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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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What Is Gaza to Jerusalem?

Through its first three quarters, 2023 had already proven to be the deadliest year for Palestinians since 2006. Israel's far-right government oversaw an intensification of state violence – including deadly raids in Jenin, 'Aqabat Jabr, and Nur Shams refugee camps, among other locations, but also the continued blockade of the Gaza Strip – while tolerating or encouraging settler violence, the most striking example being the rampage through Huwara in late February. Across Palestine, there seemed to be a broad consensus that things were getting worse. This steady decline has now become a free fall.

On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched Operation Tufan al-Aqsa (al-Aqsa Flood). Some 1,500 Palestinian fighters demolished parts of the barriers meant to seal Palestinians within the Gaza Strip, crossed to the other side by land, air, and sea, and targeted Israeli military installations, kibbutzim, and communities adjacent to the Gaza Strip and as far north as 'Asqalan. Few if any could have anticipated the scale of the attack and the number of those killed (around 1,200 people) wounded, and abducted by Hamas fighters (about 240 captives); the degree of coordination and planning that allowed so many fighters to advance so deeply into territories that Israel had cordoned off from Gaza decades ago; or the apparent lack of warning by the intelligence or preparation by Israeli military and security forces. The surprise attack, especially the unprecedented number of civilian casualties, sent a shock wave through Israeli society.

In the terrible weeks since, Israel has bombarded the Gaza Strip with more than

twenty-five thousand tons of explosives, and has cut the Gaza population's access to food, water, medicine, electricity, fuel, and other necessities. Medical personnel and infrastructure, schools, journalists, and places of worship have all been directly targeted. After three weeks of uninterrupted bombing, Israeli forces embarked upon a ground invasion of the coastal strip. Communication within Gaza and from Gaza to the outside world has been extremely limited – for thirty-four hours coinciding with the start of the ground invasion, there was an almost total blackout. The scale of suffering is difficult to record, let alone comprehend. One month in, more than ten thousand Palestinian deaths have been reported in Gaza, though with so many destroyed high-rise apartment buildings, the true number is surely higher.

In the West Bank and Jerusalem, movement has been curtailed and fear of military and settler violence is pervasive, confining many to their neighborhoods or within their homes. Israel continues to launch military raids throughout the West Bank, accompanied by air strikes. The number of Palestinian prisoners has swelled, and their conditions harshened, now deprived of food and water access, healthcare, electricity, and communication with family and lawyers, and subjected to overcrowding, solitary confinement, and physical torture. Settler and vigilante violence is surging across historic Palestine, fueled by weapons supplied by the Israeli government and a general sense of impunity. Within a generalized atmosphere of terror, settlers have completely displaced more than a dozen Palestinian communities and taken over their lands.

Many fear that the violence will spread to engulf the region. Israel has launched attacks on Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt – the latter allegedly by mistake. The U.S. government, striking a slightly more cautious tone of late, initially encouraged Israel's genocidal violence in Gaza while sending aircraft carriers to the region and striking sites in Syria to cow regional actors into quiescence. But European and North American states' support for Israel feels increasingly out of step with world opinion. Eight countries in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East have recalled their ambassadors to Israel, and Bolivia severed diplomatic ties altogether. Millions of demonstrators have taken to the streets around the world, calling for freedom for Palestinians and a stop to Israel's destruction of Gaza. Across Europe and the United States, these calls have been met with censorship, intimidation, harassment, and arrests. Attacks on pro-Palestinian sentiment predated Tufan al-Aqsa, of course, but have reached new levels of intensity in its aftermath. Take, for example, the Palestine Writes festival, reviewed in this issue by Ahmad Abu Ahmad: the festival, which took place on the University of Pennsylvania campus in late September, came under intense pressure from anti-Palestinian groups seeking to prevent or disrupt it; after 7 October, however, Zionist donors withdrew funds from the university and called for the dismissal of its president. In a number of high-profile cases, critics of Israeli policies have been accused of antisemitism and support for terrorism, doxxed, boycotted, denied employment, and fired from their jobs. In a case particularly close to the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, Asher Cohen, the president of the Hebrew University, and Tamir Sheafer, its rector, publicly released a letter smearing Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, a contributing editor of *JQ*, and suggesting that she resign her position. In this issue, we republish a response from the Middle East Studies Association of North America's Committee on Academic Freedom decrying Cohen and

Sheafer's letter as "a grievous violation of Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian's academic freedom and … an incitement to violence."

A quarterly journal is an imperfect forum for responding to fast-developing and breaking events. Each day brings new horrors. It feels that we are at a turning point, but how will we know when we've rounded the corner? By the time this issue is printed, will Israel have succeeded in displacing millions of Palestinians into the Sinai – a plan that Israeli military insiders identified as the most advantageous possible outcome of the current assault on Gaza? Will states and other actors in the region reach a point where they can no longer remain passive, given the scale of Israel's violence, leading to a larger conflagration? There is always a futility in trying to predict the future, but a number of terrifying possibilities feel closer than ever to being realized.

Yet, as many observers and commentators have made clear, neither Tufan al-Aqsa, nor Israel's bombardment and starvation of Gaza – not to mention the campaign of intimidation and censorship against '48 Palestinians or the intensification of state and settler violence against Palestinian communities in the West Bank – can be disconnected from the century-long Zionist project of colonization in Palestine and Palestinians' resistance to it. In this regard, although most of the contributions to this issue were completed well before Tufan al-Aqsa and Israel's subsequent assault on Palestinian life, they remain relevant to what is happening now and what will unfold in the days, months, and years to come.

It is essential to situate the current moment in the longer context of Israel's efforts to control, displace, and erase the Palestinian people, and the refusal of Palestinians to succumb. Israel pursues these policies through tried and tested methods (divide and rule, miseducation, and the cooptation of local elites, for example), as well as new innovations and technologies (including surveillance cameras, spyware, and online tools of disinformation). The former is treated in Yusri Khaizran's article on the Druze population within the '48 territories, as well as the efforts to cleave the Druze from the Palestinian body politic and the broader Arab and Islamic milieus, and the protest movements they have organized to challenge their dispossession and marginalization. Similarly, Mahmoud Muna, in his essay "Colonial Subjugation, Not Organic Integration," speaks to the ways in which physical infrastructure, precarious legal status, and economic pressure have separated Palestinian Jerusalemites from their compatriots in the West Bank, while fostering connections between Jerusalemites and '48 Palestinians. Shahd Qannam and Jamal Abu Eisheh, meanwhile, turn their attention to the latter in "Settler Colonialism and Digital Tools of Elimination in Palestinian Jerusalem" – a piece that received honorable mention in the 2023 Ibrahim Dakkak Award competition. Qannam and Abu Eisheh explore how forms of surveillance, mapping, and social media are mobilized by Israel to control Palestinian actions, voices, and presence in Jerusalem with the goal of erasing its Palestinian identity. Such efforts have only intensified since 7 October.

The current Israeli assault on Palestinians has also given rise to calls to revive the moribund "peace process" that thirty years ago took shape in the Oslo accords. Some of this is certainly cynical, an attempt to install a comprador authority in what remains of Gaza after Israel "destroys Hamas" – the stated goal, however empty, of its bombardment and invasion. For others it is an acknowledgement that there is no military solution to a

political problem, and that Tufan al-Aqsa, Hamas's popularity, and the inhumane conditions under which more than two million Palestinians live in Gaza (to say nothing of Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank) are themselves the product of Oslo's failure. In this issue, Mick Dumper reflects on his own role in the "Middle East Peace Process," specifically in Track Two diplomacy efforts. It is a critical account of how this process came to take on a momentum of its own, in many ways divorced from the deteriorating conditions on the ground – the mushrooming carceral structures that locked Palestinians behind walls, fences, and checkpoints, and within mangled political structures and discourses.

Gaza is often referred to as the world's largest open-air prison. It thus serves as a symbol of Israel's project of confining the maximum number of Palestinians in the minimum amount of territory – the corollary to the Zionist ambition to absorb the maximum amount of Palestinian land with the minimum number of Palestinians. Its majority refugee population is a testament to the enormous disruption of the 1948 Nakba. It is a specter of both past and future, a reminder of prior Palestinian traumas and a grim vision of Israel's plan for Palestine. At the same time, it is the pit that sticks in the throat of Zionist attempts over seven decades to consume the fruit of Palestine – where the All-Palestine Government was established and the founders of Fatah were nurtured, where Hamas was born and where the first intifada ignited, where 'Arafat returned to Palestinian soil after Oslo, and where Israel evacuated its settlements after the second intifada. Despite Israeli efforts to sever Gaza and cordon it off from the rest of Palestine, it has been and remains an essential part of Palestine's past, present, and future.

It is important not to lose sight of Gaza's past. As a crossroads linking Africa and Asia, a Mediterranean port linked to trade routes extending east and south to the Indian Ocean, Gaza has been a city defined by movement of goods, people, and knowledge. In two Letters from Jerusalem, Khaldun Bshara and Chris Whitman-Abdelkarim profile efforts to preserve Gaza's past, the precious material and documentary remains of its rich history and culture, despite the multiple threats arrayed against it. Bshara reflects on his experience working with local architects, engineers, artisans, laborers, and students in the restoration of historic buildings in the Gaza Strip, including the al-Saqqa mansion, Dayr al-Khadr or the Monastery of Saint George in Dayr al-Balah, and Dar al-Ghusayn. Whitman-Abdelkarim describes the personal efforts of Salim al-Rayyes to collect and protect artifacts and documents for his antique shop in Gaza City. Ultimately, of course, the value of the items is not intrinsic, but linked to the individual lives and social worlds that birthed them. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi, profiled in this issue by Khader Salameh, stopping in Gaza during his many travels back and forth between Cairo and Jerusalem, visiting its mosques and libraries to meet with its scholars and notables.

In the realm of real and imagined journeys, existence, and mortality, Eibhlin Priestley's review of Jacob Norris's opus *The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub* is elegantly encapsulated by the title "Chasing Miracles." In a world shadowed by adversity, it is not a single miracle, but a profusion of them, that one yearns for in these trying times. As we witness Israel's ongoing attempts to obliterate the individual lives and social worlds of Palestinians in Gaza and beyond, it is imperative that we not reduce Gaza to a site of incarceration, impoverishment, destruction, and death. It has been and must continue to be, as Bshara writes, "a testament to an unbending human spirit that defies oppression and seeks freedom."

Errata
Autumn 2023 Issue (*JQ* 95):

- On page 96, footnote 53: the following text should be added to the end of the footnote:

  However, Mujir al-Din reveals that Mihrab Zakariyya is actually located on the south side of the Haram, inside al-Jami' al-Aqsa, the main congregational mosque on the Haram. According to Mujir al-Din, Mihrab Zakarriya lies next to what he refers to as Jami' 'Umar, or the Mosque of the second Rightly Guided Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, which is, Mujir al-Din explains, a small congregational area ("*majma' ma'qud bi-al-hajar…bihi mihrab, wa yuqal li-hadha al-majma' Jami' 'Umar*"). This spot, Mujir al-Din adds, is named Jami' 'Umar since it is what remains from 'Umar's original, rudimentary mosque, which was built, as the traditional Islamic accounts narrate, by the caliph 'Umar and his followers after his conquest of the city in 636 ("*li-anna hatha al-bina' min baqiyyat bina' 'Umar radiya Allahu 'anhu al-ladhi kana ja'alahu 'inda al-fath*"). Specifically, Mujir al-Din indicates that Mihrab Zakariyya lies next to Jami' 'Umar but near the eastern gate of al-Jami' al-Aqsa ("*wa ila janib hatha al-majma' al-ma'ruf bi-Jami' 'Umar min jihat al-shamal iwan kabir ma'qud yusamma Maqam 'Uzayr wa bihi bab yatawassal minhu ila Jami' 'Umar wa bijiwar hadha al-iwan min jihat al-shamal iwan latif bihi mihrab yusamma Mihrab Zakariyya 'alayhi al-salam wa huwa bi-jiwar al-bab al-sharqi*"): Mujir al-Din al-'Ulaymi, *al-Uns al-jalil*, II, 12–13. That being said, there is a lively modern debate on the Mosque of 'Umar, including contentious theses that doubt whether 'Umar had actually built a rudimentary mosque on the Haram, while others even assert that the second caliph may have never even visited Jerusalem: for an excellent review of the scholarship on the subject, including a revisionist thesis on the question of 'Umar's construction of a mosque atop of the Haram, see most recently Lawrence Nees, *Perspectives on Early Islamic Art* in Jerusalem (Leiden: Brill, 2016), especially 5–20; for a revisionist thesis on 'Umar's (non-)visit to Jerusalem, see Busse, "Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam." It is interesting to note that Nees did not consult Mujir al-Din's chronicle in regards to the Mosque of 'Umar, or whatever remnants there may be of this supposed early mosque, eventhough Mujir al-Din, as explained above, provides a succinct description of the remains of Jami' 'Umar in al-Jami' al-Aqsa, on the south side of the Haram."

- On page 99, footnote 125, it states, "On the supposed Jami' 'Umar on the Haram, see note 55 above." This reference should be to the missing text that is now added to footnote 53.

The Druze in Israel: Between Protest and Containment

Yusri Khaizran

Abstract

Israeli policy toward the Druze has been two-dimensional since the establishment of the state. While the state enforced conscription of Druze into the military, the government's policy toward Druze in civilian areas was no different from the policy toward its Palestinian citizens in general, namely the confiscation of lands, discrimination in education and employment, and exclusion from a self-identified Jewish state. The ambivalent reality of the Druze community thus produces a dual dynamic of protest and containment. In this article, Yusri Khaizran reads the trajectory of protest among the Druze community inside Israel, and identifies key inflection points in that trajectory. He also analyzes the primary obstacles to such protests, which undermined their momentum and helped the state to tighten its grip over the Druze, despite the discrimination and exclusion that Druze, like all Palestinians inside Israel, face. This includes not only state authorities but also the traditional religious establishment in the Druze community, which has been increasingly involved in the efforts to contain and coopt Druze protest since the early 2000s.

Keywords

Druze; Israel; political protest; Palestinians in Israel; minority; Palestine; Middle East.

This article charts the repeated instances of *fawran* (spontaneous eruption of protest) and containment that characterize the Druze relationship with the Israeli state since the 1950s. It begins

with the efforts to impose and resist compulsory military conscription in the 1950s. It then examines the rise of Druze political organizations, the most important of which is the Druze Initiative Committee in the early 1970s. In response, the Israeli state sought to isolate and contain the increasingly politicized Druze through the education system. Despite the effectiveness of these efforts, the 2000s saw the emergence of new political forces among the Druze, including new efforts to restore connections – with Druze in Syria and Lebanon, but also with other Palestinians – that had been severed in prior decades. The article concludes with a look at recent developments, particularly the impact of the Arab uprisings of 2011 and their consequences, and the passage of the Nation-State Law, to consider Druze protest in the present time.

The Druze in Israel number close to 148,000 and are scattered over nearly twenty villages and towns in the Galilee and Mount Carmel, as well as in the Israeli-occupied Golan.[1] In comparison with Syria and Lebanon, where the Druze participated heavily in both nationalist and leftist movements, the Druze community in Israel constitutes something of an anomaly. Its small size, lack of power, and peripheral location all contributed to its historical marginalization in Palestine. In the Mandate period, the Druze were an integral part of Palestinian rural society, but remained on the fringes of the Palestinian national movement, reflecting the deep rift between political elites and the peasantry.[2] When the 1936–39 revolt failed and internal feuds ravaged Palestinian society, Zionist activists sought to mobilize the Druze as "a knife in the back of Arab unity."[3] At the same time, in 1939, the Zionist movement devised a transfer plan for the Druze population in the Galilee and Carmel, seeking to settle the community in the Hawran in southern Syria. Several Druze dignitaries collaborated with the Zionist movement in the wake of the revolt, but most Palestinian Druze fought neither alongside nor against Zionist forces during the 1948 war – nor were they transferred beyond the borders of Palestine.

Zionist strategic policy toward the Druze has remained relatively stable since the 1930s – namely, it has sought to mobilize them internally and externally as a kind of buffer against Arab Muslims. However, a major shift took place with the establishment of the state of Israel, after which it was possible to use state power and institutions to impose military conscription for the Druze, contain local leaders, form religious courts, and produce a separate education system. As part of its goal of isolating the Druze from their cultural and national milieu, Israel recognized the community first as a religious minority and then as a national group in 1956. That same year, Druze conscription into the Israel military forces became mandatory. The government patronized traditional leaders, whom it encouraged to promote and legitimize Druze army service. Some also regard military service as affirming a "Blood Alliance" and brotherhood between the Jewish people and the Druze community – two persecuted minority groups – said to go back three thousand years to Jethro's giving of his daughter Zipporah to Moses.[4] This view dovetails with the traditional Druze claim that the community is completely separate from Islam and its religion obligates loyalty to the ruling government.[5] This pseudo-religious doctrine of allegiance has been crafted to justify the network of special relations and cooperation between the Druze political and spiritual leadership and the Israeli establishment.

The state also embraced an education system grounded in control and alienation from a collective national identity. In this regard, Israel's education policy toward the Druze was part and parcel of the policy applied to Palestinian citizens of Israel more generally. Centralized and under full control of the Ministry of Education, the education system for Palestinian Arabs in Israel is managed and supervised by Jewish staff. The ministry interferes extensively in the appointment of teachers, principals, inspectors, and education curriculum development committees.[6] Yet Israeli authorities have also sought to separate the Druze and Arab education systems to divorce the Druze community from its milieu. These efforts intensified in the 1970s, when protests among the Druze seemed to indicate the state's dwindling grip on the Druze community, particularly its youth.

For over forty years, the formal education system has methodically subjected the Druze to an isolationist agenda, which sought to reformulate their political consciousness and historical memory through emphasizing a shared history with Jews as oppressed minorities struggling for survival, and instilling a fundamental fear of the Arab and Islamic milieu as a source of persecution. Special textbooks were put in place in Druze schools in subjects like history, Arabic, and Hebrew, all with the blessings of the Druze spiritual leadership. This was clearly an attempt to shore up the rising generation's loyalty to the state and to affirm Druze particularism and an introverted sectarian identity, wrenched from its vital Arab and Islamic milieu, and in so doing instill the belief that the status quo was preferable to any alternative.[7]

This has, to some extent, resulted in the alienation of the Druze community from its immediate and broader Arab milieu. Although this can be understood as a product of the Druze's minority status in a state that encourages the nationalization of their sectarian uniqueness, the community suffers from the same exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination that the Palestinian Arab population of Israel experiences as a whole.[8] Druze land is confiscated and Jewish settlements are erected around Druze villages while the budgets allocated to the community and official appointments are minimal.[9] Some 64 percent of Druze land has been confiscated by Israeli authorities under various pretexts, most commonly for "public interest" and "security issues."[10] Most of these lands were expropriated during the period of the military rule between 1949–66, when the Druze villages in the Galilee, with the exception of Daliyat al-Carmel and 'Isfiya, were under the same military rule imposed on other Arab villages. Twenty-six Jewish settlements have been established on these lands.[11]

Indeed, the Druze experience in Israel lays bare the fallacy of Israeli political discourse that claims that the status of its Palestinian citizens suffers only as a result of the community's failure to participate in civilian or military service. While Druze military service has improved the conditions for certain individuals, it remains on a personal, and not a structural, level. Military service has not expedited Druze integration into the Israeli milieu. This is because integration into Israeli society is not contingent on performance of duties, but is associated with the definition of Israel as a Jewish state. Racial, national, or religious affiliation, rather than civic participation, determines the relationship between citizens and the state. This has been made explicit after Israel passed the Nation-State Law, which affirmed the exclusive Jewish character

of the state and entrenched the privileges of its Jewish citizens.

As a result, despite economic dependence, manipulation of leaders, reengineering of consciousness, and a discourse of "preferring what is earned to what is deserved," the Druze in Israel have engaged in multifaceted protests, ranging from organizations that play an opposition role in the realm of power politics to demonstrations, public meetings, publication of bulletins, lawsuits, and efforts to establish and maintain contacts with the Arab milieu. These various efforts seem to largely agree about the goals: namely, abolition of conscription, emphasis on the Druze's affiliation with the broader Arab community, and equality within the framework of the state.

Druze protest movements, however, have lacked a clear intellectual ideological foundation, as well as a coordination of ongoing struggle and protest. In the absence of strong civil society organizations – like those found among Palestinian citizens of Israel – protest movements have appeared isolated and ineffectual. At the same time, recent years have marked a clear escalation, increasing momentum, and frequency of protests among the Druze, fueled by an intensifying housing shortage and educational shortcomings. Military service has not prevented the state from confiscating and constructing settlements on their land. Hence, resentment is twofold – directed at the state that antagonized the milieu against them, grabbed their land, marginalized them, and discriminated against them, as well as at Druze religious and traditional leaders who contributed to enforcing state policies and gave their blessing to conscription, land expropriation, and the dilution of identity.

The 1950s: Compulsory Military Service and Early Protest

The beginnings of political protest among the Druze are linked to the Israeli authorities' imposition of compulsory conscription. Like France's Troupes Spéciales in Syria and Lebanon and Britain's Iraqi Levies, the Israelis separated Druze recruits within a "minorities unit" (*yihidat ha-mi'otim*). The Israeli establishment's long-term efforts to recruit Druze into the Israeli military forces eventually reaped its rewards, and in 1956, at the instigation of a group of Druze notables, Druze conscription became mandatory.[12]

Contrary to the prevailing narrative in Israel, this decision sparked fierce opposition in Druze villages, supported initially by Shaykh Amin Tarif, spiritual leader of the Palestinian Druze. According to the Israeli intelligence services, Shaykh Tarif's opposition was rooted in moral, religious, and political considerations, including the presence of Druze communities in Arab states and the fear of being accused of treason.[13] In 1956, only about one-fourth (51 of 197) Druze conscripts from villages in the Galilee complied with their conscription orders; a similar proportion (32 of 117) of Druze conscripted from villages in al-Karmil, 'Isfiya and Daliyat al-Karmil complied.[14] Despite arrest campaigns carried out by the police, dozens of Druze clerics in Shafa'Amr sent a letter to the prime minister and the defense minister asking that the recruitment order be lifted and to treat the Druze like the rest of the Arab citizens of the state, stressing that the army was not in need of their service.[15]

Opposition to compulsory conscription never coalesced into a protest movement, however. No doubt the atmosphere generated by the defeat of the 1948 war, namely the low morale that prevailed among Palestinian Arabs in its wake and the imposition of military rule, played a role. But the authorities also succeeded, through manipulation of the faction- and family-based divisions within the traditional leadership, in silencing the voice of protest and passing conscription, which, in the end, received the blessing of the Druze spiritual leadership.[16] By exploiting conflicts of interests between local leaders, Israel managed to convince many traditional leaders to embrace and promote the conscription project. Although Shaykh Tarif had opposed mandatory conscription, the positions of the traditional leaders later forced him to abandon his opposition, fearing that it would undermine his position and that of his family vis-à-vis the state.[17] The traditional spiritual leadership of the Druze in Israel argued that the Druze were religiously bound to serve the ruler in place, whoever that may be, and this included, and thus legitimized, military service.[18] In the end, Shaykh Tarif had to back off from his initial position and acknowledge the status quo.

The implementation of compulsory conscription on the Druze was accomplished by way of several other major developments in terms of the state's relationship with the community. In 1956, Israel recognized the Druze as a distinct religious (and then national) group – although it had for centuries been seen as a part of the Islamic faith – and in 1961–62 the state established a spiritual head and religious courts for the community, providing further avenues for patronage.[19] The minorities unit, meanwhile, remained outside the official framework of the Israeli army and was in regular contact with the political division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Militarily, the unit reported to the operations section of the Israeli army general staff and within the framework of intelligence operations.[20]

The Late 1960s and Early 1970s: Political Organization of Protest

The early 1960s were a period of relative inactivity, facilitated by the imposition of compulsory conscription and the continuation of military rule. By exploiting economic conditions and alliances with the traditional community leaders, Israel largely succeeded in eliciting Druze compliance with its decrees.[21] However, in April 1965, a group of educated Druze youth, including Samih al-Qasim, Nayif Salim, Muhammad Naffaʻ, Salah Hazima, and Jihad Saʻd, organized themselves in what became known as the Free Druze Youth (*al-Shabab al-Druze al-Ahrar*). They issued a statement, distributed in Hittin during the annual visit to the shrine of the prophet Shuʻayb, calling for the lifting of oppressive measures, foremost among them mandatory military service.[22] This group would later form the nucleus of the Druze Initiative Committee, which after its establishment in 1972 became the primary engine and platform for Druze opposition to state policy. Muhammad Naffaʻ, a founding member of both groups, claimed that the Druze Initiative Committee had no links to the Communist party, although a number of its founders were members or supporters of the party.[23] Instead, Naffaʻ argued, the committee reflected young Druze intellectuals' dissatisfaction with

the status quo. This growing frustration and resentment can also be seen in the results of the 1969 parliamentary elections, in which Rakah (*Reshima Komunistit Hadasha*, New Communist List) received approximately 10 percent of the Druze vote.[24]

In fact, discrimination and prejudice had pushed some Druze linked to the establishment – employees of the Arab directorate in the Histradrut, correspondents for the daily newspaper *al-Yawm*, and teachers in some government schools, among others – to establish the Association of the Druze in January 1967. This was set up by intellectuals affiliated with the state, the most notable among them Zaydan 'Atsha, Amal Nasr al-Din, Farhan Tarif, Salman Farraj, and Munir Faris.[25] They sought to instrumentalize their positions within state institutions to demand that the Druze be granted rights, that government institutions be open to them, that their villages be industrialized, and that government schools teach a shared history that brought together Jews and Druze. On top of this, the Association of the Druze demanded that the Labor party – the ruling party at the time, whose membership had been closed to Arab citizens until the late 1960s – open its doors to young Druze, as party membership was a key to integration into the establishment.[26] Nabih al-Qasim goes so far as to claim that Amnon Linn, the long-time head of the Labor party's Arab directorate, was behind the establishment of the Association of the Druze – Israeli authorities having realized from 1956 that they could contain protest movement through Druze intermediaries. In 1970s, the Labor party opened its membership to Druze "and all other minorities who serve in the security forces," in a clear attempt to ease tensions.[27]

In 1969, the Israeli government announced that it would no longer recognize Eid al-Fitr as a Druze holiday, replacing it with the day Druze religious figures visited the shrine of the prophet Shu'ayb near the depopulated village of Hittin. Although the vast majority of Syrian and Lebanese Druze do not celebrate it, this became an official Druze holiday in Israel, during which schools are closed and work is not mandatory.[28] This move was part of the Israeli effort to strengthen the traditional religious leadership, which administers the holy place. Exhibiting no qualms about being used politically to ensure loyalty to the state of Israel, the spiritual leadership accepted the condition that soldiers serving in minority units take their loyalty oath at the shrine – during which time it would also host Israeli state leaders and government representatives. This took place against the backdrop of the 1967 war, which brought the Syrian Golan, as well as the West Bank and Gaza, under Israeli occupation, and reaffirmed for Israeli authorities the need to cultivate the Druze as a "loyal minority." Yigal Allon, a Labor leader, suggested creating a Druze buffer state between Israel and Syria in the Golan and Hawran mountains, that would be sponsored and armed by the Israeli government, to serve as the forefront of the struggle against the Arab eastern front.[29]

In this context, the Druze Initiative Committee signified a quantum leap forward in the institutionalization of protest against state policies, representing the establishment of its first organized framework, tightly linked to Rakah. The Druze Initiative Committee was announced in March 1972 at a meeting at the home of Shaykh Farhud Farhud in the village of al-Rama. This meeting, organized by Shaykh Farhud

– who had been active in the campaign against compulsory conscription in 1956 – set the parameters of the struggle against the injustices and inequality imposed by authorities on the Druze.[30] It pointed to three key points in this regard: mandatory conscription; land confiscation, especially in al-Rama, Bayt Jann, al-Buqayʻa, al-Maghar, and Yarka; and interference in the religious affairs of the Druze community through the abolition of Eid al-Fitr and the exploitation of religious visits for political purposes.[31] The committee subsequently presented a petition to state leaders bearing some eight thousand signatures and making four basic demands: (1) cancellation of military service; (2) non-interference in religious affairs and holidays; (3) an end to land confiscation and the return of confiscated lands; and (4) provision of grants and technical and financial assistance required to develop Druze villages.[32]

The Druze Initiative Committee served for many years as a platform for resisting state policies, gathering within its framework a number of prominent personalities known for their Arab nationalist and anti-establishment tendencies. These included the poet Samih al-Qasim; Muhammad Naffaʻ, secretary of the Communist Party; the poet Nayif Salim; the educator Nimr Nimr; the writer Salman Natur; Ghalib Sayf; and Hadi Zahir, among others. The Druze Initiative Committee attained further significance given Shaykh Farhud's stature as a local religious and spiritual authority. His position diverged from the quiet accommodationist line adopted by the Druze's traditional religious leaders in Israel; his refusal to lend religious legitimacy to the status quo thus raised doubts about the traditional leadership's claims that the Druze were religiously obliged to give allegiance to the state within which they lived.[33]

The Druze Initiative Committee also served as an institution linking Druze opposition to the Communist Party, which had previously faced major difficulties mobilizing support among the Druze. This was one of the reasons, according to Muhammad Naffaʻ, that the party supported the committee's establishment.[34] The parliamentary elections of 1973 witnessed a doubling in Druze support for Rakah, to 20 percent of the Druze vote. No doubt, these developments can also be seen as in keeping with a broader resurgence of the Palestinian national movement. With the rise of the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon, the 1970s marked the revolutionary episode of the Palestinian national struggle, which evolved side by side with the Lebanese left under the leadership of Kamal Jumblatt, scion of a notable Druze family from Mount Lebanon. Jewish-Israeli attacks on Druze clergy in Tiberias, and Kiryat Shmona, following an operation in Kiryat Shmona in April 1974 carried out by members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine–General Command further raised tension among the Druze.[35]

Israeli authorities noticed the deterioration of relations between the state and the Druze and appointed two commissions to look into the issue. The first, formed in May 1974, was headed by MK Avraham Shekhterman. The second was formed a few months later in November, at the request of the president's adviser on Arab citizens' affairs. Chaired by Gabriel Ben-Dor of the University of Haifa, it was tasked with researching the means and measures necessary to restore friendly relations between the state and its Druze citizens.[36]

The Late 1970s and 1980s: Manipulation through the Education System

Both the Schechterman Committee and the Ben-Dor Committee presented their recommendations in 1975. Among the commissions' recommendations were that the government stop dealing with Druze issues by way of the Arab directorates. The Schechterman Commission made wide-ranging recommendations on land, planning, and economic development; however, its recommendations on education were particularly important as they made clear the functional objectives to be applied to the formal education system of the Druze community. The commission called for the "Druzification" of the teaching ranks in Druze communities, proposing that all educators in Druze schools should be members of the Druze community, with parent committees and local councils empowered to review non-Druze teachers in Druze villages.[37] Druze retired military officers and wounded veterans were to be invited to lecture students on the benefits of military service, while the curriculum at Druze schools would emphasize the concept of "Druze-Israeli awareness."[38] The state would establish youth clubs in Druze villages, which would also be integrated as a distinct component into the Hebrew Youth Movement (Gadna).[39]

The Ben-Dor Commission explicitly recommended separating schools in Druze villages from the Arab Education Department and developing Druze-specific education programs. To realize the committee's vision, textbooks in Arabic, Hebrew, history, and geography would be compiled exclusively for the Druze, and a course on Druze heritage would be introduced. According to the committee, "applying such an education program in these areas will definitely lead to eliminating the feeling of frustration emanating from the identity problem."[40] Both substantively and structurally, the proposals reflected a systematic effort to alienate the Druze from their Arab and Islamic milieu and to bolster sectarian particularism and isolationism among the younger generations.[41]

In mid-1975, the Ministry of Education moved forward with these recommendations, developing a curriculum for Druze schools that stressed, among other things, Druze heritage and love of the homeland, allegiance to the state of Israel, Jewish culture, and the distinctive relationships between Druze and the Jews. The Druze heritage course was blessed by the traditional religious leadership, which ensured that it would not include any secret religious texts of the Druze sect.[42] The main purpose of this program as a whole – which was applied to instruction in Arabic, Hebrew, history, and heritage – was to promote allegiance to the state among the young generation and consolidate a reclusive sectarian identity in isolation from the Arab and Islamic milieu, into which the Druze community had emerged in the eleventh century and with which it has been connected ever since.

Overall, Israeli policy toward the Druze frames the objective and religious discourse at Druze schools, which emphasizes Druze-Israeli consciousness, including the Jews and excluding the Arab milieu with all its implications. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not taught in Druze schools, pan-Arabism is barely cited (and a blind eye turned

to the pivotal role that Druze-born figures played in pan-Arab or leftist revolutionary movements in the Arab Mashriq), and the history of the Druze under Islamic rule emphasizes Druze particularism. This division is reinforced by the insistence on Druze teachers, sidelining Palestinian Christian and Muslim educators who might (formally or informally) challenge the official line. Indeed, whereas non-Druze teachers comprised 50 percent of teachers in Druze schools in 1975, by 1985 this number was reduced to 28 percent.[43] Supposed to serve as a cultural tool of communication and identification of self-culture, Arabic has become an instrument to reproduce consciousness and frame the young generation in tandem with the minority thought devised by Zionist ideology. Hence, the state's education policy, implemented in collaboration with the traditional leadership and some Druze intellectuals, effectively serves as an extension of Israel's approach since 1956, which unrelentingly seeks to Zionize the Druze in terms of both intellect and conduct.

