The Palestinian cultural scene has witnessed over the past few months a revival of grassroots efforts to recover, collect, and organize Palestinian archival records. After all, in the absence of a state-backed archive, individual archival repositories offer a window into our collective past and a critical tool to document our national narrative. This issue of This Week in Palestine titled Palestinian Diaries and Memoirs is an effort to both complement and celebrate these endeavors. The TWiP team extends a special thank you to PADICO HOLDING for sponsoring this issue.

We offer our sincerest gratitude to this month’s contributing authors: Ali Qleibo, Palestinian anthropologist and artist; The Palestinian Museum; Sabrin Hasbun, Italian-Palestinian transnational writer; Abdul-Rahim Al-Shaikh, poet and professor of philosophy; Tarek Bakri, researcher and documenter from Jerusalem; Xavier Abu Eid, political scientist; Suad Amiry, author and architect; Jacob Norris, senior lecturer in Middle Eastern history at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom; Stephanie Elias Musalem, Palestinian journalist from Santiago de Chile; Hanna Safieh, one of the founders of the Confederation of Palestinian Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean-COPLAC; Muna Nassar, writer, freelancer translator, and literary personality; and Anas Abu Oun, project coordinator at El-Funoun Palestinian Dance Troupe.

In this month’s limelight section, you will read about our Personality of the Month, Palestinian historical sociologist Salim Tamari and his creative utilization of grassroots archives. You will get a glimpse into our Book of the Month, Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem, explore the works of our Artist of the Month Elias Halabi, and tour our Exhibition of the Month, Violence, Fast and Slow, currently on display at the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Centre. Finally, our Where to Go section takes you to The Iraqi Army Martyrs Graveyard in Nablus City, and its place in our collective history.

The TWiP Collective
The Magical Allure of Qatamon

By Ali Qleibo

"Sometimes I longed to be able to write a novel and make Jerusalem its locale. I wished I could capture the mood and the spirit of Jerusalem, describe its houses and streets and the lives of its people."

Thursday, June 26, 1947, Hala Sakakini

Qatamon is a southwestern, predominantly Greek Orthodox suburb of Jerusalem, west of the train station and up the street from the German colony. It is squeezed between the ostentatious Talbiya to the east and the sprawling, mostly Muslim, Al-Baqa’a to the west. Hala, the youngest of the three children of eminent educator Khalil Sakakini, was born in the Old City. In her account of the various houses that her father had rented, she brings alive sites and neighborhoods in the now Israeli-occupied West Jerusalem and populates them with insightful, stirring, and sometimes funny anecdotes from when it was still Palestinian. At first, her dad rented the romantic windmill off King George Street—lovingly referred to as the cottage, al-koukh—which had belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church. During the next few years, they rented various apartments in the German colony from German Templars before finally building their own home in the middle-class Greek Orthodox community in Qatamon.

January 6, 1948, the day after the terrorist blow-up of the Semiramis Hotel, witnessed the first wave of forced exodus from Jerusalem’s western suburbs: Talbiya, Al-Baqa’a, and Lower and Upper Qatamon. Throughout the day following the attack, terror spread. Palestinian residents were seen carrying their belongings and leaving Qatamon for fear that their houses would be blown up while they were asleep. Those who had relatives still living in the Old City took refuge with them until order prevailed. Many others held out. The neighborhoods organized night patrols to keep watch and alert each other in case of danger. As the Zionist terror escalated, more and more people left Qatamon until almost all the Arab population had disappeared. Overnight, thousands of professional Jerusalemites found themselves homeless and jobless, crammed within the walls of the Old City, living with their parents and grandparents.

On April 30, less than four months later, Khalil al-Sakakini, with his daughters Dumia and Hala, fled for safety to Cairo. They were the last Palestinians to hold steadfast to their home in Qatamon. In her precious chronicle, Jerusalem and I, Hala al-Sakakini preserves the charmed way of life they had left behind. Erudite, sensible, and sentimental, the book chronicles Qatamon’s social life in the deteriorating political situation culminating with the fall of West Jerusalem in 1948.

In Jerusalem and I, Hala al-Sakakini lovingly writes of her longing for Qatamon, her family, their friends, and their homes with red terracotta roofs surrounded by cypress trees, jasmine and honeysuckle bushes, flowering shrubs, and roses. Based on diaries, letters, and personal musings, the biography was redrafted in Cairo and finished in Ramallah. The diary, which she describes as a personal account, is a nostalgic reconstruction of a way of life she longs for. Written in English (as was customary for her generation and mine who were trained to pass the British matriculation exams), the book’s 150 pages are illustrated with many family photos and a hand-drawn map that pinpoints the homes, families, and shops in her immediate neighborhood.

Jerusalem and I draws a vivid picture of the way life in Qatamon used to be. We glean the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the period in Hala’s portrayal of the local—the exquisite characterization of her relatives, friends, and neighbors, the fuss and excitement in anticipation of Christmas and Easter, of the delicacies from Spinney’s, of the savory cheeses from the Greek delicatessen Zapheriades and the scrumptious cakes from Frank’s the German Templar bakery. In the style
of Jane Austen, the book invites us to follow the interconnecting social relations. We are ushered into her social world composed of a litany of names whose memories linger in Jerusalem: Arnita, Awad, Tubbeh, Haddad, Farraj, Kreitem, Salfity, Sruji, Sfeir, Joury, Tleel, Kort, Ajrab, Damiani... As we leaf through the book and browse the family albums, a petit bourgeois, genteel way of life that has long since disappeared is brought to life.

Throughout the narrative of Jerusalem and I, the reader senses the depth of the trauma that Palestine and the Palestinians sustained. Victims of British Mandate oppression and helpless vis-à-vis the Jewish terrorist attacks, the direct danger and threat to life loomed large. Danger was imminent, and it was clearly present. As the tensions and threats escalated, social life centered on the radio, following the news and trying to locate the explosions and sniper exchange that rocked Jerusalem on an almost daily basis. Given her father’s sense of humor, fortitude, and charisma, neighbors gathered daily in their house for solace, strength, and well-being. Fear of the bleak future was dispelled with humor as they relentlessly held to their homes.

“Do we leave tomorrow?” was a question that became a common joke as they knew that sooner or later they would be forced to leave. The pitch of Jewish terrorist assaults and everyday fears take over the narrative after 1947. Throughout, the Sakakini family remained a source of strength for the few that stood their ground in their homes with one major preoccupation: waiting... waiting for the end of the internecine fighting and for the outcome of Jewish Haganah terror attacks, praying for the safety of loved ones and for the return of peace.

Believing the Arabic rhetoric, the classical Palestinian tragic flaw (hamartia), the neighbors huddled around Khalil al-Sakakini naively holding steadfast, waiting for the Arab armies to come to save them. No one came to their rescue: the emptying of West Jerusalem of its Arab residents was pre-arranged as a preliminary step to separate the area west of the river Jordan from Israel. It is startling to note that throughout the book, the narrator, who is an educated professional and the daughter of the great Palestinian intellectual of the period displays no awareness of the various Zionist political parties nor of the various strategies to evacuate Palestine nor of the complicity of the Arab regimes in the division of Palestine. The Zionist Operation Nachshon, part of the plan to secure access to Jerusalem and evacuate the surrounding western villages, for example, is never mentioned, neither in her biography nor in that of her father.

Sadly, the Sakakini diaries of both father and daughter, which complement each other, reveal the tragic irony: namely, that the self-centered, personal preoccupations of the relatively privileged middle-class, cosmopolitan suburb-dwellers, both Christian and Muslim alike, inured them to the grievous threat posed by the Balfour Declaration and the role of the British Mandate in implementing it. Uppity and cocky, the educated middle class became marginalized, inadvertently accelerating the process of its own demise. Alienated from the overall social, political, and economic upheavals, ambivalent vis-à-vis the widening rift and intra-Palestinian civil disorder produced by the Husseini/Nashashibi political parties, they were ultimately ineffectual in responding to the international consensus on the need to create a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine. The assimilation of Western humanist liberal aesthetics, values, and consumerism sequestered the Palestinians and rendered them individualistic, vulnerable, and defenseless.

“Reality” was misconstrued. The ensuing lacuna among educated Palestinian middle classes impeded their perception and appraisal of the imminent Zionist threat. They, with their savings, were the first to stampede outside Jaffa, Haifa, and other lost cities to initially comfortable hotels in Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus before they rented or purchased new properties in exile. With their exodus they left behind the uneducated rabble.

The underground terrorist Haganah, the core of the present-day Israeli army, targeted scrupulous Palestinians to spur panic and terror. Its end was achieved in various bombings in Jerusalem. In Hala’s narrative there is no mention of Jewish history in the

The King David Hotel and YMCA were the symbols of cosmopolitan Mandate Jerusalem and the gateways to the sprawling western suburbs of Qatamon, Talbiya, and Baqa’a.
making nor any account of the various political groupings. She is simply surprised that nice, civilized Europeans are capable of such atrocities.

The structural myopia, méconnaissance, of the Palestinian bourgeoisie was fostered by the misleading, highly distorted nationalist discourse and further confounded by the inter-Palestinian political rivalries between the Husseini and Nashashibi partisans. The Palestinian educated, professional middle class was misled by vapid rhetoric manipulated by local politicians seeking favor, power, and recognition of Arab foreign states who in turn had their own self-serving agendas. Concurrently, the inter-Palestinian conflict obstructed the development of a unified nationalist consciousness and ultimately a centralized administrative body. Consequently, they failed to set up their own intelligence centers that would research and systematize Zionist strategies in preparation for the takeover of Palestine. Apart from Abdel Qader Husseini who undertook preemptive action, Palestinian resistance remained sporadic and invariably reduced to retaliatory responses. The ensuing political chaos was augmented by the fact that the nationalist resistance parties were infiltrated by the rabble, undermining the credibility of the leaders and turning them into rabble-rousers.

From Qatamon, and the rest of the lost cities, the Palestinian educated middle class dispersed all over the world. The Nakba, in this context, was a major blow not only to the Jerusalem Christian community but to the Palestinian bourgeoisie, Muslim and Christian alike. It was the onset of the “brain drain” that led Jerusalem and other urban centers to devolve into backwater provincial towns. In the ensuing vacuum, the rabble assumed positions of leadership; the Robin Hood mentality in its negative sense has dominated the Palestinian sphere of political action.

The last days in Qatamon read like a tragicomic satire. Following the night of the Semiramis explosion, a neighborhood meeting was held at Khalil al-Sakakini’s home in Qatamon. The gathered men decided that they needed to protect themselves from Zionist terrorists. They had a few guns that they did not know how to use. As in a tragedy, we read with pity and horror the demise of the bourgeoisie in Sakakini’s chronicles. The first group dispatched to protect Qatamon produced frictions and problems with the residents that required Abdel Qader Husseini to interfere. They were replaced by the suave single guard, Mr. Abu Dayyeh (the Muslim guard from Dura), aided by a single assistant! Once he is shot down, the last residents are left defenseless.

On April 15, as the bombing intensified, Mr. Sakakini sent his library and manuscripts for storage in his sister’s house inside the Old City.

