school education of the Palestinians. They nurtured both rural and religious education, deemed apolitical realms in what Suzanne Schneider frames as "Mandatory separation" in her excellent book of the same title.[4] Moreover, as Rochelle Davis notes, while Palestinian students were taught by Palestinian and Arab teachers and supervised by Palestinian inspectors, those formulating the curriculum and administering the educational system were British officials.[5]

Educational policy was informed by the overall colonialist attitude towards colonized people elsewhere in the empire. From this perspective, education needed to be controlled and regulated as a process of modernization so as not to harm imperial interests. There were two schools of thought in Britain about how far and in what manner London should rule its colonies: a generous one, which prevailed in the early years of British rule in Palestine, and a more austere one, which dominated later policy. The first strategy assumed a long British stay in Palestine and appeared euphemistically in the documents as "the commonwealth approach." Its logic was that there was a need to invest in the local infrastructure so that economic autonomy would benefit colonized and colonizer alike.[6]

Sometime during the 1920s, this approach was abandoned and replaced by a more austere view that assumed a brief British stay in Palestine. This meant, from a utilitarian point of view, a wish not to invest too much and to allow educational autonomy, at least in the Palestinian rural areas, provided it followed the traditional customary hierarchy through heads of clans and mukhtars.[7] The British were aware that

"uncontrolled" modernization invites a modern education that can only be properly obtained in the city.[8] Whether invested as a long-term or a short-term project, the British colonial bureaucrats in Palestine understood their mission to be one allowing limited modernization, that is, improvement in rural life based on local traditions. They wanted to avoid the "dangerous" leap towards anti-British nationalism that had already emerged in Egypt and India (many of these bureaucrats had served in these two countries before coming to Palestine).

On the one hand, Khalil Totah's memoirs tell us there was a consensus between the Palestinian educators and the British officials that much had to be done to improve rural education.[9] On the other, more than anything else, the officials wanted to keep the villagers in the rural areas, and hoped that they could encourage this by supporting traditional agriculture. Full urbanization was deemed a dangerously uncontrollable process. The local social elite was to be left intact but subordinate to British officials, who would mediate between village and government. Colonial officials thus allowed only a slow process of change, which left the rural economy unable to cope with the economic competition from the Jewish market.[10]

'Abdul Latif Tibawi, who served in the department of education and published his seminal work *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine: A Study of Three Decades of British Administration,*[11] has a slightly different take on British policy in this regard. Davis, who also looked thoroughly at the history of Mandatory education shares Tibawi's assertion that British policy was not monolithic. Both believed there was a school of thought in the British department of education that wanted the urban education system to produce a local elite, and another one that dreaded the appearance of such a political force in the country. It is possible that there were such voices (Tibawi did not disclose many of his sources, which were given to him by the department, and he was not allowed to quote from them directly).[12] It is possible that there was such a school of thought, but judging by action, and not by intent, it seems the consensus was that a local elite had to be an Anglophile and not a national one, whereas the emergence of a national elite among the Zionist community did not seem to be a concern for the British.

It is interesting that some scholars such as Davis believe that some educators, including those teaching in the Arab College, did not object totally to this British policy for their own reasons. She quotes Totah as declaring: "Rural education should be overwhelmingly agricultural and town schools distinctly vocational," and found a similar attitude expressed by Tibawi. Davis contends that such views were common among the elite who tended to adopt a condescending attitude towards the rural community; therefore, providing a mere rudimentary education to the masses had the added bonus of preserving the privileged status of Palestinian elites.[13]

Regarding practical educational development, this meant that the British only strove to expand the elementary school system; in 1919 alone, fifty-two schools were opened in rural Palestine.[14] At the same time, there was a reluctance to open high schools, and a rejection of the idea of a university – although, as we shall see, some British officials regarded a university as a separate project that could advance "British

values" in Palestine. By 1948, there were only ten high schools all over Palestine (and only two for girls), while four schools had some high school secondary-level classes. Three of the high schools also served as teachers' colleges, the most famous among them being the Arab College in Jerusalem, of which more will be said later.

As mentioned earlier, the British were obsessed with the link between urbanization, education, and nationalism. From their perspective, urbanization enhanced by education was a "dangerous" process – dangerous as it could lead to the development of an anti-colonialist national movement. Such a "danger" was familiar to some of the British officials who ran the educational department in Palestine and had previously been posted in Egypt, where British colonialism already experienced a powerful national movement led by an educated elite demanding an end to British rule in Egypt.[15]

The problem for Britain in Palestine was that, with the expansion of Zionist colonization, an uncontrolled process of urbanization occurred, coupled with the emergence of a national middle class in the towns that worked to help graduates of elementary schools in the villages continue their studies in the city. Responding to developments beyond their control, the British developed teacher training under their supervision in the towns and complimented themselves that this was their original contribution to education in Palestine, along with their campaign to encourage girls' education in the villages. Two new colleges for teachers were opened in Jerusalem. This was indeed a welcome addition to education in Palestine, but a far cry from what the society desired and needed. One should also note that such institutions had already existed towards the end of Ottoman rule. In fact, one such school – the Sultaniyya College – was closed by the British who moved its sophisticated German equipment, the pride of the last Ottoman governor of Palestine Jamal Pasha, to the new colleges.[16] Likewise, girls' education had already been expanded during the late Ottoman period. Isma'il al-Husayni, a scion of the notable family (and the original owner of the Orient House) contributed to girls' education with the help of the Spafford family (the founders of the American Colony in Jerusalem).[17] But it is also true that the Mandatory authorities opened additional schools for girls in many rural areas.

The expansion of the elementary rural school system, the opening of teachers' colleges, and the introduction of girls' schools on a larger scale were not meant to enhance higher education but rather to deepen elementary education while keeping higher education closely regulated. This was the policy of Humphrey Bowman, a quintessential colonialist educator, who built the foundation for education in Palestine during part of the Mandatory period. He viewed local people in the same way he had in Egypt and India where he had been responsible previously: namely as primitive, illiterate, and too poor to pay for their education.[18] He was also convinced that there was literally no educational system in Palestine until the British came – "tabula rasa," as he called it.[19] We recognize this today as the distorted Orientalist view of late Ottoman education. As Furas shows, late Ottoman Palestine experienced a boom in educational development, which became a more cosmopolitan process that also affected state education.[20]

Bowman was replaced before the end of the Mandate by Jerome Farrell, who

pursued a similar policy with the same philosophy, investing in elementary and agricultural education.[21] Schneider argues that the British government in Palestine did more than that. It supported religious education, assuming it to be an antidote to national uprisings. If anything, this policy led to a stronger fusion in Palestine, as in other parts of the Arab world, between religion and nationalism, leading to a powerful appearance of political Islam in Mandate Palestine.[22]

Bowman's idea was to expand elementary schooling, to slightly widen the high school system (under his term in office, only 30 percent of eligible pupils found places in the limited number of high schools), and to open up limited opportunities for a more general, non-nationalist education. In short, Bowman wished the villagers to continue their traditional way of life and production without incentive for change or urbanization (in his eyes a recipe for politicization and nationalization).[23] Bowman claimed insufficient funds in his budget prevented him from encouraging the opening of high schools, but it seems clear that colonialist racism was at play here.[24] These attitudes were even more pronounced when either British officials or Palestinian politicians proposed opening an Arab university and later an Islamic university in Jerusalem.

However, it would be a mistake to describe the British policy on education as clear or even coherent. After all, Bowman did allow Palestinians to open an additional college for teachers in Ramallah in 1920 and the Kadoorie agricultural college in Tulkarm in 1930 (funded by an Iraqi Jewish philanthropist, Elie Kedourie, and built at the same time as its Jewish counterpart, Kedourie College, in lower Galilee.)

There were thus contradictions in this policy between a wish to be the modernizer who came from the West, and a fear of the emergence of an anti-British national movement. Even while opposing the idea of an Arab or Palestinian university or an adequate high school system, at the very same time the British fostered a wish to build a British university. At the end of the day neither materialized in a country whose fate was determined by the settler colonial movement of Zionism and not the empire or the native population.

## No to an Arab University but What about a British University?

The two Hebrew universities in Mandatory Palestine were theoretically open to non-Jewish students, but neither the Hebrew University in Jerusalem nor the Technion in Haifa had a significant number of Palestinian students; both schools embraced a fully Zionist curricula and extracurricular activities wherever and whenever it was possible.

Before Britain's educational policy was officially formed in the very beginning of the Mandate, British officials contemplated the establishment of a British university in Palestine for all, in line with the notion of the "white man's burden" and mission to civilize non-Western societies. Serious deliberations over such a plan took place in 1922 with the participation of senior British officials, and educators from all three "religious" communities; Ronald Storrs, the military governor of Jerusalem, chaired the meeting. The Zionists, through their representative, Yosef Klausner, informed Storrs they would not participate in the deliberations since such a project "constituted

a threat to Hebrew culture in Palestine" and because "it meant competition for the projected Hebrew University."[25] In that year the planning for Hebrew University in Jerusalem was quite advanced (the foundation stone was laid in 1918 and it opened in 1925, under full Zionist control) and thus the Zionist leadership vehemently objected to the idea of another university.[26]

Storrs did not give up and founded the "Palestine Board of Higher Studies" in 1923 whose members were entrusted with the task of building the university. It moved into more detailed preparations under a new chair, Herbert Danby, the director of education in the ministry in London. Under Danby the officials discussed how to prepare high school pupils in Palestine to pass the entry examinations for universities in the region and beyond.[27]

This was the strategy of opening new universities in Britain, to begin building incrementally from below.

This initiative by Danby created the impression for some time that indeed the first step toward opening a university had been taken. A new system of matriculation examination was put in place in Palestine, recognized by the American University of Beirut in 1924 as a valid ticket to admission there. This applied mainly to pupils who enrolled as the next stage in their education into teacher training courses, or colleges, where they would graduate with a diploma called a "higher certificate," recognized within a certificate system in the British Empire, known as the Oxford and Cambridge School 1 Certificate. This certificate enabled one eventually to become a teacher but also to begin an application to a university outside of Palestine.[28] This raised the hopes of prospective candidates only to be shattered by the eventual lack of progress on the issue. The small group of aspirants could have been the core of the first cadre of a new university.

Noteworthy, the clerks in London working in the Department of Education were supportive of the idea of a university. They deemed the project – a university for the majority of people living in Mandatory Palestine – as a natural venture that the government, colonial or not, was supposed to advance. This was the view of Headlam-Morley, the advisor to the Foreign Office and a senior official in the British Ministry of Education. His report generated a conversation about a "Jerusalem Institute for Higher Studies," a project which was enthusiastically welcomed by the high commissioner at the time, Lord Plummer. Plummer decided to join Headlam-Morley personally and present the idea to the advisory committee of education in the colonies in 1929.[29] Their bid seemed at first successful. The idea was accepted by the Ministry of Colonies and the Palestine government was ordered from London to advance the preparation for opening a university in Jerusalem. The canon of the Anglican Church in the city was entrusted with the task. However, the eruption of the Buraq disturbances in 1929 disrupted these preparations; gradually London lost interest, but not the Palestinians, who saw more than ever the university as part of their national project of liberation.[30]

One problem was that the local Palestinians interested in advancing the project of a university saw no contradiction between a national university and an institute that would be an integral part of the British educational system. Thus, it is possible that the 1929 events provided British officials on the ground, who opposed the idea of a

university, apart from Storrs, with the pretext to kill the project, which they considered an Arab university project. Khalil Totah (1875–1955), the third director of the Arab College and a leading historian on education in Mandatory Palestine, had no doubt that the idea of an Arab university was rejected due to British fears of its potential contribution to the national struggle. In fact, Totah believed the whole of British educational policy during the Mandatory period was motivated by this fear. More specifically, Totah asserted that a university in the eyes of the British would lead to an upsurge in the popular objection among the Palestinians to the Jewish national homeland policy.[31]

Even after 1929, a university in Palestine, and in particular in Jerusalem, remained on the agenda. However, it took a different twist in the 1930s. The advisory committee in the Colonial Office was still very much interested in establishing a university in Jerusalem and was surprised by the lack of any interest from the Palestine government on the ground. It suggested a new idea: a joint university in Palestine and Cyprus to be part of the British higher education system.[32] However, the British on the ground, all over the Arab world and in Cyprus, resisted the idea. In 1931, the Cypriot national movement mobilized an uprising that threatened colonial rule in Cyprus. British officials were aware that they had failed to anglicize the educational system on the island and regarded the local intellectuals as their worst enemies – a university was something they could not accept.[33] Without such support, given the complexity of the relationship between funding and political decision, there were no funds for the project. The educational advisory committee of the Colonial Office did not give up, and appealed to the British Council to raise funds for a university wherever possible (either in Palestine or in Cyprus).

The discussion of a British university in Palestine seemed to have a life of its own, at times detached from the political drama on the ground. And so, in the middle of the Arab Revolt and during the time of the deliberations of the Peel Commission in 1937 seeking an overall solution to the problem in Palestine, the committee was willing to give attention to the question of a university:

> We are aware that the project of a British University in the Near East has been mooted in other quarters, and we are not in a position to say how practicable it may be financially or otherwise, but we recommend that in any further discussion of the project the possibility should be carefully considered of locating a university in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem or Haifa.[34]

The members of the commission were now fantasizing about an institution that would reflect the excellence of British values and education. However, if one tries to find a conclusive opinion of the commission, within the verbose documents, it is a recommendation to build a university in Palestine, an idea that had the full support of the British Council and its president, Lord Lloyd. It appears that some members of the Peel Commission believed that such a university would in fact facilitate a kind of a solution for the future, as it would "mitigate" what it called Arab and

Jewish "discordant nationalisms."[35] The report also proposes that it would prevent Arab students from seeking education outside of Palestine and would be a kind of preparatory institution for the Jewish students before joining the Hebrew University.

The only tangible result of all these efforts was that they were too little too late. In 1945, the British Council[36] opened "The Jerusalem Institute for Higher Education." It was a preparatory institution helping Palestinian students to pass entrance exams for the University of London. To the credit of the British Council, it did not see this as a final station. It wanted to develop the institute together with the Arab College into a university.

The educational advisor to the British Council drove the final nail in the coffin of the Jerusalem university in 1946 when he ruled that having the Hebrew University as a direct route to the American University of Beirut, and having the Arab College were enough to satisfy the needs of the local population. Moreover, he recommended closing down the embryonic Jerusalem Institute for Higher Studies. It did not close down immediately despite the recommendation and survived until the Nakba, when also the Arab College ceased to function.

Alongside these rather minor efforts, the Zionist leadership maintained there was no need for such institutions since the Hebrew University was already functioning. The cynicism of that leadership was quite bewildering. It boasted a university open to all, but one that in essence was Zionist and part of the Zionist project in Palestine. And yet it used the Histadrut's mouthpiece in Arabic, *Haqiqat al-Amr* (The truth of the matter), to publish occasional reports on the university and its achievements as if it were an institution serving the whole of Palestine and the Palestinians.[37]

## An Islamic University for All

After the Buraq disturbances, some members of the Palestinian political leadership and most notably Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni attempted a different path. It was in the wake of the All-Islamic Congress convened in Jerusalem in 1931 that the real efforts to open such a university began in earnest in 1932.

The coordinating committee of the All-Islamic Congress sent delegations to Egypt, Iraq, Afghanistan, and India for fundraising for an Islamic University in Jerusalem. Hajj Amin al-Husayni and Muhammad 'Ali 'Alluba Pasha headed the delegations. 'Alluba at the time was the Egyptian Minister of the Awqaf and a known supporter of the pan-Islamic vision. It was important to have 'Alluba on the team as al-Azhar University's leadership was worried that an Islamic university in Jerusalem would undermine al-Azhar's position in the Muslim world.[38] Muhammad Bakhit, former mufti of Egypt, in his public statement against the congress, also criticized the "dreams" of those who pretended to establish a new university that would become the new scientific center of the Muslim world.[39]

Upon his arrival in Egypt, Mufti Hajj Amin gave interviews to many influential newspapers. In these interviews, he denied that the congress would deal with the caliphate question. The mufti portrayed the projected congress as a Muslim

demonstration intended to emphasize the importance of Palestine and Jerusalem to Islam. He further presented the idea of an Islamic university at Jerusalem as a local project intended to challenge the Hebrew University rather than al-Azhar institution.[40]

'Alluba, it seems, was not deterred by Bakhit's criticism as he told *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* (25 July 1932) that the executive committee of the Islamic congress was looking for architects to propose the plan for building the Muslim University in Jerusalem. In the interview it was stressed that there were two major missions at that point. The first was to persuade people that this project would help to limit the Zionization of Jerusalem and Palestine and, secondly, it would upgrade the educational system as it would provide secular as well as religious education for the people of Palestine.

The counterpressure on al-Azhar was effective and the mufti managed to galvanize the Wafd party behind his project (who were in the opposition at the time). Opposition leaders, such as Nahhas Pasha, Hamid Pasha al-Basil, and Muhammad Mahmud fully endorsed the resolutions of the congress. They promised to help establish an Islamic university in Jerusalem, to protect Muslim rights in Palestine and Jerusalem, and to defend Islam. Nahhas even gave a contribution of two hundred Egyptian pounds to the newly created fund for the fulfilment of the objectives of the congress.[41]

Muhammad 'Ali 'Alluba could not claim greater success than enlisting the important scholar Rashid Rida to support the project, but he was less of a prime mover when it came to funding. As the elected treasurer of the Permanent Bureau of the Congress, 'Alluba had made several unsuccessful attempts to establish committees which would organize the fundraising campaign for the Islamic university. In May 1933, 'Alluba joined the mufti of Jerusalem in a fund-raising tour to Iraq and India. The mission failed to collect substantial sums, and 'Alluba returned to Egypt bitter and disappointed. He contemplated appealing to King Fu'ad I (Faruq's father) for the financing of this project but was reported to have decided against it for fear that the king would turn him down.[42]

The mufti had to navigate carefully vis-à-vis some of the Indian supporters who wanted to stress the Islamic nature of a future university, while the mufti wanted it to be Arab and Palestinian as well. The main potential backer, the Indian Muslim leader Shawkat 'Ali, asked that there will be no "national significance" to the university. However, it seemed that this was not a major hurdle and the mufti agreed that other languages would be taught in the university apart from Arabic while deep down all concerned knew that much like the All-Islamic Congress itself, the university was very much about Palestine.[43] And when a consensus was reached, the focus on Palestine was manifested by the decision to have the names of rulers and notables who contributed funds for the implementation of the congress resolutions placed on special boards inside al-Aqsa Mosque as well as in the proposed university. It was indeed a project with clear twin purposes in mind: to promote Jerusalem as a regional center of Islamic learning while simultaneously countering the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, thus addressing the Zionist challenge. The future institute was meant to accentuate symbolically the link forged at the Congress between pan-Islamism and the Palestinian cause.

Some funding did come through. The nizam (ruler) of Hyderabad donated one million rupees. He was nizam by title only, as the actual rulership was abolished in 1911, but still he was an important member of the Muslim nobility in British India. He also had a history of donating to various projects in Palestine: due to his personal ties with Hajj Amin al-Husayni, he donated to waqfs all over Palestine. The British followed Husayni's trip closely, but they approved that donation, probably asserting that his dependency on British rule in India would enable them in the future to make sure that he did not work against their interests in Palestine.[44]

That sum of money was used to buy land in the Tulkarm district that was endowed as a waqf for the future university. At least in this respect, the mufti could have been satisfied; he prevented the sale of the land coveted by the Zionist movement and ensured a future investment for the university. Alas, it was a short-lived victory as the village (Raml Zayta/Khirbat Qazaza) was destroyed in 1948 and on its ruins Jewish settlements were built and the university was not established.