The 2000s: New Protest Formations and the Containing Role of the Religious Establishment

From the late 1980s, the relationship between the Israeli state and the Druze community in Israel has been marked by recurring expressions that resist the alienation of the Druze in Israel from their coreligionists in Lebanon and Syria and from their Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic milieus, as well as the continued marginalization of and discrimination against Druze within Israeli society. In 1987, violent clashes broke out between the community and the police in the village of Bayt Jann. The conflict stemmed from the Israel Nature and Parks Authority's claims over the lands of al-Zabud, which belonged to Bayt Jann. The roots of the protest around al-Zabud lands reach back to the 1960s, when the government decided to establish the Miron reservation, which blocked peasants' access to their lands in al-Zabud. In 1984, the villagers tried to open a road through the reserve, but this attempt was interrupted by a court order. After three years of discussions (1984–87), the villagers were unable to reach an agreement with the Israeli authorities. In July 1987, the protest renewed with even more strength. A general strike was declared and all the entrances to the village were blocked. A large police force entered to disperse the protesters, and violent clashes between the residents and the security forces left twenty-six wounded and three vehicles burnt. The events of al-Zabud were the most violent clashes between the Druze and the authorities since the establishment of the state, holding a significance for the Druze akin to Land Day.[44] In response to the protest movement in Bayt Jann, the Israeli government announced Decision 373 in April 1987, a historic move granting equality between Druze and Circassian citizens and their villages and Jewish citizens in all civil fields and governmental services.[45] By the 2000s, however, efforts by state and traditional authorities to manage or contain Druze protest produced diminishing returns.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Tawasul (Communication) Project launched by 'Azmi Bishara[46] sought specifically to penetrate the political isolation imposed

on the Druze by Israel over the preceding decades. Ties to their brethren in Syria and Lebanon had been cut in 1948 and expressions of identification, especially since Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, had been confined to the social, the familial, and the religious; politics were put aside and even religiously prohibited by the official religious leadership (itself a politicization of religion that served to subjugate the Druze in Israel). What was new about Tawasul was its creative attempt to break through the wall of isolation to bring about political communication between the Druze of Israel and the Druze in Syria and Lebanon, who were long known for their nationalist and pan-Arab inclinations. More important still, the project engaged a large group of Druze religious figures under the umbrella of opposition to conscription and returning the Druze to the fold of Arabism from which Israel had long tried to alienate them.

The friendly relations (at that time) between the Lebanese Druze leader Walid Jumblatt and the Ba'thist regime in Syria contributed to Tawasul's support. In 2001, Tawasul held a conference in Amman. Attendees included Druze figures and forces from Lebanon who enjoyed the patronage of the Jumblatt-sponsored pan-Arab bloc attended, as well as Druze delegations from the Galilee and al-Karmil. The resolutions that emerged from the conference not only rejected compulsory military service for the Druze in Israel but also denounced non-Druze Arabs volunteering in the Israeli army.[47] Jumblatt's estrangement from the Syrian regime after the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri in February 2005 cast a shadow over the project. After a hiatus of about two years, another delegation of Druze clergy from Lebanon, Israel, and the Golan was sent to Syria in September 2005. Meanwhile, relations between Druze religious authorities and the state showed evidence of fraying. The Israeli security services, fearing the affinities that could result from the continuation of these visits, called a number of Druze clergy for interrogation and pushed for judicial proceedings to be initiated against them for having visited an enemy state.[48] These prosecutions ended in 2014 by sentencing Sa'id Naffa' to imprisonment and the religious figures to probation.[49]

The Tawasul project gave birth to a new dynamic for organizing a protest movement among the Druze in Israel, one that affirmed the Druze's Arab nationalist affiliation and exposed the injustices to which they are subjected despite serving in the army and security services. The first of the new organizations formed in this spirit was the Free Druze Charter (Mithaq al-Ma'rufiyyin al-Ahrar), founded by a group of activists led by the lawyer Sa'id Naffa' and linked to Balad (Brit Leumit Demokratit, or National Democratic Alliance, a party formed in 1995 and headed by 'Azmi Bishara) and the Tawasul Project. This organization tried networking with Druze in Syria and centered on the issue of visiting holy places throughout *bilad al-Sham* (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine). In a May 2005 statement titled "Returning from Damascus," the Free Druze Charter pointed to the inability of Druze to visit their holy places and relatives in Syria and Lebanon, asking: "Are all citizens – Muslim, Circassian, Baha'i, Christian, and Jewish – able to go to hostile states – Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran, Morocco, Lebanon, and even Iraq – without fear that they will be accused of betraying the state?"[50]

Another organization to emerge from the Tawasul Project was the Free Movement for Arab Civilization (Harakat al-Hurriyya lil-Hadara al-ʿArabiyya). Founded in 2005 on the initiative of the activist Ihsan Murad, it announced its formation at a demonstration in front of Hadarim prison near Netanya, calling for the release of prisoners, at their head the Lebanese Druze Samir al-Quntar. The movement defined itself as an open social nationalist political and intellectual movement that believes secular nationalism to be the best way to preserve Arab civilization in circumstances of sectarian fragmentation. In its founding statement, the movement committed to raising nationalist consciousness around land confiscation and displacement and to abolishing mandatory military service for the Druze.[51] In a February 2014 statement, the movement called upon Druze religious authorities in Lebanon to issue a religious proscription of the use of Druze religious sites inside Israel for Israeli army exhibitions or administering the oath of allegiance for Druze recruits in the Minorities Unit, now called the Sword Battalion (Gdud Herev).[52]

The goals and orientation of the Free Movement for Arab Civilization converged with those of other recently established organizations like al-Juzur Society to Strengthen and Consolidate the Cultural Roots of the Arab Druze (Jamʿiyat al-Juzur li-Tathbit wa Tarsikh al-Juzur al-Hadariyya li-l-ʿArab al-Duruz) and the ʾ48 Arabs–Druze Communication Committee (Lajnat al-Tawasul al-Dirziyya ʿArab al-1948), comprised primarily of the clergy who participated in the delegation that visited Syria. Before long, the Communication Committee suffered from internal divisions and split: one group, which remained the Communication Committee (Lajnat al-Tawasul), was headed by Shaykh ʿAli Maʿdi, while a breakaway organization called the National Communication Committee (Lajnat al-Tawasul al-Watani) was headed by Shaykh ʿAwni Khunayfis.

The involvement of clergy in such organizations seriously challenged the claim made by the official religious leadership that the Druze were religiously obliged to show loyalty to any ruling authority.[53] It demonstrated that there was in fact no consensus among the clergy on the position of blind loyalty and that a significant number were ready to adopt positions other than those dictated by the authorities. The official religious leadership was apprehensive of what seemed to be the emergence of an alternative leadership under the umbrella of the national project, especially since the Communication Committee argued that the Druze could not remain a "tribe under the banner of the tribal chief."[54] Collectively, these organizations fulfill a need that the traditional leadership had not met, namely addressing the state's attempts to dilute the national identity of the Druze.

The growing disillusionment of Druze in Israel and the diminishing ability of state authorities and traditional elites to exert control can also be seen in the bloody clashes in the village of al-Buqayʿa and protests against land confiscation in al-Mansura and al-Jamala by residents of ʿIsfiya and Daliyat al-Karmil. The dispute between the Druze in al-Karmil and the state broke out in 2003, following governmental plans to expropriate private agricultural lands of Druze peasants in the Jalma and Mansura areas, east of their villages, to build a railroad line and a gas line. These plans provoked

strong protest among the Druze of al-Karmil and the landowners quickly established an organization called the Committee for Defending Land and Home (Lajnat al-Difaʿ ʿan al-Ard wa al-Maskan). This committee, headed by Fahmi Halabi, advocated for fair compensation to landowners, while insisting on the principle of "land for land."[55] Driven by real fear of escalation, the institutionalized religious leadership hastened to position itself as a mediator between the state and the Druze landowners. Rather than supporting the landowners, the main goals of the religious leadership were to contain the crisis and to reach a compromise – containment and cooptation having always been the main political strategy adopted by the religious leadership.[56]

The same approach can be seen in the religious establishment's reaction to events in Buqayʿa a few years later.[57] In 2007, violent events in al-Buqayʿa marked a potential turning point in the relationship between the Druze community and the Israeli state. These clashes were the most violent and bloody clashes between Druze and the state since 1948. In October 2007, police entered the village of al-Buqayʿa to arrest young men accused of setting fire to a cellular antenna erected in the Jewish settlement of Pekiʾn ha-Hadasha (New Pekiʾin). The attack on the antenna was a spontaneous response to the attempts by ultra-Orthodox Jews to revive the Jewish presence in al-Buqayʿa, which the people of al-Buqayʿa considered a grave threat.[58] The community's reaction to the police raid led to clashes that lasted two days and left twenty-nine policemen and thirteen villagers injured.[59] The police used live ammunition against the residents of al-Buqayʿa, which shocked the Druze, who had long believed that their military service immunized them from the violence of the state. However, it became clear to them in this case that any attack on a Jewish citizen crossed a red line that rendered their property, their lives, and even their religious assembly halls fair game. The state was surprised by the outbreak of the al-Buqayʿa events, as was the religious establishment.

There are some indications that this moment could have led to an organized protest movement demanding a new basis upon which to reconfigure the relationship between the state and the community had not the accommodationist traditional religious leadership thrown its weight behind containing the events' political repercussions.[60] The official spiritual leadership rushed to play an intermediary role between the police and the protesters in al-Buqayʿa. Matters stabilized as Druze youth who participated in the events of al-Buqayʿa were not indicted. The official spiritual leadership also mediated between the Druze owners and the Israel Lands Administration and Prime Minister's Office in the case of al-Karmil, resulting in a 2009 meeting between the director-general of the prime minister's office, Eyal Gabbai, and a delegation from the villages, arranged by the spiritual leadership.[61] In 2011, an agreement was reached in which landowners received other lands in compensation for those the government had expropriated.[62]

Notably in these cases, Israeli authorities did not initiate steps toward containment; rather, the official spiritual leadership took it upon itself to mediate between the community and the state. Gabbai's September 2009 statement clearly indicates a shift in the state's position: he accused the Druze of thuggery, going on to say that

"Druze" had become a word that inspired terror within government offices, as it was impossible to deal with Druze carrying licensed weapons.[63] This shift can be explained by the growing rightist and isolationist trend within Israel in recent years, which increased sharply after the second intifada and is represented in the promulgation of laws – including on matters of citizenship, nationality, immigration, boycott, and civil society organization funding – bearing a clear racist imprint toward the Arab citizens.

The events at al-Buqay'a demonstrated the increasingly strained relations between the Druze and the state, representing a qualitative shift in the political consciousness of a large segment of the Druze. Indeed, they seem to indicate the future of relations between Druze communities on the one hand and the establishment and the traditional leadership allied with it on the other. A poll conducted in early 2009 by Majid al-Haj and Nihad 'Ali, two researchers from the University of Haifa, illuminates this trend. According to the poll, 64 percent of Druze favored abolishing compulsory conscription or making it voluntary; 48 percent of those polled described the relationship between the Druze and the state as not good or not sufficiently good. Four factors emerged as fueling resentment, frustration, and alienation among the Druze: 95 percent of respondents mentioned land confiscation, 75 percent mentioned unemployment, 70 percent mentioned the events at al-Buqay'a, and 68.5 percent mentioned the absence of master plans for Druze towns.[64] Al-Haj saw the results as an indication of a multi-dimensional crisis within the Druze community, involving the state but also the official Druze leadership. Seventy-two percent of those polled believed that the Supreme Druze Religious Council[65] did not represent the interests of the Druze in Israel. This traditional leadership's flagging legitimacy provides fertile ground for a protest movement against both the state and the traditional leadership that has since 1956 played such an instrumental role in convincing the Druze to accept the authorities' diktats.

Inspired by the leading role played by the young generation in the popular uprisings of the "Arab Spring," an organization called Urfud (Refuse) was established against compulsory Israeli army service. Formally founded in 2014 to protest all forms of enlistment imposed by Israel on Palestinians in general and the Druze in particular, this non-party youth movement comprises young men and women from various regions. The principal activists focus their efforts on the struggle against compulsory Druze conscription, emphasizing humane values and identification with Arab-Palestinian identity. Women – such as Hadiya Kayuf and Maysan Hamdan – hold key positions alongside central figures like Yaman Zaydan and 'Ala' Muhanna. According to its platform, Druze citizens of Israel are Palestinian Arabs, and it expresses uncompromising opposition to the Israeli government's repeated and ongoing attempts to "divide and conquer" though sectarianism, confessionalism, clannism, and geographic particularism. Urfud also resists all forms of Palestinian conscription, including so-called national service. Organizing diverse activists in Arab villages, it calls for refusal of military service and offers information, advice, legal counsel, and workshops and seminars designed to raise awareness on the subject. Some members have participated in international conferences as a way of making their voice heard.[66]

Despite this, the pan-Arab bloc has not been able thus far to unite and transcend personal, factional, and partisan differences.[67] Structural factors impede the development of an organized protest movement that would present a real challenge to the establishment, chief among them the absence of any real Arab protection or support. In this, the case of the Druze is no different from that of Palestinians inside Israel more generally: the lack of Arab support has allowed the Israeli establishment to cultivate an accommodationist leadership and impose politicized educational programs. Equally important, however, is the pliant religious leadership, which considers loyalty to the state to be a crucial component of religious belief. Further, one cannot discount the economic dependency that is the product of compulsory military service. Military service and engagement in security agencies have provided a primary livelihood for broad segments of the Druze community, particularly given the loss of land and subsequent decline of traditional agriculture. A study in the 1990s demonstrated that more than 30 percent of young Druze men in the labor force are involved in the security forces, whether the police, army, or border guard.[68] Many young Druze men consider army service as a means of self-realization, integration into mainstream Israeli society, and social mobility – as well as a source of income. Thus, the prime candidates to participate in any protest movement cannot afford to do so given that their livelihoods are fundamentally threatened and subjected to politics.

Ghalib Sayf, a member of the Druze Initiative Committee since 1983 and its head since 2012, attributes the movement's weakness to three main factors: the economic factor, official education, and the compromised position of the spiritual leadership. To these he adds the fact that the Israeli media provides no coverage of the activities of the nationalist forces within the Druze community. On top of this, there is no support from the Palestinian national movement.[69] Because the question of the Druze was not in and of itself a priority for the Palestinian nationalist forces, the nationalist trend within the Druze community never received resources or political attention equivalent to what Israel devoted to separate the Druze from the Arab milieu.

Although Sayf was clear to avoid casting blame, since the nationalist forces at home and abroad face many challenges, Muhammad Naffaʻ felt that the Palestinian national movement should have done more to embrace the protest movement among the Druze.[70] The political reality produced by the disastrous results of the 1948 war explain to a great extent the Palestinian national movement's neglect of this issue. The Druze were dealt with similarly to how the Arab world dealt with the Palestinians inside Israel, who were held responsible for accepting Israeli citizenship and integrating (however marginally) into Israeli political life. Likewise, the Arab world chose not to embrace, even minimally, the nationalist forces among the Druze, which struggled to thwart the project of compulsory conscription. Without such support, these forces' efforts to resist the Israeli state's policy of splitting the Druze from their surroundings and their past were overmatched.

The absence of Arab financial, political, and moral support remains, without the slightest doubt, a weakness and has over the past decades curtailed the impact of nationalist forces within the Druze community. With such support – and the

abandonment of the discourse of betrayal – it may have been possible to limit some of the repercussions of the policy of conscription, subjugation, and containment that Israel was able to implement vis-à-vis the Druze. The Tawasul Project showed perhaps the greatest awareness of the importance of Arab support to any nationalist or protest movement inside Druze society.[71] However, this attempt was disrupted by internal developments and events that swept the Arab world.

The 2010s: The "Arab Spring" and the Nation-State Law

The outbreak of so-called Arab Spring revolutions once again led to a breakdown in contact between the Druze in Israel and those in Lebanon or Syria, and the suspension of any protest activity among the Druze in Israel. Syria slid into a civil war, causing the collapse of its social fabric and political system. This has clearly cast a heavy shadow on the protest movement among the Druze in spite of growing issues around unlicensed construction in Druze localities and the hefty fines it has incurred. The rise of Jihadist-takfiri[72] organizations in Syria and attacks on Druze communities in Idlib, Jaramana, and the Hawran undoubtedly diverted attention to Syria and the threats to communities there. Druze traditional and religious leaders in Israel attempted to use the events unfolding in Syria to reintroduce a reclusive minority discourse, portraying Israel as a safe haven for ethnic and religious minorities. The comparison of Israel to its neighbors dominated the political discourse within the Druze community during the most difficult years of the Syrian revolution.

However, the tide turned after the Knesset approved the Nation-State Law in summer 2018. Passage of the law sparked a large-scale protest movement across the Druze community. Of note, and to the surprise of many, Druze retired military officers led an organized protest campaign, though they were careful not to depart from a broader Zionist-Israeli consensus. Spurred by these officers, the religious leadership adopted a similar position toward the Nation-State Law, calling for its amendment. Protests centered on the principle of equality rooted in the notion of the "covenant of blood and common destiny" shared by Druze and Jews, which was undermined by the Nation-State Law.[73]

From the outset, Druze military officers and official religious leaders attempted to distinguish themselves from the protest movement among Palestinian citizens of Israel more generally. This was premised on the conviction that maintaining this distinction would help lobby a wide cross-section of the Jewish community onto the side of the Druze movement against the Nation-State Law. Major demonstrations in Tel Aviv, where the organizers made sure that slogans and speeches did not deviate from the Israeli consensus, echoed this trend.[74] Still, the broad public participation among the Druze and the role played by retired military officers merit special reflection. These protests were triggered by, and cannot be isolated from, the day-to-day concerns that haunt Druze citizens of Israel – concerns about land, housing, unlicensed construction, unemployment, and so on. The predominant sentiment was that discrimination against ordinary Druze citizens was a particular kind of double betrayal: not only had their

allegiance to the Jewish state, manifested most clearly in military service, not spared them these everyday concerns, but the Nation-State Law had now explicitly placed the Druze outside of the boundaries of the political community.[75] However, in view of the position of the officers and official religious leadership, it is unlikely that the protest movement can in the near future serve as a prelude to a "return to oneself." Apparently, these parties are still convinced that change can be devised through state institutions and within the framework of the ideological consensus in Israel, and not necessarily by combining protest with a broader effort to reshape identity and collective affiliation among the Druze.

Conclusions

In the Mandate period, the Druze, while an integral part of the Palestinian rural community, remained on the fringes of the Palestinian national movement. A major shift took place when the state of Israel was established. The state used its institutions and power to impose conscription, contain local leaders, form religious courts, and "Druzify" the education system. This has, to some extent, resulted in the alienation of the Druze community from its immediate and broader Arab milieu. This disconnection is reflected in the discourse of the spiritual leadership and Druze Forum for Local Authorities, the education system and curricula, and enlistment in the army and security agencies. Voting for Zionist parties reflects another dimension of alienation (and has remained unchanged even after passage of the Nation-State Law).

Moreover, the situation of the Druze lays bare the fallacy of Israeli political discourse that claims that Palestinian citizens' rights are diminished only because of their failure to participate in civil or military service. Druze military service has only improved conditions on the individual level. It has not led to integration into Israeli society, which is contingent not on performing certain duties or obligations of citizenship, but on national, and religious affiliation – namely, Israel's definition as a Jewish state. The historical experience of the Druze speaks volumes to the nature of the state and the limits of inclusion. It also helps explain the recurrence of protest among the Druze.

Despite economic dependence, the manipulation of leaders, the reengineering of consciousness, and the promotion of a discourse of "preferring what is earned to what is deserved," Druze protest has been multifaceted, ranging from building organizations opposed to power politics to common protest practices, including demonstrations, public meetings, publications, judicial action, and establishing contacts with the Arab milieu. All forces involved in this activity agree on the targets, namely, abolishing conscription, emphasizing the Arab affiliation of the Druze, and demanding equality within the framework of the state. However, the Druze protest movement continues to lack a clear intellectual or ideological foundation or coordination of an ongoing struggle. Further, it lacks civil society organizations that can secure external support, as civil society groups do for the Palestinian community inside Israel more generally.

Recent years have also witnessed a clear escalation of protests among the Druze, as

housing shortages and low levels of education compared to other Palestinian citizens of Israel have spurred protests of increasing frequency and momentum. The Druze also realize that military service has neither prevented these setbacks nor prevented the state from confiscating and building settlements on their lands. Hence, resentment is twofold, directed not only against the state that marginalized them, discriminated against them, seized their lands, and antagonized the milieu against them, but also against the spiritual and traditional leaders who clearly helped enforce state policies and gave their blessings to conscription, land expropriation, and the dilution of identity. These issues are naturally at the heart of protests, which are anticipated to erupt sooner or later as an inevitable consequence of decades-long policies.

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Endnotes

1   It is important to clarify that this article does not deal with the Druze of the Golan for two main reasons. First, the Druze of the Golan fought the decision taken by the Israeli government to annex the Golan in 1981, refusing to accept Israeli citizenship and holding onto their Syrian identity. Second, Israel's policy toward the Druze in the Golan is different from its policy toward the Druze in the Galilee and al-Karmil. The state did not impose military conscription on the Druze in the Golan and, as a result, their struggle and protest movement has differed significantly from that which developed among the Druze inside Israel, both in terms of its goals and its consequences.

2   Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians and 1948: The Underlying Causes of Failure," in *The War for Palestine*, ed. Eugene Rogan and Avi Shlaim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12–36.

3   Firro, *Druzes in the Jewish State: A Brief History* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 55.

4   Larry Derfner, "Covenant of Blood," *Jerusalem Post*, 15 January 2009; Firro, *Druzes in the Jewish State*, 77.

5   Aharon Layish, "*Taqiyya* among the Druzes," *Asian and African Studies* 19 (1985): 275–77. As Zeidan Atashi notes: "Since the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, when their religion first became established, the Druze have customarily maintained allegiance to

the incumbent regime in the regions, where they have lived, as long as that regime has respected their way of life and their religion." Zeidan Atashi, *Druze and Jews in Israel: A Shared Destiny?* (London: Sussex Academic Press, 1997), 166.

6   Mahmud Mi'ari argues that the "Arab education system lacks an independent self-management. Since the state was established, the administrative structure of the education system has been fully controlled by the government. The Ministry of Education, particularly the Hebrew education department and its staff, and sometimes the Israeli security services, manipulate all aspects of the Arab education apparatus (such as infrastructure, services, curricula, programs, and appointments)." Mahmud Mi'ari, ed., *Manahij al-ta'lim al-'Arabi fi Isra'il: dirasat naqdiyya fi manahij al-lugha al-'Arabiyya wa al-tarikh wa al-jighrafiyya wa al-madaniyyat* [Arab educational curricula in Israel: a critical study of Arabic language, history, geography, and civics curricula] (Nazareth: Arab Pedagogical Council and the Follow-up Committee on Arab Education, 2014), 24.

7   Yusri Khaizran, "On the State's Education Apparatus: Zionization and Minoritarianism of Druze Consciousness in Israel," *Arab Studies Journal* 28, no. 2 (2020): 76–106.

8   Atashi, *Druze and Jews*, 5.

9   Arab Center for Alternative Planning

(ACAP), *Da'iqat al-aradi fi al-baldat al-'Arabiyya al-Durziyya (al-Ma'rufiyya)* [Land Pressure in Arab Druze (al-Ma'rufiyya) Communities] ('Aylabun: Arab Center for Alternative Planning, 2008), 1.

10 ACAP, *Da'iqat al-aradi*, 8.

11 ACAP, *Da'iqat al-aradi*, 8.

12 Rami Zidan, *Gedud bene 'Arav: toldoteha shel yehidat ha-mi'utim be-Tsahal mi-shenat 1948 ve-'ad 1956* [Battalion of Arabs: the history of the minorities unit in the IDF from 1948 to 1956] (Tel Aviv: Modan, 2015), 168–69.

13 Hillel Cohen, *Aravim Tovim: ha-modi'in ha-Yisre'eli veha-'Arvim be-Yisra'el: sokhnim u-maf'ilim, meshatfim u-mordim, matarot ve-shitot* [Good Arabs: Israeli intelligence and the Arabs in Israel: agents and operators, collaborators and rebels, goals and methods] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2006), 187–89.

14 Cohen, *Aravim Tovim*, 188.

15 Cohen, *Aravim Tovim*, 190.

16 Cohen, *Aravim Tovim*, 194–96.

17 See the report *Ganzekh ha-medina*, document titled "Ha-Ida Hadruzit." Hitz 28/2402, 3 November 1953.

18 In a 1953 meeting between Meir Argov, a leader of the Labor party, and a delegation from the Druze traditional leadership, including representatives of the Tarif, Ma'di, and Khunayfis families, Shaykh Salman Tarif affirmed that the Druze, according to their most holy religious books, were obliged to obey God and the sultan. See "Protocol mi ha-yeshiva 'im mishlahat ha-Druzim," 14 May 1953, file no. 15-1953-926-2, Labor Party Archives, Beit Berl.

19 Mordechai Nisan, "ha-Druzim bi-Yisrael: sheola shel zahot" [The Druze in Israel: a matter of identity], *Kiyunim Khadashim* 22 (2010): 6.

20 Kais M. Firro, *Duruz fi zaman "al-ghafla": min al-hirath al-Filastiniila al-bunduqiyya al-Isra'iliyya* [Druze in the time of "inattention": from the Palestinian plow to the Israeli gun], (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2019), 185.

21 See Kais Firro, "al-Tajnid al-ijbari lil-Duruz fi al-jaysh al-Isra'ili: khalfiyya tarikhiyya" [Compulsory conscription of the Druze into the Israeli army: an historical background], in *al-Filastiniyyun fi Isra'il: qira'at fi al-tarikh wa al-siyasa wa al-mujtama'* [The Palestinians in Israel: readings in history, politics, and society], ed. Nadim Rouhana

and Areej Sabbagh-Khoury (Haifa: Mada al-Carmel, 2011), 61–62.

22 Druze Initiative Committee, *Samidun* [Steadfast Ones] (Shifa 'Amr: n.p., 2001), 17. Also see the statement issued by this group and published in *al-Ittihad* newspaper, 20 April 1965.

23 Author interview with Muhammad Nazza', 6 June 2013.

24 Firro, *Druze in the Jewish State*, 197.

25 Firro, *Druze in the Jewish State*, 186–89.

26 Letter from Association Secretary Munir Faris to Shimon Peres, 27 August 1968, file number 5-027-1968-453, Labor Party Archives, Beit Berl. See also: Firro, *Druze in the Jewish State*, 187.

27 Nabih al-Qasim, *al-Duruz fi Isra'il* [The Druze in Israel] (Jerusalem: Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyya, 1995), 49.

28 Rabah Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim, 1975–1995: mediniyot shel ha-'adafah o shel shlitah" [The Druze system of education, 1975–1995: a policy of preference or control] (MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1997), 13.

29 Shim'on Avivi, *Tas nehoshet: ha-mediniyut ha-Yisre'elit klape ha-'edah ha-druzit, 1948–1967* [Copper plate: Israeli policy toward the Druze, 1948–1967] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2007), 363–65.

30 Shaykh Farhud presented a petition to Israeli president Yitzhak Ben-Zvi demanding the cancellation of compulsory conscription in 1956. Druze Initiative Committee, *al-Shaykh Farhud Qasim Farhud* (Shifa 'Amr: Dar al-Mashriq, 2005), 19.

31 Druze Initiative Committee, *al-Shaykh Farhud*, 16–18.

32 Druze Initiative Committee, *al-Shaykh Farhud*, 20–22.

33 In fact, this vision has its historical and intellectual roots in the establishmentarian jurisprudence of Sunni Islam, which considered obedience to the sultan a religious obligation and a duty based on the placatory argument that an unjust ruler is better than lasting strife. See Nehemia Levtzion … (Tel Aviv: Open University, 2000), 99–100.

34 Author interview with Muhammad Naffa', 6 June 2013.

35 Qasim, *al-Duruz*, 145.

36 Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim," 16–17.

37 Suhayl Farraj, *ha-Nose ha-Druzi bi-knesset Yisra'el* [The Druze issue in the Israeli

Knesset] (Maghar: n.p., 2012), Annex 1, 11.

38 Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim," 18–19.

39 Farraj, *ha-Nose ha-Druzi*, Annex 1, 11.

40 Salman Falah, ed., *ha-Druzim bi-Mizrah ha-tikun* [The Druze in the Middle East] (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2000), 164.

41 Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim," 18–19.

42 Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim," 22–24.

43 Halabi, "Miarekhet ha-khanokh la-druzim," 43–44. Falah believed that the fact that half of the teachers were non-Druze obstructed the implementation of the ministry's education policies, namely, to upgrade education standards among the Druze, and to highlight the identity and historical idiosyncrasy of the Druze. To overcome this challenge, non-Druze teachers had to be transferred outside Druze villages. In addition to giving priority to Druze teachers in vacancies, professional Druze female educators were to be rehabilitated.

44 Firro, *Duruz fi zaman "al-ghafla"*, 302–3.

45 Statement of Likud MK Amal Nasr al-Din in the Knesset, 13 September 1987, see Farraj, *ha-Nose ha-Druzi*, 181; Druze Initiative Committee, August 1997 Initiative, 18–19.

46 Born in 1956, Bishara is a leading intellectual and political Palestinian leader. Between 1996 and 2006, he served as a Knesset member. Bishara is also the founder and leader of the National Democratic Alliance party. He was most identified with the idea of eliminating the Zionist identity of Israel and turning Israel into a state of all citizens. In 2006, Bishara was forced to leave Israel, after being accused of cooperation with Hizbullah during the second Lebanon War in 2006. Currently, he is the head of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Qatar.

47 *Al-Wasat* 514, 3 December 2001, 26.

48 Statement of the Druze Communication Committee, "Awwaluha wa a'dhamuha sadaq al-lisan" [The First and Greatest Is a Truthful Tongue], September 2004, held in the author's personal collection.

49 Sa'id Naffa', *al-Tawasul wa 'uri al-qada' al-Isra'ili: hawamish fi sira jam'iyya wa dhatiyya* [Persistence and the nakedness of the Israeli judicial system: footnotes in a collective and personal biography], vol. 2 (Bayt Jann: al-Haraka al-Wataniyya lil-Tawasul, 2021), 258–65.

50 *al-Wasat* 514, 3 December 2001, 26. Statement released by the Free Druze Charter, "Returning to Damascus," May 2005. Author's personal collection.

51 By February 2008, the movement announced the cessation of its activities. See the formal statement by its head, Ihsan Murad: Hussam Harb, "Harakat al-hurriyya lil-hadara al-'Arabiyya" [Free Movement for Arab Civilization], *Kul al-'Arab*, 10 February 2008, online at www.alarab.com/Article/43990 (accessed 6 October 2023).

52 Harakat al-Hurriyya lil-Hadara al-'Arabiyya, "Kitab maftuh muwajjih li-marji'iyyatina al-ruhiyya wa mashayikhina al-ujalla' al-thiqat" [An open letter to our distinguished and trusted spiritual authorities and shaykhs], 17 February 2012. Author's personal collection.

53 This was embodied by the principle, falsely attributed to the founder of the Druze doctrine, Hamza ibn 'Ali ibn Ahmad al-Zuzani that "any nation that conquers you, obey it and preserve me in your hearts" (*ayy umma ghalabatkum, ti'uha wa ahfadhuni fi qulubikum*). See the book *Bayn al-'aql wa al-nabi* [Between the mind and the Prophet], author unknown, which attributes this doctrine to Hamza bin 'Ali, though it is nowhere mentioned in *Rasa'il al-Hikma* (The Epistles of Wisdom).

54 Statement of the Druze Communication Committee, October 2005. Author's personal collection.

55 Author interview with Fahmi Halabi, head of the Committee for Defending Land and Home, Daliyat al-Karmil, 25 September 2023.

56 Author interview with Fahmi Halabi, Daliyat al-Karmil, 25 September 2023; author interview with Khalil Fahmi (member of the Committee for Defending Land and Home), Daliyat al-Karmil, 24 September 2023. Both interviewees confirmed that their committee led the struggle, while the religious leadership showed its support.

57 Firro, *Duruz fi zaman "al-ghafla"*, 311.

58 Indeed, it is impossible to separate the attack launched by the police forces from the symbolic importance of al-Buqay'a/Peki'in in Zionist political memory, as it has long been seen to represent the continuity of Jewish presence on the land and is a place of religious significance linked to Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai. In 1922, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, who later became president of Israel, wrote: "The

village of Peki'in, al-Buqay'a in Arabic, is a large village hidden in the rocky foothills of Safad. The village is rich in water and blessed with fresh and healthy air. One spring, known as the Habus river, flows below the mountain where the carob of Simeon bar Yochai is planted, of which the village girls seek blessings." Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, *ha-Yishuv ha-Yehudi bi-Kfar Peki'in* [Jewish Settlement in Peki'in Village] (Tel Aviv: Hotzat sfarim akhedot ha-avoda, 1922), 3). See also Nisan, "ha-Druzim," 12.

59 See Efrat Weiss, "Eru'im Peki'in: hashotrim shiyaru lo yo'amdu ledin" [The events of Peki'in: the police who shot will not be prosecuted], *YNet*, 17 April 2008, online at www.ynet.co.il/articles/0,7340,L-3533071,00.html (accessed 6 October 2023).

