

Remapping Palestine and the Palestinians: Decolonizing and Research

ISSAM NASSAR

The abrupt and sudden disappearance of Palestine in 1948 was multidimensional in nature. In a short period of time, the world of the Palestinians collapsed. The familiar home was nowhere to be found for a large number of the Palestinians who found themselves refugees in the lands of the others. Even those who physically escaped the turmoil lost the right to continue to be Palestinians with some becoming the “Arab minority” in Israel and other becoming Jordanians in eastern Palestine that was renamed “the West Bank.” Palestine, the land and the country, ceased to exist and its people were denied the right to continue to claim it as their home. Expulsions, destruction of cities, town, and villages, loss of life and exile were but the concluding chapter in the disappearance of Palestine. In more than one way, the Palestinians have been unfortunate that the land they call their homeland is such an ancient land historically connected with holy texts of various religions. For at the age of the colonial expansion of Europe, religious texts were employed in the attempt to conquer this land. Ironically, in the plan to conquer Palestine, the people of the land were rarely considered. In fact, the conquerors rarely even acknowledged the very presence of a population in Palestine. In many ways, the point can be made that the absence of the Palestinians from Palestine was a matter that predated their physical absence by decades as far as colonial imagination was concerned. In the European, and later on, Zionist, politics, travel narratives and visual representations of Palestine, the Palestinians failed to be present. To illustrate this point, let us take the example of visual representation of Palestine, particularly in the arena of photography, in the period that pre-dates its disappearance and the role that might have played in constructing an image of the land as if it was uninhabited.

The first photographic images of Palestine appeared shortly after photography itself was invented in 1839. For the first half a century or so, most photographs that were brought into Europe from Palestine were of places connected with the Bible and not of the people, the towns and the villages. In fact the people of Palestine rarely appeared in the early photographs and that in itself did not seem to be a matter of concern for most

viewers at the time. The amazing ability to see the land but not the people was not necessarily a coincidence in the case of photography. The absence of the Palestinian population from most photographs partially reflected both the fact that they were also absent, at some level, from the mind and consciousness of the European or American photographers and a desire to cleanse the holy land from signs and evidence of histories other than the Judeo-Christian one. Palestine was reduced to a location that could attest to the truth of the biblical story, rather than recognized as a real place in this world.

Eventually, images of Palestinians started to appear in the photographs and “carte de visite” both as exotic Orientals (Sheiks, Harems, Bedouins and Clergy) and as illustrations of the biblical ancestors’ appearance. In both cases, the premise of the framing eye of the photographer was to remove the photographed individual from history and place him/her in a context more relevant to Europe and its relation to Palestine than to the “real” lives of the native population. Peasants appeared in the photographs with captions that referred to them with anglophile biblical names and were classified into biblical categories of people to whom the European viewer would relate (Samaritans, Jews, Mohammedans, Saracens...etc). And when the “ethnographic” divide was not used, “biblical careers” were introduced and images of fishermen, shepherds and carpenters started to flood the tourist market.

With the birth of Zionist movement in the late nineteenth century, the emphasis on presenting the land but not the people quickly became a trademark of the Zionist imagination of Palestine. What was historically a Christian imagination in nature was soon adopted by Zionism and given a Jewish twist. The Zionist organization was by the turn of the twentieth century already a full-fledged movement, which had held several conferences, assembled headquarters, delegations, and representatives “western world wide.” It had settlements in Palestine already and was more mobilized and organized than the native populations and by 1905, had already adopted the famous slogan “A Land without a People for a People without a Land.”

With the passing of time, new sets of images and

meaning were assigned to the Palestinians in the context of Zionist imagining of Palestine. And Palestinian Arabs started to gradually go in and out of the Zionist representations of the land as evident by early Zionist photography and cinema. Sometimes, the Palestinian was seen as a part of the landscape: as a shepherd with goats perhaps as the prototype of the forefathers the ancient Israelites. But on other occasions, the Palestinian was completely absent from the landscape or represented as the primitive native that cannot represent him/herself and ought to be represented by someone else who is viewed as more modern and more "legitimate." As the conflict between Jews and Arabs was heightened over the passing of time, the *essentialization* of the Palestinians started to take on new dimensions as images of Arabs started to demonstrate backwardness and lack of civilization - images that bring to mind the manner in which the White settlers in North America were representing the Native "Indians." Images of Palestinians were transformed into representations signifying senseless violence, cruelty and terrorism.

In this context, it is perhaps important to keep in mind the settler colonialist nature of the Zionist project, at least as far as the Palestinians are concerned. Jewish immigration to Palestine was not like immigration anywhere else in the world, for it was intended to be part of building a new Jewish society in places where it did not exist, at least for a considerable period of time. Immigrants were not expected, nor did they expect, to live within the existing society and mingle with the natives of the land. Instead, they joined already-existing Jewish colonies in Palestine where natives were not seen, except perhaps for the occasional passing shepherd. In other words, Jewish immigrants who came to Palestine as part of the Zionist project were more likely not to see the Palestinians and their society for they lived in exclusive Jewish communities in places relatively far from any obvious Palestinian presence. It should be no surprise then that the bulk of the immigrants of the *Yeshuv* continued to nurture ideas and images about Palestine that were dominate in the European cultures from which the immigrants themselves came. When the Palestinians started to vanish from the landscape as a result of the war of 1948, the members of the Jewish *Yeshuv* hardly noticed what was happening to their "invisible" neighbors.

The loss of Palestine and the temporary disappearance of Palestinian identity that resulted directly from policies of the new state of Israel did not necessarily mean that most in the Jewish *Yeshuv* were fully aware of what had occurred. Indeed, it was only natural that the Palestinian trauma went almost unnoticeable since the Palestinians were absent from the Zionist consciousness to start with. And the fact that Israel enacted policies that considered the Palestinian national identity illegal

and illegitimate made lack of awareness about the Palestinians a chronic condition within the Israeli psyche.

Israeli denial of the mere existence of Palestinians as people with national political rights led to a policy of supporting traditional, reactionary and religious elements within the Palestinian community. Inside Israel the Palestinians were renamed "Israel's Arabs" and in the eyes of the law constituted a number of religious and communal groupings. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the other hand, they were named the Arab residents of the administered territories of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The Israeli policy of encouraging traditional as opposed to political leadership was consistent with the Old European colonial view that Israelis had already adopted where Arabs, as natives, were not suited to democracy. It was equally so with the internal logic of Zionism, which is based on blurring the distinction between nationality and religion: if Zionism made Judaism into a national identity, then why not consider Islam, Druze and Christianity as quasi-national identities, as well?

It would take the Palestinians and their national movement decades to finally place themselves on the map. Although the long path to Palestinian independence and freedom seem to be further away, the fact that the Palestinians have national rights seem to be a given nowadays. The re-emerging Palestinian identity gained legitimacy worldwide and was granted a certain degree of recognition by Israel with the signing of the Oslo Peace Process in 1994. The Peace process with all its faults and deficiencies signaled for the first time in the history of Israel a formal de-facto recognition of the existence of the Palestinians as a people. The result was the legitimizing of their national and political symbols and their very presence in the eyes of certain portion of the Israeli public. The previously outlawed Palestinian flag became legal and the establishment of cultural, political and governmental institutions was initiated. Such legitimization was perhaps the most positive of all the provisions of the agreement which otherwise reflected in its entirety the weakened position of the Palestinian National Movement represented by the PLO.

However, the Oslo process failed and Israeli settlement activities peaked both during and after the process had stopped. The Palestinians who were recognized as people with certain political rights during the process and had been given a kind of "independent Bantustans" were now besieged and barred from entering Israel. Settler bypass highway that were built at the height of the process to connect settlements in the Occupied Territories with Israel were now enabling Israelis to travel throughout the Occupied lands without having to see or encounter a single Palestinian. The combination of the bypass roads with the complete ban on the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip from entering Is-

rael once again created a situation where the mere presence of the Palestinians is completely removed from the consciousness of the general Israeli public. This is making the Israeli army's attacks on the Palestinians, already demonized in the eyes of most Israelis, a simple and uncontested matter. Are we seeing a process that resembles what happened in 1948?

We cannot be sure, but the handwriting on the wall suggests that there are significant resemblances. The debate over "peaceful expulsion" of the Palestinians or what is often referred to, as "the transfer option," is part of the academic, political and popular discourse in Israel.

In this context, writing about the Palestinians means placing them on the map as a legitimate nationed group once again. Writing in this sense becomes an act of decolonization in the sense that it challenges assumptions, images and stereotypes not necessarily by refuting them directly, but by discussing the Palestinians without having to even qualify the reasons to do so. By engaging in historical, sociological and politics studies about the Palestinians, their history and society, we in fact normalize them and their lives in a way that a debate about how legitimate the Palestinians are will most likely be missing the point. This issue of *CSSAAME* presents an attempt to do exactly that. The articles that follow are not about the disappearance of Palestine, nor are they about roving the existence of the Palestinians. But the fact that the authors of the various articles discuss issues about the history and society of the Palestinians as a living entity turns the contributions in their totality into an attempt at "re-inhabiting" Palestine. The contributions span various disciplines within social sciences and humanities and cover a wide range of themes connected together only through the fact that they are about something Palestinians. Rochelle Davis, for example, narrates a history of an aspect of Palestinian life in Jerusalem during the two decades that preceded al-Nakba by focusing on a little known history of the first teacher's college in Palestine. The Arab College was a promising project that could have culminated in the first Palestinian university but instead vanished overnight like the rest of Palestine following the fall of the western suburbs of Jerusalem to Israeli control. Kimberly Katz, on the other hand, examined how Jerusalem was transformed into a Jordanian city and the role its incorporation as a Christian holy city played in legitimizing Jordan as the sovereign in east Palestine.

The Nakba is present clearly in the contributions of Ilan Pappé and Salim Tamari not because the both discuss it directly, but because it forms that background in which their discussions are grounded. Tamari looks at images of Palestine in the *imaginaire* of the Palestinians who returned to the country after the Oslo accords were signed. Pappé on the other hand, examines how a vision

of a shared, but divided, homeland can be a way out of the historic traumas of the two peoples who inhabit this land. Still the contribution of Tania Forte takes another angle in her essay in which she examines the debate within the Israeli academy regarding the Palestinians. Although many have written on a similar theme, especially as it relates to the *New Historians* in Israel and the *Nakba* debate, Forte's contribution however, takes a different approach to the debate altogether. For Forte shifts the discussion away from the ideological realm to that of academic practice.

The contributions of Elia Zuriek, Jamil Hilal, Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar on the other hand focus on issues most relevant to the discussion of Palestinians society and politics nowadays. Zuriek examines the theoretical and methodological considerations that ought to be taken into account when studying the Palestinian society that he describes as a society in conflict and transition. Hilal, on the other hand, examines the potential and the problems involved in any discussion about democracy in Palestine and its political system now. Echoes of the same themes can also be found in the joint study of Hanfi and Tabar in which the agendas of the organizations of Palestinian civil society are examined particularly in light of the influence of globalization.

Theoretical and Methodological Considerations for the Study of Palestinian Society

ELIA ZUREIK

To study the Palestinians is basically to study a society in conflict and transition. The majority of the society's members live in dispersion as refugees and members of exiled communities, whether in the Arab countries or the West. Some continue to live in their homeland, such as in Israel where they live as a minority, or as a majority in highly contested political environments such as the West Bank and Gaza. Thus, it is not surprising that issues of identity, control, and resistance, among others, comprise key concerns of any intellectual enterprise purporting to render intelligent the fragmented experience of the Palestinian people.

While maintaining a particular emphasis on refugees, this paper situates recent studies of Palestinians in the context of (1) social science debates surrounding qualitative and quantitative methodologies with special reference to Palestinian society; (2) theoretical discussions of power, resistance, and subjectivity; and (3) ethnographic studies of refugee identities.

Methodological Quandaries

The long, established tradition of positivist social science, which looked to natural science as its model for theory construction and empirical testing, has dominated the social sciences off and on throughout the twentieth century. However, during the last two to three decades, positivist social science—particularly sociology—has yielded to many influences emanating from philosophy and the humanities. This cross-fertilization of ideas has brought new insights to social science, insights which have left their mark in terms of methodologies, choices of research topics, and, above all, have blurred the lines separating the social sciences from other disciplines. Sociology, for example, has acknowledged the place of qualitative and ethnographic studies as integral to the discipline and not as a “soft,” add-on component to what used to pass for predominantly hard-core positivist social science.

Even before the recent popularity of qualitative social science studies, such studies have always occupied a place in sociology, including Arab sociology. The American sociologist Howard Becker reminds us that

qualitative studies made their debut in the United States more than six decades ago.¹ Arab sociology boasts a rich tradition in qualitative social science, as in the work of the Iraqi sociologist ‘Ali Al-Wardi. Following in the footsteps of the fourteenth century Arab thinker Ibn Khaldun, ‘Ali Al-Wardi explored the interplay between urbanism and nomadism, and their impact on the development of individual personality and community life in Iraq.² Similarly, there are the valuable studies of village life by the Egyptian anthropologist Hamid ‘Ammar in which he analyzed the values and personality make-up in rural Egypt.³ Until recently, qualitative community studies in the Fertile Crescent, Egypt, and North Africa comprised the bulk of what was reported in Arab social science.⁴

Applied social science, involving the collection of social statistics, was introduced to the Arab world in the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries as part of the administrative requirements of western colonization of the region. Following political independence in the first half of last century, indigenous scholars and the government elite expanded the use of applied research techniques to meet the bureaucratic and educational needs of the fledgling states. However, not until the 1960s did western-educated Arab social scientists begin to experiment with positivist methodologies in a sustained fashion. At this time they began to carry out survey research to uncover public attitudes and orientations to current affairs and policy matters. Although this coincided with a period when positivism was under attack in western scholarship, to a very large extent the undertaking of quantitative survey research in the Arab world proceeded without heeding the problems raised by such an approach. Two different sets of problems presented themselves. The first is specific to third world regions; the second is more theoretical, and focuses on an epistemological debate concerning objectivity and knowledge claims.

With regard to the former, three such problems are worth mentioning. First, consider the meaning of “public” in the context of the developing world—or the developed one for that matter. The notion that there is a public “out there” amenable to survey research is prob-

lematic in Arab society. To respond to a questionnaire interview assumes a modicum of trust and confidence between the interviewer and the interviewee, and also assumes that one's opinions count as far as public life is concerned. In societies where, to a significant degree, the public has not felt and does not feel that it has an influence on the course of events, citizens are unlikely to see utility in divulging their views. Moreover, because of lack of trust between officials and the public at large, there is a tendency to look with suspicion at those seeking individual-based information for fear that this information may jeopardize their position.⁵ Officials are equally suspicious of data collected on a large scale for fear that it may reveal sensitive information deemed threatening to regime legitimacy.⁶ Second, the problem with large-scale survey research in third world regions generally has to do with the integrity and representativeness of the statistical universe from which the so-called public is chosen. In the absence of reliable census data and open access to such information for the sake of verification and drawing from reliable samples, it is difficult to feel confident about results that are based on quantitative research alone. Third, the gathering of public opinion data and survey research is basically an *individual* enterprise anchored in methodological individualism. People are asked to express their views individually. In a society where collectivist values are deeply rooted and where, to use the Gestalt metaphor, the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts, it is problematic to aggregate individual responses statistically for the purpose of drawing up a picture of the collective.⁷ This is reminiscent of C. Wright Mills' criticism of abstracted empiricism in western social science, by which he meant the carrying out of quantitative research without paying sufficient attention to the historical context and the socially embedded nature of human agency.

These comments are not intended to discredit quantitative and survey research, but to sound a cautionary note concerning its limitations, particularly in the context of modernizing societies. In a lucid argument, Becker makes an important distinction between qualitative and quantitative research.⁸ Quantitative research, which includes both survey research and "official statistics," tends to be "interest laden."⁹ For example, official statistics tell us more about the process of data production, the intentions of administrators in charge of information gathering, and how records are kept, than they do about the real world. Paraphrasing Becker, Campbell points out that "we should regard official statistics as the persuasive communications of administrators and not as unbiased reflections of reality."¹⁰

Survey research, on the other hand, is decontextualized and insulates respondents from the consequences of their utterances. Unlike the natural environment, the setting for ethnographic fieldwork, survey research taps

responses removed from everyday life experiences. More importantly, according to Becker, in contrast to survey research where data collection is guided by a questionnaire schedule and pre-determined set of variables, ethnographic approaches leave the possibility open to the emergence of unexpected data in the course of doing fieldwork. Having made these distinctions, Becker goes on to note that qualitative and quantitative approaches differ mostly in terms of their goals and the kinds of questions they ask. The former focuses on the case study and seeks comprehensive disclosure of data in a natural environment, whereas the latter aims at reaching generalizations in contrived settings and through statistical assessment of group differences. However, according to Becker, "the similarities between these methods are at least as, and probably more, important and relevant than the differences."¹¹

A few ways to rectify these problems include contextualizing the research problem in question; complementing survey research with in-depth interviews; and combining, where possible, quantitative with qualitative and ethnographic data by incorporating symbolic and cultural evidence in the data gathered.¹² A final way, in the words of Egyptian sociologist Sa'ad Eddin Ibrahim, is to adopt the group rather than the individual as the unit of analysis:

An alternative [to the western-based approach] is to take the group as the unit of analysis in survey research, since in traditional or modernizing societies the decision-making unit may not be the individual. The individual may not initiate action. He or she may not be a free agent. In this respect, the difference between western and Arab societies is one of degree rather than of kind, but it is great enough to call into question the assumption that the individual is always the most appropriate unit of analysis. Alternatives can and should be considered, such as using a social network or some other kind of collectivity.¹³

Interest in ethnographic research is experiencing a revival, and occupies a central place in the diverse methodologies encountered in the post-positivist era. The thrust of ethnographic research in general, in the words of Paul Willis, is to understand the relation between three elements: "creative meaning-making in sensuous practices; the forms, i.e. what the symbolic resources used for meaning-making are and how they are used; the social, i.e. the formed and forming relation to the main structural relations, necessities and conflicts of society."¹⁴ Thus, ethnography is the analysis of meaning-making as a cultural production of everyday practices. As such, its focus is the creative use (implicitly and explicitly) of a symbolic and material repertoire to comprehend and decode the world, cope with it, and understand it as a creative endeavor. From a standard positivist angle, the problems with ethnography, and all

qualitative work for that matter, are measurement, validity of the data collected, and generalizability of the conclusions reached. A rather different criticism of ethnography comes from the postmodern camp, and centers on the authorial problematic of the text. Willis encapsulates this stance by describing the “postmodern and poststructuralist critique of ethnographic methods as constituting rather than reflecting their subject matter.”¹⁵ The postmodern critique of ethnography questions the finality and authoritative nature of the text and stability in meaning. The emphasis on difference and juxtapositioning in postmodern writings is taken to mean that, in the study of culture, the line separating the global from the local is becoming blurred. The global is not “out there,” but is increasingly becoming part of the local.¹⁶

With regard to quantitative research in Palestine, the most noticeable surge in the use of attitudinal surveys and other kinds of applied research techniques occurred after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel in 1967, and more particularly after the signing of the Oslo agreement between Israel and the Palestinians in September 1993. While there is some research that is carried out by independent researchers and academics, the bulk of such research is interest-laden and funded either by international organizations or donor countries, both of which have a vested interest in gathering such statistics for policy purposes. Included in this surge of quantitative research is the gathering of public opinion data in the West Bank and Gaza that is intended to gauge Palestinian public opinion on various facets of the Middle East peace process. Here is how Hammami and Tamari describe the connection between survey research and policy-making in the aftermath of the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements in 1992 and 1993:

The impetus for these surveys at this time was described by one [Palestinian] pollster as an attempt to provide the Palestinian negotiating team, as well as the PLO in Tunis, with a sense of the community’s “red line”; that is, what issues could and could not be compromised on...applied social science in the study of Palestinians, particularly in the post-Oslo period, have resulted in uncritical acceptance of empiricist social science tailored to meet the needs of funding agencies and careers of individual researchers.¹⁷

A glaring example of this policy-oriented research was aptly described by the *New York Times*. Immediately after the signing of the Oslo agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel in 1993, the newspaper dubbed the role of the Institute of Applied Social Science in Oslo—an organization that was, and remains, intimately involved in survey research on Palestinians on behalf of the Norwegian and other donor governments, while at the same time facilitating secret negotiations between the two sides—as “peace through

survey research.”¹⁸

Theoretical Considerations

Official discourse such as government reports, commissions of inquiry, and censuses, are but a few of several means for insuring state legitimacy.¹⁹ Equally relevant in the construction of state hegemony are the writings of social scientists, intellectuals, and media commentators, as demonstrated by Herman and Chomsky, and Said.²⁰ Until recently, the focus of critical research has been on decoding and deconstructing elite discourse. But understanding resistance and counter-hegemony is not only a function of decoding and deconstructing the discourse of the powerful; it is also linked to revealing “unrecorded” histories as experienced by the less powerful, those in whose name intellectuals and governments speak. Ethnographic studies and oral histories have played a major role in giving voice to agency and marginal groups in society. In the case of the Palestinians, such studies assumed special significance when describing the world of Palestinian refugees and those living in exile and under Israeli occupation. I provide below an overview of several recent ethnographic studies of Palestinian refugees to demonstrate how such an approach can capture subjectivity and nuances of the phenomenon under investigation.

Analysis of power and resistance is crucial in assessing systems of control. Michel Foucault analyzed the deployment of power in terms of subjectivity, administrative practices, and knowledge production. What distinguishes Foucault’s work is the shift from viewing the state as the main carrier of power to considering the “microphysics of power” that is reflected in day-to-day disciplinary measures of population control—whether in the workplace, school, family, hospital, or elsewhere. It is customary to remark that Foucault’s important analysis of normalizing the self (that is, how individuals unwittingly discipline themselves by acting on their bodies and thoughts) falls short of addressing the role of resistance by agency.²¹ For Foucault’s defenders this may have been true of Foucault’s earlier work, where, according to Gordon, he “seemed to give the impression of certain uses of power as having an almost absolute capability to tame and subject individuals.”²² It is certainly not true of his subsequent work on governmentality and the use he makes of the “biopolitics” and “strategic reversibility” of “power relations.”²³ Power here is conceived in its “productive” capacity. It is precisely because of its capillary forms, whereby governmentality involves itself in intimate aspects of people’s lives (body, sexuality, reproductive ability) that it renders visible multiple locations of power, thus making it possible to design counter strategies. According to Foucault,

Resistance is integral to power. The existence of power relationships depends on a multiplicity of

points of resistance which are present everywhere in the power network. Resistances are the old terms in relations of power: they are inscribed in the latter as irreducible opposite.²⁴

Although Foucault acknowledged (non-sovereign) power and resistance, the critics rightly point out that he did not fully recognize agency's reaction to and interpretation of power, let alone modes of resistance. Foucault's analysis "misses any relation between power and resistance. Specifically, it misses any antagonistic relation in which the means of power take shape against resistance."²⁵ Julie Peteet makes a similar point, noting "Foucault's view of the body as a text, as a site of inscription and exhibition by dominant forces, shows little concern with people's responses to having their bodies appropriated and designated as sites of inscription."²⁶

If ethnographers provided a methodology for delving into subjectification as a way of revealing the effects of power relations, social theorists articulated a theory of resistance. With regard to the latter, Anthony Giddens' work on structuration stands out as an important contribution in this respect. According to Giddens' structuration, "the dualism of the 'individual' and 'society' is reconceptualized as the duality of agency and structure."²⁷ Structuration theory portrays human beings as knowledgeable agents who are capable of acting upon and reproducing social systems across space and time, and through the deployment of an array of material and non-material resources. According to Giddens, "in the production/reproduction of interaction, agents draw upon corresponding elements of social systems: signification (meaning), domination (power) and legitimation (sanction)."²⁸ Giddens' conception of agency is premised on the ability of human agents to make choices and intervene in the course of events by making a difference. As he says, agency implies "that a person could have done otherwise," and that "an agent who has no option whatsoever is no longer an agent."²⁹ The knowledgeability of agents refers to what actors believe or know about the context of their actions and those of others, including the reservoir of knowledge, tacit as well as explicit (discursive), which actors rely upon in the production and reproduction of structures.³⁰ Actions in which agents engage can be rationalized (i.e., supported by explanations if the need arises), or reflexively monitored (i.e., they are part of "the flow of activity") in the sense that action does not consist "of discrete acts involving an aggregate of intentions, but a continuous process."³¹ Structure refers to the "rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems."³² The resources (material, symbolic, and legal) at the agency's disposal can be both enabling and disabling. In Giddens' words, "structuration theory is based on the proposition that structure is always both enabling and constraining, in virtue of the inherent relation between

structure and agency (and agency and power)."³³ Social reproduction, which is contingent upon practices carried out in the context of "space-time distancing," is a key element in Giddens' structuration theory. The more differentiated a society is, the higher it is on the time-space continuum, as, for example, in modern industrial societies. Tribal societies are low on the distancing scale because of co-presence and face-to-face communication.

Giddens rejects the proposition that power is an "out there" entity that is unidirectional, and flows in a causal manner from an "objective" source to a subject. Thus, power is not a zero-sum, but "the means of getting things done, very definitely enablement as well as constraint."³⁴ Notwithstanding Foucault's relational treatment of power, Giddens rejects Foucault's analogy of the "microphysics of power" or the "capillary of power." In place of the ubiquitous and dualistic conception of power, he substitutes the "dialectic of control," which refers to "the two-way character of the distributive aspect of power," and denotes "how the less powerful manage resources in such a way as to exert control over the more powerful in established power relations."³⁵ The concept of resistance is explicit in his portrayal of agency and structure.

While from the Foucauldian perspective subjectification is achieved through governmentality (i.e. by disciplining the population through non-coercive means), the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza is subjected to routine coercive practices which evidence violence as a spectacle. In commenting on Foucault's treatment of power, Diane Macdonnell appropriately comments that Foucault's conception of power "does little to help us consider how power is at work in the deadly forces of physical repression, especially the army and the police."³⁶ Criminologist Stanley Cohen remarks that Israel's secret service has been engaged in applying psychological and physical pressure to extract confessions from Palestinian prisoners since the early 1970s. A landmark government commission headed by an Israeli Supreme Court judge recommended in its report that when "nonviolent psychological pressure" fails to extract information from detainees, "the exertion of a moderate amount of physical pressure cannot be avoided."³⁷ The ethnographic case studies presented below highlight the dialectical nature of power: violence is inscribed on the body, but at the same time it triggers resistance.

Ethnography of the Refugee Experience

With more than half of the Palestinian population existing in a transitional state—as refugees, migrants, and displaced people—time, place/space, and memory are bound to play a role in the constitution of these collectivities. Palestinian society stretches across time

and space through the production of locales/spaces, in the shape of refugee camps, or as segregated and exiled refugee communities in several host societies and nation-states. The Palestinians in *al-ghurba* (diaspora) have recreated their society in what amounts to virtual spaces that correspond to identifiable locales drawn from the continuum of time-space distancing. Here I am thinking of the Palestinian experience in refugee camps where villages belonging to a different social system prior to exile (in pre-1948 Palestine) are recreated in today's camps as a social space and locale representing specific cultural and political reproductions. For Palestinians at large, as for any exiled group for that matter, the implication of distancing for memory and identity is quite significant. While the camps acted as a symbol of severance from one's homeland, they became the site for the social construction of memory and identity. The camps, to borrow the phrase of Robert Bellah and his colleagues, become the "community of memory." These communities, into which one is born, link the present to the past, but also "turn us towards the future as communities of hope."³⁸ "In order not forget that past," say the authors of *Habits of the Heart*, "a community is involved in retelling its story, its constitutive narrative, and in so doing, it offers examples of the men and women who have exemplified the meaning of the community. These stories of collective history and exemplary individuals are an important part of the tradition that is central to a community of memory."³⁹ More importantly, it is in these communities where the self is constituted.

Anthropologists have been at the forefront of researchers working on refugee camps. The studies we have of Palestinian refugee communities, whether in the host countries or in their homeland, demonstrate the powerful influence of the so-called "imagined community"⁴⁰ on sustaining Palestinian identity and attachment to the homeland. Rosemary Sayigh's pioneering studies of the Palestinian community in Lebanon's refugee camps show vividly the transmission of identity from one generation to the next in a community that is now well into its third generation, and how this identification plays an important role in mobilizing the refugee community to cope with adverse conditions.⁴¹ Recent studies show important changes taking place in the identity of Palestinian refugees compared to two earlier generations. These changes are shaped by the factors of gender, generational differences, and the impact of the surrounding political environment.

In a series of perceptive articles,⁴² Julie Peteet provides theoretical insights with which to examine gender, body, place, and rituals as possible sites and resources of mobilization for dealing with both ontological insecurity and the production of resistance subjectivities in the lives of Palestinian refugees:

Resistance to exile itself and resistance to the legal designation 'refugees' are central motifs of Palestinian exile culture. Resistance as an analytic concept is a point of entry to understanding these refugee communities. They insist on specific connection between space, place, culture and identity. Yet this connection between a time and a place in the past and contemporary struggles to return to it should not gloss over the experience of exile itself, which also evinces a clear connection between place, space, and culture. Palestinians are desirous of a specific territorialization of place, space, culture and power, one rooted in the past but oriented toward the future. Reterritorialization is only conceivable through resistance and empowerment.⁴³

Peteet's subaltern work makes full use of oral history and the quotidian experience of Palestinian refugees to show how, in this case, identity is negotiated across Lebanon's changing political and civilian-military landscape, where Palestinian refugees live in highly controlled environments, and with the traumatic experiences of uprisings against Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians reject the discourse which portrays refugees as helpless and dependent people and embrace a discourse of resistance in which refugeehood is replaced with the refugees' call for their right of return to their homeland. Since Palestinian refugees are not a homogenous group in terms of their generation, class affiliation, or place of origin in Palestine, not to mention gender, differing contours of identity construction will likely emerge. Although being a Palestinian refugee seems to have a leveling effect on these differentiated identities, important variations emerge in interpreting subjectivity. This is where ethnography's fine-grained analysis proves extremely useful in capturing the nuances of subjectivity.

Peteet examined the meaning of rituals and rights of passage to manhood among Palestinian male youth who had experienced imprisonment and torture at the hands of the Israeli occupation forces during the first intifada, which lasted from 1987 to 1993. While the body is the site of violence, it is also treated as a locus of power and a resource of "resistant subjectivity."⁴⁴ According to Peteet, ritual is not necessarily conservative by reaffirming the status quo, but can also become a weapon of the weak in the context of asymmetrical power relations between oppositionary national/ethnic groups. Inscription of violence on the body in a collective fashion "was read as a collective assault and a commentary on suffering," thus "upsetting established hierarchies of generation, nationality, and class yet reproducing and reaffirming other hierarchies such as gender."⁴⁵

Peteet pursues the theme of subjectivity and resistance in a subsequent paper by questioning the need to "essentialize" women's emotions as an overriding, uni-

versal aspect of maternal sentiment. She demonstrates how Palestinian women negotiate political-national space for themselves in a highly patriarchal society by reconciling “maternal activism” with traditional “maternal imagery.”⁴⁶ The sites of her research cover refugee camps in Lebanon, the West Bank, and Gaza, where she interviewed around fifty women. Peteet’s research challenges the dominant domestic image of mothers as the “national icon” usually identified with a caring labor ethic and reproductive roles. As mothers of male martyrs, Palestinian women occupy a special place in Palestinian society, whether in Lebanon or the West Bank and Gaza. They have managed to transform the meaning of their traditional roles and endow them with political activism directed not only at the Israelis and the Lebanese state, but also at the Palestinian leadership itself, by raising issues of gender equality and citizenship rights in the nascent Palestinian state. This transformation has been far from successful, however, for Peteet shows how “[a] female practice and emotion are transformed in a way that empowered mothers as political actors but did not challenge the gendering of either citizenship or caring labour.”⁴⁷ Considered within the specific Palestinian context, where periodic assaults on refugee camps, regional wars, and economic hardships predominate, Peteet discusses what she calls practices of “othermothering.” This involves extending help through “fictive kinship” to other mothers of martyred youth, or intervening to rescue Palestinian youths from arrests and beatings by Israeli soldiers. In so doing, the mothers connect motherhood to the national struggle, and even to the class struggle, as reflected in the peasant and impoverished background of Palestinian refugees from whom the bulk of victims come.

Writing in the same ethnographic tradition and concentrating on “the connection between cross-subjective self-articulation and the nascent [Palestinian] state,”⁴⁸ Jean-Klein supplements Peteet’s analysis by taking into account younger as well as older men drawn from sixty households in the West Bank city of Ramallah. In the case of the former, instead of diminishing the moral standing of the subject, as would be expected in a highly masculine culture, physical abuse at the hands of Israeli soldiers enhanced the stature and moral standing of the young. However, among older men, torture “was publicly accorded the value of passive reception.”⁴⁹ The differentiated impact of victimization shows that “victimization is a partial signifier of virtues associated with manliness and honour.”⁵⁰ To account fully for the constitution of the “heroic selves” among the young, the role of mothers and sisters becomes crucial in understanding how “the discourse of cross-subjectivity involves a discourse of gender complementarity and equality that specifically excludes senior men.”⁵¹ Mothers, and to a lesser extent sisters, become the main vali-

dators of the prison experience of their sons and brothers, who “were expected to perform great deeds,” but were “equally expected to show humility and modesty” when they returned home.⁵² The silence is a testimony to the “absence of self-reflexive testimonials by youths returning from prison or hospital [and] constitutes the most compelling ethnographic evidence of their reliance on familial cross-subjectivity.”⁵³ What is also absent in this cross-familial subjectivity is any reference to father-son relationships. Jean-Klein points out that fathers resented their wives for neglecting their familial obligations by engaging in extra-familial tasks which took them away from the home. The diminution of the social status of senior men, and the iconic place of young people as carriers of the national struggle, with mothers acting as the main narrators of their sons’ experiences, all coalesced to produce significant empowerment in women’s moral standing in the family, community, and society generally.⁵⁴

By incorporating generational difference, social class, religious activism, and locale, another body of ethnographic research on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan highlights important points of rupture in the construction of identity and its link to mobilization strategies.⁵⁵ This rupture is what characterizes the subaltern nature of the discourse—a discourse of resistance that is fragmented and lacks unity.⁵⁶ It is interesting to note that the defeat and subsequent eclipse of the PLO from Lebanon and elsewhere in 1982 fragmented the refugee discourse. By the same token, the Oslo agreement and the talk of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza are considered by the refugees themselves as capitulation and abdication of their right of return to their original homes in Israel.⁵⁷

Dorothee Klaus carried out a qualitative study of Palestinians in Lebanon using a longitudinal analysis of interviews in Greater Beirut over a 12-month period involving a sample of equal numbers of Lebanese and Palestinians.⁵⁸ She examined Palestinian identity through the relationship between, what she calls, “self-referential designation” and the designation given to Palestinians by others, in this case their Lebanese hosts. The dialectical relationship between reflexivity of the self and Othering, and the contrast between the opposing forces of integration and exclusion experienced by the Palestinians in Lebanon, allow the writer to trace the shifting boundaries of Palestinian identity. The identity with which she is concerned is the national/regional one and how it juxtaposes Palestinians to Lebanese. Palestinian society is viewed from a heterogeneous vantage point: bourgeoisie vs. proletariat and refugees; city people vs. village people; and young vs. old. These social-structural cleavages enable Klaus to locate the shifting boundaries of Palestinian identity—considered in the context of the changing role of the Palestinian national movement.

Contrary to expectations, the author finds that, after half a century of exile, camp refugees are more willing to quell the desire to return to Palestine than the bourgeoisie who, at one time thought of themselves as Lebanese in the making by carving up for themselves a niche in the economic and cultural landscape of Lebanon. Over time, middle-class Palestinians went through drastic changes in their identity. These changes ranged from privatizing, if not concealing, their Palestinianism so as not to disrupt their attempts to integrate into Lebanese society, to thinking, more recently in the post-Oslo period, of returning to Palestine through their checkbooks (i.e. by investing in property and businesses in Palestine). Palestinian camp refugees, on the other hand, most of whom are of peasant origin, carried the torch of return to Palestine in earlier years, particularly between 1967 and 1982, but such a desire seemed to wane after the 1982 debacle. Their narrative reflected their yearning for the land in Northern Palestine from where the majority came. However, with the passage of time, during which they experienced several crises of survival, the youngest among them, now three or four generations removed from the original Palestinian peasants, began trading their Palestinian identity for a place in Lebanon's political maze. Here is how Klaus puts it:

Whereas on the one hand the memories of the village and the orange grove have been transferred into a political claim for return, which after its perceived failure has lost its meaning and thereby its founding moment of identity construction, the individualistic memory of the bourgeoisie, conserved in black and white photography of the lost mansions, has led to an individualist, non-ideological strategy of return in the sense of reclaiming economic and private property.⁵⁹

In another study, Stephanie Latte-Abdallah examines the nature of family links in two refugee camps in Jordan: the Gaza camp near Jarash, and the Jabal Hussain camp near Amman.⁶⁰ It is important to note that the two camps are administratively and socially different. The Jabal Hussain camp consists of the 1948 refugees, all of whom have Jordanian citizenship. The Jarash camp consists primarily of Bedouins from Palestine who were expelled by Israel from Gaza for the first time in 1967, and those who first became refugees in 1948 but remained in Palestine and were expelled for the second time during the 1967 war. Thus, the Jarash camp contains Bedouins and peasants, whereas the Jabal Hussain camp contains rural and urban refugees from 1948 who originated from "the heart of Palestine." Here too, we have first and second-time refugees. The theme of heterogeneity of Palestinian society emerges again: Bedouin vs. peasant vs. city people; 1948 refugees vs. 1967 displaced; female-headed households vs. male-headed nuclear families. This is a unique study in which The

United Nations Relief and Works Agency's (UNRWA) administrative practices are examined in terms of their impact on Palestinian refugee life. It is an excellent example of Foucault's "biopolitics" where a proxy state, a United Nations agency created more than fifty years ago specifically to cater to Palestinian refugees, is engaged in disciplining the Palestinian refugee population. Not all refugees fall under the same administrative regime. Only the 1948 refugees benefit from UNRWA's services. So-called displaced individuals, refugees from the 1967 war, receive assistance from the Jordanian government. Those who came directly from Gaza to the Jarash camp, around forty percent of the current inhabitants of the camp, are not registered with the UNRWA, and have neither passports nor official family registration records, which are the basic means for determining refugee status and entitlement for assistance.

Several key concerns emerge from this study. First, the issue of identity is visited again here. How are familial, gender, and, indeed, national identities negotiated in the context of an overwhelming administrative apparatus woven around Palestinian refugees—an apparatus in which the Jordanian government and the UNRWA play leading roles? Second, as is well known, the Palestinian family in the camp is mainly a collectivist family. As such, bonds are shaped by marriage to kin belonging to the same extended family, *hamula*, or *'ashira*. The interplay between family bonds and the administrative structure of UNRWA further fragments the extended Palestinian family and accelerates the emergence of the nuclear family. Here, Latte-Abdallah shows how UNRWA's classification scheme, which has undergone several iterations since the agency's inception, has ramifications for family structure. For example, in order to be classified a hardship case, a needy refugee family must not have an adult male between the ages of 18 and 60 living in the household. UNRWA's definition of economic hardship is not determined according to employability or availability of work opportunities, but by the projected ability of the agency to deliver food rations. Thus, the administrative need to control expenditure by reducing the number of hardship cases led to splitting up extended households; increasing nuclear households (more so in the Jabal Hussain camp, compared to Jarash camp); early marriages (and divorces); and the emergence of female-headed households (around fifteen percent of the families are female-headed). There is thus a disjunction between the reality of the family unit created out of administrative necessity, and the bonds of refugee family life.

Similarly, in singling out the patterns of leadership recruitment in the camps, the study locates several actors, primarily the Jordanian government which controls the camps, but assisted and followed by UNRWA, and various organizational groups (such as women's groups,

youth clubs, and students). The analysis reveals different patterns of local elite co-optation by the Jordanian government. In the Jarash camp, for example, the traditional structure of the *'ashira* and *qabila* remains intact, and the Jordanian authorities rely on these pre-1948 Palestine structures to insure social control. The Jabal Hussain camp exhibits a different social structural composition. The refugees are a mixture of urban dwellers and peasants. While the role of the village *mukhtar* is perpetuated and is transplanted to the camp, traditional family bonds weaken due to the increasing mobility of individual family members, in particular the younger generations who sought advancement in education and occupational qualification. Here the author detects another contrasting pattern of family bonds: the case of the Jarash camp presents a continuation of more or less existing patterns, which were strengthened after the Oslo agreement, that led to the return of refugees from Gaza to work for the police force of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Latte-Abdallah also analyzed marriage patterns with a view to determining the contours of identity. Endogenous marriages remained in effect in both camps, but they were not confined to the customary parallel patrilineal cousins. As a matter of fact, parallel-cousin marriages were in a minority, but endogamy within the wider kinship system remained high. She noticed that marriage outside the family lineage increasingly became the norm among refugees in Jabal Hussain. The village of origin in Palestine became a reference point for sustaining identity, and social space was expanded to the level of "national space." Thus, to marry a Palestinian became the new substitute for traditional kin relations.

Marriage patterns among Jarash camp inhabitants showed a cleavage peculiar to the camp. Bedouin refugees refrained from marrying refugees of peasant origin, and Palestinian refugees in the camps almost never married Jordanians. Only four such cases were documented in Jabal Hussain. If national considerations affected family structure, they also permeated a deeply-held concept of family honor as defined in terms of symbolic and biological identity. While family honor remains tied to female sexuality, Latte-Abdallah shows how the land, as a symbol of national honor, came to challenge the traditional definition of family honor based on defending female virginity. However, consistent with earlier findings noted above, in the larger scheme of things, the activist discourse regarding the role of women during the first intifadah failed to make a lasting dent on the gendered roles of men and women in Palestinian society, thus supporting Latte-Abdallah's claim that women's histories have been appropriated by others—mainly men.