This nexus between endowment, struggling against Zionist purchase of land, and the university enthused also Christian activists in the national movement. Members of the Christian Orthodox community were prepared to do more than send words of congratulations. Most notable in this respect was 'Isa al-'Isa, the editor of *Filastin*, who sent the World Islamic Congress a proposal outlining a scheme for saving Palestinian lands from the Zionists by creating endowments on the coveted land – it was a rather complicated and detailed proposal suggesting that lands owned by Palestinians, but coveted by the Zionists, would be assigned a value per dunam, high enough to attract the interest of rich Palestinians, who might then buy them and donate them as religious endowments. And he suggested that all profits would go to the proposed Islamic university. In reading the proposal to the participants at the congress, the secretary, Riyad al-Sulh, praised this idea and declared that this was an example that demonstrated the overall Christian solidarity with the Muslim brethren in Palestine.[45]

## Why Did the Islamic University Fail?

There were two reasons why nothing came out of the mufti's initiative. The most important one was the British objection. Even if the mufti had overcome the other challenges in the project, the British government would not have allowed it to happen. Officially, the project petered out because of lack of funding and the refusal of the British to allow a second pan-Islamic congress from taking place that might have recruited the necessary funds.

Surprisingly, it was the British government in India that seemed more supportive of the idea than any other part of the British imperial administration. It saw such conventions and projects as a means of alluring the Muslim community in the sub-continent to remain in the Allies' camp, especially after the Second World War broke out.

However, the Foreign Office in London, prodded by the British government in Palestine, rejected the idea, both when it was first suggested in 1931 and when it was raised again until 1940. In the conversation that eventually led to the categorical

rejection, others also participated, such as the British ambassador in Egypt, the high commissioner of Palestine, and the Palestine police force's Criminal Investigations Department (CID) in Jerusalem. A surprising interlocutor was the ambassador in Jedda (Saudi Arabia) since he represented Ibn Sa'ud's uneasiness about the project as well. The basic message from Palestine, Cairo, and London was that another congress attempting to found a university, as did the All-Islamic Congress in Jerusalem, would be the base for what the officials called "Arab Palestinian propaganda" and warned that in essence it would be anti-British. The issue was discussed quite often as the mufti, even in exile and on the run from one exile to the other, had not easily given up on the idea.[46]

British policy in British-controlled areas in the Arab world in general regarded Arab universities as an unwelcome development. They did not fund universities as they thought university graduates were likely to "become leaders of nationalist movements." In Egypt, it also translated into trying to regulate the curriculum in high school so that there would be no candidates specializing in topics such as philosophy, ethics, social economy, history, and literature.[47]

But opposition was not the only reason that the idea of the Islamic university in Jerusalem petered out. Unfortunately, these fundraising missions, particularly the mufti's long fundraising trip to Iraq and India in 1933, were not successful in raising the funds necessary to establish a university in Jerusalem. Nor was there enough interest among activists in convening a second congress in the city, and that led to the collapse of the organizational capacity of the World Islamic Congress by the end of 1934.[48] Although the local press constantly mentioned the idea of reviving the university project and holding another congress in Jerusalem in the years that followed, those plans came to nothing and were soon forgotten. As mentioned, even after the mufti's escape from Palestine in 1937, he was still involved in the efforts until 1940; soon after he also lost interest in the project.

'Abdul Latif Tibawi detailed in his work the development of education in Palestine. He examined what he called "the project of the university" and remarked that the Palestinian leadership, even after the idea of a Muslim university was dropped, continued to support the idea of a British university. In their eyes, the two projects of an Islamic university and a general one were not mutually exclusive and actually complemented each other.[49]

In fact, Tibawi observed that Palestinians who participated in the deliberations of a future university, unlike the Zionist representatives, did all they could to assist the various boards established for pushing the idea forward. One tends to agree with him that most of the Palestinians who also backed the idea of the Islamic University did not see it as an exclusively Muslim university. They did not view Arab-Muslim culture as exclusive but rather as one that assimilated elements of the Hellenistic and Christian heritage and therefore was cosmopolitan in nature.[50]

The one body that survived to the end of the Mandate within the British administration was the Board of Examination that vetted graduates of high schools as possible candidates for further academic education in the UK. Muslim schools,

Christian schools, private schools, as well as schools controlled by the Supreme Muslim Council, continued to offer candidates for the board's examinations. The government schools did likewise. During the last year for which figures are available, 1946, at least one-third of the candidates for the board's matriculation came from Muslim or Mandatory schools. The most assured way forward through this path was to graduate from the Arab College in Jerusalem, rightly called by Khalil Totah a university college that substituted for the university that the Palestinians were denied. [51]

## The Arab College: A University College for Palestinians

In 1991, some of the graduates of the Arab College tried to revive the school sensing that this had been an institute of which the Palestinian people in general should be proud. The special collection the graduates published to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the college proved to be, in Davis's analysis, a proper oral as well as archival history of the college. Davis also surveyed almost all the sources published prior to that collection on the history of the college. The mix of oral and archival material does not complement each other, and at times it is difficult to build a coherent narrative since, naturally, recollections are selective at times, serving agendas which are not always compatible – something that could be said about all archival material. But there are some similar powerful recollections that tell the story of the Arab College as an institution that, quite courageously and impressively, filled the vacuum that Britain, operating under Zionist pressure, created in the Palestinian higher education system. It was not a substitute for a proper university, but it was good enough to deliver many of a university's attributes and had in many ways a similar impact on Palestinian society as a university in Jerusalem would have had.

The British officials who helped to establish the Arab College in Jerusalem in 1918 wished it to be a pilot school with high academic standards for the elite, eventually providing an educational program similar to an English public school education. In reality, it became a unique institution in the Arab world as a teachers' college that was in essence a quasi-university.

The college, located on Jabal Mukabbir, began its life as a teachers' college and changed its name to the Arab College in 1927.[52] Its first director was probably 'Adel Jabr, the famous Palestinian writer, educator, and journalist. He taught first at the Constitutional School in Jerusalem at the end of the Ottoman period, which was owned by Khalil Sakakini, and then moved to teach at the College of Salah established by the governor, Jamal Pasha in 1915 (the principal of which was Shaykh 'Abdul 'Aziz Hawwash from Egypt who also taught in the Arab College; either he or one of the Egyptian teachers, according to some sources, might have been the first director at least for a short while).[53]

What is clear is that the first cadre of teachers at the Arab College came from Egypt, but they were soon replaced by Palestinian teachers under the directorship of Khalil Sakakini who did not last long as a director; he resigned in 1919 in protest against the appointment of the pro-Zionist British Jew Herbert Samuel to the post of

high commissioner. In the short period of his directorship, he laid the foundation for others in imagining an institution that was much more than just a teachers' college and tried to introduce general knowledge courses on philosophy and music.[54]

Khalil Totah replaced Sakakini and remained in office until he resigned in 1925. During his term of office, he too tried to turn the teachers' college into a proper further education institution, but did not stay long enough to develop his plan. Balfour's visit to Palestine to inaugurate the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was the reason for his resignation. As Davis comments rightly, this is not an anecdotal event. The visit, apart from reminding the society of the injustice of Balfour, also highlighted the preferential pro-Zionist British engagement with the question of Palestinian higher education. The students at the Arab College were furious and went out to demonstrate and the Palestine government closed down the college in response. The Palestinian political leadership – the executive committee of the Arab Palestinian annual congress – intervened, forcing the students to consent to conform to "college discipline" and on that basis were returned to the college that was reopened.[55]

Totah's position towards the demonstrations and the government's reaction is a matter of historical discord. The discussion about that particular period has much wider implications for our days. The question of how educators should deal with student's national commitment and enthusiasm has become an internal dilemma for Palestinian educators teaching under colonialism, settler colonialism, occupation, and apartheid. How much do you encourage or discourage your students to join the resistance to the oppressor? Totah was a Quaker who opposed violence in principle, on the one hand, but was totally committed to the national struggle. His resignation was indeed the only solution for him.[56]

The episode is also important as it showed the spirit of many of the students seven years into the British occupation and after forty years of Zionist colonization. This was a first signal for the British that they were right in suspecting that higher education and politicization of the younger generation may go hand in hand. It was one of the factors that persuaded the Mandatory government to resist any attempt to build a Palestinian university during the Mandatory period.

Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, the father of Walid Khalidi, was the last director and remained in this post until the end of the Mandate. His appointment was a turning point in the college's history and development. In 1925, he reoriented the college and further developed the teacher training curriculum that was meant to prepare students to pass the Palestine matriculation examination. Beginning with the summer of 1926, this general examination was administered to students who had completed secondary school and wished to continue their university education – necessarily outside Palestine. The matriculation exam was conducted under the supervision of the Council of Higher Education, which was composed of British, Palestinian, and Jewish experts, and was headed by the general director of the department of education in the Mandate government.[57] In hindsight, it was clear that the teaching programs included more than preparing pupils for exams. They included an educational infrastructure for students in a variety of disciplines and areas of inquiry in both humanities and the core

sciences; indeed in 1939, from the lowest grade in the college (third year high school pupils), students were streamed into two divisions of higher education: science and arts. The subjects for a matriculation exam included Arabic, English, general history, mathematics, geography, physics, and chemistry. The actual curriculum of the college also added history of education, psychology, and teaching methodology.

The British were aware of this reorientation of the college and at first, Bowman and the department of education in the Palestine government welcomed the more expanded nature of teaching at the college. Their in-house discussion reveals that they deemed this transformation from a teachers' college into a university college as a welcome development. They asserted that it could be the Eton College of Palestine: namely the prep school for a future anglicized elite, admitting only excellent pupils from high schools.[58] Although this is not what eventually transpired, it did create a class of professionals who helped in the administration of the country.[59] However, precisely because it was not a British project, but a Palestinian one, its main contribution was to the cultural history of Palestine, substituting for the university the British refused to allow.

Furas has commented that in the 1930s, a career in education was less appealing as salaries were low which may explain decreases in the number of candidates at times. Davis contradicts Furas and actually stresses that there was a higher demand that the Arab College alone could not satisfy. I tend to agree with Davis, as a low salary could not have been a main reason for not choosing a teaching career. We know from oral history that in many villages teachers were paid or salaries were supplemented in kind (which could have included poultry, meat, or wheat), and not with money.[60]

The curriculum of the Arab College was based on English literature and cultural tradition, but also contributed to the general change among its students' attitude toward literature and the revival of Palestinian culture As Samir Hajj's interviews with the college's graduates testify, the stress in the curriculum on British culture had the twin result of both introducing British culture into Palestinian culture and at the same time encouraging an original modern Palestinian culture, creating a rich infusion whose legacy is still with us.[61] This process of synthesizing European culture with traditional Arab culture and producing original contemporary Palestinian culture is a process that occurred all over the Mashriq as was illustrated by the brilliant work of the late Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* and has recently been acknowledged once more by Ussama *Makdisi* in his incisive *The Age of Coexistence*.[62] There were of course those who saw the Western influence as a curse and part of the oppressor's culture, but even the inclusion of Latin language and literature (which included poems, plays, letters, and articles written by ancient Roman authors) in the curriculum was taught as part of the legacy that had brought Arab civilization to Europe centuries before. This is a point made by both the eminent Egyptian writer Taha Husayn and Hilary Falb Kalisman in her work on the Mandate educational system.[63]

This mixture appeared later in the works of the graduates of this college, many of whom became writers, educators, civil servants, and quite a few reached high positions in the Mandate government. Others continued their studies in British universities.

Hajj points to the works and life of one such graduate, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra (1920–1994). The literary works of Jabra, including his novels, poems, and translations represent an example of the impact British culture had on the works of one of Palestine's greatest novelists.[64] Similar fusion and richness can be found in the works of other graduates who, like some of their teachers, were part of the Nahda (renaissance) in Palestine. Prolific writers and scholars such as Ihsan 'Abbas, Tawfiq Sayigh, Hanna Abu Hanna, Nasir al-Din al-'Assad, Nicola Ziyadeh, Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi, Mahmoud al-Samara, Mahmud 'Ali al-Ghul, Muhammad Yusuf Najm, 'Abdul Rahman and Hashim Yaghi, to mention but a few.

By the early 1940s, some of these writers had already produced books that were part of the curriculum in the college and would have been included in a future university had it not been for the Nakba: 'Isa al-Sifri, *History of Palestine* (1929); George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (1938); Qadri Tuqan, *The Scientific Heritage of the Arabs* (1941); Nicola Ziyadeh, *The Rise of the Arabs* (1945); 'Arif al-'Arif, *History of Jerusalem* (1951); Michel Abcarius, *Palestine through the Fog of Propaganda* (1946).[65]

When these historiographies and sociological works were taught together in the Arab College, they created an Arab and Palestinian national and cultural meta-narrative that enhanced other processes on the ground. They helped to solidify the collective national identity of the Palestinians in their struggle against the pro-Zionist policy of the British Mandate, a policy that since 1918 allowed a settler colonial movement of European Jews to claim the Palestinian homeland as their own. It was possible to offer such a fusion because of the personal interest of the last director, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, in translating and writing educational books.

By the early 1940s, the high standard of the Arab College (and also in the Rashidiyya high school in Jerusalem) was recognized by the British educational system and thus, upon completion of the college course, students received an equivalent of a BA degree, under the supervision of the University of London. Most students, however, preferred to go to the American University of Beirut to complete the degree.[66]

Another indication of the high academic standards was the fact that the students in the college always fared well in the general examinations, according to Fu'ad 'Abbas, a graduate of the college: "In 1942, the year I took the matriculation examination, all twenty students in my class passed and received their matriculation certificate."[67] The students came from all over Palestine: Haifa, Jaffa, Gaza, Nazareth, Nablus, Tulkarm, Safad, Bisan, Majdal, 'Asqalan, and Jenin, and top students from the rural areas were sent to the college, so a meticulous selection also contributed to its high achievement. Many had their tuition fees waived or subsidized and they were boarded in houses and dorms and driven back and forth to the college.[68] From the memories of 'Abbas, we learn that you were in danger of losing your spot in the school if your academic performance was poor, or your anti-British activity was too prominent.[69]

Being expelled for being anti-British did not mean that the college ceased to be a national project as well as an educational one. The British tried to monitor and regulate it, but with little success. Early on, Herbert Samuel banned a book written for

the college by the third director Khalil Totah (jointly with 'Umar Salih al-Barghuthi) titled *A History of Palestine from Ancient Time to the British Era* (1923). In his evidence in front of the Peel Commission, Totah said that Samuel banned the book because it did not fit the pro-Zionist policy of the British government. The college did not change its orientation because of such censoring attempts, nor was it intimidated by the Peel Commission's overall criticism of the college and other institutions as being "seminaries of nationalism."[70]

Censorship and the challenge to it arose mainly because, as Furas has commented, the Arab College teachers from the very beginning were aware that they would have to write their own textbooks. They were also highly qualified for doing so, which is another indication of the potential of the Arab College to play the substitute role of the university the British did not allow the Palestinians to have. Those writing the textbooks or teaching them had degrees from British, at times American, universities.[71]

The authors of the textbook *Al-Jughrafiya al-haditha al-musawwara* (Illustrated Modern Geography) made it clear that their objective was to give the student "a general idea of the wide world he lives in." As Davis shows, this goal was directly related not only to the authors' educational ethos, but also to their biographies, seeing themselves as seekers of knowledge and masters of their own progressive destiny. These textbooks were a joint project by five authors: Sa'd al-Sabbagh (Haifa, 1900–1967), 'Abdallah Mashnuq (Hama, Syria, 1902–1988), George Shahla (Jerusalem, b. 1894), Wasfi 'Anabtawi (Nablus, 1903–1984) and Khalid al-Hashimi (Baghdad, 1908–1985). Born at the turn of the century, they reached adulthood in the interregnum and hence experienced the demise of the old order and the rise of the colonial age. Educated mainly in non-governmental Anglican or Muslim Ottoman schools, all but al-Sabbagh enrolled in the American University of Beirut (AUB) in the 1920s. At the AUB, they were prominent members of the famous progressive, national student society al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa and later they did their post-graduate studies at the University of Cambridge, the Sorbonne, the University of London, and Ohio University. Physically and conceptually, they sought knowledge around the world and symbolized "a new ethos of social mobility through education."[72]

Where censorship did take place, it was in fact self-censorship. Teachers who wished to publish their own textbooks were forced to self-censor any potentially "controversial material," including anything on the subjects of nationalism, British rule, and Zionism. For example, High Commissioner Samuel banned Khalil Totah's book *History of Palestine* simply for stating that he (Samuel) had "endeavored to reconcile the Arabs of Palestine to the Zionist policy of the British government but failed." In addition, Totah recalled a headmaster telling him that he could "not place a book in the school library without reference [to the authorities]."[73]

But there was a limit to self-censoring, in particular when it came to textbooks on the history of the Arab world and Palestine. The narrative spanned in these books ignited the national imagination of a younger generation and therefore, as Furas puts, the authorities tried to appropriate historiography and colonize it, or rather denationalize it.[74]

As noted, the Peel Commission was worried that such a textbook would be the basis for "seminars on nationalism," and indeed such "seminars" took place in the college. Al-Miqdadi, who taught in the college, according to students' recollections, "talked ceaselessly about Arab nationalism" in classes devoted to European history. He changed his name during his day as teacher from Ibrahim to al-Miqdadi, a name resonating with early Muslim iconography. He also encouraged students to change their names in such a fashion. He suggested looking for names in one's own genealogy that would stress the longevity of the connection to the homeland, the culture, and religion of Palestine and the Arab world. He wrote articles in the college's journal, took students on cultural tours and did all he could to plant in them a sense of belonging both to Palestine and to a more pan-Arab national movement.[75]

## The Last Struggle: The Intermediate Certificate

The formative moment that allowed the college to play such a crucial role both in the potential that did not materialize because of the Nakba and in what did transpire eventually, came in 1939, toward the end of the Arab Revolt, when outside events inevitably penetrated the college and affected its life. In that year, the college added a fifth and sixth year, on a level at par with post-secondary British colleges. There were two tracks for this new addition: science or literature, with strong stress on Latin. Either track would have awarded the students an intermediate certificate, which opened the way for further education. The same struggle that accompanied the composition of the curriculum earlier erupted once more when the curriculum was expanded in such a way in the late 1930s. The new director of the department of education, Jerome Farrell, inspired by his British school upbringing, tried to micromanage the composition of the curriculum.

The intermediate certificate thus included the study of English and Arabic for both the science section and the literature section. Farrell tried to control particularly the literature track, and put the stress on Western philosophy, classical history, and Latin. But outside the classroom, the Palestinian uprising raged and his attempts to downplay the Arab and Islamic past in favor of a more "universal humanistic" (that is, British) subjects, was rejected by teachers and students alike.

Arab educators associated Farrell's intervention as trying to westernize the Palestinian students and more importantly to win their support for the British policy in Palestine. In the words of Khalil Totah in this testimony to the Peel Commission:

> The Arab education [according to the British] is . . . designed to reconcile Arab people to this policy [of facilitating Zionism] or to make the education so colourless as to make it harmless and not endanger the carrying out of this policy of Government. Jewish education has an aim. It is not colourless. Its aim is to establish Zionism, establish a national home, and revive Hebrew culture. The Arabs of Palestine feel there is no such aim behind their education. They feel Arab culture is neglected.[76]

# Epilogue: The Graduates and Their Impact

The partially successful struggle to resist the British indoctrination, coupled with a high level of education in the college at large, turned quite a few of the graduates of the Arab College into political activists or inserted them with the future political elite of the Palestinians. Had a university existed, the potential for playing such a political role would have been even greater.