On April 30, at around six in the morning, Khalil Sakakini and his two daughters Dumia and Hala left Qatamon to take refuge in Cairo. They were the last Palestinians who held steadfast to their home in Qatamon. The road from Qatamon to Jaffa Gate had already been occupied by the Haganah and blocked. They had to flee from the back road through Beit Jala, past Hebron to Cairo. The trip took 13 hours.

Hala returns to visit her home and neighborhood following the defeat in the 1967 War and the total loss of Palestine. She describes her pain.

“We left our house and our immediate neighbourhood with a sense of emptiness, with a feeling of deep disappointment and frustration. The familiar streets were there, all the houses were there, but so much was missing. We felt like strangers in our own quarter.”

Al-huzon, nostalgic melancholy, permeates every step that Hala Sakakini takes. The specter of solitude hovers over each home as the residents of Qatamon abandon their homes for their lives; not a single family has been spared the wounds of death, injury, and grief.

Nostalgia, melancholy, and an unfathomable sense of solitude; these thematics that we have come to associate with Jerusalem figure prominently in her account of the fall of Jerusalem’s western suburbs.

The great diva Fairuz epitomized these feelings. Al-huzon dwells in Jerusalem.

By the early sixties, Jerusalem had developed the character now deeply impressed in me: a city of old people who cling to memories about a period of time in the past, when families lived together: a paradise lost and a civilization gone with the wind.

Anthropologist Dr. Ali Qleibo has lectured at Al-Quds University, held a fellowship at Shalom Hartman Institute, and was a visiting professor at Tokyo University for Foreign Studies and Kyoto University in Japan. As a specialist in Palestinian social history and through his work at the Jerusalem Research Center, he has developed the Palestinian Social and Muslim Tourism Itinerary. Dr. Qleibo has authored numerous books on Jerusalem and its history. A renowned oil painter, his works have been on display in a variety of exhibitions and art shows. He may be reached at aqleibo@yahoo.com.
Dear Melia… remember me every time you remember Jordan and its struggles, colonialism and its conspiracies, America and its dollars, Israel and its cunning. Remember me every time you remember Jaffa and its oranges, Haifa and its port, Akka and its mountains, Jerusalem and its holy sites, Gaza and its sacrifices… Remember me, for in reminiscence there is yearning... in yearning there is love... and in love is eternity.”

Between the 1960s and 1970s, Wadad Eskafi sent this letter to her sister Melia from Beit Jala. This letter reached the Palestinian Museum as part of a notebook filled with personal journal entries and letters kept by Melia over the years. Years have passed, and although the letter as a format has changed, nearly disappeared, the content of Melia’s letter feels as though it were written today.

After over a year and a half of work on the Digital Archive, the Palestinian Museum has archived more than 70,000 documents that encompass prominent as well as unseen aspects and landmarks in the history of the Palestinian people. The archive is a free and open source of digital information to all those who are curious to explore Palestinian history and the chronicles of its people. Our own curiosity and research have led us to compile some personal memoirs and correspondences among Palestinians, and to make them available to you.

On November 20, 1956, Layla Tarazi (Jerusalemite educator and militant intellectual) received a letter that was neither from a distant friend nor from an artist Layla had admired, but from the late Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser himself, thanking her for the noble sentiments expressed in a letter she had previously sent him.

The feelings of amity and affection overwhelmed Mas’ada Daoud as well, who on September 13, 1939, penned a letter to her colleagues, describing plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Friends Girls School in Ramallah, which she had attended. Mas’ada laments that the prevailing political climate of the time did not allow for a large gathering and proper celebration but insists that there be a small gathering on Saturday, September 23, in the hopes that the situation would soon improve and allow for a fitting celebration.

Years before the political situation had taken the turn alluded to in Mas’ada’s letter,
Aref al-Aref, the Palestinian politician, journalist, and historian, wrote a letter dated June 30, 1920, in the name of the Central Committee of the Arab-Palestinian Society, addressing the Arab Club management. The letter is an invitation for all clubs and associations concerned with Palestinian national issues to attend a general Palestinian conference in Damascus with the aim of outlining a unified position and course of action in opposition to Zionism.

On October 26, 1943, Hussein Ayyad was preoccupied with the bureaucratic process of transporting his share of corn crop from Ramleh to Jerusalem. He reiterates his request in a letter to the Jerusalem governor saying, “I had informed you that I, along with some partners, had a share in a corn yield in Ramleh, and we had petitioned you for permission to transport it to Jerusalem because we have not cultivated anything in the Jerusalem District this year. Your Excellency sent a letter to the governor of Ramleh on September 20, 1943, indicating your approval for the transportation of some chickpeas…”

On June 22, 1977, Dr. Amin Khatib (a Jerusalemite militant) wrote an appeal of a different sort, requesting that Sheikh Helmi al-Muhtaseb act “before time runs out and we regret being late in taking the necessary measures to protect the Islamic Holy Sites in the Haram al-Sharif,” suggesting that “all citizens in the West Bank and Gaza participate in guarding the Haram in shifts and in cooperation and coordination with the municipalities, which will provide the necessary funding, select personnel, and ensure their arrival to the Haram al-Sharif.”

Despite Palestinians’ increasing preoccupation with their political conditions and collective concerns, which are reflected in their correspondences and diaries, the intimate and the personal have always remained present. Perhaps the most common form of such correspondence came in the form of messages written on the back of individual or group photographs.

The beginnings of photography in Palestine date back to the nineteenth century. During and before the 1930s, photos of Palestinians were mostly portraits, especially family portraits. In his book *Alternative Snapshots: Early Local*
Photography in Palestine, 1850–1948, researcher Issam Nassar explains that photography arrived in Palestine in the nineteenth century with European photographers as part of a European and colonial knowledge project. However, its local development was a twentieth-century phenomenon, as photo studios appeared in several Palestinian cities, mainly Jaffa and Jerusalem, then Haifa, Nazareth, Bethlehem, and Ramallah.

On June 24, 1935, a young woman, whose name we could not verify, sent her photo to her friend Jamilah and wrote a poem on its back that reads, “to you Jamilah, I offer this image...as a souvenir of amity...I do not ask for anything in return, for I know that your image is in my heart.”

This photo also arrived from Beirut in 1926 with a Christmas greeting on its back.

Following the Nakba and the spread of university education, many photos of students appeared in Palestinian albums, either sent home to family members or left as souvenirs. One such example is a message on the back of a photograph that Mohammad Issa Ahmad left his father on August 20, 1962, moments before departing, in which he says, “to my dear father who has cared for me for many years and with whom it is hard to part, with my sincere wishes for a long and happy life and good health.”

On August 1, 1974, Musa al-Alami (renowned Palestinian politician) received a postcard in Austria from Hala and Dumia Sakakini, the daughters of the educator and intellectual Khalil Sakakini, in which they called him “uncle.” Mailed from Moscow, the card was stamped with Soviet communist imagery as well as a stamp chosen by Hala and Dumia depicting two renowned Russian actors and directors, and founders of the modern theater, Constantin Stanislavski and Vladimir Ivanovich Nemirovich-Danchenko.

The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive is among the most significant components of the museum’s online platform. The museum is developing an open-access regularly updateable digital archive to document photographs, films, audio, paper documents, books, and other materials, conserving them through digitization from loss, damage, or expropriation.

Do you have any forgotten photographs or documents in a drawer at home? Do you keep valuable archives or collections in your organization? Would you like to see them digitized and made available to researchers and members of the public? Let us provide a treasure trove of knowledge about history and life in Palestine.

Join us and be part of archiving Palestine!

www.palarchive.org
What Do We Remember When We Remember?

By Sabrin Hasbun

The idea of writing a family memoir came to me completely by chance. At the time, I was studying to become a travel reporter, to write about faraway places, to explore new countries, to learn about other cultures and other people’s stories. But every time I was writing about something new, something from my past would enter into my words. The smell of bread in a cottage in Dorset made me write about the focaccia my mother used to buy for me before we went to the sea. Sitting in a car for hours in Morocco made me write about an impossible road trip to Sebastiya. The shades of a courtyard in Chile reminded me of my childhood summers in our house in Ramallah. If it is true that the past is a foreign land, then that was the country my mind kept telling me to visit.

While intentionally noting my memories, however, I soon discovered that remembering is not a straightforward action. Memories don’t just come to you in a linear, precise, and tidy way. They are triggered and shaped by specific events, smells, tastes, and views.

I have now worked for over three years on the implications and complications of writing with memories. I have written about my memories, about my family’s memories. I have worked with interviews, letters, and diaries, and there is nothing more contradictory and nuanced. Now let’s put all of this in the background of the Palestinian question, where historical and political events shape everyday life with an earthquake effect on personal memories: how is it possible to make sense of it? How can we excavate the real value and impact of what we remember?

When I saw the title of this issue of This Week in Palestine, I thought that the best way to approach this topic would be by clarifying some of the terminology around the use of memories: I believe that clarification can shed light on the impact that the studying, sharing, and writing of personal memories can have on understanding our collective past.

Memories are memories, the material of our remembering. They are what come to our mind spontaneously shaped by external factors, such as Proust’s madeleine, or internal ones, such as nostalgia. Memories are also the very blocks of our identity and form the base for our own idea of self. And they are the foundation for creating a sense of community. Memories, however, are never a pure raw material, an objective and reliable recollection of what happened. They are rather a patchwork of different times and moments and are influenced by what other people said, by other events, and by what our mind wants to remember in order to fit its own narrative.

In this issue you will find many articles that deal with the shifting sands of memories and their influences on identity: impressive, for example, the piece by Tarek Bakri, where he collects the testimonies of Palestinian refugees. The same event becomes a motif thanks to the prism of memory, and we can see how different generations and different places have lived the same historical moment: “Today, after all these years, three generations went back to Palestine – me, my children, and my grandchildren – to look for my home and recall my memories.” (See Page 32.)

Diaries, letters, recordings, etc., but we could now add social-media pages, selfies, blogs: These are mediated forms of memory. To make the material of our memory understandable on the page, we rework it, we try to give it a meaning and an order of some kind. Think about writing a page in your daily journal: memories of your day will come to you by importance or by emotions or by priority; however, you would probably write them down in chronological order, or you would try to reflect on what happened. Even more if you are writing a letter – or an email – to someone. Then your memories need to take the shape of a simple story, to be explained, put into context. In other words, diaries,
letters, and other similar forms will neither report the event as it happened nor will they report the event exactly as it is in our memory. They will rather present another stage of remembering – a less spontaneous but still informal relationship with the past. In this regard, the article by Anas Abu Oun about the difficulties of putting together an exhibition from the abundant material of El-Funoun’s archive is exemplary. (See page 66.)

Memoirs: Memoirs are a literary genre that works with one’s personal memories or with other people’s memories, or with both. To be able to write a full narrative from the ambiguous and inadequate material of memories – or diaries and letters if used – the author of memoirs will borrow many writing techniques from fiction. When writers start to write a memoir, they are not just remembering, they are weaving a narrative of events that have already happened; they know the full trajectory of that part of the story/history, and they write it with a specific agenda in mind – what message they want to give to the reader, which readers they are writing for, which facts to include, and which not.