Very much in line with the previous discussion, Randa Farah's work focuses on the rupture between the

promise and reality—the promise of return to Palestine and the reality of the post-Oslo agreement where, according to the refugees, their cause has been marginalized.⁶¹ She draws upon life-histories and oral narratives, rather than historical, positivist "data," in order to capture the "statement of culture and identity" as living experiences. Farah, who carried out her field work in Jordan's Baq'a refugee camp between 1995 and 1997, opts clearly for ethnographic rather than positivist methodology, thus giving a subaltern character to her work. It is a study of identity formation using popular memory as its basis.

Construction of Palestinian identity is viewed as an outcome of several competing forces having to do with interests of the Jordanian state, the PNA, UNRWA, the refugees themselves, and the Oslo agreement. Superimposed upon these are internal divisions within the Palestinian community: class, gender, and generation. Capturing popular memory through oral narratives reveals to Farah the contrasting, if not conflicting, "beginnings" upon which the various actors draw in telling their stories. For Palestinian refugees the "beginning" was the collective life of the village in pre-1948 Palestine; for UNRWA, the "beginning" was the Nakbah of 1948, which defined in terms of precise date and location who is to be considered a refugee and who is not. Thus, for UNRWA the construction of refugee experience has its beginnings in administrative practices, while the refugees resort to collective historical experience. Here is how Farah expresses it:

the very fact that both Agency [UNRWA] and the refugees have narratives with different "beginnings" implies conflict. For the Agency, the beginning of its history is "after" the 1948 Catastrophe, when it embarked on assisting a "helpless" and dispossessed people rise above their predicament. The "beginning" for refugees is in the village of origin. For refugees there is individual and collective histories and politics; for UNRWA there are the "refugees."⁶²

With no immediate promise of return to Palestine, the camp came to symbolize "the ethos of the village." In other words, the camps "became the metaphorical universal 'original village.'"⁶³

Similar to what I noted earlier, here too Farah discovers the sense of exclusion Palestinian refugees feel due to discrimination in the wider society. This discrimination is subtle and informal. Just being labeled a camp resident, one respondent told Farah, already jeopardizes job prospects. The camp is defined by its members as the hub of a moral community, a space which decries rampant materialist culture in the surrounding society. People outside the Baq'a camp talked about the camp in language laden with violent imagery, so much so that one respondent accused the outside world of trying to give the camp "a Chicago image...with people running

around with knives and raping women.”⁶⁴ The camp overwhelms the lives of its inhabitants socially, psychologically, and existentially. The camp sets Jordanians apart from Palestinians (very few Jordanians live in the camps). The camp becomes the terrain on which Palestinian identity is reconstructed, and it acts as a social leveler of some sort, where socioeconomic status differences are “cloaked” with the national symbolism of the camp.

However, Farah detects transformation in the discourse of Return. While it is not couched in abstract terms, the path of Return to Palestine now goes through the soul of the “Arab” citizen, a soul that must be purified, according to one respondent. In a remark made by one respondent, it appears that the liberation of Palestine and the right of refugee return are contingent on the adoption of democratic practices in society at large, and the right to say what one wants without fear of persecution. This is reminiscent of an old theme in Arab nationalist discourse. The business of Palestine is being re-cast as the concern of every Arab. It is being revived in the face of deep disappointments felt by the refugees over the conduct of the PLO in the aftermath of the Oslo agreements. If such a discourse has failed to be translated into reality in the past, what guarantees do we have that it will not fail again in the future? Farah, and indeed most of the memory literature, pins hopes on the power of memory. It is portrayed as restorative, that is, it is capable of restoring the right of return in this case. Memory is a necessary, but not an all-sufficient, condition for return. According to one refugee by the name of Nidal, “We will pass on to our children not only what our parents told us about the oranges of Palestine and so on, but we will pass on the memory of the camp and how the camp was a symbol of Palestine...look, many Palestinians went to the USA...but they did not forget Palestine.”⁶⁵ Indeed, one wonders how many refugees in these far away places are prepared to return to Palestine? More importantly, how many have developed a strategy of return? None were mentioned by the refugees who were interviewed above.

Jason Hart, in his research on young people from the Hussain camp in Jordan, provides us with a contrasting glimpse of refugee views on the right of return, with age playing an important role. Hart, who interviewed Palestinians between ten and sixteen years old, departs from traditional socialization approaches which view the young as passive agents whose cognitive map consists of a tabula rasa, or, as the author calls it, an “empty vessel.”⁶⁶ Rather, the view which Hart adopts is that the young, who are subjected to traditional, authoritarian teaching methods, where rote learning predominates, are nevertheless able to develop an oppositionary style of thought which is influenced by their generational location as camp members, the surrounding Islamist climate,

and the specific context of the UNRWA schools—the site for the reproduction of these oppositional styles of thought.

Hart questions the “naturalness” of the assumption that is based on a one-to-one correspondence between the parents’ and children’s views on Palestine. By interrogating this taken-for-granted assumption, which is near-sacred in the literature on Palestine, he shows that while young Palestinians under specific contexts are able, indeed expected, to reproduce parental imagery concerning the temporality and geography of Palestine, the picture which emerges from his research is quite different. Third generation Palestinians depart drastically from their parents and grandparents in terms of their Palestinian identity. Hart uncovers disdain by the young towards their elders—contrary to the view which depicts familial authority as the embodiment of respect for the elders by the offspring. After all, for the young it is the elders who lost Palestine. Moreover, these young Palestinians know very little about Palestine, although they have been taught to regurgitate the names of places from where their grandparents came. When asked to draw a picture of Palestine, the overwhelming majority of the children chose an Islamic emblem and drew Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock. Few drew the Palestinian flag, for example. For those able to articulate a vision of return, it was couched in a “cosmic, trans-historical view of the battle between Jew and Moslem to liberate the sacred land of Palestine, and most specifically the holy sites of Jerusalem.”⁶⁷ For Hart, this represents a clear transformation of the secular, nationalist discourse produced in earlier times by the Palestinian national movement. The Islamization of the discourse on Palestine reflects a displacement effect in the Palestinian conflict, where the liberation of Palestine is viewed by the young as the responsibility of every Moslem in the first instance. Finally, when asked about the future, few (only one-third) expressed the desire to return to Palestine; among those desiring to return even fewer had any notion of how to do this.

Conclusions

This paper situates the study of Palestinian society in the context of recent theoretical and methodological advances in social theory. Particular attention was devoted to ethnography in order to understand the refugee experience. It was demonstrated that ethnographic research allows the practitioner to interrogate the dialectical relationship between power and agency, and show how agency is capable of resisting power. Resistant subjectivity was facilitated by cross-subjectivity where women, mothers in particular, played a leading role in validating the experience of the male youth. Ethnographic research on Palestinian refugees produced unexpected results with regard to national identity. There

were ruptures in the discourse of return to Palestine, created in response to existential crises faced by the refugees. This rupture (whether the 1982 war in Lebanon or the Oslo agreement) was manifested among refugees living outside historical Palestine by their rejection of the Palestinian national movement, and by turning to Arabism and Islam as sources of inspiration for the redemption of Palestine. Similarly, discontinuity in the transmission of national identity across generations of Palestinian refugees raised questions about the assumption regarding socialization and the moulding of personality.

NOTES

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³⁴Giddens, *Constitution of Society*, 175.

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Problematizing Democracy in Palestine

JAMIL HILAL

There has been obvious interest in the Palestinian political system after the establishment of a Palestinian Authority (PA) with self-rule over parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Democracy is sometimes presented, overtly or covertly, as a resultant of the interaction between a competitive market economy, political representation, and a vibrant or active civil society. Others tend to emphasize political culture, legalistic (or constitutional) development, and institutions-building as the determinants of political democracy. However, the posited relationship between these factors and political democracy remains opaque. I want to argue that the crucial factors in establishing and reproducing political democracy are structures and processes that generate and reproduce a plurality of “autonomous” centercenters of power, driven or motivated to establish rules of co-existence (or rights) in order to maintain or stabilize the system. A system of this type promotes rules of political action, including rules for transfer of power.

In the case of Palestine the issue goes beyond democracy to questions related to the fate of the Palestinian people, including the destiny of the Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBG). This destiny has been shaped just as much by external actors and their projects, as by Palestinian initiatives and visions.

Democracy and the Narrative of Palestinian Nationalism

The establishment of an independent Palestinian state has dominated the political narrative of the Palestinian political movement since the twenties of the last century. The colonial state (Britain) and the Zionist colonization of Palestine shaped the Palestinian political field prior to 1948—the national movement that Palestinians refer to by the Arabic term *al-Nakba* (the catastrophe). This political field featured a multiparty system. Political parties were mostly, though with notable and important exceptions, formed round established merchant and land-owning families which formed autonomous centercenters of power. A second feature was the concern of these parties to stress their nationalist character by promoting the Moslem-Christian composition of their leadership. However, the multi-party political system was not allowed to take root or develop to full capacity as it faced the pressures and

repression of Mandatory power, as well as by the conflict with the fast-growing presence of Zionist settlers in Palestine. Following the 1936 Palestinian rebellion against both the British policy and the Zionist project the leadership of the national movement was imprisoned, exiled, or forced to flee. Later developments ended in the destruction of Palestinian society and the disintegration of the Palestinian national movement.

Following the creation of the Israeli state in 1948, Palestinians were dispersed and scattered into various communities, and their national political field disappeared. Palestinians (about one million people in the year 2000) who remained within the territory, on which Israel established itself, were subjected to systematic discrimination as a national minority by the state institutions of the Israeli state. The West Bank (whose population is about two million in the year 2000) was annexed in 1950 by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and resident Palestinians were granted Jordanian nationality but denied the right to express their national identity. Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (about one million in the year 2000) were put under Egyptian military rule in 1948. Refugee camps for Palestinians from areas taken over by Israel were established and run by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Work Agency) in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

With the total collapse of the Palestinian national movement, and the disappearance of the Palestinian political field in 1948 Palestinians began to join movements with wider political agendas: pan-nationalist movements (Nasserism, Ba’thism, and the Arab Nationalist Movement), left-wing parties (mostly communist parties), and Islamic groups. Three observations can be made in relation to this period from 1948 to the mid-1960s. Firstly, the collapse of the Palestinian national political field drove Palestinians, in the 1950s and part of the 1960s, to seek political meaning through identifying themselves with wider political fields, and pan-Arab nationalism appeared as the most relevant. Secondly, the collapse of the Palestinian political field did not mean a collapse of Palestinian national identity. It led to its reconstruction, with *al-Nakba* occupying a central catalyst in this reconstruction process. Thirdly, political democracy did not appear as an issue or relevant to Palestinian communities, which became subject to the specific political fields of the states they existed

in. Much more relevant was to escape repression of political activity or national identity by these regimes. This was particularly so since the period saw the upsurge of pan-nationalist regimes that showed little concern for political democracy, while in Israel the Jewish identity of the state took precedence over political democracy. Arab pan-nationalist regimes did sponsor the establishment of a Palestinian political entity in 1964 in the form of the PLO. In fact some Palestinians saw this as an attempt by the pan-nationalist regimes (Nasser's Egypt, and the Ba'ath regimes in Iraq and Syria) to contain the emerging Palestinian nationalism.

The defeat of Arab states by Israel in the 1967 June war provided the occasion for the Palestinian resistance groups (Fateh being the largest and most popular) to take over the PLO and to transform it into a national political field. In a short time the resistance movement, very much influenced by successful models of national liberation movements in the Third World, remade the PLO into an encompassing structure to accommodate autonomous political organizations (organizationally, financially, ideologically, and militarily). Here the resistance groups formed the autonomous centercenters of power that allowed pluralism to become a structural feature of the PLO of the new national political field. The defeat of the Arab regimes was the moment that allowed the resistance group to capture the PLO from the Arab states and to turn it into an organization with wide Palestinian popular support. Soon it imposed itself on the Arab states as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. By the mid-1970s this claim was officially acknowledged by all Arab states, a large number of Third World countries, as well as by the Soviet Union, which became a major ally of the PLO.

As a national movement with a strong military wing, with well-developed bureaucratic structures, and with its leading institutions operating from outside Palestine, democracy did not pose itself to the PLO or its political parties or groups as an urgent issue. The question of democracy within the PLO institutions was raised by left-wing organizations solely in the context of improving the "quota" system. The fact that the leading PLO institutions acted as a parliament-in-exile (PNC or the Palestine National Council) and a government-in-exile (the Executive Committee) made political democracy irrelevant. These institutions had no direct and sovereign access to the major Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which were occupied by Israel in 1967, nor in Jordan or Syria. The realization of the need for a territorial base, particularly with the recurring conflicts with various Arab states, is a decisive factor explaining the changes in the PLO objectives and tactics. Thus its objective changed from the establishment of a democratic secular state on the whole of Palestine, to the establishment of a state on the West Bank

and Gaza Strip. It also changed from undue reliance on armed struggle to reliance on a popular form of struggle. But the vision of the Palestinian state remained a democratic one. We find this vision enunciated in the Declaration of Independence adopted by the PNC in 1988. It included a vision of parliamentary democracy with regular and fair public elections, a state built on political pluralism, freedom of speech and organization, and the rule of law guaranteeing the equality of all citizens.

In short, the narrative of Palestinian nationalism, as in many other national movements, did not articulate democracy as an urgent or central issue. However Palestinian political life did experience a political, ideological, and organizational pluralism. This pluralism existed prior to the Nakba (albeit in temporary form and under extreme forms of colonial pressure), as well as to the political field constructed by the PLO (with autonomous political organizations having their own independent military, organizational, financial, and informational institutions). In other words no one political group or organization has a monopoly over the means or aims of struggle. What happened after the establishment of the PA in 1994 was an attempt by the central authority to exercise a monopoly over the means of struggle (and negotiations) other than peaceful forms of protests, and this was contested.

While accepting political pluralism, the PA rejected any dual authority, considering it a challenge to its legitimacy. The opposition, particularly the Islamic opposition, acknowledged the legitimacy of the PA but rejected its monopoly over means or aims of struggle. However the opposition parties refused to compete for "state" power, considering this as lending legitimacy to the Oslo accords.

The Oslo Accords: Built-in Constraints on Viable State-formation

A specific conjuncture guided the entry of the PLO into the Oslo process. The search by PLO for a home territory for its state project is relevant here. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw a series of occurrences that pressed on the PLO leadership the necessity of seeking a negotiated settlement to the Palestinian question. The impact of the first intifada on world opinion and on the Israeli political elite was one such occurrence. Another, the second Gulf war of 1991, estranged the PLO from the Gulf states, which have been major financial supporters of the PLO. The collapse of the Soviet Union, a major PLO ally, with the corresponding rise of the United States as the dominant world power, was a third occurrence. The highly unfavorable balance of power was reflected in the Oslo accords. It was no accident that the Oslo accords contain no mention of the establishment of a Palestinian state on the area occupied by

Israel in 1967 as the result of the negotiation process between the PLO and Israel. Nor do they refer to the fate of the four million or so Palestinian refugees.

Furthermore the Oslo accords did not specify any independent mechanism of implementing agreements between the two parties. The accords specified the establishment of a Palestinian Authority on parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip as an interim arrangement without outlining the final outcome of the negotiations. The issues of borders, East Jerusalem, Israeli settlements, and control of West Bank underground water resources were deferred to final status negotiations, to start in May 1999. This built-in gross asymmetry in the Oslo accords generated a gross asymmetry in Palestinian internal power relations. The asymmetry was manifested in an over-centralization of power at the top of the political pyramid, and in the marginalizations of national institutions.

Thus, although the PLO remained the formal partner to the negotiations with Israel, its role as the major player in the political field became increasingly peripheral as the leadership of the PA assumed state-like functions in territory classified as “A.” It took over the task of negotiations with Israel as well as the running of the quasi-state. But as we shall see, the negotiations failed to move towards the institution of a Palestinian state. Israel maintained its domination, settlement-building, and the arbitrary implementation of what it saw fit in its agreements with the PA. Thus, when final negotiations began with Israel the PA had control only over twenty percent of the West Bank and about sixty percent of the Gaza Strip. Final-status negotiations brokered by the United States at Camp David in July 2000 failed to produce an agreement. This failure fired the second intifada at the end of September 2000.

The continued active military, economic, financial, and security intervention of a settler-colonial power has its direct and indirect implications for democracy in Palestine, as will be illustrated later. This applies also to the dominant international discourse and power relations in the 1990s. As a decade it is very different from the decades in which other Arab states emerged (as other “third world” countries). Palestinian attempts at state formation, as reflected in PA institution building, were/are conducted under the hegemony of the ideology of economic liberalization, privatization, and “structural adjustment” advocated by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. It is an ideology with effective and powerful global institutions (economic, communicational, and financial) demanding a redefinition of state sovereignty that facilitates the free flow of capital and commodities on a world scale, and giving high priority to political and economic stability. The impact of foreign aid and donor assistance had contradictory ramifications on the emerging Palestinian

political system (e.g. a discourse of democracy and transparency, on the one hand, and tacit support for erecting large police and security apparatuses). Much of the donor discourse has been phrased in the language of development and human rights, but was, in practice, aimed at preventing the “peace process” from collapsing by mitigating the impact of Israeli economic measures.

The Palestinian Authority and the New Rules of the Political Game

Soon after its establishment in 1994 the PA faced three sets of issues. Firstly, it had to re-define and control a new national political field to supersede the one established by the PLO¹. Secondly, it had to carry on negotiations with a resident colonial power. Thirdly it had to administer (and transfer) a very weak and a highly dependent economy with a de-developed infrastructure (roads, airports, seaports, public water networks, electricity networks, sewage systems, etc.) that it inherited from Israel. All this had to take place without sovereignty over natural resources (large areas of land, underground water, Dead Sea minerals) or borders, and without territorial continuity.

The main organizational instrument of the PA, in all the above, has been Fateh. Hence, this party came to dominate all top positions of PA institutions: ministries, police and security apparatuses, the legislative council, the leading judiciary, the official mass media (press, radio, and television), and the negotiating team. Fateh remained, meanwhile, in the saddle of the formal PLO structures, which it could activate when there appeared to be a need for it.

The capture of the PA institutions by Fateh provided the latter's leadership with additional leverage and resources. Firstly, it enabled the political leadership to incorporate in the emerging government institutions many of the movement's leading local cadres which had long been ignored in the decision-making process. Secondly, it enabled the leadership to enlarge and consolidate a social base for its power. Fateh leaders did notice an increase in the membership of Fateh in the first years after the establishment of the PA. However, they realized that much of this new membership is opportunistic; that is, it has been brought about by the resources that Fateh has come to control through the PA. Thirdly, the organization's leadership was quick to use its newly acquired international recognition following the Oslo accords, and to use the new resources it now commands (including international assistance) to consolidate its power.

As a quasi-state power, the PA faced opposition from both Islamic and secular groups. These rejected the new rules and definitions that the PA tried to impose on the new political field. First the opposition groups (Islamic

and secular) formed a political alliance opposed to the Oslo accords and committed to its overthrow. The alliance (named “the group of ten”) did not last, as it was riddled with political, organizational, and ideological divisions that eventually led (in 1999) to its disappearance as a political actor from the political field.

Second, the secular and Islamic opposition political groups boycotted the general elections for the Legislative Council (PLC) and the head of PA that were scheduled for January 1996. The boycott, in fact, helped Fateh, as being the largest political party, to capture the overwhelming majority of the seats in the PLC, and enabled Arafat to win the presidency of the PA with a large majority. The high rate of popular participation in these elections dispirited the opposition that boycotted the elections. More importantly, the elections signaled a significant change in the national political field that was erected and dominated by the PLO during the previous three decades. The elections legitimized, in effect, the dominance of one party in the political field, and ended the consensual politics—which represented all political groups in the leading national institutions and legitimated their presence and political and organizational autonomy—that characterized the national political field dominated by the PLO².

Political Islam presented itself as a serious contestant to the authority and the legitimacy of the PA and was perceived as busy enlarging its political constituency. It is (that is Hamas and the Islamic Jihad) organized, has armed underground wings, well financed, and is capable of derailing the peace negotiations with Israel through militant tactics. Furthermore, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad have never been part of the PLO, and have not acquired the legitimacy accrued to political groups of the PLO. Of no less importance was the direct and indirect pressure exercised by both Israel and the USA on the PA to control and weaken the Islamic radical movement because it opposed the Oslo accords and was ready to use armed means of struggle against Israel. Given the balance of force (internal and external), the PA was able to impose itself as the sole, legitimate, central, national authority, and the Islamic movement (particularly Hamas) had to accept conducting itself as an opposition in accordance, more or less, with the rules of the game dictated by the PA.

The period prior to the second intifada saw the imprisonment of leaders and cadres of the Islamic movement by the PA, and in fact a readiness by both Hamas and Jihad to play, more or less, by the new rules of the political game. They had to accept the monopoly of the PA over the means of struggle, though not its monopoly over the aims of struggle. It needed the second intifada and the tacit approval of the PA to change the rules governing the means of struggle.

The second intifada created the moment to alter the

rules of the political field. The moment re-instated the rules that prevailed in the PLO as a national liberation movement. That is, the PA proposed a relaxation of its monopoly over the means of struggles. This change allowed the resumption of armed resistance against Israeli targets as Israel now used military force to repress the intifada or uprising. All political groups were now included in the local and regional political steering committees for the intifada, which encompasses all political groups active in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These changes were made possible after the collapse of the final status negotiations, held at Camp David in July 2000. The PA legitimacy was increasingly undermined by the failures of the Oslo process to produce an acceptable settlement of the conflict with Israel. To be acceptable a settlement has to include a viable Palestinian state that has East Jerusalem as its capital.

Regulating Relations with the Non-Governmental Organizations

The confrontation between the PA and professional non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took a somewhat different course than that with political Islam³. It developed when the PA proposed a law to regulate NGOs and charitable organizations. The proposed law was modeled on a restrictive Egyptian law which granted the government wide jurisdiction and control over the NGOs. The professional NGOs anticipating restrictive legislation from the PA formed soon after the latter’s establishment of an umbrella association for themselves (PNGO Network). The network or the alliance made canvassing for NGO autonomy one of its main tasks, using the militant history of civic associations against the Israeli occupation and their historical strong connections with mainly left-wing political parties. With the election of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the PNGO Network worked with some of its more active members to pass a more progressive law that ensures greater autonomy to NGOs. The law was ratified by Arafat in January 2000, with one amendment (registration to be with the Ministry of Interior and not Justice). This amounted to a victory for the NGOs. However the success was not solely the work of the NGOs and the Legislative Council, but also reflected donors’ pressures on the PA. The fact that NGOs provided employment for more than ten thousand individuals in a situation characterized by high unemployment also helped NGOs win the fight to establish their autonomy.

However the professionalization of NGOs has the price of orienting their work towards “service delivery” instead of or in addition to popular mobilization, and the severance or loosening of their connections with political parties. This was encouraged in one way or another by Western donor organizations. Foreign NGOs

and governments primarily conceived of the role of NGOs in Palestinian territories as “the promotion of confidence building for peace and stability” rather than promoting democratic change. The fact that the impact of Palestinian NGOs on political democratic change has not been noticeable despite their active presence since 1994 is an indication of the limited role they can play in this field. This is so because NGOs cannot form a national center of power base because of their fragmentation, lack of an organized constituency, and dependence on external resources.

Apart from their role in alleviating poverty, Palestinian NGOs have been most successful in circulating the “globalized” discourse that elevates notions of democracy, human rights, human development, and popular participation, among other notions. In the 1990s this discourse has gained an ascendance and dynamism of its own. It is a discourse that was propagated at the end of the cold war by international agencies and human rights’ organizations. Much of this discourse has infiltrated into the political address of political parties and became increasingly adopted by the institutions of the PA. In fact the dominant political culture is very much committed to the main principles of democracy (separation of powers, pluralism, free elections, freedom of speech and organization, unhindered participation of women in public life, and in the market).⁴

An Embryonic Two Party Political System?

All secular left-wing political groups experienced a decline in the relative size of their support following the establishment of the PA. The decline began in the early 1990s as the first intifada began to lose its popular democratic character under the multi-layered pressures of the of the Israeli occupation army. This applied also to the radical Islamic movement (i.e., Hamas and Islamic Jihad). However the second intifada saw a turn in trend as far as the Islamic movement is concerned as it witnessed a significant increase in popular support. The ruling party also witnessed a decline in support after 1996 (the year of the general election), and this decline continued during the second intifada.

Public opinion polls show that support of the adult population (eighteen years and older) in WBGS for all left-wing parties declined to 5.1% in December 1999 from 12.2% between September 1993 and December 1994. In December 1999 support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad stood at 11% compared to 17.6% between September 1993 and December 1994. Fateh support averaged 47.8% during 1995, compared to 37.1% in December 1999. A year in the second intifada saw support for radical Islamic groups rise to 26.4% (20.7% to Hamas and 5.7% to Islamic Jihad). In contrast support of Fateh dropped in September 2001 to 29.2%. Those who said they do not support any political group or

movement rose to 23% in September 2001 from 11.4% between September 1993 and December 1994, not including 12.3% who gave no answer)⁵. The Development Studies Programme at Berzeit University recorded a support among individuals aged sixteen years and above of 33.3% to Fateh just before the eruption of the second intifada, and a support of 17.6% for radical Islamic groups (13.9% for Hamas and 3.7% for Islamic Jihad). At the beginning of June 2001 support for Fateh dropped to 23% and rose to 24.7% for Islamic groups (18.7% for Hamas and 6% for Islamic Jihad). Support to secular left wing groups dropped from 5% at the beginning of September 2000 to 3.3% at the beginning of June 2001⁶.

These figures as well as de facto political performance point to a political system dominated by two major parties with a number of small secular and left wing political parties falling in between. It is likely that small political parties will either disappear from the political field or merge into one political formation. Whether the system of rule will be based on a democratic electoral system depends on the outcome of the present confrontation with Israel, and the final status negotiations if and when such negotiations reach an outcome. It also depends on the nature of the changes in the discourse and programs of the two main parties with respect to their commitment to democratic procedures and values. Of major importance are changes in the Palestinian economy and its internal integration, as well as its relations with neighboring economies. The emergence of a national bourgeoisie with an independent economic power base, a vocal professional middle class, a strong trade union movement, and a women’s movement could be decisive for democratic change.

A conglomeration of factors explains the recent changes in the Palestinian political map and the shift in the internal political balance of power. A triple shift occurred in the internal balance of power. First a shift occurred as to the location of the center of political gravity as it moved from “the outside” where the PLO institutions and leadership operated, to the “inside” (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) where the political movement faces daily the Israeli occupation. Second, a shift occurred in the composition of the political field with the entry of political Islam as a serious competitor to the historically dominant political party Fateh. Thirdly, the left wing groups lost much of the political and ideological influence that they had in the seventies and eighties.

Disillusionment with the Oslo process did culminate in the outbreak of the second intifada. And despite the leading role of Fateh in this intifada the party lost popular support as it was seen, rightly, as the ruling party. The Oslo process has led, among other things, to the worsening of the economic situation of most Palestinians, and this is expected to be reflected in a with-

drawal of support to the ruling party. The gain made by the Islamic groups during the second intifada is due to two reasons: the violence and new repression by Israel gave some credibility to the Islamists' strategy of armed resistance, which was substituted with negotiation by the PLO. In September 2001, a year after the start of the intifada, some 85% of adult Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip supported military operations against Israeli targets⁷. Secondly, the Intifada squeezed the resources available to PA, which affected public services and allowed the Islamic groups to step in with assistance to a population facing additional deprivation.

The shrinking support of secular political parties following the establishment of the PA is not, primarily, the result of changes in the political culture of Palestinians. It is not due to a migration from secular left wing or liberal political ideas to Islamic fundamentalist ideas, but due to dropping support to the left with no significant renewal of membership. We need to look at regional and international changes, and to changes in Palestinian communities, particularly those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The closure of Gulf states' labor markets to Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the restriction of their entry into the Israeli labor market had its impact on the class division and situation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The drying up of the financial resources of the PLO political parties following the Gulf war, and the support given to Islamic parties from Gulf and other sources are also relevant to the explanation at hand. But it was the political, ideological, and organizational quandary that followed the Oslo accords and the emergence of a new political national field that made the secular left at a loss and in disarray, unlike the tactical flexibility exhibited by Hamas, for example.

It is interesting to note that no significant differences emerge between the supporters of the two political parties, Hamas and Fateh, in terms of age and occupational structures, levels of education, and income. Furthermore no significant differences appeared in attitudes towards political democracy, both parties giving high scores to its major indicators. That is, Both Hamas and Fateh seem to be competing for the support of the same social base⁸. However, there were embryonic pointers before the second intifada that the Palestinian public views the two main parties as representing the interests of different social classes. This applied to the supporters of the two parties. For example, nearly 40% of Fateh supporters saw Fateh as representing the rich, while 43% of Hamas supporters saw Hamas as representing the poor. It remains embryonic, as a high percentage of supporters of both parties recorded that they do not think a political party exists that represents the poor or the rich or the middle class or express an opinion on the issue⁹. It is not clear what effect the

second intifada did have on the perception of political parties in relation to social classes. My guess is that the intifada has strengthened the politics of national identity at the expense of what could be termed the politics of class interest.

Attempts by secular left wing parties to unify themselves have, so far, produced no results, and fragmentation remains the dominant feature of these groups. A unified platform could collect up to 7% of popular support, and could attract the support of some of the 23% of the adult population who say they do not trust any of the present political parties. This could make an impact on the Palestinian political field.

The decline of secular political parties has its impact on mass or sectoral organizations (trade unions, women's organizations, student organizations, etc.). These movements did play an active role—acting as organizational and political fronts for the PLO and its political groups—in organizing resistance to the Israeli occupation and as providers of basic services. The failure of the first intifada to achieve its political ends had its impact on these mass organizations¹⁰. In comparison, older types of solidarities (based on kinship and local ties) witnessed a re-emergence (albeit with new articulations) along side the process of the quasi-state formation of the PA. Such revivals are a reflection of the decline of secular political parties, which sustained and supported these organizations, as well as the paralysis that befell the leading institutions of the PLO. It is also due to the state formation process itself that was initiated by the PA in order to maintain and stabilize its control.

The Quasi-State Formation and Social Polarization

The non-existence of a sizeable public economic sector appeared to be an asset to the newly established PA. However it posed contingencies. The PA needed to erect its state bureaucracy, a police and security force, and various other state institutions. Such an enterprise required resources and these remained very scarce. Furthermore the PA remained under the watchful and suspicious eyes of Israel. This meant that it had to maneuver within a very restricted political and economic space. To add to its problems as a novice authority the PA had to struggle with a sharp rise in unemployment and a noticeable decline in GNP in the areas that came to be under its control.

The local economy in West Bank and Gaza Strip is still dominated by very small family businesses (mostly located in the informal sector) with very weak industrial and agricultural capabilities and no national capitalist or business class. The establishment of Palestinian businessmen in the West Bank and Gaza was parochial or locally based with hardly any national base. In addition the Palestinian market is fragmented (West Bank is cut

off from Gaza Strip, and both from Jerusalem), and further fragmentation was imposed in response to the second intifada. The West Bank and Gaza Strip had no unified legal system (West Bank operated under Jordanian law, Gaza operated under British Mandate law and East Jerusalem under Israeli law). In addition the PA has not been handed control over natural resources (land, water, Dead sea), historic and religious sites (Jerusalem), control over borders, or control over movement between the various parts of the territory that came under its control¹¹. In short, the PA inherited an economy with compound structural weaknesses and disadvantages¹².

The first few years of PA rule have witnessed the emergence of a new class structure. A new class of entrepreneurs and businessmen began to emerge with various companies operating at a national level that is operating in all areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (such as Pedico and Paltel). The establishment of a banking system in PA territory (with more than twenty Palestinian, Arab, and international banks and many tens of branches) provided businessmen a needed financial and credit infrastructure. Second, local businessmen began forming their own associations and unifying their voices with the objective of pressing their demands for a liberal economic policy that they need the PA to support. In this they were supported and encouraged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Third, Palestinian political elite from the ruling party began to engage in business either by themselves or in joint ventures with established businessmen, particularly with Palestinian businessmen with large capital who have been operating outside the occupied territories and have become interested in extending their investment to Palestinian areas. Thus, a kind of alliance was created between the sectors of the top political elite and certain sectors of the Palestinian bourgeoisie (particularly with a strata of expatriate large capital).

Palestinian state formation has not only initiated a process of national bourgeoisie formation, but also a process that enlarged the Palestinian middle class in the PA territories. The new middle class is composed of a number of sections. First, there are those in the higher echelons of the PA bureaucracy, and in public services. Second are the directors of Palestinian and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as university teachers and administrators. Thirdly there are those in management of the new enterprises, banks, and companies. One can add to the above full-time cadres of political parties. Available indicators suggest that income, work conditions, and job security of most of the new middle class have improved since the establishment of the PA. However, the PA, compared to the earlier period (comparing the rule of the middle class

in the first intifada with its rule in the second intifada) has marginalized the political role of the middle class. More important, perhaps, is the fragmentation of this class, and its privileged socio-economic position, which limits its political role to making policy recommendations and engaging in occasional protests. However, someone might want to argue that the middle class, given its political diversity, could in future, in pursuit of a way out of its marginalization, help in formulating the political rules of the game that permit peaceful competitive political coexistence. This is possible because of its strategic position within the political groups and in other civil society organizations.

The working class is even more fragmented than either the middle class or the business or capital-owning class. Over ninety percent of establishments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip employ less than five individuals each, and a high percentage of these establishments employ “informal” labor, that is with no or little job security or formal contracts. Before the outbreak of the second Intifada, about a fifth of the labor force (the majority are unskilled or semi-skilled wage earners) was employed in Israel or in Israeli settlements. Again, employment in Israel carried neither job security nor contractual arrangements. Work mobility between Gaza Strip and West Bank is almost non-existent. Given these facts, most wage workers have little or no job security, and because of closures and other Israeli measures since the establishment of the PA the standards of living or workers had witnessed a decline. These features of the working class make unionization not an easy task. In fact, trade unions have become extremely bureaucratic and isolated from workers’ problems and needs, particularly since the first intifada. In other words, trade unions do not present a center of power that could balance the embryonic center of capital power. The PA president, heeding the opinion of business associations, has not ratified the labor law, despite the fact that it was passed many months before the second intifada by the Legislative Council and accepted by the labor unions.

Crossroad

The PA impact on the social structure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been noticeable in two main spheres. First, it has been felt in the sphere of public employment, and consequently in expanding the ranks of the middle class. The establishment of the PA has been concomitant with a heightening of the insecurity and the lowering of standards of living of the working class. This is a result of Israel’s use of economic measures against the Palestinian territories for political ends. Second, the PA leadership has promoted the emergence of a new business class, but could not create a secure investment environment for foreign capital, because of

the continued conflict with the colonial state. In the sphere of employment the PA created a large government sector that has come, in 1999, to employ almost 23% of the active labor force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. That is a percentage that equals that of those employed in Israel before the recent Intifada (some 120 thousand day laborers working mainly in unskilled jobs)¹³. But while public sector employment provides a reasonable degree of job security and a minimum of social benefits, employment in Israel carries no job security or social benefits.

The emerging Palestinian quasi-state is in a situation not comparable to situations passed by other states in the region. Not only does it face a powerful colonial settler state and an occupation army, it has also emerged in a different global metropolitan time than other states established by national liberation movements. It is a time dominated by an ideology of privatization, free trade, and minimum state function. This, in addition to scarcity of resources has induced the PA to leave the planning of "development" to international agencies and donor countries. At the same time the PA, because of the paucity of resources in a highly precarious political situation, has adopted policies to generate capitalists through various forms of rent generation. These included the creation of monopolies (private, mixed, and public). They included also the creation by the president of a parallel budget to meet emergencies created by the colonial state that could disable or destabilize the regime. This budget was not subject to the scrutiny or supervision of any of the PA or PLO bodies or any other public body, despite frequent attempts by the Legislative Council to do so¹⁴. However it was terminated under the pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 2000¹⁵. As such, the parallel budget was financed through profits that accrue from partnerships in monopolies, commissions on licenses, and investments of sums deducted from public employees for pensions and other benefits. In addition some of the top PA officials have used their office or leading position in Fateh to facilitate private access to local markets and investments. In short, a process of rent-seeking emerged to create a new stratum of capitalists. This should not deflect from the fact that the PA did enhance significantly the delivery of basic services particularly in the fields of education, health, infrastructure, and social support.

What is of concern to us here is the prospects that the establishment of a Palestinian state, have had on local capital, mostly of medium and small size. It has induced it to create national (covers the whole of the WBGs) associations. The two years before the eruption of the intifada have witnessed a strong movement towards the creation of associations by local businessmen. These have been vocal in demands to end mo-

nopolies, to regulate licensing, and to allow participating in the formulation of economic policies. In this they have no doubt been encouraged and supported by international financial agencies. Following the eruption of the second intifada, local capital has been active in the campaign to boycott Israeli products and to encourage locally produced commodities. It is likely that indigenous businessmen, if and when an acceptable and workable political settlement is achieved, will form an autonomous center of power that could affect the prospect of democracy in Palestine.

Following the Oslo accords, international donors pledged some 3 billion dollars to the PA to be disbursed between 1994 and 1998¹⁶. These pledges were made under the assumption that improving the standard of living, rebuilding the infrastructure of the WBGs, and building adequate public institutions are necessary for promoting the peace process. That is, the motive behind aid has been openly political¹⁷. Basic to the donors' agenda has been keeping the peace process on track¹⁸, although their public discourse has emphasized development, economic liberalism, and liberal democracy¹⁹. Moreover "only a little over half the total monies pledged to the Palestinians had actually been disbursed, and much of that went for budget support," and "to technical assistance, often involving highly paid experts from abroad"²⁰. The complex structure set up to administer and co-ordinate aid to the PA only highlights the specific agenda of each donor and the absence of an overall plan for foreign aid. To this could be added the PA's susceptibility to political and financial pressure from Israel and the donor community.

In summary the establishment of the PA has had a powerful impact on the structure of Palestinian society. These impacts are most obvious in the emergence of the new political field with its alignments, oppositions, discourses, challenges, and internal dynamic. This paper suggests the political system is moving towards a two-party system, with each party having its autonomous center of power. The impact has also been evident most in the sphere of class formation, particularly in the formation of a new capitalist class through an alliance between expatriate capital and the top bureaucracy, the enlargement of the modern middle class and the process of social proletarianization in society. Such polarization could feed the existing political proletarianization. This carries with it the prospect of political democracy or the attempt by one of the two main parties to impose its domination on the political system. This depends, to no small measure, on the outcome of the ongoing conflict with Israel, over the shape and powers of the future Palestinian

NOTES

¹The PLO's political field was built on the idea of a national

alliance that allowed the participation, on the basis of a quota system, of all political groups in the leading institutions of the PLO while retaining their full organizational, political, ideological, military, and financial independence. The discourse of the PLO political field was dominantly a discourse of resistance, liberation, and self-determination. Political Islam has no influence or representation in the PLO's political field, where a huge bureaucracy and military apparatus with a secular culture developed. The political field that emerged after the establishment of the PA was based on a system of government (or a ruling party) and an opposition, not on the idea of national consensus. In the new political field of the PA, political Islam has had an influential contesting role. The discourse of the new field is also different in that it emphasizes state building, democracy, accountability, and human rights. However the continued presence of a colonial situation imposed the continuity of a discourse of national liberation.

²By national here is meant the institutions, the documents, and the rules that define processes of decision-making that speak to the Palestinian people and in their name. National political fields are state oriented. In the Palestinian case the national political field is geared to the establishment of a Palestinian state and addressing the rights of the Palestinian refugees. Given the dispersion of Palestinians in various political fields one can speak of local political fields (for Palestinians in Israel, Jordan, and Lebanon).

³In the year 2000, there were 926 Palestinian NGOs active in West Bank and Gaza Strip (77% in the West Bank and 23% in Gaza Strip). Most of these were composed of charitable organizations (40.4%), followed by youth and sports clubs (30.4%). Modern (professional) NGOs composed some 29.2% of the total. The modern NGOs were composed as follows: 10.2% were classified as cultural centercenters; 4.8% as welfare organizations (including Zaka committees) which should be added to the charitable organizations; 4.9% as development organizations; 3.5% as research centercenters; 2.7% as training NGOs; and 2.6% as human rights organizations. Some 39% of NGOs received funds from external donors (foreign and Arab), with half depending mainly on such funds; 29% received assistance from the PA; some 88% supported their budget from their own resources; 71.5% received assistance from local sources; and 19.5% received assistance from Palestinians inside Israel. Of the NGOs that reported their revenues (711 organizations) indicate total revenue of nearly \$113 million for the year 1999, nearly half from external sources. Revenues varied widely from 14 million to a few hundred dollars for the same year. Interestingly, more than a third (37.6%) of NGOs were created between 1994 (when the PA was established) and 2000. Most NGOs adopt general aims, and only a few have clear, well-defined aims. Towns, in contrast to villages and camps, had the larger percentage (60%) of NGOs as well as those with the better assets and capabilities. See: Yasser Shalabi, et al, *Mapping of Palestinian Non-government Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Palestine Economic Research Institute (MAS), Ramallah, May 2001; and Jamil Hilal and Magdi Maliki, *Social Support Institutions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Palestine Economic Research Institute (MAS), Ramallah, September, 1997.

⁴For example in a survey in November 1997, a high percentage of a representative sample (aged 18 and above) con-

sidered the following important or very important for Palestinian society: freedom of political activity (Hamas supporters 78.4%; Fateh supporters 75.8%, PFLP 84.9%); independent judiciary activity (Hamas supporters 90.3%; Fateh supporters 92.9%, PFLP 94.3%); rule of law activity (Hamas supporters 96.1%; Fateh supporters 97.7%, PFLP 94.3%); regular free general elections (Hamas supporters 87%; Fateh supporters 92.9%, PFLP 96.2%); freedom of expression, organization, and demonstration (Hamas supporters 90.9%; Fateh supporters 89.3%, PFLP 98.1%); representing women fairly in all PA institutions (Hamas supporters 74%; Fateh supporters 76.4%, PFLP 84.9%). See: Jamil Hilal, *Palestinian Society and the Problematic of Democracy*; Center for Palestine Research and Studies, Nablus, August 1999, Table 8, appendix (in Arabic).