The route to play a role in the future political elite of Palestine did not depend only on the availability or rather non-availability of proper higher education in Palestine. The Palestinian graduates who made it to the American University of Beirut, were studying at "the hub of pan Arab identity."[77] But at that crucial juncture, between *qawmiyya*, pan-Arab nationalism that had no future as we know in hindsight, and *wataniyya*, the local national identity, which would be the focus of the Palestinian liberation movement, a Jerusalem university would have played an important role in solidifying the Palestinian national movement at home.

The absence of a university may have been one of the reasons why Palestinian graduates of the AUB played an important role in the national movement of other Arab countries or within pan-Arabist movements. As they could not serve Palestine after the Nakba, they served in other countries. Graduates and teachers at the Arab College and those who continued to AUB and similar institutions reached high political positions all over the Arab World (a detailed account can be found in Davis's work).[78] This human capital was of course not only to be found among the graduates of the Arab College but was there among the local educators at large.[79]

This was more than just a political elite; it was also a cultural one especially for those who graduated from the Arab College. The cultural education they received was unique as it had been shaped in many ways by the demands of the students themselves. As Amin Hafez al-Dajani tells us, it was due to students' demands that the curriculum included books written by Egyptian authors such as 'Ali Jarim, Taha Husayn and Mustafa Amin which enriched the Arabic literature background of the college's graduates.[80] Al-Dajani tells us the British who were overseeing the college allowed this intrusion of Arabic culture into the curriculum quite reluctantly; their aim, he claims, was to obliterate the Arab national identity and educate this generation only about Western civilization, English literature and culture, disregarding the history and geography of the Arab countries and their literature and heritage, in order to make the student feel proud of English history and all that is English. Thus, this cultural education gained through a political struggle within the college played a special role in the lives of the graduates later on.

The graduates were students who were accepted into the college on merit rather than on social status, and the exilic experience after the Nakba enabled the uprooted graduates to be part of the cadre of Palestinian scholars and writers who would retain a Palestinian cultural presence even with the absence of a Palestinian nation state. One can only ponder the possible impact an education gained in such a way would have had on opportunities for social and economic mobility in a future Palestine. Nonetheless, they, as well as the next generation of Palestinian scholars, intellectuals, and producers

of culture, continued to flourish without a state and within the liberation movement.

It could have been different. An Arab Palestinian university fed by collective national identity and aspiration would have openly enhanced Arab and Palestinian history and culture as part of the curriculum. Its teaching and research would have empowered the anti-colonial narrative, helping to counter the project of the Hebrew University that provided scholarly scaffolding to the Zionist ideology. Elsewhere in the more independent Arab world, higher education provided knowledge and education alongside the solidification of national pride and a sense of belonging. Moreover, higher education institutions played a crucial role in liberation struggles all over the colonized world.

However, what was accomplished was impressive enough. Those who were fortunate to attend the Arab College and similar institutions were taught a colonialist curriculum, but nonetheless were politicized in anti-colonialist ideas, as they pondered on the reality they lived in with the critical tools and methodologies offered to them. Knowledge was disseminated as a regulated and controlled colonialist product, but it could not prevent the graduates from developing a clear sense of national identity and orientation.

This is also a chapter in anti-colonialist struggle. Very rarely do historians refer to the pre-1948 Palestinian struggle as anti-colonialist. It was anti-colonialist in that it was fought on two fronts: one against Zionist settler-colonialism and the other against British colonialism and imperialism. The two struggles fused in the educational battlefield. It was a struggle against the twin Anglo-Zionist "politics of denial,"[81] as the British administrators, with the help of the Zionist movement, used education to undermine the Palestinian national movement while simultaneously claiming that education should be apolitical.[82] Well, education was both professional and political, scholarly and committed. We all over the world who are part of the expanding area of Palestine studies still adhere to and respect this legacy.

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# The 1963 General Plan for Jerusalem

## The Unrealized Vision for the Eastern Part of the City

Jawad Dukhgan
and Falestin Naïli

**Abstract**

This article attempts to analyze the comprehensive urban plan commissioned by the municipality of Jerusalem from Brown Engineers International in 1963 in light of the status of the city within Jordanian governance and politics, and also compared to earlier British plans. This plan was the basis for the 1966 town scheme submitted to the Jordanian government just one year before the 1967 war by Henry Kendall, who was in charge of city planning for the municipality between 1963 and 1966. Faced with the extreme reduction of the space for urban development after the division of the city, the plan ambitioned to lay the basis for a "complete city" and to compensate for the lack of vital infrastructures. For the Old City, the plan sought to further approaches to preservation initiated during the Mandate period, while calling for the creation of residential neighborhoods outside of it.

In today's East Jerusalem, an estimated twenty thousand buildings are considered illegal structures according to the Israeli municipality, which has been issuing demolition orders each year, making hundreds of Palestinian families homeless. The municipality tries to justify these measures by the absence of master plans for Palestinian neighborhoods that could enable legal

construction, while systematically rejecting plans proposed by the inhabitants of these neighborhoods.[1] However, a very detailed master plan for East Jerusalem actually does exist: it was developed between 1963 and 1966, though its implementation was cut short by the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the eastern part of the city.
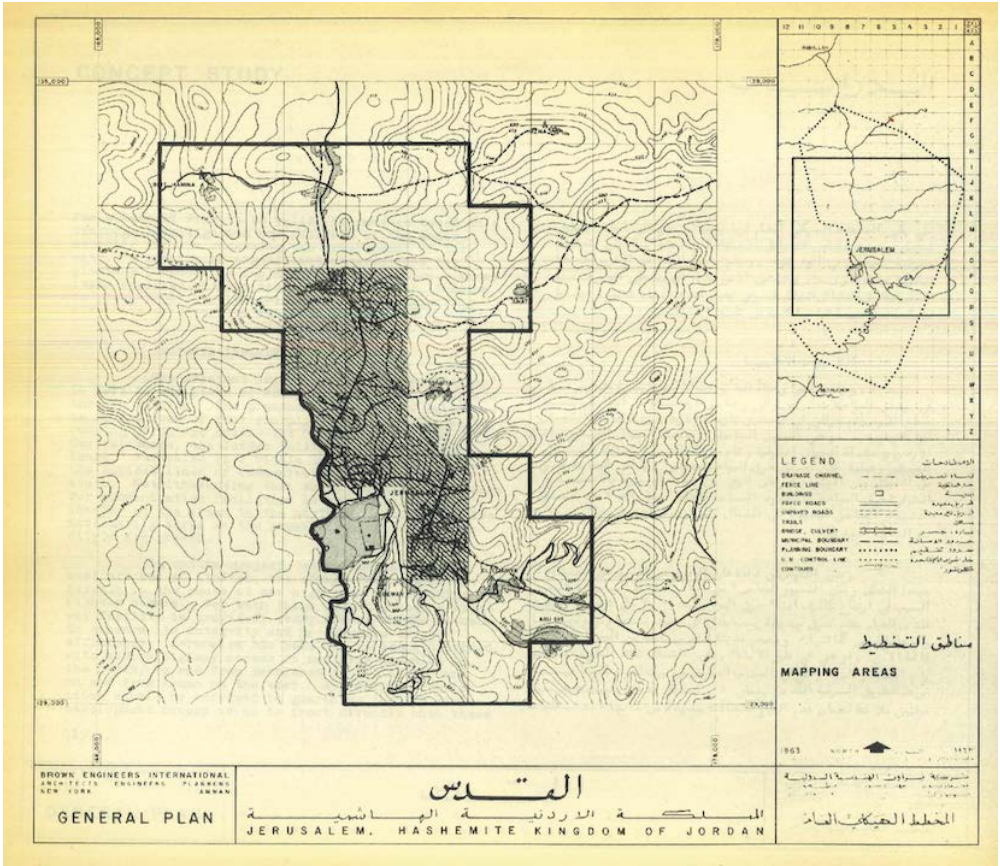


Figure 1. "Jerusalem [Jordan] General Plan," submitted to the Mayor and City Council of Jerusalem by Brown Engineers International, New York and Amman, 1963.

In March 1962, five years before the abrupt end of the Jordanian administration of the city, the Municipality of Jerusalem entered an agreement with the New York-based firm Brown Engineers International to create a survey, concept study, and planning proposals for East Jerusalem. This comprehensive plan was commissioned by the municipal council and by Henry Kendall, who was in charge of city planning for the municipality from 1963 to 1966, after having been the town planning advisor for the British Mandate authorities from 1936 to 1948.[2] The resulting 144-page document deals with all aspects of life in the city, including health, sanitation, education, housing, recreation, traffic, and transportation. According to the authors, this general plan resulted from extensive consultations with "responsible bodies, officials, officers

and notables concerned with the affairs and welfare of Jerusalem and its future" along with "sound principles of planning." Its stated goal was to translate "community ideals and objectives into concrete proposals."[3]

Since the war of 1948 and the division of the city, the truncated eastern part of the city lacked vital infrastructure and economic opportunities. This was the result of Mandate-era planning and development favoring the western part of the city over its eastern segment,[4] compounded by the subsequent division of the city.[5] The ethnic cleansing of the western neighborhoods and villages in 1948–49 forced tens of thousands of Palestinians to seek refuge in the cramped Old City and adjacent neighborhoods. The municipality of East Jerusalem, under Jordanian control as of December 1948, was faced with a boundless number of immediate problems to be resolved before it could eventually turn its attention to urban planning.[6]

Since most construction occurring at that period was located outside the planning area of approximately twelve square kilometers, one of the first recommendations of the 1963 plan was to expand the planning area to seventy-five square kilometers by including several adjacent villages. The plan paid particular attention to the restoration and protection of the Old City and proposed to create integrated residential neighborhoods for future developments outside of it. It contained a plan for constructing a civic neighborhood, concentrating local administration and cultural institutions, but official government buildings were conspicuously absent from the list of planned structures.

The 1963 plan and study was the basis of the "Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals" submitted by town planner Kendall to the Jordanian government in the mid-1960s.[7] Sometimes referred to as the plan of 1964,[8] it was actually only adopted in 1966, just one year before the war and the Israeli military occupation of East Jerusalem.[9] The 1963 plan has since become a historical document, kept in the private archives of the former Jordanian minister and urban planner Ahmad Dukhgan.[10] Worth noting, in the 1960s in Jordan, Western-trained Jordanian planners such as Ahmad Dukhgan began to take the lead in regional and country planning within the Ministry of the Interior for Municipal and Rural Affairs, thus slowly easing the dependance on the British planners and experts who had been commissioned in the 1950s in the framework of the UN's technical assistance program. In this respect, the continued reliance on a British planner in Jerusalem represents an exception to the rule within the Jordanian planning practice of the 1960s.

Considering planning as "an arm of the modern nation-state,"[11] we aim to highlight the broad lines of the planning proposals put forth in 1963 and place them in their historical and political context. British Mandate-era plans form an important background for analyzing the underlying approach particularly to the Old City of Jerusalem,[12] while Amman – as the political center of the Jordanian state encompassing the West Bank and East Jerusalem – constitutes another crucial point of reference. Due to time constraints, this article cannot speak to the debates around these plans in Jerusalem and Amman, either on the level of the municipality or on the level of the government, but we hope that future research will be able to build on the modest groundwork proposed here.

Despite the stifling division of the city, the 1963 plan set out to turn Jerusalem into a "complete city, with a balance among all of its functions."[13] On the social level, new residential neighborhoods were to play a crucial role in improving the quality of life for some Jerusalemites, while the dismantling of informal housing areas in the Old City entailed resettlement schemes without the same standards for others. On the political level, the plan emphasized the civic and cultural role of the city while furthering British Mandate-era conceptions of Jerusalem as a place defined by its religious centrality. Building on the 1963 plan, the 1966 town scheme subsequently developed by Kendall added an important shift concerning the role of Jerusalem as a socio-economic hub for the West Bank.

## Jerusalem under Jordanian Administration

Jerusalem's division and the military occupation of the western part of the city in 1948 left only 11 percent of the municipal area of the city under the control of Jordan, which officially annexed the eastern part of the city along with the rest of the West Bank in 1950.[14] As Michael Dumper points out, Jordanian policies concerning East Jerusalem were primarily concerned with integrating the city into the kingdom.[15] The city held an important place in Jordanian politics from 1948 onwards, as did its holy places. Jordan sought to establish the legitimacy of its control, despite continued calls for internationalization. In this spirit, King Abdallah created the position of "Custodian of the Holy Places" in 1950, which became part of the responsibilities of the governor of Jerusalem after 1952.[16] In 1955, King Husayn split the governor position in two: the custodian (*muhafiz*) was now in charge of the city and the holy places, whereas the governor (*mutasarrif*) was in charge of the district of Jerusalem, extending to neighboring towns such as Bethlehem.[17]

This change occurred at a moment when calls increased in the Jordanian press and parliament for declaring Jerusalem the capital of Jordan or at least its second capital, as analyzed by Kimberly Katz.[18] There was a sense of urgency ever since the Israeli government moved the president's official residence to the city in 1952, which meant that diplomatic credentials had to be presented in West Jerusalem.[19] When the British and U.S. ambassadors did so in 1954, Arab media outlets began to speculate about an upcoming move of the Jordanian foreign ministry to Jerusalem, a move that never actually happened.[20] In 1960, however, Jordan's parliament was convened in Jerusalem and on this exceptional and highly symbolic occasion, King Husayn welcomed the members of parliament to the "second capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."[21]

As early as December 1948, four months before Jordan's official annexation, a municipal council under Jordanian control had been created for East Jerusalem.[22] A decade later, just before the municipal elections in 1959, the city was granted the status of *amana* (trusteeship), making Jerusalem the only city in the kingdom to hold this title aside from Amman. That same year, the government also decided to build a royal palace in Jerusalem,[23] the concrete skeleton of which still stands today in Bayt Hanina, a stark reminder of the interruption of all Jordanian plans for Jerusalem in June 1967.

The larger political context of the 1963 plan is thus constituted by the status that the Jordanian state attributed to Jerusalem, a status forged by the need to react to unilateral Israeli attempts to change the city's status in contravention of international law. The small size of the territory and the absence of vital urban infrastructure was another crucial factor influencing the development of the eastern part of the city during the years of Jordanian administration: the main water reservoir, for instance, was in the western part of the city.[24] In the words of Ruhi al-Khatib, mayor from 1957 to 1967, the situation in the city was dire in 1949: "Arab East Jerusalem was confined to the part inside the city walls and a few residential centers falling east, north, and south of the city. . . . Our heritage from the Mandate Government in this part of Jerusalem was a distressed city of shaking buildings, a paralyzed commerce and industry, devoid of any financial resources and without a government, water, or electricity."[25]

The demographics of the eastern part of the city had also been heavily impacted by the loss of the western neighborhoods and by the loss of the status as capital. Emigration was on the rise, since employment prospects had worsened. As Dumper writes of the situation:

> This emigration can be attributed partly to continuing difficulties over the provision of water and electricity supplies, partly to a Christian Arab exodus, and partly to the development of Amman as the political, administrative, and commercial center of the Kingdom at the expense of Jerusalem, which drew away the professional and middle classes of the city.[26]

This was the case in particular for professionals who had worked for the Mandate administration before 1948 and who now saw similar opportunities only in Amman. In the 1955 "Final Report of the United Nations Field Town Planner Jordan," Amman was already described as the epicenter of Jordan. Aside from its function as an administrative center housing both the royal palaces and the government, it was also the "business center of the kingdom, serving as a clearing house for the country's merchandise."[27] Although in 1959–60, there were discussions about building government offices in Jerusalem and thereby bolstering its status as the second capital of Jordan, they were never implemented and are absent from the 1963 plan.[28]

## Urban Planning in Unnatural Circumstances

The urban plan for East Jerusalem, prepared by Chief Planner Harry A. Anthony and Project Planner Warkentin Schroeter, includes a preliminary survey, topographic maps, a comprehensive concept study (including climate issues and social and economic life), planning proposals and policy, and effectuation recommendations. This study had been requested by the municipality of Jerusalem, which – during its course – also asked for advice on "urgent & immediate problems calling for interim solutions."[29] This mention of urgent problems hints at the precarious context in which this urban plan was commissioned, and at the continuing predicament of a municipality which could generally only propose interim solutions.

The document's authors clearly express the difficulty of planning a city that has been divided and therefore lacking in vital infrastructure.[30] In their words, "modern Jerusalem is largely the product of unnatural circumstances."[31] Nonetheless, they set out to enable this divided city to function as though it was complete.
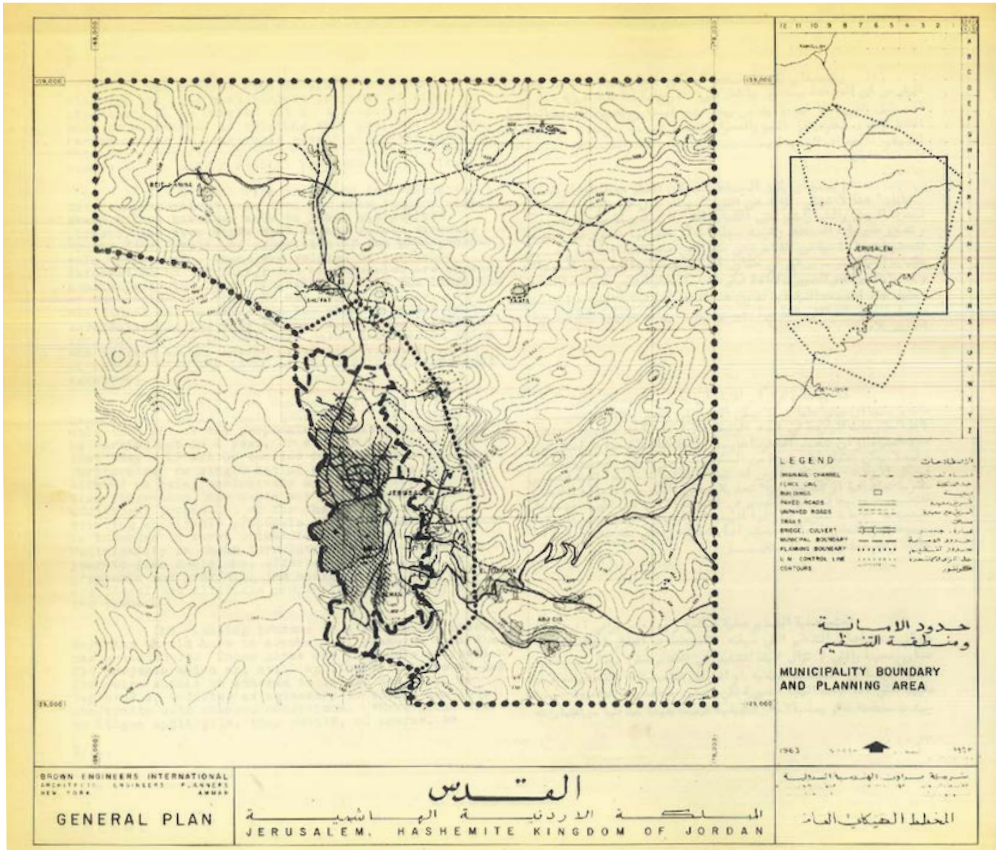


Figure 2. Municipal Boundary and Planning Area in "Jerusalem General Plan," 1963.