60 This was the conclusion of participants in a one-day seminar organized by the Association for the Support of Democracy in early January 2007. See the Druze Initiative Committee, *'An Buqay'a al-sumud* [On steadfast Buqay'a] (2008), 54–55.

61 Nisan, "ha-Druzim," 10–12.

62 Firro, *Duruz fi zaman "al-ghafla"*, 311.

63 See Eyal Gabbai's statement in *Haaretz*, 3 September 2009.

64 The poll's conclusions were published on the official site of the University of Haifa under the title "Seker da'at ha-kahal shel ha-'ada ha-druzit" [Public opinion survey of the Druze community]. See also Druze Initiative Committee, *al-Rumana* 1 (2010), 7.

65 Founded in 1995, the council is entirely identified with the religious leadership of the Tarif family and headed since 1995 by Shaykh Muwafaq Tarif.

66 Yusri Khaizran and Muhammad Khlaile, *Netushah le-goralah: ha-hevrah ha-'Arvit be-Yisra'el be-tzel "ha-Aviv ha-'Arvi"* [Left to its fate: Arab society in Israel under the shadow of the "Arab Spring"] (Ramat Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 2019), 167–68.

67 *Al-Wasat,* 514, December 2001, 26.

68 Wasif Hasan, "Tamorot bi-mavna ha-ta'suka shel ha-yishuvim ha-druzim" [Changes in the Employment Structure of Druze Communities], in Salman Falah, ed., *ha-Druzim bi-Mizrah ha-tikhun* [The Druze in the Middle East] (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 2000), 231–46.

69 Author interview with Ghalib Sayf, head of the Initiative Committee, in his home in Yanuh, 16 May 2013. Despite the scarcity of resources and the absence of external support, Sayf pointed out that the Druze Initiative Committee has published nearly sixty books and pamphlets around their activities.

70 Author interview with Muhamma Naffa', 6 June 2013.

71 More recently, the Druze have sought to counter state policies with the aid of civil society organizations associated with Palestinian citizens of Israel. In June 2011, Shaykh 'Ali Ma'di presented a petition to the High Court of Justice requesting that in Druze communities all financial penalties imposed on unlicensed construction be frozen; that master plans be ratified; that housing bids be distributed to young couples; and that planning and building committees be replaced with technocratic, non-political committees. Statement issued by Shaykh 'Ali Ma'di, 1 June 2011. Author's personal collection.

72 Jabhat al-Nusra and ISIS.

73 Nabih al-Qasim, *Waqi' al-Duruz fi Isra'il: dirasa* [The reality of the Druze in Israel: a study] (Haifa: Dar Raya, 2019), 27–29.

74 Sheren Falah Saab, "Druzim ve-Muslimin kholkim bakhag ha-korvan ha-zeh gam et ha-akhzava mehakhsheret khok ha-laom" [On Eid al-Adha this year, Druze and Muslims share the disappointment of the Nation-State Law's passage], *Haaretz*, 19 July 2021, online at (haaretz.co.il) bit.ly/47iw5Jt (accessed 6 October 2023).

75 Doron Matza, Meir Elran, Khader Sawaed, and Ephraim Lavie, "The Arab Society in Israel and the Nation State Law," Institute for National Security Studies, 24 August 2018, 2–3, online at www.inss.org.il/publication/arab-society-israel-nation-state-law/ (accessed 6 October 2023).

The Middle East Peace Process: How Did I Get It So Wrong?

Mick Dumper

Abstract

In this article, Michael Dumper critically examines his engagement with the Middle East peace process from 1992 through to 2023. He provides an overview and a discussion of some of the key issues and the contribution played by Track Two discussions, particularly in relation to Palestinian refugees and Jerusalem. The section on Jerusalem explores in more detail the difficulties in finding a mutually agreeable framework for the management of the holy sites in the city and considers the approaches of some of the groups participating in these discussions. The author also reflects on the cultural and educational influences that guided his participation in these discussions and some of the pitfalls he failed to avoid. The way in which academia is coopted into policy making is also considered. The conclusion offers both some lessons learned and a prognosis for the prospects of a negotiated agreement.

Keywords

Negotiations; Middle East; peace; Track Two; Jerusalem; Old City; Palestinian Liberation Organization; Israel; holy sites; refugees.

Editor's Note

This is an abridged and slightly revised version of Professor Mick Dumper's public Valedictory Lecture to students, faculty, and invited guests delivered at Exeter University on 20 January 2023. The conclusion has been altered to take into account the Gaza crisis in October 2023.

There is a curious tradition in the UK's Foreign Office where senior diplomats, on their retirement from their last overseas posting, sometimes write a more candid account of their thoughts and judgments concerning the issues and people they have had to deal with. It is a refreshing counterpoint to the cautious and rather stuffy statements normally made. My working life as an

activist and as an academic has spanned the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP) from its beginnings in the mid-1990s to its slow collapse over the past ten years. What follows is an attempt to take this Foreign Office tradition and examine quite critically some of the choices I took and the judgments I made as an academic engaged with the MEPP.

At the same time, this will not be some Maoist self-criticism in which I publicly berate myself in order to obtain redemption from my peers. I employ my experience of the MEPP as a kind of "case study" which may shine a light on the messiness and dilemmas such engagement has led to. My intention is that it will be useful to both students and to colleagues who may have had similar experiences and perhaps help them avoid some of the pitfalls I encountered.

The MEPP and Me

Given the audience, I do not need to enter into all of the details of the genesis of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in this essay. Nevertheless, I should outline my personal take on the evolution of the MEPP as it helps explain my change of heart. In essence, the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 led to the dispossession and exile of approximately 750,000 Palestinians residing in the Palestine of the British Mandate period. Now, at the end of 2023, these refugees and their descendants number over seven million, spread throughout the region, and many have not given up the hope of either returning to their homes or the homes of their parents or grandparents or seeking some sort of reparation for their loss and their enforced exile. This has been the core of the conflict for seventy-five years.

The MEPP has been an attempt to reconcile incompatible rights – those of the Palestinian refugees to a state and to reparations with those of the Zionist Jewish settlers who created Israel, many of whom suffered discrimination and persecution in their countries of origin, and whose children and grandchildren regard the part of Palestine that became Israel in 1948 as their home. The MEPP is also based on a model of partition and the existence of two states – Israel and Palestine. Israel exists but the location, size, and nature of Palestine is still to be determined.

Formal regional negotiations began in Madrid in 1991 and culminated in the 1993 Oslo accords between the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the government of Israel. At their core, the accords comprised a series of confidence-building measures. These included an Israeli withdrawal from some of the territory it had occupied during the 1967 war – East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – and the establishment of a semi-autonomous Palestinian administration. The hope was that as the benefits of peace became obvious to all, Israel would continue to withdraw its armed forces from more occupied territory, and the Palestinian Authority would step into the space provided with more services and security.

Again, I do not have the space to track here the sporadic ebb and flow of negotiations over approximately three decades. Suffice it to say the process was punctuated with major summits and conferences to finalize details, such as the Camp David summit

in 2000 and the Annapolis Conference in 2016. But non-compliance with agreements on both sides led to mistrust and bad faith which, in turn, kept extending deadlines further and further. The end result of such a protracted process was, first, stasis – no movement whatsoever on political issues accompanied by low-level conflict as further compromises were discussed – and, second, regression – as changing political developments in Israel and among Palestinians eroded the support for the compromises that, even in the best of circumstances, had been difficult to consolidate.
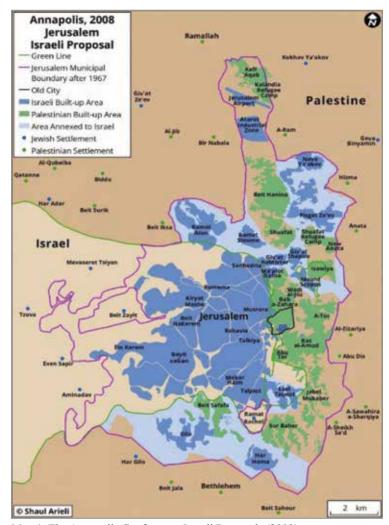
Despite frequent attempts to keep the process alive over the past decade and a half, weak Palestinian leadership and deep internal Palestinian divisions, combined with unflinching refusal by Israel to unpack the dispossession of 1948, the MEPP has finally run out of road. Fundamentally, the major flaw of the MEPP was a disagreement over the causes of the conflict. The Palestinians wanted to negotiate their dispossession and exile of 1948 and the Israelis wanted to restrict negotiations to their withdrawal from some areas of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip that they had occupied in 1967.

Turning to my own (small) part in the MEPP, the collapse of progress to a negotiated agreement has led me to examine in what ways I may have been complicit in its failure and why. I am not saying I was responsible: that would grossly overstate my role! I played a very small part on the very periphery of the negotiations. I see myself as having been a lowly stagehand helping to move the furniture and scenery around for a play on a grand stage. I will return to this theater analogy later. As is often the case of stagehands, I had, nevertheless, a pretty good view of the action and was happy to contribute in my small way.

An important part of the overall negotiations were the "Track Two" discussions which preceded or even ran parallel with them. These were opportunities for participants who were close to the formal delegations to probe positions, try out ideas and delineate areas of possible agreement. Much of the detailed examination of the formal proposals discussed in the official conferences and summits had actually taken place during these Track Two discussions. For example, one of the main issues blocking progress on the future of Jerusalem was the governance of the Old City of Jerusalem and who would control the holy sites within it. The Canadian-led Jerusalem Old City Initiative explored in forensic detail how the Old City could be administered with a high degree of international supervision as a means of alleviating the tensions around the Old City so that progress could be made in other areas.[1] Many of the ideas we explored in this project emerged in the bridging proposals submitted by the United States during the Annapolis Conference in 2007. (See map 1)

From the1990s onward, I became increasingly embedded in a series of Track Two discussions run by, among many others, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator for the MEPP (UNSCO), the Canadian Department for Trade and International Trade (DFAIT), the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), the Olaf Palme International Center, the University of Windsor (Canada), the Toledo International Center for Peace, the Max Planck Institute for Comparative

Public Law and International Law, the Rockefeller Foundation, the UK Department for International Development, and the Fondation des Treilles.[2] In addition, I was asked by the FCO to supply background research and training for some of the PLO negotiators on the question of Jerusalem and by the PLO's Negotiation Support Unit to review its Jerusalem negotiation objectives and strategy. Like many other academics in this field, I was also invited to participate in numerous seminars and conferences run by university departments, smaller

Map 1. The Annapolis Conference: Israeli Proposals (2008).

think tanks, and NGOs which included a Track Two component.

The two main areas in which I tried to make a contribution were the future of the Palestinian refugees and the future of Jerusalem. Most of my work on the refugee situation was through the European Union, UNRWA, Chatham House, and the Canadian International Development Research Center, and focused on trying to identify both feasible models of a refugee return and acceptable forms of reparations based upon international precedents.[3] The work was very detailed. Some sessions went as far as calculating and costing the schools, hospitals, roads, and accommodation that would be required for a given number of returning refugees over a given period. Another notable session even included the drafting of a series of possible apologies for Israelis and Palestinians to offer to each other as part of a reparations package.

Jerusalem

On Jerusalem, I participated in many of the discussions on alternative models of governance that would be appropriate to different scenarios – a divided city with an Israeli and a Palestinian municipality, a shared city with sub-municipalities and an umbrella coordination council, a divided city with an international zone for the holy sites, a divided city with security cooperation, and so on.[4] Of all those scenarios, I devoted the most time and energy to the ones focused on the management of holy sites.

Holy sites were a particularly difficult issue to find agreement on. They cannot be traded in the same way as, say, mineral resources or strategic river crossing points. Holy sites are more intangible as they relate to spirituality, heritage, and community identities. Nor can you divide a mosque, church, or synagogue between antagonistic parties and keep the meaning and integrity of the site.[5] Offering access to lesser alternative sites or recognizing the importance of a site to the other party and the possibility of conditional access to it were the weak tools available in looking for some kind of *modus vivendi*.

A complication to these discussions was, ironically, the need to include the views and arguments of religious authorities, scholars, and clergy. While many of these saw the need for compromise and sharing for the sake of minimizing friction and promoting peaceful coexistence, others took a much longer and more celestial view. As conveyors of the divine message, their view was often that a concession over, say, granting access to a particular holy site would transgress the guardianship their role encompassed, and that there was no need to make concessions this century when in the next century these demands may not exist. I recall one long discussion with the most senior clergymen in a particular Christian denomination who argued that criticism of their management of religious property in and around Jerusalem was misplaced. It should be seen, not through the lens of Palestinian or Israeli nationalism, but through the intention to uphold a presence for the church in the Holy Land for all time.

Lurking behind these discussions was always the realization that compromises were entirely contingent upon a contemporaneous balance of power. Muslim control over sites in Jerusalem stemmed from the long period of 'Abbasid, Mamluk, and Ottoman rule under which competing claims by other religious communities were framed and restricted. The momentum behind the current Israeli and Jewish claims over access and use of sites in Jerusalem is driven by the military occupation of East Jerusalem and the power of religious nationalism in Israel which has provided a powerful platform to further such claims. During these Track Two discussions, it was difficult to disentangle the intrinsic value of the site to a community from the dynamics of the political context.

In addition to the holy sites issue in Jerusalem, was another equally important issue – how to construct a security regime that would satisfy Israel's concerns and at the same time recognize the security role of whatever Palestinian political entity for East Jerusalem had been agreed upon. When it came to protecting Jewish holy sites and the possibility of Palestinian militants infiltrating across the border of a Palestinian state into Jerusalem, Israel demanded a complete monopoly over the security regime in place. If this was the starting point of negotiations, then the presence of the myriad
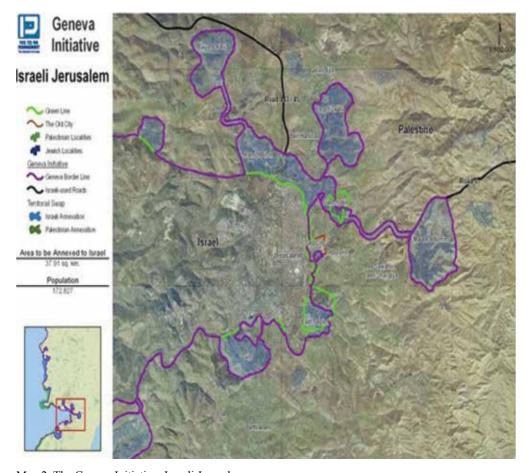
number of Jewish holy sites in East Jerusalem meant that a territorial division became increasingly complicated as, during the whole of the MEPP, these sites in and around the Old City were deliberately consolidated and even expanded by Israeli organizations. At the same time, international precedents offered a valuable resource in providing models for a variegated and flexible security regime in Jerusalem.[6] During the 2010s, part of my research was to explore and "reality test" these models. None of them quite suited Jerusalem but I had the unenviable task to trying to identify the "least bad option," knowing all the time that political events beyond the negotiations were unravelling any prospect of a warm peace that would allow such an option to work to some degree, and that, instead, a cold "truce" was becoming the best outcome to be hoped for.[7]

One important lesson I learned was that in these kinds of backroom or supplementary discussions, there was no "eureka" moment when everything fell into place, or you found the perfect fit for the last piece of the jigsaw. In fact, the opposite was true. Every possible agreement on a particular mechanism or institutional framework was heavily caveated by progress in other areas being negotiated. An agreed framework for managing the holy sites, for example, was contingent on overarching security understandings between the PLO and Israel, or on land swaps and the status of Israeli settlements in Jerusalem, or on the land corridor to Gaza, or on where returning refugees would be located and what reparation they might be offered, and so on. Indeed, it was even more complicated since the external political environment was also changing quickly, so any progress in one area was often paralyzed by a provocative Israeli raid on a refugee camp or a Palestinian group ambushing an Israeli patrol in the West Bank or merely changes in personnel at the top of the negotiating pyramids of each party. The lack of a stable environment and of continuity made progress akin to walking through a river of molasses pushing you backward all the time.

There were also duplicate processes within Track Two. There was the Aix group, the London track, the Geneva Initiative, the Jerusalem Old City Initiative (JOCI), to name but a few. While these could be competitive and even exclusionary and secretive, they also provided some cross-fertilization of ideas. For example, while the Geneva Initiative proposed schemes for the sharing and division of Jerusalem, it also devoted considerable energy to the Old City, which was the focus of the work of the JOCI team.[8] My view of the Geneva Initiative was that it was brimming with useful ideas, but ultimately it was based on the balance of power at the time of discussion and in effect consolidated Israeli gains made in the period since the 1967 war. In addition, while its solutions were often imaginative, in practice they were fragile and unworkable in the medium to long term. It proposed long curling corridors for link roads between Israeli settlements, tunnels under and bridges over Palestinian areas, walls, and fences – all of which corresponded to the patchwork of Israeli settlement in East Jerusalem. (See map 2) This approach also applied to its proposals on the Old City, which would have divided up that small area into different Israeli and Palestinian zones.

The JOCI team worked on the assumption that if a suitable framework could be established for administering the Old City and its holy sites, then this would unlock further agreements on other aspects of how the city could be governed. It adopted the

model of an international zone for the Old City and explored in great detail how this could work in practice.[9] Sub-groups worked on security, holy sites, the administration of justice, landownership, and so on. My main concern about its approach was that it also proposed deferring the question of sovereignty over the Old City for ten years; that is, it fudged the application of UN Resolution 242 to the Old City. In effect, the JOCI proposals did not confirm that the starting point for any agreement should be the recognition of Palestinian sovereignty over the areas of Jerusalem up to the 1967 borders, which included the Old City. In addition, I regarded a ten-year interim phase as much too long, inevitably establishing a new legal *status quo* that would undermine Palestinian claims to the Old City. Nevertheless, given the Old City's religious associations for both Israelis and Palestinians, I believe there will be a need for "special arrangements" over the holy sites, without which we will not get an agreement. The JOCI team carried out useful work in this direction and some of its ideas are likely to be taken off the shelf and updated if there is to be a negotiated agreement over Jerusalem.[10]

Map 2. The Geneva Initiative: Israeli Jerusalem.

One idea I tried to feed into these discussions over the Old City never took off, and I am not sure why. Given the Palestinian determination that their sovereignty over the Old City should be recognized, and given the Israeli insistence that they could not allow Palestinian control over their holy sites in any way whatsoever, especially in the Jewish Quarter, I thought the extra-territorialization of a significant part of the Israeli-designated Jewish Quarter might square this circle. All embassies are extra-territorialized, so it is not without legal precedent. In essence, the Israeli embassy to the Palestinian state could be nominally located in the Jewish Quarter which would be under Palestinian sovereignty but extraterritorial. This would allow Israel to employ whatever security measures it thought appropriate, allow access to the Jewish holy sites there and confer recognition of Palestinian sovereignty. Clearly this and other such ideas can only be contemplated in a completely different political atmosphere to the one we are witnessing in late 2023.

When I total up the various grants I received on the MEPP activities, depending on how one defines MEPP "engagement," I come to an approximate total of £1.7 million over a twenty-five year period. I hasten to emphasize that these funds were not fees paid to me. They were funds either for travel, accommodation, subsistence, venue hire, and other logistics; for people participating in conferences, workshops, and seminars that I was convening; for publications which I was commissioned to edit or write; or for postgraduate students who I recruited to carry out research on MEPP-related topics. For example, one big international conference on international law and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict held in Exeter cost over ninety thousand pounds.[11]

The point I wish to make here is not to draw attention to the success in obtaining grants for the university, but to the extraordinary large amounts of money – for a social science discipline – that were available for research and policy engagement on the MEPP. This clearly reflected the value placed on the MEPP by grant-awarding bodies and funders, which in turn were channeling the political priorities and agenda of governments and public opinion. Nevertheless, the MEPP collapsed. As this snapshot of one academic in a smallish university on the fringes of Western Europe indicates, despite the huge investment in time and resources by influential actors, the forces aligned against the success of the MEPP proved to be stronger. And being there in its midst, during the beginning and its middle stages, I was also able to witness its unravelling.

Why Did I Continue to Support the MEPP?

Given the fact that the MEPP began unravelling from about 2007–10 onward, why did I continue to engage with Track Two activities around the MEPP for so long? I think there are two main reasons or explanations.

The first is the social, religious, and political environment in which I grew up and in which I was trained and felt comfortable. I was born and raised in a strong Anglican environment – my father was a clergyman (and later a bishop) and my

mother a president of a diocesan Mother's Union – and this led me to adopt some basic assumptions about human behavior. Despite all the faults of the Church of England, particularly regarding gender and inclusivity, the message I imbibed through the many church activities in which I was involved was that one of the main purposes in our life is to make the world a better place to live in. I was and am not a saint by any means, but this framework led me to seek to avoid conflict and competition. It motivated me to generally adopt a problem-solving approach to disputes that explicitly avoided zero-sum games and the advance of the interests of a particular group or class.

As I moved away from the Anglican church and explored alternative forms of religious expression in my twenties, I became very attracted to the work of the Quakers and their commitment to peace and internationalism. As a result, I was delighted when a couple of years after graduation I was offered the post as the British Quaker Middle East coordinator. Dialogue, compromise, inclusivity, reaching out to opponents, challenging powerful interests – all were part of my brief in this role, and along the way I met many inspiring individuals who confirmed to me in their words and deeds the rightness of this approach.

This experience framed my approach to negotiations. I would assume that the parties involved were seeking agreement and were prepared to compromise to do so. As a result, I clearly failed to recognize the extent to which some parties manipulated negotiations to further their national or organizational interests. My assumption was that by sitting at the negotiating table, a commitment had been made to work together to resolve differences. Now that I look back, I realize how very naïve I was.

What this set of assumptions also meant was a poor analysis of the dynamics of power. The study of politics is the study of power – what constitutes power and how it is exercised. My academic training will have introduced me to many ways of analyzing power but, for me, there was a disconnect between the theories and patterns discussed in the literature and their application to a real-life situation.

My culturally determined assumption that a zero-sum game would be anathema to those involved in negotiations remained my starting point – and was a fundamental flaw. It failed to recognize how the promotion of ethnic and nationalist or sectarian interests drove the negotiating tactics of many of the participants. For example, my starting point did not sufficiently account for economic and military factors. Yes, Israel needed to have access to the markets of the Arab and the Islamic world and a peace agreement with the Palestinians was, at that time, a key to that. But economically, Israel was strong, with powerful allies, and could survive without an agreement. The same could not be said about Palestinians, who were in a much weaker position. You could almost fit the economy of Palestine into an industrial estate of a medium-sized city in the UK.

Similarly, after the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt in 1978, and between Israel and Jordan in 1994, and also after the destruction of the Iraqi army by the United States in 2001, there was very little serious military threat to Israel from its immediate neighbors. Certainly, despite all the media attention given to Palestinian military operations, the Palestinian threat to the Israeli armed forces was insignificant.

Tourists and inward investment may have been deterred but without a single fighter jet in their arsenal, the Palestinian armed forces were no match for the Israeli army.

From the mid-2000s onward it should have been clear to me that Palestinian leverage in the negotiations was critically weakened by the lack of economic resources it had at its disposal and the lack of a military threat it posed to Israel. Consequently, the incentive for the Israeli leadership to make concessions, especially in the face of an increasingly nationalistic and sectarian Israeli population, was drastically reduced. U.S. and European pressure, which alone was trying to keep up the momentum of negotiations, was not enough. Politically, Israel did not and does not need to make concessions. It took me a long time to see how my overly positive perspective on the negotiations obscured a much darker side of the process.

A second explanation for my continuing to engage with the MEPP lay in the career structure of a British academic like myself. During the 1980s, I was based much of the time in the Middle East, working not only with the Quakers but with other NGOs and charities, and also with think-tanks as a researcher on political issues. I had at that time half an eye on a career in the UN. I also received support and advice from an influential Palestinian academic, Professor Walid Khalidi, who was able to channel research grants in my direction, and as a result I was offered a temporary position at Exeter University. After I obtained a PhD in 1993, the position became permanent.

Simultaneously in 1993 came the Oslo accords and the first glimmers of a peace process and the need for expertise. Suddenly a new horizon of policy engagement in the Middle East opened up. With my existing contacts in the voluntary sector on both sides of the conflict, my first-hand knowledge of key issues, and my status as an academic in a university with a reputation for Middle East expertise, I was ideally placed to play a part. So, for the next twenty years, I was almost constantly engaged in providing briefing papers, carrying out in-depth studies, organizing workshops, and facilitating discussions between diplomats, politicians, academics, and security and intelligence officials.

From the amount of funds that were channeled through me to Exeter University, one can begin to gauge how much was being spent to oil the cogs of this enormous machine that became the MEPP. As a late-starter academic, being awarded grants such as these led to a rapid rise in my status in the department and the university, which led to steady promotion, to salary increases, to being head-hunted by other universities, which, in turn, led to further promotion and eventually to a professorship. It was a bit of a whirlwind and for what, it seemed, a manifestly a good cause – at least in the first ten years.

I can honestly say that this was not the reason I undertook this work. Being part of the search for an agreement that could reverse or mitigate the historical injustice meted out to the Palestinians and that could offer some security to Israel was in itself a great reward. It was also fantastically interesting. I was meeting people who were either pulling powerful levers behind the scenes or figuring prominently in the daily media. One of the frustrating and dispiriting things about being an academic is that you never can be sure if your research is valuable to the wider community. But during

this period of late 1990s and 2000s, the MEPP presented me with an almost bespoke opportunity to put my knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills to good use.

Two Awkward Questions

At this point I want to digress slightly to pose two rather awkward questions. The first is: *Was I a spy?* Looking at the list of activities I was involved in, I could not blame anyone wanting to ask that question. For example, at one point in the late 2000s, I was running or was involved simultaneously in four projects on the issues of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees: with the PLO, with the Foreign Office, and with two think tanks. And I felt quite self-conscious at the number of meetings where I would meet again the same participants, some of whom would say: *What, Dr. Dumper, you? Again?! Are you a spy?*

Indeed, I recognized that my research and projects were the perfect cover for information gathering but it was disturbing for me to feel that, however good my intentions were and however careful I was in handling sensitive material, there were those who in the end would not trust me. At the same time, I was also aware that the perception of others that I may have been employed by one of the various intelligence services with which the MEPP was riddled, was also quite useful. It meant I was taken perhaps a little more seriously and while some things were kept from me, other things were passed onto me deliberately in the mistaken assumption it would be conveyed to some higher level.

My family and close friends know that this role of being a spy is a bit of a joke. At home, I am more the bumbling Mr. Bean than Jason Bourne or James Bond. My sons just laughed at me when I mentioned it. My close friends also know that I am a terrible gossip and find it hard to keep a secret, which is hardly a qualification for espionage. And most telling of all – despite years of study – I speak poor Arabic and worse Hebrew, which also would seem to disqualify me as a source of information at a very basic level.

It is actually the second question, however, which I find more troubling: *Was I a useful idiot?* "Useful idiot" is a term that refers to academics who are used to grace the boards of businesses, NGO trustee boards, government committees, and the like, to confer legitimacy, credibility, and the appearance of competence and expertise to their work or policy agenda. Having a useful idiot on your team is like having a piece of intellectual bling.

As the MEPP began to stretch out into its second and third decade, in the 2000s and 2010s, it became increasingly institutionalized. Track Two workshops, conferences, background studies, and the like became part of the regular budget of foreign ministries, international organizations, and conflict resolution NGOs, with full-time staff allocated to organizing them. The participation of academics and other experts in this merry-go-round became an essential feature of their processes and outcomes. The same academics were being asked time and time again to participate in a new dialogue

exercise which was only slightly different from one which they had participated in perhaps a month before, but funded by a different sponsor. Yet, their presence was required as a sign of relevance and seriousness of that project. And as the progress of the MEPP stalled and began to reverse after 2010, I became increasingly aware that invitations to me and others were looking like attempts to meet certain reporting criteria for budget holders rather than serious attempts to resolve a specific issue in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

I have to admit, I do think that I became a kind of "useful idiot." I did receive invitations to meetings which I could see were box-ticking exercises by a foreign ministry to show that they "had a seat at the negotiating table." At the same time, I can argue there was a transactional dimension to fulfilling this role. I also got something out of it which was valuable. I would be happy to attend such a box-ticking exercise, although knowing it would not lead to anything substantial or lasting in terms of the peace process, because as a professional researcher, the occasion would provide me with an excellent opportunity to be updated, meet key interlocutors, gauge the prospects of progress in a fast-moving area – for example, security cooperation over the management of holy sites – all of which were important to allow me to continue to offer advice and make judgments. Bear in mind that, for all of this period, I lived not in London or Jerusalem or Brussels, but on a small farm in mid-Devon, so playing the "useful idiot" card was a practical way to connect with the international networks so essential for my own research.

I want to return to my previous analogy of my involvement with the MEPP being similar to that of a stagehand in a theater production. In terms of characterizing the nature of my analysis, the MEPP "play" was fascinating and uplifting, the text was gripping, the actors quite extraordinary, the props and scenery exquisite. Being a stagehand in such a production was rewarding in so many ways. So far, so good. But I think I was so busy moving props around that I did not stop to ask further questions: Who actually wrote the play? Who employed the actors and which ones? Who selected the play in the first place and chose the director? Furthermore, who owned the theater and what audience was being targeted?

In this analogy you can see how as a young academic I became beguiled by the prospect of playing a small part in probably the most promising breakthrough in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in one hundred years. Yet, in the intense engagement with the minutiae of negotiations, I lost sight of the bigger picture: that the balance of power was stacked up greatly in Israel's favor and that the major powers in the international community were committed to the two-state model for an agreement because anything else would raise the even more difficult question – the question of what solution would recognize the injustice that befell the Palestinian refugees in 1948.

Before I come to my conclusions, I have one more thing to say about my involvement in the MEPP. As I said in my introduction, the purpose of these reflections and observations is not to beat my chest in remorse. I can be my own toughest critic

but I know there were some achievements during the past three decades. Some of my work, which I carried out with others, will stand the test of time and I know will form the basis of a negotiated agreement, especially the detailed papers on Jerusalem and the management of the holy sites of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in the city. I am also very proud of the fact that scattered around Europe and North America there are PhD students who are doing great work, which I had been able to facilitate through my supervision and my access to scholarship funds. I also know that at critical moments, when the low-level conflict in Jerusalem began to spiral out of control and show signs of enraged inter-ethnic violence, the members of the network of those working on the peace process – Palestinians, Israelis, and internationals like myself – were able to keep a dialogue going, were able to head off or at least dilute the lurch toward polemical rhetoric and extremism and to keep the prospect of a negotiated agreement going as an alternative to blind violence.

Conclusions

As a case study, I think my experience leads me to draw at least three main conclusions that may be useful for others. First, the line between engaged policy work and academic analysis is a line that can indeed be crossed – but you cross it at your peril. Engagement enriches and motivates your research; it gives it a foundation in reality and a relevance that is difficult to obtain otherwise. At the same time, if you wish to understand the picture beyond your own involvement, you need to step back regularly from the fray and reexamine your assumptions.

Second, and this is related to the first, collective work, including research, stretching over many years can lead to "group think." You end up in a rather comfortable silo of shared values, language, and social networks and can regard contending views as merely disruptive. Often the participants of Track Two discussions share a similar class and a Western educational background which lulled us into a sense of a collective endeavor, when other more subtle dynamics are in play. Academics need to consciously seek out and engage with a variety of approaches in order to strengthen the quality and acuity of their work.

Third, the career structure we have as academics does not sufficiently foster the pursuit of independent thought. Career progression is dependent upon grants awarded, having research accepted for publication by well-respected publishing houses, and the cultivation of networks of influential people. All of these are inherently risk-averse.

In my case, having a wide hinterland to my academic career helped, I believe, to mitigate these dangers – not completely, but to some extent. As a result of my NGO work before becoming an academic, I had a network of friends and former colleagues in the voluntary sector and in Palestinian and Israeli civil society. I also help run a small farm, mucking out barns at the weekend, digging holes for fence posts, milking goats and shearing sheep. The academic life was not my whole life by any means, and this I believe was a great asset in keeping slightly removed from the anxieties around career advancement.

Prospects and Prognosis

Before I finish, in the light of my change of heart regarding the MEPP, I should say something about the prospects of the peace process. Part of our job as political scientists is to make predictions based on an analysis of past and current events. I do not have a particularly good track record on this aspect of my work. For example, I never foresaw the dismantling of the Berlin Wall in 1989. For the life of me, I never thought Nelson Mandela would be released from prison and, then become the president of the state that had imprisoned him. The Arab Spring in 2011 took me, and many others, completely by surprise.

Prior to the events of October 2023, I confidently wrote that I could see no circumstances in which serious negotiations or progress on the core issues dividing the Palestinians and Israeli would take place for at least five to seven years. My view then was that the incentive for the dominant power, Israel, to make any concessions was just not there. In addition, those actors in the international community which could intervene more strongly were too preoccupied with the war in Ukraine, the shifting power dynamics in the Pacific, the climate crisis, and the prospect of Iran developing a nuclear weapon. For its part, the Palestinian leadership was too fragmented and internally divided to be able to offer a coherent and strategic plan of resistance to Israel. I concluded that unless there was a significant change in the balance of power, such as an economic shock for Israel or a military setback, I could see no progress in a negotiated agreement whatsoever before 2030. After that, it would be too difficult to predict anything – so many issues, from demographic change to the impact of new Artificial Intelligence technologies to the impact of climate crisis on the region, would come into play.