This makes of memoirs a further stage of remembering. Even if based on memories, they are a proper rewriting of the past, a search for meaning to deliver meaning. You will find really interesting the piece by Jacob Norris. The author explains: “The book is a work of creative history that mixes detailed empirical research with fictional styles of writing borrowed from genres such as magical realism and the Palestinian khurrafiyya to capture the spirit of confusion, wonder, and encounter that marked this period [end of the nineteenth century] of Bethlehem’s history.” (See page 48.)

Briefly, memories, diaries, etc., and memoirs are not a reliable account of the past. In fact, they are deceptive. So why should we pay attention to them, read them, or collect them? Why are they so important? And in particular, why are they so important in Palestine? Are we not already fed up with distortions of our history, misappropriations, omissions?

My opinion is that the unreliability of memories, diaries, and memoirs is what makes them so important. The image that they render is not one based on pure fact, it is rather about our feelings, our points of view about the facts, our unconscious reactions to the facts. When I write about my memories of the second Intifada, for example, I would not remember exact dates, but I would probably remember exact sounds or what the journalist was wearing on TV, and I would probably mix up events that are days or even months apart. Those sounds, however, those random details, and those mix-ups would disclose a deeper reality: they would not tell us about facts of history, but they would put us in touch with the moods and the emotional reactions that we have when confronted with history. To understand more about this reality, I suggest that you read the article by Ali Qleibo on the memoir of Hala Sakakini. It contains all the nuances that a work on personal memories can have and all the controversy it can spark. But in this article, Ali is also able to create an original and provocative historical analysis out of the gaps and partialities of Hala Sakakini’s account: “‘Reality’ was misconstrued. The ensuing lacuna...
among educated Palestinian middle classes impeded their perception and appraisal of the imminent Zionist threat." (See page 6.)

Memories, diaries, and memoirs are invaluable sources that help us to understand the spirit of the past, to look at the present with more awareness, and to leave to the future a more conscious account of what we are living. So I invite you to read this issue of *This Week in Palestine* as an anthology of texts that speak to each other, with memories passing through all of them like an electric wave that transforms personal experience into the collective heritage of Palestine.

Sabrin Hasbun is an Italian-Palestinian transnational writer. She has always had to mediate between two cultures, and every day for her is a journey across borders. Italy and Palestine are her two countries and form the focus of her writing, but during the last few years, she has lived in France and the United Kingdom and has been part of the academic worlds of the University of Pisa, the Sorbonne University of Paris, and Bath Spa University, where she is currently doing her PhD in creative writing and history in collaboration with Exeter University. She is currently writing her family’s memoir.

*The same applies to museums, museum-archives, and exhibitions. None of these environments are simply a gathering of material; rather, they provide a means to organize it, label it, display it, and curate it, following specific rules, goals, and agendas. Once more, the article about the El-Funoun archive is a great example of the compromises and choices that need to be made in order to render communicable the material of our memories.*
Philosophy in Captivity

By Abdul-Rahim Al-Shaikh

Walid Daqqa

In the post-Oslo era, reading Palestine through prisoners’ writings resembles reading an electrocardiography report. It does reflect the state of the “national body,” yet it requires a painful confrontation with our collective memory and amnesia. The writings of Walid Daqqa, a “masked philosopher” who is currently spending his 34th year in Zionist captivity, provide an ideal instance for such an exercise.

At the end of a rare phone call from Ramon Prison, Daqqa struck me with his take on the slaves’ role in philosophy. He believes in the possibility of separating the corporal from the intellectual, yet he views the passive agency of slaves in serving philosophers to be as crucial as the latter’s labor. Daqqa explains that in Zionist captivity, the case is reversed: the Israeli “guards” live their own form of slavery, not only in the awful machine of their settler colonial regime but also in “serving” Palestinian prisoners, “enabling” them to own their indigenous time at the threshold between the individual “parallel time” and the communal “social time.”

Based on original prison notebooks, this article interrogates Daqqa’s intellectualism in captivity and reframes the dynamics that enabled prisoners to defy colonizing their indigenous time. In addition, it revisits the positionality of producing knowledge in captivity to bring an end to the lingering “parallel time” towards future and freedom.

A liminal biography

Walid Daqqa was born in 1961 in Baqah al-Gharbiyyah, central Palestine. During his childhood, he lived the abnormalities of the liminal life between a colonized Arab village, suffering the ongoing torments of military defeat, and Tel Aviv, the triumphant center of the Israeli colony. In 1983, this harsh reality triggered in him the urge to join the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). On March 25, 1986, Daqqa was captured and sentenced to life in prison on the grounds of kidnapping an Israeli soldier as collateral to free Palestinian prisoners. In 2012, his sentence was set at 37 years. The Zionist authorities refused to release Daqqa in prisoner-exchange deals, and two years were wrongfully added to his sentence in 2018 on the grounds that he helped his fellow prisoners communicate with their families.

In addition to his key role in leading the Palestinian prisoners’ movement, Daqqa is an earnest public intellectual who “smuggles out” his (Arabic and Hebrew) writings, which subsequently appear in various venues that include Haaretz, Fasl al-Maqal, Bawabat al-Hadaf, and other media outlets affiliated with the National Democratic Assembly (BALAD), of which he became a member after 20 years in the PFLP. Daqqa is a prolific writer whose intellectual production includes highly sophisticated writings at the intersection of politics, philosophy, and literature. Much of his work is inspired by his passionate advocacy for the Palestinian cause.

Against all odds, Daqqa managed to obtain an education in captivity. By 2010, he had finished both his BA and MA degrees in democracy studies from The Open University of Israel, and a parallel degree in regional studies in 2016 from Al-Quds University. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD in philosophy under the mentorship of Anat Matar from Tel Aviv University.

Daqqa demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of Arab sources, both medieval and modern, which he uses with precision against European traditions in philosophy. His masterful interweaving of diverse intellectual histories in his academic enterprise has no equal among his peers. He seems like a manifestation of the philosopher’s “intellectual destroyer of evidence and universalities, the one who, in the inertias and constraints of the present, locates and marks the weak points, the openings, the lines of force, who continuously displaces himself, doesn’t know exactly where he is heading nor what he’ll think tomorrow because he is too attentive to the present.”
In 1996, the journalist and translator Sana’ Salamah met Walid during a visit to prisoners on behalf of the Association of Prisoners’ Supporters. The couple decided to get married in August 1999. After a year-long waiting period, the wedding ceremony took place in Askalan Prison with a limited number of attendees from their families and fellow prisoners. Sana’ and Walid were deprived of conjugal visits or even artificial insemination to conceive a child. For two decades, the couple have been meeting at the wire and glass barrier and talking via phone during bimonthly prison visits. Daqqa wasn’t only deprived of intimacy with his wife (Sana’) and fulfilling his desire to father a child (whom he would wish to call Milad), he was also banned from taking part in the funeral of his father (Nimer), and from hugging his mother (Fareeda), who has Alzheimer’s, during her last visit in 2019.

**A turbulent odyssey**

Perceiving writing as a political act, Daqqa has devoted much of his energy to discussing the fate of Palestinians within the green line (occupied Palestine in 1948) from their own perspective. Specifically, after taking part in the armed struggle waged by the PLO based on the Palestinian Charter of 1968, they were then left to face their fate alone, without a political guardian, in the post-Oslo era. His dictum of “parallel consciousness” started to emerge as a valuable tool to interrogate the political realities that led to the tragic prostration of Palestinian national foundations from “armed struggle” to a “struggle against arms.” Parallel consciousness is Daqqa’s way of describing time, space, and the human within the boundaries of 1948 in general, and in captivity, in particular. While Israel tried its best to render Palestinian freedom fighters as outlaws, the PA transformed them into social outcasts in dire need of “rehabilitation.” When the PLO abandoned its “principles,” and the national project that drowned in the Oslo illusion, the ongoing Nakba intensified, especially for those kept in double captivity: the prisoners from 1948 Palestine.

Daqqa’s intellectualism is focused on four topics: the assumed failure of revolutionary violence as a strategy of liberation; the Palestinian prisoners’ movement; criticizing the politics of the PLO towards the Palestinian Arabs of 1948; and questioning the political performance of the Palestinians of 1948 within the confines of Israeli fascism and the paradox of the “national law” that tried to collapse the contradictions within the settler nation between the so-called Israeli “Jewishness” and its “democracy.” In his first book, *Diaries of Resistance in Jenin Camp 2002* (2004), Daqqa conceptualizes Palestinian political ill-time. Drawing from several in-depth interviews that Daqqa conducted with his fellow prisoners who participated in battle (some of which appeared in Hebrew by Amira Hass), he focused on four interviews as he skillfully maneuvered between the historical event and its historiographical value as a political force to change reality. Ethnographically reflecting on his political affiliation between the PFLP and BALAD, Daqqa investigated the “case” of the Palestinians of 1948, and the absence of a strategic vision within the Palestinian establishment towards them. Searching for national salvation, Daqqa maintains that armed struggle was not a “wrong” strategy, but a “wronged” one throughout the history of the PLO.
Zooming in towards the impact of the unimaginative leaps by the PLO, Daqqa went a step further in investigating the transformations within the Palestinian prisoners’ movement. In his most prominent book, *Consciousness Molded or the Re-Identification of Palestinian Torture* (2010), Daqqa investigates technologies utilized by Israel to “sear” prisoners’ consciousness and to mold it anew in order to tame their morale. He takes prisoners as a case study, by which Israel examines its colonial psychological, social, and political engineering on the Palestinian people in the wider prison – within historical Palestine.

“Bettering” the material conditions of Palestinian prisoners, according to Daqqa, was not cost free, for “the prisoner’s body is no longer the direct target: the spirit and mind are.” Near the end of Al-Aqsa Intifada, around 2004, he argues, “Israel has created a strict system, based on the most updated theories of human engineering and social psychology, in order to mold Palestinian consciousness by shattering its collective values.” Such policies made prisons a replica of the segregated and thoroughly controlled OPT, and the prisoners lab mice for the experiments of taming Palestinians on the narrow borderline between life and death.

Living such realities, according to Daqqa and his fellow captives, wasn’t only an ontological experience, it was also a philosophical reality of living in the “parallel time” – a concept coined by Daqqa to depict life in prison juxtaposed to “social time” experienced on the “outside.” The concept appeared in three literary forms written between 2005 and 2014. *The Letter of Parallel Time* (2005) and the lyrical play *The Story of Parallel Time* (2011), both written in Gilboa Prison, and the theatrical play *The Story of the Forgotten in the Parallel Time* (2014), written in Hadarim Prison and produced in cooperation with Al-Maidan Theater in Haifa. All were warmly welcomed by the Palestinians but caused huge controversy and state animosity by Israelis.

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of his imprisonment, Daqqa wrote a letter expressing prisoners’ bitter dismay. From the time of the Cold War to Al-Aqsa Intifada, Palestinian prisoners have been cut off from the external world, while countless inventions have been introduced to life to which they don’t relate. Tubeless tires are among those inventions that Daqqa uses as a parody of politicians who steer Palestinian life in a rusted vehicle. Alas, don’t waste a chance to step on nails without having the courtesy of self-repair. Palestinian prisoners live a unique situation that is unmatched throughout the world: prisoners who have a ministry without a state.