One of the first measures called for in the plan is the extension of the planning area, which counted approximately twelve square kilometers in 1963, with a municipal boundary of about six square kilometers. Noting that much construction in Jerusalem is located beyond the existing planning area, including the villages of Silwan (which was also within the municipal boundaries), al-Tur, al-'Isawiyya, al-'Ayzariya, and a small portion of Shu'fat, they considered that the new limits of the planning area should also include Bayt Hanina, 'Anata, Abu Dis, and the rest of al-Tur, Shu'fat, al-'Ayzariya, and al-'Isawiyya, adding up to a total planning area of seventy-five square kilometers. The municipality had already filed a request with the Jordanian government to recognize such a planning area officially, but no change to the existing planning area of twelve square kilometers had been approved by the time the plan was handed over.[32]

The almost forty-page concept study of the plan covers many factors including climate, existing land use, population, housing, health, sanitation, economic activities, education, recreation, religion, culture, traffic, transportation, utilities, and administration. While all of these topics deserve further study, we will limit ourselves here to a brief analysis of the demographic data and projections since they are closely linked with the question of land use and control.

In 1961, East Jerusalem counted 60,488 inhabitants, of which sixty percent lived in the Old City. The area that the plan calls the "inner circle of villages" consisted of Abu Dis, Sawahira, Shu'fat, Sur Bahir, al-Tur, al-'Ayzariya, and al-'Isawiyya and contained an additional 18,401 inhabitants. The "outer circle of villages" including Qatanna, Qalandiya, Bayt Hanina, and Mishimishi, was home to 28,059 inhabitants. These three zones taken together constituted the "Jerusalem Census Subdistrict" with a total of 106,948 inhabitants, which are the data underlying the proposed planning area in the document. Unfortunately, none of this zoning is clearly apparent from the maps.

The authors note the unusually high proportion of children and young people in Jerusalem in particular (as in Jordan in general). Schooling for boys and girls was on the rise, while Jerusalem's school system was already overloaded. More than half of the seventy-seven elementary, preparatory, and secondary schools in the city and the surrounding area were overcrowded to varying degrees, leading the authors to call for massive investment in the construction of schools and playgrounds.[33]

In Jerusalem, men between twenty and sixty years constituted less than one-fifth of the population which, according to the authors, put much pressure on them to ensure the livelihood of the rest of the population.[34] The demographic analysis also shows the relatively small size of this generation, almost 30 percent smaller than the previous generation, for men and women alike. The authors propose several possible reasons for this phenomenon – low birth rate, high infant mortality maybe due to epidemics of children's diseases[35] – but from a socio-historical perspective, additional possible causes could be the impact of the brutal British repression of the 1936–39 revolt and that of the 1948 war on this generation of young Palestinians. This was also a generation which – having founded families – was likely to have chosen to leave the city after 1948 when employment prospects began to dwindle drastically.

The planning proposals constitute the second half of the general plan, with twenty-five "sample administrative policy recommendations . . . offered as the basis for setting the course for systematic enhancement of Jerusalem."[36] The overall land use plan divides the area into the following districts: Old City, civic center, urban center, transportation center, Mount of Olives, Silwan, resettlement housing, hospital, urban residential, medium density, low density residential and, last but not least, an "open landscape district." These divisions show the overall approach to the city, setting the Old City apart from the rest, along with the Mount of Olives, while revealing a functionalist approach to the rest of the city, with particular considerations for civic life, housing, education, transportation, and health.

# Residential Neighborhoods as Safe Havens?

The plan calls for the creation of new residential neighborhoods with improved housing standards for different income groups. Based on the 1961 housing census in Jerusalem (counting 10,119 households within the municipality's boundaries), the authors estimated that the average household size was almost six persons. They also found that the homes built after 1955 were primarily single-family dwellings and therefore based their own housing concept on this approach.[37]
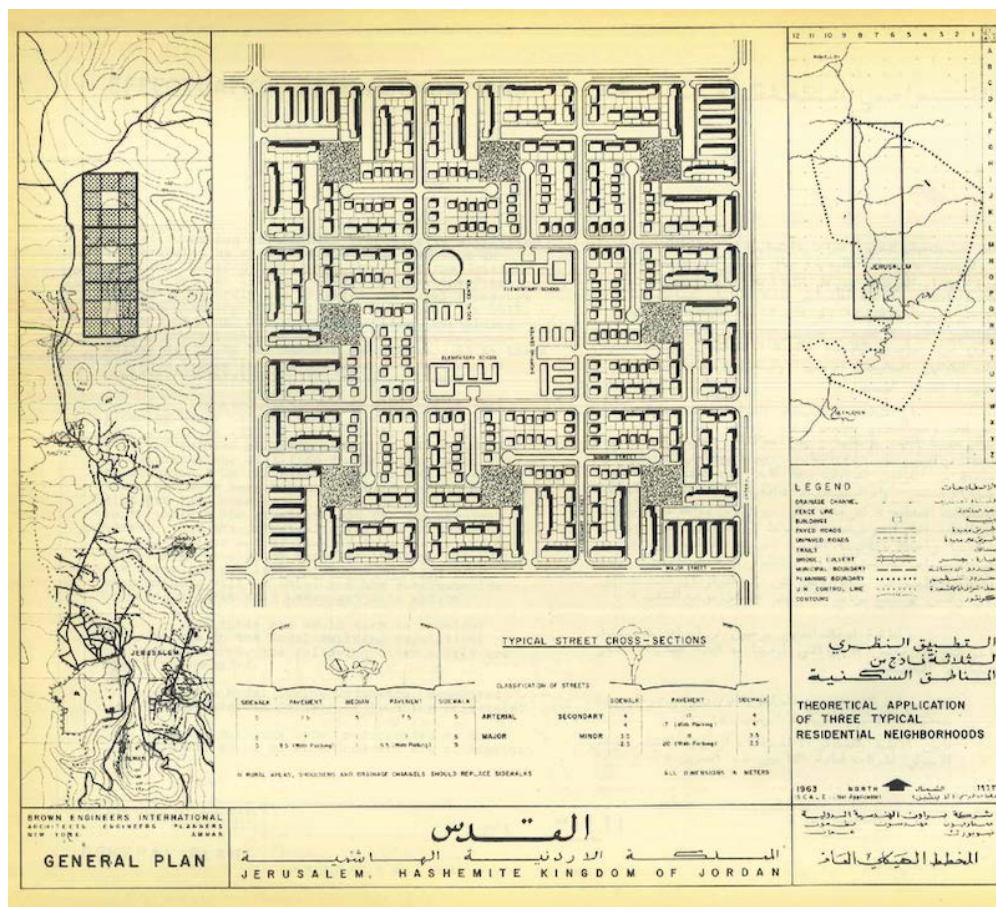


Figure 3. Theoretical application of three typical residential neighborhoods in "Jerusalem General Plan," 1963.

The concept of the residential neighborhood set out in the 1963 plan for East Jerusalem is of particular interest. Conceived for five thousand to ten thousand persons, it would be characterized by the absence of major streets within its limits and the presence of a "central area for elementary schools, neighborhood stores, places

of worship, a center of assembly, and a clinic, all arranged in a campus-like manner, with an abundance of trees, large playing fields, and with smaller recreational areas closer to the houses for the smaller children." The authors proposed a large square neighborhood (made up of nine small squares) to maximize land use, considering the provision of open areas for playgrounds and other public facilities as a means of reducing the size of individual parcels for houses.[38]

This entire concept takes into account the limited space on which East Jerusalem could develop and the general situation of the city, but nonetheless tries to create an ideal setting for families and children:

> Recognizing that the capacity of such a neighborhood would be about 8,000 people, it would require eight nursery schools. Therefore, a public open space, or playground, of about four dunums has been set aside and reserved at the center of each of the eight residential squares. It will further be noted that all of the tiny children living within the square are able to walk to their playground or nursery school without having to cross a single street. [39]

In spite of the wholly unnatural circumstances in which inhabitants of East Jerusalem had to lead their lives, this plan set out to create safe havens for families with the utmost sensibility to the needs of small children.

There is a dissonance between these plans and the resettlement schemes for Old City residents referred to in the plan. The residents of overcrowded areas of the Old City were to be resettled in "basic shell public housing units (leaving the interior finishing to be completed by the occupants)," a proposal of a very different standard of living, far from the concept of the integrated residential neighborhood that sought to cater to people's daily needs, from childcare to grocery shopping. The stated objective was to "facilitate the rehousing of the inhabitants in the Old City of destroyed or deteriorating housing and temporary structures which have been erected in courtyards, in order to further facilitate the removal of such temporary structures and the reconstruction of such destroyed areas."[40] There are no clear indications as to the location of these resettlement areas in the text, but one of the maps shows the western part of al-'Isawiyya, south of Shu'fat, as the primary site, whereas the eastern part of al-'Isawiyya was designated as an "urban residential district."[41]

While there are no details of the type of urban setting this resettlement area was supposed to represent, this approach to resettlement in housing units providing only the bare minimum of comfort resembles that concerning the resettlement of inhabitants of the informal Mu'askar camp in the Old City's Hay al-Sharaf area. Planned and executed by UNRWA, the housing provided in the newly created camp in Shu'fat in the mid-1960s was among "the cheapest, smallest and lowest quality" of UNRWA shelters in use during that period.[42]

## Succession: A New Plan Building on Older Plans

A section entitled "Understanding the General Plan" sets out the view on which the plan is based, combining "sound principles of planning" with an effort to reply to the "common aspirations of the populace."[43] As a long-range general plan, it ambitioned to serve as "a guide to the Municipality in their formulation of day-to-day and year-to-year decisions," while taking into account all the plans that have preceded it,[44] particularly the 1944 Kendall plan whose philosophies, standards and regulations are considered just as applicable today as they were then.[45]
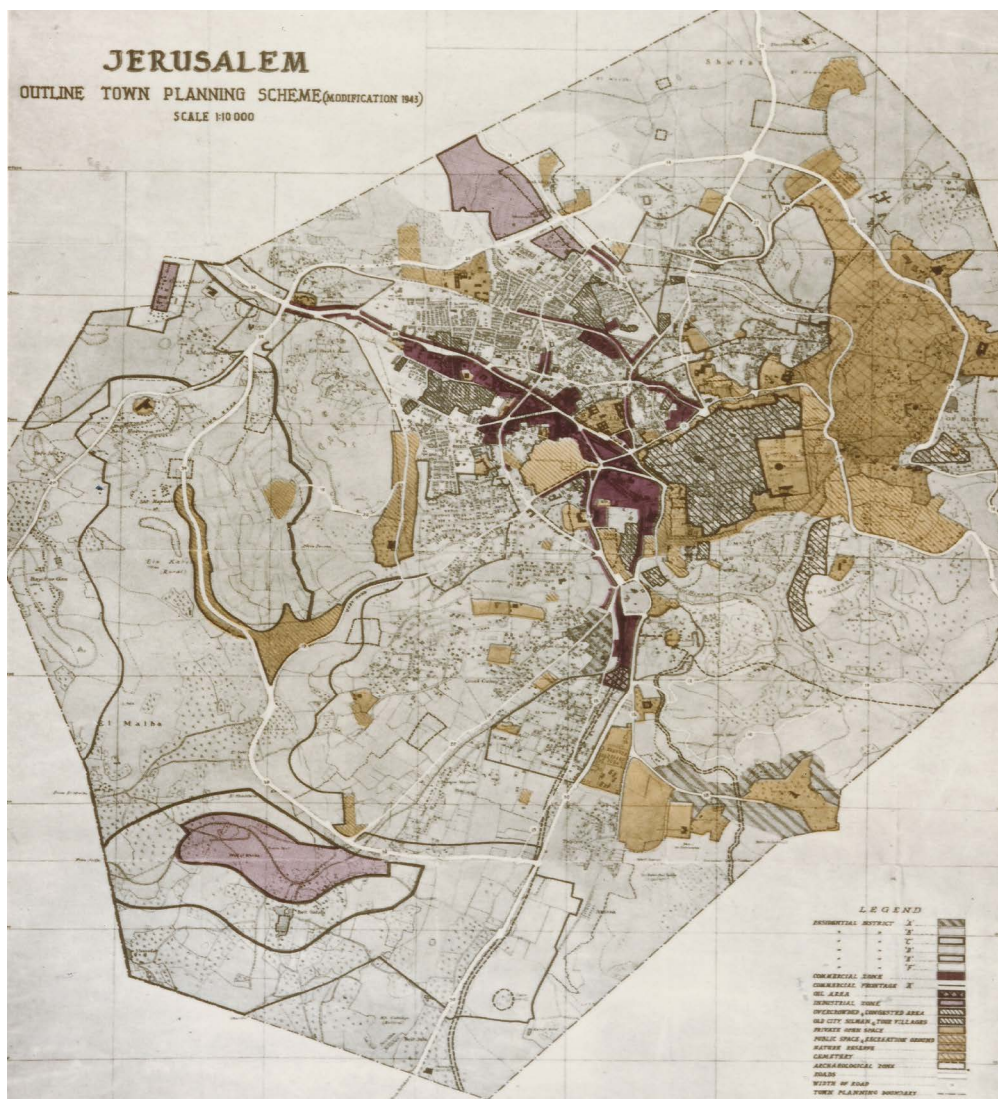


Figure 4. "Jerusalem Outline Town Planning Scheme," Henry Kendall's Jerusalem Zoning Plan 1944. Jerusalem Municipality archive, 1 January 1944, online at (wikipedia.org) bit.ly/3WymYje (accessed 1 November 2022).

Indeed, the first truly comprehensive plan for Jerusalem had been proposed in 1944 by Henry Kendall who imagined a capital city "with administrative, political, and scientific-educational functions rather than with industrial ones."[46] A PASSIA analysis of this plan describes it as "a comprehensive plan . . . which envisioned reasonably equitable development to both the east and west of the Old City. His 1944 plan provided for modernization along industrial and urban lines based on the arterial routes leading west towards the coastal plain as well as those running north-south to serve the Palestinian markets and towns of what would become the West Bank."[47]

The 1963 plan reproduces the broad lines of the 1944 plan while adapting the surface on which it was deployed, now reduced to only 11 percent of what constituted the city's space before 1948. In 1963, the main zone of development comprised only 2.5 square kilometers, including one square kilometer in the Old City. The other significant difference between the 1944 and the 1963 plan is the loss of political function, which Jerusalem no longer held under Jordanian rule. The 1963 plan does, however, place a particular emphasis on the civic and cultural life of the city, a point we will return to later.

The 1963 plan calls for several major development projects, including the establishment of a new industrial area outside the city for the relocation of heavy industries and "objectionable service activities" (in 'Anata) which recalls the approach of all British Mandate planners, including Kendall. In terms of major infrastructure, the creation of additional water supplies and an obligation for cisterns to be included in any new building plans echo the precarious hydraulic supply of East Jerusalem, which, on the other hand, suffered from sewage flow originating in the western part of the city. Last but not least, the plan also advocates the enlargement of Jerusalem Airport to handle jet aircraft.[48] The Jerusalem airport located in Qalandiya to the north of the city was indeed the airport used by two thirds of all tourists heading to Jordan in the mid-1960s.[49]

The enlargement of the Jerusalem Airport is linked to the important place attributed to the promotion of tourism in this plan, and recognizes its crucial role for the economics of the city and the livelihoods of its inhabitants, while asserting that the latters' needs should come first.[50] In the realm of tourism, there was a certain reversal of roles between Jerusalem and Amman, hinted at in the 1955 report of the UN Field Town Planner Jordan mentioned earlier: "Amman can be considered as a tourist centre, being the transit place for visitors and pilgrims bound for Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, and Jerash."[51] Although designated as a tourist center, Amman appears here mainly as a transit station for tourists heading primarily to Jerusalem and the West Bank, making it secondary to Jerusalem.

For the plan's authors, Jerusalem was at a crossroads where it still could "choose between organized development and metropolitan sprawl."[52] Given the limited space and resources available to the city, they advocated for organized development, which was also very much in the spirit of earlier British plans that had divided the city into various functional zones, albeit in very different political circumstances.

## *Déjà vu*: Jerusalem as a Religious Capital and a Garden City

The stated objective of the 1963 plan was "to assure the preservation and enhancement of the Holy City, and to relate the unique role of this old and venerated human settlement to the family of other great cities throughout the world." The authors believe that this particularity of the city would assure it support for its preservation and development "for the entire Moslem and Christian world can rightfully be called upon to render assistance to this religious capital."[53]

The tone was thereby set: Jerusalem was defined as a holy city and as a unique witness of the history of humanity while being destined to join the world's other great cities through a special regime of development. This is particularly evident in the status attributed to the Old City that was considered apart from the rest of the urban entity, having "resisted modernization up to now."[54]

The authors note that the lack of space and upkeep in the Old City imply insufficient sunlight and air for inhabitants and an atmosphere of decay in the streets.[55] They therefore call for the removal of "temporary structures in courtyards," whose inhabitants would be resettled in shell public housing units.[56] They do not provide the number of structures or the number of persons who would be part of this permanent resettlement program, nor the areas of the Old City that were primarily concerned.[57] The existence of these temporary structures was, of course, intimately linked to the ethnic cleansing of the western neighborhoods of Jerusalem in 1948, which forced around thirty thousand Palestinian inhabitants of these neighborhood to seek refuge in the Old City and the neighborhoods on its east, as well as in the rest of the West Bank and surrounding Arab countries, namely Jordan.[58]

This concern for living conditions within the Old City is coupled with the ambition to preserve the "present character of the Old City with firm architectural control and judicious restriction on building heights."[59] The following measures echo the ideas of Ronald Storrs, Charles Ashbee, Patrick Geddes, and other British planners, while bringing them up to date in terms of technological advances:

> Encouragement for the repair and restoration of oriel windows and balconies overhanging public streets. Encouragement for the removal of corrugated iron shop canopies and their replacement with softly-colored canvas awnings. Installation of traditional tile street names signs on all corner buildings. Reconstruction of destroyed areas along lines similar to the original. Systematic enhancement of the many exceptionally fine architectural details in the Old City by the removal or re-arrangement of encumbrances, such as signs, posters, wires, and pipes. Requirement that roof-top TV antennas be prohibited in the Old City and that future TV users be supplied from a common public antenna system.[60]

All of the above measures result from a heritage-centered approach to the Old City, meant to remain true, or rather to become truer, to its medieval architecture. Signs of modernity are discarded to preserve the Old City as an open-air museum – well

ordered, but not partaking in the contemporary development of the rest of the city in any visible way.[61] The ideas of British planners resonate strongly in this approach. Still, there were also some original measures in the 1963 plan, such as the transformation of the Pool of Hezekiah into a children's playground with a swimming pool.