Clearly the events of October 2023 have been traumatic in the extreme for both Israel and the Palestinians. Whether they amount to the military setback for Israel that would alter the balance of power is, at the time of writing, too soon to discern. Certainly, the psychological impact of the attack by Hamas has been considerable on the Israeli military and the wider Israeli society. While it can be viewed by Palestinians as a military victory of sorts, its sheer viciousness is possibly, as a result, strategically self-defeating. Israel's corresponding enraged, criminally disproportionate, and merciless response on Gaza civilians through aerial bombardment will not have advanced its security one iota. A kind of madness seems to have descended on the leadership of the nation. Despite professions by influential actors like the United States and some European states that there needs to be a renewed commitment to a two-state solution to the conflict, their complicity in so much death and destruction is likely to push the prospect of such an agreement occurring much further into the distant future. When the dust has settled, the shock to Israel will probably be insufficient to induce it to make the necessary concessions.

Even if the current situation amounts, in effect, to a defeat both for Palestinians of their goal for an independent state and for those Israelis who believed that some accommodation with the Palestinians was possible, nevertheless, the conflict is not

going to go away. A defeat of Hamas in Gaza, if it occurs, will not be the end of the story. A new generation of Palestinians are being galvanized and are finding new ways of expressing their national identity and of mobilizing resistance.[12]

About ten years ago I carried out a comparison of the ways in which the Indigenous populations of New Zealand, Australia, and the United States were continuing their struggle to restore control over their former lands. It was quite remarkable to note the progress that, for example, the Maoris have made in advancing their political and cultural rights in contemporary New Zealand. Similarly, I learned that the Sioux tribes of North Dakota refused financial compensation for the loss of their lands in the Black Hills back in the 1850s and have insisted, instead, on their former lands being returned to them.

The impact of Palestinian dispossession in 1948 has had a different trajectory from these examples, in that their resistance to dispossession has been woven into wider regional and international conflicts. So I do not want to draw too many parallels. But the bottom line we can see from the above examples of ongoing resistance is that dispossession is not the end of a people's story. They do not just take it lying down. The resulting colonial-type occupation is not a stable political situation and requires huge financial, military, and political resources to maintain. In the end, Israel will be confronted once again with the need to address the historical injustice of Palestinian dispossession.

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Endnotes

1 See Tom Najem, Michael Molloy, Michael Bell, and John Bell, eds., *Track Two Diplomacy and Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Old City Initiative* (London: Routledge, 2017).

2 In 1992, I had just obtained a Ford Foundation grant for research on Jerusalem, which resulted in my first book on Jerusalem: *The Politics of Jerusalem since 1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

3 Some of the product of this work can be found in: Michael Dumper, "Palestinian Refugees in Comparative Perspectives," in *The Palestinian Refugee Issue*, ed. Eyal Benvenisti, Chaim Gans, Sari Hanafi

(Berlin: Max Planck Institute, 2006); Michael Dumper, ed., *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2006); Michael Dumper, "The Return of Palestinian Refugees and Displaced Persons: The Evolution of a European Union Policy on the Middle East Peace Process," in *Palestinian Refugees*, ed. Rex Brynen and Rula al-Rifaʻi (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006); and Michael Dumper, *The Future of Palestinian Refugees: Toward Equity and Peace* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

4 Michael Dumper, "A False Dichotomy? The Binationalism Debate and the Future of

Divided Jerusalem," *International Affairs* 87, no. 3 (May 2011): 671–86.

5   See the observations in Robert Hayden and Timothy D. Walker, "Intersecting Religioscapes: A Comparative Approach to Trajectories of Change, Scale, and Competitive Sharing of Religious Spaces," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 81, no. 2 (June 2013): 399–426; Ron. E. Hassner, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). These themes are also explored in greater detail in Michael Dumper, ed., *Contested Holy Cities: The Urban Dimension of Religious Conflicts* (London: Routledge, 2019), and Michael Dumper, *Power, Piety, and People: The Politics of Holy Cities in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020).

6   See Michael Dumper, "Policing Divided Cities: Stabilization and Law Enforcement in Palestinian East Jerusalem," *International Affairs* 89, no. 5 (September 2013): 1247–64.

7   A summary of this work can be found in Michael Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound: Geography, History, and the Future of the Holy City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 224–32.

8   See a very interesting account in Menachem Klein, *A Possible Peace between Israel and Palestine: An Insider's Account of the Geneva Initiative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

9   See Najem et.al., *Track Two Diplomacy and Jerusalem,* 143ff.

10 An extended version of this comparison between the Geneva Initiative and JOCI can be found in Dumper, *Jerusalem Unbound*, 200–212.

11 This conference resulted in a publication: Susan Akram, Michael Dumper, Michael Lynk and Iain Scobbie, eds., *International Law and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Rights-based Approach to Middle East Peace (*London: Routledge, 2011).

12 I examine this issue in Michael Dumper, "Refugee Entitlement and the Passing of Time: Waldron's Supersession Thesis and the Palestinian Refugee Case Sixty Years On," in *Forced Migration, Reconciliation, and Justice*, ed. Megan Bradley (Montreal: McGill and Queen's University Press, 2014).

Colonial Subjugation, Not Organic Integration: East Jerusalemites and the Delusion of West Jerusalem

Mahmoud Muna

Abstract

While the Israeli government cements its annexation of East Jerusalem amid the failure of the peace process and Israel's push for normalization with the Arab world, most recently the Abraham accords, the Palestinians of Jerusalem – categorized as "permanent residents," not citizens – are challenging their non status. Many are individually maneuvering economic, social and perhaps political, change in a direction that further distances them from their fellow Palestinians in the West Bank. As that relationship shrinks due to its restricted access, a new comradeship is being strengthened between Jerusalem Palestinians and their fellow Palestinians living within Israel. This shift could be significant on the larger political level, potentially upsetting the two-state project. At the same time, Palestinian cultural identity everywhere is stronger than ever and proving to withstand all Israeli attempts of erasure. The emerging reality in Jerusalem combines an individual pragmatic approach at the bureaucratic level with a strong collective identity at the cultural and political level. Left alone, the Palestinians in Jerusalem are defining themselves.

Keywords

Jerusalem; integration; identity; culture; peace process; annexation; residency; civil rights; Hebrew; divided cities.

Since 1967, the population of Palestinians in Jerusalem has quadrupled, from less than one

hundred thousand persons to approximately four hundred thousand today. They have long maintained strong social, economic, and political ties with their fellow Palestinians in the West Bank. Over the past fifty-six years, Jerusalem residents have been in the vanguard of the Palestinian national movement, their political identity crucial for establishing a future Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. However, there seems to be a changing dynamic that has gone unnoticed or deliberately ignored.

In the summer of 1967, immediately after the war, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a census in East Jerusalem, including the Old City and its surrounding areas, revealing that sixty-five thousand Palestinians resided in the newly annexed eastern part of the city.[1] These Palestinians were granted the status of permanent residents, and not citizens, of Jerusalem, which Israel declared to be its capital, in breach of international law. Palestinian Jerusalemites were given some civil rights; under Israeli jurisdiction, people were ordered to pay taxes in exchange for social services and health care, and allowed access to civil courts and basic educational services. The Palestinian Jerusalemites were denied political rights, barring them from voting rights in Israeli national elections. Furthermore, the Israeli security apparatus continued to treat the Palestinians in East Jerusalem as a security threat, subjecting them to close surveillance and control, military harassment, collective punishment, and police violence.

The residency status was symbolized by a blue ID card (compared to the orange IDs for Gaza and later green IDs used in the West Bank), essentially granting Palestinians in East Jerusalem the right to move around the country more freely. Although their status was not equal to that of Israeli citizens, it provided for more rights than were accorded to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This classification system effectively divided the Palestinians into three levels of limited privileges and rights: Palestinians in Israel proper (citizens), Palestinians in Jerusalem (permanent residents), and Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (neither citizens nor permanent residents, but subjects under military law). For East Jerusalemites, the blue identity card is important to protect and maintain, since it indicates their right to reside in their ancestral home city of Jerusalem.

Although categorized as "permanent residents" under Israeli law, there is nothing permanent about the status of East Jerusalem Palestinians. Jerusalemites are regularly summoned by the Israeli Ministry of Interior to reconfirm their central connection to Jerusalem, a process that requires showing extensive documentation – tax records, rental leases, utility bills, payroll slips, and school records. Failure to provide all requested documentation can result in the revocation of residency, forcing individuals or families to relocate to the West Bank. Since 1967, Israel has consistently expanded the criteria for revoking residency status, leading to at least 14,500 Jerusalem IDs withdrawn and residency revoked.[2]

The revocation of Jerusalem residency is part of Israel's wider "quiet deportation" policy, which includes the absence of approved zoning or expansion of Palestinian towns within Jerusalem, house demolitions, and restrictions on

building permits. At the same time, illegal Zionist settlement expands in the city, and land continues to be confiscated under the pretext of "public use," meaning for exclusive Jewish use. The explicit desire of this policy is to "maintain a solid Jewish majority in the city," as stated in the Jerusalem municipality's master plan (Jerusalem Outline Plan no. 2000). Although initially limiting the percentage of Palestinians to below 30 percent of the city population, this was later considered unattainable, and so amended the ratio was amended to 60 percent Jews and 40 percent Palestinians.[3]

Despite two intifadas and a peace process, little has changed regarding the daily systematic discrimination against Palestinians. In the West Bank and Gaza, a bureaucratic proxy system was introduced for issuing identification cards, seemingly under the Palestinian Authority, but effectively under the Israeli Ministry of Interior, which controls the population registry for the entirety of people between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

Politically, Palestinians in East Jerusalem have always considered themselves as part of the West Bank, the whole of which was occupied by Israel as a result of the 1967 war. Palestinians in Jerusalem have cautiously supported the two-state solution, with East Jerusalem as the future capital of the State of Palestine based on the 1949 armistice or Green Line. Nevertheless, recent developments such as the demise of the two-state solution, the failures of the Palestinian Authority, the Trump administration's change in U.S. policy toward Jerusalem, the Abraham accords and the normalization of relations between some Arab countries and Israel have led Palestinians to reevaluate their position.

With physical barriers separating them from other Palestinians in the West Bank, Palestinian Jerusalemites are increasingly aligning themselves with the more accessible Palestinians citizens of Israel. This new camaraderie is not artificial or psychological but rather a tangible social, economic, cultural, and potentially political realignment.

This shift should not be regarded as strange or surprising. Palestinians in East Jerusalem are relatively small in number (around four hundred thousand),[4] and such a community will seek a larger ecosystem for social connections and economic trade, as well as communal and cultural relationships. Due to Israel's well-developed road and transport system, it can be easier for Palestinians in Jerusalem to travel to Haifa, 150 kilometers to the north, than to make the journey through checkpoints to Ramallah, a mere fifteen kilometers away.

Not only is movement easier, but so is the exchange of goods. It is common to find produce from Jerusalem in Palestinian-owned shops within Israel and vice versa. Under the reality of occupation, as specified in the Paris Protocol (the specifications for economic relations under the Oslo accords), Jerusalem and Israel fall within the same tax zone, sharing the same tax codes.[5] On the other hand, trade with the West Bank requires additional tax and invoicing procedures, making it complex and less desirable.

In education, movement restrictions hindering access to Palestinian universities in the West Bank and the non-recognition of many degrees offered by these universities

have led many young Palestinian Jerusalemite students to choose Israeli academic institutions for their higher studies. The website of Hebrew University, conveniently located just north of the Old City of Jerusalem, reports a steady increase in the number of "Arab" (never "Palestinian" which would recognize their nationhood) students, rising from 7 percent in 2004 to 14 percent in 2019.[6] The number of Palestinian students in Israeli academia continues to grow exponentially. Hadassah Academic College (one of the more popular academic institutions in Jerusalem) is boasting its increasingly diverse student body, including "Arabs," also on their portal.[7]

Naturally, college campuses serve also as social spaces where young people interact and form relationships. Personally, I have observed a noticeable increase in "mixed" marriages between Palestinian Jerusalemites and Palestinian citizens of Israel. Three out of the last five weddings I attended were of this nature. Various factors contribute to this trend; limited social interactions with Palestinians from the West Bank due to the physical separation (annexation wall and checkpoints) and the near impossible laws surrounding family unification (so that partners from opposite sides of the Green Line find residing together both legally and physically challenging). In March 2022, the Israeli Knesset approved a law that extended the ban on the unification of Palestinian families, by prohibiting the interior minister from granting residency or citizenship to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip married to Palestinian citizens of Israel.[8]

A new trend within the East Jerusalem community is the increasing enrollment in Hebrew language courses. Of the many studies that have attempted to examine the motivation behind this, most agree that primary motivations are practicality: improved communication with authorities in order to access information and services more effectively, and the pursuit of better employment opportunities within the Israeli labor market, where knowledge of Hebrew is an asset if not a requirement. Neither participation in Israeli cultural life, nor an appreciation for Hebrew literature and poetry were motivating factors for learning the Hebrew language. The Arabic language remain the center of Palestinian cultural identity, regardless of the language spoken with authorities during the workday, used for paperwork or the nature of their job, Palestinians in East Jerusalem value their expertise with and celebrate the Arabic language, at home, in schools, in culture and in media, and at every social gathering.

As someone involved in organizing cultural events and author appearances, I frequently design itineraries that link events or create series of events between Jerusalem and cities like Nazareth and Jaffa, easily visited within a day. On the other hand, arranging and executing events in the West Bank can be time-consuming and often frustrating. The city of Haifa serves as a striking example of a city reviving its strong Arabic art and culture life, and links with Jerusalem's cultural scene are obvious for those willing to look.

But how do things appear from the perspective of a Jewish Israeli sitting in a trendy café in West Jerusalem? One can witness thousands, if not tens of thousands, of Palestinians from East Jerusalem daily making their way toward West Jerusalem

for work, to seek services from governmental institutions, to attend schools, and even to shop. Observers may perceive this as a sign of normality, that things are "working out," or even argue that there is a slow process of Palestinian integration with Israel. On the contrary, relations are far away from any form of genuine integration or assimilation, and neither the Israeli public nor the Israeli government are actively seeking integration. The articulation of Israel as a "Jewish state" is a constant reminder to Palestinians that policies are designed to maintain them as "the other" in all aspects and sectors of the society. In 2018, the Israeli parliament approved the Nation-State law, which grants exclusive national self-determination rights to the Jewish people, effectively relegating Palestinian citizens of Israel officially to second-class status in a Jewish state.[9] It is not hard to argue that Israeli racism has strengthened Palestinian unity and wholeness.

The majority of Palestinians in East Jerusalem have no desire to integrate into Israeli society, and understandably so. Why would they seek to belong to a system that has displaced, dehumanized, segregated, and oppressed them? Nevertheless, many strive to improve their personal status, by seeking equal rights and resisting oppression and discrimination – perhaps some are navigating to attempt to effect change from within, in some measure.

One of the schizophrenic practices Palestinians have honed over the past seventy-five years of fragmentation is the ability to switch between celebrating their cultural identity and maintaining the bureaucratic identity that was imposed on them. Historically, the Palestinian people have been scattered under various political realities, which has been a dividing factor, yet, their culture has served to express, encourage, and solidify their sense of one peoplehood. Palestinian cultural identity reaffirms Palestine roots, but it is also reflected in art, music, literature, values, food, traditions, language, and religion. The strong affiliations Palestinians are forging with their brothers and sisters inside Israel is a form of assertion of their cultural belonging to the wider Palestinian nationhood.

According to current data released by the Israeli Ministry of Interior, 5 percent of Jerusalemites, about nineteen thousand persons, have applied for and successfully obtained Israeli citizenship since 1967.[10] This decision should also be understood as an individual, practical choice for security within roiling political dynamics rather than a change of political or cultural affiliation.

Palestinians in East Jerusalem are fully aware of the existential dilemmas of their fellow Palestinians within the Green Line, who may hold Israeli citizenship but are attached to the Palestinian struggle. They demonstrated their political consciousness and activism during the revolt in May 2021 in protest of the takeover of Palestinians houses in Shaykh Jarrah. Tens of thousands took to the streets to demand the lifting of the siege on the people of the Gaza Strip, and to object to the restrictive conditions on worshippers at al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan.

It is undoubtedly an early stage of a new pattern of behavior, individually driven and without orchestration, but representing a significant number of individuals, so much so that it appears as a collective movement. But one need only consider the

weakness of the Palestinian national project, and the lack of leadership in Jerusalem to understand that this is purely an individual endeavor.

The question remains: Will this trend lead to any political transformation? Will the 5 percent of Palestinians in Jerusalem who are now holding Israeli passports participate in Israeli national elections? Will they attempt to represent themselves politically, possibly through a nationalist joint list? Or will this lead to a new political party adopting Jerusalem in its name or its political manifesto? Perhaps the most important question of all is asking to what extent the Palestinians in Jerusalem are learning from the political experiences of their fellow Palestinians inside Israel? The Palestinians in Israel have been involved in political work within the Israeli political and civil institutions for almost eight decades. Study of their successes and failures is imperative for those advocating a similar political engagement from Jerusalem.

That is precisely why Palestinian Jerusalemites are cautious about how far they are willing to extend their "pragmatism." Israel's Ministry of Education and its Jerusalem Municipality, which have been alternately strong-arming and incentivizing schools in East Jerusalem to drop the Palestinian curriculum, in favor of the Israeli/Zionist one, have managed only moderate success.[11] In contrast to the alarming increase in murders in Palestinian towns in Israel due to criminal networks with alleged protection from police, Jerusalemites continue to respect the strong traditional social law system, where disputes between individuals or families are settled with community participation. Nor are security forces including the police able to recruit Palestinians from Jerusalem.

Since the annexation of East Jerusalem, Palestinians in East Jerusalem have boycotted participation in municipal elections. Despite steady Israeli urging (often coming from center-left Israeli institutions) for the Palestinians to participate, less than 2 percent of eligible Palestinians in Jerusalem voted in the last election.[12] This is particularly thought provoking when we know that 5 percent of Jerusalemites acquired Israeli citizenship! While the Palestinians want to improve their individual status, they are careful not to weaken the collective. After fifty-six years of occupation, Palestinians know very well that a vote in the Jerusalem municipality election may be a vote for better services, but also a step in assimilation, a sign of integration, while their fight is about collective political national recognition. At the same time, the Israeli government has obstructed Palestinians in Jerusalem from active participation in Palestinian elections, in contrary to the agreed agreements.

If Palestinians in Jerusalem transform their political platform and their liberation struggle from the long-standing demand for a separate capital in an independent Palestinian state, to a struggle for equal and civil rights, it will undoubtedly undermine the Palestinian national project for a Palestinian state along the 1967 Green Line and East Jerusalem as its capital. The corner stone securing this project is in the hands and minds of Jerusalemites, and they are starting to have second thoughts about this.

But such a shift would also endanger the Israeli national project based on the notion of Israel as a Jewish state and Jerusalem as its capital. A reality in which

almost 40 percent of Jerusalem's population consists of politically active non-Jewish Palestinians (some holding Israeli citizenship), a fight for equal civil rights in the capital of this Jewish state would shake not just the way the city sees itself but the whole of Israel – the country can't be Jewish if the capital is not.

While political leaders on both sides, and the wider international community in the background, failed to bring about any real progress in the last two decades, people are taking the matter into their own hands. Regardless of our judgment on the political correctness of such undertakings, we must understand the wider consequences of such actions in reshaping the conflict for the years to come.

It has long been argued that Jerusalem is a microcosm of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Whatever happens in Jerusalem will have repercussions throughout the entire country, and the success or failure of any model will extend beyond this city. Dividing Jerusalem into two would facilitate the division of the country into two states, whereas maintaining an interconnected city would reflect an interwoven country. Israel's annexation of Jerusalem (or its "unification," as Israel terms it) back in 1967 was the first step toward annexing the whole of the West Bank. The one-state model could either be realized or prove unworkable in Jerusalem.

The political conflict will eventually compel the actors to focus on a realistic and achievable political framework, one that can only succeed if it includes a systematic process of decolonization. Only then can we pave the way for a viable comprehensive solution. Perhaps the first call for this process is coming from al-Quds.

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Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi: Chief Judge of the Kingdom of Palestine

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Translated from the Arabic by Laila Asser

Abstract

This abridged version of the Arabic original provides a comprehensive exploration of Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi's life (1863/4–1941). Originating from a prestigious Jerusalem family, the narrative delves into his formative years, education at al-Aqsa, and extensive studies in Istanbul. The study examines his academic pursuits, including training in Hanafi jurisprudence and interactions with influential scholars. It further elucidates his diverse appointments in the Ottoman judiciary, detailing his travels to Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt. The inclusion of figures like Jamal al-Din al-Afghani adds depth to his intellectual journey. The narrative encompasses Shaykh Khalil's challenging period of unemployment, subsequent appointments, and notable roles in the Ottoman judiciary, concluding with his affiliation with the Committee of Union and Progress. Illustrations, including his *ijaza* and certification documents, enrich the historical narrative.

Keywords

Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi; Ottoman Empire; al-Aqsa; Istanbul; Hanafi jurisprudence; Ottoman judiciary; Jamal al-Din al-Afghani; Committee of Union and Progress; Ottoman history.

Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi (1863/4–1941), a leading member of a prominent Jerusalem family, served from 1921 to 1934 as chief judge of Jerusalem's shari'a court.[1] There is no doubt that the momentous events that shaped Palestine during his lifespan, which included both

the Ottoman and Mandate eras, had a profound effect on him. He witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire, a regional and world power for some six centuries and important to many in the Islamic world, the collapse of an Islamic caliphate, the rise of Arab nationalism, and the colonization of the Arab world and its partition. He observed at first hand the emergence of an alien Zionist entity in the region and its colonization of Palestine. These global and regional changes became intertwined with Shaykh Khalil's personal and professional trajectory and continue to impact inhabitants of the Middle East into the present.

It is not surprising that Shaykh Khalil became a judge, as the Khalidi family had a long history of serving in the Ottoman judiciary. The shari'a court in Jerusalem was the source of the family's power and influence, not only in and around Jerusalem but at the highest levels of the Ottoman government. The court's qadi, or chief judge, was typically appointed for a year before moving on to some other administrative post in the empire, whereas the deputy, always a local, served for an extended period (often until their death or retirement), at which point the position was taken up by one of his heirs. In this way, the position of deputy judge of the Jerusalem shari'a court was handed down from one member of the Khalidi family to another over several centuries. In addition to wielding influence within the Jerusalem court, the position gave opportunity for a network of important relations with judges who returned to the Ottoman capital after serving in Jerusalem.[2] Beyond carrying on this tradition, Shaykh Khalil was a calligrapher (and if he had not become a judge, he could have worked as such) and an avid scholar and traveler, visiting centers of knowledge far and wide for both professional and personal reasons.

In 1980, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi's library, including his collection of private papers, was moved from his home above the Gate of Bani Ghanim (Bab al-Ghawanima) to al-Aqsa Mosque.[3] These papers are abundant, but disparate. They encompass various notes and observations on his travels in Spain, Ottoman Europe, the Maghrib, the Levant, and the Hijaz; his correspondence, including letters to and from prominent Arab and Muslim thinkers from Palestine, the Arab World, Europe, and India; his writings and research, including notes for religious lectures and material related to the libraries he visited during his travels, among them the library tickets for books he received from the Khedival Library (later the Egyptian National Library); and matter relating to the business of the Supreme Islamic Council and its membership, pertaining to his work but also, for example, invitations to events such as Ramadan iftars, the meals breaking the fast. The papers are complicated and overlapping, presenting many difficulties for the researcher: they are mostly undated (especially correspondence), and Shaykh Khalil seems to have written a note or a comment on every piece of paper, small or large (even envelopes), that came into his hands, often compiling notes on various topics on a single sheet of paper. Despite these challenges, they are a rich trove of information, which this essay uses to discuss the educational and professional life of Shaykh Khalil, as well as the local and regional contexts in which they unfolded.[4]

An Era of Transformations

Shaykh Khalil was born in either 1863 or 1864 (1280 or 1281 AH) in Jerusalem, the third of four sons of Badr al-Din bin Mustafa bin Khalil bin Muhammad bin Khalil bin San'Allah al-Khalidi.[5] He thus lived almost two-thirds of his life under Ottoman rule, at a time when the empire was suffering significant military, economic, and cultural crises. He was also born into the Tanzimat era, when the Ottoman state undertook a series of reforms to centralize and modernize its rule.[6]

As a result of these reforms, education in the Levant region blossomed in the second half of the nineteenth century compared with the previous era. Printing, journalism, and literary societies flourished and wealthy families began to send their sons to study in Beirut, Istanbul, and France.[7] In 1876, a constitution was declared and a bicameral parliament was established the following year in Istanbul. Yusuf Effendi al-Khalidi was elected as the representative of Jerusalem, defeating 'Umar 'Abd al-Salam al-Husayni. The new parliament did not last for long, however. The Russo-Turkish War broke out in 1877 and, using the war as a justification, Sultan 'Abdul Hamid II dissolved parliament at the beginning of 1878.[8] 'Abdul Hamid proceeded to rule the empire with an iron fist for the next thirty-three years.

Figure 1. Shaykh Khalil's birth certificate – one of two, each giving a different year of birth, among his papers.

Revolts in the Balkans and war with Russia exposed the military, economic, and administrative weakness of the Ottoman Empire. The empire was drawing its last breaths, and its people felt the effects, which were particularly severe and painful for non-elites. According to Yusuf Effendi al-Khalidi, some ten thousand Palestinians died in the Russo-Turkish War.[9] The Berlin Conference of 1878, which brought the war to an end, granted Serbia and Romania independence from Ottoman rule. The wars in the Balkans led to the exodus and exile of thousands to Istanbul, putting enormous pressure on the state. In an effort to preserve what was left of the empire, the sultan suppressed movements advocating nationalism and independence.[10]

The woeful situation in the empire also tempted France to occupy Tunisia in 1881 and Britain to occupy Egypt in 1882. Britain was now poised at the frontiers of Palestine. The influence of foreign consuls grew in Palestine, and particularly in Jerusalem.[11] The Zionist movement began to seek support for the colonization of Palestine, mobilizing political and financial influence to these ends. Zionist designs on Palestine also became known to at least a limited number of intellectuals, including members of the Khalidi family such as Yusuf Effendi al-Khalidi and his nephew Ruhi al-Khalidi.[12] Still, Ottoman concessions to European powers granted protection to what became known as religious minorities, facilitating Zionist colonization.[13] The Zionist movement thus found a foothold in Palestine on the basis of the European powers' increasing influence. By the end of the nineteenth century, fifteen Zionist colonies had been established.

At the turn of the century, 'Abdul Hamid sought to expand his appeal among Muslims within and beyond the Ottoman Empire to Muslims. He emphasized asceticism and piety in his private life, revived the idea of an Islamic League, and emphasized the notion that the caliphate was the only way to keep the West at bay. He lent support to Arab colleges and funded repairs to the Holy Mosque in Mecca, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Yet these efforts were undermined by growing nationalist movements, including Arab nationalism.[14] In 1908, Sultan 'Abdul Hamid was forced to restore the constitution. Palestine was represented by five candidates in the new parliament.[15]

A year later, 'Abdul Hamid tried again to dissolve the parliament. This resulted in the overthrow of his government by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which transferred the privileges of the sultan to the government and the parliament.[16] Meanwhile, Arab reformists established such organizations as the Arab-Ottoman Brotherhood Society, the Qahtani Society, the Arab Forum (al-Muntada al-Arabi) and others.[17] The Turkish chauvinist inclinations of the CUP soon became obvious, prompting protests and the spread of the idea of decentralization, autonomy, and even independence among Arab parties. Such ideas continued to materialize up until the outbreak of World War I. Meanwhile, by the start of the war, forty-three Zionist colonies in Palestine housed some thirteen thousand settlers. The Zionist movement had established workers' parties and military and civilian institutions that later became the foundations of Zionist colonization in the Mandate period.[18]

The Ottoman Empire officially entered World War I in October 1914 on the side

of the Central Powers. Meanwhile, the empire's Arab provinces grew increasingly discontented with the CUP's Turkification policies and the activities of Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman governor and military commander in the Levant, which included executing and imprisoning scores of Arab nationalists. This was compounded by military conscription, forced labor, deportation, and the costs of war, which the Ottoman state shifted onto the population. Disease and locust infestation were rife during the war years.

Britain exploited these grievances and encouraged the Arab Revolt, led by Sharif Husayn and his sons in June 1916.[19] By the end of 1918, no Ottoman forces remained in Arab lands, having been replaced by Allied forces, while behind the scenes Britain and France engaged in secret negotiations and agreements regarding the post-war fate of Ottoman territories. With the collapse of the Gaza front on 7 December 1917, five days after the Balfour Declaration was announced, the British army marched into Palestine. The British Commander, General Allenby, entered Jerusalem on 11 December 1917, and Palestine entered a new era, more vicious and miserable than the Ottoman period.[20]

From Jerusalem to Istanbul

Shaykh Khalil was raised within one of the preeminent families in Jerusalem, whose history in the city goes back centuries.[21] The Khalidi family held significant properties in the Old City and, like other Jerusalem families, expanded their holdings to include properties outside the city walls in the nineteenth century.[22] Members of the family held high-ranking positions, particularly in the judiciary, in Palestine, and elsewhere in the Ottoman provinces, and a number rose to prominence through their employment in the Ottoman administration, especially during the Tanzimat era.[23]

Figure 2. The Khalidi family tree, going back to Shaykh Khalil's grandfather, Mustafa.

There is little material in Shaykh Khalil's papers on his early life and education in Jerusalem, but it is likely that he received the standard education of that period through the *kuttab* system. Given his family's status, it is not surprising that, from the age of fourteen or fifteen, he embarked upon ten years of study at al-Aqsa, the most prominent Islamic institution in the city.[24] In a letter to a friend in Fez, Morocco, Shaykh Khalil mentions having received "a lifetime of education" under Muhammad As'ad al-Imam (d. 1890/1308 AH), the most prominent shaykh at al-Aqsa at the time and mufti of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence in Jerusalem.[25] Though no other scholars are mentioned in Shaykh Khalil's papers, he presumably received lessons from other shaykhs who taught at al-Aqsa during this time, such as Shaykh 'Abd al-Latif al-Khazandar al-Ghazzi, Shaykh 'Abd al-Razzaq Abu al-Sa'ud, and 'Ali al-'Awri.[26]

Shaykh Khalil left his homeland for Istanbul in 1887 or 1888 (1305–6 AH), and it seems that he lived there for over a year before enrolling in the Mumtaz College of Law, where he was trained in Hanafi jurisprudence (the dominant *madhhab*, or school of Islamic jurisprudence, under the Ottomans). He was one of thirteen students selected to attend that academic year, and he spent at least five years there studying jurisprudence.[27] In his second year of studies (1890/1308 AH), he received an *ijaza* (religious license) from the Deputy Grand Shaykh Ahmad 'Asim Effendi.[28] He was supposed to have graduated at the end of 1894, but among his papers there is a certificate showing

Figure 3. The first two pages of Shaykh Khalil's *ijaza* received from Deputy Grand Shaykh Ahmad 'Asim Effendi.

that he rose from his third-year to his fourth-year studies in 1893, meaning that he graduated at the end of the following year, in 1895.[29] It may be that his course took such a long time to complete because he was not only studying in Istanbul, but going on educational tours of the Ottoman libraries and receiving additional lessons from scholars of the period. While in Istanbul, for example, Shaykh Khalil attended Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's circle, as well as lessons given by Shaykh Muhammad 'Atif al-Rumi al-Islambuli.[30]

It seems that there were no positions open to Shaykh

Figure 4. Shaykh Khalil's certification of advancement from his third to his fourth year of legal studies.

Khalil after he completed law school. He spent about five years without securing a job. During this period, he toured Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt. In Tunisia he met with scholars and visited libraries, in what would become an unwavering habit of his whenever he visited a new place: upon arrival, he would look for the library first, visiting it and studying its collections, writing down what he thought was important. From Tunisia he went to Morocco and then, in August 1896, to Egypt. His papers include the card granting him entrance to the Khedival Library, later the Egyptian National Library, and several book loan cards from this collection.[31] While in Egypt, which he visited several times, he also attended the lessons of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Shirbini (d. 1908/1326 AH).[32] In 1901, Shaykh Khalil returned to Istanbul, to receive his first appointment in the Ottoman judiciary, as a deputy judge.

Figure 5. Shaykh Khalil's first judiciary appointment.

Work in the Ottoman Judiciary

On 29 July 1901, Khalil al-Khalidi was appointed deputy judge of the shariʿa court in Jabal Samʿan in the Aleppo governorate.[33] He was thirty-four years old. There is nothing in his papers discussing his work or personal life during this period, but we can guess that he visited places in and around Aleppo, including its libraries, as was his habit when traveling. Shaykh Khalil continued in this position for two and a half years before he was dismissed.