⁵Figures are based on public opinion surveys carried by Center for Palestine Research and Studies (Nablus) up to December 1999. Figures for September 2001 are taken from Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC), poll No. 42 (September 2001).

⁶The Development Studies Programme at Berzeit University, poll No. 1 (31 August 2000–2 September 2000), & poll No. 4 (31 May 2001–3 June 2001).

⁷JMCC, poll No. 42 (September 2001).

⁸Jamil Hilal, *Palestinian Society and the Problematic of Democracy*, 70-75.

⁹Jamil Hilal, *Palestinian Society and the Problematic of Democracy*, 100, table 7.

¹⁰The only exception is university student associations, which retained their strong connection with political parties. However these associations remained associations within each of the eight Palestinian universities in West Bank and Gaza Strip. No active umbrella association for university students exists, except in name.

¹¹Under the Oslo-2 Agreement the West Bank was divided into three areas: Area "A" which is under Palestinian control (confined to towns); Area "B" which came under Israeli security control and PA civil administration (confined to villages) and area "C" which is totally under Israeli control. The largest area is still area "C." All Israeli settlements—with a total population of about a third of a million remaining under Israeli jurisdiction—are connected directly to Israel by newly built pass-by roads. Palestinian population in WBGS including Arab Jerusalem numbered some 2.9 million at the end of 1997. Borders remained under Israeli control and so did natural resources (including water and Dead Sea mineral resources). There is still no "safe passage" connecting the West Bank with Gaza as was envisaged by the Oslo accords. Much of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations since 1995 have been on the size of areas to come under Palestinian control. The implementation of the Wye agreement will bring 40% (some 18% Area "A") of the West Bank under PA control, and the remaining 60% as Area C.

¹²*Development under Adversity*, 5. The World Bank and MAS study, referred to here, put the combined cost of work permit restrictions and border closure policies at about \$850 million in 1995 and \$1 billion in 1966 (in 1995 prices and compared with the situation prevailing in 1992). p. 7. These figures are triple the amount of international aid received by the PA, indicating an Israeli policy of impoverishment of the WBGS.

¹³UNSCO, Office of the Special Coordinator of United

Nations (Gaza Strip), Report on the Palestinian Economy, autumn issue, 1999, table 15.

¹⁴Shuaybi, Azmi 2000. "A Window on the Workings of the PA: An Inside View," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, no. 117, (Autumn 2000), Washington: Institute of Palestine Studies.

¹⁵Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLIC). 7-8 June, 2000. West Bank and Gaza Economic Policy Framework Progress Report, Ramallah; Pecdar, (in Arabic).

¹⁶The international donor community included some 40 countries and international bodies. Most of the pledges (\$2.23 billion) were in the form of grants, and \$0.76 billion were in loans. The largest pledges came from the EU and individual European countries, followed by the US, Japan, and Saudi Arabia.

¹⁷The most clear in their political agenda was the USAID. Other donors support democracy-related projects. There is much doubt as to the benefits of these projects run by NGOs as they tend to focus on individual rights and less on collective rights, or the organization of people over issues they deem important.

¹⁸One USAID official is quoted as saying regarding aid to Palestinians; "... for political reasons, it is our government's interest to co-ordinate aid with Israel. The Embassy sees to it that Israeli interests are secured and that Israeli officials are involved in decision-making" (Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre, *Mortgaging Self-Reliance, Foreign Aid and Development in Palestine, Phase 2 Report*, Jerusalem, November 1997).

¹⁹However, issues of liberal democracy and human rights were overlooked by influential donors when Israeli "security" of individuals required so.

²⁰Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre, *Foreign Aid and development in Palestine*, 46-47.

Bourgeois Nostalgia and the Abandoned City

SALIM TAMARI

Testimonies commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Nakba in the spring of 1998 kept on flowing in a manner that confounded narrators and listeners.¹ The former were perplexed at their own silence for what seemed like eternity, before releasing their concealed stories. The listeners were also perplexed at the narrators for having failed to explain those stories—whether the stories portrayed divine retribution or a collective inability to face a superior enemy.

Besides the testimonies, which constituted a collective biography of the war generation, commemorative activities included a “march of the million” organized by a number of political parties, poetry recitals, documentary films, the production of posters, and endless lectures and essays analyzing the past and reinterpreting it in the light of the present.

The most poignant of the Nakba oral testimonies were primarily contemporary eyewitness disclosures of the war of 1948. In the main these were unembellished episodes of events lived by the narrators, mediated only by the problematic prism of their memories, and by the presence of a younger audience and their recording machines. Most of those narratives were distinguished from intellectual discourses by their spontaneity, their simplicity and by the distance their narrators kept from the world of the intelligentsia and politicians.² Most of the narrators were “average” people who were involved in the events while being on the margin of society—mainly as drivers, fighters, mukhtars (notables), sheikhs, peddlers and the like. Many of them were, and still are, illiterate.

The dominant characteristic of those narratives was the emphasis on the dramatic nature of the incident, as if the war itself and the displacement that followed were not dramatic enough. Siege, confrontations with the enemy, fighting, massacres, martyrdom, and expulsion were at the core of the stories. The following is a typical example:

When the training period in Syria was over, we entered the country via the Allenby Bridge. We then headed to Jaffa via Ramla and then to Yazour. Two hundred and forty of us fighters gathered in Al-Ajami in four detachments. We witnessed several skirmishes in Tel Al-Reesh, from where we moved to Manshiyya, where the situation started to deteriorate. I recall a Yugoslav group that included three Christians who

committed suicide at Hasan Bey Mosque, each of them by allowing himself to be shot by his colleague. After that, I left Manshiyya to Ajami for the second time with Musa Al-Qattan who was an explosives expert, and from there, we went to the Salamah Duwwar [rotary]. When we tried to withdraw, car drivers refused to take us with our weapons, and we refused to withdraw without our weapons. This continued until the British secured our exit in a caravan that included 21 fighters. I then returned to Silwad where I joined the fighters. The last scene I witnessed was the departure of most Jaffa inhabitants in motorboats and light barges to the steamers waiting at sea.”³

What is absent in this story—and numerous other similar episodes of war—is the fabric of daily life, which could have provided the framework of these incidents and explained them. There is an assumption here, it seems, that what is “normal”, in the perception of the narrator, is taken for granted and needs no recalling. The moderators of these testimonies, mostly academics, tried in vain to provide the social and political background that engulfed the dramatic moment, and to give it the necessary interpretation, but they invariably collided against a barrier of astonishment, denial or forgetfulness.

Above all, however, *there is an overriding sense of localism*. What happened then is seen as having happened to this town or village in a context isolated from an onslaught that affected Palestine as a whole. While the narrators recognize that the Nakba, the collective tragedy, happened to the country as a whole, this realization is not reflected in the protocols of narration—nor in the pattern of the stories thus retold. There is an astounding absence of the overall picture, and of the networks that affected the lives and behaviour of the combatants and onlookers alike. Thus the siege of Jaffa and Lydda, the massacres of Deir Yasin and Dawaiymeh, and the exodus from Safad and Haifa—all happened in these narratives as disparate incidents unconnected to the general saga of the war.

The Vision Transformed

Equipped with hindsight we can today explore the transformations that eventually differentiated the consciousness of exiled Palestinians from those who re-

mained in Palestine in order to examine the shifting concepts of what the “homeland” meant to them and how they understood notions of return to the homeland.

In the era of the first dispersion (1948-1967), the concept of a categorical Return to Palestine came into being and was linked to an abstract vision of liberating the land. This dream/vision was personified in the paintings of Tamam and Ismail Shammout, focusing on the image of a paradise lost and idyllic peasant landscapes. In Shammout’s paintings all internal conflicts in Palestinian society were obliterated and a pastoral picture based on the collective memory of the Palestinian refugees in the Arab host countries was produced. The most salient traits of this vision are found in the tortured relationship between the exiled refugees and their usurped homeland. These exiles’ homeland was their homes to which they were continually seeking to return—their village communities or their town neighborhoods. The people who remained steadfast on their land, on the other hand, were excluded from this vision in a magical act, as if their staying in Palestine was no more than a coincidence unworthy of consideration.

In the period of the second conquest (after the war of 1967), the relationships between the Palestinians in exile and those who remained in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as in Arab communities of the Galilee, was reformulated. The Palestinians who had remained in the Galilee—as well as in other Israeli territories, were looked upon as heroes, albeit ineffective ones. This motif prevailed until the Land Day incidents broke out in the Galilee and the Negev, when their status was “upgraded” and these steadfast Palestinians were now given the appellation equivalent to that of the “heroes of return” (“*abtal al-awda*”), a term until then reserved for Palestinian refugees living in exile.

This relationship changed yet again after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority and the signing of the Oslo Accords. With the return to the occupied territories of tens of thousands of exiles, it signified a shift in Palestinian decision-making and self-identity in the direction of a new territorial base inside the homeland. As a result, the diaspora Palestinians, and not the ones inside, now found themselves marginalized—especially those in refugee camps.

With this political/demographic transformation, the concept of return to Palestine has now acquired different nuances. Tension emerged immediately after the signing of the interim accords because the vision of an abstract liberation collided with a “realistic” political vision of limited and qualified repatriation. Returning to Palestine was now possible only through individual visits. Returning collectively was impossible due to the existing balance of forces between Israel and the Palestinians.⁴

This qualified return to the homeland was mediated by two new developments. The first involves the rediscovery—or actually the “discovery”—of the forsaken Palestinians in their homeland—the presence of living communities who have retained their own social fabric, their specific cultural traditions, and their literature and art. These communities engendered a new problematic in relation to Palestinian society in exile, which in the past had hardly acknowledged their existence.

The second phenomenon involves what may be referred to as “visiting encounters” by the third generation of Nakba victims. This generation lived the Nakba through the imagery of their parents and grandparents. The members of this third generation had only lived in a Palestinian society under colonialism (in the West Bank and Gaza Strip), or subjected to a military invasion (Lebanon), or lacked a normal daily life (exile in the Arab countries).

A Vindictive Return

In the summer 1994, a number of activists intellectuals who returned to Palestine with the PLO cadres following the Oslo accords began publishing a series of essays on the experience of return from exile.⁵ These pieces collectively constitute a rich body of discourses on journeys towards the reformulation of self-identity. If there is one theme that unites them it is the theme of shock at the rediscovery of the homeland. They all seem to have landed after a prolonged flight, but it is not clear in whose homeland they have landed.

The poet Ghassan Zaqtan portrays the homeland as the new exile. He returns to his village Zakariyya, now the Hebraized Kfar Zakariyya, and tries to recall the stories of his forefathers:⁶

Zakariyya did not look as it was described at all. The hill was not astonishing as in the description, and the Jews who were wandering along the roads did not relate to the place; rather, there was a distance separating them from it...the body movement...shoulders in particular. It seemed to me that they were totally removed from what was happening...I said something I no longer remember. I did not abandon it. I have no right to do that; I have no right to abandon it. This is a knowledge that is more sublime than the vehicle of yearning that brought me here, or rather the exile that brought me to my father's place.⁷

Zaqtan extrapolates from his testimony, falling back on Arab exodus from Andalusia:

We have become the new Andalusians. It seems very appropriate. The text has chosen its language, comparisons and exile. All of a sudden “our return” seems like a white. It seems like a treachery of exile, text, and the idea of Andalusia, the land we inhabited for centuries. We had to take back our suitcase and leave with-

out any notice. We had excluded Awda from our Andalusian condition but have yet to find Andalusia.

Zaqtan refers to the disintegration of the concept of holiness when imagining the sacred land as he confronts the Israeli Other:

Sacredness here presents another problem when facing the holiness of the other who cannot be expunged from the scene. The ability of the other to propagate his own sacredness and make it part of the contemporary universal scene cannot be negated. I was never convinced that the sacred... stands on our side. The "other" had already established his mythology, reformulated it as a racial doctrine, and descended on our villages, towns and roads like a huge silver plate coming from a neighboring unseen mythology. This was at a time when our own myth was collapsing and disintegrating on the ground with the elapse of time, forgetfulness and a fading conviction.⁸

This fetishism of the homeland dominates the imagery of poet Zakariyya Mohammed. Contrary to his colleagues however, he decided not to philosophize things. He chose instead literary metaphors to treat current dilemmas of the returnees. The aridity of the Palestinian new return is equivalent to the arid soil left to the remaining part of Palestine after the Israelis appropriated the coastal regions:

I thought I would double my idols and mirrors in the homeland. What is this homeland? It is no more than a piece of land that is left for us. It is a piece of stone. It is a land of mountains and hills...a land of stone and rock. They took the coast and left rocky hills for us. No, in fact, they did not leave it; we try to make them leave it. What can we do with stone? We can at least bear our agony.⁹

Hasan Khader, by contrast, attacks Palestinian narcissism and its accompanying self-pity. This narcissism, he claims, lifts the concept of return to the level of a cult, which needs to be transcended in favour of "normalizing" daily life through a new praxis.

What we lived through in the past was the time of a transitional culture of contingencies [thaqafat tawari'], the culture of transforming refugees into a people. The problem now is to how to transform those people into a new normalcy away from the domain of the "miraculous children".¹⁰

This search for "normalcy" is viewed as the problem of a culture that has finally shifted from attempting to rise to focus on an "exemplary homeland" to coming to grips with a "flesh and blood" homeland--that is to say, towards a shift from ideology to reality. "This is a shift that requires the writer to depart from the illusions of a 'stolen homeland'."

There is no possibility of reproducing the homeland as a paradise lost. The homeland is at hand, disfigured and distorted and waiting for salvation. We have an

identity that is still in the formulation stage. This identity will become larger with every meter we are able to extract from the occupier, with every road we construct, every book we print, every woman we free (sic), every window we open in our life, which is so burdened with stagnant air, and every decision we take in the fields of social and political organization and human rights.¹¹

Of all the returnees Khader is the one most obsessed with the process of return to the normalization in Palestinian daily life--a normalcy which he sees as a categorical pre-condition for normalization with his protagonists.

Mureed Al-Barghouthy is arguably the author with the utmost inner peace among the returnees. He is probably the only one among them who is not a refugee, or whose family did not leave coastal Palestine to become a refugee family. He is also the most relentless in self-criticism when viewing his own past. "How can we explain today," Barghouthy says in *I Saw Ramallah*,¹² "after we have grown and become mature, how we in the towns and villages of West Bank treated our people who were expelled by Israel from their coastal cities and villages...and came to stay in our mountainous towns and villages. We called them refugees, we called them immigrants!"

Barghouthy's return to Palestine involved a qualified sojourn to his village of Deir Ghassaneh (a formerly feudal estate in the Ramallah district). But it was Jerusalem that became the focus of a nostalgic recollection of the sensuous memories of his adolescence:

That vague enjoyment we felt when our adolescent bodies touched the bodies of European tourist women on the Saturday of Fire [Sabt enNour, during the orthodox celebrations of the day before Easter Sunday], when we shared with them the darkness of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and carried the white candles that illuminate the darkness, just like them. This is mundane Jerusalem, the city of our little times that we had forgotten too quickly. Because it is normal, just as water is water and lightning is lightning, and just as our hands were lost, it has now emerged as an abstraction.¹³

To a poet who grew up in the socially repressive milieu of the highland villages the Holy City evokes a keen sense of eroticism. Thus, tragedy for Barghouthy is not the Nakba itself, but rather the loss of the city which it gave rise to. "The occupation has left the Palestinian villages as they were and reduced our cities to villages."¹⁴ At the end, the writer preserves his Palestinianism in the imagination, and returns to his promised land in Cairo.

The Abandoned City

In the current debate concerning the significance of the Nakba and Awdah, the political and emotive are intertwined. So long as the lines separating exile from

the homeland are clear, the Palestinian discourse pertaining to notions of Return remains clearly delineated in their abstraction. The main price for this clarity and purity, however, was--until recently-- the exclusion of the people who remained rooted in their homeland from the discourse of liberation. But as exiles begin to return, as they did with the establishment of the new Palestinian entity the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the issues have become confused, and the imagined constructs of the homeland had to be reformulated.

I will review here the nature of this debate through the heated polemics pertaining to the meaning of Nakba and Awda. It is a debate that has been taking place among exiled intellectuals and natives of the city of Jaffa, who have pondered the meaning of the city's iconography over the last decade. The significance of this contested dialogue is due first to the centrality of Jaffa in the culture of Palestine before dispersion, and secondly, because it sums up the nature of this new relationship between exile and the homeland.¹⁵

In a collection of testimonies gathered in this debate, the concept of return was discussed and the incidents of 1948 invoked, often producing contradictory visions of the Palestinian experience. The discussion also dealt with experiences of internal estrangement on the part of those Palestinians who remained in Jaffa, including those who moved into the abandoned city since the war. It dealt with the experience of those who returned to Jaffa on personal visits after the 1967 war, while refusing to accept what had happened. And finally, the discussion dealt with the experience of Palestinian intellectuals who have tried to reconstruct a vision of what happened to the city in the light of hindsight, trying to understand why the city's social elite abandoned it before it fell militarily, and whether this fate could have been avoided?

In these experiences we find the following overlapping themes: an attitude, bordering on hostility, on the part of the city's remaining residents towards the returnees for ignoring the realities of the present city, and elevating it to the level of an abstract memory; the vision of the Other (the Israeli Jew) and attempts to come to terms with their displacement; the attempt by refugees to restore the past through modification of the new reality, or through a protracted attempt to co-exist with this new reality.¹⁶ Altogether, we can distinguish here the responses of three groups from Jaffa, all of who lived through the experience of the Nakba but in different places and at different times.

The experience of the first group is exemplified through the writings of the first generation that lived the events of war and expulsion and tried to restore through their memoirs the vision of the city before it fell to Israeli control. This is a restorative memory that expunged contradictions and tries hard to enable one to make a

mental return to the lost paradise. The issues that occupy this group's vision revolve around three themes:

- An obsessive nostalgia. The group attempts to restore the city through the reinvention of its dramatic landmarks such as the festival of Nebi Ruben and the invocation of idyllic vignettes from pre-War Jaffa.¹⁷
- The reconstruction of the social fabric of the daily life in Mandate Palestine in a pastoral, and static form. Much of this reconstruction is genealogical, and is based on a documentary-type record of the "original" families within the city's urbanscape. Invariably this genre is "frozen" in the sense that it fails to take into account any changes in the city structure since it fell. It also neglects to seek the connection between the city's social fabric and its national networks.¹⁸
- Attempting to understand what happened. Here we locate a number of memoirs and monographs whose objective is to interpret the factors behind the fall of Jaffa to the Israeli forces within the larger epic, namely, the fall of Palestine. Those who provide these explanations and justifications focus on the atmosphere that prevailed in the city during the Rebellion of 1936, the British suppression of Jaffa's rebellion by 1939, and the heroism of the Jaffa's defenders in the 1947-48 period, in spite of the "defeatism" of the Arab leadership.¹⁹

The second group consists of second generation post-Nakba Palestinians, who have experienced life in Jaffa through their parents' memories. They have carried the burdens of separation in exile, and tried to comprehend the experience of the Nakba while living through Israeli occupation and the war of 1967. This generation differs from the Nakba generation because it visited the city and saw its later transition from the "bride of Palestine" to the "hashish den of Israel". The dominant narrative of this generation is characterized by a critical nostalgia bordering on cynicism. Although much of the writing of this group is in a sarcastic vein, nevertheless it is also affectionate.²⁰ Recalling her relationship with the family, Samira says:

I was fourteen when my uncle, who lived in Greece, visited us. For a certain reason that I knew later, my mother, who was a non-Jaffite, was quarreling silently with my father one day. When she said something about the many orange orchards that the family had lost in Jaffa, my uncle, who did not know how much family history my father had told my mother, intervened and said to me "Your grandfather did not have any orchards in Jaffa, he was a merchant in the wholesale market, not the owner of an orchard." My mother lived for twenty years of her marriage recalling stories about the family's glory and its orchards in Jaffa. As

for my father, he never had the courage to tell her the truth.²¹

In another scene, which takes place at the Clock Center in Jaffa, Shaker, who was born in Jaffa in 1945, visited the shop of Shlomo the Moroccan, who sold oriental records and cassettes. When Shlomo asked Shaker where he was born, he replied, "In Ajami" (a neighborhood in Jaffa). "Strange, I came to Jaffa from Morocco and started my new life there the same year, isn't that a coincidence?" "No", said Shaker, adding politely, "You could say that it was an exchange operation." Shlomo opened his mouth in astonishment and kept on repeating the word. "Exchange...exchange..." until all of a sudden he was able to comprehend the meaning of the word, and shouted in a loud voice. "Exchange!" smiling, then shaking his head sadly.²²

The third group consists of Jaffa residents who remained entrenched in the city after the majority were expelled or had departed, and those who came to the city from the northern areas looking for work. The voice of this group of people is almost not heard outside Palestine, in spite of the impressive record of resistance to subordination by the various associations of Jaffa Arabs. It is intriguing that the Nakba generation opted to ignore the present reality of Jaffa and the conditions of its resident Palestinians, even while visiting the city, despite their continuous encounters with these residents.

One can venture several explanations for this myopia; for one, it allows the returnee to ignore the present squalor of Jaffa. The city's poverty and dilapidated buildings contrast sharply with its "glorious past," which the first generation has maintained in their memories and narratives. But there are other reasons for dissociation: the majority of the present Arab residents of Jaffa are not descendants of the original Jaffites and families who left the city in 1948. Thus, the visitors/returnees does not recognize that the city his family was compelled to abandon is a heritage he shares with the current residents, except perhaps in a tenuously symbolic manner. This whole phenomenon underlines an essential localism in the way the 1948 war is felt, common among both urban and rural Palestinians, who distinguish between indigenous members of their towns and latecomers ("ghuraba" or "wafidun").²³ Moreover, as already mentioned above, the majority of Jaffa Arab residents who remained in the city from the original pre-war generation belong to marginalized social groups that account for very little in terms of the city's past glories in the eyes of the returning middle class families.

This idyllic (and highly selective) vision of exiled Jaffites towards the present Jaffa situation is exactly what provokes the anger of the present Arab residents of Jaffa, including many of its intellectuals and professionals, toward the Nakba generation. This reaction is well

articulated by Andre Mazzawi who took it upon himself to deal with what he deemed "the poverty" of the nostalgic writings of the Jaffa residents in exile.²⁴

In criticizing the visiting/returnee Nakba generation, the author is struck by how the image of Jaffa in the writings of the Nakba generation reflects a romanticized pastoral picture of the city, "which ignores social differentiation or conflict", while the reconstructed image of the city is confined to a pattern of life that was lived by the mercantile elites, orchard owners, and the professional strata, while the texture of daily life as experienced by the majority of city dwellers, including sailors and port workers, is not reflected save as background vignettes illustrating seasonal festivals such as Nebi Rubeen. Mazzawi cites Ahmad Zaki Dajani's assessment of the social makeup of the city in support of his claim about class-blindness:

The majority of Jaffa residents belonged to well-known indigenous families. These were families that occupied a prominent position in the economic life of the city, such as in commerce, ownership of agricultural land, and in the higher echelons of the civil service and the judicial apparatus. One does not find a poor class in Jaffa, except those seasonal workers who came to the city from Syria and Egypt to work in agriculture or in municipal services such as paving streets and the like.²⁵

We find a similar streak, albeit in a more sophisticated style, in a well known collection of memoirs of Jaffa before the war. These writings dwell on the exoticism of life in exclusive social clubs, private schools and the nightlife of the city's middle classes.²⁶

Mazzawi also criticizes the writings of the Nakba generation for their unmitigated and deliberate failure to recognize the existence of the current realities in the city. A prominent example is cited in the well known compendium by Hisham Sharabi, *The Perfume of a City*, which includes interviews with 53 former residents of Jaffa now living in exile in Amman, Cairo and Beirut but not a single interview with any current-day resident of Jaffa. No vision of the contemporary conditions of the city is presented to the reader, as if the city died when its original inhabitants left it in the war of 1948.²⁷

Mazzawi tackles the diaries of several members of the Nakba generation, and their justifications for leaving the city. Reviewing the memoirs of Dr. Yusif Haikal, the last Arab mayor of the city, he points out that Haikal left the city and took refuge in Amman in May 1948, when Jaffa was being held under siege by Jewish forces. Claiming that he wanted to get military support from Jordan, Haikal authorized his administrative staff in the city council to handle the affairs of the city, but he never returned to Jaffa. In doing so he paved the way to the Zionist conquest and subordination of the city. Had he remained in the city, according to Mazzawi, he would

have been able to negotiate with the Israeli forces officially as an elected leader or at least ensure that the city remained an open city, thereby preventing it from being plundered and ransacked.²⁸ In this regard, Mazzawi poses the question:

Why did Mayor Haikal obstinately insist on leaving the city for 'Amman, after May the 3d 1948 ?Why wouldn't he remain and negotiate with the Jewish side from a more powerful stand than a delegated commission of second-rank politicians and in his capacity as the city's mayor? Had he stayed wouldn't he be able to protest, ex officio, the Jewish takeover of the city and the subsequent transgressions of the Jewish-Arab agreement, especially the annexation of Jaffa to Tel-Aviv.²⁹

It seems to me that Mazzawi's criticism of Haikal is in fact an indirect indictment of the behavior of the social class that deserted the city, leaving it to its inevitable destiny in spring 1948. The people of that social class did not understand the extent of the consequences resulting from this evacuation. When recalling their joyful past in the city, they do not link their frivolous life-style before the Nakba to the collapse of the city when they decided to leave. Finally, they subsequently behaved, in retrospect, as if their own departure from the city was synonymous with the demise of the city from history. The rejuvenated contemporary city and its residents thus exist today as background for the tragic nostalgia in the memoirs of many people of this class.

This critical approach by several post-Nakba generation intellectuals aims at a deconstruction of the nostalgic discourse of ante-bellum Palestinian history, and focus on countervailing tendencies that are inherent in a new reading of that past. A number of historians are already working in this revisionist vein.³⁰ No satisfactory political solution is likely to resolve the aspirations of the exiles in the foreseeable future., Therefore, side by side with these critical assessments,romantic pastoral histories of Palestine are bound to continue to be generated by exiled writers. ,The current debates between those exiles and residents are likely to create more "realistic" linkages with the current situation in predominantly Arab towns and in mixed urban centers in Israel, such as Jaffa, Haifa, Akka, and Ramleh, focusing on the lives and struggle of its Arab residents, their relations with the new and old Jewish residents, and the synthetic social formations that are emerging within them.

While I agree with much of Mazzawi's critique targeting the Jaffan nostalgia, or "Jaffamania", as Musa Budairi calls it, I believe that he is sometimes inclined to direct his critical vision at the wrong target. In his attempt to enhance the contemporary conditions of Jaffa and the people who are confronting/adapting their presence under to Israeli rule, his writings seem to question the de-legitimize the collective memories of the

exiled Jaffa elite, which disappeared from the scene during and after the war. This depiction of nostalgic collective memory as a class memory is, however, not convincing. In the Arab World, the memoirs and diaries of political activists and other intellectuals often reflect the bourgeois (and sometimes aristocratic) social background of their authors. One can easily claim that the Nakba was much more devastating to the lives of "ordinary" Palestinians such as farmers, laborers, and craftsmen than to the lives of the bourgeoisie of Jaffa and Palestine. After all it was much easier for middle class refugees to rebuild their lives than it was for plebeians. But very few of the latter left us with a written record of their tribulations and yearnings.

Nevertheless the absence of the voice of average people from these private histories and biographies is indeed an astounding void. It is the task of the new researchers to provide this voice with a forum and appropriate tools (such as oral histories) so that it can articulate its own experience. It is a mistake, however, to attempt to exclude or dilute the suffering of the bourgeois intelligentsia and historians of the middle class because the other voices are absent.

In Mazzawi's work, as in other current writings about the Nakba, we note more than a sustained critique of the life-style of the pre-war Jaffa elite, and other Palestinian urban elites. These writers also attributes to them, and the political class that articulated their interests, the collapse of the national will when confronted with the military onslaught of the Jewish forces. There is a tendency here to underestimate the considerable imbalance of forces that separated them from the enemy's capacity. Suppose we accept the allegation that this elite, or part of it, was able to remain in the city, to defend it, and to negotiate on behalf of its residents. What guarantee is there that its destiny would have been different from its actual fate during the critical days that followed the occupation? What could have guaranteed that its destiny would have been any different to the destiny of other cities in Palestine (such as Nazareth), in which a high proportion of local elites opted to stay?

The point that I am suggesting here is that the romantic re-imagining of pre-1948 Palestine is not necessarily a bourgeois vision. Rather, it is a vision of escapism, which is found as much in the writings of the radical intelligentsia as in the images of the citrus plantation owners. It is also the essence of nostalgic writings and paintings. We find it in Shammout's canvasses and in an enormous number of autobiographies and fiction dealing with Palestinian rural life in the 1930s and 1940s. Examples include *Ghorbat Al-Ra'i* (The Shepherd's Exile), by Ihasn Abbas, and *The Plums of April* by Ghasan Kanafani. Another clear illustration of escapist visions is in a series of monographs that aimed at systematically reconstructing the social history of de-

stroyed villages before they were expunged from the map. In these studies, a pastoral and harmonious world, free of any conflict or contradictions is presented. It is indeed paradise lost. Almost all of these studies are far from elite fantasias or discourses by an upper class intelligentsia.³¹ Obviously this critique should in fact target the discourse itself, not the social background of the people who created it.

With the beginning of the 1990s, and after the entry of PLO forces into Palestine (but not necessarily because of it), Nakba narratives began to exhibit a more balanced, but also a more problematic account, of Palestinian history. In regard to the social history of Jaffa, this started with the serious effort of the first generation to record their bitter experience as accurately and as honestly as possible. This effort, however, faltered at the start. Writers were able to imagine that experience only through the lens of nostalgia.³² But there are important exceptions. For example, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, in his autobiographical works was able not only to transcend nostalgia in his treatment of his early years in Bethlehem and Jerusalem, but he asserted an Arabist nationalist identity which went beyond the confining atmosphere of Palestine.³³ Writing from a revolutionary humanist perspective, Ghassan Kanafani also transcended a nostalgic vision by examining the enemy through the lens of psychological empathy.³⁴

The second generation, on the other hand, had suffered from both the heavy burden of the Nakba experience and from the estrangement of exile. Tackling the memories of their fathers' generation, they directed acute criticism at their patrimony of defeat and defeatism, into which they were dragged as well. The third generation has been liberated, or so it seems, from the conditions of exile but not from self-exile. They returned to explore the past with the spirit of avid investigators, faithful to finding the truth of what happened, not caring about the consequences, even if the price was to undermine the story of the received narrative.

Palestinian political realities today have destined a large proportion of Palestinians for perpetual exile. Those who managed to end their exile, either by coming back to the homeland or by adapting themselves to their adopted homes, have managed to come to terms with their predicament. But for most exiles only a political solution to their refugee status will satisfy them, an outcome that is unlikely to be realized in the current political environment. As for the intelligentsia, whose articulations we have discussed in this essay, one can say that their self-estrangement is a perennial consequence of the intellectual condition—and one that is compounded by physical exile. To them an end to their territorial exile may be indeed the beginning of a new and profound internal exile. And it is this condition that many of the returnees have expressed in their anti-return narratives.

Conclusion

This discussion has attempted to bring together several experiences of exile and the reconstruction of the homeland in the imagination of Palestinian writers. The most striking feature of this reconstruction is the delayed reaction to the experience of war and uprootedness, and the accompanying repression of those memories. When the waves of disclosures did emerge, as happened during the commemorative ceremonies of the Nakba half a century after the event, the ravages of war appeared as localized incidents, disconnected from the larger tragedy that had engulfed the refugees.

Among exiled writers I have discerned several trends. Among the earlier generation of exiles there is a dominant tendency to “freeze” the homeland into frames of pastoral, idyllic, paradise lost. This is especially true of artists and poets, but it was also a natural flow from the nationalist historiography of the period.

Within the second and third generations of exiles a more radical current appeared, questioning the conventional experience of exile and the causes of the exodus. Of particular interest here is the manner in which these critics interrogated the composition of pre-1948 society that allowed itself to be defeated and dismantled. The bourgeois nostalgia of this stratum was seen as a blindness that joined its pre-war fragility to its impotent behavior in the war itself.

The turning point is this nostalgic narrative was the return of the PLO and its intelligentsia to Palestine in the mid-nineties. Here we encounter the shock of return to a virtual part of the homeland under conditions of political compromises and physical confinement. Its main impact was to de-mystify the whole ideological discourse on the right of return under the rubric of political realism, and to initiate a new discourse which centered around notions of normalcy and the normalization of daily life. Here normalcy is related to the question of carrying on with dual (and conflicting) intellectual agendas; on the one hand, building and consolidating a new social formation based on the institution of statehood; on the other hand, the conceptualizing and implementing a mundane, normal society based on the “heroic” images of Palestine, whose intellectuals have become addicted to their exiled status. The main victims of this process have been those Palestinians who were not exiled, those who stayed steadfast as an Arab minority in Israeli society. Their portrayal in the literature of exile has shifted from the forgotten lot to an abstract heroic status that remained marginal to the Palestinian experience. The turning point referred to above is therefore both a conceptual and historic benchmark. It refers to the beginning of a Palestinian narrative that attempts, under the conditions of the new and tenuous normalcy, to synthesize these

exiles' different experiences, of three generations and three geographies. In doing so it will have to deal with exile as a permanent condition: for those who returned and experienced an internal exile, and for those who did not return and established their lives as part of the cultural scene in their diasporas.

NOTES

¹This chapter appears in an earlier version in Ron Robins and Bo Str ath, eds., *Homelands*, (Brussels: Presse Universitaire Europ enne-Peter Lang, 2003).

²These impressions are based on my attendance of the major Nakba activities that took place in March, April, and May 1998 in Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem. The most prominent among these activities were organized by the Khalil Sakakini Center in Ramallah, the Popular Art Center in Al-Bireh, and the local universities. The reader can obtain a list of those events from the Sakakini Center published as "Commemoration of Nakba Events: Lectures, Films and Exhibitions", Ramallah, 1999.

³Testimony by Hajj Hussein Abdel Rahman Al-Hilmi from Silwad, Khalil Sakakini Center, 2 May 1998.

⁴At the end of 2000, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators were wrestling with a formula for the interpretation of UN resolution 194 which allows those refugees who "will leave [please check original text: should this word be "live"?] at peace with their neighbors to return to their homes" in the context of final status talks. The refugee issue, more than Jerusalem and settlements, proved to be the decisive factor in the collapse of the Camp David and Taba negotiations.

⁵*Al-Karmil* magazine in Arabic started publishing the essays in spring 1997 ("Shahadat" ["Testimonies"]- *Al-Karmil* No. 51) and continued doing so until the summer of 1998 (*Al-Karmil* No. 56/57 - "The Memory of the Place ... The Place of the Memory"). See specifically Shafiq Al-Hoot "Jaffa The City of Stubbornness," Hasan Khader "Al-Ghurba - Absence from the Homeland," Mohammed Ali Taha "Time of the Lost Childhood," and Elias Sanbar, "Return to the Homeland."

⁶All references, unless otherwise mentioned, are to the respective *Karmil* issues identified above.

⁷Ghassan Zaqtan, *Nafi Al-Manfa [The Banishment of Exile]*, pp.141-145, in Arabic.

⁸Zaqtan, pp. 144-145, in Arabic.

⁹Zakariyya Mohammed, *Bone and Gold*, p.137, in Arabic.

¹⁰Hasan Khader, *Were You There?* p.124, in Arabic.

¹¹Khader.

¹²Madbooly, Cairo 1997, in Arabic.

¹³Mureed Al-Barghouthy, *Living in Time*, p.156, in Arabic.

¹⁴Barghouthy, p.158.

¹⁵The reader can review this discussion at the electronic forum run by Haitham Sawalhy and Andre Mezzawi, which appeared first in the web site www.yafa.org, and now in www.jaffacity.com.

¹⁶That this reality can shift suddenly in the perception of native Jaffites, both Jews and Arabs, can be seen in a revealing survey of attitudes in the city in the aftermath of the bloody events that took place during the first week of the second Intifada, in October 2000. See Lily Falili and Ori Nir, "City of Strangers," in Haaretz, November 27, 2000.

¹⁷The best example of this tradition can be found in Imtiaz Diab and Hisham Sharabi, *Yafa: Itr Madina (Jaffa: The Perfume of a City)*, Dar al- Fata al-Arabi, Cairo, 1991. See especially "Mawsim Rubeen" by Elias Rantisi, pp 70-73.

¹⁸See Hanna Malak, *Zhikrayat al-'ailat al-Yafyyah*, Jerusalem, 1993, and *al-Juthur al-yafyyah*, Jerusalem, 1996.

¹⁹See Yusef Haikal, *Ayyam Al-Siba (Days of my Youth)*, in Arabic, Amman 1995; Ahmad Dajani, *Yafa wa Thawrat 1936 (Jaffa and the 1936 Rebellion)*; and Zaki al Masri, *Hadith al-Dhikriyat, 1936-1994*, Ramallah, 1994.

²⁰See Musa Budeiri, "The Last Plane from Jaffa", forthcoming.

²¹The electronic forum www.yafa.org. "Samira Tells the Story of Her Family".

²²The electronic forum www.yafa.org "Exchange".

²³These terms mean "strangers" or "newcomers" respectively, and have immense significance in mapping marriage strategies and business partnerships among Palestinians.

²⁴Andre Mezzawi, "Memories and Counter-Memories: Production, Reproduction and Deconstruction of some Palestinian Memory Accounts about Jaffa", in English. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association, San Francisco, 1997. Some of the quotations cited below have been re-translated from the Arabic text, and may differ slightly from the original English.

²⁵Quotation from Ahmad Zaki Dajani, *Jaffa and the 1936 Rebellion*, in Arabic, p.69 (my translation, st).

²⁶Imtiaz Diab and Hisham Sharabi (eds.), *Yafa: Itr Madina (Jaffa: The Perfume of a City)*, page 14ff.

²⁷Andre Mazzawi, "Memories and Counter-Memories."

²⁸Mazzawi, p 21; and Yusif Haikal, in *Perfume of a City*, pp.55-56, in Arabic.

²⁹Mazzawi, pp. 18-20.

³⁰Some of this work can be seen in an anthology of writings edited by Jamil Hilal and Ilan Papp , *Palestinian and Israeli History Re-Examined* [working title], forthcoming 2004.

³¹See "Destroyed Palestinian Village Series," Documentation and Research Center, Birzeit University published over a twelve year period (1982-1994).

³²The reference here is to the mainstream among the writers of this era. No doubt, there are authors who were able to transcend the spirit of the stage they lived through (see references below about Jabra and Kanafani).

³³In the "First Well", and "Princesses Street."

³⁴In *Return to Haifa*, his most important novel.

Legitimizing Jordan as the Holy Land: Papal Pilgrimages—1964, 2000

KIMBERLY KATZ

Pope Paul VI's journey to the Holy Land in 1964, the first papal pilgrimage ever, took him to many Biblical sites, most of which were then under Jordanian control. The historical period leading up to this tour saw subtle political jockeying between Jordanians and Palestinians regarding their respective national standing in the Holy Land. In the year 2000, a Jubilee Year on the Catholic calendar, John Paul II made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, only the second ever by a pope. In the thirty-six year interim, much had changed in the region—politically, geographically, and nationally. In 1967, three years after the first papal pilgrimage, the region's national borders were re-defined as a result of the June War. The Hashemite Kingdom lost Jerusalem—the core of Jordan's claim to the Holy Land—as well as the West Bank, to Israel's occupation. In the wake of that situation, a new competition emerged, this time among Jordanians, Israelis, and the Palestinians, represented by the Palestinian Authority since its establishment in 1994, over claims to the Holy Land.

Jordan, a country with few previously-shared traditions, engaged a new historical and geographical situation after the 1948 War, in addition to being faced with the absorption of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees. Having fallen under Jordanian control during the 1948 war, Jerusalem and its holy places played an important role in Jordan's construction of its "self-portrait" during the nineteen-year period in which the Holy City was part of Jordan.¹ In the Muslim world, control over Jerusalem, the third-holiest city in Islam, allowed King Abdullah and later his grandson, King Hussein, to demonstrate both Jordanian sovereignty and Hashemite legitimacy over a greatly venerated Islamic city. The Hashemites, claiming descent from the Prophet Muhammad, had lost the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to the Saudi family early in the twentieth century. They could certainly claim compensation for their loss a couple of decades later with their capture of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1948—or as recorded in Jordanian historiography, their "saving Jerusalem from falling under Zionist control." The al-Aqsa Mosque, the al-Buraq site, and the Dome of the Rock are all sites

associated with Muhammad's "Night Journey and Ascension to Heaven," recorded in Qur'an 17:1, and appearing in many *hadiths* (sayings of the Prophet). One also finds reference to these *hadiths* in King Abdullah's memoirs, an effort to tie the modern Hashemites' claim for religious legitimacy beyond their ancestral birthplace in Mecca, just as their ancestor Muhammad's prophetic legitimacy includes the Holy City of Jerusalem.² The presence of Jerusalem's Christian holy places now in Jordan afforded the kingdom's leaders an opportunity to assert their position in the city by claiming to serve as protectors of sacred Christian sites. In the intervening period between the two papal journeys to the Holy Land, Jordan was forced to re-make a collective identity through the promotion of sites found within its shrunken post-1967 boundaries. During these two landmark papal pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the Jordanian authorities represented holy sites as symbols of national identification—discursively in official speeches and visually on cultural markers, including tourism promotional materials and postage stamps. While other factors and social groups certainly influenced the project of identity-building in Jordan during this period, they remain outside this article's focus.