The other echo of British planning tendencies can be found in the next section about "gardens and vistas."[62] The authors call for the protection of the skylines, particularly the Old City walls and gates, the Mount of Olives and the minarets, towers, and domes of the many religious buildings. They urge the extension of public gardens around the Old City wall, adding to the existing green belt – created in the early Mandate period – and the transformation of archeological sites into public garden areas and cemeteries into small forests.[63] The presence of antiquities should thus serve as a basis for additional open areas with trees, paths and benches, for the benefit of residents, tourists and pilgrims.[64] They consider the public garden begun around Damascus Gate as a good example to follow.[65]

In the concept study section of the 1963 plan, the authors paint the vision of the Jerusalem they were aspiring to create:

> In the usual sense of the term, Jerusalem has no parks. But in a unique sense, all of Jerusalem has a park-like character. . . . In dreaminess and poetic thought, one can visualize the Haram-area, following the advent of an abundant water supply for Jerusalem, with broad expanses of lawns evenly rolled, walkways carefully trimmed, an occasional well-tended flower garden, and shade trees throughout. Above this carpet one sees the magnificence of the architecture of the many domes, minarets, prayer niches, and arcades growing out of the dignified stone pavements upon which man walks and worships, as nowhere else this side of Paradise.[66]

The inherent link between the notion of a holy city and the emphasis on green spaces is tangible in this paragraph, made explicit in reference to paradise. Beyond the space of the Noble Sanctuary, all of the city was tinted in green, with afforestation efforts along the slopes of the Mount of Olives and planting of street trees in conjunction with construction of sidewalks.[67] The authors imagine Jerusalem as one of the world's garden cities,[68] provided that future development follows the regulations proposed in the plan:

> The vast open spaces now easily accessible to the population will disappear as the city expands – unless areas are consciously designated and set aside as permanent open spaces. The broad vistas from most parts of the city will disappear – unless building heights and volumes are judiciously controlled.[69]

This vision echoes the ideas that guided Henry Kendall in his twelve-year tenure as town planning adviser under the British Mandate. He emphasized the presence of open spaces, careful zoning, firm elevation controls, and building use conformity, and was concerned with the country's "aesthetic importance" and its ancient monuments, convinced that planning in Palestine should be more protective than constructive.[70]

## Jerusalem as a Civic Center and a Locus of Cultural Leadership: A Possible Niche?

The overall land use plan featured in the 1963 plan divided the city according to various functions and characteristics. The Old City and the Mount of Olives were set apart as monumental sites of historical interest framed by green spaces. The urban center was the modern commercial heart of the city, whereas the transportation center district to be created would serve the city's inhabitants as well as tourists. The civic center district involved the construction of a municipal administrative center and auditorium west of Nablus Road and the reservation of the area between Salah al-Din Road and Nablus Road as a predominantly open area for institutions and cultural activities.

Moreover, the plan called for the construction of an amphitheater outside the southeast corner of the Old City wall and for that of a "National University" near the airport "to assure and maintain the cultural leadership for Jerusalem throughout the Middle East."[71] This university was envisioned as a four-year university[72] and was an integral part of a strategy of enhancing the position of Jerusalem in terms of "cultural leadership and prominence within the Nation."[73]

While the absence of government institutions clearly signified Jerusalem's lack of official political status, this plan seems to attribute a different sort of leadership role to the city, namely in the realms of culture and higher education. Was this then the possible niche that Jerusalem was to hold within the Hashemite Kingdom? Coupled with the civic center district concept, this approach seems to be an attempt to attribute a particular status to the city and to its inhabitants.

In the section devoted to the city's administration, the authors call for the establishment of a planning department within the municipality and for the primacy of local planning initiatives: "Ideally, planning should be initiated at the local level. Following this local initiation of a plan, a review could subsequently be made at the national level to ascertain that the general policies and programs established for the country as a whole have been incorporated therein."[74] Read together with the idea of establishing a civic center district, this recommendation hints at the importance the plan's authors attribute to the municipality's role for the future of the city.

## Kendall's 1966 Town Scheme: Jerusalem as "the Socio-Economic Hub of the West Bank"

Based on the 1963 plan, town planner Kendall produced a town scheme that he submitted to the municipal council and the Jordanian government as part of the "Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals." Kendall's four-page introduction to the 1966 town scheme reads like an extremely objective and pragmatic document and could have been written about any city in the world. It begins with a very sober description of Jerusalem's situation after 1948, without any reference to the war or the division of the city. Indeed, the approach is technical and neutral, while in the 1963 plan, the particular predicaments of the city are identified as the direct results of the division of the city.
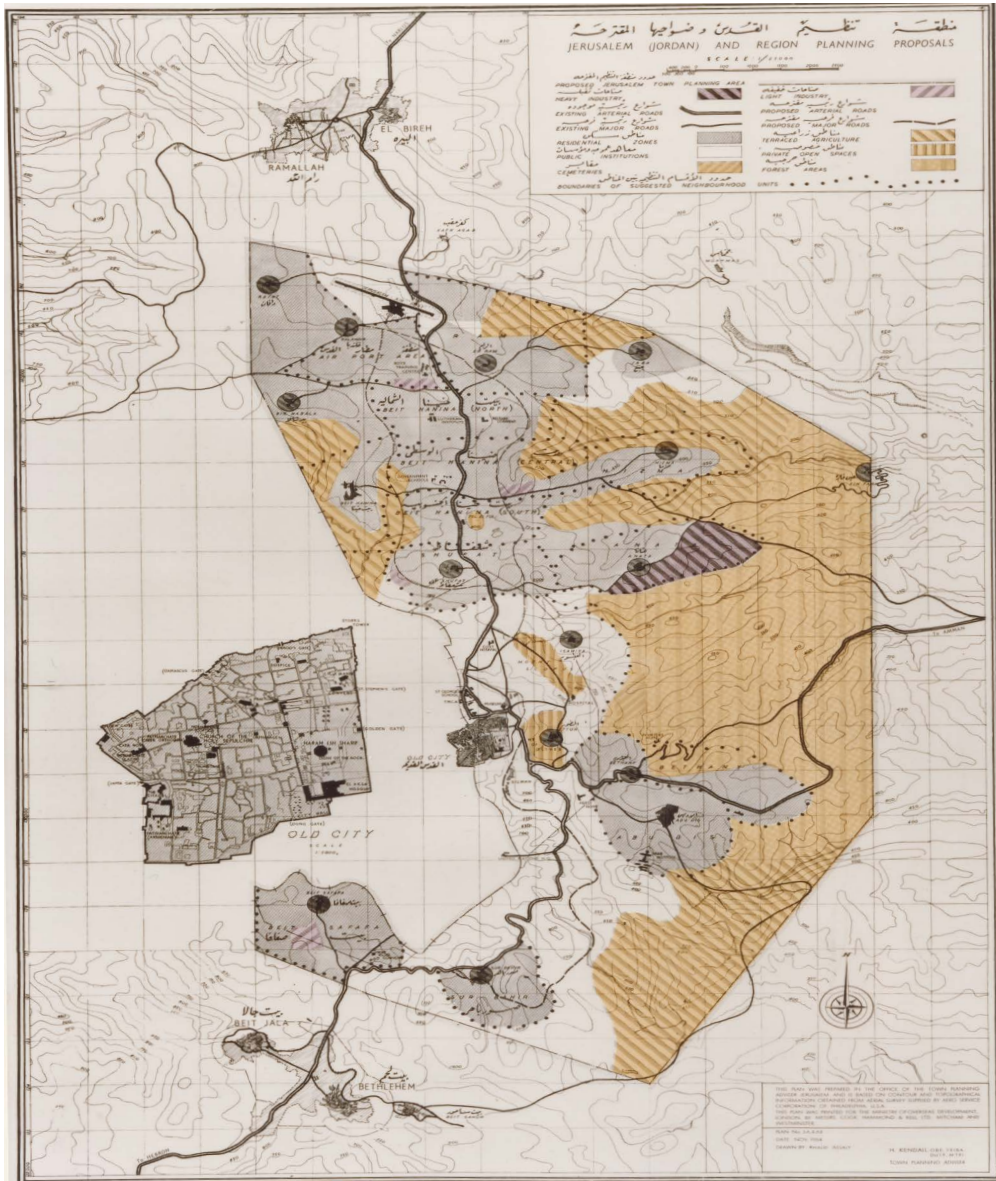
Figure 5. "Jerusalem (Jordan) and Region Planning Proposals, 1964," Wikimedia Commons, online at (commons.wikimedia.org) bit.ly/3FKyZMA (accessed 29 October 2022).

Kendall's town scheme confirms the planning goals set by the 1963 study, but goes beyond the enlargement of the planning area foreseen by the latter. Kendall recommends a 139-square-kilometer planning area including the Jerusalem airport in the north, the 'Ayn Farah spring and the junction of the Jericho road in the east, as well as Sur Bahir in the south. Kendall explains that this northward focus of development

is the result of the main road linking Jerusalem to Bethlehem and Hebron being "cut," but again does not refer to the occupation or the division of the city. He advocates for the afforestation of the area east of Jerusalem, expanding the existing forest reserve in order to preserve the city's view (*sic!*) from the road linking Amman to Jerusalem. As for the four-square-kilometer residential areas to be developed, he projects the first ones in the airport area, al-Ram, Bayt Hanina (north), Bayt Hanina (central), Bayt Hanina (south), Shu'fat, 'Anata, Bethany, Bethany/al-'Ayzariya (east), Abu Dis, and Sur Bahir. At a second stage, such neighborhoods should also be developed in Rafat, Bir Nabala, and Hizma.

The Kendall town plan "posited a single urban development scheme for the population centers lying between Bethlehem and Ramallah, with the Old City and existing municipal area at its center," according to a PASSIA analysis.[75] It also had an important economic dimension:

> By placing within the city limits the airport to the north, as well as a ring of industrial zones, the Kendall Plan not only stood to boost the flagging economic life of the city, but to return it to its rightful and historic status as the socio-economic hub of Palestinian life. Direct and immediate development was extended to the limits of the city so as to place the towns of Bethlehem and Ramallah within the remit of anticipated growth. In this sense, the scheme took up the challenge of recreating an integrated and cohesive Palestinian development base for the whole West Bank. Indeed, while the plan incorporated the existing centrality of the Amman link to the east, it simultaneously presented a distinctly Palestinian view of Jerusalem's future, acknowledging the importance of communication lines to the Jordanian capital, while drawing the outlying West Bank economy and infrastructure back into harmony with the Palestinian capital's development.[76]

This analysis emphasizes an important aspect of the Kendall plan: indeed, this plan was a compromise between the ambition to incorporate East Jerusalem and the West Bank into the Hashemite Kingdom and thus subordinate Jerusalem to Amman, and the necessity to bolster the status and economic viability of the truncated former capital of Mandate Palestine within its immediate environment, the West Bank.

## Conclusion

The 1963 plan commissioned by the municipal council of East Jerusalem owes much to the older plans devised by British town planners, just like Israeli plans after the military occupation of the eastern part of the city in 1967.[77] As Michael Dumper points out, "The Jordanian government was anxious to continue the planning priorities laid down by the British and, in the main, the basic outlines persisted. It is perhaps ironic that as a result of this policy, it was an Arab government that continued the preservation of the Old City as a cultural monument."[78]

Setting the issue of the Old City aside for a moment, it is clear that according to the 1963 urban plan and the Kendall town scheme based on it, Jerusalem was to become a very green city, foreshadowing more recent international planning orientations gaining momentum because of the acute climate crisis. In some ways, this is the latent image of Jerusalem we can distill from this plan, an image that has been holding sway for a century now, ever since the McLean plan. While aesthetically pleasing and ecologically beneficial, a question remains concerning the place of the inhabitants of the city and their right to shape the environment in which they live "as real people with real lives," to use Rana Barakat's words.[79] The plan, however, also foresees the provision of additional housing in residential neighborhoods conceived for families and children, addressing a vital need of Jerusalemites, which remains unanswered until today. Overall, it seems that the plan tried to strike a balance between the needs of Jerusalemites and those of visitors coming from abroad.

The plans of 1963 and the town scheme adopted in 1966 were interrupted by war, military occupation, and colonial policies of ethnic cleansing and expropriation. Not knowing what was ahead, the authors of the plan set a large horizon for the implementation of their proposals: "A recommendation need not necessarily be feasible before it is included in the overall plan. If the objective is a desirable one, the time may arrive when its implementation will become feasible."[80]

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**Endnotes**

1  Nir Hasson, "Over 100 Palestinian Families in East Jerusalem Face Demolition of Their Homes," *Haaretz*, 30 November 2021. For an analysis of the policies of the Israeli municipality of Jerusalem and for current planning schemes, see Francesco Chiodelli, "The Jerusalem Master Plan: Planning into the Conflict," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 51 (Autumn 2012): 5–20.

2  Vincent Lemire, *Au pied du mur, Vie et mort du quartier maghrébin de Jérusalem, 1187–1967* (Paris: Seuil, 2022), 153.

3  "The Jerusalem General Plan, submitted to the Mayor and City Council of Jerusalem by Brown Engineers International, New York and Amman, 1963" (hereafter "Jerusalem General Plan"), 6.

4  According to Michael Dumper, the municipal boundaries created in 1927 mostly included neighborhoods and villages located to the west of Jerusalem; Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 27.

5  PASSIA, "The Kendall Town Scheme 1966,"

online at www.passia.org/maps/view/58 (accessed 29 October 2022).

6   See Haneen Naamneh, "A Municipality Seeking Refuge: Jerusalem Municipality in 1948," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (Spring 2019): 110–21.

7   The authors wish to thank Vincent Lemire for providing them with some images of this document.

8   Wendy Pullan and Maximilian Sternberg, "The Making of Jerusalem's 'Holy Basin'," *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (April 2012): 38. Elisha Efrat (former head of national and regional plans in the Israeli Ministry of the Interior) and Allen Noble present that plan as follows: "A master plan for Arab Jerusalem was promulgated in 1964. Great emphasis was placed on improving living conditions and standards of public services. New residential areas were proposed to the north; the ones already on the northern edge of the Old City were converted to commercial use to supplement the activities in the Old City. Other features of the plan were an industrial zone in the Anata locality and arterial roads to Amman, Ramallah, and Bethlehem. The plan was the work of Henry Kendall." Elisha Efrat and Allen G. Noble, "Planning Jerusalem," *American Geographical Society* 78, no. 4 (October 1988): 398.

9   PASSIA, "Kendall Town Scheme 1966."

10  This plan does not currently seem to be available in any public archives in Jordan.

11  Oren Yiftachel, "Planning and Social Control: Exploring the 'Dark Side'," *Journal of Planning Literature* 12 (1998): 397.

12  For an overall analysis of British planning in Jerusalem, see Rana Barakat, "Urban Planning, Colonialism, and the Pro-Jerusalem Society," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 65 (Spring 2016): 22–34, and Nicholas E. Roberts, "Dividing Jerusalem: British Urban Planning in the Holy City," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42, no. 4 (2013): 7–26.

13  "Jerusalem General Plan," 51.

14  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 91.

15  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 33.

16  Kimberly Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Places* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 74–79.

17  Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*, 83.

18  Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*, 85–88.

19  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 33.

20  Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*, 85–86.

21  Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*, 88.

22  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 33. See Naamneh, "A Municipality Seeking Refuge."

23  Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem*, 87. See the cover of this issue.

24  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 91.

25  Rochelle Davis, "The Growth of the Western Communities, 1917–1948," in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighborhoods and Their Fate in the War*, ed. Salim Tamari (Jerusalem and Bethlehem: Institute for Palestine Studies and Badil Resource Center, 1999), 52.

26  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 69.

27  Gerald King "The Final Report of the United Nations Field Town Planner" (Jordan: United Nations, 1955), 1. See Myriam Ababsa, Norig Neveu, and Falestin Naïli, *Amman's Social History through Photography* (Beirut: Presses de l'Ifpo, forthcoming).

28  Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 33.

29  "Jerusalem General Plan," 3.

30  "Jerusalem General Plan," 7. This situation even rendered the production of maps arduous, since the topographic survey was limited due to security constraints for aerial photographs, for example; "Jerusalem General Plan," 10.

31  "Jerusalem General Plan," 14.

32  "Jerusalem General Plan."

33  "Jerusalem General Plan," 28–33.

34  "Jerusalem General Plan," 19.

35  "Jerusalem General Plan," 22.

36  "Jerusalem General Plan," 63.

37  "Jerusalem General Plan," 24. It is interesting to place this census in the context of the housing situation of Jordan (including the West Bank), analyzed in the report on the "Economic Development of Jordan," 1957. This report highlighted the inadequacy of housing and public facilities and the high population densities in significant districts. Districts like Hebron, Jerusalem, and Nablus were described as highly populated, with old towns in which "lack of security in the past has contributed to crowded conditions." For example, in the district of Jerusalem, the Housing Standards of 1952 show an average of nineteen persons per structure, while Amman had eight persons per structure ("Economic Development of Jordan, Report of a Mission Organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the Request of the Government of Jordan," 1957, 24), and this after having absorbed tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees as a result of the 1948 Nakba. The housing situation was thus particularly dire in East Jerusalem and in

the Jerusalem district, a situation which can be largely attributed to the overcrowding of the Old City, exacerbated after the 1948 war.

38 "Jerusalem General Plan," 134.
39 "Jerusalem General Plan," 35.
40 "Jerusalem General Plan," 78.
41 Land Use Plan, "Jerusalem General Plan," 69.
42 Kjersti G. Berg, "Mu'askar and Shu'fat: Retracing the Histories of two Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 88 (Winter 2021): 40.
43 "Jerusalem General Plan," 4.
44 "Jerusalem General Plan," 6.
45 "Jerusalem General Plan," 17.
46 Efrat and Noble, "Planning Jerusalem," 394.
47 PASSIA, "Kendall Town Scheme 1966."
48 "Jerusalem General Plan," 53.
49 Eldad Brin, "Gateway to the World: The Golden Age of Jerusalem Airport, 1948–1967," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 85 (Spring 2021): 65.
50 "Jerusalem General Plan," 27.
51 King, "Final Report of the United Nations Field Town Planner Jordan."
52 "Jerusalem General Plan," 52.
53 "Jerusalem General Plan," 52.
54 "Jerusalem General Plan," 14.
55 "Jerusalem General Plan," 15.
56 "Jerusalem General Plan," 60.
57 See the contribution of Maria Chiara Rioli and Vincent Lemire to this special issue which highlights the way these ideas became more concrete in the Kendall plan that built on the 1963 General Plan.
58 Rochelle Davis, "The Growth of the Western Communities," 52.
59 "Jerusalem General Plan," 59.
60 "Jerusalem General Plan," 60.
61 See Roberts, "Dividing Jerusalem," about the Mandate era approach.
62 See Wendy Pullan and Lefkos Kyriacou, "The Work of Charles Ashbee: Visions with Everyday City Spaces," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 39 (2009): 5–61.
63 "Jerusalem General Plan," 62.
64 "Jerusalem General Plan," 39.
65 "Jerusalem General Plan," 72. From 1929, the efforts of the town planning commission had concentrated on the city's walls and gates and on "the clearance of undesirable buildings." The latter occurred in several phases: in 1936, there was a wave of expropriations and subsequent demolition of buildings around Damascus Gate, and after the 1941 earthquake, stores outside Jaffa Gate were declared dangerous and were similarly expropriated for demolition (Barakat, "Urban Planning," 31).
66 "Jerusalem General Plan," 37.
67 "Jerusalem General Plan," 37.
68 "Jerusalem General Plan," 51.
69 "Jerusalem General Plan," 37–38.
70 Roza El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (London: Routledge, 2006), 48–51. The quest for a particular aesthetic of Jerusalem, largely inspired by biblical imaginaries, had been an important element of British policy in the city from the outset, leading to the preparation of six development plans. The first two urban development plans for the city were produced under the auspices of the Pro-Jerusalem Society founded by military governor Ronald Storrs. The town engineer of Alexandria, William H. McLean, prepared a scheme that set the "medieval" Old City apart from the rest of the city by surrounding it with a green belt; he did not propose any clear vision for the new city in the west, but it was to be the site of future development. The latter was outlined in the second urban scheme for Jerusalem, developed in 1919 by Patrick Geddes. Though initially conceived as a report on the McLean Plan by the Military Administration, Geddes focused his efforts on Jerusalem's Jewish suburbs and on Mount Scopus at the request of the Zionist Commission. Benjamin Hyman, "British Planners in Palestine, 1918–1936" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 1994), 51, 123–24. On Geddes, see Nazmi Jubeh, "Patrick Geddes: Luminary or Prophet of Demonic Planning?" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 80 (Winter 2019): 23–40.
71 "Jerusalem General Plan," 55.
72 "Jerusalem General Plan," 66.
73 "Jerusalem General Plan," 36.
74 "Jerusalem General Plan," 50.
75 PASSIA, "Kendall Town Scheme 1966."
76 PASSIA, "Kendall Town Scheme 1966."
77 Pullan and Kyriacou, "The Work of Charles Ashbee," 52.
78 Dumper, *Politics of Jerusalem*, 91–92.
79 Barakat, "Urban Planning," 22.
80 "Jerusalem General Plan," 51.