Upon leaving, Shaykh Khalil set off for Morocco, arriving in Fez in February 1904. About fifty small pieces of paper in his collection reference this trip to Fez. They comprise a collection of letters, as well as descriptions of and notes on books he found interesting in the city's libraries. One of these letters, addressed to the editor of the weekly Beirut-based newspaper *Thamarat al-Funun*, traces his journey from Aleppo to Fez, listing the cities he passed through and recounting the manuscript collections, libraries, and historical sites, as well as the prominent families and individuals, in each.[34] Shaykh Khalil stayed in Fez for four months, during which time he met many of the prominent scholars of Morocco. He studied under Shaykh Ahmad bin al-Khayyat, who gave him an *ijaza* as an authority on everything Shaykh Ahmad had said, heard, and written.[35] The top scholar in Morocco, Shaykh Jaʿfar al-Kittani, also granted Shaykh Khalil an *ijaza* recognizing him as an authority on his publications.[36] Shaykh Khalil made his way back to the Levant via Tunisia (on which he wrote eight pages) and Libya (recording his observations on twelve small sheets of paper, containing information on Libyan scholars, mosques, and tribes). He arrived in Beirut on 26 October 1904 – the whole journey extending about nine months. From Beirut, he took a tour of the Levant and Ottoman Europe, reaching Istanbul on 9 August 1905. In Istanbul, he had eye surgery.

At the end of November 1906, Shaykh Khalil received his second appointment, as deputy judge in Qalqandalen (now Tetovo) in the Ottoman province of Kosovo. He stayed in this job for eight and a half months. For the following year and a half, he remained unemployed, during which time he traveled around Ottoman Europe before returning to Istanbul. His third appointment, also in Ottoman Kosovo, was deputy judge in the district of Metruja (Mitrovica). In October 1909, Shaykh Khalil received his first appointment

as a full judge. He served as qadi of the shari'a court in Diyarbakir for one year and nine months. He then spent two and a half years away from government employment before being appointed in April 1914 to the Fatwa Department of the Verification (*Tadqiq*) Council in the office of the Grand Shaykh in Istanbul.[37] He remained in this job for six-and-a-half years, the longest stretch in his career in the Ottoman state, during which time he was promoted to become a member of the Fatwa Committee.[38] Of course, the end of his position coincided with the end of the Ottoman Empire itself.

Figure 6. Shaykh Khalil's CUP membership.

Returning to Jerusalem

By the end of 1920, Shaykh Khalil had returned to Jerusalem. In the chaotic circumstances following the end of World War I, his decision to return to Jerusalem at this time may well have been influenced by a letter from his nephew urging his swift return to Jerusalem. The letter reads:

> You said that you would arrive in Gaza in July, but your delay is exceedingly unwarranted, for the time has come. If I could afford it, I would have sent you a telegram telling you that you must return quickly. I cannot give you more details, but I beg you, my lord and uncle, that when you receive this letter, you will honour us by returning to Jerusalem. This is because our sire, the mufti, wants to resign from his position as [grand] mufti and president of the Shari'a [Court of] Appeal. Its salary is 6,000 Egyptian piasters. So, there is no room for your delay at all, and this is in your hands, and you have no legitimate excuse. My lord may you live long. My mother wishes you success.[39]

The letter infers that the Khalidi family hoped, with the impending resignation of Kamil al-Husayni from his role as Grand Mufti – a position invented by the British, who had appointed Husayni in 1918 – that Shaykh Khalil might take over this role.[40]

Upon arriving in Jerusalem and finding that Kamil al-Husayni remained in his position as Grand Mufti, Shaykh Khalil became deputy chief of the Shari'a Court of Appeal in Jerusalem.[41] He continued in this post for three months before being appointed Chief of the Court on 10 March 1921. In letters sent outside Palestine, he used the title *ra'is al-qada bi-mamlakat Filastin* – Chief Judge of the Kingdom of Palestine.

On 21 May 1921, Kamil al-Husayni died, and Shaykh Khalil put his name forward for the position. However, the British high commissioner for Palestine chose Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni instead.[42] Shaykh Khalil was clearly dissatisfied with this result, and among his papers is found a letter addressed to the mufti of Beirut, asking for a fatwa on the decision to appoint a man "not older than twenty-seven … with no qualification in shari'a studies, who only put a turban on his head three months ago. The general public, which cannot distinguish between an educated and an ignorant man, asked the government to appoint the mufti …." The date of the letter (6 Ramadan 1339/14 May 1921) indicates that both the struggle to succeed Kamil al-Husayni, and the British decision to appoint Hajj Amin, preceded the mufti's death. The affair alienated Shaykh Khalil and the Khalidi family more generally, pushing them into the ranks of the opposition (*mu'arida*) to the Husayni-led Supreme Muslim Council, as discussed below.

During his time working in Jerusalem, Shaykh Khalil resumed his travels. This was facilitated by his comfortable wealth and small family of just his wife and himself, allowing him time and money to spend on tours.[43] There was not a single year in which he did not travel. He was constantly late getting back to his work after his annual leave was over. In 1932, he was fifty-two days late because he visited Andalusia for

three months. Often his trips were less far afield, to various destinations in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. He visited Egypt multiple times per year.

These visits reflected Shaykh Khalil's personal interests, but they also helped to maintain his connections with scholars outside Palestine. He was a member of several societies; having been a member of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Ottoman period, he later joined the Council for Legal Studies in Palestine and the General Islamic Conference for the Caliphate. In May 1926, Shaykh Khalil attended the first conference of the latter in Cairo, which brought together attendees from around the Muslim world. While in Cairo for the conference, Shaykh Khalil received an angry telegram signed by a large group of Syrians objecting to the conference's failure to condemn the French bombardment of Damascus earlier in the month, killing some seven hundred Syrians.[44]

The scholarly and political networks within which Shaykh Khalil was embedded also come into focus through the vast array of intellectuals with whom he maintained correspondence. His papers include exchanges with Palestinian figures like 'Abdallah Mukhlis, As'ad al-Shuqayri, 'Ajjaj Nuwayhid, Kadhim al-Khalidi, Sa'id al-Karmi, and the owner of *al-Zumur* newspaper Khalil al-Majdi;[45] with Egyptian intellectuals like Ahmad Zaki, Hasan 'Abd al-Wahhab, 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Azzam;[46] the Syrian Muhammad Kurd 'Ali; and the Iraqi 'Izzat al-A'dhami.[47] Figures from further afield also wrote – Hamid Wali in Berlin, Hashim al-Nadawi of India, and Abu al-Wafa, a teacher at the Nizamiyya School in Hyderabad, as well as letters from Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco. Often, correspondents asked about where they might be able to locate a particular book, manuscript, or artefact, or inquired about archaeological sites and their history. Other times, writers sent Shaykh Khalil their good wishes on Islamic or national holidays, or invited him to give lectures or write articles. They testify to the geographic reach of his reputation. Closer to home, however, matters were often more contentious.

Shaykh Khalil and the Opposition

During the British Mandate, conflict among Palestinians raged between supporters of the Supreme Muslim Council (known as *al-majlisiyya* or *majlisiyyin*) and its opponents (known as *al-mu'arida* or *mu'aridin*). Though states and actors more powerful than the Palestinians played the greatest role in shaping events there, it is also true that some Palestinian leaders, whether unwittingly or in bad faith, contributed to the crisis that Palestinians faced. Competition among Palestinian elites played no small part, as notable families fought over positions for material gains and status. Many non-elite Palestinians, meanwhile, were caught up in these rivalries, failing to realize their consequences until it was too late. The catastrophe that resulted left Palestinians scattered around the region and the world, divided geographically and politically, rather than united.

Shaykh Khalil was known as a member of the opposition (*al-mu'arida*). It was even said that he was a pillar of the opposition, one of its honorary leaders, though in reality his role was minor. His opposition was of the silent kind, rarely expressed in

public, and his association with the opposition was largely to do with family politics rather than his individual statements or actions. Indeed, throughout the Mandate, there is little evidence that Shaykh Khalil played a political role or took a firm position against the British.[48] His political quietism may have been because of his job and his reluctance to take any steps that might endanger his position, or perhaps because of his Ottoman education, so to speak.

Still, although his role in the opposition was largely symbolic, rooted in personal and family rivalries rather than principle or politics, Shaykh Khalil's association with the *mu'aridin* led many to direct complaints his way. In the early 1930s, for example, Ayyub Sabri, the Palestinian editor-in-chief of the Egyptian newspaper *al-Wataniyya*, wrote to complain about the consequences of changing the paper's editorial line in favor of the opposition.[49] Sabri noted that he himself had been pro-*majlisiyya*, and that five hundred partisans of the mufti and the Supreme Muslim Council had subscribed to *al-Wataniyya*. These subscriptions were paid all at once, and Sabri believed that the funds came from the council's control over Islamic endowments (*awqaf*) and donations made for the repair of al-Aqsa Mosque. Since the newspaper switched its alliances to *al-mu'arida*, none of these subscriptions had been paid – despite weekly reminders. Meanwhile, only 320 subscriptions had been taken out by *mu'aridin* – 100 in the name of Fakhri al-Nashashibi, 70 in the name of Ribhi al-Nashashibi, and 150 to names provided by the latter. On top of this, Sabri and his son had been attacked, and *al-Wataniyya* subjected to boycott, by *majlisiyyin*. Sabri noted that other newspapers – such as *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, *Mir'at al-Sharq*, *al-Karmil*, and *Filastin* – had been subjected to similar pressures and changed their course to produce coverage more favorable to the *majlisiyya*. He contrasted his own fate with that of *al-Shura* newspaper, a pro-*majlisiyya* newspaper whose owners had accumulated wealth and property. Sabri suggested to Shaykh Khalil that prominent members of his family, such as Mustafa and Samih al-Khalidi, as well as members of the Jarallah, Dajani, and Nashashibi families, should take a more active role in organizing the opposition if they wanted to combat the *majlisiyyin* and, ultimately, emerge victorious over them.

The owner of the 'Akka-based newspaper *al-Zumar*, Khalil Zaqut al-Majdali, also complained about the SMC's boycott of his newspaper.[50] He wrote to Shaykh Khalil: "Seven letters arrived from Jerusalem from the president of the Islamic Council and his supporters focusing on the boycott and battle against your newspaper *al-Zumar* …. I draw your eminence's attention to this point because the reach and popularity of newspapers relies on great men, especially when it comes to partisanship…."[51]

These letters give further credence to the argument that the conflict between the *majlisiyya* and the *mu'arida* during the British Mandate was rooted in personal interests rather than the interests of the nation. It matters not whether individual actors engaged in this rivalry in good or bad faith, for the result was the same. The major difference, ultimately, was that in contrast to the strength of the *majlisiyyin*, the *mu'aridin* were scattered and disorganized. Indeed, for over a century, we might say that elite families pursuing their own interests have played a disproportionate role in Palestinian politics, often to the detriment of the Palestinian people.

Shaykh Khalil the Public Intellectual

Although Shaykh Khalil had little public political presence, he was frequently invited to give lectures and contribute articles, which he did in various forums. He published eleven articles in *al-Zahra'* magazine.[52] He was also a contributor to *al-Risala* magazine, publishing a work titled

"A Dangerous Historical Poem: People of Granada Beseech Sultan Bayazid," as well as two articles, in two parts each, about scholars with good handwriting.[53] 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Azzam also published a two-part article in *al-Risala* titled "The Salons of Shaykh Khalidi," which he introduced as follows:

> Five years ago in Istanbul, I met an honorable shaykh searching for books and telling stories about them. I found out that he was Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi, chief of the Shari'a Appeal Court in Jerusalem. I was then honored to meet him in Egypt several times. Whenever he came to Cairo, he would be kind enough to visit me at the university. During one of our meetings, he spoke about books and authors in an expert and detailed manner, so I made sure to see him again to benefit from his knowledge. He displayed endless knowledge and had a meticulous memory.[54]

The article went on to discuss schools in the Levant, Egypt, and Morocco.

The magazine *al-'Arab* also published an interview with Shaykh Khalil about his travels in Andalusia under the title "Andalusia as You See It Now."[55] The magazine presented him to readers as a most distinguished Muslim scholar, an itinerant researcher, and a traveling historian. They published a second article, "Wonderful Scenes in Andalusia," which summarized a conversation between Shaykh Khalil and the editors of the magazine.[56] *Al-'Arab* published a third article, "Andalusia Yesterday and Today," penned by the shaykh himself about his journey.[57] It is likely that Shaykh Khalil published articles elsewhere, though I was unable to locate them in his papers or elsewhere.[58]

There is no evidence that he ever produced a book-length manuscript. As 'Ajjaj Nuwahid wrote, "He did not write a book, but his heart overflowed with knowledge."[59] Still, I found in his papers some notes that point to several book projects, if we can call them that. In one letter he wrote: "I propose to you that most of the articles, the majority of which were published in *al-Thamarat*, were struck by the censors based on [their] feeble thinking and illusions. I am determined to publish them in a separate book and when this comes out, I will send you a copy as a gift."[60] Elsewhere he planned a book about his travels, which he intended to title *The Benevolent Gift in Western Tourism*. On another piece of paper, I found written: "The Book of the Protected Pearl in the Accounts of Tunisia, Its Scholars, and the Great Mosque of al-Zaytuna – its writer who is desperate for his God's forgiveness and mercy, Khalil bin Badr." One chapter was called "A Chapter on the Overview of the Political Situation in…." There is no evidence, however, that these projects ever came to fruition.

Retirement and Legacy

On 30 June 1934, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi retired, receiving a pension of over 120 Palestine pounds per year, as well as a bonus of over four hundred Palestine pounds.[61] He seems to have spent most of his retirement in Egypt, where he owned a house. His Jerusalem papers shed no light on his activities there; rather, it seems that his library in Egypt contained books and papers covering the period of his retirement, which may allow greater insight to this period if accessible. On 2 October 1941, at the age of seventy-eight, Shaykh Khalidi passed away in Cairo. He was buried at Bab al-Nasr, in front of Ahmad Bek 'Iffat's tomb. On the first anniversary of his death, Muhammad Ghassan wrote a tribute to him in *al-Risala* magazine.[62]

Although Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi may be little known today, at the time he was a prominent and respected jurist and scholar. His fame may be attributed to three things: belonging to the Khalidi family, one of the most well-known notable families of Jerusalem and Palestine more generally; his cultural interests and travels to various parts of the Arab and Muslim worlds; and the judicial posts that he held, beginning under the Ottoman Empire and culminating in one of the highest judicial positions in the "kingdom" of Palestine, as chief of the Jerusalem Shari'a Court of Appeals.

I have attempted to use Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi's papers to shed some light on his life, which coincided with a period in modern history that had a crucial impact on the fate of the Palestinian people. Drawing on such previously unexamined material allows us to revisit this period, uncovering the personalities who participated in key events of the period, who affected them and who were affected by them. Further, the insights provided by private papers like those of Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi, which are now divided among several locations, affirms the need to preserve what remains of these collections, which contain material essential for understanding our history as Palestinians.

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Endnotes

1   The life of Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi has been covered in several sources. Perhaps the most important is what Shaykh Khalil wrote about himself to Ibrahim 'Isa al-Masri. See Ibrahim al-Sayyid 'Isa al-Masri, *Majma' al-athar al-'Arabiyya wa rijal al-nahda al-fikriyya* [An assemblage of Arab works and men of the intellectual renaissance] (Damascus: Matba'at Ibn Zaydun, 1939), vol. 2, 125–31. See also: Ya'qub al-'Awdat,

Min a'lam al-fikr wa al-adab fi Filastin [Some luminaries of thought and literature in Palestine], 3rd ed. (Jerusalem: Dar al-Isra, 1992), 153–55; 'Irfan Abu Ahma, *A'lam min ard al-salam* [Luminaries from the land of peace] (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1979), 153–54; Khayr al-Din al-Zirakli, *al-A'lam* [Luminaries] (Beirut: Dal al-'Ilm lil-Milayin, 1980), vol. 5, 316–17; 'Ajjaj Nuwahid, *Rijal Filastin ma bayna bidayat al-qarn*

hatta 'am 1948 [Men of Palestine from the beginning of the century to 1948] (Beirut: Manshurat Filastin al-muhtalla, 1981), 24; Fawzi Yusuf, *Shay' min hayati* [Something of my life] (Jerusalem: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1981), 139; 'Abd al-Hadi Hashim and Anis Sayigh, eds., *al-Mawsu'a al-Filastiniyya* [The Palestinian encyclopedia] (Damascus: Hay'at al-Mawsu'a al-Filastiniyya, 1984), vol. 2, 369–70; Adel Manna', *A'lam Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'uthmani, 1800–1918* [Luminaries of Palestine in the late Ottoman era, 1800–1918] (Jerusalem: Jam'iyyat al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1986), 133–34; 'Umar Rida Kahhala, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin* [Dictionary of authors] (Beirut: Maktabat al-Muthanna, n.d.), vol. 4, 139; "Rijal min Filastin: al-Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi ra'is mahkamat al-isti'naf" [Men of Palestine: Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi, chief of the court of appeal], *al-Nahar* 48, 30 January 1987; and Kamil al-'Asali, "al-'Alama Khalil al-Khalidi" [The scholar Khalil al-Khalidi], *Majallat al-Dirasat* 15, no. 7 (1988): 293–326.

2　Adel Manna', *Tarikh Filastin fi awakhir al-'ahd al-'uthmani, 1700–1918* [The history of Palestine in the late Ottoman era, 1700–1918] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1999), 200.

3　Bab al-Ghawanima is one of the gates to al-Aqsa Mosque, located in the northwestern corner of al-Haram al-Sharif.

4　This essay does not make use of all of Shaykh Khalil's papers. It does not, for example, address his library and its contents or his writings about manuscripts in any significant way, which I hope to do at a later date. Unfortunately, he did not write a diary or a memoir of the events he witnessed.

5　Among the shaykh's papers, I found two birth certificates (issued in year 1305 of the Ottoman financial calendar, or 1889 CE): the first gives his birth year as 1280 AH and the second as 1281 AH. Ibrahim al-Masri states that Shaykh Khalil was born in Ramadan 1282 AH (1865 CE). Shaykh Khalil himself noted that he was fifty-eight years old in 1925, which would mean that he was born in 1867, and that he was thirty-four years old when he began working in the Ottoman government. We know that he was appointed in Rabi' al-Awwal 1319 AH, which would put his birth in 1285 AH. Further complicating matters, among his papers is a record of "the

anniversary of the coming of age of Khalil bin Badr al-Khalidi." It goes on: "He reached the age of puberty on Tuesday, a quarter of an hour after sunrise, at the end of Rabi' al-Akhir, on the 29th, and on this day an angel came … and it is the Hijri year one thousand and two hundred and ninety-eight. He was fifteen or sixteen years old on 18 March, according to the calculation of Rumi, his aforementioned historian."

6　Tanzimat is a term given to the reforms inaugurated under Sultan 'Abdul Majid (1839–76). Sultan Mahmud II (1808–39) is considered the first to introduce modernizing reforms to the Ottoman Empire, including abolishing the Janissaries and establishing a modern army and modernizing the Ministry of Finance. He was succeeded by 'Abdul Majid, who with the Edict of Gülhane in 1839 was seen as launching the Tanzimat. Although many historians believe that 'Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909) was a hindrance to Ottoman modernization, during his reign scores of schools were opened, health services were improved, and the army was further modernized through the introduction of German experts and missions to study in Germany. For more on these Ottoman reforms and regulations see: Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 76–77, 82–83, 178; and Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 218–21.

7　'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awad, *Buhuth fi tarikh al-'Arab al-hadith, 1514–1914* [Studies in the modern history of the Arabs 1514–1914] (Amman: Maktabat al-Muhtasib, 1983), 84–85.

8　Alexander Schölch, *Tahawwulat jidhriyya fi Filastin, 1856–1882* [Palestine in Transformation: 1856–1882], tr. by Kamil al-'Asali (Amman: Dar al-Huda, 1988), 282–84. Despite dissolving parliament, 'Abdul Hamid II pushed forward with reforms and tried (to no avail) to repair the basic foundations of the state by supporting the idea of an Islamic League.

9　Schölch, *Tahawwulat jidhriyya*, 287.

10　Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 211–16.

11　See Schölch, *Tahawwulat jidhriyya*, 59–76.

12　In 1899, Yusuf Effendi wrote a letter to the French chief rabbi, a friend of Theodor Herzl, requesting that the Zionist movement leave Palestine in peace; Schölch, *Tahawwulat jidhriyya*, 289. Ruhi's manuscript was

published in 2020: *al-Siyunizm ay mas'alat al-yahudiyya: awwal dirasa 'ilmiyya bi-l-'Arabiyya 'an al-sahiyuniyya* [Zionism or the Jewish question: the first academic study on Zionism in Arabic], ed. Walid Khalidi (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies and Khalidi Library, 2020).

13 Alexander Schölch, "al-Quds fi al-qarn al-tasi' 'ashar, 1831–1917" [Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, 1831–1917], tr. by Kamil al-'Asali, in *al-Quds fi al-tarikh* [Jerusalem in history], ed. Kamil al-'Asali (Amman: University of Jordan, 1992), 273–303.

14 'Awad, *Buhuth fi tarikh al-'Arab*, 89.

15 The delegates were: Ruhi al-Khalidi and Sa'id al-Husayni (Jerusalem), Hafiz al-Sa'id (Jaffa), Ahmad al-Khammash (Nablus), and As'ad al-Shuqayri (Acre). A letter from Faydallah al-'Alami to Shaykh Khalil, dated 15 Sha'ban 1326 AH (10 September 1908), described the parliamentary contest in Jerusalem that year: "I have never been more tired my whole life, because some ignorant people decided to take the liberty of inflicting revenge on each other. Then I asked Ruhi Bey al-Khalidi, who will be at the top of the list of nominations for membership of the parliament, about whether he was accepting [the nomination] or not, and I received his acceptance by telegraph. Most likely there will be three people from the Jerusalem district, and there are many applicants. They are of no importance, except for the worthy ones, 'Abd al-Salam Effendi Jarallah, Hafiz Bey al-Sa'id, Sa'id Effendi al-Husayni, and 'Ali Effendi Hallaq." After elections in 1912, Ruhi al-Khalidi and As'ad al-Shuqayri retained their seats and were joined by 'Uthman al-Nashashibi (Jerusalem), Ahmad 'Arif al-Mini (Gaza), and Hafiz Tuqan (Nablus). See Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 244, 250; document no. 37, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi collection.

16 On this period, see: Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi, *Asbab al-inqilab al-'Uthmani wa Turkiya al-fata* [Causes of the Ottoman coup and the Young Turks] (Cairo: Matba'at al-Manar, 1908).

17 Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 94–95.

18 Manna', *Tarikh Filastin*, 231, 252.

19 On the revolt, see: T. E. Lawrence, *A'mida al-hikma al-sab'a* [The seven pillars of wisdom] (Beirut: Manshurat al-Maktaba al-Ahliyya, 1968); and Amin Sa'id, *al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-kubra: tarikh mufassil jami' lil-qadiya al-'Arabiyya fi rub' qarn* [The Great Arab Revolt: a comprehensive, detailed history of the Arab cause in a quarter-century] (Cairo: Matba'at 'Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1943).

20 Khayriyya Qasim, *al-Hukuma al-'Arabiyya fi Dimashq bayna 1918–1920* [The Arab government in Damascus between 1918–1920] (Cairo, Dar al-Ma'arif, 1971), 15–22.

21 The Khalidi family traces its lineage back to Khalid bin al-Walid. Chief Judge Shams al-Din Muhammad bin 'Abdallah al-Dayri al-'Absi is believed to be the first member of the family to live in Jerusalem. (It is not known when the family became known as al-Khalidi instead of al-Dayri, after a village near Nablus.) The oldest document I found mentioning the name al-Khalidi al-Dayri (Shaykh Muhammad bin al-Shaykh Musa al-Khalidi al-Dayri) is from 1601. See: Jerusalem Shari'a Court sijill no. 84, 579; Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, *al-Uns al-jalil fi tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil* [Great Men in the History of Jerusalem and Hebron] (Amman: Maktabat al-Muhtasib, 1972), vol. 2, 221; Nasir al-Din al-Asad, *Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi: ra'id al-bahth al-tarikhi al-hadith fi Filastin* [Muhammad Ruhi al-Khalidi: pioneer of modern historical research in Palestine (Cairo: Ma'had al-buhuth, 1970), 25–26, 30; Muhammad 'Abd al-Hayy al-Laknawi al-Hindi, *al-Fuwa'id al-bahiyya fi tarajim al-Hanafiyya* [The great benefits of the biographies of the Hanafi school] (Cairo: Matba'at Sa'ada, 1906), 78–80; Mus'ab bin 'Abdallah al-Zubayri, *Nasab al-Quraysh* [The Lineage of Quraysh], 2nd ed. (Cairo: Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1982), 328; Ibn al-Athir, *Tajrid asma' al-sahaba* [Unsheathing the names of the companions] (Hyderabad: Matba'at Da'irat al-Ma'arif al-Nidhamiyya, 1897), 165.

22 During the Mamluk period, an area in the Bab Hutta quarter of Jerusalem was known as the Khawalida area. There is evidence that the Khalidi family – including seventeenth-century judges Rajih al-Dayri and Isma'il al-Dayri – lived in this area. In 1888, a document describes a yard [*hakura*] next to the Christian quarter by New Gate as being in the Khawalida area, meaning that members of the Khalidi family owned property on the western side of the city. From about the eighteenth century, the family seems to have concentrated in an expanse from Chain Gate to 'Aqabat al-Khalidiyya in the Old City. In

the nineteenth century, like other Jerusalem families, members of the Khalidi family began to buy property outside the walls of Jerusalem. See: Donald P. Little, *A Catalogue of the Islamic Documents from al-Haram aš-Šharif in Jerusalem* (Beirut: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1984), 86, 94, 96; Amnon Cohen and Bernard Lewis, *Population and Revenue in the Towns of Palestine in the Sixteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 40, 82, 84, 92; and Jerusalem Shari'a Court sijillat no. 83, 464; no. 378, 181; no. 390, 156; no. 402, 341; no. 340, 120; no. 343, 147.

23 For example: Yusuf Diya' al-Khalidi, mayor of Jerusalem and its representative in the Ottoman parliament; Yusuf's brother Yassin; and Ruhi al-Khalidi, representative of Jerusalem in the parliaments of 1908 and 1912.

24 Masri, *Majma' al-athar*, vol. 2, 126.

25 The letter reads: "In this letter, you will find a religious recognition (*ijaza*), with the attributions left out, from my most prominent shaykhs and teachers, such as Muhammad As'ad al-Imam, from whom I have received a lifetime of education. God willing, when I have completed the judicial term, of which I have seventeen months left, I will send you the detailed attributions." On Muhammad As'ad al-Imam, see Manna', *A'lam Filastin*, 43.

26 See: Manna', *A'lam Filastin*, 162; 'Abd al-Rahman Yaghi, *Hayat al-adab al-Filastini al-hadith* [The life of modern Palestinian literature], 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadida, 1981), 121–22; Kamil al-'Asali, *Ma'ahid al-'ilm fi Bayt al-Maqdis* [Educational institutions in Jerusalem] (Amman: al-Jami'a al-Urduniyya, 1981), 32, 43.

27 Masri, *Majma' al-athar*, 125.

28 *Ijaza* is a license to narrate material from the Islamic tradition. This six-page *ijaza*, dated Jumada al-Awwal 1308 AH (January 1890) is highly decorated: the text of each page is surrounded by a gilded border, and it is decorated with gold stippling and gold decorations between the lines of the first, second, and final pages; the header on the first page is a multicolored botanical painting, as is the footer on the last page. The scribe of the ijaza was Ahmad Tahir al-Qanawi.

29 The certificate from the Council to Elect Shari'a Judges is dated 1 Muharram 1313 AH (12 June 1311 on the Ottoman financial

calendar, and 23 June 1895 CE). This means that he graduated at the end of the following year, in 1315 AH. The certificate also has the seals of his examiners: Muhammad As'ad, Isma'il Haqqi, Muhammad Sa'id, al-Sayyid 'Uthman, Hasan Tahsin, Ahmad 'Asim, and 'Uthman Kamil.

30 al-'Asali, "al-'Alama Khalil al-Khalidi," 298.

31 Based on these records, it seems that he viewed eighty-seven books from the Khedival Library in 1900: forty-four books on history, twenty-one books on hadith, eleven books on jurisprudence, and eleven books in other fields.

32 'Abd al-Rahman bin Muhammad bin Ahmad al-Shirbini was the Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar for two years and wrote several books. 'Awdat notes that Shaykh Khalil studied in Egypt and that Shaykh al-Shirbini was one of his shaykhs at al-Azhar. However, I did not find anything indicating that Shaykh Khalil studied at al-Azhar. See: Kahhala, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, vol. 3, vol. 5, 168; al-Zirakli, *al-A'lam*, vol. 3, 334; 'Awdat, *Min a'lam al-fikr*, 153.

33 The appointment letter, dated 12 Rabi' Awwal 1319 (16 June 1317 on the Ottoman financial calendar, or 28 June 1901), reads: "In accordance with the privileges held by Rafat Zada Ibrahim Adham, Anadolu military judge, Khalil Effendi has been appointed a deputy judge in Jabal Samaan in the province of Aleppo. He will impose shari'a laws in conformity with righteousness and good judgment in various cases." The Anadolu military judge was, along with the Rumeli military judge, one of two judges under the Shaykh al-Islam, head of the Ottoman judiciary. As indicated by their titles, the scope of their jurisdiction was geographic (the Rumeli judge was responsible for administering the judiciary in the "European" territories of the empire, and the Anadolu judge presiding over the "Asian" territories). Judicial positions were lucrative, and judges would typically take 2 percent of the value of any financial case he handled. On the judiciary in the Ottoman Empire, see for example: Layla al-Sabbagh, *Min a'lam al-fikr al-'Arabi fi awakhir al-'asr al-'uthmani* [Some luminaries of Arab thought in the late Ottoman era] (Damascus: al-Sharika al-Muttahida li-l-tawzi', 1986), 35–58, 89–91.

34 *Thamarat al-Funun* was a weekly magazine published in Beirut by 'Abd al-Qadir al-

Qabbani (d. 1935) from 1875 to 1908; for seventeen years, it was edited by Ahmad Tabbara (executed by hanging in Aley, Lebanon, in 1916). See al-Zirakli, *al-A'lam*, vol. 1, 113; and vol. 4, 46.

35 Ahmed bin Muhammad bin 'Umar, known as Ibn al-Khayyat al-Fasi (d. 1925/1343 AH). See: 'Abd al-Hayy bin 'Abd al-Kabir al-Kattani, *Fihris al-faharis wa al-ithbat wa mu'jam al-ma'ajim wa al-mashyakhat wa al-musalsalat* [Index of indices and evidence, dictionary of dictionaries, shaykhs, and series] (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islamiyya, 1982–86), vol. 1, 288.

36 Masri, *Majma' al-athar*, vol. 2, 27. Ja'far bin Idris al-Kattani al-Hasani (d. 1905/1323 AH) authored over a hundred works. See al-Kattani, *Fihris al-faharis*, vol. 2, 219.

37 In the nineteenth century, the term "Grand Shaykh" was used to refer to the Shaykh al-Islam.

38 This promotion is according to a letter of appointment dated 9 March 1919 (Jamada al-Ula 1337).

39 Letter dated 12 March 1920, document no. 6, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi collection.

40 On Kamil al-Husayni, see Manna', *A'lam Filastin*, 124.

41 Before 1910, judgments issued by the Jerusalem Court of First Instance were appealed to the Beirut Court of Appeal. As a result of the large number of cases in the Jerusalem District, the Ministry of Justice in the city established a Court of Appeal in late 1910. Its first chief was Ibrahim Haqqi. Its members were 'Awni al-Khalidi, Elias Trad, 'Awni Ishaq, and Antun Shalhub. See Yusuf al-Hakim, *Suriya wa al-'ahd al-'Uthmani* [Syria and the Ottoman Era] (Beirut: al-Matba'a al-Kathulikiyya, 1966), 216–17.

42 Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hout, *al-Qiyadat wa al-mu'assasat al-siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* [Political leaders and institutions in Palestine, 1917–1948], 2nd ed. (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1981), 203–4.

43 His elder brother, Hasan, married his cousin Siddiqa bint Muhammad Salim and was the only one of Badr al-Din's sons to have children.

44 Document no. 40: telegram no. 3466, 19 May 1926, sent to the Shaykh from the Azbakiya Post Office in Cairo, from the al-'Ataba al-Khadra' office. Given the importance of this document, and the events it covers, I quote it in full. "The Syrians can only declare their deep

pain over the conference's unvoiced regret that offered no protest against the tragedy in al-Midan [neighborhood of Damascus]. This tragedy has inflamed the sense of dignity of an honorable American who witnessed the killing of women and the destruction of … houses, the demolition of mosques, and the burning of troves of manuscripts. He wrote to one of the newspapers declaring his horror at the disaster. Political caution did not restrain him from his duty as a free and honorable human being, while a conference held to take care of the affairs of Muslims was careful with their words of protest to avoid disturbing the oppressors. The tragedy claimed the lives of seven hundred people. There are two thousand houses, shops, and mosques in which the name of God is recited – al-Rifa'i Mosque, al-Daqqaq, Sayyiduna Suhayb, Shaykh Junayd, al-Saha, and al-Qa'a. Eighteen people were killed in al-Saha Mosque while they were standing to perform the dawn prayer, behind the imam, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghani al-Qasimi, the grandson of the great shaykh of the Levant, Shaykh al-Midani al-Akbar. The blind shaykh, 'Abduh al-'Attar, the muezzin of the mosque, was killed alongside them. If the conference turns a deaf ear again, let the Islamic world, in all the corners of the earth, bear witness to what happened. We believe that it is not worthy of an Islamic conference, held in one of the major Islamic capitals, to have that be the fate of the capital of the Umayyads, flowing with blood and tears."