The papal tours exacerbated existing political tensions in the region. The pope faced competition between national groups in the 1964 visit with Jordanians and Israelis, and in the 2000 visit with Jordanians, Palestinians, and Israelis, each vying for papal authentication of its position in the Holy Land. The polemics of both papal pilgrimages inspired the themes argued in this study: a visit by a pope to the Holy Land authenticates Christian sites traditionally deemed holy, as well as sites newly conceived of, discovered, or re-discovered, thereby impacting nation-building efforts focused on sacred Christian sites. Both in 1964 and in 2000, Jordanian authorities promoted, or alternatively, re-invented a number of religious sites as national treasures through representational images and official discourse, intending to convey the message that Jordan was indeed the historical Holy Land, although not specified as solely Muslim or Christian.³ Muslim holy places received their proper due by

Jordanian officials, and the 1990s witnessed an extraordinary Jordanian effort to promote Islamic sites. The effort was marked mainly by newly renovated “tombs of the Companions of the Prophet” (*maqamat al-sahaba*) and a campaign to increase public awareness about these sites.⁴ They were matched, or in some cases superceded, only by the Hashemite involvement in the restoration of the Dome of the Rock in the early 1990s. That said, this article concentrates on Christian sites located within the borders of Jordan, focusing on the kingdom’s intentions to consolidate its “Holy Land” national identity during the two papal visits to the region.

Regional political themes, in fact, dominated the discussion of both papal journeys to the Holy Land. The year of the first papal pilgrimage saw the birth of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) created in Jerusalem under the sponsorship of King Hussein, as the Holy City was then under Jordan’s political control.⁵ The emergence of the PLO marks a turning point in Jordanian-Palestinian relations as the competition between Jordanians and Palestinians for political legitimacy became more prominent, especially with regard to their respective claims to Jerusalem. The second papal pilgrimage came approximately at the same time as the “Final Status Negotiations” of the Middle East peace process were scheduled to begin, a process intended in part to solve the political status of Jerusalem.⁶ Each national group made its claim on the Holy City part of the political landscape, which the pope could not avoid seeing. Jordan’s “historic role” in Jerusalem was identified in the 1994 Jordan-Israel Peace Treaty.⁷ Israel used its physical presence as occupiers in the eastern part of the city to substantiate its historic claim to Jerusalem. Finally, the Palestinians had their own centuries-old historic claims to the Holy City to serve as the basis for their contemporary political claims to Jerusalem. These factors all necessarily increased the potential for political disputes when the pope visited the Holy City.

A journey replete with symbolic attributes even prior to departure from Rome, the 1964 pilgrimage was promoted by officials as the first to the Holy Land by a pope since the days of St. Peter. For Jordanians, the reach back into ancient Christian history provided an added legitimacy to a visit already imbued with a sense of religious validity. Beyond the celebrated pilgrimage, the pope was scheduled to meet with the Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople (the patriarchate of primacy in the Orthodox Church), who arrived in the Holy Land from Turkey. Such a meeting between the two highest religious officials of the two largest churches in the world had not occurred since the 15th century.⁸ Taking place in Jordanian Jerusalem, hosted by His Majesty King Hussein, this highly publicized meeting between the Catholic pope and the Orthodox patriarch illus-

trated, at least to Jordan, the country’s importance in Christian religious affairs. Throughout and following this visit, Jordanian officials linked the notion of the Holy Land and the holy places, validated by the person and office of the pope, to the young Jordanian state. The benefits of the meeting for the kingdom—religious, political, touristic, and national—would become evident.

Despite the pope’s impassioned insistence that this was solely a pious journey, the visit spanned the Jordan-Israel border and raised political questions.⁹ During the visit the pope spent most of his time within the borders of Jordan, visiting holy sites, both Christian and Muslim, in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and at the Jordan River, limiting his East Bank stops to Jordan’s capital of Amman. Paul VI crossed over into Israel only for a period of about 12 hours. While the pope did travel to holy sites in Nazareth—the most significant Christian pilgrimage site within Israel’s pre-1967 borders—and met briefly with Israeli officials, he did not mention the word Israel during his trip and stayed away from Jewish holy places, a scenario that would be completely altered during the 2000 trip.

Even the location of the pope’s arrival was plagued with political overtones as King Hussein, according to political protocol, received the pope in Jordan’s capital of Amman rather than in Jerusalem, the Kingdom’s “Spiritual Capital.” The king had often stressed that title for Jerusalem, “Spiritual Capital of Jordan” indicating its status in the kingdom as religious rather than political. Amman had served as capital city of Transjordan from its earlier days under British mandate and any consideration to change that when Jordan took control of Jerusalem after 1948 would have had grave consequences. Such a move would have required relocating the center of government, but more importantly, it would have implied that any sense of communal identification with East Bank national sites that King Abdullah had created for Transjordanians during the Amirate period was now discredited in the face of a rival (some might say Palestinian) city.¹⁰

Jerusalem’s political, religious, and cultural significance underscored the competition between the holy city and Jordan’s capital city.¹¹ King Hussein’s reception of the pope in Amman was an example of the national contestation between Transjordanians and Palestinians over geo-national space—in this case, Jerusalem, a holy city—and the legitimacy of those ruling over it. Beyond Jerusalem’s great religious significance for both Muslims and Christians, some Palestinians saw legal justification for making Jerusalem Jordan’s capital as the kingdom’s constitution permitted changing the capital under special juridical circumstances.¹² To combat any ill feeling by the Palestinians regarding the promotion of Amman at Jerusalem’s expense during the pope’s visit, the king

made frequent reference to the Palestine problem. He used the occasion to comment during a press conference about the injustices that had occurred as a result of the occupation of Palestine, the overwhelming number of refugees that resulted from that situation, and Israel's exploitation of Jordan River waters. He may also have chosen Amman as the welcoming place for the pope in order to extend the Holy Land theme east of the Jordan River. The geographical extension of the Holy Land is usually put forth by Jewish religious ideologues seeking to control all of the Biblical "Land of Israel," but the Jordanian authorities would also employ it during the 2000 papal visit to Jordan, albeit with a more "Christian" than "Judeo" outlook. Finally, King Hussein may have wished to downplay Jerusalem's political value. For several years, he had been glorifying Jerusalem as the Kingdom's "Spiritual Capital," therefore, he could hardly reverse this claim by politicizing the Holy City with diplomatic protocol, as it would have diminished his legitimacy as sovereign over and "Protector of the Holy Places." Jordan's ruler did not accept the visit simply as a spiritual one—politics and religion were difficult to separate during this visit.

As the pope traveled throughout the country, he became something of a spectacle for Jordanians on both the East and West Banks, which had been politically and legally unified in the kingdom since 1950.¹³ While the pope was making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, huge crowds of both Christian and Muslim Jordanians were making a kind of pilgrimage to the pope—although likely much of this was staged by Jordan's officials—to look at him as he passed through their towns and villages and the holy sites. Jordanians held signs as they stood in the streets paying respect to the pope next to large banners that read "long live the King, long live the Pope" and "Jordan welcomes His Holiness to the Holy Land," among other slogans hung by the government.

All *official* accounts of the visit in the newspapers illustrate how the crowds were welcoming the pope to Jordan. Some newspapers, however, carried articles that may offer another interpretation as to which country the crowds were welcoming the pope.¹⁴ An example is an editorial in the Jerusalem-based, palace-sponsored newspaper, *al-Jihad*, already openly critical of government policies in 1960, alluding to a fundamental dilemma that Jordan had tried to silence both in practice and in law.¹⁵ The *al-Jihad* editorialist used the occasion of the pope's visit to raise, indirectly, the Palestinian issue, and thus, question the official attempt to construct a distinct Jordanian national identity.¹⁶ He writes very candidly about the Zionist imperialists' separation of a united Palestine into the State of Israel and another territory, which is not Jordan but Palestine, in the political imagination of the author. He begins the piece de-

claring, "We must make them listen to us while our country is swarming with delegations...pilgrims, visitors from countries everywhere, with journalists and correspondents and other media representatives."¹⁷ The editorialist welcomed the pope to the Holy Land by making reference to the persons and events that signify that area as holy, but he never so much as mentions Jordan at all in this piece. He describes the same sites that are highlighted in Jordan's tourist literature as being part of Jordan to make the tourist or pilgrim—in this case the pope—aware of the political problems in Palestine.¹⁸ Although when *al-Jihad* had been openly critical four years earlier its palace funding was cut off, there was no evidence that this was the case following the publication of this 1964 editorial. Confident that the papal visit authenticated Jordan's position as "the Holy Land," the king and the government, it seems, were not threatened by this editorial and allowed its publication.

On the occasion of the pope's visit, Hussein set out to seal his position as both national ruler and "Guardian of the Holy Places" as the postal ministry "stamped" the nation with papal legitimacy. Jordanian postage stamps, issued to commemorate the papal pilgrimage, linked four holy sites, two of them Islamic and two Christian with the likeness of Hussein and Paul VI, each one above his respective holy site.¹⁹ They imply that the pope, as head of the Vatican state and spiritual leader of Catholicism, exemplifies the role of King Hussein as ruler of Jordan and possibly as spiritual leader of Islam because of his prophetic lineage, coupled with his rule over one of Islam's holiest sites. By 1964, the king had appeared on many stamps and holy places had also appeared on several stamp series. The visit by the pope, however, marks the first time that King Hussein appears *with* the holy places on the same stamp, sealing his relationship as national ruler over the country and the holy places.²⁰ By announcing in his speech upon the pope's departure that he was the "Protector" of the Christian holy sites, the king issued a formal pronouncement to the pope and the Christian world about his and Jordan's position regarding both Muslim and Christian holy places.²¹ Hussein's image, appearing with the holy places on postage stamps to commemorate the pope's visit, reinforced his and Jordan's "self-portrait" to the Jordanian population and to the world at-large.²²

The papal pilgrimage traversed the Jordan-Israel border, opening a space for political controversy at a state-to-state level, between Jordan and Israel, as well as at the local level. In a *New York Times* article, King Hussein stated that he saw no room for improvement of relations with Israel, saying that the Palestine issue was "a matter of injustice. And until there's a just and honorable conclusion to this problem I hardly see how relations could be improved."²³ The king addressed a num-

ber of issues, such as Palestinian refugee rights and Israel's diversion of Jordan River waters, to appeal to the "conscience of the Christian world."²⁴ The international and domestic issues were nearly the same for Jordan. Officials thought that one problem (the refugee issue) might be solved by addressing the other (Israel's unjust policy of not allowing Palestinian refugees to return to their homes within Israel, as was called for in UN General Assembly Resolution 194).²⁵ In Israel, the pope's visit received official attention and welcome, but Israel's chief religious official shunned the papal reception. Just as Jordan's officials considered the visit a legitimizing event, so too did the chief rabbi of Israel. He refused to participate in Israel's welcoming delegation for the pope's visit unless there would be a gesture by the pope of some kind of reciprocal visit for Israel's highest religious official.²⁶ At that time the Vatican did not recognize Israel, so a papal gesture whereby the pope would host the chief rabbi would not be forthcoming. By his absence, Israel's chief rabbi indicated that he felt the pope's visit undermined Israel's position in the Holy Land.

The pope's visit to Jordan served as an occasion for Jordan's tourism officials to promote religious tourism to the country and enhance its self-image as "Guardian of the Holy Places." The tourism sector aptly appropriated the person of the pope as a symbol for representing the Holy Land, thus authenticating the kingdom's "Holy Land" status. A few months after the pope's visit, Jordan participated at the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair, primarily exhibiting reproductions of holy places which had been imagined nationally and displayed internationally. With an abundance of publicity surrounding the papal visit, Jordan's representation of the country as the Holy Land did not fall on deaf ears. By the end of January 1964, *The Jerusalem Times* reported that tourism to the Holy Land was expected to increase following the pope's pilgrimage earlier that month.²⁷ In March of that year, King Hussein inaugurated the new Hotel Jerusalem Intercontinental, foreseeing that tourism was on an upswing and a flurry of activity was drawing tourists to visit Jordan, the Holy Land.²⁸ The newspaper again reported on the pope's trip in April 1964, remarking that tours of the Middle East were changing their focus in the wake of the pope's historic pilgrimage. Tour agencies highlighted Paul VI's pilgrimage as the model for would-be pilgrim-tourists who might want to trace the pope's steps, just as the pope had traced the steps of Jesus and other Biblical figures.²⁹ The results for tourism were staggering as the number of visitors increased significantly in the two years following the pope's visit, correspondingly increasing the national income.³⁰ The Holy Land and Jordan were becoming synonymous for many beyond Jordan's borders. The tourism arena proved a

fertile ground in which Jordan could inscribe, or re-inscribe, sites of religious importance with national meaning. After Paul VI's visit, tourism increased as his presence cemented the association of Jordan with the title of Holy Land, a title whose symbolic value was prominent in promoting the kingdom's self-image.³¹ By targeting the papal pilgrimage for touristic promotion, Jordanian officials exploited tourism to the kingdom by promoting symbols of religion as symbols of national identification.

During the twentieth century, archaeology, regional wars, and peace treaties have re-defined the "national" sacred geography of the Holy Land. The 1948 war divided Jerusalem between Jordan and Israel with the most significant holy places falling within Jordan's borders. Following the June 1967 War, Israel has taken control of Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank holy sites, some of which have now been turned over to Palestinian control.³² Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Israel have all configured their post-1967 national identities to represent their respective national images as "the Holy Land." This has been most evident during the visit of Pope John Paul II to the region in the year 2000, despite a border scheme that divides peoples into different nation-states each led by a different government.

During Pope Paul VI's pilgrimage, there had been no one to contest Jordan's claim for control over the holy places. Even the State of Israel at the time, with its reliance on being "God's Chosen People" in the Promised Land (even if that did not include all of the "promised" land) could not dismiss Jordan's self-representation as the Holy Land, for Jordan administered all of the most important holy sites. This did not prevent Israel from displaying abroad Dead Sea Scroll material that it had obtained through covert means under the title "Treasures of Israel the Holy Land." Israel and every other country, including the Vatican, could and did reject Jordanian sovereignty over the holy places in 1964. They could not, however, reject the reality that by 1964, nearly all of the traditional Holy Land sites had been located within Jordan's borders for 16 years. Despite international opinion which rejected Jordan's self-proclaimed legal standing with regard to the holy places, high level visits such as the pope's, conducted under official Jordanian hospitality, validated the kingdom's self-image as the Holy Land.

All of the sites that Pope John Paul II visited in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during his Jubilee Year Holy Land pilgrimage had not been on the itinerary of his predecessor. Not only had Pope Paul VI not visited those sites; they were not developed for pilgrim or touristic, let alone national, purposes at the time. For example, the baptism site at Wadi al-Kharrar on the East Bank of the Jordan River, the kingdom's most promi-

nent “Holy Land” site during the 2000 papal pilgrimage, had only been excavated in the 1990s. John Paul II began his visit in Jordan at Mt. Nebo, the site where Moses is said to have looked into the Promised Land and later died. The pope’s prayers on Mt. Nebo were followed by a drive through the streets of Madaba, where the remains of many Byzantine churches are found. His final stop in Jordan on the last of his two-day visit in the kingdom took him to *al-Maghtas* at Wadi al-Kharrar, the site claimed by Jordanian archaeologists and the Jordanian government as the authentic baptism site of Jesus. The sites common to both papal visits are primarily those sites on the West Bank (including Jerusalem) that have long been equated with the traditional image of the Holy Land, and were under Jordanian control from 1948-1967. Despite the fact that the holy sites in Jordan that Pope John Paul II visited in the year 2000 were undiscovered, unknown, or simply not promoted during the 1964 visit, and despite the fact that the Jerusalem/West Bank holy sites were no longer within Jordan’s borders, the kingdom billed itself as the Holy Land during the Jubilee Year papal pilgrimage.

Jordan’s year 2000 claim to the Holy Land had an altogether different basis than that in 1964. While the early visit, and the early claim to being the Holy Land, was based on both Muslim and Christian sites, Jordan’s more recent claim is primarily based on Christian sites alone, an unusual position for a country with an overwhelming Muslim majority population. As mentioned above, Jordan’s leaders have made considerable efforts during the past decade or so to discover, authenticate, and promote Muslim holy sites, namely tombs of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*maqamat al-sahaba*).³³ These sites, while perhaps important to Muslims, or at least to the Jordanian government that promoted them, offered little to the Catholic pilgrim during his short stay in the Jordanian Holy Land.

Many months prior to the pope’s arrival in 2000, the Jordan Tourism Ministry, with its mandate to advocate for the country at home and abroad, began promoting the papal tour to Jordan’s holy sites. Prior to the 1964 visit, organized tourism in Jordan had been in its infancy and thus no such efforts had been made at that time. For a few decades after 1967, the ministry had been promoting East Bank, primarily non-religious, sites and cities to lure tourists to the kingdom. Petra, Jerash, the Desert Castles, and other archaeological sites had become the focus of touristic promotion since the 1970s, as the realization became undeniable that the holy places and holy cities of the West Bank were lost to Jordanian tourism. Triggered by the pope’s scheduled visit in the year 2000, the ministry and local Catholic Church leaders in January 2000 announced a series of pilgrimages to sites that had been confirmed by the Vatican as “offi-

cial” sites for the Christian pilgrim to Jordan.

The Tourism Ministry brochure promoting these journeys—which continued throughout the year 2000—identified Jordan as “The Sunrise of Christianity,” implying that Christianity’s earliest roots are located in Jordan.³⁴ Perhaps for the Jordanians the most important of these pilgrimages was set for *al-Maghtas* (known to Christians as Bethany Beyond the Jordan), or Wadi al-Kharrar, the site where Jesus was baptized. The other locations on the pilgrimage schedule in 2000 were: Anjara (local shrine at the Roman Catholic Church), the Citadel, Amman (church remains from the Byzantine era), Tel Mar Elias (Shrine of the Prophet Elijah), Mukawer (the site where John the Baptist was beheaded), and Mt. Nebo. While the Vatican has “certified” that all six of these sites are part of the Christian pilgrim’s route in Jordan, the pope only visited *al-Maghtas* and Mt. Nebo.³⁵ Not only had the Vatican “authenticated” those two sites, but the pope himself also traveled to them during his pilgrimage, adding another level of legitimacy to these holy places, Jordan’s national treasures. As a result, *al-Maghtas* and Mt. Nebo continue to receive more emphasis in touristic promotion.

The repeated mention of Vatican approval of Jordan’s holy places in the daily Jordanian newspapers during the months leading up to and following the papal visit suggests a sense of uncertainty by the Jordanians vis-à-vis their claim that Jordan is the Holy Land. Further, this reliance on Vatican authentication of Jordan’s holy places is de-valued by the fact that the majority of Jordan’s Christians are Greek Orthodox and do not defer to the pope in Rome, although many of them did participate publicly in the pope’s visit. In 1964 the kingdom had a surety of position regarding its “Holy Land” claim, as Jordan controlled not only Christian sites but Muslim sites, as well, thus making its claim more “natural” and appealing to its predominantly Muslim constituency and to the Muslim world at large. By the year 2000, the self-image Jordan had long been projecting was related to ancient history and archaeological sites. In order to compete in the regional tourism industry, maintain regional political and religious importance, and regain a sense of “holiness” that had dissipated since Jordan’s official announcement to relinquish control of Jerusalem’s Muslim holy places to the Palestinian Authority in 1999, the kingdom identified, excavated, renovated, promoted, and represented sites referred to in the Bible as part of the Jordanian national heritage and Jordan’s national treasures.³⁶

Jordan’s newspapers were filled with articles that reinforced Jordan as the “Holy Land,” or part of it, adding that the government was taking great pains to propagate it as such. *Al-Ra’i*, the main Jordanian daily representing official discourse, began publishing articles

to promote the pope's visit as early as September 1999. These articles became more frequent after the millennium celebrations and John Paul II ushered in the new year as a Jubilee Year. A 16 January 2000 article in *al-Ra'i*, appearing one week after the first of the communal Christian pilgrimages took place in Anjara, attests to the efforts taken abroad to promote the country as the "Holy Land." The article quotes Father al-Far, director-general of the National Higher Committee for the Third Millennium Celebrations in the District of Madaba,³⁷ saying that "Jordanian diplomats have succeeded in representing Jordan as part of the Holy Land, [a title] that Israel had been exploiting for a long period of time to attract religious tourism." The pope's visit to the kingdom's holy sites, especially *al-Maghtas*, had its legitimating effect, but this legitimation was furthered on a national level when King Abdullah II chose the baptism site as the location for the celebration of Jordan's National Arbor Day (*Id al-Shajara*).³⁸

As the traditional baptism site is located on the West Bank side of the Jordan River at Qasr al-Yahoud (Palace of the Jews), Jordanians took the pope's visit to *al-Maghtas* at Wadi al-Kharrar, on the East Bank side as a coup, giving something of a seal of approval to their site. The notion that Jordan's baptism site is religiously genuine is disputed politically, certainly by the Israelis, but also by the Palestinians located on the other side of the Jordan River. While competing with the Israelis for recognition of the West Bank site as "Palestinian," the Palestinian Authority also found itself embroiled in an authenticity dispute with Jordan. The contestation existed on a national and political level as well as a religious level, with officials of the Latin Rite in both Jerusalem and Amman trying to prevent a dispute between Jordan and the Palestinians. Jerusalem's Latin patriarch attempted to remain neutral as to whether the legitimate site of the baptism is in Jordan's Wadi al-Kharrar or on the West Bank of the Jordan River, at Qasr al-Yahoud, under Israeli occupation, but also claimed by the Palestinian Authority as a Palestinian national site. The patriarch's neutrality elicited a reply by the Latin vicar in Amman who "stepped in with a clarification statement...to avoid that the Patriarch's neutral stand be interpreted against Jordan's claim of hosting one of Christianity's holiest sites."³⁹ Akel Biltaji, Jordan's Minister of Tourism and Antiquities at the time, claimed a Jordanian victory from the pope's visit to the now rival baptismal site at Wadi al-Kharrar, which he saw as "a confirmation of the baptismal site...the authentic site."⁴⁰ Emerging primarily between the Jordanian and Palestinian tourism ministers, the dispute had the potential to strain relations between the two national groups. Although religious leaders tried to dismiss the competition over the sites and inspire inclusivity rather

than exclusivity, the competition continues for national possession of the baptismal site. For Jordan, however, there is no dispute. The Wadi al-Kharrar site, identified and excavated by Jordanian archaeologists and stamped with papal approval, is "the real thing."

To visually convey Jordan's position regarding the baptism site, the Jordan Ministry of Post and Communications issued commemorative stamps in honor of the pope's visit to the kingdom and to commemorate the third millennium. Of the three stamp series issued, the first two issues included some expression of *al-Maghtas*, either in words or images.⁴¹ The third millennium series, the first official cultural marker of the new millennium in the kingdom to project this theme, carries the slogan, "Jordan, The River & The Land of the Baptism." The same slogan also appeared later on a promotional brochure called "Biblical Sites of Jordan," published by the semi-governmental/semi-private Jordan Tourism Board, suggesting that the validity of the baptism site was accepted in both the public and the private sectors. The other stamp in the series still bears this slogan but also has a picture of the Jordan River near the site of *al-Maghtas*, with reproductions of sixth century Byzantine mosaics that appear in some of Madaba's archaeological remains. This series also produced a special collector's sticker that included a portrait picture of Pope John Paul II overlooking an image of John baptizing Jesus at the East Bank baptism site with a white dove in the center of the stamp, again conveying an aura of papal approval of the site. The final issue in the series bears the image of the Jordan River, Bethany Beyond the Jordan, i.e., the baptism site itself. The pictures of both the pope and King Abdullah II on the stamps, in addition to Jordanian and papal flags, reify the papal authentication of the site and thus Jordan's claim as the Holy Land.

The intention of the Postal Ministry to connect the 1964 and 2000 visits, in addition to the Hashemite Jordanian and Catholic leaders, with the Muslim and Christian notions of the Holy Land, became evident in the last of the three stamp series issued for the occasion. The series titled, "The 36th Anniversary of His Holiness Pope Paul VI visit to HKJ and the Holy Places" carries a photographic image of both King Abdullah II and Pope John Paul II flanking an artist's rendition of Jerusalem's holy places, the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.⁴² In the center of the stamp is a copy of a limited-series medallion, issued on the occasion of the 1964 papal pilgrimage, carrying images of Hussein and Paul VI on one side and the Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the other. It is likely unclear to most people viewing the stamp what this circular item in the center of the stamp might be—so few medallions were minted and distributed at the time that very few people had the opportu-

nity to see it when it was issued and afterward. The medallion's reproduction on the stamp is quite small, to the degree that the profile images of King Hussein and Pope Paul VI are nearly indistinguishable, although in light of the occasion certainly one might make an educated guess.

Jordan has been geographically disconnected from Jerusalem since 1967. The city's holy places, however, depicted on the commemorative anniversary stamp series, continue to represent the kingdom in its self-definition as the Holy Land, a definition that included the representation of both Christian and Muslim sites. One might link Jerusalem's holy places, sites no longer under Jordan's political control in 2000, to the 1964 visit, as they were the focus of the Holy Land papal pilgrimage at that time. Does their presence in Jordan's official discourse, on stamps for example, imply reluctance on behalf of the Hashemite king to relinquish control over Jerusalem's holy places a short time after his announced intention to defer to the Palestinians on such matters?⁴³ This illustration represents ambiguity in Jordan's self-portrait in the year 2000, as this predominantly Muslim country grappled with a self-image as a "Christian Holy Land." Those holy places that Jordan promoted during the 2000 visit are absent from the anniversary stamp. This omission detracts from the message Jordan had been trying to convey throughout the Jubilee Year pilgrimage—that despite the historical, geographical, and political changes that had transpired since the first papal pilgrimage in 1964, Jordan may be other things, but it is still, or once again, the Holy Land.

The discussion of the 1964 visit is necessarily richer in its historical context, as the analysis of the event has the benefit of decades of hindsight that the 2000 visit lacks. The 1964 papal pilgrimage was very early destined to play an important role in 2000 in Jordan's unfolding self-representation. The 1964 visit was symbolic during the Jubilee Year visit not solely for it being the first papal pilgrimage ever, but for the legitimizing effect it had for the country in terms of continuity among Jordan's kings. Jordan's King Hussein died in 1999, having led Jordan for more than 45 years through several wars, and even a peace treaty with long-time enemy Israel. But in 2000, the 1964 papal pilgrimage could serve as a reminder to Jordanians of the young king who had welcomed Pope Paul VI, and could serve as a model for the potential that his son has as heir to the throne of Jordan. During their September 1999 visit to the Vatican, King Abdullah II and Queen Rania visited the olive tree that King Hussein had given Pope Paul VI in 1964.⁴⁴ The 36th anniversary postage stamp is a striking visual attempt to link the two papal visits and thus confer authenticity and legitimacy to Jordan as host for the Year 2000's "Great Pilgrim." Finally, the Greater Am-

man Municipality, which was responsible for decorating the city with banners to honor the "Great Pilgrim," included the slogan, "From al-Hussein and Paul VI... to Abdullah II and John Paul II." At the same time, photographs of King Hussein and Paul VI appeared next to those of Abdullah II and John Paul II in the daily newspapers.⁴⁵ The two visits, however, had very different travel programs that affected the way Jordan represented itself as the Holy Land.

The papal pilgrimages to Jordan in 1964 and 2000 impacted Jordan's efforts to construct its national self-image and highlight the complexities of Jordan's nation-building project in both the second decade of its independence and as the world entered the third millennium. A consideration for the cultural products generated in Jordan leading up to, during, and in the wake of these two historic visits sheds light on Jordan's historic and contemporary "self-portrait" as the Holy Land. These cultural products also help us understand why that self-portrait persisted, or recurred, despite the regional re-configuration of national borders. In 1964 King Hussein billed himself as the "Guardian of the Christian Holy Places" in the Holy Land. He also sought distinction in the Islamic world by serving as "Protector of the [Muslim] Holy Places." Jordan was brimming with holy places, especially those that had traditional standing as Holy Land sites. The king and the government appropriated these sites to promote an all-encompassing vision of "Jordan, the Holy Land," a title that appeared frequently from 1948-1967. In the year 2000, Jordan was re-defining itself once again as the Holy Land after a long period of trying to re-make its image based on prominent East Bank sites such as Petra and Jerash. This time, however, Jordan's conception of what the Holy Land meant had changed as a result of the geographical changes in the region. Jordan had ceased to control the holy places in Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank, following Israel's occupation of the territory in 1967, although Jordanian administrative and symbolic control of those holy places has lasted for several more decades. Established in 1994 and representing the Palestinian people, the Palestinian Authority has emerged as an internationally recognized political player with valid claims to (at least) part of the Holy Land. While Islamic sites and Islam's place in the kingdom have not been downplayed in recent efforts to promote the country as the Holy Land, the Christian sites and Christian figures have received a newfound prominence in Jordan, based largely on the Jubilee papal pilgrimage. The Christian landscape in Jordan has allowed the country to compete with the Palestinians and the Israelis for sacred geography, making the kingdom's claim to the title "the Holy Land" legitimate.

NOTES

¹The term “self-portrait” in this context is taken from Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), Chapter 7. For more on how this is considered in the Jordanian context, see Kimberly Katz, “Holy Places and National Spaces: Jerusalem under Jordanian Control,” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, New York, 2001).

²King Abdullah, *My Memoirs Completed*, (New York: Longman, 1978).

³Neil Asher Silberman and David Small, eds., *The Archaeology of Israel: Constructing the Past, Interpreting the Present*, (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997).

⁴See *Holy Sites of Jordan*, (Amman: Turab Publishing, 1996). The role of the Muslim holy places in recent nation-building efforts in Jordan warrants a separate study.

⁵While some historians suggest that the creation of the PLO was solely Egyptian in design, others argue that King Hussein was so confident of his role in and legitimacy over Jerusalem and its holy places that he sponsored the conference in April that year, when the Palestine Liberation Organization was founded. The PLO position at that time was to recover the lands taken by the Zionists, not those under Jordanian rule. For a fuller discussion of the historiography of this subject, see Katz, “Holy Places and National Spaces.”

⁶The peace process was far off-track by 1999, its scheduled date for the start of final status negotiations. By September 2000, the al-Aqsa Intifada had broken out following then-opposition Israeli leader, Ariel Sharon’s visit to the platform in the Old City of Jerusalem where the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque stand, accompanied by hundreds of Israeli soldiers. Sharon’s visit to the site—the last straw for the Palestinians after seven years of the failed Oslo Process, which brought little tangible benefit to them—not only brought violent Palestinian resistance and Israeli counter-violence, but was soon followed by Sharon’s rise to the premiership and the near-death of the peace process. At the time of this writing, American President George W. Bush has begun to try to revive the peace process with what has become known as the “Road Map.”

⁷The 1994 treaty laid out Israel’s recognition of Jordan’s historic rights in the Holy City and, in particular, its supervision and protection of the Islamic holy places located there. In it, Israel agreed to “give high priority” to Jordan’s historic role in Jerusalem when Israel set out to negotiate the permanent status of the city with the Palestinian Authority. The treaty is found in *Ma’arikat al-salam: watha’iq urduniya (al-masar al-urduni-al-isra’ili) min mu’tamar Madrid ila ilan Washington* [The Battle for Peace: Jordanian Documents (The Jordanian-Israeli Track) From the Madrid Conference to the Washington Declaration] (Amman, 1994).

⁸The patriarch in Turkey (Constantinople) is considered the highest Orthodox official, figuratively, although all Orthodox patriarchs have the same standing. In addition, the pope met in Jerusalem with other Orthodox patriarchs, including the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Armenia.

⁹A *New York Times* article from 3 January 1964 reiterates the

expected politicization of the papal visit.

¹⁰Most of the literature on this subject suggests that Jerusalem was almost completely neglected by the Hashemites and the Jordanian government during the 1948-1967 period. This author does not entirely dispute this but offers evidence elsewhere that Jordan invested in the Holy City for national purposes, i.e. identity building. See Katz, “Holy Places.”

¹¹Naim Sofer, “The Political Status of Jerusalem in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 1948-1967,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Volume 12, No. 1 (January 1976): 79.

¹²Both the 1946 and 1952 constitutions include a clause proclaiming the capital of the kingdom to be Amman, “but it may be changed to another locality by a special law.” An English translation of the constitution is found in M. Khalil, *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, Volume I Constitutional Developments, (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), 43 and 55 for the quoted clause; the Arabic original can be found in *Majmu’at al-qawanin wa-al-anzima* (Collection of Laws and Regulations), Volume I, (Amman: Jordanian Syndicate of Lawyers, 1957). See also the section titled “The Demand to Make Jerusalem the Capital” in Naim Sofer, “The Political Status of Jerusalem,” 84-86.

¹³The text of Jordan’s “Unification of the Two Banks” in April 1950 can be found in M. Khalil, *The Arab States and the Arab League*, p. 54.

¹⁴The newspaper article discussed here may have reflected the voices of many discontented Palestinians in Jordan at that time; however, few printed items were found to directly support that notion. The article should not be used to generalize across the entire Palestinian population living in Jordan then.

¹⁵In 1950, Jordan enacted legislation to erase Palestine from Jordanian parlance. Palestine, at least that part which was incorporated into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, ceased to be Palestine. For Jordan, Palestine was the area that was occupied by the Zionists and became the State of Israel. In Jordan the area of central Palestine was now called the “West Bank.”

¹⁶All references to the article here refer to the 7 January 1964 edition of *al-Jihad*.

¹⁷*Harri bina...wa-biladuna tu’ju bil-wafdin...hujaj, za’irin min mukhtalaf al-bilad...wa-bil-sahafiyin, al-murasilin li-subuf biladhim...wa-bi-sa’ir rijal al-a’alam*

¹⁸An example of this description is “light of guidance and peace, the Night Journey of the Prophet, Muhammad, the birthplace of Jesus and the path trod on by many of the Prophets...”

¹⁹The Dome of the Rock, the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, respectively. Incidentally there was also a stamp issue that reflected the meeting between the pope and the patriarch of Constantinople, both of whom flank the king on a background of the Muslim holy places on the *al-Haram al-Sharif* (the Noble Sanctuary).

²⁰The stamp series had strong reverberations in Italy as well. The Jordanian newspaper, *al-Jihad*, reported on 4 April 1964 that the Jordanian-issued stamps entered the Italian market on the same day as they did in Jordan and were sold for nearly ten times their face value. The images on the

stamps were not limited to Jordan's internal market nor just sent abroad on mail; they received mass consumption in the Italian market. An explanation for Italy's interest in the Jordanian-issued king/pope/holy places stamps is a topic for another article. *Al-Jihad* reported on the same day that the Vatican had also issued a stamp on the occasion of the pope's visit to the Holy Land, although apparently the king did not appear on the Vatican stamps with the pope, as the intended meaning was probably different.

²¹The king's speech is reprinted in *al-Jihad*, 7 January 1964.

²²See note 1.

²³*New York Times*, 3 January 1964.

²⁴*New York Times*, 3 January 1964. The diversion of the Jordan River was a project that Israel had been engaged in since the beginning to mid-1950s. The Arab states vehemently opposed the project as they claimed that it would deprive the Arab states surrounding Israel of adequate water resources. This subject was the stated reason for the convening of the Cairo Summit Conference in January 1964, less than 10 days after the pope's pilgrimage to the Holy Land. For more on this issue, see Leila S. Kadi, *Arab Summit Conferences and the Palestine Problem 1936-1950, 1964-1966* (Beirut, 1966), especially Chapter VI.

²⁵UN General Assembly, Resolution 194, 11 December 1948.

²⁶*New York Times*, 2 January 1964.

²⁷25 January 1964.

²⁸*The Jerusalem Times*, 21 March 1964.

²⁹*The Jerusalem Times*, 4 April 1964.

³⁰Tourism in Jordan increased by 111,500 people in 1965 and again by the same number in 1966. See Jordan, Department of Statistics, *Iqtisadiyat al-siyaha fi al-Urdun, 1950-1976* (*Statistics of Tourism in Jordan, 1950-1976*), prepared by Fawzi Sadiq, Jordanian Department of the Economy, 1978.

³¹Conversation with Ghalib Barakat, former Jordanian Minister of Tourism, 21 April 1999 in Amman, Jordan.

³²At the time of writing, many of the Palestinian territories have been subject to Israeli re-occupation during the al-Aqsa Intifada, which broke out in September 2000. So often have Israel's forces entered and exited areas that during the Oslo Process had been transferred to Palestinian Authority control that it is difficult to say at present what holy sites are under whose control.

³³See note 4.

³⁴The brochure is titled "The Sunrise of Christianity, Jordan 2000."

³⁵The Vatican "certification" for the Citadel as one of the holy places for Christians to visit came much later than the other five sites.

³⁶In August 1999 King Abdullah II and Jordan's prime minister publicly announced Jordan's intention to cede their "traditional" rights over the holy places to the Palestinian Authority when the "time was right." *Jordan Times*, 20 August 1999.

³⁷*Al-Lajna al-abliya al-'alya lil-ibtifalat bil-alfiya al-thalitha lil-milad*.

³⁸"Special Prayers on Mount Nebo during the pope's Visit," *al-Ra'i*, 16 January 2000, p. 32.

³⁹*Jordan Times*, 14 March 2000.

⁴⁰*New York Times*, 22 March 2000.

⁴¹The first was "The Third Millennium," the second "The Pope's Visit to Jordan: 36th Anniversary," and the third "The Pope's Visit to Jordan."

⁴²HKJ=Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

⁴³See note 36.

⁴⁴*al-Ra'i*, 19 September 1999, p. 1.

⁴⁵*al-Ra'i*, 21 March 2000, p. 30.

Commemorating Education: Recollections of the Arab College in Jerusalem, 1918-1948

ROCHELLE DAVIS

Until recently, modern Palestinian history has almost exclusively been written as a political history, one that details the events, negotiations, and activities leading up to the destruction of Palestine in 1948.¹ This political component of history has been utilized as the major explanatory tool to describe the absence of a Palestinian state, the existence of a diaspora composed of millions of Palestinian refugees living outside of Palestine in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, and the unwillingness of the international community to implement United Nations resolutions that provide Palestinians with land, rights, and compensation. While the political landmarks of the struggle over Palestine, of course, define Palestinians' lives today, Palestinians also recognize that their history and struggle lies in more than just the political forces and events that led up to the destruction and depopulation of the land.

In contrast to the formal histories that rely on the written documentation of the British Mandate Government and the nascent Palestinian national movement, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a surge in "new" types of histories on Palestine, such as autobiographies, village memorial books, and oral history collections.² Many of these works offer personal recollections and collected documentary material from the period prior the destruction of 1948, and focus primarily on personal and local concerns, set within a larger framework of Palestinian political realities and national identification practices. These recollections of the past envision a new history of Palestine, a type of history that Raphael Samuel calls in his *Theatres of Memory*, "a social form of knowledge: the work, in any given instance, of a thousand different hands."³ One possible explanation for the appearance of these new histories is that Palestinians live in a number of different countries and they have no state of their own; thus, no one particular group or institution can assert an exclusive hegemonic position over a historical vision of the past. Instead, as Swedenburg notes, "specialized bodies devoted to the preservation, collection, and dissemination of memories of the past have come to play a crucial role in a wider Palestinian struggle to articulate and sustain a national and cul-

tural identity."⁴ Often collectively conceived and composed as documentary projects to preserve specific types of knowledge, memorial books and oral history collections emerge to both challenge and complement the overarching narratives of Palestinian collective history, in the process of recording what are peculiarly local histories about individual families, villages, institutions, and events.⁵

The power of these texts lies in the specificity of the experiences described: late summers spent harvesting wheat, illicit cigarettes smoked beyond the watchful eyes of family, the farming and grazing of land that had been known by names now on the verge of being forgotten,⁶ village-and family-origin stories, the building of the family house, and memories of the first day of school. Through these stories, new histories of pre-1948 Palestinian life reveal what were once the known, mundane details of everyday life and existence, and which, following the destruction of Palestine in 1948, have become a powerful subject of nostalgia and inspiration for continued struggle. These memories are part of a growing documentary historical production that seeks to make the everyday life of the past a known commodity. This article addresses the topic of modern Palestinian historiography and the subject of historical memory by exploring the history of the Arab College in Jerusalem and the written recollections of former instructors and students that were published in the 1990s. In particular, this article examines two issues related to our understanding of history: first, the intersection of first-person accounts with the more general histories about education under the Mandate; and second, the role of the Arab College in the national struggle for Palestine as seen through the eyes of its former pupils and teachers.

In 1991, a group of Palestinians living in Jordan began a campaign to revive the Arab College, a secondary and post-secondary teacher training college that had stood on Jabal al-Mukabbir in Jerusalem prior to 1948.⁷ These former students and teachers of the Arab College, a public school under the jurisdiction of the Mandate government, felt that it had been a unique educational institution for the top students of Palestine and

Transjordan, as well as a symbol of national pride.⁸ They published an appeal to “all who are sympathetic to the intent [to re-establish the College] and who want to contribute to its future implementation, in repayment of their obligation [*wafa’ lil-dayn*] and in recognition of the College’s service.”⁹ In presenting their case, these former teachers and students published a volume commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Arab College, which included historical documents and photographs from the period between 1920 and 1948, a copy of the Arab College magazine from 1933, and recollections of former teachers and students.¹⁰ The material for this publication was largely gathered and presented through the efforts of a young researcher, Walid Raghīb al-Khalidī, who had published much of it previously in nineteen installments in *al-Quds al-Sharif*, a monthly periodical of the Jerusalem Arab Municipality-in-exile in Amman, Jordan.¹¹ These works by al-Khalidī, in addition to a number of accounts by former pupils or instructors of the college, provide an important body of material not only for the history of the Arab College and its role as an Arab educational institution during the British Mandate, but also for the historiography of education under the British occupation.