# Archives and Potentiality in Jordanian Jerusalem (1948–67)

Vincent Lemire
and Maria Chiara Rioli

**Abstract**

The history of Jerusalem through the Jordanian period is still largely unexplored by historiography. Generally overlooked and presented as an "immobile" or "declining" age, a mere transition between the Mandate rule and the Israeli occupation, Lemire and Rioli point out that instead it constitutes a dynamic phase of profound transformations and projects attempted by the public and private institutions in the city in the tragic aftermath of the war for Palestine. New studies have recently enlightened the life of the Jerusalem municipality during this period. This paper aims at focusing on three main aspects: first, can historians narrate a "potential history" of the Jordanian period? How would this "potential history" differ from that retraced during the late Ottoman and Mandate periods? Are Jerusalem's archives a "space of possibility"? Second, which expectations and projects, conflicts, and desires emerge from the city inhabitants, refugees, and institutions? Third, focusing on a specific neighborhood, al-Maghariba quarter, is this phase simply a period of "pre-destruction," to be analyzed under the somber light of the 1967 events, or rather a time of restoration and re-foundation, of tensions and impulses? Through these questions, the authors intend to propose some strands for social histories of the 1947–67 period, opening new itineraries to review a crucial phase of Jerusalem history.

**Keywords**

Jerusalem; Palestine; Israel; Jordan; archives; potential history; municipality; Harat al-Maghariba; UNRWA; Palestinian refugees.

The history of Jerusalem during the Jordanian period (1948–67) is still largely unexplored in the historiography of Palestine. This phase has been generally overlooked and presented as an "immobile" or "declining" age, a mere transition between Mandate rule and the Israeli occupation of the Old City and East Jerusalem. Far from these reductionist and essentialist depictions, instead it constitutes a dynamic phase of profound transformations and projects undertaken by public and private institutions in the city in the tragic aftermath of the 1948 Palestine war. New studies have cast light on the life of the Jerusalem Municipality during this period. In parallel, the discovery or opening of unpublished or overlooked archives and records is contributing to the re-evaluation of the period.

Our paper focuses on three main questions. First, can historians narrate a "potential history" of the Jordanian period? How does this "potential history" differ from that traced for the late Ottoman and Mandate periods? Are Jerusalem's archives a "space of possibility"?[1] Second, what expectations and projects, conflicts and desires did the city's inhabitants, refugees, and institutions have in these two decades? And third – focusing on a specific space within the city, al-Maghariba quarter, razed on the night of 10–11 June 1967 – is this phase only a period of "pre-destruction," to be analyzed under the somber light of the 1967 war and its aftermath?[2] Or, without denying or reducing the 1967 watershed, can the Jordanian period, seen from al-Maghariba quarter, be unpacked also as a time of restoration and re-foundation, of conflicts and impulses? Through these questions, we intend to propose some research strands for social histories of the 1947–67 period, thus opening new itineraries to review and reveal a crucial phase of Jerusalem's history – two decades of potentialities dismantled and erased as the ruins of the war.

## Resisting the Temptation of "New Beginnings": On 1948 and Archiving

The word "archives" contains in itself a fundamental duality and therefore ambiguity: it defines both objects – a record, or a series of records, that constitute a source of information, of permanent value – and also a place of custody, a repository, a place of safekeeping, an institution with an access regime.

The practices, norms, and reflections around archiving have been at the center of numerous and fundamental studies. Two recent and seminal contributions, Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's *Potential History* and Gil Z. Hochberg's *Becoming Palestine*, have further enriched the study, intertwining a reframing of the analysis of archival materials and the definition of "archive" in the Israeli-Palestinian context and conflict.[3]

Azoulay unpacks the violent origin of numerous archives:

> Papers written by politicians, in which the most atrocious commands against vast populations were prescribed – to kill, enslave, rape, humiliate, displace, uproot, expel, destroy houses, bomb shelters, confiscate, or deprive – were made into past documents at the moment

in which they were written, and these documents were doomed to be sequestered for decades from the communities they affected. But those uprooted and bombed didn't need these sequestered papers to confirm that what is written in them was done to them. These documents would be classified in an archive, away from the public eye, until a few decades later, when the many who could have been interested would be weakened and exhausted or long dead, and a few trained historians would be curious enough to retrieve and investigate them.[4]

When dealing with 1948 and its aftermath, and at least until the historiographic turn of the 1980s and 1990s with the publication of seminal contributions on the war for Palestine, the forced transfer of Palestinians, and the refugee issue, "the regime of the archive" protected, as Azoulay observes, "a polity constructed on the basis of differential power, where some groups are subordinated to others, to preserve rights and privileges to a subgroup of citizens and limit as much as possible the struggle to conceive citizenship as cocitizenship."[5]

Revisionist historians were among the first to refuse the separation of the archival documents and the political rights and claims these documents refer to in the Palestinian/Israeli context. Azoulay maintains: "Archives, sovereignties, and human rights, constitutive of the reproduction of regime-made disasters, are also central in exporting and promoting political emancipation as the true meaning of politics. As conveyors of the emancipatory mission, [their] set up ends to be pursued along a predetermined axis of progress."[6]

Her argument has poignant meaning if we apply it in the post-1948 decades, where this "predetermined axis of progress" was identified with Zionist stances, goals, and means. The narrative around the "declaration of independence" of 14 May 1948 – although this text was intended to be a charter of assertion of international legal sovereignty, despite its later reinterpretation[7] – reflects how the discourse around "new beginnings" is often intertwined with violence and expulsion.[8] In post-1948 Palestine/Israel, potential history has then the overdue role to resist the rhetoric of "new beginnings."

Hochberg goes beyond that, deepening the limits of an archival-centered approach to the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict:

> What the archives "revealed" is what Palestinians already knew, and what most Israelis knew but chose to deny. Archival findings in this context, and perhaps in many others too, are less about new findings and more about the repeated affirmation of already known historical information. Finding, exposing, sharing the same information and the same facts, time and time again – the same atrocities, the same numbers (more or less), the same unveiling of open secrets – can be numbing.[9]

If archiving is intrinsically intertwined with selection, it also entails destruction, oblivion, secrecy, or sealing. When dealing with Jerusalem during the 1948–67 period,

all of these elements play a significant role.[10] One of the main elements that the historian has to face is the scarcity of sources from the Jordanian kingdom and government concerning its rule in Palestine: these archives are mostly unavailable and unpreserved, apart from printed collections of sources produced and preserved by state agencies.[11]

Israeli institutions have collected and made available other fundamental sources, such as the archives of the Jerusalem Municipality. The collection related to the Jordanian period consists of the minutes of meetings of the Arab Municipal Council of Jerusalem from its creation in 1948 to its dissolution in 1967.[12] In most cases, in the council's minutes, one record of minutes corresponds to one meeting.[13] The Arab Municipality itself gave order numbers to each of these meetings, apparently restarting from 1 when a new council was composed. However, opening sessions and extraordinary meetings, which were named as such, were not counted. From December 1963, confidential debates did take place at these meetings. In such cases, two different minutes were issued with the same meeting order number: a regular one and a confidential one. The minutes of meetings were originally located in the Arab Municipality building in folders identified by reference codes. After the dissolution of the Arab Municipality, those documents were moved to the Jerusalem Municipality archive and the current reference codes were added, replacing the old ones. As explored and described by Haneen Naamneh in her contributions, these archival fonds and collections allow for retracing not only the creation of the Arab Municipal Council after 1948, but also the relations established with other political, social, and religious institutions, its humanitarian action, and its general management until the 1967 war.[14]

Kimberly Katz unpacks how the Jordanian monarchy and government tried to "Jordanize" Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967, while choosing to not make Jerusalem the capital of the kingdom and privileging Amman in terms of political and economic choices and investments. She also highlights Palestinian opposition to Jordanian rule. However, the position of Jerusalem remained complex and multidimensional: the Hashemite kingdom invested symbolically in the Holy City, through numerous initiatives like appointing a Custodian of the Holy Places in 1951 and self-presenting itself as part and parcel of the "Holy Land," encouraging pilgrimages, and continuing to make use of Jerusalem's religious symbols even after 1967, as part of a national discourse that aimed to unify the different components of the country, especially the Palestinian refugees.

Palestinian refugees are one of the examples of the sensitivity of archives in the Middle East and on a transnational scale. As for the study of factual and potential history of Jerusalem, the municipal archives represent a fundamental, although until recently unexplored, repository of documentation. For the history of Palestinian refugees, the most relevant and at the same time unknown archive is represented by the collections of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), established by the UN in 1949. They contain the genealogical, demographic, and social history of Palestinian refugees as well as traces of their political and individual ambitions, efforts, and potentialities. The unsatisfactory preservation conditions and irregular access to the UNRWA archives,

due to the organization's political and financial crises, reduce the availability of reliable data on Palestinian refugees and prevent the broader historical reconstruction of the humanitarian and social history of the Palestinian diaspora in the Jordanian period and after 1967.[15]

The UNRWA archives are organized into three main archives: the Refugee Registration Information System (RRIS), which contains information on the Palestinian refugees and other persons registered by UNRWA since its establishment; the audio-visual archive, comprised of photographs (negatives, slides, digitals, and prints) and videos taken or commissioned by UNRWA since its establishment; and the Central Registry, the administrative archive, which contains correspondence and documents pertaining to UNRWA's functioning and relations with various stakeholders.[16]

At the time of its inception, UNRWA inherited the registration records of Palestine refugees from the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the American Friends Services Committee. In 1950–51, UNRWA conducted a census across its fields of operation, resulting in the registration of some 875,000 Palestine refugees. Since then, UNRWA has been updating registration family files from voluntarily supplied documentation on the original refugees and their descendants. Today, about 5.7 million Palestine refugees are registered with UNRWA; nearly 700,000 persons eligible for services are also registered.

The RRIS is a web-based system that includes both the current registration status of the Palestinian refugees and other registered persons, and comprise individual civil registration records organized in family ledgers and linked to documentation materials, the "Family Files." The Family Files have been digitized, with dedicated project funding, through an agency-wide scanning operation implemented in the 2000s (the Palestine Refugee Records Project). The original Family Files, currently inaccessible to researchers, remain in UNRWA's five Field Offices (in Amman, Beirut, Damascus, Gaza City, and Jerusalem).

Since its digitization, the audio-visual archive has been the most consulted of UNRWA collections.[17] Over the years, UNRWA has commissioned photographers and filmmakers to document its activities, mainly for communication and fundraising purposes. Their works have been preserved in a voluminous physical archive. Split since 1996 between UNRWA's two headquarters in Amman (Jordan) and Gaza City, it contains over 600,000 records, including approximately 459,000 black-and-white photo negatives, a few hundred photographic prints, 58,000 color slides, 15,000 contact sheets, 75 films, 730 videocassettes and an estimated 80,000 born-digital images. Starting in the 2000s, with special project funding, these records have been fully digitized. The originals remain in the two aforementioned locations. The collection has been inscribed by UNESCO in 2008 in its "Memory of the World Register." In 2016, a selection of photographic records became readily available for online consultation and reproduction through the UNRWA digital archive.[18]

The administrative files pertaining to UNRWA's operations and relations with its various stakeholders are maintained in the Central Registry archive, originally

established when UNRWA's headquarters was in Beirut. It then moved with UNRWA headquarters to Vienna and finally back to its area of operations, split between Amman and Gaza City. The archive has been regularly updated with internal and external correspondence and communications as well as other internal records and documents. Since the turn of the century, when email gradually replaced paper communication, the archive has become gradually passive. Email communication is not systematically archived and hence the historic record is being lost, as is the case with many other public and private organizations.

UNRWA archives represent a key depository for the retracing of the history of Palestinian refugees but also to imagine potential forms and futures of return. Therefore, they are critical to rethinking the current status quo.

The 1948–67 period, however, was not only a phase marked by displacement and expulsions. During these two decades, Jerusalem experienced profound transformation in terms of urban dynamics and forms of inhabiting the space: this is notably the case of the Maghariba neighborhood. Razed on the night of 10–11 June 1967 by the Israeli army, the destruction of this district in front of the Western Wall was followed by the oblivion of the history of this quarter. Archives can intercept strands of possible histories of a now-cancelled space.

## Just before Disappearing: Urban Planning and al-Maghariba Neighborhood under Jordanian Rule

As explained above, the period of Jordanian rule in East Jerusalem was marked by a determination to reassert Hashemite sovereignty over the Holy City, especially after 1963. This resolve translated notably into intensive renovation efforts in neighborhoods located immediately adjacent to the Haram al-Sharif, and in particular Harat al-Maghariba. Tracing these urban programs involves exploring the decades that immediately preceded its destruction by Israeli bulldozers in June 1967, avoiding a teleological approach defined by its destruction and unpacking all of its unfulfilled potentialities.

The archives of municipal engineer Yusuf al-Budayri provide fresh records on this period. Among them is a copy of the town plan proposed by the American agency Brown Engineers International in 1963 at the request of Henry Kendall, who was coordinator of the town planning scheme within the Jordanian municipality of Jerusalem from 1963 to 1966 – thereby resuming a position he had held during the British Mandate.[19] Close scrutiny of his proposals reveals that several recommendations involved Harat al-Maghariba or its vicinity: in front of Robinson's Arch (located on the Western Wall), for instance, there were plans for "archaeological sites as garden areas" and "sitting areas with trees and fountains," as well as "creation of automobile parking areas" both inside and outside al-Maghariba Gate.[20] In a zone encompassing both al-Maghariba and Jewish quarters, there were plans for a "rehabilitation" of "deteriorated areas," which would presuppose a preliminary "rehousing program" for the residents involved.[21]

Other traces of these development projects are contained in the archives of the Jordanian municipality of Jerusalem: for instance, the municipal council meeting on 3 July 1963 dealt with the parking lot project planned for al-Maghariba Gate area. The municipality was involved in negotiations with al-Maghariba waqf concerning the lease. On 24 July 1963, the municipal council welcomed the completion of a new school located at al-Maghariba Gate – the same worksite photographed a few months before by Yusuf al-Budayri – and stressed the need to build a wall around the new structure. A year later, on 8 July 1964, the municipal council ordered the demolition of "wooden shacks" located near al-Maghariba Gate, no doubt in anticipation of the parking lot project. On 5 May 1965, however, it was the municipality that opposed the Jordanian



Figure 1. Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals*, October 1965.

governor regarding the eviction of people living in these shacks, because there was no guarantee they would be rehoused. In the end, it was decided that the shacks would not be demolished until the issue of financing a rehousing scheme was settled. A few years earlier, on 7 June 1956, the Jordanian municipal archives indicate that a small police station was built near al-Maghariba Gate; the municipality covered the utility costs but collected rent from the governorate. These few elements attest to the reality of these redevelopment projects in the vicinity of Harat al-Maghariba, but also testify to the latitude that the Jordanian municipality meant to deploy when issued with orders from the Jordanian government.

These stepped-up Jordanian town planning schemes resonate with convergent testimony regarding the 1966 expulsion of a few dozen residents living illegally in the former Jewish quarter,[22] but also with a dispatch from the French consul Christian Fouache d'Halloy on 29 December 1966 that mentions a project that aimed to turn part of the former Jewish quarter in the Old City into a "park" and to "allow free access to the Wailing Wall."[23] Vague as this latter claim may seem, we understand at any rate that the southeast corner of the Old City, comprising both the Jewish and al-Maghariba quarters, was to undergo a broad-based rehabilitation project by urban developers. Already in February 1963, the French consul noted that "seventeen representatives of North American travel agencies have arrived in Jerusalem, Old City . . . in order to study the conditions in which tourism might be developed," and he adds that "the Municipality of Jerusalem, Old City, has taken steps to devise a town

planning scheme that would involve the architect Henry Kendall," specifying that the project provided notably for "turning the Jewish Quarter into a public garden," and that "the Wailing Wall would be kept intact, this vestige of the second temple being considered a holy site."[24] In December 1964, the consul further explained that this "urban design plan" would be carried out under the aegis of the East Jerusalem Development Corporation, and that it anticipated "the demolition of numerous more or less damaged buildings."[25]

In the *Jerusalem Star* of 28 December 1966, an article details "Mayor Khatib's grand plan for Jerusalem in 1967," emphasizing, "This new year heralds a large number of important state-sponsored public projects . . . which the government gladly announces to visitors to the Holy City in this period of religious feast days," before going on to mention the upgrading of Qalandiya Airport, the renovation of al-Aqsa Mosque, continued restoration work on the Holy Sepulchre, but also various upgrades of the water supply networks and electrical grid.[26] Beyond the unavoidable irony that arises when reading these documents in light of later events, we clearly perceive that the Jordanian authorities, at both governmental and municipal levels, were committed in the early 1960s to a broad scheme of modernization of the Holy City, with the stated aim of improving tourist attractions.

One final testimony shows that the perimeter of Harat al-Maghariba was particularly targeted by these tourism development projects: Fu'ad Mughrabi, who later became professor of political science at the University of Tennessee, recalls participating in an archaeological dig in the summer of 1966 under the direction of William Stinespring, in the vicinity of Wilson's Arch, immediately bordering Harat al-Maghariba, in the northern part of the Western Wall.[27] He had a very special connection to this dig, since his father, who was of Algerian origin, had grown up in Harat al-Maghariba in the 1930s. In February 1966, Stinespring published a first article in the American journal *Biblical Archaeologist* about an excavation project in the sector intended to eventually create a "tourist attraction."[28] The following year, in February 1967, Stinespring reported on the excavation that Moughrabi took part in, stressing that further digging would require an opening up of the excavation area. He ended with a question: "But can such an opening be made, with many people living overhead? And can we do any excavating underground without bringing down on our heads large stones or even whole buildings now resting on this ancient structure? We hope to answer some of these questions in the summer of 1968."[29] The answers would come sooner than expected, as the buildings of Harat al-Maghariba would be effectively demolished, the "tourist attraction" would indeed be created, but in conditions and proportions that Stinespring could hardly have imagined.

## Liberating Potential Futures

Archives are not only containers of potential pasts. Potential futures are also on stage. In contemporary Jerusalem, the construction of the "Separation Wall" during the second intifada "generated a number of urban transformations that, together with

the changes related to the new urban plans, foreshadow a very different future for the city."[30] These questions are a matter not only for urban planners, but also for historians, archivists, and curators.