Daqqa concedes: “We are part of a history, and history obviously is a state of past events that have ended; except for us, it is a continuous past that never ends. We communicate with you from it as a present that shouldn’t be your future. Our time is different from yours, for time here does not pace itself on the axis of past, present, and future. Our time, which flows in the lingering place, dropped the concepts of conventional time and space from our language, or it con-fused them, if you wish. Here, we don’t ask when and where we shall meet, for example, for we have met and keep meeting at the same place. Here, we travel at ease, back and forth, on the axis of the past and present, and every moment, post the present moment, is an unknown future that we are not capable of dealing with. We have no control over our future, and our case is quite similar to that of all Arab peoples. Yet there is a substantial difference: our occupation is foreign and theirs is Arab. Here we are in captivity because we search for a future, while their future has been buried alive.”

In 2011, Daqqa met the young Syrian musician Fida’ al-Sha’er from Majdal Shams, the occupied Golan Heights. Daqqa and Fida’ managed to manufacture an oud after a tiring journey; alas, the musical instrument was confiscated by the prison authorities. However, the story triggered a lyrical play that Daqqa wrote to depict prisoner life during Al-Aqsa Intifada, including scenes of a hunger strike and the martyrdom of a prisoner. In 2014, Bashar Murkus...
of Al-Maidan Theater altered the play to narrate the story of the playwright himself.

Preoccupied with the desire to father a child, denied conjugal visits, and facing titanic difficulties in “liberating” semen for artificial insemination, Daqqa decided to write a children’s story that reverses the whole course of events. In 2017, he released the first part of a trilogy for children: The Oil’s Secret Tale, followed by two manuscripts: The Sword’s Secret Tale (2018), and The Spirit’s Secret Tale (2019). The three stories, consecutively, narrate the lives of prisoners, refugees, and martyrs who inhabit marginalized geographies, albeit present in popular rhetoric, almost absent from the Palestinian establishment’s official discourse.

Since its launch in September 2018, The Oil’s Secret Tale has achieved wide acclaim throughout Palestine and won the Sharjah Award for Children's Literature in 2018. This story also caused a huge controversy in Israel, where several events to celebrate the book and author were banned. Upon its publication, a related audio recording by Daqqa was circulated, explaining the aim of writing the story and allowing Joud, the 6-year-old protagonist who came into the world through artificial insemination, to triumph over the Zionist state by visiting his father:

“Prison is not the only thing that holds us captive with its walls and barbed wire. If you ask me the most important conclusion I’ve arrived at throughout the three decades I spent in captivity, I would say that we lost Palestine not because we are weak, but because we are weak and divided due to ignorance. Ignorance is our most furious enemy, it’s more dangerous than prisons, as it transforms your mind into a prison cell in which your future and the future of generations to come are held captive. My motive in writing The Oil’s Secret Tale was not creative writing but rather sumud (steadfastness) in captivity, for sumud was not possible throughout these long years, without liberating my mind from its prison cell, little by little. As much as I yearn for liberation from prison, I yearn for ‘liberating’ prison from myself. What caused me the most pain is that through my captivity I ‘lived’ with the grandfather, the father, and the son, and I recognized a scenario that keeps repeating itself, as if captivity is inherited. Therefore, I wanted Joud to emerge from The Oil’s Secret Tale against all odds, and to pace a path that does not lead to prison. I wanted him to think of a future that is different from ours. I wanted to release the imagination for these generations in order to be released from the scenarios that have been scripted for us and that we have scripted for the next generations, and a whole nation that entered captivity. I write to release myself from prison, with a hope to release it from myself.”

The writings of Walid Daqqa are not only a rich example of revolutionary poetics but also a philosophical trial in demonstration of the popular politics of hope in the heavy presence of hapless official Palestinian politics.

Abdul-Rahim Al-Shaikh is a poet and a professor of philosophy and cultural and Arab studies at Birzeit University.
All of Tiberias lived on Hittin’s provisions of oil and wheat. I lived in a two-story house with a big garden, and it was ten minutes away from the mosque. I can’t wait to get back to it. Middle-ground solutions do not satisfy me… Hittin or the grave.”

Tawfiq Shabayta was born in 1919 in the village of Hittin, Tiberia Subdistrict. He died in Ein al-Hilweh Refugee Camp, Lebanon, in 2015.

“"If they allowed you to return to Palestine, not to Al-Safsaf but rather Ramallah or Nablus, would you return?”

“Yes, I would… I would be a refugee there just as I am here, but not all exile is the same.”

Jamil Hamad was born in 1935 in Safsaf, Safad Subdistrict. He lives in Shatila Refugee Camp, Lebanon.

“My father was 19 years old at the time of Al-Nakba… he was part of the group of young men who remained to defend Al-Ghabiisiyya before they were forcefully displaced. He was severely wounded, and for 52 years, he carried the six bullet fragments that settled in his head on the journey to exile at the refugee camp. He died a few years ago. Today I return with my six children to Al-Ghabiisiyya carrying a foreign nationality. We sat on the ruins of our home as I recounted to them their grandfather’s stories.

Fadya al-Maqdah, Al-Ghabiisiyya, Akka Subdistrict

“My family owned more than 20 stores in Bir al-Sabe’. My father had a shop that sold tools used by Bedouins. I was a boy during Al-Nakba, and as airplanes started to bombard the area, a few bombs landed next to our house. We escaped the shelling and walked towards the valley. We walked 50 kilometers in the desert. My elder brother died on the road. We reached Rafah and settled there for a few years until we headed to Egypt. We continued around the whole world until we reached Canada. Today, after all these years, three generations went back to Palestine – me, my children, and my grandchildren – to look for my home and recall my memories.”

Nabil Al Shurafa, Bir al-Sabe’ Gaza, Canada
“I was five years old when we were exiled from Safad. We walked to the Lebanese border and remained in Bint Jbeil for six months. We then continued on our way until we reached Al-Sham (Syria). I lived in Damascus, received my university degree from Spain, and found a job in America where I met my Mexican wife. A few months ago, the family decided to return to Palestine to try to find my home in Safad. We found the house after great effort and lots of searching. When the Israeli who stole our home saw us walking towards the house with cameras, he knew that he was living in the house I had been born in and simply stated: “I feel sorry about what happened to you. You look like a good person, and you are welcome to visit the house whenever you want. I do not want to talk about politics, but a war happened here, and we won. Should I be sorry that we won? It’s history, and this is how it was written, and this house is now mine.”

Husni Ghneim, Safad
Syria; United States of America

“I was born in Yarmouk Refugee Camp in 1961 and was raised to know the shape and detail of our house in Akka although I have never seen it. I pursued my university degree in America, later finding a job, getting American citizenship, and settling there. I decided to return to Palestine in 2018 to find our home. We walked among the houses of the new Akka neighborhoods outside the gate, and I was surprised when I intuitively found the house based on my father’s description: Twenty-four cypress trees surround the house, a red marking above the window. I found our house in Akka, and it is now a nursery that belongs to the Israeli Ministry of Education.”

Maher Chamma, Akka
Yarmouk Camp; United States of America

“Every time you see a cactus plant, you know that you are on the site of demolished homes. We used to plant cacti around our homes in the villages to determine areas and borders, but we never planted cacti on the Western side so that thorns would not fly with the western wind into our eyes.”

Ni’ma Shaqdeh was born in 1942 in Beit Nabala, Ramle Subdistrict. She now lives in Jordan.
The picture: Her return to her village for the first time after 68 years.

“I was born in Yarmouk Refugee Camp in 1961 and was raised to know the shape and detail of our house in Akka although I have never seen it. I pursued my university degree in America, later finding a job, getting American citizenship, and settling there. I decided to return to Palestine in 2018 to find our home. We walked among the houses of the new Akka neighborhoods outside the gate, and I was surprised when I intuitively found the house based on my father’s description: Twenty-four cypress trees surround the house, a red marking above the window. I found our house in Akka, and it is now a nursery that belongs to the Israeli Ministry of Education.”

Maher Chamma, Akka
Yarmouk Camp; United States of America

“Zionists always claim that the old will die and the young will forget… I am a third-generation descendent of Al-Nakba, and I traveled 13,000 kilometers from Australia to Palestine with an old picture of our home in Yafa … and I named my daughter Yafa.”

Ahmad al-Khalidi, Australia.

Ibrahim Tannous often recounted: “As we ran around the town – to the school, the mosque, or a neighbor’s house – doing a few errands, we would pick fruits off the trees and eat until we were full.”

It took a very long time for the late Ibrahim Tannous to be convinced that he had become a refugee and that he would no longer be near the fruitful trees of Ein Karem. It took him many years to accustom to the idea of buying fruit from the market in Amman instead of picking it from the trees of Ein Karem.”

Mohammad Ibrahim Tannous was born in Ein Karim, Jerusalem. He passed away in Amman a few years ago, never having been able to return to or visit Ein Karem.
“I did the most beautiful thing in my life—after 68 years... I returned to Fajja, which is now an Israeli town under the jurisdiction of the city of Petah Tikva! I cannot believe that I returned to my village near Yafa and reclaimed two oranges from our home.”

Hiyam Salah, Fajja, Yafa Subdistrict
Al-Kuwait

“As the saying goes: The wedding is in Saffuriyya, but the people of Al-Mujaydil are dancing. That is how my native village—Al-Mujaydil near Nazareth—was known. We used to love life, always joyful and happy. During Al-Nakba we were exiled to Syria, and I lived my life in Yarmouk Refugee Camp. After the war in Syria, Syrians and Palestinians alike sought refuge, but I became a refugee twice. I obtained foreign citizenship and returned to Al-Mujaydil to harvest its soul and pass it on to my children and grandchildren. I am not here to complain or cry over the land, I am here only to assert my rights.”

Hussein Ghubari, Al-Mujaydil, Nazareth Subdistrict
Yarmouk Refugee Camp; United States of America

Abdul Salam, the grandson of Yousef, returned to Palestine holding the foreign citizenship he obtained after he left Syria in 2013 because of the war. He spent two weeks at sea to reach Europe and was able to acquire Finnish citizenship. From Tiberias, Abdul Salam video-phoned his grandfather who was in Homs Refugee Camp.

Abdul Salam: Grandfather, I am now in Tiberias, and as you can see, according to what you have described to me, it seems that our home was demolished a few years ago, and a new building is being erected in its place.

Grandfather Yousef: It does not matter if the house was demolished my son... we want to return to Tiberias, and we will erect a tent on the shore.”

Yousef Al-Zobi, Homs Refugee Camp, Syria
Abdul Salam Al-Zobi, Finland

“I was born in Akka in 1943. Zionist gangs forced us out of our country. We walked towards southern Lebanon, and we stayed for a while in an old French army camp under inhumane conditions. Afterwards, we headed towards Beirut and settled in Bourj al-Barajneh Camp.

We were humiliated in Lebanon. My mother was shot in the stomach during the invasion, and after six hours of bleeding she was martyred. My brothers are martyrs, too. Some of them were killed during the Israeli invasion, and some during the Sabra and Shatila massacre.