Prior to the activities of those who sought to re-establish the Arab College and their concomitant publications in the 1990s, the history of the Arab College was accessible in scholarly histories and well-informed, general accounts. Early works from the 1950s on education under the British Mandate by A. L. Tibawi and Abdulqadir Yousuf offer a variety of perspectives on that system of education based on both documentary material and their own experiences, always couched within a neutral and scholarly language.¹² Mahmud Abidī’s nine-page historical overview of the college’s history includes the names of teachers and students, descriptions of the buildings, and the different certifications offered. Despite the fact that he was a student at the college, the account is written in the third person with no personal details or stories.¹³ Similarly, Hisham Nashshabeh wrote an important article on the Arab College that includes references from the unpublished diaries of Ahmad Samih al-Khalidī, the director of the college from 1925 to 1948.¹⁴ In the late 1990s, more autobiographical accounts began to appear, such as Nicola Ziadeh’s description of his experiences as both a student and teacher at the college and Sadiq Ibrahim ‘Odeh’s combination of historical summary and personal stories.¹⁵

While the majority of Palestinian projects on oral history and popular memory have focused on rural refugees,¹⁶ the Arab College commemorative works, by contrast, focus on an elite, largely urban, experience shared by young men from all over Palestine. These students spent the formative period of their youth in the college and received a well-regarded education that pre-

pared them for positions in education, banking, and government service, among others. The Arab College was the most prestigious public educational institution for Arabs, and the only one offering education beyond the matriculation exam. Herbert Samuel, the first high commissioner, had envisioned (and promised) that it would become an Arab university, a plan that, unfortunately, was never implemented. The former teachers and students readily found prestigious employment throughout the Arab world and beyond, particularly after 1948.

These individual accounts presented in the commemorative works offer us the opportunity to examine the Arab College’s history as portrayed by students and teachers, who themselves recount the past through their personal experiences. Their recollections of the environment where they were educated and taught and the political and nationalist activities that surrounded them contrast with and complement the more formal and political histories of education during the Mandate period. With the publication of these personal stories of the past, we have a rich body of first-hand accounts of the pre-1948 Arab College to supplement more generalized forms of history. Thus, this article will discuss the historiography of Palestinian education in light of these new personal sources of history in two specific events in the Arab College’s history: the student protests against the British in 1925 and the Latin language requirement for the intermediate certification.

Arab Education Under the Mandate¹⁷

The Arab College, called the Men’s Teacher Training College until 1927, grew out of the British military administration’s restructuring of the governmental school system that followed the British occupation of Palestine in 1917-18. Colonial policy advised British Mandatory officials to leave all existing systems in place (adopting a *status quo* position), although the administration did change the language of instruction in the governmental schools for Arabs from Turkish to Arabic.¹⁸ Due to this amendment, the department found a dearth of what it perceived as teachers qualified to teach in Arabic.¹⁹ The department immediately established teacher-training colleges in Jerusalem for both men and women.²⁰ The problem of the lack of teachers was further compounded by a new British educational goal, set by the authorities when Palestine was transferred to a civil administration in 1920, that “every child in Palestine would have an opportunity of attending school” after four years of the civilian administration.²¹

Throughout the Mandate, the Palestinians and the British struggled over the types of education, content, funding, and control. The British Mandate Department of Education was under the direction of two British officials, Humphrey Bowman, followed by Jerome Far-

rell, who enforced the educational practices that they and their British and Arab assistants developed.²² Tibawi notes that the struggle between educational policy-makers focused on those who advocated high standards of education for a few versus others who believed in mass education of lower quality for more people. Thus, while some aimed to “discover and educate an *elite* class,” others worked at “keeping the peasants on the land by teaching their children farming, together with the three R’s.”²³ The implementation of these two different priorities resulted in the Department of Education organizing the new governmental educational system for Arabs around separate education for boys and girls and separate syllabi and standards for towns and villages. The division they created between town schools and village schools determined the different curricula and standards for teacher selection, among other issues.

While the Arab College was almost exclusively concerned with educating the most outstanding male students in Palestinian schools, selected to enter the college based on exams and interviews, the number of students trained to be teachers was limited by facilities and government commitment.²⁴ Of course, the limited scale of teacher training had a profound effect on the ability to develop the educational system. Between 1921-22 and 1932-33, the number of teachers increased by only 188, an average increase of 17 per year.²⁵ In the same period, the number of students increased by more than 7,000, and almost half of those who wanted to attend school were regularly turned away: in 1932-33 only 57 percent of applicants to the rural government schools were accepted, as were 45 percent of town school applicants.²⁶ Thus, in the early period of the Mandate, the limited teacher education training programs in addition to the Mandate Government-imposed budget cuts severely restricted the growth of education.

In the 1930s, the Department of Education implemented expansion schemes that resulted in a huge increase in the number of teachers.²⁷ In 1935, the Rural Training Center for Women in Ramallah offered two (and later three and then four) years of post-elementary training for women teachers for the rural schools. The Kadoorie Agricultural School in Tulkarm was established in 1931 and later included a year of teacher training for selected male students to become teachers in the rural schools.²⁸ Despite the growth in the number of teachers and the expansion of facilities, the Mandate government still turned away students and never achieved its goal of universal education; by 1944, it succeeded to insure that only 32.5 percent of the Arab school-age population (ages five to 14 years) was in school.²⁹

Tibawi and Yousuf are particularly keen to note that despite any successes of the Mandate educational system—and the Arab College was one of them—the en-

tire educational enterprise was constantly under attack by Arab educators and nationalist leaders. This was particularly true of the three directors of the Arab College, Khalil al-Sakakini (1919-1920), Khalil Totah (1920-1925), and Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi (1925-1948), who adopted different positions when negotiating the rough political waters that enveloped Palestine at various times, as will be discussed below. From the outset, Palestinian Arabs struggled with the British over control of the education system, particularly given that the British Mandate Department of Education granted the Jewish community complete charge of its public schools.³⁰ According to Tibawi, the major flaw of educational administration during the Mandate was the lack of Palestinians in the departmental administration.³¹ Therefore, while Arab students were taught by Arab teachers and supervised by Arab inspectors, those formulating the curriculum and educational policy, albeit with input from Arab employees of the department, were British. The lack of fundamental and significant Arab participation in the decision-making and policy formation remained a highly contested issue by the Palestinians throughout the Mandate.³²

In a Palestinian public educational environment characterized by large numbers of students unable to attend schools, lack of facilities, budget cuts, and personnel and administrative limitations imposed by the government and the Department of Education, the Arab College functioned as the elite institution for the education of Arabs in Palestine. Since students were accepted into the college on merit rather than social status, education provided opportunities for social and economic mobility and the formation of a diverse intellectual cadre that joined the ranks of the nationalist leadership.³³ As will be explored below in the discussions of the events of 1925 and the teaching of Latin, the personal memories and recollection of stories about the Arab College reveal the importance of national Palestinian Arab sentiment in remembering the past. Specifically, these accounts reveal the national consciousness of students and teachers, their nationalist activities, and their reactions to the limitations and restrictions of the Department of Education.

Colonial Education and the Student Strike of 1925

The national character of the struggle for Palestine was mirrored in the early history of the Arab College. The first Palestinian director of the Arab College (when it was still called the Men’s Teacher Training College) was Khalil al-Sakakini, appointed in 1919. Active in many of the intellectual pursuits of the time, he was a visionary educator, debated politics with other Palestinians in a number of forums, founded literary clubs, and took part in the leadership of the Arabization movement within the Greek Orthodox church.³⁴ His diaries,

edited and published by his daughter Hala shortly after his death in 1953, provide us with the only Palestinian accounts of education from this very early period.³⁵ In the following excerpt from November 1919, al-Sakakini describes his meeting with Legge, the Assistant Director in the Department of Education in which al-Sakakini sought to change the curriculum of the college:

I also suggested to Legge that we add music and singing to the school program, and he was pleased with that suggestion. As for a teacher for this subject, if we cannot find a special teacher, I myself can do it since I take special lessons at the music school in violin and voice for two hours a week. I also suggested that we teach natural philosophy and metaphysics (*al-falsafa al-tabi'iya*) and he asked me to prepare a list of the equipment necessary for such a class. In addition, I provided him with a long list of the various sports equipment we need. There were many other things I presented him and he accepted them pleasantly [...]³⁶

While we do not know the reaction of the authorities to al-Sakakini's proposals, it is clear that he did not see himself as merely a figurehead of the college and subordinate to the British Department of Education, but instead actively promoted his own agenda for education. Despite this promising first year, he resigned to protest the appointment of Herbert Samuel, both Jewish and a Zionist, as the high commissioner for Palestine in 1920.

The director appointed in his stead was the immanently suitable Khalil Totah who had a master's degree in education from the Teacher's College at Columbia University in the United States. Under his tenure from 1920 to 1925, Arab College educational standards advanced greatly: the teacher training period was raised from two to three and then four years, and a preparatory class for students from the village schools was opened.³⁷ Like al-Sakakini, Totah was intent on improving the educational possibilities for students.³⁸

Rather than directly protesting the British policies as al-Sakakini had done, Totah tried to negotiate between the colonial administration and Palestinian desires for national independence. The Arab College had the prestige of being the best Arabic educational institution in Palestine at the time, and thus, according to Tibawi, "this College had been considered by the Arab national leaders as an excellent field for their operations. Several members of the staff, notably the history lecturer, were ardent nationalists actively in contact with those leaders."³⁹ Totah's successful tenure, however, witnessed a number of "unsettling events," as Abidi describes them.⁴⁰ Totah was directly involved in one incident when he and 'Umar Salih al-Barghuthi wrote a textbook on the history of Palestine that Herbert Samuel banned. Totah did not make full disclosure of the story until 1937, when he says Samuel banned the book due to the

following statement in the text: "Sir Herbert Samuel endeavoured to make the Arabs see the Jewish point of view as regards Zionism and failed."⁴¹ That Totah (and al-Barghuthi) did not go public with the incident reveals that Totah, unlike al-Sakakini, sought to smooth over the conflicts between the colonial sensibilities and Palestinian national sentiments; his success in avoiding confrontation with the British, however, was short-lived.

The end of Totah's tenure as director of the college came as a result of Palestinian demonstrations against the Mandate Government in 1925. Historical sources recount the events in 1925 with varying levels of detail and style, among them personal accounts of people who were affiliated with the Arab College. Lord Balfour, the founder of the eponymous Balfour declaration, came to Jerusalem that year at the invitation of the Zionist movement to inaugurate the opening of the Hebrew University.⁴² The Palestinian Arab population marked the occasion with demonstrations and strikes, school students among them, including members of the Arab College. The Government closed down the Arab College for several weeks and only agreed to open it again after the Arab Executive Committee intervened and students signed agreements to "conform to college discipline."⁴³ However, if one reads Tibawi, the most comprehensive account of education under the British, there is no mention of Khalil Totah in the section on the 1925 student strikes; Tibawi only notes that Totah "voluntarily resigned his post" in a separate location in the book, with no reference to why he might have resigned nor the year.⁴⁴ Yousuf mentions the 1925 strike as one example of "effective and important strikes" by educational institutions, but does not discuss its effect on the tenure of Totah.⁴⁵

Despite the importance of the strikes and their effect on the leadership of the college, neither Tibawi, as the most authoritative scholar on Palestinian education, nor numerous other sources detail the exact events and participants in the 1925 strikes. Even Nicola Ziadeh's recollection of his time at the Arab College, where he studied from 1921 to 1924, does not mention the events of 1925. Ziadeh began teaching in Acre following his commencement, although, he writes, "I maintained a relationship with the Teacher's College after my graduation, and I corresponded with Khalil Totah and Darwish Miqdadi and some of the students who were behind me."⁴⁶ The only comment he makes about Totah's resignation is when describing the many changes that had taken place following his return visit to the Arab College in 1926: "the most important of which was the resignation of Khalil Totah, and the deputation of Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi as the director in 1925."⁴⁷

In a few personal accounts we find some suggestion as to why Totah submitted his resignation. Mahmud Abidi, a student at the college at the time, explains that

Total's position as principal became very delicate: he could neither discourage nor encourage the students. As a Quaker he was against violence. He was unjustly suspected of sympathy with the government (which his evidence before the Royal Commission twelve years later proved unfounded). Accordingly he resigned, and the government decided to close down the college and send the students home....⁴⁸

Similarly, Nashshabeh's historical account, relying on the diaries of Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, who succeeded Total as director of the college, suggests that the British were responsible for Total's resignation. After the strike, certain students were punished and the remainder were allowed to return to school in June of 1925; the students however, "renewed the spirit of resistance" and refused to go to classes. Nashshabeh reflects that the British then saw the students as the most radical in the country, because only the students were still striking. Unable to get the students to return to the classroom, Total resigned. According to Nashshabeh this put the Department of Education in an embarrassing position and they asked Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi to step in for Total while he was on "medical leave" for six days.⁴⁹

By all accounts Total was successful and well liked; thus, in these histories of the Arab College, the variety of explanations, or lack thereof, for his resignation, particularly from people who were present during that period, suggests their contemporaneous confusion over the exact course of events. One possible suggestion for the silence on this issue comes from Abidi's insinuation that Total was seen as sympathetic to the administration. Thus, in retrospect, to preserve Total's reputation, no one comments on his role in 1925. This explanation concurs with the recollection of the events by 'Abdulrahman al-Habbab,⁵⁰ a student who entered the college in 1924. He maintains that Total told the students not to demonstrate, but they went onto the grounds and street anyway, among them Mustafa al-Tahir and Radi 'Abdulahdi who gave speeches.⁵¹ Given the students' behavior, the director was seen by the British administration as being unable to control the students and thus was fired, along with a number of teachers who were supportive of the strike: George Mu'ammam, Jallal Zurayq, and Darwish al-Miqdadi ("an ardent nationalist").⁵² Al-Habbab's account stresses a very different understanding of Total's role in the strike—Total discourages the students but does not prevent them from demonstrating (appropriate to both his position as director of the college and national sentiments as a Palestinian). Al-Habbab is the only one who believes that Total was dismissed for his actions; this interpretation of his resignation is in keeping with a Palestinian national role Total is seen retrospectively as maintaining, particularly following his testimony in 1937. Abidi suggests that there was some confusion over Total's actual

position, and thus, not mentioning this period of his life may be the best way for all those who wrote about or recalled this period of protecting Total's nationalist credentials. Tibawi's only mention of Total occurs when he quotes a number of times Total's 1937 testimony to the Palestine Royal Commission on behalf of the Arab Higher Committee. His testimony clearly indicates his nationalist position on Palestinian education, particularly through his opening statement: "The major grievance of the Arabs as regards education, is that they have no control over it."⁵³ Without the actual documentation, people's accounts and memories leave room for a wide range of possible outcomes, motives, and interpretations.

In fact, Total's own version of events, recounted much later, bears out some of the reason for the historical silence, as he did stand against the prevalent nationalist opinion.⁵⁴ He gives a very clear account of why he refused to support the strike, which is not reproduced or even captured in any of the above accounts:

My attitude to Arab strikes, which are too frequent and usually futile, was negative. I preached strenuous toil for the Arabs and not strikes, if they wished to stand up to the Zionists. I told them that every day's loss of work was permitting the Jews to get ahead of them by just that much. I would not join in the noisy mob in the streets nor march with the demonstration.⁵⁵

His lack of enthusiasm for the strike was not about his lack of support for the nationalist cause, but was instead about rejecting striking as a viable nationalist action. However, in the heat of the moment, his nuanced position seems to have been overlooked. He presents the complications of nationalists' interpretations of his position and his bitterness over the ultimate outcome:

The mob was after my scalp as a traitor to the Arab Cause. Like Pontius Pilate, the British authorities let me down in order to appease the crowd who cried, "crucify him, crucify him!" That was my reward for sticking to my principles, for faithfulness to real Arab interests and incidentally for loyalty to Government orders which were issued to its officers in writing forbidding the strike. But of course, that was not an unusual performance on the part of the British politicians or politicians of any other country either.⁵⁶

Total seems to lay the majority of the blame for the resulting upheaval in his life not on the nationalist activists who mistook his position, but on the British who failed to support him and the fact that he was actually following their orders by refusing to participate in or condone the strike. Total says he then resigned and went to America where he finished his Ph.D., later to come back and head the Friends' School in Ramallah.

Incidentally, as can be seen in all of the aforementioned accounts of the events of 1925 at the Arab Col-

lege, Totah is never cast as being sympathetic with the British government, neither by historians nor by people who were students at the time, even though it is clear that he did not want the students to strike. While he may have been penalized in 1925 for his position, history has not exposed him as anti-nationalist. Instead, historical memory has sheltered him and the details of what was his controversial position, both through the vague accounts of historians who sweep past the details, and the eyewitness accounts of students at the time, who see him either as following his religious convictions or as a victim of British colonial policy.

While in all of these accounts Khalil Totah is not connected to the strike and bears almost no responsibility for it or the students' behavior at the time, a number of people name Darwish al-Miqdadi as one of the instigators of student sentiment. Abidi describes him as "an inspiring teacher, and his extra-curricular activities were as extensive and stimulating as his teaching. His talks at the Debating Society were very popular, and his organized tours of historic sites in and around the city were most exciting and illuminated by his well prepared expositions."⁵⁷ In addition, he was "as popular with the Arab leadership outside the college as with the students inside."⁵⁸ A graduate of the American University in Beirut, Miqdadi had been hired by the Arab College in 1922 to teach history and geography. Nicola Ziadeh's account of this period fails to describe what happens to Miqdadi in 1925, but does mention one other teacher, George Mu'ammār, whom al-Habbab described as among the three who were fired. According to Ziadeh, Mu'ammār, also a graduate of AUB, had just joined the college after Ziadeh's graduation, "but only taught there for one year."⁵⁹

Likewise, Miqdadi's past in the Arab College is rarely mentioned in biographical information about him. For example, in Choueiri's recent book on Arab nationalism, he reports that Miqdadi was educated at the Ottoman Islamic College and the American University of Beirut, where he studied history, literature and sociology.

He was to spend the rest of his life in various posts associated with teaching and educational administration. After his graduation (1922), he first worked in Jerusalem before moving to Iraq in 1927 where he joined the Teachers' Higher Training College. He was involved during this period in propagating nationalist ideas, working in close cooperation with Sati' al-Husari who dominated the Iraqi education system at the time.⁶⁰

There is no mention of his nationalist activities and clash with authorities in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Ya'qub al-'Awdat, whose encyclopedic reference work *Min Alam al-Fikr wa al-Adab fi Filastin* (From Among the Scholars of Thought and Literature in Palestine) contains biographies of the most significant and influential Palestinian

men from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, reports that Miqdadi taught at the Arab College from 1922 to 1925, but attributes another cause for his departure; in this account, Miqdadi submitted his resignation because of a clash with British authorities over a scout group he had established named after Khalid ibn al-Walid, the early Arab Muslim military leader who headed the Muslim armies in their conquests of Iraq and Syria. The British asked Miqdadi to do one of the following: terminate the troop's existence, make it part of the Baden-Powell Scouts, or resign from his work. Miqdadi is said to have shouted in the face of the British Director of the Department of Education, "Will the Scout troop of Khalid ibn al-Walid, the great hero who was never defeated in his life, be canceled? No, no, it will not be rescinded, and it will not join the British Baden-Powell Association. Here is my resignation."⁶¹ Al-'Awdat, like many others, does not give a source for this information, although presumably he gathered it either directly from Miqdadi, who died in 1961, or from those who knew of the incident. The text of the letter Miqdadi wrote is quoted in al-'Awdat as having appeared in the newspaper *al-Ittibad al-'Arabi*, issue 38, on 17 Rajab 1344/30 January 1926.⁶²

To the Honorable Director of Education in Palestine

The Assistant Director of the Teacher's College informed me that you will not allow the establishment of an Arab Scouting group independent of the English Baden-Powell Scouts at the Teacher's College.

I believe that we are Arabs in an Arab country, and we want to have an Arab slogan and Arab flag. We also want to have an Arab Scout [organization] outside of the English Scouts, which we do not agree with on some issues because there is no doubt that it is foreign to us, colonialist in spirit (*isti'mariyah fi ruhiba*), and English in its slogan and flag.

I believe that we should have an independent Arab Scouts, as is the situation in the Jewish schools where the Scouts are independent of Baden-Powell Scouts and carry a Zionist slogan and a Zionist flag.

Our Arab Scouts are valuable to the students after the failure of the English Scouts at the Teacher's College. For these reasons, I stand by the Arab Scouts because I fully believe that its presence is greatly beneficial to the students and the teachers.⁶³

Al-'Awdat then details that Miqdadi resigned from the Arab College and was appointed as a history teacher at the Islamic College that had been established by the Higher Muslim Council in Jerusalem.⁶⁴ Abidi also notes that Miqdadi's history as a nationalist activist begins with the scout troop incident: "His first clash with authority was concerning his attempt to organize an Arab Scout Group independent of the Baden-Powell Association of which the British Director of Education [Bowen] was

county commissioner and Samuel the chief scout.”⁶⁵ Whether Miqdadi resigned over the independence of the scout troop or was fired for his role in the 1925 protests, his experiences in Jerusalem during this period prefigure his later history and writings as a staunch Arab and Palestinian nationalist. In many people’s recollections of the events, he was a catalyst for nationalist action in his short tenure at the Arab College.

We find, therefore, in this short but eventful history of the Arab College in 1925, that an individual’s participation in nationalist activities and resistance to British control over education clearly has an important place in people’s memories, but fails to achieve any mention in texts more focused on generalizing histories of Palestine. For example, Totah’s part in the 1925 strike only comes out in the individual accounts, as does Miqdadi’s name. Tibawi, as the chronicler of Arab education under the Mandate, fails to mention why Totah resigned. Nor does he mention the names of the teachers who were fired. Tibawi’s reluctance to name names (throughout the book and not just in this case) is perhaps in keeping with his desire to protect the reputations of his informants, friends, and former colleagues.

The multiplicity of the accounts of the events of 1925 at the Arab College exposes the concerns of historians about the reliability of memory and oral sources.⁶⁶ Wary of the interested nature of colonial accounts and lacking other documentary evidence, scholars find themselves with people’s memories of the past as the only information available on some subjects. However, with so many plausible accounts, how do we know what really happened? The question may be answered in other ways. For example, the events of Darwish Miqdadi’s life in 1925 are so muddled in the multiple accounts of his fate that it seems more productive to understand the claims of the different accounts rather than to try and find the “truth.” Miqdadi’s resignation, rather than his firing, suggests a nationalist agency and mirrors the precedent of Sakakini’s resignation to protest Samuel’s appointment as high commissioner. Likewise, Miqdadi’s firing is equally plausible, and certainly the most corroborated of the accounts. And it is undoubtedly possible that he was both fired and that he also resigned. Thus, these “histories” of his experiences must be read through the hegemonic nationalist forces that mold and form personal memories.⁶⁷

Scholars who work extensively with oral histories appreciate the non-conformity of individual accounts to the dominant, overarching narratives. Alessandro Portelli’s work, collecting oral histories of the Italian resistance to fascism and the Nazi occupation, has brought him to believe that people telling their stories are “more articulate and credible historians than those professional writers and administrators of history....”⁶⁸ These conflicting accounts of the Arab College in 1925

also reflect Palestinians’ direct confrontation with the hegemonic methods of historical recollection. In contrast with the generalizing, distant historical accounts, the new methods of recording the past that Palestinians have embarked upon—memorial books, autobiographies, and oral history collections, such as the compilation accounts of the Arab College—give authority to individual memories. As such, their discussions of classmates, funny incidents that happened, the strict and the kind teachers, school subjects, martyrs, important people, and their own nationalist activities, reshape our knowledge of the past.⁶⁹ Through exhibiting this encyclopedic and intimately detailed knowledge of their subjects, the authors are claiming the authority to know about their subject. At the same time, such information must be seen as an act of recording for posterity, and a way to tie personal stories and remembrances to a larger Palestinian identity and consciousness. Further reflection on these issues appears in the student reminiscences of the required study of Latin at the Arab College.

The Intermediate Certificate and Memories of Latin

While the students and teachers at the Arab College struggled with the British Mandate administration in demonstrations and street protests, at the same time they protested the educational policies that they were subjected to by the Department of Education. A keen example of student reaction to these policies is in the teaching of Latin at the Arab College. In 1939, the Arab College added a fifth and sixth year, which were considered college-level, post-secondary education. Completion of this two-year course—on either a science or a literature track—resulted in being awarded an intermediate certificate. Jerome Farrell, the director of education from 1936 to 1946, was crucial in establishing this certificate and determining its curriculum, which he envisioned reflecting his own British school upbringing.⁷⁰ The intermediate certificate thus included the study of English and Arabic for both the science section and the literature section; in addition, the science students studied theoretical and applied mathematics, and the literature students studied philosophy, classical history, and Latin.

Numerous authors have commented on the very alien curriculum imposed by the British on Arab students, in which “direct teaching of contemporary history was excluded from the official syllabus.”⁷¹ In light of the events taking place in the country, Palestinians strenuously objected to the fact that the educational curriculum downplayed the Arab and Islamic past in favor of more “universal humanistic” (i.e., British) subjects. The imposition of Latin as part of the only higher education available to Palestinians was seen as yet another colonial

mechanism to distance the best students from their national heritage. According to Yousuf,

One of the main reasons for the introduction of Latin and Greek in the syllabus of the high school and the matriculation was the fact that one of the Directors of Education, Jerome Farrell, had the taste and appreciation for these two languages. He even volunteered to teach the interested students himself and went far to establish with the Department's money scholarships for Latin and Greek students in British Universities.⁷²

Yousuf adds that "Many students anxious to have college educations studied Latin and Greek in order to satisfy the Director and secure scholarships. Thus, instead of initiating professional studies in agriculture, engineering, medicine, health, and other technical subjects necessary for the life of the Arabs of Palestine, Farrell's policy was to produce amateurs or experts in Latin and Greek."⁷³ Yousuf's scholarly account of the inclusion of Latin and Greek into the intermediate syllabus reveals a general dissatisfaction with the courses, but also shows the interested nature of people's compliance with the regulation. In writing a generalizing history of the policy, despite its critical tone, he consequently overwrites the possibility of actual enthusiasm for the subject or dissent by student or faculty. In understanding the Greek and Latin requirement and its influence on student's lives, personal accounts provide a less orderly and more contested understanding of the implementation of the new intermediate syllabus. Some students excelled in the study of the classics. According to former student Khalid al-Sadiq:

The London Intermediate started at the Arab College in 1947. I was among the first group of students to apply to it. So I left the Rashidiyah school and entered this class, based on preparation for the Baccalaureate system which at that time was limited to the Hebrew University. The Arab College had adopted a gifted student named 'Irfan Qa'war who began preparing to obtain the Bachelor's degree in Latin from the Arab College as a unique case. He was placed under the supervision of the teachers, among them George Hourani. Qa'war almost never left the library in order to achieve the equivalent of the first university degree from London ...⁷⁴

Another student of the Arab College, Ahmad 'Anani, tells of his refusal to study Latin and Greek within the nationalist context that surrounded the college.

Mr. Farrell wanted to send me on a scholarship to complete my studies in Greek and Roman history, but I refused at the time. I now see this as a big mistake that I clung to this position out of my desire to study Islamic history, because even if I had gone and studied Greek history, I could have studied what I wanted to afterwards. [...] But I was a passionate and zealous

young man at that time and in 1940 I felt that excelling in Greek and Latin in our culture was a war against Islam.

I put my opinion on the board in the corridor of the College to the effect that no students wanted to study Latin. I had stopped studying Latin around the time of graduation in 1941, and I was getting books on Islam from the library to study other than Latin. Al-Khalidi [the director of the Arab College] intervened and convinced the administration of the Education Department to solve this issue and so I graduated with the grades I had got for the first part of the year.⁷⁵

In his narrative, 'Anani figures as something of a rebel against the British authority, although his retrospective regrets over his action figure prominently into the story. 'Anani's account reveals his willingness to follow his personal conviction and nationalist feelings, as well as al-Khalidi's fundamental sympathy to his stance. 'Anani's recounting of this story, in addition to his later re-evaluation of his situation and revelation of his thoughts that he did the wrong thing, reveals a significant element of his individual thoughts and feelings, as well as shows his intellectual and political development in the context of national identity and resistance to colonialism. He cites his opposition as an objection to the obscuring of the national/religious history of Palestine, which he equates as part of his own personal history.

Moreover, 'Anani offers another story that justifies his nationalist and anti-colonialist stand. A visitor from South Africa came to the Arab College with the head of the department of education to inspect the school. In the Latin class, 'Anani stood and read the material that he had prepared for the occasion. He then continues,

The guest, an older man, voiced a word of criticism openly to the class and in front of the shocked Mr. Farrell. He said, with the experience of a world expert and unfettered scholar, "You give the Jews technology and other practical matters, but as for the Arabs, you prevent them from more useful things. Teach them, Jerome [Farrell], what will be of use to them because these are the cream of the crop in Palestine. Do you have any technological institutes?" Farrell replied no, but that the Rashidiyah school works in complement to the Arab College. The guest replied, "By God I have seen this same scene before in Algeria. They concern themselves there with teaching Moliere and Racine, in total absence of anything of practical importance. If you would teach them how to make soap it would be of more benefit to them and their country."⁷⁶

'Anani's successful attempt to seek validation for his actions in national and personal contexts is complemented by the views of the visiting professor who

complains of the worthlessness of an education in Latin to these boys and to their country. 'Anani's interpretation of the visitor's comments leads one to think that the visitor is advocating the teaching of more valuable (i.e. technical) educational material to these boys. To me, however, the nature of the visitor's comments is not exactly clear. It is certainly possible to understand the visitor's comments as a derogatory criticism, given the colonial context in which they occurred—that teaching Latin to such people is a wasted endeavor, and that if the Palestinians made soap, they might improve themselves by being cleaner. Unbeknownst to the visitor it seems, Palestinians were expert soap-makers, who had long been exporting soap outside of Palestine.⁷⁷ 'Anani's account of studying Latin and the visitor's comments and suggestion of a technical education uncover the struggle of colonial educational projects between two approaches towards education: practical education to help develop the country versus intellectual education to create an educated elite that could embrace the modern world. Both approaches were steeped in views of the inferior nature of indigenous education and the inability of local peoples to govern their own administrative and educational systems.

The publication of 'Anani's recollections of his refusal to study Latin prompted a response from a former classmate, revealing that memory of events and occurrences of the past are not uncontested material. In fact, their written publication makes them appear in a form that can be easily debated, argued over, and have their accuracy called into question. In the next installment of the Arab College series, Ahmad Hussein al-Hajj submitted the following reply to 'Anani:

I noticed that all of the previous articles that have been written on the Arab College in Jerusalem have come from memory and lack any documentation. What Ahmed al-'Anani wrote caught my attention because of its lack of evidence, and the mistakes in it must be corrected. What I remember from the Arab College in this context is the following:

1) the class of 39-40 and 40-41 was made up of 14 students, 9 from the arts and literature section [...lists names, among them 'Anani...]. A Jordanian student named Muhammad Salim 'Abdulwali (May God have mercy on him) was excused from studying Latin. However, Latin was an essential and required part of study of the arts and literature section. Four students were in the science section [...lists names, among them his own...].

2) In addition to the shared courses that we all had to study—Arabic, English, Logic, and Pedagogy—the arts and literature section studied Latin, Philosophy, and History while the science section studied mathematics, practical mathematics (mechanical), and the history of mathematics [science?].⁷⁸

Despite his protests about the reliance on memory, al-Hajj presents his own corrections to 'Anani's story in the form of his own memories. Interestingly enough, al-Hajj was in the science section and not part of the literature section which had to study Latin, a fact which causes one to ask on what basis he discredits 'Anani's story. He concludes his letter with the following comment: "It is important to me to read articles about the Arab College that are well-documented and tied to the development of the college from the time of its establishment, discussing the curriculum that was taught at each stage, and the teaching staff that worked in it each year. My respect and appreciation to the *al-Quds al-Sharif* and its administration."⁷⁹ Al-Hajj turns from an indirect criticism of the style of the information being presented as unreliable, to praise for the magazine for its work.

The student recollections of studying Latin at the Arab College reveal the contentiousness inherent in the imposition of the colonial Mandate curriculum. The students were caught between nationalistic and personal desires to learn about the Arab, Islamic, and Palestinian past and their drive and desire to succeed in the only educational channels available to them. The personal accounts of this period show us that students took both paths. In the absence of written records about the Arab College, which hopefully will surface some day in an Israeli archive (or elsewhere), memory, photographs and individual documents are all that remain to tell these stories. The struggle over the "correct" memory is part of a larger struggle in Palestine over remembering the past, as skillfully spun in Ted Swedenberg's *Memories of Revolt*, which details the recollections of former Palestinian participants in the 1936-39 revolt. What Swedenberg terms "oppositional memories" of former fighters counter the dominant Palestinian accounts of the revolt.⁸⁰ Similarly, the Arab College history that emerges from oral histories and personal recollections of individual memories takes on a new role in creating collective and national histories and influences the various coercive and hegemonic powers that create a specific vision of the past.

Conclusion

In their efforts to commemorate the past of the Arab College, the former students and teachers of that institution have provided us with the opportunity to understand the specific actions and reactions of students and instructors to the nationalist activities that surrounded them and the Mandate government policies. Their memories enrich our historical vision and provide us with a chance to see the creative agency in people's individual lives and their relation to authority. These personal accounts also record information that history writers rarely include. Al-Habbab recalls from the 1925 demonstration the following chant:

Allab-u akbar la nurid al-Tura fa-inkas 'ala 'aqbayka ya Balfoura

(God is Great and we don't want al-Tur [the location of the High Commissioner's residence], so turn on your heels and go, [Lord] Balfour)⁸¹

According to al-Habbab, these lines were part of a poem written by an Islamic College pupil who shouted them as he was carried on the students' shoulders marching towards the government headquarters. Identifiable to the events of 1925, this chant reminds us of the specificity of individual memory and the contribution each person makes to creating the whole. By examining the contradictory and complementary accounts of the Latin Intermediate Certificate requirement and the events of 1925, we can appreciate the role that personal testimony plays in undermining dominant narratives and in clarifying interpretations, motives, and reactions of participants and their memories as we reconstruct modern Palestinian history.

NOTES

¹See, for example, Izzat Tannous, *The Palestinians: A Detailed Documented Eyewitness History of Palestine Under British Mandate* (New York: I.G.T. Company, 1988); Abd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *Tarikh Filastin al-Hadith* (Modern History of Palestine), 3rd ed. (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1973), English translation published as *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1972); Constantine Zurayq, *Ma'nab al-Nakbah* (The Meaning of the Disaster) (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm lil-Malayin, 1948), among many others.

²See, for example, the projects of Birzeit University's Center for Research and Documentation of Palestinian Society, which includes a series on destroyed Palestinian villages and a series of oral histories/autobiographies, <http://www.birzeit.edu/crdps> (27 March 1999); Amin Hafiz al-Dajani, *Jabhat al-Tarbiya wa-al-Ta'lim wa-Nidaluba Dad al-Isti'mar -- al-Baramij wa al-Manahij wa -al Mu'allimun wa-al-Tullab 'abr Arba'a 'Uhud* (The Battlefield of Education Against Colonization: The Program, Curriculum, Teachers, and Students Over Four Decades) (n.p.: n.p, n.d); Rawan al-Damin and Dima al-Damin, *Al-Tahjir fi Dhakirah al-Tufulah: Shabadat Filastiniyah Hayyah* (Exodus in the Memory of Childhood: Living Palestinian Witnesses) (West Bank: Al-Lajnah al-wataniyah al-filastiniyah lil-tarbiyah wa-al-thaqafah wa-al-'ulum, 1997); Imtiaz Diab and Ziyad Fahum, *Hikayat Qaryah: Qura Filastin al-Mudammarah 'Am 1948 fi Mintaqat al-Quds* (The Story of a Village: Palestinian Villages Destroyed in 1948 in the Jerusalem Area) (Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'arabiyah lil-dirasat wa al-nashr, 1990); Orayb Aref Najjar and Kitty Warnock, *Portraits of Palestinian Women* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992); Julie Peteet, *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement* (NY: Columbia, 1991); Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998); Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-9 Rebellion and the Struggle for a Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1995); and Adel Yahya, *The Palestinian Refugees: 1948-1998 (An Oral History)* (Ramallah: Palestinian

Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), 1999).

³Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), 8.

⁴Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, 19.

⁵Rochelle Davis, "The Attar of History: Palestinian Narratives of Life Before 1948." (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2002); see also Susan Slyomovics' excellent discussion of this subject in *Object of Memory*.

⁶For example, al-Walajeh village contained *kebilat al-thalab, 'iraq abu sa'd, abu zalat, tif abu 'adas*. These names mean, respectively (from the sources I consulted), the "concave plain of the fox," "the marsh[?] of the stork," "the place of pebbles," and a reference to lentils. From Aziz Abu Khiyarah et al., *Al-Walajeh Hadarab wa Tarikh* (Al-Walajeh Culture and History) (Amman, Jordan: al-Walajeh Cooperative Society, 1993), 34. Because the terms used to describe the land are so regionally and locally specific, it is not always clear to someone from outside the village or the region what the names mean (if anything) and what type of land the designations suggest. Consequently, with the removal of the people from the land, the names of places are no longer in use and are being forgotten. See also Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁷The Arab College was called the Men's Teacher Training College until 1927, when its name changed to the Government Arab College. Throughout the article, I will refer to it as the Arab College to avoid the confusion of referring to the same institution with multiple names, despite the historical inaccuracy of the usage. In Arabic it was called *Dar al-Mu'allimin* and later *al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah*. Jabal al-Mukabbir is known in English as the Hill of Evil Counsel and lies south of the Old City on the road to Bethlehem, and was also the location of the new British Mandate High Commissioner's residence (what now houses the UNTSO headquarters).

⁸*Khamas wa Saba'un Sanah 'ala Ta'sis al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fil-Quds* (Seventy-five Years Since the Founding of the Arab College) (Amman: al-Bank al-'Arabi, 1995), 11.

⁹*Khamas wa Saba'un Sanah*, 57, from a reprint of a 1991 announcement issued by a committee of teachers and students of the Arab College. The committee included Hasan Sa'id al-Karmi, 'Abdulrahman Bushnaq, Fathi As'ad Qaddura, Jamal Muhammad Badran, 'Ali Hasan 'Odeh, and Badr Sa'id al-Fahum. Walid Raghbi al-Khalidi, a much younger man, was involved in the documentary aspects of the project from the beginning.

¹⁰*Khamas wa Saba'un Sanah* (see note 8 for full citation). The reprint of the magazine covers pages 63-119 of the book.

¹¹The first installment was in issue 78, from September 1991, and the nineteenth installment appeared in issue 96, March 1993. The magazine's last issue was 97.

¹²Tibawi's study on Arab Education under the Mandate is by far the most comprehensive study, and also the most well-known treatment of the subject. In fact, almost all current scholarship on Palestinian education uses Tibawi as its primary reference for this period. This status is well deserved, and the limits of his study will be discussed below. His work examines Arab education explicitly within the colonial framework established by the British, based on British Mandate

statistics and reports, while critical of many aspects of the British Department of Education and its policy (of which he himself was a part). A.L. Tibawi, *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine: A Study of Three Decades of British Administration* (London: Luzac and Co, 1956). The work by Abdulqadir Yousuf is his Ph.D. dissertation written during the same period as Tibawi's book. See Abdulqadir Mohammad Yousuf, "The British Educational Policy in the Arab Public Schools of Palestine during the Mandate" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1956).

¹³Mahmud Abidi, "The Arab College, Jerusalem," in *Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture*, vol. 3, Mohamed Taher, ed. (New Delhi: Ammol, 1997), 204-213. The article originally appeared in *Arabic and Islamic Garland Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi* (London: Islamic Cultural Center, 1977), 28-35.

¹⁴Hisham Nashshabeh, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiya fil-Quds (The Arab College in Jerusalem)," in *Dirasat Filastiniyah: Majmu'at Abthath Wudi'at Takriman lil-Duktur Qustantin Zurayq* (Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honour of Constantine K. Zurayq), Hisham Nashshabeh, ed. (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyah, 1988), 127-153.

¹⁵Nicola Ziadeh, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiya fil-Quds (The Arab College in Jerusalem)," in *Dhakhirat al-Quds: Bubuth wa Dirasat Mu'adab li-dhikra Kamil Jamil al-'Asali* (Memory of Jerusalem: Research and Studies in Memory of Kamil Jamil al-Asali) (Amman: University of Jordan Press, 1996). Note that Ziadeh's name in Arabic should be transliterated as Ziyadah, however, his many publications in English spell his name as Ziadeh, and so to avoid confusion I have chosen to transliterate his name as he chooses to spell it in English. Sadiq Ibrahim 'Odeh, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiya fil-Quds 1918-1948: Ma'lumat wa-Dhikrayat (The Arab College in Jerusalem 1918-1948: Information and Memories)," in *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyah*, 40 (Fall 1999): 170-188. See also Hasan Sa'id al-Karmi, *Al-'Ilm wal-Ta'lim wal- al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiya fil-Quds* (Knowledge, Education and the Arab College in Jerusalem) (Beirut: n.p., 1995).

¹⁶See Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Press, 1979); and for an especially comprehensive discussion of Palestinian oral history see *Al-Jana: File on Palestinian Oral History*, special volume edited by Rosemary Sayigh (Beirut: Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts, 2002).

¹⁷Arab education is discussed separately from education generally because Jewish public education remained relatively independent of the department, although Zionist organizations did receive grants and a supervisory position in the department. See Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 255-267; Nardi Noah, *Education in Palestine* (Washington: Zionist Association of America, 1945); *Commission of Enquiry into the System of Education of the Jewish Community in Palestine* (London: HM Stationery Office, 1946), among other sources. The private schools (of all religious communities) remained private, although the Muslim *kuttabs* were considered "public" schools and subsumed into the education department.

¹⁸See Article 15 of the Mandate. As under the Ottomans, the private schools remained autonomous.

¹⁹*His Majesty's Government Report for Palestine and Transjordan* (London: HM Stationery Office, 1929) says "In general it may be said that the public schools in the Turkish provinces were

ill-organised and the methods of instruction unsatisfactory. The use of Turkish as the medium even in elementary classes, added to these defects, made the schools largely ineffective. The foreign missionary institutions, though they enjoyed a comparatively high reputation and performed a notable service by paying some attention to Arabic, also made the mistake of employing a foreign medium. Thus, when Arabic became the official language of instruction after the War, it was found that teachers with any knowledge of general subjects were weak in Arabic, and that those Moslems who had received the traditional religious education, even if adequate in Arabic, were ignorant in all other branches of knowledge" (63).