In recent decades, enterprises and efforts that can be linked to a transnational and largely analyzed "archival fever" and "archival activism" were pursued in Palestine and Israel, with numerous projects devoted to the discovery, cataloguing, and digitization of archives, animated by different and sometimes opposite intentions: to document the Nakba and preserve the documentary deposits that have survived destruction, or to legitimate dispossession.[31]

However, three main strands remain unexplored or not fully investigated. The first is the multitude of nonmilitary, nonstate and nondiplomatic archives in Israel/Palestine. If these have been largely explored – although relevant *omissis* and classified documents remain unknown – other types of archives, traditionally classified with labels such as private, religious, or association archives, contain fundamental information that can provide new insights on individual and collective itineraries, testimonies, and construction of memory of the 1948 trauma.

The second focus is to closely monitor the condition of "open" archives in the current "digital age." This is notably the case of the Israel State Archives that, after being self-presented as a documentary symbol of Israeli "transparency," were closed between 2016 and 2017 on the pretext of a massive digitization effort. The experience of scholars and the public is that documents previously accessible are no longer available for research purposes and that even physical access to the reading room has been reduced.[32] At this point, and provocatively, one of the main tasks facing historians who use its collections is not only to dig and bring to light new events, but to compare the current available collections with those analyzed in the past to identify and expose the dispersal of documents and the impossibility of physically gaining access to the reading room and its holdings.

The third and last main strand is linked to a reactivation of the potential of archives not only as sites of memory but as spaces for counternarratives.[33] Archives are not only repositories of information but objects to be reinterpreted and approached, and this goes far beyond the mere historical methodology, requiring borrowings and exchanges with other disciplines and methods. As Hochberg wrote: "To fight this archival fatigue and make archives actually matter, we need to develop an altogether different approach – one that builds on imagination, future vision, playfulness, creativity, speculation . . . . What future aspirations, communities, and solidarities the archive holds are a matter of engagement: our job is to imagine."[34]

This different way to conceive of the archive not only attains the narration of a violent past or the denunciation of a stagnant present, but also – and no less crucially – the imagination of a possible future[35] through a continuous back and forth through the aspirations and potentialities to be disclosed in the past, present, and future.

**Endnotes**

1   Concerning the broad concept of potential and counterfactual history in the modern and contemporary Middle East and beyond, see Salim Tamari, Issam Nassar, Stephen Sheehi, eds., *Camera Palæstina: Photography and Displaced Histories of Palestine* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2022); Quentin Deluermoz and Pierre Singaravélou, *Pour une histoire des possibles: Analyses contrefactuelles et futurs non advenus* (Paris: Seuil, 2016); and Falestin Naïli's introduction in this issue of *JQ*: "Reclaiming the Past, Disrupting the Present," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 92 (Winter 2022): 5–9.

2   On the history of al-Maghariba neighborhood, see *Au pied du mur: Vie et mort du quartier maghrebin de Jérusalem (1187–1967)* (Paris: Seuil, 2022); English translation forthcoming: Vincent Lemire, *In the Shadow of the Wall: The Life and Death of Jerusalem's Maghrebi Quarter, 1187–1967* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2023); Nazmi al-Jubeh, *Harat al-yahud wa harat al-maghariba fi al-Quds al-qadima: al-tarikh wa al-masir ma bayna al-tadmir wa al-tahwid* [The Moroccan quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem: history and destiny between destruction and Judaization] (Beirut and Ramallah: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2019), and "Childhood Memories of a Jerusalemite," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (Spring 2018): 91–100; Maryvelma Smith O'Neil, "The Mughrabi Quarter Digital Archive and the Virtual Illés Relief Initiative," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 81 (Spring 2020): 52–76; and Thomas Abowd, "The Moroccan Quarter: A History of the

Present," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 7 (Winter 2000): 6–16.

3   Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019); and Gil Z. Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

4   Azoulay, *Potential History*, 341.

5   Azoulay, *Potential History*, 342.

6   Azoulay, *Potential History*.

7   On this ambiguity, see Derek Jonathan Penslar, "Declarations of (In)Dependence: Tensions within Zionist Statecraft, 1896–1948," *Journal of Levantine Studies* 8, no. 1 (2018): 13–34.

8   "Even in later centuries, when millions of so-called free citizens could engage critically with spectacles of imperial violence, like the partition of India and Pakistan, or the destruction of Palestine and the establishment of Israel (whose 'new beginning' and constitution of national sovereignty generated millions of expellees), phrases such as 'necessary violence' and a 'prestate phase' prepared the terrain for the celebration of yet another bloody independence and constitution of a sovereign nation-state. Independence and national constitution continue to be repeated as the true meaning of the revolutionary events." Azoulay, *Potential History*, 343.

9   Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine*, ix and 27.

10  Kimberly Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Spaces* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2005), 5.

11  This is the case of Muhammad 'Adnan al-

Bakhit, ed., *al-Watha'iq al-Hashimiya, awraq al-malik 'Abdallah bin al-Husayn: al-idara al-Urduniyya fi Filastin, 1948–1951* [The Hashemite documents: the papers of King Abdallah bin al-Husayn: the Jordanian administration in Palestine, 1948–1951] (Amman: Jami'at al-Bayt, 1995).

12  The description of this collection was accomplished within the Open Jerusalem Project ("Open Jerusalem: Opening Jerusalem Archives for a Connected History of 'Citadinité' in the Holy City," funded by the European Research Council), online at (openjerusalem.org) bit.ly/3NAFtzz (accessed 2 November 2022).

13  The gaps observed in the original numbers given to these meetings and documents suggest that one record of minutes is missing for the beginning of summer 1955 and another for autumn 1955 (B936-7). Moreover, the minutes of the meetings held between January 1958 and December 1959 could not be identified.

14  Haneen Naamneh, "Navigating the Time of Arab Jerusalem: A Perspective from Within," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 50, no. 3 (2021): 52–55, and "A Municipality Seeking Refuge: Jerusalem Municipality in 1948," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (Spring 2019): 110–21.

15  These questions will be at the core of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*'s forthcoming special issue titled "Retracing UNRWA's History: Archives, Social History, and Visual Culture on Palestinian Mobilities and Humanitarianism," to be published in 2023, co-edited by Maria Chiara Rioli and Francesca Biancani.

16  For this information on UNRWA's archives, Maria Chiara Rioli is profoundly grateful to Lex Takkenberg, former UNRWA Ethics Chief Officer.

17  Michelle Hamers, "The UNRWA Film and Photo Archive," *Photography and Culture* 14, no. 3 (2021): 401–13.

18  The archive is available online at unrwa.photoshelter.com.

19  Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem: The City Plan. Preservation and Development during the British Mandate, 1918–1948* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office [HMSO], 1948).

20  Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals* (London: Cook, Hammond, and Kell, 1965), plates 10 ("Gardens and Vistas," proposals 2 and 10), 8 ("Streets and Parking," proposal 6).

21  Kendall, *Jerusalem Jordan Regional Planning Proposals*, plates 13–26 ("Specific Projects with Generalized Locations," proposal 49).

22  See Abowd, "The Moroccan Quarter," 9, based on an interview he conducted with a former mukhtar of al-Maghariba quarter, Muhammad Abdelhaq, on 26 September 1999.

23  Centre des Archives diplomatiques de Nantes (henceforth CADN), Jerusalem 294 PO/2, box 29, 29 December 1966.

24  CADN, Jerusalem 294 PO/2, box 48, 6 February 1963.

25  CADN, Jerusalem 294 PO/2, box 59, 17 December 1964.

26  "Mayor Khatib Outlines Projects for the Holy City in 1967," *Jerusalem Star*, 28 December 1966.

27  Correspondence with the author, March 2017.

28  William Stinespring, "Wilson's Arch Revisited," *Biblical Archaeologist* 29, no. 1 (1966): 27–36.

29  William Stinespring, "Wilson's Arch and the Masonic Hall," *Biblical Archaeologist* 30, no. 1 (1967): 27–31.

30  Francesco Chiodelli, "The Next Jerusalem: Potential Futures of the Urban Fabric," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 53 (2013): 51.

31  On this idea, see Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) and Cassie Findlay, "Archival Activism," *Archives and Manuscripts* 44, no. 3 (2016): 155–59.

32  On this point, see Ilan Pappé, "An Indicative Archive: Salvaging Nakba Documents," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49, no. 3 (2020): 22–40; Hagar Shezaf, "Burying the Nakba: How Israel Systematically Hides Evidence of 1948 Expulsion of Arabs," *Haaretz*, 5 July 2019.

33  Ann Laura Stoler, "On Archiving as Dissensus," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38, no. 1 (2018): 43–56.

34  Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine*, ix and 27.

35  On this reflection, see Arjun Appadurai, "The Capacity to Aspire," in *Culture and Public Action*, ed. Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 59–84.

# Exhibiting an Exhibition

Review by Maissoun Sharkawi

**Abstract**

"Al-Ma'rad" (The Exhibition), curated by Nadi Abusaada and designer Luzan Munayer, was held 10 August to 30 November 2022 at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center (KSCC) in Ramallah. The double significance of the word *ma'rid* links this exhibition intimately to its subject: the Arab Trade Fairs of 1933 and 1934. The exhibition highlights the socio-political environment prevailing around the two Arab fairs by displaying objects such as artwork and journal archives, as well as some artefacts from the venue of the fairs – the Palace Hotel in Jerusalem.

**Keywords**

Local Arab industries; Arab fairs; taxes; British colonization.

Two month-long Arab trade fairs took place in Jerusalem in July 1933 and April 1934. The building that hosted the two exhibitions was the newly built Palace Hotel, located on Ma'man Allah Street in Jerusalem on awqaf property owned by the Supreme Muslim Council. The first Arab Fair's main intention was to enhance Arab industrial production at a moment when local producers from Yemen, Hijaz, Greater Syria, Egypt, and the Arab Maghrib were unable to compete with the increasing imports introduced by European capitalist colonial powers. In fact, cheap industrial products from Europe undermined Arab countries' potential to develop traditional crafts and move toward an industrial phase of production. The idea of an Arab exhibition in Jerusalem was an initiative taken by 'Isa al-'Isa, founder

of *Filastin* newspaper, following visits to international fairs in Paris and London that aimed to display the resources of colonial possessions. Al-'Isa's idea became more concrete after he visited the Iraqi Agro-Industrial exhibition in 1932, where he met King Faysal, who strongly supported the concept of a future Arab exhibition taking place in Palestine. Soon after al-'Isa's return, he founded a company with a group of Arab elites from Syria and Palestine to begin planning an Arab Fair for industries from Palestine.

Although the Arab Fair ("al-Ma'rid," as it was known in Arabic) was short-lived (see the article "Fair Competition?" by Semih Gökatalay in this issue, 34–51), it left a cultural and material legacy that is the foundation for an exhibition – likewise titled "al-Ma'rad" – at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah, running from August to November 2022. The objects displayed in the exhibit's four rooms are mainly archival materials collected from several archives such as the Sa'id al-



Figure 1. Demonstrations in Jerusalem, photo from Theodore Surrouf archives, 1936, from Amjad Ghannam Collection. "Al-Ma'rad" (The Exhibition), Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, 2022. Photo from exhibition by author.

Husayni collection which is located at the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit and mother-of-pearl art works borrowed from the Antonian Charitable Society in Bethlehem. Artworks by artists who exhibited at the two Arab trade fairs were borrowed from the privately owned collections of George al-'Ama and Amjad Ghannam, prominent Palestinian art collectors and archive conservators. Thus, the objects that constitute this exhibition were scattered in various collections that is, in and of itself, indicative of the fate of Arab industries and trade in Palestine.

The first room of "al-Ma'rad" contains collected art works and crafts illustrating the emerging Palestinian art movement of that period: a landscape painting by Tawfiq Jawhariyya, embroidered dresses by Mary and Jamila Salman, and a mother-of-pearl portrait designed by Tawfiq Butrus al-Shami portraying St. Anthony of Padua and the infant Jesus. It is interesting to link the latter to the fate of the mother-of-pearl crafts sector during the 1930s. Indeed, in 1931, *Filastin* reported that mother-of-pearl stakeholders (*al-saddafjiyya*) from Bethlehem and Bayt Sahur, the two main areas for this industry, had complained to the high commissioner via Niqula Saba Effendi, the governor (*qa'imaqam*) of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, about taxes that had been re-imposed (that is, removed and imposed once again) on raw shells imported from different places.[1] The report stated that import duties on mother-of-pearl goods,

which had increased from 12 to 20 percent, had strongly impacted the mother-of-pearl industry and that the wages of workers had fallen by 50 percent when the taxes had been re-imposed, from between ten and fifteen to only seven Palestinian piasters per day.[2] As a result of the deteriorating economic conditions, many workers from this industry began emigrating from Palestine to the United States.[3]

The first room of the exhibition also features testimonies from visitors of the two fairs and shows how they opened a space for women artists to display their works: spectators were introduced to artists such as Zulfa al-Saʻdi and Jamila Qunbarji. The choice of exhibiting art and crafts at the 1933 and 1934 fairs is no coincidence, but a response to British officials' discrimination between the Jewish and Palestinian Arab economic arts and crafts sectors, the latter being viewed by these officials as immature and traditional with artisans lacking basic educational and technical skills. W. A. Stewart, a supervisor of technical education in the British Mandatory government and a founding member of the Jewish Bezalel Art Academy in 1935, praised Bezalel for playing an important role in enhancing Palestine's crafts industry and compared it favorably to the traditional crafts industry run by Palestinian Arabs, although he also noted the necessity of establishing a textile school to preempt competition from Palestinian Arab industries: "The need for such school is great, and it will have to be established before the Arab Palestinian weaving industry can develop on modern lines suitable for competition, with surrounding countries."[4] Noteworthy in this regard, the two catalogs displayed in the second room of "al-Maʻrad" show that exhibited goods came mainly from Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Iraq, with textiles representing more than 50 percent of the products, followed by souvenir goods, and diverse processed food products. The Egyptian pavilion occupied the largest halls of the hotel exhibiting "the reputed" Egyptian textile industry.

This room of "al-Maʻrad" also contains a historical chronology of the social, political, and economic moment during which the two Arab fairs were inaugurated: between the revolts of 1929 and 1936. Documents in this room offer a bottom-up reflection on the socio-political dynamics and challenges facing Palestinian society between two world wars and two local uprisings, and offering a valuable synthesis of the reality of Palestinian and Arab industries that were struggling to survive under new colonial regimes and to awaken the socio-economic cultural life in spite of the difficult situation. Photos from the archives of Theodore Sarrouf documenting the 1936 revolt are also exhibited in this room, offering evidence of the coverage of the revolt despite strong repression by British forces.

A third room is devoted to historical materials and newspaper archives that documented these two events. The journal archives in particular show that these trade fairs attempted to create Arab economic independence, boycott foreign products imposed by colonial powers, and materialize Arab cooperation that would supply the Arab markets with the necessary goods for its vast clientele – as expressed, for example, by Muhammad ʻIzzat Darwaza in *al-ʻArab* newspaper.[5] Craft industries largely disappeared in Arab Palestinian society in the period before 1948 in the absence of institutional structure and investment credit. Not only did these industries

lack capital and technical skills, but they were also unable to secure raw materials needed to boost production to competitive levels. Taxes on raw materials were a major obstacle facing Arab local industries in Palestine under the British Mandate, which adopted a different strategy than that of the Ottoman government concerning monopolies and collecting taxes. Toward the end of the Ottoman period, as the state sought to encourage trade within the empire, tariffs on goods originating from other parts of the empire were reduced from 11 percent to 8 percent, accompanied by a tax of 1 percent on all exports.[6] These provisions were abolished in 1922, and only goods from Syria were exempted from the new taxes on raw material.[7]



Figure 2. Ceramic tile from the Palace Hotel fountain, designed by David Ohannessian, 1929, "al-Ma'rad," Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, 2022.

In the summer of 1925, under increasing pressure from Jewish organizations to aid industrialists, High Commissioner Herbert Samuel submitted a proposal to the Colonial Office whereby raw materials would be allowed duty-free admission against the re-export of finished products. Although the Colonial Office regarded such an action as exceptional, since it contradicted the system in comparable Mandate areas such as in Syria (or in Egypt where laws contain clauses prohibiting monopolies),

Samuel held that the emergent Jewish industries would collapse without it, and added that it would resolve the issue of immigrants' employment. Industries granted this aid would employ immigrants, leading in turn to an increase in consumption in Palestine. Palestine's colonial administration singled out for specialized treatment several factories, all Jewish-owned. These included the Palestine Oil Industry (Shemen) in Haifa, and Delfiner's Silk Factory, the Yehuda Steam Tannery Factory, the Raanan Company (confectioneries), and the Lodzia Textile Company, all in Tel Aviv.[8] Furthermore, the British government exempted building materials and agricultural implements imported by Jewish investment firms. Meanwhile, wood or paper imported for packaging of oranges for export were not exempt from any import duty, although these materials were not consumed within the country, but were solely destined for export. The British government's decision reflects a colonial context, since most orange farmers and merchants were local Arabs.

The last room of "al-Ma'rad" documents the fate of the elegant Palace Hotel, the venue for the Arab fairs. This choice of placing the history of the building itself in the fourth room of the exhibition offers a particularly vivid demonstration of the main idea behind "al-Ma'rad" and also links to the current Palestinian reality of dispossession, appropriation, and recasting. The hotel was suffering from the competition of the newly built King David Hotel, which opened nearby in 1931. The Palace Hotel closed its doors for good in 1935 and the Supreme Muslim Council then leased it to the British government.[9] Ironically, it housed the offices of the departments of agriculture and fishery and later, after 1949, the Israeli ministry of industry, trade, and labor. Since 2008, the building has been subject to "restoration" work that has completely emptied the Palace of its architectural and interior components and contents, keeping the facades of the building intact, while reconstructing the building from the inside. The only element that escaped the interior razing were the stairs that will continue holding the four-story building; everything else was scrapped or sold at auction. The fate of the Palace thus parallels the settler colonial project to empty the land of its cultural and civilizational components.

Clearly, Arab and Palestinian industries, including small-scale emerging industries such as textiles, souvenir industries, and agricultural products, could have flourished to a much greater extent under more favorable political and economic conditions. The decline of most small-scale industries in Palestine was due to the heavy taxes imposed by the British, designed to inhibit the development of native industries, thereby substituting products made by the Jewish immigrants for the local traditional industries. Significant capital concentrated in the hands of new Jewish immigrants, including skilled craftsmen who could afford to import modern machinery and apply up-to-date methods, together with their monopolistic and capitalist spirit, undoubtedly defeated emerging small-scale Palestinian industries and brought about increased market dependency on new products of better quality. These new investors had an incentive to produce on a large industrial scale with determined efforts to establish the only factories in the Middle East.[10]

"Al-Ma'rad" is in many ways a tribute to the efforts of Arab entrepreneurs, craftsman, and traders to resist British policies that favored Jewish-owned industries

and ventures. The exhibition at the Sakakini Center reconstructs a fragmented part of the Palestinian history of creativity, protected today by private institutions and collectors. Ironically, "al-Ma'rad" could be the last exhibition shown at the Sakakini Center. As the center struggles to survive a funding shortage, the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Culture is undertaking serious attempts to reclaim the building, which it owns, on the pretext that the ministry needs the building to manage its affairs. If this plan becomes reality, the first non-governmental community center established after the Oslo Accords, a popular center that did much over the years to produce a cumulative experience of cultural work in Palestine, will be closed.