45 'Abdallah Mukhlis (1878–1947) was a prominent Palestinian intellectual in the fields of history and archaeology. The Supreme Islamic Council appointed him chief accountant for Islamic endowments (*awqaf*) and in the 1930s he became general director of endowments. See: Kamil al-'Asali, *Turath Filastin fi kitabat 'Abdallah Mukhlis* [The heritage of Palestine in the writings of Abdullah Mukhlis] (Amman: Manshurat Dar al-Karmil, 1986). As'ad al-Shuqayri (d. 1940) was a religious scholar from Acre, appointed by Jamal Pasha as mufti of the Ottoman Fourth Army during World War I. He strongly opposed the Arab movement and its adherents during the Ottoman period. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, he returned to Palestine and became a leader of the opposition to the Supreme Muslim Council and its president, Hajj Amin al-Husayni. In 1932, he established

the Arab National Party, and remained a believer in the Ottoman Islamic idea until his death. See: Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, *Khamsa wa tisa'un 'amman fi al-hayat: mudhakkirat wa tasjilat* [Ninety-five years of life: memoirs and records], ed. 'Ali al-Jarbawi and Hussam al-Shakhshir (Jerusalem: al-Multaqa al-Fikri, 1993).

46 Ahmad Zaki (1867–1934) was an Egyptian writer known as "the Shaykh of Arabism." Hasan 'Abd al-Wahhab (1899–1967) was a scholar of Egyptian antiquities. 'Abd al-Wahab 'Azzam (1894–1951) was a scholar and diplomat, and dean of the Faculty of Arts at Fu'ad I University in Cairo. See: al-Zirakli, *al-A'lam*, vol. 1, 126–27; vol. 2, 198; and vol. 4, 186; Kahhala, *Mu'jam al-mu'allifin*, vol. 13, 403–4.

47 'Izzat al-A'dhami (d. 1936) was an Iraqi writer and parliamentarian representing Baghdad. See Kahhala, *Mu'jam al-Mu'allifin*, vol. 1, 312.

48 I could not find any mention of a significant role played by Khalidi in the Palestinian national movement.

49 Ayyub Sabri was an intellectual from the Palestinian city of Qalqilya who published several newspapers in Jaffa and Jerusalem. See Hashim al-Saba', *Dhikrayat sahafi mudtahad* [Memoirs of a persecuted journalist] (Jerusalem: Matba'at Dayr al-Rum al-Urthudhuks, 1951).

50 Khalil Zaqut, a Palestinian journalist originally from al-Majdal, established *al-Zumar* newspaper in 'Akka in 1927. It was a weekly newspaper that focused on politics, criticism, and humor. See: Ya'qub Yahusha', *Tarikh al-sihafa al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya* [History of the Palestinian Arab Press] (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1981–83), vol. 2, 440; and Yusuf Khuri, *al-Sihafa al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin, 1948–1967* [The Arab press in Palestine, 1876–1948], 3rd ed. (Baqa al-Gharbiyya: Manshurat Shams, 1993), 48.

51 Document no. 38, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi collection.

52 *Al-Zahra'* magazine was a monthly magazine published in Cairo by Muhib al-Din al-Khatib (d. 1969/1389 AH). Shaykh Khalil published articles in vol. 2, no. 3–4, no. 5, no. 8, and no. 10; vol. 3, no. 2–3; no. 5; no. 6; no. 8; and no. 10; and vol. 4, no. 1–2, and no. 5.

53 *Al-Risala*, established in Cairo in 1933, was owned by Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat (d. 1968/1388). See al-Zirakli, *al-A'lam*, vol. 1, 113. The second part of these articles was published in vol. 7, no. 323 (1939). I was unable to locate the first part.

54 *Al-Risala* 2, no. 78 (1934): 2129; *al-Risala* 3, no. 84 (1935): 214.

55 *Al-'Arab* 39: 9–10. *Al-'Arab* was a weekly illustrated magazine published in Jerusalem. See Yahusha', *Tarikh al-sihafa*, vol. 3, 28.

56 *Al-'Arab* 59–60: 15.

57 *Al-'Arab* 68: 3–5.

58 He mentions, for example, that he published in the newspaper *Thamarat al-Funun*, but I was not able to locate its issues.

59 Nuwahid, *Rijal Filastin*, 24. I believe this to be true. Shaykh Khalil's library was moved to al-Aqsa Mosque library a few years ago and it did not contain any books that he himself had written. It seems inconceivable that his library would not contain his publications, or their drafts, even if they had been neglected by other sources.

60 *Al-Thamarat* here refers to *Thamarat al-Funun*; see note 35.

61 Letter from Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Islamic Council of Palestine, no. 655, 26 Safar 1353 AH (9 June 1934), document no. 39, Shaykh Khalil al-Khalidi collection. See also document no. 40 of the collection, in which the head of the Supreme Islamic Council informed Shaykh Khalil that the General Secretary for Palestine had granted him a pension of 121 Palestinian pounds and 794 mils per year, supplemented by a bonus of 405 pounds and 983 mils.

62 *Al-Risala* 10, no. 483 (1942): 950.

Settler Colonialism and Digital Tools of Elimination in Palestinian Jerusalem

Shahd Qannam and Jamal Abu Eisheh

Abstract

This article examines various ways in which the Israeli security apparatus utilizes digital tools to surveil and control Palestinians in East Jerusalem and beyond. Authors Shahd Qannam and Jamal Abu Eisheh argue that such digital tools are part of the Israeli settler-colonial goal of eliminating the Indigenous Palestinians. They identify three ways in which digital tools contribute to the elimination of Palestinians and Palestinianness in Jerusalem: first, tools that allow the tracking of the movement of Palestinians, such as CCTV cameras, biometric information, and electronic ankle monitors, enable the Israeli regime to digitally track Palestinians and criminalize their movement, in order to subsequently physically remove them from the city. Second, the authors detail how Israel produces digital maps that deliberately erase the Palestinian identity of the city, promoting instead an exclusionary Zionist narrative. Third, they explain how social media serve both as tools of censorship that further erase the Palestinian narrative, and as tools of surveillance that push Palestinians to self-censorship, thereby eliminating expressions of Palestinianness.

Keywords

Settler colonialism; digital tools; cyberspaces; surveillance; censorship; erasure; discipline; elimination; Jerusalem.

Editor's Note

This essay was a notable contribution to the 2023 Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem.

The Israeli government uses myriad forms of digital tools to oppress Palestinians across colonized Palestine, and especially in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. These practices are designed to eliminate Palestinians from the land in a relentless effort to Judaize/Zionize it. This paper focuses on Israel's weaponization of digital tools against Palestinians in East Jerusalem. It demonstrates how digital spaces are juxtaposed with the physical landscape, and how these tools are deployed to erase Palestinians and their claims to the land in order to exert Israeli control over the entirety of Jerusalem and colonized Palestine.

In Jerusalem, Israeli digital surveillance shapes public order and dictates public access to space, especially among Palestinians. Importantly, however, Israeli digital surveillance in East Jerusalem not only targets the Palestinian population of the city; it also systematically attacks what Palestinian civil society organizations and scholars refer to as "the Palestinian national project."[1] In this essay, we argue that the digital sphere provides Israel with an additional tool to exercise the settler-colonial "logic of elimination,"[2] and we show how the Israeli regime uses digital tools to simultaneously exercise physical and digital elimination of Palestinians.

The essay begins with an explanation of how the elimination of the Palestinians from the land is part and parcel of the Zionist settler-colonial project in Palestine. It then identifies three ways in which digital tools allow Israel to exercise this elimination. First, we discuss how Israel uses "traditional" surveillance, which tracks the movement of Palestinians through equipment such as CCTV cameras, biometric information, and electronic ankle monitors, to revoke the residency of Palestinians in Jerusalem. Second, we explore how Israeli online maps eliminate Palestine symbolically by separating it from the landscape or erasing it altogether from digital cartographies. Third, we analyze how social media are used both as a tool of surveillance and censorship, leading to the elimination of expressions of Palestinianness. Combining these three elements of Israeli digital oppression, we demonstrate how Israel deploys digital tools to supplement physical forms of elimination.

The Eliminatory Logic of Zionist Settler Colonialism

As exemplified by the 1948 Palestinian Nakba, the Israeli settler-colonial project continuously seeks to remove Palestinian presence from the land. Fayez Sayegh points to the racist ethnic exclusivity and territorially expansionist characteristics of Zionism, explaining that Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine clearly aims at the creation of a state, making territory the principal objective of the Zionist project rather than labor, as in cases of non-settler colonialism.[3] Specifically, the Zionist project aims at acquiring the largest amount of land, removing Palestinians from it, and replacing them with Jewish settlers.[4] Settler-colonial policies and practices toward the Indigenous are guided by what Patrick Wolfe calls "the logic of elimination": to delegitimize, deny, and replace the existence of an Indigenous population over the land. Importantly, settler colonialism is a "structure not an event," suggesting its temporal continuation.[5]

Israeli occupation forces' denial and revocation of Palestinians' residency rights in Jerusalem is just one mechanism used to realize the Zionist goal of physically removing Palestinians from the land. Between 1967 and 1994, when Israel directly administered the West Bank and Gaza, a quarter of a million Palestinians living in the West Bank (excluding Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip had their residency IDs revoked.[6] The establishment of the Palestinian Authority consequent to the 1993 Oslo accords brought the administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip under the mandate of the new authority, meaning that Israeli authorities could no longer revoke the residency permits or identification cards of Palestinians in the West Bank (excluding Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.[7] In East Jerusalem, however, Palestinians have a more precarious legal status. After Israel illegally occupied it in 1967, Palestinians residing there were given the status of "permanent resident," which is revocable according to Israeli law and does not provide political rights. Israeli Ministry of Interior data revealed that from 1967 to 2015, at least 14,000 Palestinians in East Jerusalem had their "permanent" residency status revoked.[8]

However, the erasure of Indigenous people is not only physical. Lorenzo Veracini exposes a variety of ways in which the settler-colonial state can erase the presence of an Indigenous population. This could be, among other ways, through the erasure of Indigenous narrative and culture, the non-recognition of Indigenous legal rights, or the denying of the ties between the Indigenous population and the land – all expressions of Indigeneity that challenge the legitimacy of the settler colonizer.[9] This is what Wolfe terms the elimination of nativeness.[10] In this way, the varied nature and structured characteristics of settler-colonial policies mean that there is a multiplicity of spaces in which they can be enacted and challenged.

The digital and online realms are such spaces that become sites of struggle between the eliminatory settler-colonial logic and Indigenous resistance to erasure. After all, it is *territory* that is central to settler colonialism, and insomuch as digital space is a territory, it is critical to examine Israel's practices of domination of it.[11]

Helga Tawil-Souri explains that since the Oslo accords, Israel has retained control over all communication infrastructure used by Palestinians. This includes phone lines, and mobile and internet networks.[12] In what Tawil-Souri calls "digital occupation," Israel extends its control over Palestinians from the physical realm, where it controls their bodies, to the digital realm. She reminds us that "digital networks, too, are spaces of control."[13] For Israel, digital spaces as sites of control and erasure are arguably more advantageous that the physical realm because the tools deployed in them are "frictionless."[14] Digital control and surveillance technologies have allowed Israeli occupation forces to remove themselves to a certain extent from the "battlefield," thereby rendering the processes of erasing Palestinians less visibly violent.[15] In the next three sections, we explore how these "frictionless" digital spaces constitute forms of elimination of Palestinians, thus contributing to fulfilling the Zionist settler-colonial mission.

Tracking as a Tool for Elimination

The Colonial Gaze and Israeli CCTV

Surveillance has become essential for the Israeli regime in Jerusalem. Tawil-Souri explains that the logic of surveillance in East Jerusalem is that Palestinians are surveilled because they are always *a priori* guilty of something.[16] Their guilt, for Israel, might simply be the mere fact that they *are* in Jerusalem. As Wolfe puts it: "So far as Indigenous people are concerned, where they are is who they are, and not only by their own reckoning."[17] As Israeli settler colonialism is fundamentally a battle for space, removing the presence of the Palestinian other from the land is a constant preoccupation. This places Palestinians under what Elia Zureik calls the "Israeli gaze."[18]

This deliberate gaze is not meant to go unnoticed: Palestinians are constantly reminded that Israel is watching them, which is why Israeli occupation forces have invested so heavily in making their presence known, including through "photographing raids." The concept is simple: soldiers raid Palestinian houses, take pictures of their residents, and leave.[19] The pictures are not necessarily stored or used for any purpose, but the raid itself is a reminder that the Israeli military is here and can *see* what Palestinians do. Another example is the use of the Bluewolf application by the Israeli military, which allows soldiers to upload pictures of Palestinians and run a search in a large database. An equivalent application was developed for use by Jewish settlers in the West Bank.[20] These tactics of reminding Palestinians about Israeli presence show Palestinians that they cannot escape surveillance.

The surveillance technology Israel deploys in Jerusalem is named Mabat 2000, "meaning both the Hebrew word for 'gaze' and an acronym for 'technological & surveillance center.'"[21] The system relies on networks of CCTV cameras, averaging one camera per one hundred persons in the Old City of Jerusalem, and facial recognition was added to this system in 2017.[22] It is now estimated that "CCTVs have been installed to cover 95 percent of public areas in occupied East Jerusalem."[23] Additionally, some cameras can look directly into Palestinian homes, invading the privacy of the few Palestinian spaces left in Jerusalem.[24] With these intimidatingly visible cameras, the Israeli regime thus succeeds at making itself appear omnipresent and undeniable.[25]

Importantly, the network of cameras used to impose the Israeli gaze on Palestinians also serves to defend Jewish Israeli settler violence. In other words, Israel simultaneously uses its surveillance technology to criminalize and exterminate Palestinians, and to turn a blind eye to the near-daily instances of Israeli settler violence against Palestinians, as many Palestinian Jerusalemites have testified.[26] This has the added effect of providing Israeli settlers with a layer of security, advancing the process of Judaizing the city by eliminating its Palestinians.[27]

In March 2018, Israel amended Article 11 of the 1952 Entry into Israel Law "granting the interior minister full power to revoke the Jerusalem residencies of

Palestinians over allegations of 'breaching allegiance' or 'loyalty' to the Israeli state."[28] This, coupled with the increasing presence of CCTV cameras across East Jerusalem has led to growing concern among Palestinians over their ability to undertake political action. Indeed, Israel can use CCTV footage to arbitrarily accuse Palestinians of breaching loyalty to the state, thereby stripping them of their residency and leading to their expulsion from the city. To be sure, this eliminatory logic extends to Palestinian citizens of Israel, too. In July 2022, the Israeli Supreme Court decided to uphold a 2008 amendment to Article 11(2)(b) of the 1952 Citizenship Law authorizing a "court of administrative affairs, at the request of the Interior Minister, to revoke the Israeli citizenship of persons who have 'committed an act that constitutes a breach of loyalty to the State of Israel.'"[29] Unsurprisingly, what constitutes a "breach of loyalty" is left unclear, but raising the Palestinian flag in public, which the Israeli regime recently banned, could be grounds for breach of loyalty.[30]

Cameras work hand in hand with the collection and processing of biometric data as part of the Israeli Biometric Project.[31] In 2009, the Israeli Knesset adopted a law to issue biometric IDs and passports, and to establish a database with the biometric information of residents of Israel, which includes Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. This means that information on all residents would now be stored in one place accessible to the government, rather than having each resident carry their information with them. The project started with a pilot period and was officially adopted by the Israeli Ministry of Interior (MoI) in 2017. While the objective of the project was purportedly to prevent the forgery of ID cards, critics raised concerns about the potential abuse of the database.[32] Indeed, a databank of all of this information constitutes a "needless blow to the individual's right to dignity, liberty, and privacy."[33]

The major concern is that such a database will be abused by security forces and the MoI. This is because these "smart" IDs have expiration dates, unlike the previous IDs Jerusalemites held. Prior to the database, the MoI would summon Palestinians for questioning if it suspected that they were not primarily residing in Jerusalem – a requirement for holding a permanent residency status. However, the new IDs require Palestinians to visit the MoI regularly for renewal, though renewal is not guaranteed.[34] Each time they visit the MoI in Wadi al-Joz, Palestinians must present sufficient evidence that Israel (including occupied East Jerusalem) is their "center of life" – a requirement deliberately designed to be virtually impossible to fulfill.[35] If all the requirements are not met, the MoI has the power to revoke Palestinian residency permits. In fact, it is well documented that the MoI deliberately uses the "center of life" policy to revoke Palestinian residency permits rather than renew them.[36] What is more, this biometric technology is used at checkpoints throughout the West Bank, and at crossings into Jerusalem, allowing Israeli authorities to identify Palestinians who may be breaching the "center of life" requirements by residing primarily in the West Bank.[37] Thus, biometric technology furthers the Zionist mission of erasing Palestinians from the land, especially in Jerusalem.

Incarceration at Home: Ankle Monitors

The Israeli regime's violence enacted through digital tools is backed by powerful state and legal institutions that legitimize the use of such tools. This can be seen in the case of electronic ankle monitors. In 2005, the Israeli Ministry of Public Security created a pilot program to electronically monitor Palestinians under house arrest as a substitute for incarceration in Israeli prisons. In 2007, the Unit for Coordination of Electronic Monitoring was established as an operational unit within the Ministry of Public Security, and in 2009, the duties and responsibilities of the unit were transferred to the Israel Prison Service (IPS).[38] Then, in 2014, the Knesset passed the Electronic Monitoring Law to regulate the electronic monitoring program, which installs invasive equipment in Palestinian homes, including receivers and electronic ankle monitors that send signals to the IPS control room about detainees' movements. If they leave the space demarcated for them by the court, IPS is alerted and the detainee suffers further repercussions. The Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs reported that Israeli courts placed more than six hundred Palestinian children, mostly from Jerusalem, under house arrest in 2022.[39]

Israeli courts use this electronic monitoring technology on children under the age of fourteen since imprisoning them is "illegal" under Israeli law. The detention of children in their homes comes in one of two forms: either the child is detained in their own home, putting their families in the excruciating burden of preventing them from leaving the home; or, the child is forcibly removed from their home and placed under house arrest in another, undisclosed location.[40] Unable to incarcerate them, Israeli courts order their house arrest until the end of their trials, which often take months. Importantly, their house arrest does not count as time served once their sentence is issued at the end of the trial.[41]

Electronic ankle monitors constitute a form of incarceration, which is a powerful tool the Israeli regime uses to eliminate Palestinians. Indeed, scholars of Indigenous studies have demonstrated the inherent links between incarceration, criminalization, and settler colonialism.[42] The confinement of an Indigenous person to one place effectively removes them from all other places, and breaks their links with their communities – a form of elimination. Among a range of other methods, the shrinking of Palestinian spaces in Jerusalem and the imposition of the Israeli gaze through CCTV cameras and ankle monitors render life increasingly unlivable for Palestinians in Jerusalem, thus leaving many with no choice but to leave the city and possibly the country, if they have the means. Jeff Halper uses the term "bureaucratic strangulation" to describe Israeli policies that insidiously make life unlivable for Palestinians in Jerusalem, thus spurring their elimination from the land.[43] Building on Halper's terminology, we posit that the matrix of digital tools Israeli occupation forces use to monitor and expel Palestinians constitutes "surveillance strangulation."

Maps and Online Erasure

Palestinians have to defend themselves from erasure in another digital space: the worldwide web, especially when it comes to the many maps of historic Palestine that deny their existence. Maps hold a certain political and representational power, assumed to depict geographies with an almost inherent objectivity.[44] That is, maps are visual tools used by regimes of power to claim or deny the presence of geographic and topographic features, including entire nations and states. Examining the criteria for the selection and omission of data in maps therefore reveals a great deal about the motivations of their creators.[45]

A notable example that illustrates the power of maps to assert existence and enact erasure occurred when the terms "West Bank" and "Gaza Strip" disappeared from Google Maps in 2016.[46] Although the incident was reported as a glitch, and Google claimed objectivity, Valentina Carraro reminds us that the process of map-making is not neutral, as "a lot of work goes into selecting, formatting, sorting and arranging these data."[47] Google does indeed obtain its data from third-party and publicly available sources, which might suggest the supposed glitch was in the data on which Google relies. Regardless of the reason behind the glitch, the online map becomes a site for elimination.

In Jerusalem specifically, the digital erasure of Palestinian spaces is evident in the ways they are categorized on maps. Carraro explains how the navigation application Waze collaborated with the Israeli police to categorize Palestinian spaces in Jerusalem as dangerous and, therefore, as best to avoid. Carraro demonstrates that this categorization resembles "an 'architecture of war' that divides the city into us/them, safe/dangerous, here/there, generating a sense of constant danger."[48] Representing Palestinians as dangerous others in dangerous spaces, they are effectively rendered undesirable in the geography of the "safe" city, thus justifying efforts to remove them. Importantly, categorizing Indigenous spaces as dangerous fulfills the settler-colonial logic of eliminating them.[49] Digital maps on widely used navigation applications are thus critical in achieving this agenda.

Ironically, these digital maps on Waze proved contentious, as some high-ranking Israeli figures argued that the application, by categorizing spaces in and around Jerusalem as dangerous and Palestinian, was implying that parts of Jerusalem fall under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (PA), challenging the official Israeli narrative of Jerusalem being the united capital of the state.[50] In fact, Waze categorizes parts of the West Bank similarly, warning Israeli users not to visit certain "dangerous" areas. This, too, challenges the Zionist narrative that represents Palestinians as negligible and dismissible. The conundrum was resolved, however, when Waze ultimately gave in to pressure and stopped defining Palestinian neighborhoods of Jerusalem as dangerous. Carraro explains that an Israeli journalist interpreted this to be an indication that Israel did not concede any part of "the virtual map."[51] In

other words, Israeli users of the Waze application were able to both slate Palestinian neighborhoods for elimination by designating them as dangerous, *and* to eliminate their existence altogether by affirming the supposed safety of a united and Israeli Jerusalem.

In this way, Israel's illegal physical annexation of the city is complemented by a virtual one, reflecting the Zionist logic of non-recognition of Palestinianness. Indeed, Israel's annexation of Jerusalem through digital maps can also be seen in Google Maps searches for Jerusalem, which now identify the city as part of Israel. Even major checkpoints, such as Hizma and Qalandiya, that connect East Jerusalem to the rest of the West Bank, are defined as "border crossings," effectively delineating two separate territories. In denying that occupied East Jerusalem is part of the occupied West Bank, Google Maps allows for Israel's virtual annexation of the entirety of Jerusalem.

Social Media

Social media also fulfill the Zionist settler-colonial logic of eliminating Palestinians. Indeed, control over social media allows regimes of power to exercise both surveillance and censorship – forms of control considered less detectable and oppressive, as social media platforms are "deemed beyond the reach of state violence."[52] In the context of Palestine, however, Israel's use of social media as part of its eliminatory project constitutes what Kuntsman and Stein call "digital militarism," which "renders the Israeli occupation at once palpable and out of reach, both visible and invisible."[53] This dual functionality allows social media to be powerful tools in Israel's digital militarism against Palestinians. Specifically, it is the fact of invisibility that offers Israel a distinct advantage, allowing it to make political decisions outside of social media platforms that it then uses to harm Palestinians social media users. For example, in 2016, Facebook collaborated with the Israeli government to monitor and tackle "inciting content" against Israel.[54] And in 2017, Facebook also approved a large number of requests by the Israeli regime to block or remove content and accounts deemed inciteful; eighty-three pages were removed in the first half of 2018 alone.[55]

More recently, Facebook and its parent company Meta*,* which also owns Instagram, once again participated in the censorship of Palestinians. During the Unity Intifada which began in May 2021 following weeks of Palestinian protests across historic Palestine at the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem, as well as Israeli raids on the al-Aqsa Mosque compound and its bombardment of Gaza, Palestinian social media users and their allies reported "deleted posts, suspended or restricted accounts, disabled groups, reduced visibility, lower engagement with content, and blocked hashtags."[56] The majority of the deleted content depicted Palestinian experiences of Israeli brutality in Jerusalem and elsewhere; thus, Meta is complicit in both the perpetuation of Israeli state violence and its cover-up.

The way in which Facebook works in such instances reveals larger dynamics at play. The consultancy Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) explains that Facebook restricts content in Arabic much more than it does content in Hebrew. This is because

Meta does not have the necessary algorithms to detect "hostile speech" in Hebrew, while it does for Arabic.[57] As a result, violent and inciteful posts in Hebrew against Palestinians were far less likely to be deleted. In this instance, social media become part of promoting the settler-colonial political project, suppressing the Indigenous Palestinian narrative and promoting the Israeli settler-colonial one.

In addition to censorship, social media platforms are fertile grounds for surveillance. Israeli use of social media algorithms facilitates and maximizes the effectiveness of online surveillance. The ability of social media to extract and collect data about individuals is what helps algorithms function. Distretti and Cristiano explain that, "as a consequence of the 'datafication' of most facets of human experience, algorithms have become autonomous actors of power."[58] Making algorithms autonomous is not complicated: you can teach the algorithm what is dangerous and then ask it to identify anything that fits the description. Israeli companies have developed such an algorithm that can allegedly "predict" the future behavior of Palestinians, based on social media activity. Therefore, Israeli security services can locate them using biometric information or other surveillance methods, to eventually arrest them. The algorithm works by searching for "keywords" such as *shahid* (martyr) or *al-Quds* (Jerusalem). It also looks for photos shared by users, including of martyrs.[59] The information is then collected and compared to what other users who are already categorized as suspicious are posting, suggesting that "the number of people singled out as potential suspects is expanded simply based on their style of writing."[60] This effectively criminalizes Palestinian social media users based on biased predictions that have no way of being verified.

Indeed, the algorithms are not necessarily reliable. For instance, in 2017, Israeli occupation forces arrested a Palestinian worker who posted "good morning" in Arabic on his Facebook account, which was mistakenly translated to "hurt them" in English and "attack them" in Hebrew.[61] Therefore, algorithmic surveillance, whether deliberately or accidentally, serves the Israeli goal of silencing Palestinian voices and removing Palestinian presence from the digital sphere. The impacts of such algorithms are grave, as the Palestinian Prisoners Studies Center documented that around five hundred Palestinians, including children, were arrested between 2015 and 2018 on charges of incitement over social media.[62]

Social media surveillance also serves to manipulate Palestinians. In 2014, forty-three agents of the Israeli intelligence Unit 8200 (Israel's legendary high-tech snoops) revealed that Unit 8200 spies not only on phones, emails, and other devices of high-profile Palestinians, but also on vulnerable Palestinians, aiming to find personal secrets about them to blackmail them into collaborating with the Unit.[63] Israeli state agents have even created fake Facebook profiles to try and obtain information about Palestinians' "sexual orientation, medical and mental conditions, and marital and financial status" in order to extort them.[64]

These pervasive digital tools of control and surveillance, all of which are known yet invisible, have compelled Palestinians to be excessively cautious in their online expression. Sharing certain pictures or writing certain posts now require careful

thinking.[65] The case of Dareen Tatour illustrates this: the Palestinian poet posted a poem on Facebook and was charged by the Israeli police with online incitement of terrorism.[66] Such instances have a chilling effect on Palestinians, leading to a decrease in their online political activity for fear of Israeli retribution, which could come in the form of questioning, imprisonment, and even harassment of the individual's family.[67] Israeli digital surveillance has thus managed to create cycles of repression – visible and otherwise – where Palestinians must silence themselves and each other, amounting to yet another form of elimination.

The omnipresence of Israeli surveillance and censorship on social media platforms show the extent to which the regime's aim is to discipline Palestinians by silencing and eliminating them. In this sense, digital surveillance, along with other forms of surveillance, "disturbs, appropriates, and disciplines populations to obtain and then sustain its 'obedience,' to slowly eliminate its claim to Indigeneity, while maintaining it under control."[68] As Palestinians are placed in a state of "must disappear," social media not only allow the Israeli security apparatus to force this disappearance through censorship, but also prevent the "appearance" of expressions of Palestinianness through intimidation that leads to self-censorship.[69]

Conclusion

Surveillance over Palestinians has always been an integral part of the settler-colonial project in Palestine. Israeli disciplinary surveillance tactics against Palestinians initially included the issuance of specific identification cards, the establishment of watchtowers and population registries, and imprisonment, among others. However, Israel has evolved its techniques to surveil Palestinians in Jerusalem and beyond into the digital sphere. This includes the use of digital surveillance technology to monitor and control Palestinian movement and presence both in physical spaces and in cyberspaces. Settler-colonial policies against Palestinian digital visibility have thus transformed the cyberspace from a sphere where Palestinians and their allies could raise their voices against oppression to an open arena for colonial control and elimination.

From CCTV cameras, biometric information, and electronic ankle monitors that track Palestinian movements around Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine, to digital maps that designate Palestinian spaces as dangerous or deny their existence altogether, and to silencing and punishing Palestinians social media users for their posts, the Israeli settler-colonial regime entrenches its goal of ethnically cleansing Palestine of its indigenous population in order to advance the Judaization/Zionization of historic Palestine, especially in Jerusalem. Indeed, the erasure of Palestine through online maps that exclusively refer to all parts of Jerusalem as Israel contributes to the ongoing efforts of obliterating the Palestinian national project and denying the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem. Likewise, criminalizing Palestinians under house arrest with ankle monitoring devices while awaiting trial, and through censoring

their expressions of Palestinianness online, contribute to dispossessing Palestinians and revoking their permanent residency status in Jerusalem. In this way, the Israeli regime's repressive digital policies against Palestinians not only suppress Palestinian digital mobility and the Palestinian national project, they also serve to legitimize the Zionist settler-colonial claim to Jerusalem and the entirety of Palestine.

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Endnotes

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You Cannot Erase Gaza!

Chris Whitman-Abdelkarim

Abstract

This narrative captures the unique passion for Gaza's history and the remarkable character of a man named Salim al-Rayyes, who lovingly tends an antique store in the heart of Gaza City. Salim's collection, largely acquired from local Gaza Palestinians, spans the late Ottoman and British Mandate eras, Egyptian administration, and Israeli occupation, and includes even rare Judaica items acquired through connections with Israeli antique sellers. The narrative takes an emotional turn as the author recounts the events of the current Israeli attack on Gaza and the uncertainty surrounding the safety of Salim and his family. The story of Salim al-Rayyes provides a glimpse into the relentless determination to safeguard the history and heritage of a place that has witnessed countless hardships and remains a symbol of resilience.

Keywords

Gaza; Palestine; Israel; war; collective memory; Nakba; refugees; storytelling; erasure; ethnic cleansing.

At the end of May 2023, I was at Salim al-Rayyes's house in the Tal al-Hawa neighborhood of Gaza City. We were having dinner with his family, which was a frequent occurrence for me during my work trips to Gaza. As we were talking, I noticed a piece of artwork on the wall that I had never noticed before. I asked Salim what it was, and he replied, "It is a family tree of the al-Rayyes family, dating back to the mid-eighteenth century. We have been here for many centuries before

that, but this is as far back as I can properly document." I inspected the huge poster for fifteen minutes, enthralled with the details and design. "There are stories passed down through generations about the al-Rayyes family in Gaza. We have been involved in every major event in Gaza since the dawn of time. We are Gaza through and through. We have been here through every destruction and every rebuilding, and we always will be," Salim said with a righteous sense of pride.

I first met Salim in October 2021 during a work trip. I was going to stay in Gaza longer than usual, for nine days, and had some free time to explore. I spent hours trying to find interesting or historical places to visit, and I came across an article that mentioned a distinctive antique store in the heart of Gaza's Old City. After my last meeting on a humid October afternoon, I followed the instructions on how to get there. I turned left at the historic al-'Umari Mosque, walked approximately fifty meters, and turned right. There, I saw a nondescript storefront with a chaotic display of random goods. I approached the man and noticed that he was sitting alone, drinking tea. I asked him in Arabic, "Are you Salim?" He responded loudly in English, "Of course I am Salim, who else would I be? Come in and take a seat. Where are you from?" I told him I was from Boston, and he jumped out of his seat and said, "I lived in Boston for seven or eight years in the 1980s. I went to university there and lived in Cambridge, near Harvard!" It is not often that you meet someone in Palestine who has been to Boston, let alone someone in Gaza, who has lived there for such a long period.

I scanned the small store, which is approximately three meters wide and nine meters deep. It is filled with shelves of assorted books, trinkets from various parts of the world, a large poster of Gamal Abdul Nasser, and two-meter-high cabinets. He asked me how I found his store and if there was anything in particular that I was looking for, to which I responded, "Well, what do you have?" He laughed and said, "I have anything you're looking for, don't worry." Again, I scanned the shelves of books, which included numerous Hebrew–English dictionaries, silver Sphinx trinkets from Egypt, and various items of jewelry, and thought to myself, "I'm skeptical."

I asked him what kind of goods he had from Palestine, particularly historical ones. Having visited various "antique and historical stores" in Jerusalem, I must admit that my expectations were quite low. He retorted, "Hahaha, sure, what time period or subject?" I replied, "Let's start with the British Mandate." Salim went to the back of the store, opened one of the cabinets full of binders, and said, "Let's start here." I opened the binder and found it filled with individual historical documents, neatly stored in plastic sleeves, most of which were in great condition. I start leafing through, seeing British government documents, handwritten letters by Palestinians, and even documents from Zionist leaders. I naively asked Salim, "Are these legitimate?" He answered back, "Hahaha, of course, everything is an original copy. I have maps, documents, photos, letters, land contracts, and identity cards … anything you want."