²⁰While much has been written by Palestinians and historians about the Men's Teacher Training College (the Arab College) almost nothing other than the British Mandate reports exists on the Women's Teacher's Training College, also established in Jerusalem. In 1927 it had 64 students (35 Muslim, 28 Christian, and 1 Bahai). Unlike the Arab College, the principal and vice-principal of the Women's College were British, in addition to a few of the teachers. In 1927, 17 students passed the diploma examination and were appointed to government schools along with two students who didn't pass, but were appointed at a lower salary, *His Majesty's Government Report for Palestine and Transjordan* (London: HM Stationery Office, 1927), 31. R.D. Matthews and M. Akrawi, *Education in the Arab Countries*, (Washington, D.C: American Council on Education, 1949) discusses the subject on page 49; see also Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 203, although he also cites Matthews and Akrawi. In reference to the Women's College, Tibawi only mentions the nationality of the staff and that it was the only secondary public education for girls until the early 1930s (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 47-48, and 50).

²¹*An Interim Report on the Civil Administration of Palestine*, (London: HM Stationery Office, 1920-21), 51, quoted in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 156. See also Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner, who wrote in his memoir, "This was a matter (i.e., Arab education) to which I gave special attention, initiating a scheme under which the Government would pay the cost of a teacher for any village which would itself provide a school building When the offer was made in December 1920, a keen competition followed for the teachers and grants that were available. For three years new village schools were opened at the rate of more than one a week. Then a period of severe financial stringency obliged us to suspend further expansion" (Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* [London: Cresset Press, 1945], 163, quoted in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 156). The department of education has traditionally taken much credit for the expansion of education in Palestine. However, the rural education expansion was predicated on the villages providing the building and the equipment for schools. The government was to provide the teacher and his/her salary. Given these provisions, the large contribution of the villagers towards building up education in their communities has yet to be adequately addressed in any of the studies on education under the Mandate, although Tibawi and others briefly discuss the issue. In fact, the statistical evidence reveals an amazing commitment by the villagers towards education. For example, "from April 1941, to the end of August, 1945, Arab villagers raised \$1,300,480 for educational purposes. Of this sum

\$485,580 was spent on school buildings; during this period the central government spent only \$94,880 on village school buildings. ... In January 1946 there were 346 public school teachers among a total of 2,156, paid by village and town local authorities. In addition many hostels for elementary and secondary school students were maintained by the people" (Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 130-1, citing Matthews and Akrawi, *Education*, 223). Furthermore, if less than half of the money that villagers raised for educational purposes was used in school buildings, it is not clear how the remaining \$800,000 of villagers' contribution to education was used. Given the substantial role of the Arab community in funding the education of their children (during which time they were also paying taxes from which the department of education received its funding), particularly in light of the huge numbers of children who applied to school but were turned away, a fundamental reassessment is required of the conception of the British as the providers of education to the Palestinian Arabs.

²²For more on these two men see Humphrey Bowman's autobiography *Middle East Window* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1955); Tibawi, *Arab Education*; Yousuf, "British Educational Policy"; and Naomi Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine, 1917-1948* (London: John Murray, 1999), in particular the chapter entitled "Patching up Palestine." Bowman, the first director of education and a graduate of Eton and Oxford, had been inspector of schools in Egypt and the Sudan, and director of education in Iraq. George Antonious, an Arab educated at Victoria College, Alexandria, and at King's College, Cambridge, was appointed assistant director in the nascent Palestine Department of Education. According to Tibawi, the appointment of Jerome Farrell, a graduate of Cambridge, as a second assistant director in 1923 eventually brought the downfall of Antonious, who was often absent, working as a negotiator/translator on behalf of the British with other Arab states. Farrell was then promoted over Antonious, who eventually resigned. Farrell became the director following Bowman's retirement in the late 1930s, and remained until his retirement in 1946 (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 28-29).

²³Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 79-80.

²⁴In 1927, for example, there were 78 students in the Arab college (57 Muslim, 20 Christian, and 1 Bahai), in five classes. In that year, 43 students from the fourth and fifth years passed the matriculation exam and teaching diploma exam. Three students were sent on scholarship to Beirut, and the remaining 40 were appointed teachers in the government schools (*His Majesty's Government Report for Palestine and Transjordan for 1927*, 30).

²⁵Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 270. Of course, more teachers than 17 per year entered the workforce, if you take into account that they were replacing teachers who retired or died or changed work. See footnote 23 for the details for one year.

²⁶Only a small fraction of school-age children, however, were actually attending school in 1922-23: some 19,331 students out of a total Arab school-age population of 168,000. For 1921-22 there were 311 schools, and the students numbered 19,639 and the teachers 639; while for the year 1932-33, when there were only 299 schools, the students had increased

to 26,691 (out of more than 215,000 school-age Arab children) with 827 teachers (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 270). In 1932 public town schools accepted 1,702 of 3,738 applicants, and rural public schools admitted 3,766 of 6,555 applicants (*A Survey of Palestine Prepared for the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* [London: HM Stationery Office, 1946], II: 648).

²⁷A five years' expansion scheme for the department of education was introduced in 1933-34 (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 161-171). Given the small number of teacher training institutes, the department of education also recruited teachers who were graduates of foreign universities or who passed teacher examinations (Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 252). New education schemes were put into place and between 1932-33 and 1944-45 the number of teachers rose to 1,872, totaling 1,045 new teachers, an average of 87 new teachers per year. By 1947, the total number of teachers was 2,700 a jump of almost 1000 teachers in three years and an increase in the Arab student population from 71,662 to 103,000 (over 31,000 new students) (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 270). According to Yousuf, "the shortage of well trained teachers was a prevailing condition in Arab public schools to the extent that the Department started in the thirties the policy of appointing hundreds of teachers with junior high school standing and even elementary" (Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 252).

²⁸The Kadoorie Agricultural School, which opened in 1931, was built from a donation by an English-Iraqi Jew, Sir Ellis Kadoorie. According to Shepherd, Kadoorie donated money for the education of Arabs and Jews in "Palestine or Mesopotamia." Rather than establish one school, Samuel relented to pressure from Zionist leaders who wanted "to unite the various elements of Diaspora Jewry by using the Hebrew language" and established two separate agricultural schools, one in the Galilee for Jews and the one for Arabs in Tulkarm (Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand*, 161-162). Yousuf mentions that in 1946 (at the end of which the teacher training classes were eliminated) there were eleven students in the teacher training class, and fifty-one students in two agriculture classes (Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 194-5). Yousuf also discusses the failure of the education system to train people in practical education, as well as failure of the agricultural school, which was largely formed to help keep farmers on the land (Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 190-200).

²⁹Of 300,000 potential students, only 97,400 were registered as attending school (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 171). In large part, this was due to the failure of the government to certify teachers and establish more schools. There was no lack of desire on behalf of the potential students or their families to study: In 1938, for example, only 11,552 Arab children were accepted out of 23,031 applicants; in 1939, only 13,222 were accepted of some 25,488 applicants (Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 165-166 citing the *Annual Report for 1938-39*, 4). The statistics were kept for both town and village schools (see, for example, *A Survey of Palestine 1946*, II: 648-650). In 1944 only 54 percent of applicants were accepted in town schools (4,721 of 8,716), and 69 percent were accepted to rural schools (9,574 of 13,789). Tibawi comments on the disingenuous government displays of its successes in opening schools, and the falsely passive role of the population who were "receiv-

ing” the blessing of being incorporated into the governmental system and the enlightenment that followed. In addition, the increase in the number of students and teachers in the existing schools suggests that the communities were sending more children to school, expanding their existing school buildings to hold more students, and petitioning the department for more teachers (see, in particular, Tibawi, *Arab Education*, Chapter 8).

³⁰The topic of nationalism and political struggles in Palestinian education is well covered in Betty S. Anderson, “Political Education in Palestine: The Mandate Period,” unpublished paper presented at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., November 2002; see also Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” in addition to Tibawi, *Arab Education*, and Yousuf, “British Educational Policy.”

³¹With the resignation of George Antonious in the early 1920s, Tibawi sees the end of any Arab participation at the level of policy and administration until the late 30s. Farrell tried to take into account Arab considerations in the midst of the 1936-9 Arab revolt when he appointed two Arab assistant directors subordinate to the British deputy director. Only one position was approved from above, and thus there remained only one Arab assistant director until the 1940s when the second position was approved, along with a Jewish assistant director, a British assistant director for technical education, and a British assistant director for female education.

³²See Anderson “Political Education”; Tibawi, *Arab Education*, chapters 7 and 8; Yousuf, “British Educational Policy,” chapter 7.

³³Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 244-45; Anderson, “Political Education,” n.p.

³⁴Khalil Sakakini and a number of others like him founded the *Dustur* school in 1909 based on principles of secular education. The first merit of the school in Sakakini’s eyes was that “it gathers together students of different faiths, and for the first time in the history of our country they are in one school without regard to their religious beliefs.” Khalil al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana Ya Dunya* (Such Am I, Oh World) (Jerusalem: n.p., 1955), 51. For Sakakini’s early life, see Salim Tamari, “A Miserable Year in Brooklyn: Khalil Sakakini in America, 1907-1908,” *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, no. 17, (February 2003); and “Khalil al-Sakakini” in Ya’qub al-’Awdat, *Min Al’am al-Fiker wa al-Adab fi Filastin* (From Among the Scholars of Thought and Literature in Palestine) (Jerusalem: Dar al-Isra’, 1992), 273-284.

³⁵Al-Sakakini’s complete and unedited diaries have been released by the family and are currently being prepared for publication in eight volumes by Akram Musallam for the Institute of Palestine Studies and the Khalil al-Sakakini Center.

³⁶Sakakini, *Kadha Ana*, 189, entry for November 21, 1919. Also quoted in Walid Raghil al-Khalidi, “Al-Kulliyah al-’Arabiyah fi al-Quds I (The Arab College in Jerusalem I),” *Al-Quds al-Sharif* 78 (1991): 44-45.

³⁷Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” 206-7.

³⁸Total continued the student publication and the library that Sakakini had started, among other things. See Sakakini *Kadha Ana*, 186-196 for more details, as well as Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” 207.

³⁹Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 200.

⁴⁰Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” 208. The first incident involved a poem by Ma’ruf al-Rusafi, a teacher from the Arab College who was originally from Iraq. In 1920, he recited a poem in a public lecture in Jerusalem that was seized upon (and misinterpreted) by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel as praise of his leadership, which compromised al-Rusafi’s already indelicate political stands. Background on al-Rusafi, the situation of the delivery of the poem, Samuel’s reaction, the uproar in the press, and the responses and counter-responses are all dealt with in Safa Khulusi, “Ma’ruf Ar-Rusafi in Jerusalem” in *Encyclopaedic Survey of Islamic Culture*, vol. 4, Mohamed Taher, ed. (New Delhi: Ammol, 1997), 154-161 (originally published in *Arabic and Islamic Garland Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi* (London: Islamic Cultural Center, 1977), 147-152.

⁴¹Total’s testimony in Palestine Royal Commission, *Minutes of Evidence Heard at Public Session, Colonial No. 134*, (London: HM Stationary Office, 1937), 352 quoted in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 198. See also Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” 208, for his version of the account.

⁴²Lord Balfour was the British foreign secretary who wrote a letter to Lord Rothschild in December 1917 expressing support for a Jewish national home in Palestine that became known as the Balfour Declaration. The Palestinians held strikes every year on November 2, marking the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

⁴³Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 200.

⁴⁴Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 198 is where he mentions that Total resigned after describing him for the first time in the book and in reference to his appearance before the Palestine Royal Commission in 1937; Tibawi discusses the 1925 strike in a separate section of the chapter on pages 199 and 200. Al-’Awdat’s entry on Khalil Total only mentions that Total was the director of the Arab College, and that after his “disengagement” (*infkaka*) from the college, Total completed his Ph.D. in education from the US (al-’Awdat, *Min Al’am al-Fiker*, 386).

⁴⁵Yousuf, “British Educational Policy,” 243.

⁴⁶Ziadeh, “Al-Kulliyah al-’Arabiyah fil-Quds,” 128-9.

⁴⁷Ziadeh, “Al-Kulliyah al-’Arabiyah fil-Quds,” 129.

⁴⁸Abidi, “The Arab College, Jerusalem,” 209-210. While ‘Abidi was indeed a student at the college in 1925, he does not tell his account of the Arab College from the first person perspective.

⁴⁹Al-Khalidi, who at the time was a general inspector for the department of education, emphasizes his reluctance and initial refusal to accept the position, and that he did so only on the condition that he be free to do as he saw fit (Nashshabeh, “Al-Kulliyah al-’Arabiyah fil-Quds,” 139).

⁵⁰The person’s name is spelled (h-b-a-b) and the initial vowel and any diacritical marks such as shadda are absent. Thus I have rendered his name “Habbab” but it could be “Habab” or “Hibab” among other possibilities. Walid Raghil al-Khalidi, “Al-Kulliyah al-’Arabiyah fi al-Quds I,” 47-51. Al-Khalidi’s system of attribution makes it particularly difficult to figure out where all of his material comes from, despite the fact that he makes references to the material he includes from published sources. In the absence of attribution, I am assuming that the material is from a personal account.

⁵¹Al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds I," 41. Al-Habbab recounts that the students wanted to demonstrate in 1925 to protest the Balfour declaration on November 2 and not Balfour's visit to open Hebrew University, which took place on April 1, although all of the rest of the details remain similar to the other accounts including the resignation of Totah and the firing of the other teachers. Undoubtedly, students demonstrated on both occasions. Al-Habbab's section of the article is rather confusingly labeled as "Abdulrahman al-Habbab, Strike of 2 November 25/11/1925."

⁵²Al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds I," 41.

⁵³ Palestine Royal Commission, *Minutes of Evidence of the Palestine Royal Commission*, 351-352, quoted in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 205. Totah's testimony is quoted in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 198, 205, and 235.

⁵⁴PASSIA (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs). "Dr. Khalil Totah (1886-1955)." 2 April 2003. <http://www.passia.org/images/personalities/totah-khalil/kahlil-text.htm> The original source for the three-page autobiographical account is not given at this website, although it is clear from the first-person voice that it was written by Totah. The final thing he documents is his term as executive director of the Institute of Arab American Affairs in New York City (from 1946 to 1950), therefore it must have been written some time between 1950 and his death in 1955.

⁵⁵PASSIA, "Dr. Khalil Totah", n.p.

⁵⁶PASSIA, "Dr. Khalil Totah", n.p.

⁵⁷Abidi, "The Arab College, Jerusalem," 209.

⁵⁸Abidi, "The Arab College, Jerusalem," 209.

⁵⁹Ziadeh, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fil-Quds," 131.

⁶⁰Youssef Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History. Nation and State in the Arab World* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 33. See also Reeva Simon's "The Imposition of Nationalism on a Non-Nation State: The Case of Iraq During the Interwar Period, 1921-1941," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, eds. (NY: Columbia University Press, 1997). Also located at Columbia International Affairs Online. 31 March 2003, <http://www.ciaonet.org/book/jankowski/jank05.html>. Simon mentions Darwish Miqdadi, when he was a teacher in Iraq, as one of the mentors of the student demonstrations of 1927 that took place outside the ministry of education in Baghdad. Those responsible, including Miqdadi, were expelled, although later reinstated (Simon, "Imposition of Nationalism," n.p.)

⁶¹Al-'Awdat, *Min Alam al-Fikr*, p 592.

⁶²Al-'Awdat says that he found the text preserved in the papers of the historian Mahmud al-Abidi.

⁶³Al-'Awdat, *Min Alam al-Fikr*, 592-593.

⁶⁴Al-'Awdat, *Min Alam al-Fikr*, 593.

⁶⁵Abidi, "The Arab College, Jerusalem," 209.

⁶⁶As sources, all of the material concerning the Arab College examined in this article have ultimately been published in written form; however, almost all come from people's memories of events as they experienced them, or from second-hand accounts. In some instances the form that the information takes—as part of a collection of reminiscences, an autobiographical account, a dissertation, or a brief overview of history—plays a significant role in the types of information provided.

⁶⁷As Ted Swedenburg's *Memories of Revolt* suggests, individual memories compete with the larger political context and national narrative, and contribute to the rewriting of history. See Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, especially Chapter 4.

⁶⁸Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 139.

⁶⁹While this article does not provide me with the opportunity to discuss many of these issues, one student's memory, triggered by the names of al-Sakakini, al-Miqdadi, and Totah, must be given here. "Two of the teachers at the Teachers College, Khalil Totah and Darwish al-Miqdadi, used a rigorous and harsh method of teaching. I experienced this myself through their students who taught me. They were strict, serious, and had a love of sports. One of the things that we heard about Totah and al-Miqdadi is that they forbade the students to wear anything under their pajamas when they went to sleep. They were emphasizing the Spartan method of teaching and learning. This was in contrast to Khalil al-Sakakini who was flexible, tolerant, and easy to talk to, and was well-known as a friend to students. When he was appointed as an Educational Inspector he also became a friend to the teachers. At the same time he was a tireless critic of the situation in Palestine. The British control over the government departments, particularly the department of education, did not please him, and he would express his disapproval with this openly to his friends." Husayn al-Yusuf in Walid Raghil al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds II (The Arab College in Jerusalem II)," *al-Quds al-Sharif* 79 (1991), 37. Al-Yusuf obviously was not aware that al-Sakakini was in the habit of taking cold showers daily (year-round) and that he also imposed this practice on the students while he was head of the Arab College. For example, al-Sakakini writes in his diary on Friday, 26 March 1920: "I have infused the students with the spirit of activity and accustomed them to cold showers. One of the teachers trains them in calisthenics every morning before breakfast" (al-Sakakini, *Kadha Ana*, 190). Al-Sakakini's nationalist, anti-colonialist stand, however, was well known to this student.

⁷⁰One of the ways this was accomplished was by tying the Palestine certifications to the British certifications. Hasan al-Karmi recalled the time when the Palestine Intermediate was granted the equivalency of the London Intermediate: "In 1946 I accompanied the group of students sent by the Palestine Department of Education to Britain. When we arrived, the director of registration for the University of London approached me and offered me his felicitations. 'Congratulations, Mr. Karmi, we have granted the Palestinian Intermediate at the Arab College the equivalency of the London Intermediate.' So I cabled this news to the Department of Education where Mr. Farrell in his delight told everyone that he saw." *Khamas wa Saba'un Sanah*, 17.

⁷¹Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 196.

⁷²Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 186-7.

⁷³Yousuf, "British Educational Policy," 187.

⁷⁴*Khamas wa Saba'un Sanah*, 18. 'Irfan Qa'war is now the scholar 'Irfan Shahid, who teaches at Georgetown University.

⁷⁵Walid Raghil Al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds: Sanah Ula Intermediat (Arab College in Jerusalem:

First Year Intermediate)." *Al-Quds al-Sharif* 86 (1992), 47-48. This story is an oral account told to al-Khalidi for the purpose of the Arab College project, and transcribed and published.

⁷⁶Al-Khalidi, "Sanah Ula Intermediat", 48.

⁷⁷See Bishara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), especially Chapter 5 for a discussion of soap-making and the Palestinian economy.

⁷⁸Walid Raghil Al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds: Untuq Ayuha al-Saqr Untuq (The Arab College in Jerusalem: Speak Hawk, Speak)." *Al-Quds al-Sharif* 88 (1992): 39-49, letter from Ahmed Husayn al-Hajj, 48-49.

⁷⁹Letter from Ahmed Husayn al-Hajj in Al-Khalidi, "Untuq Ayuha al-Saqr," 48-49.

⁸⁰For example, former fighters explicitly discussed local contributions to the revolt, the details of local systems of taxation and justice, and their independence from and antagonism toward the urban elite, revealing the grassroots level of the revolt and the large degree of local-level mobilization.

⁸¹Al-Khalidi, "Al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyah fi al-Quds I," 48.

The Intifada and the Aid Industry: The Impact of the New Liberal Agenda on the Palestinian NGOs

SARI HANAFI & LINDA TABAR

The outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000 marks a return for the Palestinians to a period of direct anti-colonial struggle against the Israeli occupation. As the intifada attempts to figure conditions of possibility for Palestinian independence, it poses practical and theoretical challenges to researchers and practitioners alike.

The intifada directly addresses Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as their international non-governmental organization (INGO) and donor counterparts. The uprising beckons these organizations to intervene and respond to the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza; to act as a witness in the face of Israel's massive military offensive against the Palestinian population; and to support the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. In making this invocation, the Palestinian uprising provides the occasion, which unequivocally exposes the previously latent, manifold contradictions, and reveals the tensions in their relationship with the donors. The intifada exposes a disconnection between NGOs and popular movements in Palestine. It reveals Palestinian NGO activists as not able to articulate between their own aspirations for Palestinian freedom and independence and the overarching national agenda. This in turn raises complicated questions: how does one conceptualize and explain the relationship between NGOs, INGOs and donors, and what are the most important structural relations and historically contingent factors that have shaped and constituted this relationship?

This article will attempt to shed some light about the paradoxes illuminated by the uprising. Based on empirical research and interviews conducted before the outbreak of the second intifada and during it, we analyze in the first section the role of the NGOs during this intifada and the impact of the aid industry in shaping this role. More broadly the role of NGOs cannot be understood without unraveling the nature of the relationship between Palestinian NGOs (PNGOs), INGOs and donors, as set within and shaped by processes internal to Palestinian society, as well as mechanisms and structural relations within the aid industry. This will be developed in the second section.

I. The Intifada and the Problematic Modes of Action of the Palestinian NGOs

The outbreak of the second intifada is nothing short of a collective act of resistance against Israel's occupation and its colonial system of control. During seven years of the Oslo, Israel's exercise of control over the Palestinians not only deepened, but metamorphosed into an apartheid regime of checkpoints, permit system, bypass roads, and settlements, encircling and besieging Palestinian cantons of 'territoriality'.¹

By 2003, however, as the Palestinian uprising enters its third year, a palpable sense of crisis is evident. Not only has Israel's siege on Palestinian towns, its military invasions and its reoccupation of the West Bank, exacted a heavy humanitarian, social and economic toll, but disquiet looms over the achievements of the uprising. Behind closed doors questions are being raised about the capacity of the intifada to realize Palestinian political aspirations, given the variance in tactics and strategies espoused by different factions and the difficulties of harmonizing societal energies and harnessing them into a single end. This is not to mention the colonial stratagems of the Sharon government's and its use of armed provocations, particularly its assassinations of Palestinian leaders, not only as a way to escalate the conflict, but also to create havoc within Palestinian internal politics, in an attempt to thwart Palestinian national unity.

There are three separate challenges facing Palestinian society today. A consideration of each will delineate the disjunctures and antagonisms within the NGO sphere that are have a bearing on the current crisis, as well as illustrate the overarching issues framing NGO, INGO and donor relations in Palestine.

Leadership of Intifada

Firstly, from the outset, the intifada has been weakened by the absence of a unified leadership, a consequence of among other things, the decision of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to shun the command role in order to avoid the international repercussions of asserting formal leadership over the uprising.² In this context, a central paradox has been illuminated. While Palestinian NGOs have undertaken very successful forms of professional action—providing the

most accurate and up-to-date information on the number of Palestinian injuries and fatalities, the damage caused by Israeli military operations, as well as chronicling human rights violations—however, NGOs have not developed a synergy with the political forces (whether political parties, Islamic and National Committee for the Intifada or unions) or the local population. Therefore, while NGOs have used their international recognition for advocacy and to make available strategic information about the, locally they have contributed little to harnessing society's energies during a period of national struggle, nor have they had a significant impact on the direction, or lack thereof, of the uprising. While the PNGOs Network played a major role in organizing an international popular protection (in the form of international civil missions), they was not be able to work with these missions to develop non-violent forms of resistance.

This raises a number of questions. Why have PNGOs not taken on a more active leadership role during this intifada, by mobilizing the popular classes and organizing collective resistance efforts? Why for instance, has there been so little vocal support from Palestinian non-governmental organizations for the local and regional boycott of Israeli goods; and similarly, why have these organizations not attempted to strengthen community initiatives and build popular committees to sustain the socio-economic steadfastness population as during the first intifada? Why is it that Palestinian NGOs have contributed to the vacuum that has enveloped the grassroots since the uprising began?

Two examples will serve to illustrate the complex issues and processes that are bound up within this observation.

As indicated, since the beginning of the intifada, NGOs have generally been absent from the popular demonstrations that have been taking place in the West Bank and Gaza. After a long hiatus, however, the NGOs played a major role in mobilizing the population when the Israeli forces closed the road leading to the Bir Zeit University. Many organizations used their email lists and took out advertisements in the local newspapers to mobilize people for a demonstration from Ramallah to the new Surda checkpoint blocking the road leading to Bir Zeit. In light of the success of their mobilization efforts, one NGO leader declared in, *La Croix*, a French Newspaper, henceforth NGOs should impose their position to the National and Islamic High Committee (NIHC) of the intifada: "our activities are *independent* from Marwan Barghouthi [the leader of the NIHC]. It is our pressure, however, which has forced him to take civil society into account...He does not consider us as an entire part of his committee. We signed the press release. But *we did not take a position on the political aspect like the call for Sharon to resign*. Inside of the committee

our voice is well heard" (emphasis added).³

This example underscores the apolitical discourse of the NGOs—a discourse striking in its striving to maintain a 'neutral' position on a national political question in the middle of an anti-colonial nationalist struggle. At issue here is the way NGOs leaders confuse between the 'political' and the 'national' and recoil from the national agenda under the pretext of refusing to engage in 'politicized' activities.

This transformation is not product of the internal process that the PNGOs undergone but to an external one. This baffling observation only becomes intelligible when one recognizes that the aid industry constitutes what Foucault has called a 'regime of truth'. The Palestinian case reveals that it is the banality of aid systems and their 'conceptual maps', which envision the social field as neatly divided up into political and civil societies, subsumed under and embedded within public sphere, which is in need of questioning. Retreating from the challenge of re-articulating this social map, Palestinian NGOs have internalized a conceptual vision, which conflates between the 'national' and the 'political'. The intifada provides the occasion, which reveals the absurdity of this vision given the social reality of the occupied territories, illustrating the manner in which the internalization of this vision positions PNGOs in a contradictory and antagonistic relationship to the Palestinian national struggle against the Israeli occupation.

At the same time in which NGOs are going to great lengths to demonstrate their political neutrality, these organizations exhibit more and more of an internal politicization in their alliance building, an individualization of power and charismatic authority. For instance, the communiqué released on the 7th October 2000, entitled "Unifying the efforts for Ending the Occupation and Realizing Independence: All the efforts for Supporting the Popular Intifada for the Independence," was circulated among NGOs and political parties. The petition, however, requested the endorsement of individual leaders rather than organizations. This reinforces the argument that these leaders do not regard the NGOs as institution that have a role to play on national issues.

An additional example elucidates further set of contradictions. On 19 June 2002, a petition was published in *al-Quds*, a daily Palestinian newspaper, signed by academics, public figures, and many prominent NGO leaders. The signatories launched a critique of suicide bombings and called for a reconsideration of operations that target civilians: "We see that these bombings do not contribute towards achieving our national project which calls for freedom and independence. On the contrary, they strengthen the enemies of peace on the Israeli side and give Israel's aggressive government under Sharon the excuse to continue harsh war against our people."

Released in the direct aftermath of the Israeli invasion of April, during which Israeli forces re-occupied the West Bank, the petition was intended as a way to spark an internal debate on Palestinian resistance- and hence raise the issue of the inconsistencies between the means and aims of the intifada. However, the debate quickly fizzled out. The credibility of the petition was questioned and the initiative was critiqued on a number of counts, in general it was read as an affront to those, who have sacrificed for the resistance. In this regard, the petition met with reproaches and disapprobation⁴ One of the reasons for this, as Azmi Bishara has argued, is, in a moment of intense national crisis, as the one in which Palestinians now find themselves, it is simply not enough to critique resistance practices- but it is incumbent upon activists, intellectuals and political forces to also promote alternatives.⁵

By critiquing armed resistance without a sustained critique and strategic analysis of the occupation- upon which to firmly advance a viable practical and theoretical alternative mode of resistance, the NGO activists and intellectuals left themselves open to counteract and de-legitimation. In contrast to the first intifada, when activists, intellectuals and community leaders were embedded within the popular struggle and bound by mass based national movement, the incident of the petition reveals much about the location of Palestinian NGOs today within the social and political fields. The petition exposes these actors as *spectators* in the intifada, unable to make the necessary linkages and *articulate* between their own aspirations for Palestinian freedom and independence, the objectives of their organizations that promote democracy and social justice and the overarching national agenda and strategies of the intifada. As such, it also reveals the NGOs as isolated and lacking an organic base in society.

This observation is inseparable from a number of processes and the overall transformation of Palestinian Non-governmental organizations since the early 1990's, concomitant with their entry into the aid industry. Since the Oslo process began, and the Palestinian 'state-building' exercise got underway, with the intervention of donor countries and their peace-building initiatives, a new space has been constructed for Palestinian NGOs and civic institutions. Paradoxically, however, this has been accompanied by a dis-embedding of local organizations from linkages within society and their footing in popular movements. It is also a process marred by fractures and disjunctures, as the 'national' agenda has been re-conceptualized and conflated with 'politics' and hence redefined as too politicized for 'civic' organizations.

These examples provides a brief glance at the problematic of NGOs in Palestine, the complex issues touched upon here will be further explored and ex-

plained in the conceptual framework outlined below and the ensuing chapters.

Defining 'Development' in the Midst of an Anti-Colonial Struggle

The second major challenge facing Palestinian society today concerns the task of defining development in the midst of an anti-colonial struggle.

The interim period was perceived by many donors and international organizations not as 'peace-process' but more aptly as the beginning of decolonization. The situation in the Palestinian Territories was seen then as a post-conflict area and not conflict area. This has a tremendous implication on the conception of the aid industry in conceptual and procedural levels. In the first level the vision of post-conflict assistance become linear, when in fact conflict is invariably cyclical. In procedural level the donors agencies and international organizations actors want then of being a 'neutral' mediator which ignore root causes of the conflict and its colonial nature.

Aid, then follows the modality of colonial control- thus within Palestine as a new site of 'peace-building' the international order is superimposed over the colonial order. Brynen explains, new peace-building efforts have been devised which not only entail, regularly established patterns of diplomacy and military peacekeeping, "but also a variety of social and economic objectives and instrumentalities, underpinned by substantial commitments of financial support."⁶

The problem that results in practice is that the peace-building assistance, which buttresses a wide range of interventions, including supporting the start up costs to establish the Palestinian National Authority, infrastructure projects and a range of social as well as economic initiatives, is based on the assumption that the conflict is ending, when as we have witnessed in Palestine, the conflict has renewed. In the NGOs level this perception shape the nature of the NGOs' programs and projects. These become developmental projects without often any emergency plan in case of the accentuation of the national conflict. The Majority of the NGOs was shown incapability to articulate the civic with politics or to separate the 'politics' from the 'national'. Their actions betray a lack of awareness of the fact that they are in an occupied land.

It is quite clear that the intifada has shattered the veneer of the Oslo process and the euphoria of donor projects that projected Palestinian political as well as social and economic development as linear processes, all the while masking the transformations on the ground and the Israeli practices that have obstructed Palestinian development options and political independence. During the Interim period, Israeli settlements increased by sixty-five percent⁷ and Israeli's mechanisms of control, its by-pass roads, closures and control of border crossings, continued, enabling Israel to a-priori restrict Pales-

tinian development strategies and unilaterally and preemptively alter political realities in advance of the final status talks.⁸

With the outbreak of the intifada, Palestinian governmental, non-governmental and international development agencies have been grappling with the task of responding to the looming humanitarian crisis, the potential economic collapse and physical destruction caused by Israeli military operations and the siege imposed by the occupation power. According to the World Bank report the GDP per capita shrink 50% and 60% of the population live under the poverty line and the lost that the Palestinian economy undergone is \$5.4 million.⁹

Confronted with an influx of emergency assistance, Palestinian NGOs have also faced an additional challenge, the need to maintain a modicum of space from which to define Palestinian development needs and develop strategies for the medium term, while retaining a focus on the dialectic relationship between socio-economic development and resistance.

The lessons of the Oslo period have not gone unheeded, Palestinians now look upon aid somewhat more warily, aware of the way donor assistance can undercut and prefigure local development strategies, options and vision, often according to donor practical and political agendas. For Palestinians the immediate concern is one of priorities, and the issue is as follows: should donor emergency relief simply be channeled into short-term efforts, such as food aid, that alleviate the immediate humanitarian suffering, but also bear the costs of Israel's anti-insurgency war? Or can aid support more proactive strategies, linking socio-economic development to forms of resistance, such as creating new enabling governmental structures, or promoting alternative forms of grassroots community empowerment? Just as important, from the Palestinian perspective is the 'voice' of the donors. Are donors going to bear the financial costs of Israeli military campaigns as well as the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people, in the process condoning Israeli actions? Or can donors use their role as third party to penalize and dissuade Israeli state violence and address the root causes of the conflict?

Palestinian organizations such as the Development Studies Programme (DSP) at Bir Zeit University have been theorizing alternative development strategies that re-engage with national resistance efforts and reconceptualize the relationship between development and resistance. A recent study commissioned by DSP envisions the creation of new linkages between the PNA, NGOs and grassroots in order to facilitate resource mobilization, within a project of collective action, thus addressing both the basic needs of the population, while also strengthening the steadfastness and

resistance of the mass populace.

But a brief survey of Palestinian attempts to apply such innovative strategies to donor emergency assistance programmes exposes the tensions underwriting the relationship between PNGOs and donor agencies, as well as underscoring some of the limits of 'partnership.' For instance, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion and reoccupation of the West Bank, in April 2002, donors and aid agencies were focusing on the massive physical destruction and damage to infrastructure. PNGOs, cognizant of the human suffering, responded by urging the donors to recognition the humanitarian effects of the Israeli invasion. The NGOs not only wanted the donors to recognize the grave human rights violations committed by Israel, but also to acknowledge the moral and legal responsibility of the occupying power as defined in the Fourth Geneva Convention, which have been brazenly contravened, as Israeli anti-insurgency campaigns uses forms of collective punishment and assault the very structures of collective existence in an attempt to force Palestinians into submission.

NGO activists hoped that if the donors acknowledged the gravity of the humanitarian crisis, on the one hand, the donors could confirm the need for political intervention, on the other hand, they could support broader development strategies to empower the Palestinian people in their resistance to the occupation. Yet as a woman's activist and health practitioner explains, the donors were very quick to 'co-opted' the humanitarian argument and reduce it, in both scope and intent, to a narrow focus on 'food aid'. It is no coincidence that this is exactly in line with the vision of the World Bank which calls about donor agencies to focus their emergency assistance to the Palestinians on 'priority' areas such as budget support for the PNA, support for basic services and support for welfare schemes. The welfare support includes, "providing *jobs, cash and food* through multiple channels ranging from UNRWA, Ministry of Social Affairs and the municipalities to a wide variety of NGOs."¹⁰

This example illustrates one of the constraints NGOs come up against as they attempt to harness the support of donor and aid agencies and direct this 'assistance' into local development strategies that have been defined by PNGOs. At issue is the antagonism and conflict that arises when donors possess their own contrary set of interests. The intifada, as a moment of renewed anti-colonial nationalist struggle, is precisely the moment that reveals the limits of donors support. Faced with the Palestinian struggle for their collective national rights, aid agencies have opted for dispensing controversial food aid, devoid of any meaningful support for the national rights of the Palestinian people, and invariably leaving the root causes of the crisis in place. As such the uprising provides the occasion, which renders visible the

interests and agendas that underwrite donor-NGO relations, enabling one to observe the effects on PNGOs. Conflicting interests represent one of the central dynamics that underpin the relationship between NGO, INGO and donors.

The Role of the Witness: Raising Palestinian Rights to the International Arena

The current Intifada also represents a unique moment to observe the modes of moral-political action of the international NGOs, humanitarian organizations and donors during a quasi-war period, as well as the interaction between them and the Palestinian NGOs, especially given that during the peace process both sets of organizations withdrew from the national-political question, including the reality of the occupation. We find in Palestinian Territories different forms of humanitarian actions: passive intervention (international committee of Red Cross, UNRWA), the humanitarian action which combines intervention with the duty of witness (MSF, Oxfam, etc.) and finally the new form of activism with is a popular protection of the population under occupation (Civil missions, the International Solidarity Movement, Ta'aush, phr- Israel, etc.).

From the international organizations (INGOs) side, the Intifada has revealed their incapability to confirm themselves as witnesses, in a period of crisis and war. In comparison to the solidarity model of the first Intifada, the synergy between local and international organizations has been slow to develop. In this Intifada, few of the INGOs remaining in the Palestinian territories were acting as solidarity groups. The majority was closer to the model of the professionalized INGOs. However, the issue is not that all INGOs must function as solidarity groups, but rather the manner in which they articulate each of these aspects, when necessary. Some organizations in health sector, such as Italian INGOs are highly professionalized, and thus they are able to receive bids from EC for health projects. But when it comes to being a witness to a human crisis as in Palestine, they fail to be here to document what is going on or this speaks on behalf of the events (and local NGOs) to their representatives and the press of their own country. Even the international organizations which are known by their focus on the duty of witness like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) suggest the neutrality concerning the current conflict.¹¹

II. The Palestinian NGOs

For a few decades, a hot debate has been waging in the Palestinian territories, as well as in other Arab countries, regarding the issue of agenda setting. Within this debate that the question of 'agendas' is usually posed in terms of an opposition between "local" agenda(s) and that of others, often those of the "West." Sometimes

socially and politically contentious topics turn into a discussion about agenda priorities. On many occasions, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) officials have considered sectors like human rights and democracy, and gender, as over-funded and a response to donor priorities. An uncritical emulation of donor agendas is criticized, not only by PNA officials, but also by some intellectuals who consider it as politically serving the interest of the enemies. In June 1999, a crisis between NGOs and the PNA erupted concerning funding, and led to the creation of Ministry of NGO Affairs. NGOs are often regarded by the PNA with suspicion for two reasons: firstly, because of their foreign ties; secondly, because their activities sometime substitute for state service provisions, thus reducing state control over resources and services.

In this context, This article began as a research project inquiring into the ways in which external actors influence Palestinian NGOs' development policies and their promotion of democratization, as well as examining the capacity of Palestinian NGOs to contribute to the elaboration of global agendas through transnational activism and global conferences. Yet, as the empirical investigation for this project proceeded, we became aware that an investigation of the sites where the 'global' and the 'local' intersect and become intertwined is inseparable from an analysis of the effects that new transnational relations, specifically the aid system, have on local social formations. This is to say that local actors and social structures are not always already pre-given, but are transformed as they are drawn into new transnational relations, as they seek to negotiate their place within the aid industry and their relations with donors and international NGOs.¹²

Our central premise, therefore, is that there is a restructuring of knowledge and practices and a new process of elite formation underway in the Palestinian NGO sector today. Examining the agenda setting process between donors and their local recipients by investigating the relationships between donors, INGOs and Palestinian NGOs and exploring the encounters between global trends and the local society is essential to chronicle the emergence of what we termed a 'globalized Palestinian elite', composed of the leaders of NGOs, and the local leaders of international NGOs. This elite is largely composed of new urban middle class activists that emerged in the 1970-80's, which led the popular movement of the first Intifada, we suggest that they can be increasingly characterized as a *globalized elite* due to their connectivity to international NGOs, actors and agendas.¹³

In the literature much has been written on the way salaried positions in the NGO sector attract skilled and educated individuals, often to the detriment of the public sector. The notion of elite used here is much broader

and includes the way in which the rise of a new social formation disrupts the embeddedness of local organizations within social local and international networks, concomitant with the rise of the neo-liberal paradigm, which transforms the relationship between the individual and social institutions. These changes not only have a direct bearing on collective action, but also reconfigure the ways subordinate classes are incorporated into emerging state-society relations. These transformations are intrinsically linked to three complex processes.

Firstly, there was a fundamental shift in the political economy of aid to Palestinian NGOs in the early 1990's. Internationally, this moment coincided with a significant transformation in the distribution of aid; solidarity support between northern and southern NGOs withered and was replaced by the advent of bilateral and multilateral relations between SNGOs and European as well as North American governments and development agencies. Regionally and locally, this period coincided with the 1991 Gulf war and the onset of the Madrid peace talks, through which Palestine's geo-political status was reconfigured and the West Bank and Gaza Strip reinscribed as a site of 'peace-making'.

These developments must be understood as part and parcel of the Arab world's integration into unipolar world system globalization, both as a process and as a project.

It is worthwhile to reflect upon the meaning that meaning that *globalization* has taken on within the experience of modernity in the Arab world. The mid-1980's brought a harsh economic downturn in most of the non-producing oil countries, resulting in many of these nations acquiring loans from the World Bank. Through this process these countries were integrated into a neo-liberal order; many of these nations had to implement Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), privatize state industries, and reduce social spending. At the same time, following the collapse of the former Soviet Union the Arab countries were incorporated more firmly into the Western sphere of influence. With the fall of the Soviet regime, Arab leverage with the United States was reduced and Arab states became much more dependent on Western financial and military assistance. Furthermore, the 1991 Gulf war consolidated the hegemony of the United States in the region. Therefore, in its political and economic moorings, globalization has been associated with a feeling of frustration and a sense of powerlessness in the face of structural transformations that have increased the vulnerability of the region to economic and political actors external to the Middle East.¹⁴

Secondly, the shift in the political economy of aid to NGOs in Palestine created new internal forms of social and political capital, as well as new forms of exclusion. It is essential to recognize that the availability of new forms of bilateral and multilateral assistance to NGOs

induced a state of competition between Palestinian organizations. This resulted in a struggle for organizational survival, between the urban middle class activists in the NGOs and the traditional elite in the charitable societies and grassroots leadership within the committees. Western donor funding introduced new criteria of funding and new conditions for dispersing aid, this established a hierarchy among organizations in terms of access to funding, and invariably it was the charitable societies and popular committees which lost out and were subsequently marginalized. Therefore, just as there was a reduction in the overall availability of funding, there was also a concentration of funds within a few highly competent and professional organizations.