I went to Canada and obtained citizenship. When they asked me for my place of birth, I said Akka, and they replied, “So, Israel!” I said I was born in Akka, Palestine, when there was no such thing as Israel. Look at my Canadian passport: Place of Birth: Akka, Palestine, 1943.

Suleiman Abu Meita, Akka
Bourj al-Barajneh; Canada

Tarek Bakri is a Palestinian researcher and documenter from Jerusalem. He can be contacted through tarek@youad.org.

All interviews were conducted as part of the visual-oral documentation project of Palestine, We Were and We Still Are Here. Stories and videos are published on Facebook: Tarek Bakri.
One of the Last Gatekeepers of Aboud

By Xavier Abu Eid

In 1870, Victor Guerin, the French explorer and author of *La Palestine*, described Aboud as a village surrounded by water wells, valleys with lemon trees, pomegranates, and olives. The “city of flowers” as known by its people, is a breathtaking village located around 30 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem. Inhabited from ancient times, Aboud was part of the summer path taken by the Holy Family on their way from Jerusalem to Nazareth, it welcomed Queen Helena on the way from Jaffa to Jerusalem in search of the Holy Cross, and it provided refuge to Saint Barbara as she came to Palestine after being persecuted by her family for converting to Christianity.

The vivid testimonies of these historic episodes can still be seen today. Aboud is a village of 2,500 inhabitants that, like it or not, feels as though it is stuck in time. Walking the small streets of the old city, you will notice some vine- and tree-covered ruins and old stone houses that bring to mind the centuries of village traditions. This is the feeling at the Orthodox Church of the Dormition of Virgin Mary, known also as “al-Aboudiya” (from Aboud), built in 332. This is perhaps the best place to meet Sa’ed, known properly as Abu Bassam, who would rarely miss a Sunday mass, showing the nostalgic elegance of the *hatta w ergal* on his head, the traditional Palestinian scarf made famous worldwide by the late Yasser Arafat.

Born in 1931 (“at least this is what is registered”), Abu Bassam has an extraordinary memory of the historic events that have marked the history of Aboud. He remembers with details, as a child, how British forces assassinated Yacoub Anfous, the first martyr of the village, as he was going to bring water from a well across the village, in the Lemon Valley, on a day of curfew: “He was fearless, he didn’t care about anything. We were in a time of revolution (1936). He took a mule, put four tanks on it to be filled with water, and left.” Abu Bassam remembers, “I was with my dad. We were sitting with other people from the family, and someone asked, ‘Where is Yacoub?’ We were told that he had left to bring water. Some went crazy. But Yacoub had told everyone not to worry. ‘They know me,’ he said. But, of course, they didn’t know anyone.” The British army had imposed martial law. “The first bullet went into his chest, the second into his head. He fell into the water, and four men were the only ones allowed to retrieve the body, having to immediately arrange the funeral.” Yacoub Anfous was 30 years old. He left his wife, six daughters, and a son.

At the age of 88, Abu Bassam is a man of extraordinary strength. Going deeper into the story of his life, it is not difficult to discover why. He was the youngest of three brothers. Atta, the oldest, was educated at Birzeit College (“and learned very well Arabic and English”) and then moved to Jaffa, only around 30 kilometers away, to work in the municipality. The second brother, Raja, stayed with Abu Bassam in Aboud. They were, just like the vast majority of the village, *fellahin* (peasants), mastering and terror attacks of the Irgun and Lehi, carried out in March and April 1948, forcibly displaced thousands of people and drove the last resistance forces led by Michael Issa out of the city. Mayor Yousef Haikal ended up giving up his hopes of retaining “the bride of the sea,” as British troops failed to protect a population that was still under their “control.” The hills of Aboud, just as those of Birzeit, Jifna, and the surrounding areas, witnessed thousands of refugees expelled from Jaffa, Lydda, Ramleh, and the neighboring villages, people who for years lived under olive trees, in precarious tents and caves, waiting for the fulfillment of their internationally recognized right of return.

After the traumatic events of the *Nakba*, Atta lived in Aboud for about six years. Then “he got tired of this life” and joined the Jordanian army, settling in Amman. The second brother, Raja, stayed with Abu Bassam in Aboud. They were, just like the vast majority of the village, *fellahin* (peasants), mastering
Then he looked at his wife, patiently smiling. “I got married when I was 25,” he remembered. “And how old were you, Um Bassam?” he asked, looking towards Rafeeha, the gorgeous lady with an easy smile and sweet voice known as one of the last to keep the tradition of wearing the traditional thobe. “I also was 25.” “What? Wasn’t that strange at that time, marrying someone of the same age?” I asked. They both looked at each other laughing, symbolizing a simple yet beautiful love story. “We are the same,” Rafeeha concluded.

Like many others from neighboring villages, such as Deir Abu Mashaal, Beit Rima, and Deir Ghassane, Abu Bassam ended up working in an Israeli company for a few years. “What happened to your land then, did you leave it?” I asked. “Of course not, I was working on both sides (…). When it was fig season or something else, I would tell them that my son was sick and that I had to take him to the hospital. But instead I would go to help with the harvest.”

At around the same time, there was the first Intifada, when Mariam Ishaq became the first female martyr from Aboud: “She was traveling by donkey to harvest grapes. It wasn’t that far away from us. An Israeli military jeep ran over her, crushing her head. She died instantly.” Her killing took place on August 15, 1988.

By that time, Rafeeha and Sa’ed had already had eight children – four daughters and four sons. Unlike other Palestinian Christian families from the same generation, most of their sons and daughters remain in Palestine, yet only two are in Aboud. “We only have...”
the youngest ones in Aboud, Sami and Samia." His older son, Bassam, lives in Amman. He married Raja’s daughter, reuniting the two brothers that had been separated since Abu Bassam was left working alone in the fields of Aboud. A decision he never regretted.

Aboud has been able to keep its character, yet the realities imposed by the Israeli occupation are threatening its future. With two settlements built on its lands, Ammorim and Beit Aryeh, and almost a third of the village taken by the illegal annexation wall, the control of the village’s water resources has made it difficult to keep investing in agriculture. One of its ancient shrines, Saint Barbara’s shrine that dates from the fifth century, was blown up by Israel in 2002. At the entrance to the village is an Israeli roadblock, and only 2,000 dunums, out of Aboud’s 12,000, are available for Palestinian construction in accordance with the rules imposed by the occupation. This has pushed some people, especially the younger generation, to leave Aboud.

Abu Bassam’s parish priest, Fr. Talaat Awwad, explains that there are over 100 "young men and women, over 25 years old who are not getting married because they don’t have a place to live."

Abu Bassam moves into a pensive mode: “Life is nice, but people now live in fear. There is no security. You may plant on your land, but you are afraid. Once, a few years ago, we were working a piece of land we own by the entrance of the village. I left two workers there.

After a while one sent his son to talk to me. ‘Uncle Abu Bassam, my father says that the Israelis kicked them out,’ ‘What?’ I asked. Three days later, I told the workers to come with me to the land. They were afraid, but I told them that if we were kicked out, I would still pay them. We started to work, and the soldiers came and shouted, ‘Hey you!’ I said good morning to them, but they didn’t respond. They just said, ‘Get out of here!’ But I replied, ‘We’re not going anywhere, we are working the olive trees.’ They then threatened to shoot us. ‘I have a permit to be here.’ They left. Good they didn’t ask me for the papers because I didn’t have any permit. It was simply my land, and I was taking care of it… perhaps we would have been beaten!”

Sa’ed, Abu Bassam, is a humble man who is regarded with admiration by the people of his village. Aboud, the same place that witnessed the Holy Family on its path from Jerusalem to Nazareth, has kept this simplicity in the eyes of Abu Bassam. The love for his land, his family, and his church has solidified his role as one of the last gatekeepers of the identity of this ancient Palestinian village.

Xavier Abu Eid is a political scientist and holds a master’s in diplomatic studies.
The following poem is an excerpt from the concluding chapter of *Golda Slept Here* (2015) by Suad Amiry, in which she traces the lives of individual members of Palestinian families and, through them, the histories of both Palestine and the émigré Palestinian community in other countries of the Middle East.

**The Never-Ending Chapter**

My country: As close to me as my prison

Mahmoud Darwish

**Would You Ever Let Go of Me?**
Would you *ever* let go of me
For a lifetime
For a year
A month
An hour
A minute
Even a second?
No
If *ever*
If ever we get an apology
If ever we get compensation for our losses
It would not be about a lost country
It would not be about a lost field
Or an orange grove
Or a lost home
No
It would not be about the hundreds of bulldozed villages
Or the scattering of a whole nation
The shattering of a whole society
It would not be about losing a livelihood
A stolen piano, a Persian carpet or a first baby photo-album
And it would not be about someone’s personal library
An abandoned Arab horse, or a Cypriot donkey
Not a Persian cat not even Shasa, the monkey that my mother gave me a few years before the war
No
And it would not be the blossoming almond trees and the red flowering pomegranates that were *not* picked tenderly in the spring of 1948 nor the following summer
And it would not be about firing at the farmers who returned to harvest the fields they had left behind
Nor would it be about the many deserted budding roses
Or a bride’s wardrobe and many cherished wedding gifts
Or a child or an old woman who was forgotten, left behind in the chaos
No
It would not be about concealing a crime or falsifying history
It would not be about blaming the victim
It would be about dehumanization and stereotyping
It would not be about making new “wandering Jews” out of us
It would be about revising roles and images
No
If at all
It will *only* be about an *obsession*

**Yes, an obsession**
My dreams are all about you
And my nightmares are all because of you
My happiness is related to you
And my sadness comes from you
My expectations are all concerning you
And my disappointments pile up beside you
Yes
And if I run away, I run away from you
And if I come back, I come back to you
If I love someone, it is because of what they think of you
And if I hate someone, it is because of what they say about you
Yes
And it is because of you:
Nothing in my life is normal
Nothing in my life is neutral
Nothing is mundane
Or even insignificant

**And how very exhausting it is**
How I desire one ordinary day when you do not haunt me
How I long for a pleasant evening where you are not invited
How I yearn to forget you
How I wish for amnesia or a stroke that
Will neatly remove every trace of you:
Thoughts, memories, emotions
Gone forever
I heard them moan for you before I was born
And I heard them moan for you after I was born and ever after
Their bedtime stories are about you
And their daydreaming is also about you
I've seen them cry, laugh, praise and curse
You, you and only YOU
I had to learn everything about you
I had to imagine you from across a border
Miss you
Love you
Defend you
Cry for you
Write about you
Talk about you

And, in imperative form, love you
And how very exhausting it is
Above all I have to keep my sanity with all the brutality around you
Every hour every minute and every second
If ever I do come to terms with what has happened to you
I must banish that part of my brain
That cherishes reason, logic and justice
Palestine
Will you ever set us free?

Artwork by Abed Al Rahman Katanani.
Of all the travelers passing through the Dabdoub house, the one who most captured Jubrail’s childhood imagination was Ammo Hanna. At that time, the Dabdoub house, known to all as Hosh Dabdoub, was like a travelers’ way station. Perched on the edge of the steep northern slopes of Ras Ilteis, it was the first house that travelers came across on the approach road into Bethlehem. All manner of visitors would call by to purchase souvenirs or discuss politics and local gossip, which in those days were one and the same. But Ammo Hanna held a special fascination for Jubrail.