I asked Salim if I could see some of the identity cards. He walked back to the cabinet, grabbed two binders, and put them in my lap. Then, he quickly ran out of the store to buy coffee. Identity cards from the Mandate period, the Egyptian occupation, and the Israeli occupation were all right there in front of me. Dozens of each. I grabbed

one of the Mandate identity cards and read that the man was from Gaza. When I asked Salim if he knew anything about him, he went on for five minutes talking about a man named Hasan. He described Hasan's family background, occupation, place of residence, essentially providing a detailed account similar to a Wikipedia article about this individual from Gaza. I wondered how Salim knew so much about this random person and asked him if Hasan was related to him in any way. Again, he laughed and said, "No, I just know the story behind every piece in my store." I asked him for any identification pieces he had for Hasan, and I ended up buying his IDs from the Mandate period (figure 1), Egyptian period, and Israeli occupation period.

Figure 1. British Mandate identity card for Hasan Kahwaji, issued in 1942. It was the first purchase the author made from Salim. Photo by author.

Salim, in what I later discovered was his usual manner, asked me, "Are you interested in a phone book?" I smirked and replied, "I'm not sure, maybe?" He reached up to a shelf and retrieved a book titled *Palestine Phone Book, 1929* published by the British in Arabic. I started scrolling through it. At that time, Gaza only had four telephones, and the numbers were only four digits. Again, the piece was in very good condition, considering it was almost a century old. I decided to buy that as well. Salim said, "What about Ottoman documents? I have plenty of those, and they are ornate too!"

After spending three hours in his store, I purchased a dozen items, including a poster of King Farouk, a driver's license from the Egyptian occupation era belonging to Hasan, coins from the Mandate era and Ottoman era, a stamp book, and a family picture dating back to 1915 (figure 2). All items were priced extremely reasonably. Salim gave me his cell phone number and welcomed me back to the store whenever I was in Gaza.

Figure 2. A 1915 family photo from Salim's collection of Ibrahim Zharifi, who may have been a member of the Gaza City Council. Photo by author.

The second time I visited Salim was six weeks later, during another work trip. I asked him about the historical pictures he had. Salim, on cue, went to the back of the store and pulled out binders. He said, "Should we start with Mandate and late Ottoman?" to which I replied, "Of course." I began looking through the binders, and when I stopped on a page, Salim said to me:

> Oh, I see you like this one. I love it too. The picture is from 1924 and features four friends. They grew up together but went their separate ways after graduating from school. They represent the changing times in Palestine at that time. As you can see, one person is wearing a tarbush with a Western-style suit and a tie, another is bareheaded but wearing a

Western suit without a tie, and the other two are dressed in variations of fellaheen attire. The early 1920s were a period of significant transition for us. There were new ideas and clothing styles, new opportunities for education, new leaders and regulations, and a growing colonial movement to address.

I removed the photo from its sleeve and set it aside. As I continued to scroll through the book, Salim gave me deep and intimate stories about every photo, highlighting what was interesting or special about each one.

After buying a few items, Salim invited me to have dinner at his family's house in Tal al-Hawa. He told me he would pick me up at 8 pm.

At 8 sharp, he was waiting outside my hotel in the heart of Gaza City with his son, Jameel, and we exchanged greetings. We drove for ten minutes to his family's house, and throughout the journey, he explained the various neighborhoods of Gaza, including their construction history, purpose, and resident demographics. As we entered his home, I noticed a familiar sight that I have seen a thousand times in Palestinian homes: a set of big, old keys hanging on a nail in the living room. I asked Salim which village his family was from in Palestine – in what is now Israel, after the initial period of extensive ethnic cleansing that lasted until the mid-1950s. A little surprised, Salim informed me that he is part of the 20 percent of Palestinians in Gaza who are locally referred to as *muwatanin*, nationals, that is, native residents, as opposed to the other 80 percent who are *laji'in*, refugees. He said the key belonged to his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather, who owned vast properties in the ancient city of Gaza. He said that the building behind his current store was a grand residence and hotel, which was seized by Napoleon during his invasion of the Arab world in the late eighteenth century.

During dinner, I asked Salim why he had not considered opening a museum, an idea that he always finds amusing whenever I mention it.

> I have no interest in being a curator. We don't get enough tourists here anyway, so it's not worth sitting around waiting for people to look at things and then leave. I enjoy the business aspect of it. You know that people who come to Gaza, at the very least, identify with our struggle. Therefore, you can be assured that your customers are good people with good intentions. Would I run the same type of store in Jerusalem? Probably not. But for Gaza, it works. I love witnessing the joy in someone's eyes when they have the opportunity to possess and appreciate a piece of our history. They will return to their countries and display fragments of Palestine to counter the delegitimization of our people. Also, in my experience, only the true enthusiasts purchase truly rare or unique pieces, so I trust them to make good use of them.

I asked him how many customers come per week or month, to which he replied, "Foreigners, probably two or three every two weeks. They usually buy coins or stamps, something more basic. Palestinians – at most half a dozen a day – generally come to get quotes on items they have, rather than to make purchases.

Before my next trip, I messaged Salim on WhatsApp to let him know I was coming. He responded by bombarding me with fifty images and the message, "Let me know if you are interested in anything or need an explanation." As I scrolled through the items, I found some random stuff that didn't interest me, but also some really good documents. One item I did not understand was what appeared to be a uniform, so I sent him a question mark emoji. About ten minutes later, I received a three-minute audio message and additional photos of the item from him. He informed me that it was an authentic Palestine Tax and Customs uniform, worn by a Palestinian employee in Gaza. He added photos of the tag to show that it was made in Palestine, as well as the department name. He also sent me numerous photos of the person who used to wear the uniform. This started a weekly or biweekly trend, where Salim would send me anywhere from five to fifty photos of random things he thought I would like, or that he had just discovered or bought from someone.

One time, while we were sitting around his shop, I asked him how much inventory he actually has, where he keeps it all, and if the store holds everything. In his typical manner, he chuckled and mentioned that the main section of the store displayed only approximately 40 to 50 percent of his actual inventory. He said that an additional 30 percent is in the attic of the store, and another 30 percent is either at his home or in storage. To the question of how he acquired so much, he explained,

> It all began with inheriting my extended family's belongings. When my grandfather and father passed away, no one else in the family showed much interest in them, but I felt a strong connection to these items. I wanted to preserve our family's history, as we have been here for generations. Then I thought to myself, if my family has these sorts of materials, others must as well. So I reached out to friends to see if they had any items they were interested in selling. The newer generations do not seem to care about this sort of thing. I assume this is because of the blockade and the constant struggle to provide for their families. Family documents from one hundred years ago are not considered a priority. So I started by buying those.

> As the blockade worsened over time, people began to emigrate. However, due to limited space, they could only bring a small number of belongings with them and family documents were not considered a priority. As a result, individuals started approaching me with boxes of items they wished to sell. I am never leaving Gaza, so I was more than happy to be the caretaker of these goods. Lastly, the real estate business does exist in Gaza, just like anywhere else. In this region, it is common for people to inherit houses from their recently deceased parents or grandparents. But often the children are not interested in taking care of the house and prefer to sell it. As a result, I sometimes purchase small properties that come

with these unique antiques. I fix up the house and sell it, while keeping the antiques for my store. These are the most common ways I acquire these materials.

One day, in the middle of 2022, we were sitting around his shop, as usual, when he ran out to buy us some coffee and tea. When he returned, he grabbed a small table that he had made. He noticed that I was looking at it strangely, so he asked, "How do you like my Hanukkah table?" I replied, "Salim, that is a Pesach plate, for Passover. It's for a different holiday." He chuckled and said, "Oops, I've been telling everyone it's a Hanukkah table!" He then showed me other Judaica items he had in the store, including many menorahs and Star of David necklaces. It was a very unusual sight to see in downtown Gaza City. I asked, "Why do you bother having them in the store? Like, really, who is buying them?" He replied, "If no one would buy them, I wouldn't be selling them or even having them at the store." Perplexed by his answer, I asked where they came from. He said that up until the beginning of the second intifada, he was in regular contact with Israeli antique sellers in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa. He mentioned that sometimes he would come across random Judaica items in the boxes he would buy from them. Some items, he mentioned, were left behind by settlers who had vacated settlements in Gaza after the "Disengagement" in August 2005.

The last time I saw Salim was less than a week before the Hamas attack in Israel on 7 October of this year. We had dinner at his family's house, and he showed me the items he had been keeping for me: a fundraising letter sent out by Hajj Amin al-Husayni in 1946 (figure 3), a magazine from the early 1960s called *Palestine*, which featured 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, and a petition written by local Gaza leaders and sent to Palestinian businessmen, urging them to boycott specific Zionist industries.

After the Israelis started their incessant bombing campaign, I messaged Salim every day to inquire about his well-being and his family, offer any assistance I could provide, and ask about their living conditions. The first three days, I received regular responses asking for prayers for his family and the people of Gaza, as well as notes about the intensity of the bombings. After the Israelis demanded that all Palestinians in Gaza City and the northern region evacuate within twenty-four hours, I asked Salim if he and his family would comply. He responded with a firm "no." They were staying in Tal al-Hawa, regardless of the circumstances.

After that day, Salim stopped responding. On WhatsApp, there was only one checkmark, indicating that my message was sent but not received. The next day, I tried calling his phone. After ten seconds, a message appeared stating that the call could not be connected. I tried calling numerous times that day, but had the same end result. As Israel continued its bombing, telecommunication and even regular phone service became extremely difficult. It usually takes five to fifteen attempts to successfully connect a call, and even when it does connect, the calls rarely last more than a few minutes. Around day four of not hearing anything from Salim, I began

بيان حضرة صاحب السماحة

الحاج أمين الحسيني

للأمة العربية الفلسطينية الكريمة:

أيها الإخوان الكرام:

سلام الله عليكم ورحمته وبركاته وتحية طيبة من قلب يهزه الإخلاص ونفس تملأها الثقة والرجاء بما انطوت عليه نفوسكم الكريمة من عروبة صادقة وإيمان وطيد الأركان . وبعد فإن الظروف العصيبة والمطامع الخطيرة التي تحيق بوطننا المفدى قد حملتني على الإهابة بكم لأدرء هذا الخطر ودفع هذه الكارثة بكل ما أوتيتم من قوة وعزيمة صيانة لتراث آبائكم الأولين وإسلافكم الغر الميامين .

ولما كانت مراحل جهادنا الوطني فسيحة المدى محفوفة بكثير من المكاره والمصاعب وتتطلب تضافر القوى ووحدة الصفوف بين جميع أبناء هذا الشعب الكريم بالإضافة إلى ما تتطلبه التضحية والإيثار في كل ناحية من نواحي كياننا العام وكفاحنا الوطني فإني أتوجه بالنداء إلى كل فرد من أفراد هذا الشعب الكريم أن يكونوا إخواناً في السراء والضراء وأن يحرصوا كل الحرص على ضم صفوفهم وجمع كلمتهم متحاشين النعرات الحزبية والعصبية الجاهلية وأن يكونوا كالبنيان المرصوص يشد بعضه بعضا . ولما كانت نهضتنا القومية وحركتنا الوطنية لا تؤتي أكلها إلا إذا قامت على أسس صالحة من التنظيم فقد اقتضت المصلحة العامة إنشاء جهاز مالي قوي في فلسطين لتغذية الحركة الوطنية وتهيئة الوسائل للهيئات الوطنية العاملة لكي تضطلع بالأعباء الملقاة على كواهلها وتحسن التوجيه والقيادة في هذا البحر اللجي الذي تمخر عبابه سفينة الأمة .

وقد قامت أخيراً الهيئة العربية العليا التي تضطلع بمهمة قيادة الحركة الوطنية بإنشاء هذا الجهاز الذي سمي (بيت المال العربي)، ولما كان هذا الجهاز قد استكمل الآن وسائله وأسبابه التي تكفل تحقيق الغاية المثلى من إنشائه، وستكون مهمته الاتصال المباشر بأفراد الأمة الكريمة عن طريق التبرع الشعبي والاكتتاب العام ، فإني أدعوكم أيها الإخوان الكرام إلى تلبية هذا النداء بما هو معروف عنكم من الأريحية والوطنية والسخاء دعوة لا يتخلف عندها أحد من القادرين على البذل والاكتتاب كل بما تصل إليه يده الكريمة وما هو في استطاعته وطاقته ، والقعدة عن ذلك بالإضافة إلى إمداد الحركة الوطنية بما هي في حاجة إليه من مال ، هو المشاركة والتضامن وشعور الجميع بالواجب والمسؤولية الكبرى الملقاة على عواتقهم تلقاء ما يهدد الأمة من مطامع وما يقدحها من خطوب .

أيتها الأمة الكريمة :

لقد بذلت في سبيل وطنك الغالي الكثير من الأنفس والنفائس ، وليست هذه أولى تضحياتك الغالية ، وإني لواثق أنك مقبلة عليها قريرة العين طيبة النفس شعوراً منك بالواجب والمسؤولية المشتركة وإنك ستلبين هذا النداء وتشدين أزر بيت المال ، والسادة الأفضل الذين اضطلعوا بعبئه وقاموا بإدارته وفقاً للبيانات والإيضاحات التي سينشرها مجلس الأمناء وأمين بيت المال العام والله ولي التوفيق .
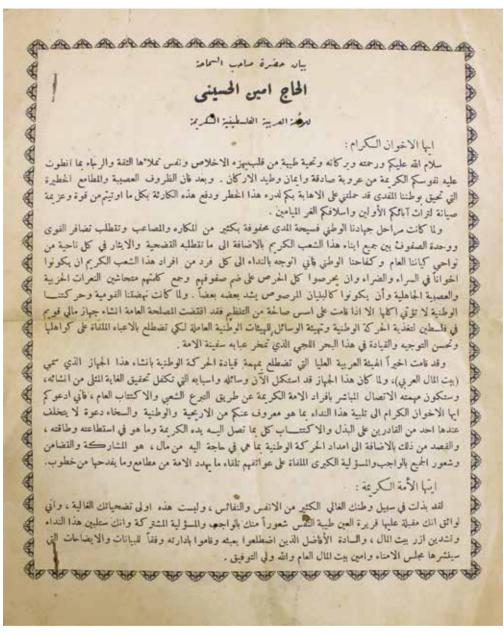
Figure 3. The fundraising letter announcing the establishment of Bayt al-Mal al-'Arabi (the Arab House of Money). Photo by author.

to think the worst. I had read reports about intense bombing in Tal al-Hawa and the military issuing numerous threats toward the residents there. One morning, around 1:30 am, I thought to myself, "I always call during the day. What if I try now?" So, I attempted to call his phone, and to my surprise, it actually rang. This was the first time

in over four days. He did not answer, but the ringing meant that he had charged the phone and it was working.

Like the previous days, I tried to call Salim every sixty to ninety minutes throughout the day, making a total of ten to fifteen calls per day. There was never an answer, and the phone did not ring. As I watched the news and continued to read about the devastating bombing of Tal al-Hawa, I became increasingly concerned.

On Saturday, 21 October, around 8pm, I tried calling and it began to ring, for only the second time in almost a week. His daughter then answered, and I cried over the phone, I was so elated to hear their voices. She told me that they were in Dayr al-Balah, in the center of the Gaza Strip. She mentioned that they had no access to electricity or water. Afterward, she passed the phone to Salim. His usual boisterous self and constant laughter were obviously gone. He said, "We had to leave Gaza City. They bombed our house. Jameel is in Shifa hospital." He was in the house when it happened. He should be okay. The house is gone, the neighborhood is gone, Gaza is gone."

I asked if everyone else was okay, and he said, "Yes, we will rebuild. We always rebuild. Gaza has been destroyed by conquerors before, ten times in its history, in fact. My ancestors rebuilt, and I too will rebuild." Despite the awful news, I was just so happy to hear that they were all alive and seemingly okay. Salim said, "I heard, but cannot confirm yet, that they bombed my store too. A few friends told me it's gone. So basically, Israel has erased 150 years of our history, our presence, and our stories in Gaza by destroying my store and home. However, we are determined to rebuild. They are attempting to do to Gaza what they did in Palestine in 1948. Their goal is to eliminate us, and they are beginning with Gaza. But you cannot erase Gaza; we will rebuild it."

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Cultivating Hope: Thoughts on Gaza amid the Ongoing Nakba

Khaldun Bshara

Abstract

Khaldun Bshara uses architectural restoration to examine the wellspring of hope and optimism within the Palestinian people, especially in the challenging context of Gaza. The author's involvement in heritage restoration projects in Gaza offers a view of the significance of preserving historic buildings in a region rich with history despite the process of design and planning being heavily circumscribed by the context of occupation and conflict. These restoration efforts, even in an the uncertain future, highlight the hope, resourcefulness, and determination of the Palestinians in Gaza to overcome limitations imposed by Israel's blockade on essential construction materials. Bshara notes that the cost and time efficiency of projects in Gaza, compared with those in the West Bank, underscores the adaptability, creativity, willingness, and resoluteness of practitioners to address daunting challenges. The author finds Gaza to be a symbol of resilience and resistance, where hope may not be able to undo past loss, but can continue to inspire the pursuit of an alternative future, devoid of oppression and colonialism.

Here on the slopes of hills, facing the dusk and the cannon of time
Close to the gardens of broken shadows,
We do what prisoners do,
And what the jobless do:
We cultivate hope.

– Mahmoud Darwish, "Under Siege" (2002)

We, in Gaza, are fine. How are you? What about your consciousness, values, everything? We are concerned about the world.

– Reem Abu Jaber from Dayr al-Balah, Gaza,
aired on FRANCE24 Arabic, 16 October 2023

During a heritage crafts conference held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, a scholar posed a profound question, inquiring about the wellspring of optimism and hope within the Palestinian people, noting the use of dark humor to draw attention to the everyday heritage practices of Palestinians. The question left me momentarily unprepared to respond, since the truth is that people who are truly hopeful and optimistic do not necessarily engage in rational thinking nor can they articulate their attitude in words – instead, they live it.

In that moment, I improvised my response, drawing attention to the ongoing "Great March of Return" rallies in Gaza that had begun in March 2018, and were still ongoing six months later. Palestinian children, youth, the elderly, girls and boys, men and women, had been participating in these rallies on a weekly, and at times, daily basis. They gathered peacefully at the perimeter barrier erected by the Israeli military forces, a barrier meant to prevent Palestinians in Gaza from returning to their homeland, in today's Israel.

Every Friday, they marched, assembled, raised their voices in chants, and even hurled stones at the Israeli posts, aware of the potential dangers – being tear gassed, shot at, injured, or killed. Yet, they returned week after week to register their protest at the blockade, at the siege that has entrapped them since 2007, and at the larger issue of being denied return. They hoped that the outcome would someday change and that they might find their way back to their homeland through this collective symbolic gesture. Their steadfastness, persistence, and courage in the face of danger exhibited the unwavering hope and optimism of the Palestinian people.

People who are subjected to colonization – which is inherently violent, inhumane, and irrational – cannot be held to conventional notions of rationality. This does not imply that they lack rationality, but rather that they undertake a rationality that is forged by their abnormal situation.

For the colonized, stripped of their land and space, their lives and aspirations revolve around time, of which they possess an abundance. Time, in this context, becomes the weapon of the vulnerable, the weapon of the disenfranchised, which can be deployed in their enduring struggle. From the outside, we may label it as *sumud*

(steadfastness) or *sabr* (patience). Under the constant pressure of siege, there is an excess of waiting, an abundance of time, and bundles of hopes and dreams.

On a micro level, the example of Palestinian prisoners can help us to understand the bound-up relationship between time and hope. Consider a Palestinian prisoner serving a life sentence in Israeli jails, detained for resisting the policies of settler colonialism. The prisoner's chances of release are negligible, if not entirely absent. Why would this prisoner choose to marry and embark on the complicated operation of smuggling their semen to facilitate a meticulously scrutinized and supervised fertilization process, all in the hope of conceiving a child whom they may never have the chance to hold in their arms? Similarly, what would motivate a woman to marry a prisoner and bear his children under such challenging circumstances? In a world where the odds for justice seem insurmountable, enduring hope and unlimited time are the essential forces that drive the calculations for otherwise incomprehensible actions.

As an architect and heritage practitioner, I witnessed first-hand these context-dependent rules during heritage restoration in Gaza's historic areas, where I was fortunate to play a role in the restoration of several historic buildings: al-Saqqa mansion in 2013 and Dar al-Ghusayn in 2020, both in Gaza City, and Dayr al-Khadr (Saint George Monastery) in Dayr al-Balah in 2015. In addition, my colleagues at the Riwaq Centre restored al-Wahidi House courtyards in Gaza City and helped in planning other conservation projects in 2022.

Figure 1. The restored courtyard of al-Saqqa mansion, Gaza City, 2014. RIWAQ photo archives.

Figure 2. A children's outdoor activity in al-Khadr Library, a project of the Nawa for Culture and Arts Association in Dayr al-Balah, beneficiaries of Riwaq's restoration of the fourth century Dayr al-Khadr (Saint George Monastery), Gaza, 2017. RIWAQ photo archives.

These buildings are among the historic treasures of Gaza, echoing back through millennia of continuous habitation in Gaza, a living repository of history on the Mediterranean. Every civilization that passed through or laid claim to Gaza left its mark, leaving behind remnants of its existence while carrying away pieces of its essence. This city's important harbor, Mina' al-Zuhur (Harbor of Flowers), was situated at the crossroads of the Silk Road and coastal Spice Route linking the pharaohs of Egypt in the south to the Persian kings in the east. It was also a nexus for trade and cultural exchange with the Roman Empire and Byzantium Constantinople in the north, facilitating the flow of goods and ideas.

The rich and tumultuous history of the Gaza region, and of Gaza City in particular, is underserved by the limited number of historic buildings that remain. The tangible manifestations of this rich history are only hinted at by the city's ancient walls and fortifications, the sacred spaces of temples, churches, monasteries, mosques, shrines, and mausoleums, as well as the communal hubs of hammams, bazaars, serais, the splendid mansions of the elite alongside the more humble dwellings of common people. Taken together, these material remnants suggest an area that remained vibrant throughout the ages. Riwaq's Registry of Historic Buildings in Palestine (2006) documents over four hundred historic structures, primarily concentrated in Gaza City. A significant portion of its historic buildings were destroyed during World

Figure 3. The central hall of Dar al-Ghusayn after restoration, Gaza City, 2020. RIWAQ photo archives.

War I military operations while others gave way to the rapid urbanization and surge of refugees from western Palestine in the wake of the Nakba in 1948, as high-rise buildings were constructed to accommodate a sudden tripling of the population.

The recent restoration projects followed each of a series of brutal assaults on Gaza: Dar al-Saqqa following the 2012 war, Dayr al-Khadr after the 2014 war, Dar al-Ghusayn after the 2018 and 2019 wars, and al-Wahidi following the 2021 war. These historic mansions were adapted by Riwaq in partnership with Iwan, a local community center in Gaza, to serve as sanctuaries for community centers for women, children, and cultural activities in what is called the most densely populated parcel of land in the world.

In the context of Gaza, the concept behind restoration – the act of returning structures to a previous state of preservation – raises troubling questions. What significance does it hold to restore a building when it may not survive the next wave of destruction? This presents a choice that became an integral part of the curatorial statement for the fifth Riwaq Biennale (2015–16) that grappled with the idea of sustainability. The term was reimagined in Gaza as "a biennale of destruction," when destruction is what we anticipate but fervently hope to avoid.

More difficult is the question: What does it mean to embark on a "post-war reconstruction" effort when the newly erected structures are destined to become the targets of the next assault? The resounding response is "hope." Hope remains the driving force for resilience of the people of Gaza, who inspire the donors, the

Figure 4. The restored al-Wahidi courtyard, Basma Center inauguration, Gaza City, 2022. RIWAQ photo archives.

dedicated implementing agencies, and heritage practitioners like myself to initiate projects that focus on the future even where the future is so uncertain.

While Gazans hold various opinions about their political representation and the multitude of political parties, a remarkable consensus prevails regarding the importance of resistance. The people of Gaza aspire to live in an environment of *amn wa aman* (security and safety), but not at the cost of accepting occupation. Ramallah is often depicted as subservient, as if on a quest for peace, prosperity, and happiness, while Gaza emerges as the epicenter of continuous resistance, decline, and suffering.

During a taxi ride from Bayt Hanun's crossing point to Dayr al-Balah, I had a revealing conversation with a taxi driver who was clearly earning a modest income. His willingness to spend the entire day with me in Dayr al-Balah for a mere twenty dollars spoke volumes about his perspective. He firmly declared, "*al-karameh* (dignity) is what matters most; without it, life loses its meaning." In his view, upholding one's dignity in the face of adversity takes precedence over all else, even if it means standing up to Israeli forces when necessary.

Why does the restoration of heritage in Gaza serve as a unique window through which we can glimpse the essence of Gaza, the boldness of hope within seemingly "hopeless" circumstances? George Marcus, my PhD supervisor at the University of California – Irvine, once expressed his envy regarding my dual roles as an architect and an anthropologist. He pointed out that, as an architect, I could conduct ethnographic research in much the same way that I designed homes and buildings in my studio. In a

studio, architects are constantly negotiating their authority and power dynamics with clients, often feeling a sense of powerlessness. Anthropologists, however, operate in a realm of knowledge production that is stripped of any presumed authority, steeped in the post-colonial, decolonized principles of knowledge creation.

In the design of restoration projects in Gaza, we are thrust into confrontation with this reality. We encounter a context that not only shapes the way we think about things but, more significantly, dictates the way we must approach the making of these thoughts and concepts. Gaza becomes a living example of the tangible interplay between the realms of power, knowledge, and creativity in the face of adversity.

In the West Bank, much like many other countries or regions, architects and restorers enjoy the freedom to choose from a rich array of materials, techniques, equipment, and supplies readily available in the market. Typically, the restoration process begins with a conceptual design, an abstract idea, which gradually takes shape as it is translated into a physical reality on the ground. In the unique context of Gaza, however, this conventional process is reversed. The severe limitations on materials and construction techniques is a result of the Israeli prohibition of approximately seventy basic materials and goods on a list of potential "dual-use" (possibility of military purposes). This contraband of everyday items (which include spaghetti, chocolate, and hair conditioner) proscribes essential construction materials such as wood, steel, and cement. So we begin with the materials that are immediately available and work backward, crafting a design that fits the limitations and possibilities of these available resources. This method might be described as a *maqluba* (upside-down) approach, like the beloved Palestinian dish of the same name. It becomes a process filled with surprises, where one anticipates the outcome with an exhilarating sense of wonder, even when there is a reasonable idea of what to expect. The willingness to adapt to the context shows an extraordinary openness and creativity toward problem-solving that defines the spirit of the people in Gaza.

Riwaq's ambitious mission in 2013 to restore the historic al-Saqqa mansion began with a comprehensive design, detailed bills of quantities, and precise specifications for the project that we gave to our colleagues in Gaza for organizing site visits with prospective contractors. We soon learned that our designs on paper had little value in Gaza. We made a complete redesign of the project, one that was centered around the materials and supplies accessible in the Gaza Strip's markets and workshops.

During our experience in helping to restore Gaza's heritage, we were profoundly moved by the deep determination exhibited by the students, interns, architects, engineers, skilled craftsmen, diligent laborers, and resourceful contractors – in contrast to the stock phrases we often encountered in our West Bank projects: "It cannot be done" or "Inshallah" (God willing), frequently a euphemism for denial. Even the word "difficult" seemed to be a foreign concept; there was always the willingness to try. The projects we executed in Gaza outshone their West Bank counterparts in efficiency; they were completed at half the cost and within half the time allotted. The atmosphere surrounding these project sites in Gaza was invariably joyful, often punctuated by hearty laughter.

The effectiveness of conservation practice in the Gaza Strip is a sharp critique of the alienating approach that has come to permeate our existence in the West Bank, particularly in the post-'Arafat era of 2004 to the present. The push toward structural adjustment policies, privatization, and dissolution of public services (except for the security apparatus) has brought stress, debt, and a culture of individualism. Gaza emerges as a symbol of resistance, challenging the choices that we, as Palestinians, are striving to achieve, wherever we may be. It raises essential questions: Who ultimately endures the siege? What does it mean to have a liberated body yet remain trapped beneath layers of apprehensions and anxieties?

As I write these final words in early November 2023, the Gaza Strip remains a fragile testament to resilience amid relentless destruction. Its buildings, infrastructures, stones, sands, and the ceaseless sea have endured unconscionable pain and thousands of lives have been lost and many thousands more changed forever by the attempt to erase the very essence of an entire community. But Gaza, much like the legendary phoenix, has astounded us time and again, rising from the ashes of despair. Hope cannot resurrect the fallen or restore the fractured landscapes, but it can feed our spirit and ignite the fire of our imagination, conjuring an alternative future. If it is meant to live with an open wound, then Gaza lives with unyielding bravery – a testament to an unbending human spirit that defies oppression and seeks freedom.
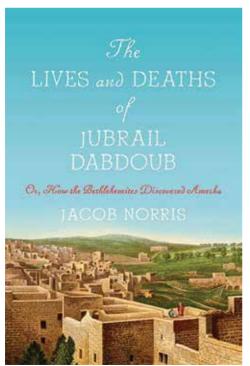
Khaldun Bshara, architect, restorer, and anthropologist, has a PhD in sociocultural anthropology. He is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at Birzeit University and serves as a senior advisor for Riwaq Centre, Ramallah, where he has worked since 1994 in documenting, protecting, and restoring built Palestinian heritage.

Chasing Miracles: A Magical Realist Chronicle of Bethlehem's Pioneering Merchants

Review by Eibhlin Priestley

The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub or, How the Bethlehemites Discovered Amerka, by Jacob Norris. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2023. 290 pages. $85.00 hardcover; $25.00 paperback; $14.75 ebook.

Abstract

The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub is a groundbreaking departure from traditional historical monographs, exploring Bethlehem's late nineteenth-century emigration boom and sudden exposure to global capitalism through magical realist prose. The book employs key tropes from the genre to convey a historical "mood," namely the sense of wonder, excitement, bewilderment, and skepticism that swept the town as hundreds of young men set off in search of opportunity and wealth in distant lands known as *Amerka*, forging the first Arab diaspora. Blending source-based research with imaginative writing, Norris creates a rich montage of scenes from the life of Jubrail Dabdoub, one of Bethlehem's pioneering transnational merchants. Representing a major contribution to the fields of Middle East migration and diaspora studies and late Ottoman Palestinian history, the work offers new insights into the symbiotic relationship between religion and commerce in the Palestinian hill town, the transformation of family and business structures, and the reshaping of masculinity. Norris's experimental methodological approach sparks discussions about the role of the historian and the very nature of historical writing.

Keywords

Bethlehem; diaspora; global capitalism; historical writing; magical realism; masculinities; Middle East migration; merchants; late Ottoman Palestine, Latin America.

In a captivating retelling of Bethlehem's late nineteenth-century emigration boom and its age of economic and saintly miracles, *The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub* pushes the boundaries of historical writing to offer a fresh perspective on the interplay between commerce, religion, and migration in Palestine's pioneering hill town. The book charts the town's transformation through the prism of one of its transnational merchant trailblazers, Jubrail Dabdoub. Born in 1860 "to the sound of chisels and saws cutting through oyster shells" (48), Jubrail came of age on the cusp of Bethlehem's rapid outward expansion rooted in the town's artisanship in olive wood and mother-of-pearl devotional objects. As developments in steam travel, communications technologies, and Palestine's deepening integration into the global capitalist economy opened up new trading opportunities, the Dabdoub family, like many others from Bethlehem's Tarajmeh clan, capitalized on longstanding if contentious links with Catholic Europe and Palestine's position in global mother-of-pearl supply chains, as they jostled to gain a foothold in new international markets.

From the first page, Jacob Norris informs the reader that this is no ordinary historical monograph, and that "it might be necessary to diverge from the impartial tones usually favored by historians" (1). Instead, treading "the porous boundaries between history and fiction," Norris channels source-based research into magical realist prose (183). Two factors inform this decision: Firstly, for Bethlehem's Roman Catholic merchant community, "travel, profit, faith and magic…were inextricably intertwined" (3). Drawing on James Grehan's concept of "agrarian religion," Norris attends to the significance of the Bethlehemites' understandings and practices of Roman Catholicism in guiding their business expansion and conduct in Bethlehem and overseas. Piety and religious patronage of holy sites and religious orders were understood to be rewarded with profit and opportunity and local saints such as al-Khadr, protector of travelling merchants, and the Virgin Mary, guardian of the growth and health of families, were revered.

Secondly, "it was not saintly intrusions or ghostly presences that constituted the fantastical in nineteenth-century Bethlehem. Rather, it was the town's abrupt exposure to global capitalism and the absurdities of European colonialism" (187). Norris's innovative approach underscores the power of storytelling, with magical realism serving as a bridge to understand the intricate interplay of faith, commerce, and the bewildering forces of global capitalism and colonialism in nineteenth-century Bethlehem. The case for writing in a magical realist key is thus rooted in the genre's historic adeptness at expressing the absurdity and violence of modern colonialism and postcolonial nation-state building and destabilizing its logic through Indigenous knowledge and belief systems.