As a result of this logic of competition, introduced by new sources of funding, new cleavages have emerged. The middle class actors have overturned the old elite of the voluntary charitable societies and represent an emerging social force. Moreover, internal divisions such as urban/rural, pro-Oslo/against, English/Arabic speakers, professionalized technocratic/militant activist, have been reproduced and become more pronounced. These divisions represent markers, which reflect and index the process out of which this new elite is emerging.

Thirdly, the entry of local NGOs into aid channels involves a process of new subject formation as well as changes in the conceptual and institutional foundation of NGO, as local organizations or incorporated a new 'modernity'—a heightened state of socio-economic differentiation mediated and facilitated by aid. NGOs represent fragmentary sites; they are positioned locally, within development channels and outside their own borders. As such, NGO actors' knowledge and practices are the result of a *complex subject formation*, and a negotiation of these different positions.¹⁵ In this regard, the notion of globalized elite refers to a type of transnational subjective formation, in which local actors' actions are foregrounded by debates, development paradigm and international standards, which are not bound in their local context.

In one sense, this suggests that a more complex notion of NGO-donor relations is needed. The notion of dichotomous donor-NGO relations, which is usually assumed in investigations of agenda setting, is challenged by the way in which both sets of actors occupy and move within the same local spaces as well as international sites, particularly global forums and UN conferences. Secondly and more importantly, this transnational subject formation alerts as to new disruptions, as well as a process of disembedding and disassociation which accompany neo-liberalism and its focus on 'empowering' the individual to fend for him/herself, in the face of reduced government services and increased economicability within social life. It is precisely this logic

that underpins the historical shift among the activists within the Palestinian NGO sphere, from their role as nexus of the popular movement of the first intifada, to their role today as missionaries preaching the importance of advocacy, workshops and training programs. As Qassoum argued the advocacy approach, arrived on the global scale to: “put an end to mass social movements, dismantle the “triad affinity” between the intellectual, the masses and the progressive and revolutionary ideas. In other words, exporting and applying advocacy at the global scale aims at demobilization, de-radicalization, de-politicization in order to maintain the emerging global neo-liberal order.”¹⁶

Having outlined these three complex processes, we will present our conceptual framework of the encounter between the global and the local in an era of globalization, as pertaining to the disruptures produced by new institutional arrangements of neo-liberalism.

Globalization, Aid and the Neo-Liberal Agenda

Globalization is deeply intertwined with, if not representing, a new phase in Western ‘modernity’. The process of modernization that accompanies globalization has generated what can loosely be labeled *new forms of modernity*, new institutions, social categories and concepts that not only manifest in a particular form but also perform a functional role within the post-industrial society. The most important of these include the new institutional arrangements associated with neo-liberalism; the dismantling of state responsibilities; new social spatial configurations, redefining ‘society’ and ‘market’; and a process of differentiation within the ‘life-world’ and the rise of new institutions within civil society.¹⁷ The aid industry is the conduit through which these new institutional arrangement arrives locally and affects NGOs. As we will argue here there are two forms of disruptures accompanying this process which creates shifts and displacement within the local field of action.

The process of globalization is also producing new structured relations between nations as well as with international organizations and capital. From the vantage point of non-Western nations, these relations facilitate the expanse of the institutional forms associated with the Western experience with modernity. Two developments stand out as particularly significant. Firstly, together liberal democracy and the capitalist economy form a new horizon in which the role of the state is envisioned. Within this horizon, neo-liberalism has emerged as a new political rationality of government that redefines state institutional arrangements. This is reflected in the new norms of political and economic management evident in the World Bank and Western donor new agendas.¹⁸ Secondly, just as there has been a collapse of what constitutes the ‘political’, reflected in the loss of the conceptual purchase of concepts like the

‘left’, ‘socialism’, ‘revolution’, there has been increased emphasis on the role of non-governmental organizations and building ‘civil society’ in developing countries within aid and development cooperation.

The particular form and function of the institutions, social spatial arrangements and categories that have emerged and displaced the social forms of the industrial order, within the Western society has already been recognized. In contrast to the generalized view that describes neo-liberalism in an abstract manner as a retreat of the state and an expanse of the market, neo-liberalism has been explained as a way of organizing government in relation to increased differentiation within the capitalist system. As some argue, it represents a new form of liberalism as an *art of government*. Therefore, it has been explained that while neo-liberalism appears to represent a ‘degovernmentalization of the state’, this is not necessarily a ‘degovernmentalization of government.’¹⁹ A range of techniques are deployed within the neo-liberal model, which produce ‘governmental/disciplinary’ entities within social field, that while separate and distinct from the state, are tied to it through complex relations and shaped through a particular economic model of action.²⁰ This brings into view the logic of neo-liberalism as a modern way of organizing power that governs by shaping possibilities for action. This represents a liberal rationality of rule that responds to a new process of modernization. At the same time, the development of civil society has also been attributed to processes of modernization; structural differentiation within the life world as well as processes of differentiation within the economy and the modern bureaucratic administration.²¹ Along with Habermas, Arato and Cohen identify the functional role of civil society as being linked to communicative action and facilitating a new reflexivity on social norms and values within a democratic society, which are both facilitated by and allow for a response to certain processes of modernization.

Studying the aid industry in the Palestinian Territories, therefore, is part of a more complex assessment of the spreading of institutional forms accompanying the process of globalization, which is being accepted by many as unproblematic. The Palestinian Territories as other non-Western societies has undergone two processes: disembedding of social relations from the local context, in a manner in which the interaction and restructuring of relations occurs across an indefinite span of time/space.²² The second process is the re-embeddness within new sets of relations with international organizations, financial institutions and Western governments. Within these relations the neo-liberal model, and its re-ordering of *arrangements within* and *relations between*, state-society-market, constitutes a new reference for the organization of social and political life in non-Western

societies. In this context, there are those such as Giddens that suggest modern institutions are being extended and spread through globalizing processes in universalizing fashion.²³ However, this view obscures more than it explains. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari theorize the expansion of capitalism as operating through a double movement, a decoding and deterritorialization of institutions and cultures that have already been developed, followed by a violent and artificial reterritorialization that institutes all sorts of 'residual and artificial, imaginary or symbolic territorialities.'²⁴ This double movement a de/re-territorialization increases the fragmentation of the society, especially the NGOs sector. Alain Touraine explains this fragmentation through his notion of 'disassociation' a concept he identifies as one of the features of late capitalist modernity. Disassociation refers to fissures and disabling forms of disconnection, as a result of which social, political and economic structures no longer cohere and mesh together in a cohesive fashion but are marred by disconnections and forms of disassociation. This impedes social cohesion and induces fragmentation.

According to Beck, in Western societies, it is a heightened form of capitalism and the 'risk society' that induce a disembedding and re-embedding of the industrial social formations by new categories and institutional forms.²⁵ If these new institutions respond to a heightened form of capitalism then clearly non-Western societies, such as Palestinian Territories are twice removed from this process in that they have neither undergone a process of industrialization nor are they situated within the new processes of modernization. Without fetishizing the externality of new institutional forms in non-Western societies, it is undoubtedly necessary to raise the question: how do we conceptualize the emergence of new political and social models in these societies, given that the models have developed out of and perform a particular function in the post-industrial society?

It is important to inquire into what configuration of institutional forms emerge in the non-Western society. Arguments have already been made against the notion of a process of homogenization accompanying globalization. The transferred institutions do not necessarily carry the same normative dimensions or functions that they do in the original societies. A process of decoding and re-coding of symbols making the new "imported" institution appropriate new meaning of their existence. As some argue, the transfer of institutions or ideas to a local context should not be assumed but described; for even if the same phenomena is transferred to different localities it will be interpreted and articulated in a unique manner in each context.²⁶ Others emphasize the importance of questioning and looking beyond the discourse of international organizations that implies uniformity between the global form and its local manifestation.²⁷

The process, by which concepts and institutions are transferred and emerge locally, varies. Therefore, while the neo-liberal model forms a new horizon in the period of globalization, one cannot, however, disregard the different modalities characterizing the way ideas, categories and institutional forms are transferred and articulated locally and the need to account for why and how this occurs.

Our study attempts to map the alterations in the institutions and practices structuring political and social life in the non-Western context and examine the transformations that occur in a field of action. In this manner, our project draws its inspiration from Scott.²⁸ We accept his basic premise that postcolonial inquiry, insofar as it focuses on the formation of a colonial subject and thus on 'decolonizing representation', has reached the limit of its uses to address questions of the present. Following Scott's lead, this project falls in line with attempts to redirect thinking about neocolonialism, towards an inquiry into encounters with the *conceptual* and *institutional* dimensions of modernity. Scott understands the transfer of institutional and political rationalities to the non-Western context in a colonial encounter as a process in which modern power becomes inscribed in the social terrain of the local society, *transforming and reorganizing a field of action*.²⁹ A Foucauldian view of power guides this conception, which recognizes power as "an action which influences another action by determining a field of possibility for it."³⁰ For Scott a transformation in a field of action occurs because as the institutions which organize political life are altered, the *means through which* and therefore *the very way in which actors relate* to a political experience is transformed. For example, in the context of colonialism, as the structures of the project of political sovereignty were set in place, a new legal system, a judiciary, and an economic field with property rights this led to the transformation of the overall rules of the game of action. Two movements underlie such an alteration of a field of action; the establishment of new structures that reorganize a social space; this in turn *disables* old life forms and *obliges* new forms to come into being.³¹ For instance, he describes the establishment of a legal system as establishing a new authoritative game of justice. In this context, the courtroom becomes a site that disciplines the native to modify his own conduct according to the new rules for deliberating justice.³² Overall, the central problematic outlined by Scott is that as the means through which action is conducted are modified, a field of action is transformed. As a result the manner in which actors relate to and respond to the political in their society is redefined.

One can observe a similar process at work in the Palestinian context. Among the changes that have occurred in the organizations that formed part of the liberation

movement, one observes a displacement of a political mode of action, in the form of mobilization, by a civic mode of action, promoting new subjectivities and a new reflexivity on social norms. Following a process of professionalization and institutionalization in relation to their increased entry into development cooperation, Palestinian NGOs have taken on new practices in the form of civic education training programs, as well as awareness raising activities. This type of activity is linked to a notion of the 'public' and is meant to facilitate reflection on social and political norms. One observes new knowledge claims, in the form of statistics and surveys produced by local research centers, illustrating the efficacy of this type of action in producing effects in the body-politics, hence legitimizing it over old modes of action. In line with the problematic identified by Scott, it is not enough to observe these changes. One must probe the effects that this institutional reconfiguration and the emergence of these new practices has on a terrain of action and the effects that are produced at the level in which actors relate to and respond to the political in their society.

Conclusion

The current Intifada represents a unique moment to observe the dominant social actors in the Palestinian society. The Palestinian NGOs sector which represent its-self as the major political and social forces emerged to bring development and national liberation was failed to mobilize the population when the intifada outbreak. These organizations withdrew from the national-political question, including the reality of the occupation since the beginning of the peace process. This article want it to highlight the transformation of the Palestinian NGOs agenda which is tremendously influenced by the neo-liberal agenda of the international organizations and the donors agencies during the ten year of transition proceeding the intifada. Since the end of the Cold War, influenced by the model of 'good governance', the development policy and aid transfers have come to be dominated by so called the 'New Policy Agenda'. This agenda play a major role in de-politicizing the NGOs mission. In the time of war and national liberation this becomes so problematic.

In the Palestinian context three observations can be made. First, the local NGOs have not moved beyond professionalized action. On the one hand, this is not necessarily bad, especially as effective forms of transnational networking and advocacy work to convey Palestinian rights internationally, require highly capable organizations, endowed with the resources and skills to communicate, network and lobby across borders. Yet, Palestinian NGOs face the problem of dependency on few specialized people if professionalized activities are not supplemented with local grassroots networking and

strategies for action. In the context of the renewed national struggle, the Palestinian NGOs have not developed a synergy with the population or other political and social organizations. Second, many PNGOs have reverted into the familiar pattern of short-term relief work. This in turn reflects the absence of a long-term vision or strategy on how the NGOs and social organizations can contribute to change in the context of national transition. The third observation concerns the incapability of NGOs to articulate the civic with politics or to separate the 'politics' from the 'national'. Their actions betray a lack of awareness of the fact that they are in an occupied land. NGO leaders are from the urban middle class; this Intifada is taking place in the refugee camps, the remote cities in the North and South of the West Bank, and in the South of Gaza, more than in the urban centers like Ramallah. At the same time, this Intifada is not simply political, but social and economic and is propelled by people who did not gain from the peace process. Moreover, the ongoing Intifada expresses cumulative popular anger at both the violence of the Israeli occupation and meager achievement of the PNA in the peace process and its bad management to the public affairs.

NOTES

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Sifting people, sorting papers: academic practice and the notion of state security in Israel¹

TANIA FORTE

The Israeli "revisionist history" of the late 1980s and 1990s has been the subject of much controversy. Revisions of mainstream historical accounts were sparked partly by the release of archival data on the early state period previously unavailable, and partly by the ways historians, aware of theoretical critiques of nationalist histories extant in the contemporary historiographical literature, modified the object of their research to provide more sensitive accounts of power relations and of multivocal historical experiences. The "release" by Israeli institutions of documents that potentially tarnish authoritative nationalist narratives of the state's foundation is unusual among Middle East countries. On the other hand, academic practice and access to data for research in Israel is far from being homogenous. This essay is an attempt to explore the production of knowledge about Palestinians in Israel from the perspective of cultural practice. That is, I seek to understand how academics' use of archives relates to other social, political, and cultural practices encountered in the process of production of knowledge in Israel. While historical texts are meaningful, they become so not only as we compare them to other historical texts, but also as we relate them to the various contexts within which they come to be. This research is based on two theoretical considerations: how "state security" informs social discourse and practices, and how the content of academic work is related to particular sociopolitical practices linked to cultural, social, and political notions of persons through which it is produced and sustained. Through concrete examples drawn from my experience and that of other researchers, I will describe how these discourses and practices can inform the production of academic research on Palestinians within Israeli history and society.

Theoretical approaches that consider how political imagination, social categories, and identities are shaped by state projects were developed mostly in the 1980s and 1990s.² More recently, researchers' attention has begun to focus on how political notions of security expressed by military officials and makers of foreign policy interact with everyday understandings of safety and homeland.³ In a critical study of American foreign policy, political scientist Philip Campbell shows how no-

tions of American identity are not only the result of national pedagogical projects, but also of more diffuse expressions, common to foreign policy, media, and popular culture, of danger posed by "others." While nationalist rhetoric constitutes states as refuges from danger, and thus justifies them as a necessary condition for the survival of a people, Campbell argues that danger as expounded in foreign policy is, paradoxically, "...not a threat to the state's identity or existence: it is its condition of possibility".⁴ As the feeling of danger threatening the nation is perpetuated, state foreign policy is made legitimate or even commonsensical. Similarly, the ethnographic research of anthropologist Catherine Lutz (2001) describes how a rhetoric of [foreign] political danger works into everyday lives in America. Both suggest, then, that contrary to popular belief a homeland is not simply built to prevent danger. Instead, the danger perceived from specific groups of outsiders is part of the very stuff which constitutes and perpetuates a sense of home.

It comes as no surprise that notions of national identity and personal safety in Israel are also closely linked with notions of state security. State security is the reason given for much of Israel's policy of expropriation of land from Palestinians in the Galilee and in parts of the occupied territories. Less obvious is the fact that discourse linked to the notion of state security works to shape categories of people (insiders and outsiders, safe and unsafe), to authorize their access to resources, and to imbue them with credibility. The rhetoric of security, then, helps to constitute both a sense of a common whole, and differences between people within and without. It pervades many dimensions of Israeli public life: political discourse, academic texts, the mass media and popular beliefs.

My concern is with how Israeli notions of state security inform the production of social scientific research and researchers—and more specifically, research pertaining to national "others"—in relation to Israeli notions of state security. I take as a premise the idea that Israeli cultural productions, like those of other countries, should be analyzed in relation to the very mundane practices by which they are constituted.⁵ Here I con-

ceive as cultural productions not only the products of popular culture and the mass media, but also the organization of political and archival documents and academic works.⁶

As my previous research has explored the constitution of selves and the production of histories in Israel/Palestine, I propose here to reexamine these notions as they apply to the constitution of academic social scientific knowledge in the state of Israel. Specifically, I describe some of the social and academic contexts within which various academics work, and link them to the kinds of texts they then produce about Palestinians. Through these descriptions, I trace how notions of state security and of danger inform the constitution of knowledge about national selves and others in the state of Israel. These practices provide insight into how categories of people and types of knowledge about others, state security, and potentially also about policy, are themselves constituted and made meaningful.

Now it is amiss to consider academic knowledge in Israel as the intentional product of conspiracy, as I have sometimes heard it described. While practices by which knowledge is produced are significant, they do not imply that the people involved are simply reproducing national ideologies, which are neither homogenous nor always agreed upon. Instead, the process of academic production is brought into conversation with an existing discourse on state security at a particular historical moment. I suggest here that academic texts are made meaningful not only in themselves, and not only within a wider academic discussion. Rather, they also interact with other meaning-making activities in society at large. The production of academic knowledge, then, is enacted “through the internal logics of cultural practices, intersecting with the entirely interested activity of social agents.”⁷ A closer look at research practices and conditions can help us understand not just how academic texts are constituted, but also how academic practices participate in a wider sociopolitical world.

Officials, Academics, and the Practice of State Security

State officials, it is well known, classify people into administrative categories through censuses and statistics. State statistics are then used to measure seemingly neutral, objective facts of difference between mutually exclusive categories of people. These numbers tend to be taken for granted as people discuss politics—the numbers provide the data according to which the debate proceeds. But in the process what are erased are two problems: that categorization itself constitutes difference, and that difference becomes embodied in people. Indeed administrative categories conceived as fixed, mutually exclusive, and comprehensive come to be taken up beyond administrative records; they start to inform ways

in which officials think and speak about persons, the ways they relate to them, and the ways people themselves come to see and act. As researchers have repeatedly shown, the process of categorization, contested as it might be, is nevertheless something people have to contend with in their everyday lives, in the myriad practices by which difference is constituted.

Academic research practices also bring us to contend with categorical assumptions disseminated by modern states. Through the research, I note the production of two kinds of difference. First, there is the question of accessing administratively controlled “knowledge” or “information.” Then, there is the question of reframing administrative forms of knowledge as the object of other intellectual concerns.

To start with, I focus on the ways in which state officials decide how to allow researchers access to data. I discuss here two types of operations: how administrators decide what data is “sensitive” and therefore should, for reasons of state security, be kept from researchers; then, how they judge whether to allow or deny researchers access to data based on their assessment of who these researchers are perceived to be—that is, based on how they constitute these researchers as persons. While academic researchers often discuss how they got hold of official data or archival documents they use in their work, these discussions have been so far confined to forewords, footnotes, or anecdotal stories. I take the process of accessing documents as a researchable object of study, and focus my analysis on the formal and informal practices by which people are allowed or denied access to documents for academic work related to Palestinians.

These practices can be taken to show that state officials constitute and categorize researchers in relation to understandings of “state security” as persons whose work will be helpful or detrimental to the state. I take “state security” to provide a basis for the constitution of difference between persons in the state of Israel. The concept of state security enters into the way people think of their work. Thus, as in other states, formal laws and procedures govern the way archived documents become accessible to the public. However, data I discuss below suggest that informal practices that occur in the interaction between researchers and archive workers hold an important place in the researchers’ capacity to access documents. I link the problem of accessibility to archivists’ understanding of the product of academic work. I argue that this link is important based on informal discussion with researchers, but also and more importantly on interactions between researchers and archivists. These also suggest, then, that because archivists tend to perceive researchers as producing widely read work with political implications, they often use their authority to control the selective flow of information from state institutions to researchers, and thus, as they

perceive it, from researchers to the general public.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, preoccupation with preservation of historical knowledge was intense in Israel. The state and the army, political parties, unions, kibbutz movements, pre-state military groups, and private individuals had set up dozens of archives. While standard procedures were theoretically to be followed when it came to government institutions, in practice at the time of my study institutional procedures varied widely from institution to institution. Indeed, researchers' access to documents rarely seemed to follow any standard patterns. Not surprisingly, most archivists share the researchers' enthusiasm for documents and history, and the interaction between them is often not simply bureaucratic, as archivists keep up with academic production. This was obvious at a conference on archives and research organized by the Rabin Institute in Tel Aviv in April 2000, and attended by an audience of about two hundred archive employees and academics. This audience interrupted speakers many times to correct dates, facts, or terminology. At the same time, however, the archivists' comments highlighted that they often felt personally engaged in their role as keepers and dispensers of "official" knowledge, and saw access to this knowledge as potentially affecting the security of the state. As conference participants explained, security checks are routinely done on archivists before they obtain their jobs, and many of them were picked precisely because they have worked or done military service in the security branches. Hence the director of the newly formed Rabin archives was proud to announce that the head archivist had been a high-ranking officer in the security services, and that his staff all had a "security background"—meaning that previous experience in the army intelligence made them especially qualified to handle archival data and make decisions concerning its release.

According to a 1998 law, archivists are directed to bar access to research documents which have a "high chance of damaging the state's security." Yet the decisions about what constitutes sensitive material, and how access should be denied, is much under debate among archivists and historians. At the same conference in Tel Aviv, a well established senior historian, recalling his experience working in a small archive in which he had had open access to files, suggested that all documents should be "open," and that the archivist himself would decide which researchers should or should not have access to particular data based on who they were. Such a stance, reflecting common practice in many archives, was opposed by the assistant to the chief archivist of the Israeli state archives. He, in turn, argued for a consistent policy of access: "Once the documents are open, they are open to all. I am not interested to know if the researcher is a tourist from Syria, a historian or student

from Birzeit University [in the Palestinian Authority]."⁸ That statement, contrasted with those of many other archivists in attendance ("but that's dangerous!"), highlighted the novelty of the idea that archival documents could actually be available to all.

How has access to documents actually worked in practice in the last few years? In her dissertation, American anthropologist Rose Haberer mentions that she went to the local council of the Palestinian Israeli village in which she was doing research and asked for a map. The Jewish mayor refused to give her one, explaining that this was privileged information. "There is more than one way to skin a cat," she comments. But she doesn't tell us how she obtained the map that actually appears in her dissertation.

Sociologist Ahmad Sa'adi, who is a Palestinian citizen of Israel, recalls how he gained access to the 1950s documents from the Labor Party archives on which he has been working recently. He was teaching at Beit Berl, the labor party college in a suburb of Tel Aviv, in the late 1990s. First, he had gone to the archivist there and inquired whether there were any documents from Arab citizens in the 1950s. The archivist told him there were no such documents, and for a whole year, he offered him files of minutes of official meetings about Arabs that held little of the micro historical data Sa'adi was seeking. One day, he was in the library when a librarian was moving heavy boxes. He offered to help. As he moved several boxes for her to the archival stacks, he noticed that there were files marked "Arab Affairs." As he and the librarian became friendly, he asked whether he could take a look at the archival boxes. She gave him permission. For the next weeks, he read and copied hundreds of letters from Palestinian citizens to party officials, which he subsequently used in published articles.

In the early 1990s, I asked an archivist in the Israel State Archives how I could look for a village map from the period of the British Mandate. He replied that such maps were not in the British Mandate files I had been researching. Rather, they were to be found in the files of the Israel Land Authority, since this administrative body had used local British maps in the process of surveying land in the early 1950's. Land authorities files, he explained, were open for researchers to use.

The problem was that these files had no titles. They were numbered instead, and the numbers didn't correspond to survey block numbers. The archivist commented that it was almost impossible for researchers to find what they were looking for, since they would have to go through hundreds of numbered files. He recalled that three years previously a woman doing research for her MA had come with specific file numbers, and had gotten exactly what she was looking for. She had obtained the file numbers from the Israel Land Authority,

where she had been working.

When I called the Land Authority office, they explained that they could not give researchers access to maps. Individuals could get access to maps of plots that belonged to them, for a fee, but maps, even from the Mandate period, were not public information.⁹ Ghazi Fallah, an Israeli Palestinian geographer, reported having the same difficulties with that office when he tried to gain access to data concerning state and private lands in several villages in the Galilee. "They thought my work was political and they refused to give me the data," he asserted in 1989. Instead, he visited the local councils of several villages, and was able to use their data to write an article which he subsequently published.

A man who had been director of the Israel Lands Authority's Nazareth office assured me that many academic researchers had come to work in his office, and that I could call his former secretary whom he was sure would let me consult the Mandate maps and registration records for my research. When I called the secretary, however, she explained that this information was not accessible to researchers. Since then, I have spoken to several Jewish researchers affiliated with Israeli universities who have conducted research in the Nazareth land administration files. A dozen years ago, Israeli Jewish geographer Oren Yiftachel was even given keys to the office where files were kept so that he could work at his convenience; however, when his work was assessed as critical of government land policies, officials refused his students access to their files. Researchers like Ghazi Fallah or Ahmed Sa'adi, were marked from the start in their interactions with officials and had to find alternate ways of getting to documents.

In Israel there are policies regulating public access to archives and documents. In fact, laws concerning researchers' access to archival data are a lot more flexible than in France or England. But gaining access to information there is not merely a question of law or policy. It is one of practice, of connection.¹⁰ While theoretically the files of the Land Authority offices are not open for browsing, in practice they can be opened to people who have, or may gain, the trust of administrators—this is done routinely by researchers who manage to use personal connections to gain access to documents. How then do administrators make such decisions? Often, they assess the researchers who come their way within broadly defined categories. Some could casually mention their army services, or call on their army friends. Others might claim connection to Israeli universities, or get introductions from Israeli faculty members or administrators. Ahmad Sa'adi, on the other hand, could be told that "there are no such documents." Similarly, after Oren Yiftachel published articles thought to be critical of government policies, people doing research for him are no longer given broad access to data. Thus archivists

and other officials often appear to take it upon themselves to operate as gatekeepers.

Situating researchers and their projects according to national cultural categories has been an important concern to officials. This becomes especially evident in cases where identities and allegiances are not clearly defined, or when researchers are not "established" within local social and academic networks. Palestinian-American anthropologist Nadia Abu el-Haj told me how difficult it had been for her to interview Israeli officials. Most Israelis who met her without knowing her name just assumed she was Jewish and often included her into a narrative "we" [meaning Jews]. On the other hand, officials whom she interviewed and who knew her name, would assume she held certain political positions, and started out by arguing against them. Like me, she never was able to get hold of a map in the archives. All of the thirty-odd historical maps of Jerusalem she ordered were "off the shelf." When American anthropologist Rebecca Torstrick worked in Acre in the late 1980s, people were often surprised if they found out she wasn't Jewish and several asked if she was going to convert, or marry a Jew. To most it was hard to understand why, otherwise, she would be motivated to do socio-historical research in Israel. When trying to assess me, various administrators asked point blank if I was Jewish, or why I was working on "Arabs." Thus officials offered advice as to what would constitute interesting research, and jotting down their questions and suggestions I realized who they expected me to be, and what they considered to be the proper "object" of my study. Every such discussion was one in which difference and similarity were again constituted along proper lines in a potentially disturbing, borderline area, that of research on the national Other.

Of course, assessment in such a situation is not simply a question of fitting a "person" within a "category," the way census officials would. It is a much more flexible kind of process that reveals how officials and others assumed or produced the differences by which state security is linked to national identities. By and large, the people whom officials in charge of documents tend to trust are Israeli, Jewish, or somehow connected to the establishment. The "others" are Palestinian, or other outsiders to an Israeli Jewish identification, whose perceptions are therefore assumed to be at best suspicious, at worst definitely biased. For officials, it seems, these differences became embodied in the persons of the researchers to whom they related, in the information one might give or keep away from them, and in the potential studies these persons were ultimately expected to produce.¹¹

Thus, in practice, there has been an effort to control access to information by people who, in the eyes of the administrators, might use it to politically questionable

ends. At the same time, people who have been conceived as trustworthy could gain access to confidential and politically sensitive information in very open, informal ways. The assumption is that trustworthy people would not stir up trouble, but rather do civically responsible work. Again, what is at stake is the notion of the security of the state.

The tension inherent in the idea of “state security” is also played out in Israeli historian Benny Morris’s account of access different researchers have to archival data in the military archives. Morris, an Israeli Jewish historian from a well-established family, had spent many years in various Israeli archives researching books on Israeli history. He had made a name for himself as the founder of a movement he called “New History.” In his first book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem*, he used newly released archival documents to trace the process by which Palestinians came to be dispossessed of land and home during the 1948 war. Morris’ work, considered very controversial in the mid-1980s when it first came out, gradually came to be accepted by the Israeli Jewish public as it resonated for many with the 1990s peace negotiation process. Largely in relation to his work at the time, the idea that Palestinians didn’t simply “leave” in 1948 but were also made to leave had become a legitimate point of view in Israeli mass culture, and “common knowledge” among Israeli Jews.¹² In a 1998 lecture at Tel Aviv University, Morris explained that the Israeli military archives are not open to everyone in the same way. Some of the researchers were, as he put it, “closer to the dish”—that is, they are allowed access to certain documents which he himself could not get. Shortly afterwards he sued government archives in the supreme court for uniform access practices and standards.

One of Morris’s examples was that of a high officer, Motti Golani, who had retired and gone on to study history at Hebrew University. When Golani wrote his dissertation on the 1956 Sinai campaign in the 1990s, he was given access to a great many classified files. But the dissertation was a somewhat radical reevaluation of decisions made by high officials during the Sinai campaign. When he published a book, then, the Israeli censor’s bureau insisted that he take off the references to specific, numbered files, so that other researchers could not request them. Speaking in 2000 at the Rabin conference on archives, Golani reflected that the privilege of access to these sources was a mistake since it conflated his role in the security services with his role as a historian. He then advocated for a separation between the two domains. Such freely discussed practices and discourse again underline the relative importance of informal access to documents described here at the turn of the millennium in Israel.

For researchers who are part of the Israeli establish-

ment, who are expected to produce work within the range of patriotic consensus in their field, confidential data has on many occasions been wide open. Stories about this preferential access abound among historians. Hence, several anthropologists and historians who were government employees or served as government advisors have had completely open access to official documents, to which they refer in their academic books and articles. Several doctoral theses and academic books have been written by people who themselves have been part of the security establishment, using documents collected by Israeli intelligence services. These works are produced within the comfortable confines of assumed consensus, together with a concern for a “common good”—that is, in the place where state security and dissemination of information are assumed to coincide. The most blatant example I collected was from several historians who had been students of Middle East history in the late 1960s at Hebrew University. One of their professors, they recalled, was a high-ranking officer during the 1967 war. The professor, in the framework of his army work, got hold of Jordanian police records from the West Bank at that time. He brought the records to class, and assigning the students specific research topics, he gave them files to take home. It is also relevant here to add that the students had a good knowledge of Arabic, which most had acquired during their army service in intelligence units—the same sense of concern for the common good, based on mainstream assessments of state security, could be assumed in his classroom. This suggests an enduring relation between the practice of state security and that of academic research, which I continue to explore below within academic practice at Israeli universities.

State Security and the Making of a National Other

“Israel’s security is permanent neither in time nor in place.”¹³

The relation between ideas of state security and the constitution of a national other as object of academic study has gone largely unexamined so far. One reason why this has been the case is that Israeli historians working on the contemporary Middle East have been for the most part members of the Israeli mainstream establishment. Until recently, these historians have tended to assume that their role is to serve both the interests of the state and those of the community, interests which they often conceive as congruent. As historian Joan Wallach Scott pointed out in her study of American historians, “the social practices of the members of a profession are intimately related to the ways they interpret the meaning of their work.”¹⁴ What then are the practices out of which mainstream Middle East

history is constituted in present day Israel? Who are the practitioners, whom do they teach, and how do they produce the object of their studies? Taking the constitution of difference as the problem here complicates the picture because it calls attention to the social status of these historians, as well as to the very conceptions of persons produced and protected by the profession. Thus, here too, otherness is constituted, this time as an object of study in which notions of national security underlie the production of both researcher and object.

At the turn of the millennium, the Department of Middle Eastern and African History at the University of Tel Aviv was a well established department. It graduated 170 students with BA's and 40 with MA's in 1999, more than any other department in the humanities division of the university. Many of the departments' students seemed to think that unlike other degrees in the humanities, this one has practical applications, since—as they saw it—it would provide them with skills for jobs in the various security services or in Israel's foreign ministry. Several of the students I interviewed actually referred to this as the reason why they chose to study in the department over others to which they were admitted.

In fact, many students came into the department with a solid knowledge of literary Arabic, a language they started to learn in high school and continued to improve during their army service in the Intelligence branch. Several of the MA students, some in their 40's and 50's, were employees of the foreign or security ministry, who needed the degree to advance in their career.¹⁵ In 1999, the department started to develop an accelerated MA program specifically designed for intelligence officers, which would be based on the current MA curriculum and taught by the same faculty members.¹⁶ The new MA would be a major part of the officers' training. Middle Eastern Studies here, then, was not simply a field in the humanities; it was conceived by students and administrators alike as a professional course of study. The degree one gained represented specific knowledge, as well as linguistic and analytical skills which could then be practiced in the service of the state.

Knowing this, it doesn't come as a surprise that there was a fluid relation between the security apparatus and many department faculty members. Like their students, many of these experts served in the army intelligence during their military service and were often called in as experts for their army reserve duty; one officially held a part-time position in the department and in military security. As one professor explained to me, he was occasionally asked to produce position papers for the security services by security officers who were once his students at the university.

There was also a strongly cultivated relation between some faculty members and the Israeli Foreign Office.

Two faculty members had served as ambassadors to Arab countries, and the faculty was often represented at official diplomatic functions. In addition, two members of the department were well known to be involved in the intermittent peace negotiations with Syria. In 1998-99, some discussed in classes or lectures their meetings with important political leaders of Middle Eastern countries or their appointments with government officials, or facilitated job interviews with security officials for students they thought had potential. For these scholars there was a logical continuity between academic expertise and government advising. Most members of the department faculty also belonged to the Dayan Center, a policy-oriented institute located at the university whose publications and conferences helped to legitimate state policy to an international public of policy makers. According to its web page,

The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies is an interdisciplinary research center devoted to the study of the modern history and contemporary affairs of the Middle East. The Center seeks to impart an understanding of Middle Eastern past and present to academic and general audiences, in Israel and abroad....The Center's origins lie in the Reuven Shiloah Institute, first established in 1959 under the auspices of the Israel Oriental Society. In 1965, the Shiloah Institute was incorporated into Tel Aviv University. In 1983, the University established the Moshe Dayan Center, which combined the Shiloah Institute and documentation units dealing with the Middle East.¹⁷

The center, as many other academic institutions, has clearly scholarly concerns, described in the website to be "to bring scholarly objectivity to the analysis of subjects that often stir passions." Yet such concerns are also practiced in specific sociopolitical and historical contexts, which must be understood in order to fully comprehend how they are related to Israeli concerns with state security. Interestingly the Shiloah Institute, named after the first head of the Israeli security services who was also among the first generation of Israeli scholars of Middle East history, was originally founded as a branch of the foreign office and later moved to its university location. At the turn of the millennium, the center was endowed by private donors and by the Israeli government. Its structure replicated that of the Israeli foreign office as well: each country of the Middle East was represented by an "expert." Significantly, there were also experts on "Palestinians" and on "Arab Israelis." Some of these were historians who, in keeping with the center's project, had developed contemporary interests as a secondary expertise. For example, a scholar of eighteenth century Iran and one working on the Arab Emirates had both written articles about contemporary Palestinian history and historiography. Together with

other members of the faculty, they contributed articles or lectures at conferences and events organized by the center on subjects related to Palestinian society and history.

There was a strong sense of shared purpose and responsibility emerging from the center. It was assumed that colleagues were working for the good of the country, that their work mattered. Sides were being defined as experts debated the policy questions they defined for themselves: were there signs of greater democracy emerging from Iran? Why were Turkey and Israel the only two democracies in the Middle East? Were Palestinians in Israel “fragmenting,” or “assimilating”? Such questions, asked within the frame of “state security,” tended to be framed within a logical, scientific, evolutionary narrative. According to this narrative, news events and other data constituted as knowledge could be used to index the progress of surrounding people in the Middle East toward a wished-for stability. They constituted ways of defining the place, or more exactly the position of the state of Israel in relation to neighboring states. They were also ways of generating knowledge for the use of the state and the wider public. At the same time, they were situated in the discursive space of academe, since its members were members of the university community who regularly taught courses, published their scholarly work, and participated in international conferences.

Foreign as well as Palestinian Israeli scholars came to lecture at the center, and their names and affiliations were prominently displayed in the Center’s publications, adding to its legitimacy. But all of the center members were Jewish Israelis, and all of them were part of the Israeli mainstream. Indeed, all had access to some classified information. Should they accept an Arab member, a center researcher explained, the center would lose its security clearance. Though their views on particular issues, of course, differed, they did so within the acceptable bonds of mainstream Israeli society. Again, the perceived needs of state security dictated, in a very practical fashion, who insiders and outsiders were, belying the seeming equality and objectivity of academic discourse.

This was articulated for me by one of the Center’s members after he attended a conference at a different university where he saw many of the participants as expressing radical views and therefore placing themselves outside the bonds of Israeli society:

As an academic I like to sit on the fence. There I’m part of the people and have critical distance at the same time. But I always talk to the Israeli public, I don’t cut myself off the way those guys do. Who are they talking to? Only to each other, not to the rest of the society. They have their little group, but they have no impact on anything.¹⁸

To this man, the production of scholarly research about Palestinians was, again, embodied in the familiar, clear-cut dichotomies of difference. The people categorized as outsiders were researchers associated and conflated with Palestinians. Those within the consensus were the purported makers of the Israeli polity: well-established “experts,” their students, their colleagues in the security services, and the “wider Israeli public” to whom they addressed their lectures, newspaper articles, position papers, and media interviews. For him, scholarly, political, and social boundaries were contiguous, and differences between people were clearly and specifically practiced.

A few department members considered the relationship between the Dayan Center and the department as problematic. Their concern was that the department was financially dependent on the Center for many of its programs, and that the Center also had a say in department hiring. These faculty members considered it their duty to clearly separate their work as academics from work they would be called to do as advisors to the government. One of them explained to me in 1999: “I once lectured to the security people, I said: there are two separate drawers: When I leave here I close one of them, and open the other. I don’t mix.”

There was ambivalence also among the students about employment in the security services. Three students discussed with me interviews they had had for jobs in the security services. One described her feelings after such an interview in her last year of BA studies:

There is a general understanding, which I resent, that we come here to “study the enemy.” [One Palestinian man] I interviewed for my MA thesis asked what department I was studying in and when I told him he said “You are...” and I could tell what he was thinking from his look, so I said “No, I don’t work with the security [defense] ministry.” And he was relieved. But listen, it is partially based in fact: people go on to work for security from our department. I got an invitation for an interview. I went, and they told me they had gotten good reports about me. I told them I wanted to continue my studies, so they offered to pay for my MA if I worked for them part time while I studied. I had to commit myself to working for them after the MA. I told them that I didn’t want to commit myself, I’m thinking of going for a PhD. Many of us do this, we delay making a decision about whether or not to work for the security services... I’m sure they got my name from the department, I was a good student—where else could they have gotten it from? Look at who is teaching in the department: how many are working for the security ministry, they always tell us in class.¹⁹

The seamless connection between patriotism and academic expertise, as this student’s ambivalence implies,

has started to be problematized within Israeli society. The “New Historians” works published since the mid-1980s aimed to question national master narratives, and in the process provided a serious critique of establishment historians, undermining their authority. Their critiques were very public in Israel, as the books were reviewed in major newspapers, discussed on TV and radio talk shows²⁰.

In 1998, a major TV retrospective commissioned for Israel’s fiftieth anniversary, *Tekuma* (awakening), presented a controversial version of Israeli history. It spoke plainly of the expulsion of Palestinians in 1948, of the subsequent destruction of Arab villages, and of the military government imposed on most of the Palestinian population of Israel until 1966. This program generated considerable debate among the larger public, as did the new Israeli history textbooks which were slated to be used in the fall of 2000. As a result, the consciousness of being Israeli now often resonates with these debates, and students have brought them into the classroom.

Mainstream historians critiqued these books through conferences and journal articles. Tel Aviv University’s Dayan center, for example, published some of these critiques and its members regularly contributed book reviews in the Israeli mass media in which they discussed the writings of “new historians.” For the first time in 1999, a class was taught in the department, entitled “Historiography of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict,” examining various perspectives on the topic of revisionist history. One of the students commented, “At least now they feel that they have to teach these books, even if it is to criticize them.” Room was being made for other ways of thinking and being within the mainstream Israeli public. While no one denied or questioned that “state security” was an important concern, there was the beginning of a sense that a blanket notion of security was not the major determinant of how authoritative histories should be written.

My description of access to documents and the production of academic research by people who are part of the Israeli establishment here has been intended to give a sense for the practices and discourses by which “expert” authority is constituted in relation to Israeli notions of state security. I have been concerned with academic research about Palestinians, not as an object in itself, which can be judged within the terms of the documents and texts which have been so hotly discussed in academic circles as well as in the Israeli popular press. Rather, by tracing what the social, cultural, and political contexts of its production can tell us about the discourse itself, I have tried to trace various manifestations of a pervasive, taken-for-granted notion of state security which underlies its everyday practice and assessments.

My concern has not been to establish or reiterate dichotomies between types of research, as revisionist histo-

rians have done, nor to highlight Gramsci’s distinction between state and organic intellectuals, as taken up by Edward Said. Such distinctions, while they are useful to political activism, do not necessarily help us to understand the more complex dynamics by which categories are [most often tacitly] practiced. Instead, I wish to draw attention to state security as an important, enduring, popular notion that organizes categories, and also works to organize scholarly discourse. As an underlying concern in Israeli cultural, social and political practice, I consider it to be a potentially very fruitful locus of further research.

NOTES

¹Special thanks to Henya Rachmiel and to the scholars who contributed their experiences and insights. This article is based on ethnographic research conducted in Israel in 1998-2000.