His real name was Hanna Khalil Ibrahim Morcos, but Jubrail called him ammo as a term of affection. Ammo Hanna had travelled to the farthest reaches of the known world and was a walking repository of fantastical stories. He would turn up at the hosh unannounced and sit with Jubrail’s father and elder brothers under the arches of the house’s riwaq arcade that looked out over the terraced valleys below. Leaning back against the mattresses and cushions of the diwan, they would sip coffee and puff on argileh pipes as they took in the sea of olive groves that stretched to the east and then gave way to the more barren hills of the Wilderness. Jubrail would wait patiently while the men discussed new clients in Jerusalem, exchange rates between strange-sounding foreign currencies, and how they might profit from the upsurge in Russian pilgrims. When the conversation died down and Jubrail’s father began to doze in the afternoon sun, the young boy would tug on Ammo Hanna’s abayeh, begging him to tell him stories of the mysterious land he called Amerka.

Ammo Hanna was not the only person in Bethlehem who had travelled abroad in those days. Alongside the pilgrims, friars, mystics, and dignitaries who regularly passed through town, a handful of local merchants had ventured across the Mediterranean to the western-most reaches of Europe. The people there were known as afaranja, or franji in the singular: a strange breed of person that could be regularly sighted in Bethlehem. For some unknown reason, the afaranja felt the need to meddle constantly in the affairs of others, even when circumstance seemed to demand a humbler approach.

Over many centuries of interaction, the Bethlehemites had learned how to turn the arrogance of the afaranja to their advantage, even if it sometimes put them at odds with the rest of the local population. People still remembered a man named Abdallah Hazboun who had decided to join the army of a particularly haughty franji general named Napoleon, to work for him as an interpreter. The army of this general had swept across Egypt and Palestine at the turn of the century, attracting a few ambitious locals along the way. When the army was defeated at Acre, the new recruits found themselves in a delicate position. Facing a choice between the vengeance of the local population or retreat with the franji armies, Abdallah had wisely chosen the latter, travelling with Napoleon all the way back to France. It was said that he had met with great success there, living in Paris with a franji wife and embarking on further military expeditions abroad, where he continued to help the French armies meddle in the affairs of others.

Jubrail was familiar with these characters who had entered Bethlehem legend as the first to travel to the lands of the afaranja. But it was Ammo Hanna and his tales of Amerka that truly captivated him. A-M-E-R-K-A. Even the word itself sounded exotic and exciting. The generation of Jubrail’s father still spoke about a man named Andrea Dawid who had set out for Amerka a hundred years ago but never came back. Word had reached Bethlehem of his death in 1796, but the event remained shrouded in mystery. The Dawid family lived across the road from Hosh Dabdoub, and they frequently discussed the fate of Andrea without ever reaching a
consensus. Some said he had been consumed by fearsome jinn dwelling in the mountain caves of Amerka, while others claimed he had been devoured by sea monsters during the return voyage.

The speculation over Andrea Dawid only served to increase the aura surrounding Ammo Hanna. He was the only person in Bethlehem to have travelled to Amerka and make it back alive. When Jubrail’s father began to doze in the afternoon sun, Ammo Hanna would finally turn to Jubrail and mesmerize the young boy with tales of strange peoples, fantastical beasts, and enchanted cities. For 30 days and 30 nights he had journeyed across the great Atlasi Ocean on a ship powered by a combination of steam and sail, enduring the most squalid conditions. The idea of a vast ocean fascinated Jubrail who had never seen the sea, nor even a river. No running water passed through Bethlehem except the ancient aqueduct that carried water from the Pools of Suleiman to the south, but they were far away, and Jubrail was forbidden by his parents to stray that far. Instead he let his imagination run wild as Ammo Hanna described waves taller than mountains and terrifying creatures of the deep, bigger than the boat itself.

Somehow, Ammo Hanna had made it to Amerka in one piece. Immediately, he had set about investigating the place. What he found, he explained to Jubrail, was a new world in a frenzy of creation. A land of great cities in the making, inhabited by people from every part of the world, all arriving to make their fortune. Waiving his hands excitedly, he explained that economic opportunity there was limitless, especially for a merchant from Bethlehem selling Holy Land carvings. It was at this point that Jubrail’s father Yusef would stir from his sleep and begin to pay attention. The people there, Ammo Hanna explained, professed to be Christian, and they held a special reverence for anything connected to the Holy Land. They had flocked in droves to buy Ammo Hanna’s crosses and rosaries, leaving him wishing he had carried greater quantities with him from Bethlehem.

Ammo Hanna had begun his journey around Amerka in a teeming port city named Rio de Janeiro. Located in a huge bay ringed by densely forested mountains, Rio had been his home for several weeks. He had been surprised to discover people there speaking the same languages and worshipping the same saints as some of the Franciscan friars who lived in Bethlehem. But once he ventured into the jungle-clad interior, he could no longer understand the people, nor could he recognize their saints. The landscape there was unlike anything that existed in Palestine: a dense mass of greenery where plants and animals burst from every crevice. Everyone and everything permanently dripped with water, either from the torrential daily downpours or the constant sweating brought on by the unrelenting humidity. Lurking in the dense forests were all manner of strange beasts.

As he listened with eyes wide open, Jubrail could feel his own skin burning with the poison of a giant tarantula, hear the barking of howler monkeys in the valley, and see crocodiles slinking across the riwaq of Hosh Dabdoub. He memorized the names of the brightly colored birds and poisonous snakes, and he drew maps of the coastline of Amerka as he followed Ammo Hanna’s meandering monologue.

Many people in Bethlehem were not sure whether Ammo Hanna’s tales could be trusted. Some laughed and called him a khurafa who had never made it farther than the island of Cyprus. Others were more willing to believe that he had crossed the Atlasi Ocean but suspected his tales were
full of fanciful exaggeration, especially those concerning the fantastical beasts of the jungle. But the young Jubrail hung on his every word, finding himself transported to another world as he listened to his tales of Amerka.

After Ammo Hanna left the house, Jubrail would walk down to the terraced slopes beneath Hosh Dabdoub to search for cicadas, lizards, and snails among the apricot and fig trees. He would imagine the lizards were the crocodiles that Ammo Hanna had spoken of, and that the olive orchard at the bottom of the valley was a dense rainforest, full of man-eating plants hanging precariously overhead.

Sometimes Jubrail would wander northwards, up the hill past the last buildings on Ras Ifteis. Following the road out of town, he would stop at the fork where it met with Hebron Road. Just past this junction in the direction of Jerusalem was Qubbet Rahil, the small domed structure that marked the boundary of the Bethlehem district and the outer edge of Jubrail’s known world. It was said that the dome contained the tomb of Rahil, the wife of Yaqub in the Holy Book who had died when travelling that road. Christian and Muslim women went there to ask for favors from Rahil, and occasionally Jubrail would see strange-looking men dressed in long black coats, rocking back and forth as they uttered prayers in an unintelligible language. Peering in through one of the windows, he would observe with a mixture of fear and curiosity the surprisingly long ringlets of hair descending from their black fur caps. Was this how people in Amerka looked, he wondered? Returning home, he pulled out the maps he had drawn of Amerka, based on Ammo Hanna’s tales. As he studied those maps, he began to plan his own journeys. He told himself that one day he too would travel the dangerous road that stretched beyond Qubbet Rahil towards Jerusalem and the world beyond.

Dr. Jacob Norris is senior lecturer in Middle Eastern history at the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom. This essay is an extract from his current book project which reconstructs the life of one man from Bethlehem, Jubrail Dabdoub (1860–1931). Jubrail was part of the first generation of merchants in the town to travel the world in the 1870s and 1880s. The book is a work of creative history that mixes detailed empirical research with fictional styles of writing borrowed from genres such as magical realism and the Palestinian khurafiyya to capture the spirit of confusion, wonder, and encounter that marked this period of Bethlehem’s history.

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1 The character of Ammo Hanna is based on a real person, Hanna Khalil Ibrahim Morcos, who was born in Bethlehem in 1824 and died there in 1900. The former Syrian consul in São Paulo, Majid Radawi, lists Hanna Khalil Morcos as the first migrant from Syria and Palestine to arrive in Brazil in 1851. See Majid Radawi, Al-Hijra al-Arabiyya ila al-Barazil 1870–1986 (Damascus: Dar Tlas, 1989), p. 48. The Bethlehem Latin Parish records show that his eldest son Khalil died in “America” (in the general sense) in 1883.


3 His death is recorded in the Bethlehem Latin Parish archives on September 7, 1796 with the sole note “morto in Latin America.”

4 This description is inspired by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s account of his visits to Rachel’s Tomb when he lived in Hosh Dabdoub as a young boy in the 1920s. See Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, al-bi‘r al-ula: fusul min sirah dhatiyah (Beirut: al-mu’assishah al-arabiyyah lil-dirasat wa al-nashr, 2001), p.89.
The Journey to a New Life

By Stephanie Elias

So they wouldn’t send him to die like cannon fodder.” This is the first reason that José Elías Aboid lists to explain why his grandfather left his native Palestine to travel to Chile, the farthest corner of the world.

“The situation of the Christians in the Ottoman Turkish Empire was not easy, not only because of the overcharging of taxes imposed on them but also because they were forced to enlist in wars that they had nothing to do with. They were recruited to fight on the front lines and were sent to die,” explains José, sitting in the middle of the living room of his apartment.

José is 81 years old. He covers his two-meter-high body with a dark-blue robe. His soft and scratchy voice contrasts with his size but combines with his wisdom of stone, matured and macerated after decades of study.

Drinking a cup of tea mixed with three tablespoons of sugar, he travels to the past, what he remembers of it, to talk about his grandfather Juan Elías Zaied, the first man in his paternal family to step onto Chilean territory.

Juan Elías Zaied lived until the end of the nineteenth century in what was then known as Palestine. At that time all that territory, including Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, was part of the Ottoman Turkish Empire. He resided with his clan in Beit Jala, which, according to José, in those days would not have had more than 8,000 inhabitants. They dedicated themselves to tilling the land, bartering, and working in construction.

Juan was the eldest of five brothers. When his father, Elias Zaied, died after a fulminating stomach illness, he was forced to assume all responsibility and take care of the whole family. He was barely twenty years old.

Driven by the imminent danger of being recruited by the Turkish army, added to the very poor economic situation, Juan Elías decided to leave his land and set forth to Latin America.

For some years now, letters had been arriving from the first Palestinian people who ventured to the other side of the world. They talked about the good weather and, above all, the possibility of a better life in Chile.

In the early 1900s, Juan Elías, a brother-in-law of his, Nicolás Majluf, and a maternal uncle, Jorge Eluti, took a steamboat on the coast of what is now Syria to Genoa (Italy). It was a long-term bet full of risks, which is why only men left. Women and children were left behind.

From Genoa they boarded another ship heading to Buenos Aires, Argentina. The most complex part was crossing the Andes Mountains from Argentina to Chile. In the three weeks that the trip lasted, a guide accompanied them, but the road was narrow and dangerous in many parts. In total it was an exhausting journey of three and a half months.