To convey these intertwining dynamics, Norris deploys key magical realist tropes. He describes "encounters with capitalist modernity in the language of wonder, enchantment, and absurdity, while relating interactions with spirits, saints, and the divine using more mundane, quotidian language" (7). The text is replete with recurring dreams, ghostly presences, local folklore and language, interruptions of linear time, and a very present narrator's voice to provide a recognizable framework and situate

his narrative within the canon. Phrases and motifs from magical realist novels by Salim Barakat, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Emile Habibi, Pablo Neruda, Amin Rihani, and Salman Rushdi are also worked into the narrative, underlining fiction's ability to capture a historical mood through imaginative rather than conventional detached and realist academic prose. Norris also draws on the *khurafiyya* oral tradition of Palestinian folk tales and its written interpretations by authors such as Emile Habibi. He further reflects on the broader utility of the genre for modern and contemporary histories of Palestine given that "Zionism's relentless colonization often seems to deny rational explanation" (192).

The narrative is structured in three parts: Part one illustrates the early days of Bethlehem's commercial rise in the 1850s and 1860s through a series of visually rich snapshots of the town: returning migrants spin wild tales of *Amerka* (a geographically flexible land of opportunity), *franji* (Western European) Franciscan friars and pilgrims co-opt the town with their Orientalist imaginations, and Jubrail's parents establish new living and working quarters outside the city walls, setting in motion the family's (and the town's) rise to prominence.

Part two follows the Bethlehemites in a restless search for untapped markets where their fellow rivals and imitators from Bilad al-Sham (Greater Syria) had not yet reached. As competition increased, staging posts in the Caribbean were shifted to the "sweet waist of *Amerka*" (82) and from Honduras the Bethlehemites ventured across the Andes where "intrepid young men climbed so high they disappeared into the clouds" (86). Some made it to Chile where they capitalized on a growing transnational network of Bethlehemite traders. Meanwhile Jubrail sets up the first trading post in the Philippines in 1881, cementing the family's position at the forefront of overseas expansion and wealth generation.

Part three introduces the life and work of Sultana Ghattas, a Catholic nun born in Jerusalem in 1843, later known and canonized as Marie-Alphonsine. Her significance to the narrative comes into focus when she resurrects Jubrail from typhoid fever in 1909. Their intersection is emblematic of the entanglement of commerce and religion, not least in the contrasting and symbiotic relationship between the spiraling luxurious lifestyles of merchant families and the asceticism of their spiritual leaders. Thus far, little academic attention has been given to Marie-Alphonsine's writings, so her inclusion here represents the valuable addition of a non-elite Palestinian female voice into the history of this period. This is one of the more empirically grounded sections of the book, rooted in first-hand accounts of her life's work and the spiritual belief systems and practices of Bethlehem. Jubrail's life comes, eventually, to an end in 1931 in the epilogue, against the backdrop of the global economic crash, British colonial rule in Palestine, and Zionist encroachment, factors which led to the dramatically declining fortunes of the merchant community. This is followed by the author's commentary, which unpacks historical themes, methodological considerations, and narrative decisions, and extensive endnotes that evidence the vast research underpinning the narrative.

Norris makes a number of key interventions about Palestine's emergent modernity, its integration into capitalist markets, and the pioneering nature and specific dynamics

of the Bethlehemites' circular mobility, knitting his findings into the narrative and giving them life through the thoughts and speech of the protagonists. First and foremost, he contributes to a body of literature that challenges the notion that the primary direction of movement during the late Ottoman period was *into* Palestine, showing throughout the book how "movement, migration, and exchange were built into Palestinian lives long before the first Zionist settlers set sail for Palestine" (12). His affective retelling of the Bethlehemites' pioneering role in forging the first Arab diaspora (six hundred thousand people left Bilad al-Sham for the Americas between 1860 and 1914) also complements studies on the far-reaching impact of Palestinian communities on shaping culture, industry, politics, and anti-colonial resistance in diasporic contexts. The book is also a counterpart to works dedicated to the impact of circular migrations in other localities within Bilad al-Sham on the reshaping of class structures, social and cultural norms, and aesthetic values.

Norris asserts that Bethlehem's emergent "modernity" was the product of its peoples' own making as Bethlehem's merchants operated as "foot soldiers of globalization" (11). Returning merchants brought home wondrous and bewildering technologies, products, and inspiration for avant-guarde architectural styles which "le[ft] the passerby in a state of dazzlement and confusion, unsure if they were looking at an Umayyad palace, a Roman villa, or a Crusader fort" (150). In "Amerka," they successfully established the Bethlehem Holy Land brand before branching out into an array of consumer goods and industries. He depicts them as "arch capitalists who shaped the consumerist world we live in" (12) through their commoditization of religion and expansion of global trade networks. While Sherene Seikaly's *Men of Capital* charts the ways the British Mandate quashed opportunities for Palestine's business class, in Norris's work we find them at the apex of their success and aspiration.

Norris illuminates a period in Palestine's not too distant history in which the dynamics of colonial rule were not yet entrenched and a small, yet influential European presence was treated by the Bethlehemites with varying degrees of opportunism, tolerance, and ridicule. Complicating the colonizer/colonized binary, he argues that "in some ways, Bethlehemites were beneficiaries, not victims, of European colonial networks in the late nineteenth century" (5). A growing global network of naval and railway routes, improved communications technologies and services, and liberal immigration laws in colonial contexts such as Brazil and the Philippines enabled Bethlehemites to capture new international markets and subvert a longstanding extractive relationship with the Franciscan friars in Bethlehem. Norris also shows how artisans and merchants exploited a biblical and Orientalist vision of their hometown through their production and sales techniques to European pilgrims and at international exhibitions that perpetuated Orientalist tropes and colonial hierarchies.

The book also contributes to works on family and gender in late Ottoman Palestine primarily through its exploration of masculinity vis-à-vis the high expectations placed on young men to undertake journeys into the unknown to make their family's fortunes and secure their legacies. Referencing Beshara Doumani's concept of "the family firm" in late Ottoman Palestine, Norris charts how families, marital relationships, and

gender roles were reconfigured into a "brutally and ruthlessly patriarchal" business model premised on young men operating as "satellites," scoping out and establishing new trading outposts (10). The shrinking pool of young men in Bethlehem led to a phenomenon whereby girls in their early teens were sent abroad to marry into prominent Bethlehemite merchant families in the growing diaspora. The age of marriage dropped to increase women's childbearing years, specifically the production of sons, to guarantee a wider network of family bases around the world. While travel is shown as a rite of passage for young men, it was equally so for girls who were uprooted from their homes and thrust into new families, cultures, and expectations of them as wives and soon-to-be mothers. Although the intersection of migration and marriage for Palestinian girls is not the focus of this book, it points to a need for more research on this subject.

Norris therefore proposes Jubrail as a "composite merchant" who serves as "a route into exploring a wider zeitgeist gripping Bethlehem" (189). Prominent in his community, Jubrail faced challenges and opportunities emblematic of the way many Bethlehemites negotiated "the bewildering contradictions of the nineteenth century: what it meant to be cosmopolitan and parochial, rational and pious, modern and traditional" (12). Although glimpses of Jubrail appear in Bethlehem's Latin parish records, colonial immigration records, international exhibition catalogues, business letters, and his cousin's memoir, much of his life remains blanketed in darkness. Norris thus constructs a "historical 'mood'" rooted in the emotions and experiences that likely beset the wider community engaged in similar enterprises (6). To this end, Norris draws on the memoirs of Khalil Sakakini, Wasif Jawhariyyeh, and Victoria Kattan who were instrumental figures in this period of transformation in Palestine and the *mahjar* (diaspora). His channeling of the childhood games and observations recorded in Bethlehemite Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's memoir *The First Well* into Jubrail's childhood years is particularly skillful. A speculative approach rooted in oral histories also enables the incorporation of women's voices from the Dabdoub family where archival traces reproduced patriarchal and patrilineal notions of family, and business records obscured women's role in the day-to-day running of the "family firm."

The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub thus serves as a new impetus for the important debate about the nature of writing history. Casting all historians as "crafters and stealers of stories, conjuring imitations of a past they could never recreate with exact similitude," Norris embraces the dynamics of storytelling and imagination, which underpin historical writing as a way of recounting this history in "a more honest way" (7). Norris's openness about the centrality of storytelling to history writing is refreshing. It goes hand in hand with a certain liberation of the author, who is no longer compelled to present processes and events with rational anthropological and sociological theories of political economy. Norris's decision to "take at face value the assumptions of Ottoman-era Bethlehemites" (185) regarding religious belief systems in the spirit of the anthropological "ontological turn" can be read as a way of giving credence and respect to the historical perspectives and assumptions of those he writes about and reducing his own interpretation to a minimum.

In doing so, Norris joins a field of creative historical writing led by Saidiya Hartman and her "critical fabulation" methodology, as well as Natalie Zemon Davis, Jonathan Walker, Sarah Knott, and others. In Middle East studies, however, Norris's experimentation constitutes a radically new approach. One of the few other works that has similarly propped open the door for further experimentation is Charif Majdalani's 2017 novel *Moving the Palace* which constructs a circular odyssey of migration between Lebanon and Sudan out of archival fragments, using magical, dreamlike, and satirical prose and imagery.

However, as Norris writes himself, "Once we embrace storytelling as an essential part of doing history, the questions quickly arise: What type of story are we telling, and how should that story be constructed?" (184). To answer this question, Norris reflects on his "outsider status" as a historian from the UK, "a country that relates to Palestine with an uncomfortable combination of physical distance and colonial proximity" (7). While Norris makes clear that he is not claiming to express the authentic voice of Jubrail, the question of whether an "outsider's" imagination can adequately grasp the historical experiences of a community to which they do not belong, particularly in speculative history writing, remains a critical and controversial one that needs further discussion. In this light, central to the way he proposes his method is his disposal with the sense of authority used by many historians to frame their work. What Norris suggests instead is that his work should be considered as just one way among many to tell the multitude of histories of this period.

The Lives and Deaths of Jubrail Dabdoub is a must-read for historians, graduate students, and individuals concerned with the social, cultural, and economic life of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Palestine. It will particularly resonate with those who draw on visual culture and creative avenues to build a historical picture of, and feeling for, a certain period. It is light-hearted and often amusing, and the author can claim both literary and scholarly merit for his successful exploration of the "grey areas of historical writing" (183). Reading this work feels as if someone has pressed "play" on an old reel of black and white images of late Ottoman Palestine enabling the protagonists to come to life in a remastered color version. Time will tell whether this work will set a new direction in the field, but it is indisputably a refreshing departure for Middle East migration and diaspora studies, breathes new life into the task of history-writing, and is a delight for academic and non-academic readers alike.

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Palestine Writes and the Politics of Language

Review by Ahmad Abu Ahmad

Abstract

Palestine Writes literature festival (Philadelphia, September 2023) offered a rich space to vocalize and vitalize the multitude of Palestinian experiences across historical Palestine and throughout the *shatat,* and to broaden our commitments as Palestinians in literature and beyond. The festival, bravely held despite a vicious and prolonged attack to defund it and suppress its voices, hosted a multitude of literary and scholarly voices that addressed questions of collectivity, creativity, and fragmentation, with the politics of language, translation, and audience being a recurring theme for panelists. From investigating the potentialities of writing exile, displacement, and critique to the realities of translating Palestine, the festival identified the urgency of themes such as (mis)translation and bilingualism, and the role linguistic subversion plays in inhabiting and inscribing Palestine across cultures. The festival, and despite the general absence of a cohesive inquiry into the question of Palestinian literature written not by, or for, Anglophones, has nonetheless stirred conversations about national-symbolic and thematic clichés, the (re)creation of Palestine through language, the conditions of writing in/from exile, and the collectivity of the Palestinian wound. In this review, Ahmad Abu Ahmad interrogates the linguistic realities for Palestinian authorship and their audience, and invites us to rethink the relationship between Palestinians, their lived experiences, and language.

Keywords

Festival; literature; language; linguistic; translation; *shatat*; bilingualism; Hebrew; exile; subversion.

In September 2023, Philadelphia hosted the Palestine Writes literature festival, a celebration of literature, knowledge, art, and innovation that vocalized and vitalized the experiences of Palestinians around the world.[1] This celebration was bravely held despite a vicious and prolonged attack to defund it and suppress its voices, marking yet another effort to live, learn, and teach Palestine in the face of academic and other institutional and political censorship.

The urgency to "de-exceptionalize" Palestine and embrace the multitude of Palestinian experiences permeated the festival. Organizers and participants emphasized the necessity of decentering our sorrows as Palestinians, and committing to giving and standing in solidarity with other struggles without the expectation of reciprocity. This was made clear from the opening remarks of festival organizer Susan Abulhawa, which acknowledged the festival's presence on the ancestral homelands of the Indigenous Lenni-Lenape (or Delaware nations), the ongoing fight against gentrification in Philadelphia, and the first panel on solidarity and allyship with Gary Younge, Roger Waters, and Viet Thanh Nguyen.[2] As Huda Fakhreddine eloquently put it, by understanding Palestine as belonging to Palestinians as well as to all who take it to be "a compass, a direction, [and] a moral stand," we not only expand the meanings of being Palestinian, but also broaden our commitments as Palestinians.

This is a commitment, first and foremost, to our varied experiences and visions of and for Palestine and Palestinian literature. Maurice Ebileeni identified a common ground of historical and political landmarks that Palestinians have formed and recognize as a collective, although forcibly dispersed and displaced, and at the same time attested to the difficulties of grasping how Palestinians across historical Palestine and throughout the *shatat* (the forced exile or scattering; diaspora) have developed differently.[3] Ebileeni introduced the late Palestinian-Danish poet Yahya Hasan (1995–2020) as an example of the disparities in the sociopolitical conditions and structures that Palestinians maneuver, and the discrepancies in the possibilities for critique. Hasan, who was born into a Palestinian family in Denmark, occupied an intermediate position between languages, political sensibilities, and cultural belonging. Caught in socio-economic precarity and in a violent limbo of fragmentation, Hasan unleashed his rage both at the violence he experienced at home and publicly, and the incessant violence against Palestinians – a violence that he experienced second-hand. He writes in his poem "Childhood":

> AND ONE LAST BLOW ON THE ASS ON THE WAY OUT THE DOOR
> HE TAKES BROTHER BY THE SHOULDERS STRAIGHTENING HIM UP
> KEEPS BEATING AND COUNTING
> I LOOK DOWN AND WAIT FOR IT TO BE MY TURN
> MOM SMASHES PLATES IN THE STAIRWAY
> MEANWHILE AL-JAZEERA TRANSMITS

HYPERACTIVE BULLDOZERS AND RESENTFUL CORPSES
GAZA STRIP IN THE SUNSHINE
FLAGS BEING BURNT
IF A ZIONIST DOESN'T RECOGNIZE OUR EXISTENCE
IF WE EXIST AT ALL
WHEN WE HEAVE WITH PANIC AND PAIN
WHEN WE GASP FOR BREATH OR MEANING
IN SCHOOL WE AREN'T ALLOWED TO SPEAK ARABIC
AT HOME WE CAN'T SPEAK DANISH
A BLOW A SCREAM A NUMBER[4]

However, Hasan's estrangement and rage remains largely inaccessible to the non-Danish reading public, including the majority of Palestinians, also because it has not been widely disseminated in Arabic or English translation.

The question of language and audience was a recurring theme for panelists throughout the festival, yet, and apart from the conversation with Ebileeni, a cohesive inquiry into the question of Palestinian literature written not by, or for, Anglophones remained largely absent. My aim here is to challenge the primacy of Anglophone-Palestinian texts not only to the festival and its role in recognizing and disseminating the works of Palestinians from the global *shatat*, but also to the general Palestinian readership whose attention rarely extends to the writings of Hasan, Karim Kattan (in French), Sayed Kashua (in Hebrew), or Palestinian-Chilean author Lina Meruane (in Spanish):

> *Y entonces le digo que de ahí proviene una parte de mí. Le pregunto si conoce mi apellido. Le menciono otros apellidos palestino-chilenos y a continuación le cuento que en Chile vive la mayor comunidad palestina fuera del mundo árabe. Que los primeros palestinos inmigraron desde cuatro ciudades cristianas de Cisjordania. Que a Chile siguen llegando los suyos, sólo que ahora vienen en calidad de refugiados. Que los últimos en llegar venían de Iraq. Ahora son todos musulmanes, como usted, le digo. Y le digo además que aunque la comunidad es fuerte yo fui criada como una chilena común y corriente. Veo desde atrás su cabeza asintiendo a todo lo que digo, pero cuando llego a la última línea Jaser da vuelta y me corrige. Usted es una palestina, usted es una exiliada.[5]*

And then I tell him that part of me originates there. I ask him if he recognizes my last name, but he has never heard it before. I mention other last names from the colonia and then I tell him that Chile has the largest Palestinian community outside the Arab world. That the first Palestinians emigrated from four Christian cities in Transjordan. That their successors are still coming to Chile. That the most recent emigrants

were fleeing Iraq. Now they're all Muslim, like you. They're all refugees, and my country takes them in, and maybe in time they'll become like regular Chileans. Like me. From behind I see Jaser's head nodding at everything I say, but when I get to this last phrase, he turns around and corrects me. You are Palestinian, you are living in exile.[6]

What potentialities of writing exile and critique by Palestinians exist beyond the linguistic and cultural boundaries of Arabic and English? Palestinian writers in Arabic such as Adania Shibli, Majd Kayyal, and Sahar Khalifah affirm for Ebileeni the importance of social criticism in Arabic and Arabic's ability to (better) accommodate self- and social critique. In contrast, writers in English are for him more likely to be constrained by the necessity to balance critique with the risk of aggravating biases against Palestinians (or Arabs more broadly), and thus to reduce or abstain from critique all together. In addition, they must also *explain* Palestine via symbols and themes that at times border clichés, so their texts might be received and understood by English readers as Palestinian. "To reach English," writes Fady Joudah, "Palestine passes through a corrupting prism, and is often received as ethnography."

> For some readers this positionality mobilizes solidarity. For others it confines Palestinians to the framework of benevolence toward the pulverized.… Enter Palestine in "original" English. The overlap zone with Palestine in Arabic is not small, but the empathy field in English is malnourished. Questions of audience further dilute Palestine in the domestic affairs of empire. As subject of foreign policy and as local newcomer, not yet a bona fide American, Palestine in English is doubly distanced.[7]

Does reaching English thus means complying, by and large, with the clichés of national symbols and dogmas from which Mahmoud Darwish orders his orators to refrain in *Jidariyya* (2000): "So wait Death til I have settled the funeral arrangements in the clear spring of my birth/ and have forbidden the orators to lyricise again/ about the sad land and the steadfastness of figs and olives in the face of time's armies."[8] Or is it our duty as Palestinian readers and scholars to urge the Anglophone-Palestinian writer to mitigate the distance to Palestine by, in the words of Elias Khoury, "eating the oranges":

> You should have eaten the oranges, because the homeland is something we have to consume, not let consume us. We have to devour the oranges of Palestine and we have to devour Palestine and Galilee … We have to eat every last orange in the world and not be afraid, because the homeland isn't oranges. The homeland is us.[9]

For Ahmad Almallah, to write in English is to probe one's positionality in a language that dismisses you.[10] Almallah spoke about infusing his poetry with Arabic and practicing (mis)translation as ways to complicate the reading experience and

inscribe Palestine *on his own terms*. This refugeehood in language, as described by Fakhreddine, works "to recreate the whole world as Palestine," an imagination that also corresponds with Lena Khalaf Tuffaha's proposal to subvert language for one's own purposes:

> In my language
>
> the word for loss is a wide-open cry,
>
> a gaping endless possibility.
>
> In English loss sounds to me like one shuddering blow to the heart,
>
> all sorrow and absence hemmed in,
>
> falling into a neatly rounded hole,
>
> such tidy finality.
>
> In my language
>
> the word for loss is a long vowel stretched
>
> taut and anchored between behemoth consonants, reverberating –
>
> a dervish word
>
> whirling on itself
>
> in infinite emptiness,
>
> the widening gyre,
>
> the eternal motion of grief.[11]

Novelist Isabella Hammad stressed that writing in English is not just intended to communicate and disseminate Palestinian literature for/in the West, but also for the global English-speaking audience.[12] Hence, and while considering her primary audience to be Palestinian, the English novel enables her not merely to narrate Palestine to the Anglophone reader, Palestinian (or in Palestine) or otherwise, but to also explore the condition of exile through the novel as a form. In *Ra'aytu Ramallah* (1997), Mourid Barghouti asks: "And what about entire generations, born in exile, not knowing even the little that my generation knows of Palestine?"[13] To be conditioned by exile, Hammad proposed, is to gain an extraordinary perspective through a deeply uncomfortable source, unfamiliar and bewildering to those who are rooted in place.[14] Novelist and filmmaker Saleem Haddad attested that while his multiple positionalities as a displaced writer limit his authority to write from a single position, they enrich his capacity to simultaneously inhabit, and write, a multitude of places/positions.

Inhabiting exile in English also provokes questions on the general conditions of translating exile and Arabic literature more broadly. In a panel dedicated to translation, maia tabet, Nariman Youssef, and Mohammad Sawaie spoke of the intricacies of navigating an Arabic text into English translation. Sawaie spoke of finding intimacy in the source text and conveying it not through literal translation but by utilizing linguistic and cultural components native to the host culture. For Youssef, translation begins with articulating the source text's impact on her as a reader, and then working

toward recreating this impact in English. tabet noted the risk of triggering unconscious biases in the reader and the difficulty of conveying cultural specificities into English, sometimes leading her to resort to transliteration and glosses.

Although tabet, Youssef, and Sawaie engaged with the question of *how to translate*, it remained unclear, during the panel and the festival more broadly,[15] if there is anything unique about the reproduction of Palestinian literature in translation, whether from Arabic or other languages. How to translate the colonial violence, permanent refugeehood, protracted death, and ungrievable lives in Palestinian literature? How to translate the narratives of erasure, ruptures, contradictions, silence, and cries? And how to translate the memories, dreams, love, and even sarcasm against the daily realities of settler colonialism and national contestation? Mahmoud Shuqair spoke about the Palestinian collective wound as inspirational to his writing and the realities of its incessant multiplication.[16] While this wound, I would argue, is more palpable to the Arabic reader and the Arabic language due to their sociopolitical, historical, and linguistic proximity to it, it is critical to probe its conveyance into languages including, but not limited to, English. While acknowledging the language restrictions of the festival being held in North America, examining the translation of Palestinian literature into languages other than English remains nonetheless crucial to understanding the malleability of languages to accommodate Palestinian narratives.

Sawaie quoted Fanon: "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture."[17] What does it mean, as Palestinians, to take on different worlds, different cultures? In contrast to English, often seen as a "universal language" for writing exile and a primary language for translating Palestine, Hebrew, for instance, presents a more complicated linguistic reality for Palestinians and Palestinian literature. As a speaker of both Arabic and Hebrew by virtue of being a Palestinian born in Israel, and notwithstanding the limited number of bilingual speakers of both Arabic and Hebrew among the festival's attendees, I am convinced that a cohesive investigation of the linguistic realities for Palestinian authorship and their audience remains incomplete without accounting for Hebrew. Witness its infiltration into Palestinian life and its institutionalization as a requisite for Palestinian survival (in Israel, but also in East Jerusalem and primally for workers from the West Bank and Gaza), in addition to the ways Palestinians use Hebrew to subvert Israeli/Zionist culture and disrupt its boundaries.

The prospect of a productive engagement with the politics of Arabic and Hebrew offers an opportunity to disrupt temporal and national, in addition to linguistic, boundaries. How might a return to the linguistic and literary scene of nineteenth century Palestine allow us to examine different conditions of contact between Arabic and Hebrew? Must Palestinian literature remain locked into the antagonistic relationship with Hebrew established by Zionism?[18] Ebileeni makes the case, for example, that the first Palestinian novel is *Nikmat ha'avot* (Vengeance of the Fathers), published in Hebrew in 1927 by Ishaq Shami, an Arab Jew born in Hebron.[19] How does this expand our perception of what constitutes a Palestinian text? Like French for Kateb Yacine, Hebrew for (many) Palestinians is also a "spoil of war." How does writing Palestinian literature in, or translating it into, Hebrew disrupt both our conception of Palestinian

literature and the presumed Jewishness/Israeliness of the Hebrew language?[20]

The variety of Palestinian experiences is not only a question of the languages into which Palestinian texts are born, written, or translated, but also a responsibility, and an invitation, to thoroughly engage with Palestinian literature as intrinsically cross-lingual and cross-cultural, across historical Palestine and throughout the *shatat*. Language is not just a tool for conveying or expressing Palestinian experiences, but is intrinsic to the daily lived experiences of Palestinians.[21] There is certainly room to expand and deepen our thinking about the relationship between Palestinians and language, and to the extent that Palestine Writes offers a venue to do so, its significance and potential extends well beyond the literary.

Ahmad Abu Ahmad is a PhD candidate in comparative literature at Brown University, and holds a BA in English and an LLB from Tel Aviv University. His research examines the politics of linguistic and (inter)cultural contact zones and the poetics of death in Palestinian literature and film, and investigates the intersections of memory, speech acts, and space. He is invested in questions of sovereignty and violence in the project of settler-colonial state-building, in addition to his work across the modern and classical Arabic literary traditions more broadly..

Endnotes

1   The literature festival was held at the University of Pennsylvania, 22–24 September 2023.

2   This panel was moderated by Rachel Holmes.

3   Ebileeni was in conversation with Susan Muaddi Darraj about his latest book *Being There, Being Here: Palestinian Writings in the World* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2022).

4   Yahya Hasan, "Childhood," trans. Jordan Barger, online at (actionbooks.org) bit.ly/3SSqwxB (accessed 4 November 2023).

5   Lina Meruane, *Volverse Palestina* (2013), 27–28.

6   "Andrea Rosenberg translating Lina Meruane – *Becoming Palestine*," online at (drunkenboat.com) bit.ly/3QUSveB (accessed 4 November 2023).

7   Fady Joudah, "My Palestinian Poem that *The New Yorker* Wouldn't Publish," *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 7 June 2021, online at (lareviewofbooks.org) bit.ly/3QvRp7r (accessed 5 November 2023).

8   Mahmoud Darwish, *Mural*, trans. Rema Hammami and John Berger (Verso, 2017), 42.

9   Elias Khoury, *Gate of the Sun*, trans. Humphrey Davies (Picador, 2007), 25, originally published in Arabic as *Bab al-Shams* (1998).

10 Almallah was in conversation with Lena Khalaf Tuffaha and Nada Matta (moderator) about his second poetry collection *Border Wisdom* (2023).

11 Lena Khalaf Tuffaha, "Dhayaa'," in *Water and Salt* (Red Hen Press, 2017). Tuffaha read from her latest poetry collection *Kaan and Her Sisters* (2023).

12 Hammad was in conversation with Saleem Haddad about her recently released novel *Enter Ghost* (2023).

13 Murid al-Barghuthi, *I Saw Ramallah*, trans. Ahdaf Soueif (Anchor Books, 2003), 97.

14 Hammad was in conversation with Sahar Mustafah, Hala Alyan, and Saleem Haddad, moderated by Alexa Firat.

15 It was not feasible to attend every panel, so I write based on my experience of those panels I did attend and the descriptions of panels that I did not.

16 In conversation with Ibrahim Nasrallah, Huzama Habayeb, and Mahmoud Muna, moderated by Huda Fakhreddine.

17 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (Pluto Press, 1986), 38.

18 This is vital not only to examine how a securitized Arabic was prioritized to ensure the advancement of the settler-colonial telos and, at the same time, undermine Palestinian sovereignty and govern the native Arabic-

speaking population, but to also understand the conditions of (positive) contact between Arabic and Hebrew. My attempt here is to probe Hebrew prior to becoming the national language of the settler-colonial movement that emptied "the land of its [Palestinian] inhabitants," and ensured the irreversibly of their expulsion. Antun Shammas, quoted in Levy, *Poetic Trespass: Writing between Hebrew and Arabic in Israel/Palestine* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 25.

19 See Salim Tamari, "Ishaq Shami and the Predicament of the Arab Jew in Palestine," *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008). Shami's text remains a product of the local (and regional) environment, written by an Arab Jew about the native Palestinian population, despite being entangled in the polemics of the local-ethnographic and the universalistic-artistic, that is, the clash "between the need to speak from an ethnic Arab (Jewish) position and the national [read Zionist] canon's universalistic dictates," as articulated by "Second Aliyah writer and critic Yosef Chaim Brenner, who occupied a position of unequaled influence during the early years of Shami's career." Hannan Hever, "Yitzhak Shami: Ethnicity as an Unresolved Conflict," *Shofar* 24, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 125, 132.

20 Texts that have been written or translated into Hebrew – not without certain controversies – include but are not limited to authors like Shammas, Shuqair, Nasrallah, and Khoury.

21 As such, one might also consider the use (or absence) of *'amiyya* (vernacular Arabic) in Palestinian texts, as well as the dialectical differences among Palestinians, and bilingual texts such as Emile Habibi's *al-Waqa'i' al-ghariba fi ikhtifa' Sa'id Abi al-Nahs al-Mutasha'il* (The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist) (1974), which uses Arabic and Hebrew, or Almallah's Border *Wisdom* (2023), which uses Arabic and English.

Letter to Hebrew University in defense of Prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian

Editor's Note

In this letter, the Middle East Studies Association's Committee on Academic Freedom defends Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian against the Hebrew University administration's call for her resignation after signing a petition in favor of a ceasefire in Gaza. *JQ* is reprinting this letter, with MESA's permission, as it represents the voice of the preeminent organization in the field of Middle East Studies. The original is available online at mesana.org/pdf/Palestine20231109.pdf.

Additional letters and statements in support of Prof. Shalhoub-Kevorkian have been published by, among others: the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies' Committee on Academic Freedom; the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at the California State University, Northridge; the USA-Palestine Mental Health Network; Friends of Sabeel North America; and Judith Butler, Distinguished Professor in the Graduate School at University of California – Berkeley.

9 November 2023

Asher Cohen
President, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
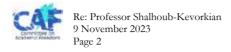hupres@savion.huji.ac.il

Tamir Sheafer
Rector, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
rector@savion.huji.ac.il

Dear President Cohen and Rector Sheafer,

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our deep shock at your letter of 29 October 2023 to Professor Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian in which you called upon her to resign for signing a petition entitled "Childhood researchers and students call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza," which was then followed by the dissemination of your letter in both English and Hebrew. The demand in your letter is a grievous violation of Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian's academic freedom and the release of the letter in the current atmosphere in Israel has served as an incitement to violence against Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 2800 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

In your letter, you note that you were "astonished, disgusted and deeply disappointed" that Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian had signed the petition of "Childhood researchers and students call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza." You claim that by so doing, Shalhoub-Kevorkian had committed an act that is "not very far from crimes of incitement and sedition." You further maintain that Israel's actions in Gaza "do not come close to the definition of genocide" while Hamas' attack of 7 October "falls completely under this definition." You then conclude the letter to Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian by stating, "We are sorry and ashamed that the Hebrew University includes a faculty member like you. In light of your feelings, we believe that it is appropriate for you to consider leaving your position at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem." After you sent Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian the letter, and before she had even read it, it was quickly posted and disseminated on social media, suggesting that someone from your office shared it with members of the Hebrew University community. Since then, Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian has been subject to hate messages and threats of violence.

We note that there is currently a disagreement among genocide scholars and legal scholars as to whether Israel's attacks on Gaza constitute genocide. However, with close to 2100 scholars releasing a statement to that effect on 15 October, Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian was echoing a widely held scholarly opinion concerning the ongoing Israeli military assaults. It is precisely during times of war that academic freedom and freedom of expression are tested and must be vigorously defended. Your letter of 29 October does exactly the opposite. It seeks to punish Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian for speaking out, thereby not only violating her academic freedom and her professional opinion as a critical criminologist, but also creating a threatening atmosphere for the University's other faculty, staff and students, particularly those who may share Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian's views.

Your attack on Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian is an attempt to silence her, to undermine her contributions, and, by extension, to silence Palestinian and non-Palestinian scholars raising their voices against state violence and violations of Palestinian human rights. Asking her to step down for bringing her expertise to bear on public debate violates democratic principles and goes against the values of academic freedom. Further, such a now-public assault on Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian endangers her life at a time when Israel is waging war on Gaza, and in a context in which Israeli public officials are calling Palestinians "human animals," seeking to establish "Palestinian-free zones" and inciting Israeli settlers to commit acts of violence.

We call upon you to rescind your letter, to condemn any and all threats against Professor Shalhoub-Kevorkian and to commit to upholding the academic freedom of all your faculty, staff, and students during this terrible period of war.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Aslı Ü. Bâli
MESA President
Professor, Yale Law School

Laurie Brand
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom
Professor Emerita, University of Southern California

cc:

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Maria Arena, Chair of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights

Dunja Mijatovic, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Kati Piri, Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs, European Parliament

Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian
territories

Michael Lynk, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the
Palestinian territories

James Heenan, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Ramallah

UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, MENA section

Noha Bawazir, Head of Office and UNESCO Representative, UNESCO Liaison
Office, Ramallah, Palestinian delegation to UNESCO

The Honorable Veronica Michelle Bachelet Jeria, The United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights

The Honorable Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human
Rights Defenders

Irene Khan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection
of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

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 engineer, 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.

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. Authors may also specifically request that their article be peer-reviewed. 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.

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Lives

Stories from Palestinian Exile

Nadia Fahed | Intisar Hajaj | Yafa Talal El-Masri
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Mira Sidawi | Wedad Taha | Salem Yassin
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Back cover: "*The Wall*," 2005. Photo by Rula Halawani.