²See for instance Bernard Cohn, “The Census and Objectification in Southern India” in *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996) and Benedict Anderson, “Census, Survey, Museum,” in *Imagined Communities*. Revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).

³See Philip Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998) and Catherine Lutz, *Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

⁴Campbell, *Writing Security*, 12.

⁵See for instance Michel de Certeau *The Writing of History*. Trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), and Michel-Rolph Trouillot *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

⁶See Melani MacAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media and US Interests in the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2001).

⁷MacAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 8.

⁸Forte, fieldnotes, 2000.

⁹Survey maps from the Mandate period—though not detailed maps of particular villages—are available at the map room of Hebrew University. Current maps and historical information about plot ownership are, in fact, public information available upon payment of a fee at the Israel Land Authority district offices.

¹⁰See Brenda Dannet, *Pulling Strings: Biculturalism in Israeli Bureaucracy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

¹¹The same kind of problem with categorization and suspect categories was highlighted in discussions at the conference on archives mentioned above concerning what documents were liable to harm state security. For instance, there was a lively debate concerning whether “sensitive” documents about the treatment of Jews of Middle Eastern origin should be released for research since they were likely to “divide the public.” Here again, a relation was drawn between state security, categories of people, and national unity.

¹²Of course, such an idea was not simply adopted by all, but rather entered the range of acceptable mainstream perspectives. It becomes differently inflected by different social or political actors at different historical moments.

¹³Gibli, head of army security services, 1955; reiterated in a Middle East history course at Tel Aviv University, spring 1999.

¹⁴Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Revised edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 179.

¹⁵Older students were common in Israeli universities as higher educational degrees led to better job and pension benefits.

¹⁶Two department faculty members who were not connected with the Dayan Center expressed disagreement with the program, and more generally with the goals of the center and its connection to the Middle East history department. At the time, theirs was a minority voice within the department.

¹⁷<http://www.dayan.org/>

¹⁸Forte fieldnotes, 1999.

¹⁹Forte fieldnotes, 1999.

²⁰According to some Israeli academics, a moderately successful academic book in Hebrew is one that sells 3000 copies, the same amount, they believe, as an academic book in the US. The much larger proportion of Israeli readers is explained by the fact that such books are read not only by academics but also by the general public. Because of the much greater exposure books about Israeli and Arab history receive in Israeli mass media, their subject and authors' names are well known even among people who do not read them.

The Post-Territorial Dimensions of a Future Homeland in Israel and Palestine

ILAN PAPPE

Many centuries from now the troublesome chapters tearing Israel and Palestine apart in the second half of the twentieth century may become dim and blurred in the collective memory of the people sharing the land as their homeland. Although judging from places such as Northern Ireland and the Balkans, even that is doubtful. What is quite certain is that in the near future any fruitful discussion of concepts such as homeland will be deeply planted in the interpretation of past events, especially those surrounding the year 1948, but also before and after that year.

The most dominant factor that should not be forgotten is that even for people who are newcomers to Palestine, it has become a homeland, and any future discussion in the concept and its practical implications must take into account that sense, whether it is genuine or the product of a very affective indoctrination. Thus defining the homeland and determining whom it belongs to will require the input of the people (or their representatives), whether they are the indigenous Palestinians, the veteran Israelis, the recent Jewish and non-Jewish immigrants or the Palestinians and their families that had been expelled from the land in 1948.

The principal argument of this article is that the road to a post-conflictual homeland in Palestine has to pass through reconciliation on abstract issues such as fairness, justice and guilt, and can not be limited to successful compromises on borders, nature of regimes or any other materialistic aspect of a political settlement. In fact, I argue that the possible achievements in the physical issues of land and borders are useless without significant progress on the moral and legal ground.

My departure point would be that “fairness” and “justice” are no less important bricks needed for building the future homeland than armies and territories. This is not an attempt to present only an ethical reflection; it is much more the outcome of a functional approach to the conceptualization of a future solution. An approach based on an assessment that in the discourse of homeland these moral issues are already evolving, no less than the materialistic question of percentages of territory, sovereignty and security. My guess is that the

moral issues would even override these practical aspects of a solution.

The Historical Background

Power and knowledge go hand in hand and hence in the West one hears too often and too loudly the conceptualization of “fairness” postulated by the occupier, the winner and the victorious, in our case the Israeli side. One hears little about the point of view of the other side”, the subaltern, the Palestinian. This is why in past, British, UN, American, and Israeli conceptualizations of “fairness” dominated the search for peace and were based mainly on the territorial dimension of the conflict while neglecting totally the question of guilt, restitution and justice. These perceptions of “fairness” are closely connected to questions of homeland in the realm of possession, entitlement and future control. In the second part of this article I will argue that only by giving a dominant position to the Palestinian concepts of fairness will it be possible to construct notions of “homeland” conducive to the pacification of the conflict.

The Israel/Palestine conflict was an object of reconciliation, mediation and peace efforts ever since it had erupted in the late nineteenth century. The first significant efforts had been made by the British Empire during the mandatory period. At that early period one can distinguish between two stages. The first stage lasted until the 1930s; during that stage the various British initiators of dialogue wished to construct under British auspices a political structure—a joint homeland—that would represent equally the small Jewish community and the Palestinian majority on the land of Palestine. The second stage, beginning in the mid 1930s, was mainly inspired by the principle of partition: dividing the territory between the two communities and constructing two separate political structures. One can talk about a missed opportunity in the first stage, around the year 1928, when, after years of rejecting any compromise, the Palestinian leadership had agreed to discuss a joint federative structure. But the Zionist leadership, which had supported until that moment such a model,

opposed it when it learned about the Palestinian consent—a typical mode of behavior that would repeat itself in 1947. Compromises, which challenged the very essence of Zionism, were accepted by the Jewish community only when it was absolutely clear that they would be totally rejected by the Palestinian side.¹

The joint and equally divided political structure of 1928 included restrictions on Jewish immigration and was a basis for a bi-national state. It was totally forgotten in 1947 when (inspired by Zionist and British schemes) the UN offered—instead, a partition plan for Palestine. This partition left an equal number of Jews and Palestinians within the future Jewish state. Therefore we can say that in a way the 1947 partition resolution offered a kaleidoscopic vision of a homeland divided into one bi-national state next to a uni-national one.²

As in 1928, so also in 1947 the Zionist leaders were offered a bi-national model. In 1928 they had rejected it and were let off by the British. In 1947, they succeeded in creating the impression that they, unlike the Arab side, preferred such a bi-national state next to a purely Arab state, as stipulated by the partition resolution. As the Arab and Palestinian rejection persisted, their bluff was never called.

One Israeli scholar was adamant in his conviction that the Zionist support for partition in 1947 stemmed from a clear knowledge about the general Arab rejectionist posture and the particular Palestinian refusal.³ A very sensible act of historical deduction, but one which is difficult to substantiate with documents. It is quite clear nonetheless that a bi-national Palestinian-Jewish state—as offered by the partition resolution of the UN no. 181—would have defeated the most basic Zionist aspirations and that the Jewish leadership of the day would have resorted to any possible means—destruction and transfer included—to make the state as purely Jewish as possible.

It is noteworthy that a few days before the UN partition resolution was adopted, the Zionist leadership discussed the issue and a consensus emerged that if Palestinians would remain within the future Jewish state they would have to be granted full citizenship. Three months later the military command of the Jewish community devised a plan for what we now call ethnic cleansing of the areas of the future Jewish state.⁴

So a “fair solution” until 1948 was a bi-national state, either all over Palestine, or on part of it, while the other part was to belong to the indigenous population. This “fair solution” was unacceptable at the time to the Palestinians, who regarded the Zionists as did Algerians the *Pied Noir*, with whom they had no wish to divide the land. But it was also totally unacceptable to the Zionist movement, the leaders of which decided to de-Arabize any part of Palestine that would be allocated to them or

they that would occupy. And yet in the international collective memory, the “fair” solution was accepted by Israel and rejected by the Arabs—a memory shaping attitudes especially in the West towards Palestinians as villains and Israelis as heroes.

And indeed the future concepts of homeland in the context of Israel and Palestine would be closely associated with the international community’s input in the peace negotiations. This input in turn is influenced significantly by perceptions of right and wrong and assessments of past behavior.

What blinded the UN at the time was the organization’s curious decision to opt for a solution which was adopted by the majority of its member states, and not to seek consent between the two warring parties on the ground. The future homeland of both locals and newcomers was to be defined and brokered by outside forces, this was never in history a successful recipe.

Partition was institutionalized in November 1947 by UNSCOP. The members of this committee did not know Palestine at all, and in a relatively short period adopted a plan already offered by the Royal Peel Commission in 1937 which had also been endorsed by the Zionist leadership. In essence partition meant dividing the land into two states while keeping between them an economic union and supervising them from abroad. This remained the basis for the peace efforts ever since. But already the initiators of the partition resolution recognized that not every issue in Palestine was divisible or negotiable on a “rational” basis. The resolution offered, perhaps contrary to its spirit, the internationalization of Jerusalem. The positions of both sides towards the city were born not in decision-making processes but laid on layers of conscience and consciousness. Even if not fully understood by the mediators, they realized that a solution to this question could not be based on the divisibility of the visible but rather should emerge out of respect for the non-divisibility of the invisible layers of the conflict.⁵

It was the first mediator in the history of the post-mandatory conflict, Count Folke Bernadotte, who tried to penetrate into these deeper layers in the post-mandatory Palestine conflict. A few days after the 1948 war erupted, on June 20, 1948, he was appointed a UN mediator. He offered two proposals to end the conflict by partitioning the land into two states. The difference between them was that in the second proposal he suggested the annexation of Arab Palestine to Transjordan. But in both proposals he stipulated the unconditional repatriation of Palestinian refugees as a precondition for peace. He was ambivalent about Jerusalem wishing it to be the Arab capital in the first proposal but he preferred it international in the second. In any case, he seemed to place the refugees and Jerusalem at the center of the conflict and to perceive

these two dilemmas as indivisible problems, for which only a comprehensive and just solution would do.⁶

Even after Bernadotte's assassination by Jewish extremists in 1948, the Palestine Conciliation Commission appointed to replace him pursued the same policy. The three members of this commission wished to build the future solution on three tiers: the partition of the land into two states—not according to the map of the partition resolution but corresponding to the demographic distribution of Jews and Palestinians, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and the unconditional return of the refugees to their homes. The new mediators offered the three principles as a basis for negotiations. While the Arab confrontational countries and the Palestinian leadership accepted this offer during the UN peace conference in Lausanne Switzerland in May 1949, as had done before them the UN General Assembly in resolution 194 of December 1948, it was nonetheless buried by the intransigent David Ben Gurion and his government in summer of that year. At first, the US administration rebuked Israel for its policy and exerted economic pressure on it, but later on, the Jewish lobby succeeded in re-orientating US policy onto pro-Israeli tracks, where it has remained until today.⁷

There was a lull in the peace efforts in the 1950s and 1960s, although into the air schema such the Anglo-American Alpha program and the Johnston Plan were thrown.⁸ These and more esoteric initiatives, almost all of them American, were attempts to adopt a business-like approach to the conflict. This indicated a great belief in partition according to security interests of Israel and its Arab neighbors, while totally sidelining the Palestinians as partners for peace. The Palestinians were cancelled as political partners in the business-like approach. They existed only as refugees whose fate was considered within the economic context of the American Cold War against the Soviet Union. Their problem was to be solved within a new Marshall plan for the Middle East. This plan promised American aid to the area in order to improve the standard of living as the best means of containing Soviet encroachment. For that, the refugees had to be resettled in Arab lands and serve as cheap labor for their development (and thereby also distancing them from Israel's borders and consciousness).

Fortunately for the Palestinians they had the PLO, a movement which through guerilla warfare and welfare systems enabled the refugees to show enough resistance to encourage Arab regimes to leave the refugees in their transitional camps, despite the perception that they were a destabilizing factor. The association of the PLO with the Soviet Union was another factor pushing the Palestinians, wherever they were, from any prospective *pax Americana*.

The June 1967 war and its consequences clarified in the most striking manner the gap lying between business-like American-Israeli attitudes on the one hand and the Palestinian conceptualization of a "fair" solution, on the other. This chasm has disabled ever since 1967 any significant progress in the peace efforts. As I presently hope to show, the quantitative and divisible approach to the conflict, at best can produce military and economic rearrangements and configurations which reflect the balance of power; at worst it perpetuates past evils and injustices. Hence the occupier, Israel, remains in its previous role, and the Palestinians, the occupied, continue to live under the same oppression. And not even a very dramatic discourse of peace, dramatized by high profile ceremonies on the White House lawn, can hide this reality.

Israel had occupied a large share of Palestine already in 1948—77 percent of it; it completed Palestine's takeover in 1967. This total control of the land enabled American negotiators such as William Rogers and Henry Kissinger, and Swedes such as Gunar Yaring, to produce and market an equation they presented as the ultimate and fair solution. Territories for peace. An equation that was wholeheartedly endorsed by the pragmatic Israeli labor movement. It is a strange formula if you stop and think about it: on the one end of the equation you have a quantitative and measurable variable, on the other, an abstract term, not easily conceptualized or even illustrated. It was less bizarre as a working basis for bilateral peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors where indeed it operated quite well, for a while, in the case of Egypt and Jordan. And yet we should remember it produced "cold peace" in the case of these two countries, as it did not offer a comprehensive solution to the Palestine question. And indeed what had this equation to offer to the ultimate victims of the 1948 war; whose demand for "justice" is the main fuel kindling the conflict's fire?

Justice is not demanded only by Palestinians, it is asked for by the Arab world at large. Justice in the local regional context is a less abstract term than it sounds. Justice for Palestinians is part of the reshaping of the post-Colonialist Middle East agenda. And even if Arab regimes tend to forget it, their civil societies remind them of this particular context of the Palestine question. Peace with Israel, even in the case of Egyptians and Jordanians, is reconciliation with the last colonialist movement—even if it had been also a nationalist one—remaining on Middle Eastern soil. For those who were not direct victims of this colonialism it may be easier to reconcile due to economic interest or in recognition of the balance of power with the Jewish state; but for its victims, not only from 1948, but victims of a continual campaign of destruction of the Palestinian people,

economic interests and balance of power can only induce the few, the uncommitted, not the devoted many. They not only seek rectification of past evils, they also seek immunity from present and future devastation.

Thus a fair peace in the eyes of the Palestinians can only be based on the healing of past wounds and, far more important, security against future desolation. Can territories assure that? Or put more in a way that would fit the present discussion: does a future homeland consist only of territorial dimensions?

The Oslo Discourse of Fairness

The architects of the Oslo accord thought it could. They resold the merchandize of “peace for territories”. Hallowed concepts such as Israeli recognition in the PLO and “autonomy” for the Palestinians was meant to strengthen the business-like approach for a solution. The solution was perpetuation of the Israeli occupation through indirect military control. . This solution was displayed with a dramatic discourse of peace.⁹

I am not underestimating the progress made in Oslo, but one should never forget the circumstances of the accord’s birth; they tell you why it was such a colossal failure. Dramatic changes in the global and regional balance of power, and an Israeli readiness to replace the Hashemites of Jordan with the PLO as a partner for peace, opened the way to an even more complicated formula of “territories for peace.” Territories, and everything else which is visible and quantifiable, could be divided between the two sides. Thus the only non-Jewish parts of post-1948 Palestine—23 percent of the land—could be re-divided between Israel and a future Palestinian autonomous entity. Within this 23 percent of Palestine, the illegal Jewish settlements could be divided into 80 per cent under Israeli control and 20 percent under Palestinian authority, most of the water resources to Israel, most of Jerusalem in Israeli hands. Peace, the *quid pro quo*, meant a stateless Palestinian state robbed of any say in its defense, foreign or economic policies. As for the Palestinian right of return, according to the Israeli interpretation of Oslo, which is the one that counts, it should be forgotten and erased. This conceptualization of fairness was presented to the world at large in the summer of 2000 at Camp David.

For Palestinians the summit in Camp David was meant to produce the final stages in the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza strip (according to resolutions 242 and 338 of the UN security council) and prepare the ground for new negotiations over a fair settlement on the basis of UN resolution 194—the return of the refugees, the internationalization of Jerusalem, and a full sovereign Palestinian state. Even the US voted in favor of this resolution at the time and has ever since.

The Israeli Left, in power ever since 1999, regarded the Camp David summit as a stage for dictating to the Palestinians their concept of fairness: maximizing the divisibility of the visible (evicting 90 per cent of the occupied areas, 20 percent of the settlements, 50 percent of Jerusalem) while demanding the end of Palestinian reference to the invisible layers of the conflict: no right of return, no full sovereign Palestinian state, and no solution for the Palestinian minority in Israel. After Camp David fairness meant that as long as the Palestinians would not accept the Israeli dictate, the occupation, exile, and discrimination would continue until the Palestinians would budge. With or without Ariel Sharon’s violation of the sacredness of Haram al-Sharif, the second uprising broke out in the territories and in Israel in October 2000 and it would be there with us for a very long time.

Ever since the outbreak of the second intifada, “Territories for Peace” is no longer on the peace table. . An uprising that spilled over into Israel itself, the second intifada led the Palestinian minority there to call for the deZionization of the Jewish state. In turn, it allowed the West Bankers to demand the Palestinization of Muslim and Christian Jerusalem. It allowed the inhabitants of Gaza to raise arms against the continued occupation and united refugees around the world in their call for the implementation of their right of return. What this last intifada makes abundantly clear is that the end of occupation is a precondition for peace; it is not peace itself. The Israeli peace camp, we are told by its “gurus,” is insulted. It feels its leaders maximized the equation by offering most of the territories Israel occupied in 1967. They demand now, like never before, a Palestinian recognition of the Zionist narrative of the 1948 war: Israel has no responsibility for the making of the refugee problem, the Palestinian minority in Israel—now twenty per cent of the population—is not part of the solution to the conflict and Palestinians should recognize as forever Jewish the settlement belt encircling Jerusalem and planted at the heart of the Palestinian cities such as Nablus and Halil (Hebron).

Thus the conceptualization of a future homeland is tied to values such as fairness no less than to eviction from territories. The post-territorial dimensions of the solution are closely associated with the direct recognition by the Israelis of their role as colonizers, expellers, oppressors and occupiers.

This is a most difficult task for the Jewish people in Israel since they imagines themselves to be the victims. This is done consciously and unconsciously by the national systems in Israel that cultivate through their discourses and conduct the fear of attributing to the Palestinians positive or even empathetic images. This particular dilemma was revealed in Israel in the early 1950s. The state system by then conveyed a very clear

negative stereotyping of everything that was Arab. It was the hated Other, symbolizing everything we, the Jews, are not. This juxtaposition ran into trouble when Israel encouraged about one million Arab Jews to immigrate. There was a conscious effort to de-Arabize these Arabs immigrants: they were coached to scorn their mother tongue, reject Arab culture and make an effort to be Europeanized.¹⁰

The other, complementary, side of this coin, was a systematic effort to deny acts of barbarism against the Palestinians, and attribute the ability for such human abuses only to the other side. This particular dilemma can be seen in the way Israeli historiography dealt with Jewish atrocities in the 1948 war or Jewish terrorism in the Mandatory period. Atrocities and terrorism are two modes of behavior Israeli Orientalists attribute solely to the Palestinian resistance movement. Therefore it can not be part of an analysis or description of chapters in Israel's past. One way out of this dilemma would be to accredit a particular political group, preferably an extremist one, with the same attributes of the enemy, which would clarify the mainstream moral national behavior. This is why the Israelis always admitted to the massacre in Dir Yassin, committed by the right wing Irgun, but tried to hide the many other massacres carried out by the Hagana and later on by the IDF.¹¹

Thus, a fair solution requires a new Israeli approach to the issue of victimhood. As I have shown recently in an article, the Israeli TV series, *Tekkuma*, celebrating Israel's jubilee in 1998, was the first popular attempt to ponder the possibility that Jews were not only the ultimate victims of the twentieth century, but also victimizers. This was done by allocating space on TV to show, alongside the Zionist narrative, chapters from the Palestinian version of history. Although this was a very cautious attempt, which did not deviate too much from the Zionist narrative, it was enough to bring the wrath of all the political system on the series' editors and producers.¹²

Such a recognition of the victimizing role they played would become a vital and necessary station in the socialization of the Jews in Israel, no less than the horror destinations to which high school children in Israel are now forced (and one hopes that at least some of them go by their own accord) to visit in Holocaust Europe. But until that recognition occurs, there is very little chance for progressing on issues such a "fair solution" in the construction of a future homeland for both Palestinians and Jews.

For the Israeli Jews, recognizing the Palestinians as victims of their own evil is deeply traumatic, for it not only questions the very foundational myths of the state of Israel and its motto of "A state without a people for a people without a state," but it also raises a whole panoply of ethical questions with significant implica-

tions for the future of the state. This fear on the Israeli side is the stronger of the two aversions and most destructive in the Jewish society's ability to turn a new leaf in its relationship with the Palestinians. The fear from allowing the other side to become a victim of the conflict would not have been so fierce had this victimhood been related to natural and normal consequences of a long-lasting bloody conflict. From such a perspective both sides are victims of "the circumstances" or any other amorphous, non-committal concept which absolves human beings and particularly politicians from taking responsibility. But what is demanded by the Palestinians, in fact has become a *conditio sine qua non* to many of them, is that Israel would recognize them as victims of its own evil. The fear is deeply rooted in the way Israelis choose to tell the story of 1948, and more importantly how the Israelis react to the way the Palestinian narrative tells the story of that year, the year of the *Nakbah*.

In Israel, educators, historians, novelists, cultural producers in general, have been all involved in a campaign of denial and concealment. The horrors of 1948 were hidden from the public eye and generations to come by those who committed them. Only in the end of 2000, did one brave journalist in *Haaretz*, a voice in the wilderness, cry out in an article: how could you lie to us for so many years? Very few ask this question now and even fewer are willing to answer it.¹³

The historians and educators in particular are the main villains in this case. They all in one way or another helped to construct and preserve a national narrative that eliminates the collective Palestinian memory. This elimination is no less violent than expulsion and destruction; it is the main constitutive element in the construction of collective Jewish identity in the state of Israel. It is manifested in the tales told by child minders on Independence day and Passover, in the curriculum and text books in elementary and high schools, in the ceremonies of freshmen and graduation of officers in the army, it is broadcast in the printed and electronic media as well as in the speeches and discourse of the politicians, in the way artists, novelists and poets subject their works to the national narrative, and in the research produced by academics in the universities about the Israeli reality in the past and the present.

This act of symbolic violence and thought control had been intensified ever since October 2000. It is particularly evident now in the educational system and the media, but mostly evident in the Israeli academia—a state of affairs which requires non partisan scholars here and elsewhere in the USA to rethink what they can and should do in their relationship with an academia that supports oppression, occupation, and discrimination.

This self control guards even peace makers in Israel from not opening the Pandora's box of 1948 and the

whole question of victimhood. This can be seen in the particular posture adopted by the “Peace Now” movement in Israel. For its members, peace and reconciliation are translated to the need of mutual recognition between the two national narratives, in a way that would eliminate clashing. The way to do it is to make divisible everything that is visible: land, resources, blame *and* history into a pre-1967 when we the Jews were Right and Just and a post-1967 when You the Palestinians were Right and Just.¹⁴

Viewed from this perspective, victimhood in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can also be divided into those two historical periods. The same righteous approach of the Israeli peace camp applies to the early, more distant chapter in the history of the conflict as one in which the Jews were the victims, namely the pre-1967 era and the recent chapter, i.e., after 1967 in which the Palestinians were victims. The periodization is very important since the earlier period is considered to be the more crucial one. Thus, having been the just party at that time, in the formative period of the conflict, justifies the existence of Zionism and the whole Jewish project in Palestine; in the same way, it doubts the wisdom and morality of Palestinian actions in that period. It obliterates out of any discussion the ethnic cleansing carried out by the Jews in 1948: the destruction of 400 Palestinian villages and neighborhoods, the expulsion of 700,000 Palestinians and the massacre of several thousands Palestinians.¹⁵

From this perspective, Israel deviated from the moral and just road after being forced to occupy the West Bank and the Gaza strip. But this misbehavior does not cast any doubt on its very essence and justification.

But peace and mutual recognition entails bridging over the invisible, hence the indivisible, layers of history, guilt and injustice. Blame can not be divided, not if peace and reconciliation mean respect for the Other’s narrative. The Palestinian narrative is that of suffering, reconstructed on the basis of oral history—a continued exilic existence, and re-discovered historical narratives—read backwards through the prism of contemporary hardships. In that narrative, Zionism or Israel, is the absolute evil, the arch-villain as well as the ultimate victimizer. How can this image be divided in the business-like approach to peace, preached by American and Israeli peacemakers?

It can not, of course. When peace is discussed in this context one should appeal to ways in which communities of suffering, world-wide, reconcile with their victimizers. The narrative of suffering is an interpretative construct describing a collective evil in the past, employed for the political needs of a given community in the present, in order to improve its conditions in the future. This is the tool employed by the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, the native Americans, the African Americans, the Muslims in

Bosnia, and by the African majority in South Africa.

In order to avoid a reductionist view of the narrative of suffering, I will add that in the case of the Palestinians especially, as well as other communities which continue to live the aftereffects of the original action which led to this narrative, such a concept has also a redemptive value—for the communities themselves. However, the way this narrative is manipulated by cultural production and political actors for political ends is another issue.

This narrative is reproduced with the help of educational and media systems, a commemorative infrastructure of museums and ceremonies, and it is preserved by employing an adequate discourse. It can serve a community in conflict; it is more difficult as means for reconciliation. In the case of the Palestinians this takes form especially in crowding the calendar with significant days that have to be commemorated: days such the Balfour Declaration, the Declaration of Independence, the End of the Mandate, the Partition Resolution, and the day of the *Fatah*’s foundation. It is admittedly less a case of collective museums as the Palestinians continue to lack such a basic infrastructure in the absence of a *terra firma* on which to establish some commemorative rituals. For example the mass graveyard of the Sabra and Chatila massacres has been used as a massive garbage dump for the past nineteen years. Every year it is cleared up in September, but usually takes activists from outside the camp to generate some memorial event before it disintegrates into a dump again. In one community at least, of the Palestinian activists of the PLO residing in Tunis between 1983 and 1993, the living room in private homes had a corner in which a kind of a museum representing a narrative and a discourse of national identity could be found.

While Palestinians live the memory of the Nakbah, the Israelis deny it out of fear. This Israeli fear plays a crucial role in the violence exercised daily in the Israeli struggle against the Palestinian narrative, the memory and the assumption of victimhood. Victimized the other and negating its right for the position of a victim are intertwined processes of the same violence. Those who had expelled Palestinians in 1948 deny the ethnic cleansing *that took place*. And so the self-declaration of being a victim is accompanied by the fear of losing the position of the Jew as the ultimate victim in modern history to the other, the ultimate victim of Israel and Zionism.¹⁶

How can we deal with this fear, a subject that has to be encountered if the hypothesis of this article is accepted—that without such confrontation there is very little hope for a different kind of coexistence or for the construction of a post-conflict homeland. Let me suggest, briefly, two possible very different ways of approaching this complex question of reconciliation.

Post-Conflictual Possibilities

The first and most difficult approach is legal. The very idea of considering the 1948 case in the realm of law and justice is anathema to most Jews in Israel and hence outside pressure would be needed here.

If it is possible to bring onto the stage of international tribunals Israel's conduct in 1948 and ever since, it may deliver a message even to the peace camp in Israel that reconciliation entails recognition of war crimes and collective atrocities. This can not be done from within as any reference in the Israeli press to expulsion, massacre, or destruction in 1948 is usually denied and attributed to self-hate and service to the enemy in time of war.¹⁷ This reaction encompasses, the media and the educational system, as well the political circles. The reaction shows what a powerful disincentive the current power structure is. It reveals how deep is the fear that members of Israeli society, including prominent figures, would be implicated in actions the likes of which have been condemned by the entire world.

Tribunals like this, even if they are staged public events, can teach us in advance about the mechanism of future settlement—for instance how does one quantify the suffering? One of the best means of approaching this quantification of suffering was offered by the Israelis and Germans in their preparation agreement. The agreement included pensions calculated according to inflation across the years, estimation of real estates, and other aspects of individual loss. A different set of agreements translated the collective loss to monetary terms in the form of grants to the state of Israel. Salman Abu Sitta has begun such thinking in some of his works, giving us an idea of the real value of assets lost in the *Nakbah*.¹⁸

A “softer” approach is to offer non-retributive paradigms of justice. Howard Zehr in his book, *Changing Lenses*,¹⁹ talks strongly against the pro-punishment judicial system. One of the questions Zehr raises is relevant to our discussion of the means by which Jews in Israel could overcome their fear of facing the past. He asks, should justice focus on establishing guilt or should it focus on identifying needs and obligations? In other words can it serve as a re-regulator of life where life was once disrupted? Justice cannot be made to inflict suffering on victimizers, let alone their descendents, but to discontinue suffering.

Such a non-retributive panel was offered by the truth committee of Bishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa. The power underlying the truth commission lies both in its disinclination to inflict heavy penalties, and in its insistence on discussing future relationships between different communities in South Africa. It ensures that victims do not transform too easily into victimizers

themselves.

Another legal approach is offered by the American psychologist Joan Fumia, who focuses her work on the transformation of attitudes in conflictual situations.²⁰ She bases her work on the relationships that develop between offenders and victims in the American legal system resulting from a recently introduced new procedure which offers victim-offender mediation. This method involves a face-to-face meeting between offender and victim. The most important part of the procedure is the readiness of the offender to accept responsibility for the crime. Thus, the deed itself is not the focus of the process, but its consequence. The search in this method is for restorative justice, which is defined as a question of what can the offender do to ease the loss and suffering of the victim. It is not a substitute for the criminal proceedings, or in the case of Palestine, it cannot be an alternative to actual compensation or repatriation, but a supplement to any final solution. Fumia claimed that in South Africa this model was successfully implemented.

If Israeli responsibility for the *Nakbah* were to be discussed as part of the attempt to reach a permanent settlement for the conflict (at the present stage, unlikely), it would obviously not reach the international court, as did the cases of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Or at least, this is what one can assess, given the way the *Nakbah* is perceived by governments in the USA and Europe. These political actors have so far accepted the Israeli peace camp perspective on the conflict, as elaborated above. However, the civil societies in America and in Europe as well as governments in Africa and Asia have different views on this, and the situation may change (the move to prosecute Ariel Sharon in a Belgian court, is one such example). But as long as this balance of power remains as it is now, one doubts the possibility of establishing a truth commission *a' la* South Africa. But the demands of the 1948 Palestinian victims would remain in a very dominant position on the peace agenda, whether or not this procedure is followed.

This outcry would continue to face the offenders. The fear of the offender would have to be taken into account in order that the settlement of the conflict could move from the division of the visible to the restoration of the invisible.

The second approach is educational and requires a dialectical recognition of both communities as communities of suffering. For this, a very natural process of negating the other should be overcome first. The destruction of the collective memory of the Other through the construction of one's own memory is a central element in the formation of national identities. Violence, direct as well as symbolic, plays a crucial part in the way collective memories are produced, repro-

duced, disseminated, and consumed within concrete historical power relations, interests, and conceptual possibilities and limitations. In the case of Palestine and Israel, control of the collective memory is part of the internal and external violence and counter violence each of the rival collectives applies to secure its existence. That is, the way the two sides to the conflict construct their collective identity is a dialectical process whose impelling force is the total negation of the Other. Within this dialectic each side sees itself as a sole victim while totally negating the victimization of the Other. The violence used in order to conquer the centers of power relations and dynamics aims at positioning more “effectively” one’s own narrative, interests, values, symbols, goals, and criteria. At the same time, efforts to secure those of the Other are marginalized, excluded, or destroyed. Incommensurability has the upper hand and dialogue has no chance of finding a starting point. Collective self-constitution, negation of the legitimacy of the Other’s otherness, victimizing the Other and refusing to acknowledge the Other’s suffering become inseparably bound up with each other. Self-proclaimed victimhood, refusing to acknowledge the evil inflicted on the Other, and insisting on being sole victim are fused into the kind of practice which reflects the position of the Other. In the case of the Israeli/Palestinian coexistence, the struggle over the control of the memory of victimization is a matter of life and death, and suffering and death, as actuality and as memory, are philosophical, political and existential issues.

It will not be easy to overcome such a powerful dialectical process in the case of Israel and Palestine. The way to go about it is by treating the history of the conflict as a chain of victimization. The violence that bred the national awakening of the Jews and their search for a homeland in Palestine did not justify past or present evils inflicted by the movement, or later by the state of Israel, on the Palestinians. And while Zionism may not be a historical case of pure colonialism, it can still be defined as a colonialist movement, and therefore the Palestinian violence and counter-violence cannot be judged in the same way as Zionist violence against Palestine. In this sense, no injustice was inflicted by the Palestinian on the Israelis, as no injustice was inflicted by the Algerians on the French colonialists though there certainly was violence. But there was a European injustice inflicted upon the Jews that can be recognized as a first link in the chain of victimization.

In the reformulation of collective memory currently under way in South Africa, the Africans are not diminishing the catastrophes that propelled white settlers to come to South Africa. While reintroducing the crimes of apartheid into the collective memory, the dialogue here creates space for the traumas that led whites to leave Europe in search of another “homeland.” Similarly, one

cannot equate injustice and Palestinian resistance to Jewish expulsion and ethnic cleansing.

Both sides need to accept difficult demands: on the one hand is the need to avoid dwarfing or eliminating the role of the Holocaust in the Jewish national identity and collective memory; on the other hand is the need to stop instrumentalizing the *Nakbah* in a way that obstructs the chances for peaceful dialogue.

The demand not to instrumentalize the memory of both catastrophes is of course directed to both sides. Such a demand can not be accepted unless the political structure of the future homeland is a-national or bi-national. Only in such a political formation can one hope for non-ethnocentric, polyphonic reconstructions of the past that can produce in their turn more reflective and humanistic attitudes towards the suffering of both sides.

The starting point is to overcome nationalism and ethnocentrism. Without this no Palestinian-Israeli dialogue on historiographical, moral, and philosophical levels is possible. Critical theory and postmodern elaboration of the historical constitution of the subject, knowledge, identity, and memory, together with empirical studies, should impel this deconstruction and reformulation of the hegemonic Palestinian and Israeli narratives. The enemy here is not so much the hegemonic interpretation as it is the position of exclusivity demanded by one side or the other and by the denial of the Other’s narrative. The demand for exclusivity in the case of the Holocaust is understandably a very touchy issue. The recognition of the universality of the memory of the Holocaust and its expropriation from the hand of Zionism does not and should not diminish its uniqueness in the history of mankind. This uniqueness, however, is manifested *inter alia* also in the *Nakbah* and the Palestinian suffering. Such an attitude contains new political possibilities currently overshadowed by both sides’ one-dimensionality.

But those who go down this road will encounter many obstacles. Those who adopt a critical “humanist” or “universal” approach that does not simply dismiss humanism will find themselves set apart from the accepted intellectual, cultural and emotional levels within the history of “their” societies and they may be pushed into eternal exile. On such marginal spots can these people still be considered as “Palestinians” or “Israelis”? This is but one question to be answered within this future dialogue.

Indeed how will Israeli Jews challenging the Zionization of the Holocaust memory fare, and how could Palestinians challenge openly the national instrumentalization of the *Nakbah* in direct clash with mainstream Palestinian conception of the *Nakbah* memory?

In the 1990s, on both sides, hopeful signs for the beginning of such a dialogue appeared. The “new histori-

ans” in Israel challenged the foundational myth of the Jewish state, while on the Palestinian side, self-criticism emerged about the tendency to minimize the Holocaust memory and its universal implications. Edward Said, Azmi Bishara, and few others deconstructed the way Arab and Palestinian literature dwarfed, ignored, and at times denied the Holocaust memory as a constitutive element in the Jewish collective memory.²¹ This is how Edward Said has put it:

“What Israel does to the Palestinians it does against a background, not only of the long-standing Western tutelage over Palestine and Arabs... but also against a background of an equally long-standing and equally unflinching anti-Semitism that in this century produced the Holocaust of the European Jews. . We cannot fail to connect the horrific history of anti-Semitic massacres to the establishment of Israel; nor can we fail to understand the depth, the extent and the overpowering legacy of its suffering and despair that informed the postwar Zionist movement. But it is no less appropriate for Europeans and Americans today, who support Israel because of the wrong committed against the Jews to realize that support for Israel has included, and still includes, support for the exile and dispossession of the Palestinian people.”²²

The universalization of the Holocaust memory, the deconstruction of this memory’s manipulation by Zionism and the state of Israel, and the end of Holocaust denial and underrating on the Palestinian side can lead to the mutual sympathy Said talks about. However, it may need more than this to convince the Israelis to recognize their role as victimizers. The self-image of victim is deeply rooted in the collective conduct of the political elite in Israel from the very early years of the state. It is seen as the source for moral international and world Jewish support for the state, even when this image of the righteous Israel on the one hand and the David and Goliath myth on the other became quite ridiculous after the 1967 war, the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and the intifada. And yet the fear is there of losing the position of the victim, next to the fear of facing the unpleasant past and its consequences, not far away from the fear nourished by the political system, substantiated by Arab hostility, of being physically eliminated as a community.

Conclusions

The nuclear arsenal, the gigantic military complex, the security service octopuses, have all proved themselves useless in the face of the two intifadas or the guerrilla war in South Lebanon. They are useless as means of facing an ever frustrated and radical million Palestinian citizens of Israel, or a local initiative by refugees unable to contain their dismay in the face of an opportunist Palestinian authority or a crumbling PLO. None of the weapons the real or imaginary fear pro-

duced can face the victim and his or her wrath. More and more victims are added daily to the Palestinian community of suffering, in the occupied territories, and in Israel itself. The end of victimization and the recognition of the role of Israel as victimizer are the only useful means of reconciliation.

So a post-conflictual homeland can not be constructed on the basis of a division of the shared imagined homeland in the most unfair balance thinkable: 78 per cent a Jewish state and 22 per cent a Palestinian protectorate of a kind. It is even less thinkable as a solution when the offer on the international agenda is dividing even the 22 per cent with a further partition. A fair solution can not be a solution which allocates to Israel exclusive say in security, foreign, and economic matters. The future construction of a homeland can not be a Jewish state in which Palestinians are second-rate citizens, and it can not be a perpetuation of an occupation, even if it is described with new terminology.

But above all, a future constructed homeland can not survive as a physical and political entity when an estimated four million Palestinian refugees and their right of return are erased from its agenda. A future homeland, from which the symbolic and actual violence is reduced or even extracted, is one in which the past evil of transfer is rectified by repatriation of those who had been expelled. This principle should be discussed as a practical solution, taking into account demography, economy, cultural inclinations and above all fears.

NOTES

¹The 1928 episode was covered by Eliakim Rubenstein, “The Treatment of the Arab Question in Palestine in the Immediate Period after the 1929 Events and the Establishment of the Political Bureau—Political Aspect,” in Ilan Pappé (ed.), *Jewish-Arab Relations in Mandatory Palestine; A New Approach to the Historical Research* (Givat Haviva: Institute of Peace Research, 1995), 65-102 (Hebrew).

²On the circumstances that led to the resolution and its content see Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-1951*, (London: I. B. Tauris, 1992), 16-46.

³Simcha Flapan, *The Birth of Israel: Myth and Realities* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 13-54.

⁴Ilan Pappé, “Were They Expelled?: The History, Historiography and Relevance of the Refugee Problem,” in *The Palestinian Exodus, 1948-1988*, eds. Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cortran (London: Ithaca, 1999), 37-62.

⁵I have dealt expansively with this issue in Ilan Pappé, “Angst, Oferschaft, Selbst- und Frembilder,” *Angst in Eignen Landn*, ed. Rafik Schami (Zurich: Nagel and Kimche, 2001), 65-77.

⁶Ilan Amitzur, *Bernadotte in Palestine 1948: A Study in Contemporary Humanitarian Knight-errantry*, (London: Macmillan, 1989).

⁷See Pappé, *The Making*, 203-243.

⁸Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall; Israel and the Arab World* (London: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), 109-110.

⁹For a critique on Oslo see Ilan Pappé, “Breaking the Mirror: Oslo and After,” in *Looking Back at the June 1967 War*, ed.

Haim Gordon (Westport: Prager, 1999), 95-112.

¹⁰See Ella Shohat, "Sprache in Spiel: Erinnerungsfragmente einer Arabischer Juden," 84-95.

¹¹See Ilan Pappé, "Fear, Victimhood, Self and Other," in *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 1 (May 2001).

¹²Ilan Pappé, "Israeli Television Fiftieth Anniversary Series: Tekumma: A Post-Zionist Review?" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27:4 (Summer 1998), 99-105.

¹³*Haaretz* (1 November, 2000).

¹⁴I have elaborated on the "Peace Now" syndrome in "Post-Zionist Critique: Part I: The Academic Debate," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26:2 (Winter 1997), 29-41.

¹⁵The scope of the tragedy is well described in a collection of articles: Ghada Karmi and Eugene Cortran (eds.), *The Palestinian Exodus, 1948-1988* (London: Ithaca, 1999).

¹⁶Ilan Gur-Ze'ev and Ilan Pappé, "Beyond the Destruction of the Other's Collective Memory: Blueprints for an Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue," *Theory Culture and Society*, 18:2-3 (April-June 2001).

¹⁷Ilan Pappé "I Profughi Palestinesi tra Storia e Storiografia," *In Fuge; Guerre, Carestie e Migrazioni nel Mondo Contemporaneo*, ed. Marco Buttino (Napoli: L'Ancora, 2001), 81-106.

¹⁸Salman Abu Sitta, "The Feasibility of the Right of Return," 171-196.

¹⁹Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses; A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Ontario: Herlad Press, 1990).

²⁰Joan Fumia, "Restitution versus Retribution: The Case for Victim-Offender Mediation, Conflict Resolution), *Suite101.com*, published for the first time in October 1988, reporting the Victim-Offender Program (VORP) at work in US legal system.

²¹All quoted in Gur-Zeev and Pappé.

²²Edward Said, *The Politics of Dispossession* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1994), 167.