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**Endnotes**

1   "Sina'at al-sadaf fi Bayt Laham wa al-dariba al-jumrukiyya 'alayha" [The mother-of-pearl industry in Bethlehem and the customs tax on it], *Filastin*, 11 July 1931, 6.

2   Correspondence between H. Dubno and the chairman of the standing committee for commerce and industry in Jerusalem, in "Import Duty on Mother-of-Pearl (1933)," Palestine Government Files box 161/45, Israel State Archives.

3   Beginning in 1927, the Palestinian pound (PP) replaced the Egyptian pound (EP) as Palestine currency. The PP was worth 2.5 less than the EP. Following this switch, merchants increased prices by 10 percent, and the British government in turn increased customs duties, which had been the most important resource for its budget. See "Ta'dil al-rusum al-jumrukiyya: himayat al-sina'at al-Yahudiyya – al-ta'widh 'an 'ajz al-naqd al-Filastini" [Adjustment of customs duties: protecting Jewish industries – compensating for Palestinian monetary weakness], *Filastin*, 8 November 1927, 1.

4   W. A. Stewart, "The Recent Developments of Crafts and Industries in Palestine," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 14, no. 5 (January 1944): 270.

5   Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, "al-Ma'rid al-'Arabi" [The Arab fair], *al-'Arab*, 13 April 1933, 3–5.

6   Ruth Kark, "The Contribution of the Ottoman Regime to the Development of Jerusalem and Jaffa, 1840–1917," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation*, ed. David Kushner (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1986), 18.

7   Commission Permanente des Mandats, Procès-verbaux et documents de la cinquième session (Extraordinaire) tenue á Genève du 23 octobre au 6 novembre 1924, 85.

8   Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920–1929* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 166–67.

9   Nadi Abusaada, "The Forgotten History of Jerusalem's Palace Hotel," *Middle East Eye*, 9 August 2022, online at (middleeasteye.net) bit.ly/3SscNcP (accessed 20 October 2022).

10  The British Mandate administration assumed its functions in Palestine in July 1920 and one of the first departments to be established was that of Trade and Industry, whose main function was to provide advice and recommendations on economic and industrial affairs. It was also tasked with developing and increasing both Arab local industries and emergent Jewish industries in Palestine.

# Jerusalem Story

## Squaring the Circle

Review by Roger Heacock

**Abstract**

This review of Jerusalem Story (www. jerusalemstory.com), a website created by Qatar's Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, doubles as a measured critique of philosophical, historical, and existential affects including fatalism, teleology, and pathos. The website project may have arisen out of the once and future unification of Palestinian resistance around Shaykh Jarrah in 2021, which encapsulated the overarching centrality of Jerusalem to Palestine's past, present, and future. Heacock notes that while the site has multiple entrance points and is brilliantly illustrated, the question remains whether the population studied is sufficiently inclusive. Certain issues are skirted, probably due to the multiplicity of themes it already evokes. The review compares Jerusalem Story to two notable existing websites, the Institute for Palestine Studies/Palestinian Museum's "Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question" – Palquest, and Palestine Remembered, and places it alongside other sources, written, oral, and pictorial. The reviewer sees in the website a tendency to evaluate essential milestones (Jordan's severance of ties in 1988, the Oslo accords, the apartheid wall) teleologically as cynical, failed, or sadistic decisions from the start. Such interpretations are treated as axioms, rather than hypotheses requiring sober analysis. Absent are Jerusalemites' issues involving each other in addition to their colonial oppressor. Despite the site's discursive tendency to treat their condition as one of sheer suffering bereft of that dynamic agency which has kept them firmly resilient and fiercely resistant, the review concludes that the site adds a great deal to our knowledge and empathy.

**Keywords**

Jerusalem; website; suffering; agency; teleology; pathos.

A prolonged visit to the new website, Jerusalem Story (www.jerusalemstory.com/en), launched in June 2022 by Qatar's Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies (ACRPS) in Doha, is fully justified and handsomely rewarding. Launched in June 2022, it illustrates the lives of Jerusalem's Palestinian population. It adds to the package of offerings of the Doha Institute, which include its seven peer-reviewed journals, books, translations, conferences, and other initiatives. This is a different endeavor, intended to contribute to knowledge in general, but particularly to the understanding, and indeed the virtual experience, of the plight and steadfastness of Jerusalemites. It breathes both information and militancy – in fact, the two are comingled by definition. Not only does the political message come through loud and strong; it is also buttressed by information that is trustworthy and reliable, based on current knowledge, bereft of exaggeration or bravado, and with scrupulous respect for actual figures and estimates, without inflation or invention. What remains to be discussed is therefore the selection of events to be highlighted and promoted, which is true of any and every complex thesis.

Who are the indigenous Jerusalemites forming the focus here? Overwhelmingly Arab Palestinians, as illustrated by perusal of the various sections. The question arises: is this a comprehensive description of the human diversity of Jerusalem? One should not forget often discriminated minorities, for example the Africans (and their presence is noted), mainly in the Old City, and the Domari gypsies. Surely in future these populations will be dealt with in detail, as they deserve to be. And then comes the question of the Jews. At the turn of the twentieth century, we are told, around 1900, close to half of Jerusalem's population were Jews. Very few of them could be described as settlers (who, as invaders, are excluded from the scope of this site), even if many came from Europe to live near their holy sites for a time. Who were they? What happened to them? Are any of these still present today, or have they all been absorbed into or preempted by the "Yishuv" which is an abstraction referring to linguistic, cultural, and political Zionists, and not all pre-state Jews? Aviva Halamish, in "The Yishuv: The Jewish Community in Mandatory Palestine" (Jewish Virtual Library, September 2009), specifies that exceptions were the ultra-Orthodox and the communists, but there were in fact many other communities and individuals.

This original Jewish population, even if it no longer exists, merits attention, in order to clarify the historical and thus the present picture. After all, their intellectual descendants among Israelis and Jews more generally – believers, academics, journalists, and ordinary people – continue to fight the iron cage of Zionist ideology that has been inexorably descending upon them for more than one hundred years. Furthermore, the temptation to "other" people needs always to be resisted, as in the use of the term "other" in the graphic Snapshot of Jerusalem's Diverse History to denote people not belonging to mainstream versions of the three Abrahamic religions (even before these existed!). Others have names.

A few remarks, rather than an exhaustive description, are in order regarding the interlocking sections. The major rubric, entitled "Topics," actually deals principally with issues of closure, enclosure, waiting, checkpoints, and related matters which

make up the impossible daily existence of Jerusalem's Palestinians. Now these are indeed major concerns, but the fact, as anyone who has lived in the city knows, is that they are countered, often neutralized, by various strategies that in my opinion enhance rather than dampen the intensity of individual and collective life: discussions in the service taxi or bus; clever interactions with those who man the checkpoints; the enjoyment of time together, and the sense of the slow passage of life, resulting from long-practiced acquired patience: it is not easy for today's freewheeling Westerners to grasp the mechanism. Fatima Moghrabi, quoted in the "Voices of Jerusalem" feature story, is spot on when crowning her account of the trans-generational travails of her family as Jerusalemites, with the all-importance, at the end of the day, of "gathering with friends after 5:00 PM at Bab al-'Amud and drinking tea."

In practical terms, as compared with many other West Bank and Gaza Palestinians, Jerusalemites, at least those who have legal residence in the city, are free to travel around historic Palestine at will, to visit the world, and yet enjoy their unique micro-vantage point as residents of their city. Nothing is more lively than the streets of the Old City (at least until a few hours after sunset, and the precautions taken thereafter are not primarily due to the occupation, but to the real or imagined dangers of urban life all over the world). Indeed, we are reminded (in commentary on Matthew Teller's *Nine Quarters of Jerusalem*) that after all these years of brutal, state-sponsored settlement with its attendant expropriation and expulsions, the vast majority of the Old City (90 percent of its thirty-five thousand residents) are Palestinians, two-thirds of them young people. How they managed this feat of "remaining" (*baqa'*) needs to be an important subject of any study such as this one.

In most of the chapters, oppression burns through, and the pathos, and the victimization, in the beautiful Big Picture, for example. The overall impression left, as Dante found at the entrance to hell, is "Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate" (abandon all hope you who enter here), perhaps an appropriate parallel since he had been exiled for life from Florence when he wrote *Inferno*. But once again, is life in its complexity not different? Let us take the Mubarak Awad story as an example: should one, in addition to his expulsion from Jerusalem and Palestine, not also speak more of what he did while there and indeed, when away? Before and early in the first intifada, he took part in public events, and added a particular face to the uprising, appealing to some and rejected by others. But he most certainly, through his speaking, writing, and actions, added "thickness" and a different perspective to the struggle. Non-violence (tax withholding, photography, cinema, financial support, hiding and caring for militants) and stones were closely related during that entire period, in Jerusalem and elsewhere. And, of course, he did indeed find himself deprived of residency rights to the city of his birth.

The biographies of this site are splendid (but where is Faisal al-Husseini?), heartfelt in many cases, the best part of the site in some ways, always intimate to the extent possible. And the biographies here include non-institutional, "young" Palestinians, who marked their times and the future, such as Maha Abu Dayyeh and Albert Aghazarian.

This brings up the vital question: can you separate Jerusalem from Palestine? The answer is no and so the issue lies in justifying this site. One can only imagine that, as with so many breakthroughs, the incentive for its creation has something to do with the insurrection spearheaded by Shaykh Jarrah's residents, bringing together all Palestinians in a concerted, decisive, and potentially definitive unified struggle carried out in the summer of 2021. In my mind, that example in itself justifies the project, especially if one adds the fact that, following the end of the second intifada, repeated individual and collective continuing acts of revolt occurred in Jerusalem, in 2015–16, for example. Jerusalem is Palestine, but in addition to its own characteristics, it possesses a microcosmic universal quality that unifies all of the disparate, endogenous, and exogenous regions of that insurgent nation, including the far-flung refugee camps and the distant diaspora.

The (not quite) exclusive focus on Jerusalem is thus fully justified. Does the site do it justice? The answer, in a time of political stagnation, is an emphatic yes, just through the sheer aesthetic brilliance of the presentations. The lessons of history are clear: the intermingling of political, practical, and aesthetic themes is ubiquitous and particularly important when politics alone provide little hope. Art, and culture more generally, cannot replace politics, but can fill in gaps and lend structure, perspective, strength, unity, and hope in difficult situations. The pictographic contributions are exquisite, their chromatic quality suitably romanticized (the reds are redder, the blues bluer, the perspective grander); graphs and maps are skillfully selected, faithfully and clearly reproduced. In this respect, one could not hope for more, and navigating the site is a gripping act. In fact, this aesthetic brilliance reinforces the dominant pathos of the overall thesis: Jerusalemites suffer (the second photograph in the Big Picture section is of a bearded man with helmeted soldiers bearing down on his neck – an all-suffering John the Baptist one might think, not a resistant Jerusalemite). And so, the very excellence of technique makes one wonder again whether content might not profit from some enrichment of a different, not necessarily heroic type, nor limited to exuberant special events such as festivals (although these are essential to the ensemble). In this respect, there is much to be learned from the theories and practice of oral history, about which more later.

Could one not, as it were, put more emphasis on factors internal to the Palestinian community, in the face of (not of course to be compared with) the constrictions of occupation, and in the quest for an even richer, multifaceted reality? One of many examples might be the problem of social relations within Palestinian society itself: are we to believe that it is a seamless, harmonious whole, plagued only from the outside? Of course not: Jerusalem is no different from the rest of the occupied territories in having its own class, cultural, and geographical contradictions, grafted onto those of the occupation. The issue is dealt with here and there (for example, in the backgrounder "al-Jidar [the Wall]: An Instrument of Fragmentation") but it bears delving into further. Deciding on content certainly depends on the intended audience. Those already knowledgeable do not need further proof of the cruelty of settler colonialism. If, on the other hand, one wishes to convince, complexity still

remains preferable to single-minded denunciation, and better conveys the richness, intelligence, and determination of Jerusalemites.

And so, the question of the intended readership is essential. Have the editors carefully thought out the answer to this question? The very short entries intended to familiarize people with relevant terminology, as well as explanations such as the meaning of *maghrib* ("the place where the sun sets") suggest that the principal audience is made up of people who know little about Palestine, language, place, and arising issues. Perhaps this is not true and, of course, a version of this site in Arabic would be precious, since the vast majority of Arabic speakers around the world are not allowed to come to Jerusalem, even for a brief visit. Indeed, for many concerned people, Jerusalem Story is an important stand-in for the city itself. Likewise, more clarity regarding intended readership is perhaps not a legitimate pursuit, as those who view, scan, peruse, read, or analyze the site can decide on their interest themselves.

Regarding the historical perspective, perhaps a bit of the ex post facto reasoning could be revised. Three examples stand out: King Husayn's cutting of institutional ties, Oslo, and the apartheid wall. King Husayn's *fakk al-irtibat* (severance of ties) speech on 31 July 1988 was at the time considered a great victory for the intifada, since Jordan finally acknowledged the independence of Palestine, and renounced the annexation carried out four decades earlier. Today, however, according to this site, one needs to view Husayn's move as de facto connivance with Israel, leaving Palestinians to face the Zionist juggernaut alone, and in particular to fend for themselves regarding the future of Jerusalem, through the stripping of Palestinians and Jerusalemites in particular, of Jordanian passports, IDs, freedom to travel, and protections.

The second instance that might be rethought in a historically sensitive site such as this one is the account of Oslo. There is virtual unanimity today on its shortsightedness, or worse (Edward Said described it as "the Palestinian Versailles") from the Palestinian point of view. But most people at the time of the signing welcomed it as a promise of freedom and independence, until underlying motivations were revealed and its actual unraveling occurred. The third example is the apartheid wall. Of course, Israel had long planned to isolate Palestinians as part of their counterrevolutionary, counterinsurgency, predatory strategy. But the decision to go ahead and build it in short order came as a result of the military activities of Palestinians (notably suicide bombings in the 1948 areas), so that the decision on the Israeli part was simultaneously strategic and tactical.

Does a website such as this one have a duty to see events as part of a historical flow or should they be concerned with present-day results? I would argue both are needed given that, if past is present, present is also past. Likewise a dose of internationalism is required, rejecting any form of narcissism. The "blogpost" account of the 2022 Jerusalem Arab Film Festival (JAFF) shows how such an approach can be exemplified. Festival director Nevin Shaheen observed that it "is important to know that we are not at the center when it comes to agony; we are not the only ones who are suffering . . . although we live in a tough city, we are not alone."

Comparing the site with the joint Institute for Palestine Studies/Palestinian

Museum's "Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question" (www.palquest.org), there is clearly an overlap, yet there are significant differences: the latter is more systematic, encyclopedic, with scant concern for visual effects. It is more suited for certain types of historical and political research, on Palestine in general and even perhaps Jerusalem in particular, but less anthropological in its affect, less in tune with the Jerusalem lover's heart. The two are based on a number of common sources and share a general outlook, scarcely surprising since they also benefit from some authorial commonality. But this is in essence a good thing, promoting double checking and so on. Palquest seeks to cover everything, Jerusalem Story to plunge deeply into a single subject; Palquest to follow events, treaties, official life, Jerusalem Story to delve into subjective realities, measured in human, not institutional terms. There are of course other important source materials, and other websites such as the noteworthy Palestine Remembered (www.palestineremembered.com) created by Salah Mansour. Where Jerusalem is concerned, it presents every single neighborhood in the inner and outer ring, detailing them in time and space. More generally, and although all kinds of sources can be ferreted out through a careful reading of various contributions, there is a tendency for the *Jerusalem Story* to rely heavily on a few contemporary scholars. Some diversification would be in order.

Things, people, movements, and events left out will certainly be entered as time moves along: the Muslim Brotherhood/Hamas are one profoundly human element with a strong presence in Jerusalem (and not only in the Haram: they did well whenever elections permitted them to count their numbers). And sociability on the Haram itself deserves some attention: I fondly remember the days long ago when our little children played and frolicked there whenever we and they wanted to.

Other issues to be pursued should probably include oral history, which in Palestine and contrary to current beliefs was originally devoted to the great 1936 revolt, whose participants rather than those who experienced the Nakba, were being interviewed in the 1990s before it would be too late. This applies to Jerusalem as well as other areas, a tribute, in other words, to inventiveness, initiative, and resourcefulness rather than abject victimhood. This understanding (as well as a few works such as Rosemary Sayigh's) could help to reorient Palestinian oral history towards examining the dynamism which is also inherent in the Palestinian condition. This is not to exclude the role of suffering, and the first (and only) wave of Israeli "new history" came in the wake of claims long made by Palestinian survivors of the Nakba and long derided by Israeli historians.

Cartography is another promising approach, and which has been broached in the site. Pierre Jacotin, editor of the ur-maps of the Napoleonic *Description de l'Egypte*, named the sheets regarding Palestine "Filasteen or *ard al-quds*" (Palestine or land of Jerusalem). Khalil Tufakji's maps from the 1980s, hand-drawn in the Orient House, could be analyzed, as well as the relevant British survey maps, and those produced by Sami Hadawi for the United Nations. And then there is the matter of Israel's looting of Palestinian houses in Jerusalem, for which there are sources, for example, Zochrot's (www.zochrot.com) oral history and archival work focusing on Qatamun in particular.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (www.pcbs.gov.ps) needs to be consulted, and one cannot simply ignore al-Jazeera's notorious *Palestine Papers* (www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers).

I have tried to show here how valuable this site is already, how promising, and yet, how one might disagree with its claim that Palestinians in Jerusalem are principally involved in how "to twist and distort their lives just to stay in their own city." Most certainly this is part of the struggle, but far from all of it. The happiest people are not necessarily those who live problem-free, but rather, those who have historically mustered the resources to enjoy the plenitude of life despite all obstacles. Jerusalem "should" not, as claimed somewhere on the site, be a cherished world treasure – it *is* such a treasure, in all of its fullness, as those who love it never cease to tell us.

It is difficult to project an overall impression of such a multifaceted site, but the lesson seems to be to produce a balanced relationship between ongoing problems and ongoing solutions. Such an approach would give more credibility to the touching admonition, the haunting, passionate song by the Banat al-Quds choir, *La tahjuru* (Do not emigrate!), and their call for patience and steadfastness, which is most certainly an underlying theme of this website. Therefore, the overall evaluation has to be, echoing Voltaire's dictum, that if it didn't exist, Jerusalem Story would have to be invented.

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# The Ibrahim Dakkak Award
## for
# Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem

The Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem is an annual award launched by the *Jerusalem Quarterly* in 2017 to honor the memory and work of Ibrahim Dakkak (1929–2016), Jerusalem architect, activist, political leader, and former chairman of the Advisory Board of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

It is awarded to an outstanding submission (in English or Arabic) that addresses either contemporary or historical issues relating to Jerusalem. A committee selected by the *Jerusalem Quarterly* determines the winning essay. The author will be awarded a prize of U.S. $1,000, and the essay will be published in the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

Essays submitted or nominated for consideration should be based on original research and must not have been previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Essays should be 4,000 to 5,000 words in length (including endnotes), preceded by an abstract of no more than 200 words, and up-to 10 keywords.

If the submitted or nominated essay is in Arabic, the abstract and keywords should be in English.

Preference will be given to emerging/early career researchers and students.

Please submit or nominate 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**, mentioning the Award. In the case of nomination, please provide a contact email address for the nominated author.

Any images should be submitted as separate files with a resolution of 600 dpi minimum, if possible. Submitted images must have copyright clearance from owners, and have captions that are clear and accurate.

The deadline for submissions and nominations is **15 January** of each year.

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