“In Chile, Palestinian names were often cut short or modified by the registration authorities. When Juan arrived with his Turkish passport, his official identity was Juan Elías Zaied, but Zaied was eliminated. This is the reason that my family’s last name is now Juan’s father’s name: Elías,” explains José.

The letters not only spoke of Chilean perks, they also warned of a discriminatory treatment towards Arabs, what became known as “Turkishing.” They also said that, in the capital, Santiago, the reception was even worse, so the three men decided to settle in southern Chile, in the city of Victoria.

“Their priority was to get settled and raise money to bring the rest of the family over. They started as street vendors. They brought religious articles from the Holy Land because they were told that in Chile these products were highly valued,” recalls José.
Nicolás Majluf Sapag is the grandson of Nicolás Majluf, who crossed the Andes Mountains together with Juan Elias. “I was born six months after my grandfather died. My name was also a comfort to my grandmother who would say: Nicolás died, but Nicolás was born,” he explains.

“Our grandparents were illiterate, poor farmers. When they arrived in Chile, they had to apply all their efforts and wit to enable these numerous families to rise above the difficult conditions surrounding them. Their stories speak of people motivated by hard work. In time, they managed to improve their economic condition, and we as a third generation could already go to study at universities,” says Nicolás Majluf.

Two years after the arrival of the men, the women undertook their trip to Latin America. Each family started its own business, and at the beginning they specialized in the sale of household items.

“Women worked side by side with men. They saved a lot of money, which meant that they had to lead austere lifestyles. Sometimes they gave themselves the luxury of buying lamb to prepare Arabic food. It wasn’t that expensive, but for them it was still a lot of money,” explains José Elias.

Juan Elías was married to Farja Param. In Chile they had five children: Osvaldo (father of José Elías), Maruka, Emilio, Elías, and Lidia. They moved to Santiago in 1936 and settled in the Buenos Aires street of the Patronato neighborhood, known as “little Palestine,” because of the many Palestinians who lived there.

“There was a tremendous sense of community until about the sixties. We all lived close together and helped each other. We went on vacation all together: the Majlufs, the Eliases, and we practically rented the entire hotel. I remember that José Elías was a very elegant young man who hated getting his feet wet in the sea,” says Nicolás Majluf, laughing at the memory.

A year after his arrival in the capital, the Elías family opened the Brooklyn Socks Company. Furthermore, they later specialized in other textiles and opened factories in the El Salto sector. The street where they settled was baptized with the name of its creator: Juan Elías.

His granddaughter Sara Elías remembers him while she looks at some old black and white photos that she delicately takes out of a leather case. “My grandfather was an elegant man, and he liked that we always looked well presented. Sometimes he gave me money and asked: “Did you go to the hairdresser?” And I would answer “yes grandpa.” “Show me your hands,” he would reply, and I would stretch them out so that he could study them. “I don’t like them that way,” he would reply sometimes,” Sara laughingly remembers.

“He was a cool man, my grandfather,” says Juan Elías, another of his grandchildren.

“It is important to highlight the contributions that the Palestinians brought to Chile. The culture and the food are important, yes, but the really beautiful thing that our grandparents brought to Chile was a new way of living with each other, a warm and affectionate way to treat one another,” concludes Nicolás Majluf.

Stephanie Elías Musalem is a 28-year-old journalist of Palestinian origins from Santiago de Chile. She has been a reporter for magazines, TV stations, and radio programs. In 2016, she was in charge of the communication department of the Palestinian Chilean Federation. Since 2018, she has been the office manager of Bank of Palestine Office of Representation in Chile.
A conservative estimate of the Palestinian diaspora communities in Latin America and the Caribbean would be 725,000 persons in 22 countries, distributed as follows. 1. Argentina 5,000; 2. Chile 300,000; 3. Uruguay 1,000; 4. Paraguay 1,000; 5. Brazil 50,000; 6. Bolivia 18,000; 7. Peru 35,000; 8. Ecuador 10,000; 9. Colombia 65,000; 10. Venezuela 15,000; 11. Panama 2,000; 12. Costa Rica 1,500; 13. Nicaragua 10,000; 14. El Salvador 40,000; 15. Honduras 130,000; 16. Guatemala 18,000; 17. Belize 1,000; 18. Mexico 15,000; 19. Cuba 3,000; 20. Haiti 1,000; 21. Dominican Republic 2,500; 22. Martinique 1,000.

The Confederation of Palestinian Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean (COPLAC) was founded during its first congress in São Paulo in July 1984 as a result of joint efforts between the Palestinian Federation of Brazil and the Palestinian Club of Santiago Chile. COPLAC’s main objective was to unite these communities in a political, inclusive, and nonpartisan institutionalized framework that would strengthen their sense of belonging to the Palestinian homeland, their national identity, and their history and culture. COPLAC worked to empower these communities by encouraging their active participation at all levels of daily life in their host societies, professionally, socially, economically, and politically.

COPLAC insisted on the necessity to invest in the education of the young generations, and due to serious efforts in this domain, there is today a new generation of young people who have been very well prepared in the best educational centers and who are ready to assume high-powered roles and responsibilities at all levels of the public sector, in municipal, local, and federal government as well as in the private sector.

These communities are not monolithic but pluralistic, and as multicultural societies, they have opened windows of opportunity because identity and integration are no longer considered incompatible and contradictory. Every community can preserve and cultivate its culture and history and at the same time work to deepen and broaden its participation and integration in the host society.

All this is part of the “Palestinian National Project” in Latin America, the execution of which comes under the responsibility of the local federations that must take into consideration the specific characteristics and needs of the communities in the various countries of the continent.

The role of COPLAC and the responsibilities of the Palestinian communities towards Palestine should figure in consistent and planned “political projects” with specific aims:
1) To make known the question of Palestine and propagate and defend its legitimacy. 2) To organize the Palestinian communities in democratic and representative institutions strong enough to defend their interests, help them achieve their aims, and preserve their culture and traditions. 3) To participate actively in all levels of the host society so that the diaspora institutions increase their visibility in the host society and thus be respected and influential in offering real support to Palestine. 4) To maintain contact with governmental institutions, especially the foreign-relations ministries, with civil-society institutions, and with the media, to keep them updated on the reality in Palestine – ethnic cleansing, apartheid, politicide, and sociocide – and to demand that they act accordingly by recognizing the State of Palestine, demanding an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine, demanding international protection for the Palestinian people, and demanding the application of all the pertinent UN resolutions. 5) To organize regular visits to Palestine so that youth (Palestinian and those of the host society) have direct contact with the realities on the ground. 6) To encourage bilateral relations between the Latin American countries and Palestine in such fields as health, education, culture, and business. 7) To interact actively with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Palestine National Authority (PNA), demanding a strong presence in the representative institutions such as the Palestine National Council (PNC) and the Palestine Central Council (PCC) as well as a presence in the
various departments. These delegates should be democratically elected in assemblies with total legitimacy.

**The diaspora and the Palestinian strategic-thinking debate**

It is clear that ending Israel’s military occupation and reactivating the diplomatic track can only be achieved through political negotiations. Due to the existing power dynamics, these must be via the international rather than the purely bilateral route.

The PLO and the PNA should consolidate their domestic legitimacy and international recognition to be able to mobilize all the segments and forces of the Palestinian people, wherever they are, for an ample democratic discussion so as to build a multi-layered national strategy that can be adopted by all.

The diaspora is well structured and well equipped, as well as capable and qualified to help in the elaboration of political strategies and their implementation in the respective countries. The PLO and the PNA should recognize and support the diaspora institutions and request their participation in decision making.

A couple of months ago, I was a keynote speaker at a Palestinian youth convention. I asked a six-year-old girl if she knew the location of Palestine. “Yes,” she answered, putting her hand on her chest, “here in my heart.” That made me realize that while most people usually live in their homeland, we Palestinians, scattered in the four corners of the world, carry our homeland in our hearts.

The article was presented to the international workshop on National Strategic Thinking: Integrating Palestinian Refugees and Diaspora Communities, organized by the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue, together with the London-based Oxford Research Group, which took place in Vienna from September 5–8, 2019.

Dr. Hanna Safieh is one of the founders of the Confederation of Palestinian Communities in Latin America and the Caribbean – COPLAC – established in 1985. He served as its president from 1987 until 1993, and as its secretary general from 1993 until 2017. He was a member of the Palestinian National Council from 1988 to 2018, and a member the Palestinian Central Council from 1989 to 2018. He holds a doctorate in physical chemistry of combustion from the Catholic University of Leuven.
If you’d been born and raised in Palestine, you’d know that some people are born to suffer. And it never stops, for them. Not for a second. You’d know where real suffering comes from. It’s the same place where love and freedom and pride are born. And it’s the same place where those feelings and ideals die. That suffering never stops. We only pretend it does. We only tell ourselves it does, to make the kids stop whimpering in their sleep.”

- Gregory David Roberts, *Shantaram*

Where does Palestine exist? Does Palestine exist only in the memories of people who lost it and can never regain it? Does Palestine only exist anymore to serve as a voice that negates all the other voices? Has Palestine existed only to set the example of resilience, *sumud*, and resistance? Does Palestine exist only to serve as the example of suffering and injustice? Is Palestine the mecca of suffering and displacement?

Someone once said that when we read, we live in bodies that are not our own. To me, that’s one of the most beautiful images of reading that I’ve come across. It was only after I heard this that I started to relate to being both the Palestinian who lives under the brutal and unfair realities of today and the Palestinian of pre-1948 who had a very different experience of Palestine. I got to thinking that the same applies when we recall and document memories. Through the eyes of those who lived in this country pre-1948, Palestine has only one beautiful image that can never be replaced no matter where they are and no matter where they go – from those who have been dispossessed of their homes, lands, and belongings, to those who still carry the key to their homes and who still live with the dream of returning. Only through the documentation of the lives of those who have witnessed injustice can we, who were born in the aftermath of it all, learn about what life was like for Palestinians whose first experience of Palestine was not connected with their experience of growing up with the military occupation growing bigger every day.

William Faulkner once wrote: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past,” and I have to agree with him. The past is never a past as it transforms itself into the present that leads into the future. On the other hand, in a context where the past defines the future of generations to follow, the past is haunting. It weighs on the shoulders of every Palestinian, whether it refers to the days we reminisce over or to those nightmarish realities of dispossession and displacement.

When asked about what a memoir really is, the famous memoirist Sue William Silverman said: “Of much greater interest, and at the heart of memoir, is the story behind the story, the memoirist’s courageous ability to reflect upon the past, thus artistically recasting his or her experience into one that’s transformative.” Thus, a transformative reality would be the case in which I talk about the Palestine that I only know from the memory of others, fellow Palestinians who have seen a better, more wholesome picture. A memory is “the faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information.”

Memories, memoirs, and Palestinians have always been intertwined. Palestinians have a lot of memories of better days and better realities, awful incidents and awful realities that cannot be erased. Palestinian memoir is a reflection of the history of displacement for people such as Edward Said, Mahmoud Darwish, and many others who were defined by a state of exile, who were born with the weight of what could have been. As a result, they wrote about Palestine from their memories as if being in exile created a constantly shifting reality that required them to stabilize and unify the Palestine they once witnessed. Through writing, one can start from the very beginning.
from the time in which one’s mind started to grasp the idea of a country and what a country resembles, whether in childhood memories or in those times when home became distant and geographically far away.

We cannot go back to where we were; those places are not the same places that were taken away from us. However, it is through capturing those moments and the feeling of that time, it’s having been part of something that stretched so far back that we know that we are the accumulation and the result of those times and those realities. The wounds of the dispossession of millions of Palestinians will never heal but will always be present, hitting them every once in a while to remind them how deep the wound was and always will be, how immense the loss was and still is, how they were forced out of their own country.

I grew up with stories of a Palestine that no longer exists, a Palestine where Palestinians lived on their land before the occupation exiled them from their homes and lands. It was a Palestine that frankly doesn’t even remotely resemble the tormented, disfigured, occupied Palestine of today.

Within this context, at a time when attempts are made to disfigure the Palestinian identity, is it reasonable to talk about Palestinian identity – past and present? Is it logical to address the past, generations later? Can I speak with fondness about Palestine if I haven’t seen it? Can we be attached to something that has passed us by? Does history treat everyone the same way?

Today we witness commentators and decision-makers who talk sensibly about the real issues of justice and equality in Palestine, where reality is far from being sensible, far from being rational, and far from being fair! Does the voice of justice for Palestinians sound whimsical? Or is the taste of justice and equality for Palestinians considered an acquired taste?

If I were to write about the Palestine of today, the Palestine that I grew up in, it wouldn’t be as beautiful or as poetic as writing about the Palestine of the past. I grew up with the image of Palestine already tainted by occupation, already lacking color. The image wouldn’t be comprehensible anymore, with the settlements suffocating what’s left of Palestine; the picture wouldn’t be whole with the disfiguration of Palestinian cities within the West Bank and the complete alienation of Gaza. How would I begin to write about the Palestine of today? How would I be able to calculate its aesthetic value when it’s so emaciated by occupation that you wouldn’t believe that it’s the same Palestine that Mahmoud Darwish so eloquently described: “We have on this land that which makes life worth living.” However, no matter how people perceive it, Palestine is like coffee in all its forms – it can be black, it can be bittersweet, or it can be sweet. But no matter how you take it, it is something that wakes you up, and it is impossible to stay awake without it.

Palestinian generations have witnessed different versions of Palestine: Palestine under Ottoman rule, Palestine under British rule, Palestine under the Israeli occupation. Others have witnessed Palestine from afar, and some have witnessed it through the memory of others. Palestine is multigenerational, multidimensional, and multi-definitional. But no matter how people choose to view Palestine, it will always shine bright, always radiate the farthest and stand the highest once it is liberated from the hideousness of occupation.

Muna Nassar is a writer, freelancer translator, and literary personality based in Bethlehem. She spends her time reading, writing, and working to articulate a different narrative that represents her perspective as a Palestinian. She is involved in the cultural domain in Bethlehem, has worked at the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, and is currently working as a project coordinator with Kairos Palestine.

"An unfortunate 15 minutes in Palestine

In 1979, a group of young and energetic people, driven by the desire to change some traditions but at the same time preserve those that are valuable and beneficial in Palestinian society, decided to form a dance troupe. As with all decisions, the future can be imagined but is never certain, and success is never guaranteed, as was the case for these young individuals. The awareness of their milieu and society’s needs was not the same as today, 40 years after the troupe’s establishment. Nevertheless, they had a vision at the time, which was to form a sustainable dance troupe that could grow and bring about the desired changes in society while at the same time ensuring a balance between the old and the new. With determination to face the unknown challenges that lay ahead, the troupe was established in March 1979. The founders recognized that this project would require wisdom, careful inquiry, discussion, and scientific research in the field of folklore.

Rebirth and renewal have continued to be the themes that run through the past years of growth, allowing the troupe to remain vibrant, harmoniously integrating new ideas in the same way as railway workers connect one railway station with another by laying and linking iron bars to connect to the world. In this way, the troupe has provided an unlimited space for freedom and imagination within the framework of its long-standing principles and vision.

The troupe, therefore, has been able to welcome the new and preserve the old, weaving all together in such a way as to preserve the integrity of the whole. After 13 years of active membership in El-Funoun, I only became aware of its diversity and tremendous growth when I was able to access its 40-year archive.
to envisage a panoramic view that encompasses time and place simultaneously, enabling one to capture the social, political, and artistic dimensions of the troupe’s experience.

Third, the archive is as old as the troupe. And it is important to note that the stages of growth of the troupe and the archive are intertwined and connected to one another. In other words, the archive of the first generation is organically connected to the second archive of the second generation. This means that the development of the troupe and its archive did not invalidate previous experiences. On the contrary, the archive was transformed into resources for building and developing the troupe’s productions and performances, thus enriching its scope and horizon, exemplified by its performances over the years. This in turn made the option of only scratching the surface necessary in order to produce the exhibition *From the Archive Room*, which was the main goal.

**From the Archive Room**

It is impossible to contain El-Funoun’s archive in one exhibition or in one room. This became apparent during the many heated discussions that were held with the exhibition’s curator, Yazid Anani, who examined the troupe’s long experience from many angles. Yazid reached the basic conclusion that looking at the archive is the same as looking at the troupe now. Moreover, the troupe’s experience, artistically at least, cannot be seen from only one angle, nor can we look at the archive only from a single angle.

Although hundreds of exhibitions and works of art can be created to reflect the troupe’s experiences, the archive was presented in an exhibition that would focus on the most striking and essential, since its aim was to provide public access to the archive for the first time. It was astonishing to discover the members’ reactions during the preparation process: their sense of personal ownership of the exhibition provoked a certain stress that was not due to the preparation process but was the result of an individualistic mentality that would have impeded the healthy functioning and success of the troupe had it been present during the previous 40 years. It is possible, however, for this feeling and dedication to work positively when it is part of collective experience, becoming a means of cohesiveness among the team, which is the secret of the troupe’s continuity.

Yazid Anani, the curator of the exhibition, recognized the complexity of the team’s work and the underlying drive and sense of belonging and ownership. Because of this, he requested that no interference or intervention be made by any member of the troupe in the preparation process of the exhibition; his request was honored.
It is worth noting that the artistic creativity of the troupe is subject to its cumulative experience over the years and cannot be reflected in a reality that works increasingly against collective action. On the contrary, the troupe’s work and continuity are based on the principle of collection action, which is a reflection of its identity and vision.

El-Funoun develops and promotes contemporary Palestinian dance through reviving Palestinian folklore and building on it by adding El-Funoun’s unique dance style. This style is a product of El-Funoun’s own social and artistic perception influenced by Arab and international dance experiences.

The troupe is not a stagnant reality but a live body that grows and develops in harmony with the view of world folklore and heritage, in general, and that of Arab Palestinian folklore and heritage, in particular. The passion of the troupe’s founders is linked to the maturity, awareness, sense of responsibility, and commitment expressed by the present members in the team’s artistic productions, as well as in ensuring continuity of experiences cumulatively passed on from generation to generation.

In conclusion, the archive provided a window that allowed us to view a vast field of human experience that is dense with varied knowledge and skills that are artistic, political, and social, but first and foremost human, and which has carried its members throughout the years from a personal experience towards a collective one that concerns and benefits an entire people.

Article photos courtesy of A.M. Qattan.

Anas Abu Oun has been the project coordinator at El-Funoun Palestinian Dance Troupe since 2014 and a dancer since 2007. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in journalism and political science from Birzeit University in 2011. He has published many articles in various magazines and newspapers.
Salim Tamari

Dr. Salim Tamari was born in the city of Jaffa in 1945 and is one of Palestine’s most prominent researchers in the field of historical sociology. Currently appointed as professor of sociology (emeritus) at Birzeit University, Salim is a senior fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies, editor of the Jerusalem Quarterly, and one of Palestine’s most published scholars. Among his many works are Year of the Locust: A Soldier’s Diary and the Erasure of Palestine’s Ottoman Past (2010), The Mountain Against the Sea (2008), for which Rashid Khalidi, professor of history and contemporary Arab studies at Columbia University, referred to him as “the preeminent Palestinian historical sociologist,” and most recently, The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine (2017).

In The Great War and the Remaking of Palestine, Salim explores Palestine under the Ottoman rule during World War I, highlighting the transformative nature of the conflict in Palestine, and the Ottoman roots of Palestinian and Arab modernity. Most importantly, he tackles the challenges of writing a history in the absence of a national archive, creatively utilizing family papers and archives that were crucial to many of his works. Palestinian scholars, who did not even have a rubric for a state, began to rely on external sources to recount their history: British records, the Israeli archival records, the Ottoman records that have recently become accessible, and less so, the Egyptian records. Palestine Islamic court records, and to a lesser extent church and municipal records, have so far been the main “native” sources for local history. Amidst these intertwined histories, the absence of Palestinian records has posed a problem for Palestinian scholars, which was the incentive for looking at family records and papers as a source to cover this void. This approach began with the development of the oral history project, where survivors from the 1936 rebellion and the 1948 Nakba were invited to provide documentation for these events through experience. Such efforts were later supplemented with researching family papers (diaries, memoirs, photographs, and records of daily life) available at Birzeit University, the Institute for Palestine Studies, and An-Najah University, which created a very important archival repository. These records allowed for a reading of social history through the biographical lens of family papers, which greatly informed Salim’s work. He notes that once we start examining people’s biographical trajectories, we discover a great deal of variation in types of consciousness, in experiences of war, and in looking back at the texture of the moment, which challenges the retrospective from which national history was generalized.

Salim’s works assert that a main cornerstone of sociology is social history and that we cannot understand the social dynamics of urban life, rural life, or rural transformation without understanding the historical trajectories of people going through these frames. He hopes to continue to utilize this methodology as he explores the Palestine of the 1920s and 1930s due to the importance of recovering that past as the dispossession of Palestinians continues into the present.
Jerusalem is a massive tourist attraction. In recent years, the city has welcomed around 4 million tourists annually. Most tourists arrive via Israeli tourist agencies that send them to stay in Israeli hotels, eat in Israeli restaurants, and shop in Israeli markets. They are not taken to visit the eastern side of Jerusalem and hardly ever meet Palestinians. International booking agencies usually follow Israeli tourism propaganda and feature Israeli businesses and tours almost exclusively.

This hits Palestinians both politically and economically. The Palestinian narrative remains absent in the mainstream tourist experience. Tourists neither see the occupation nor learn about it. They are not exposed to the Israeli policies of displacement that target Palestinians. Tourists do not spend money at Palestinian businesses, supporting – often unaware – Israeli plans to suffocate the Palestinian economy in the city and displace as many Palestinians from it as possible.

Titled *Wujood*, Arabic for “existence” and “presence,” this book puts the Palestinian existence in Jerusalem back on the map. It is our invitation to you to visit a Jerusalem that you might not know.

In the first chapter, “Living in Jerusalem,” you’ll find all the practical information you need during your stay in Jerusalem. It includes information about hotels, restaurants, markets, and shopping areas, as well as services such as transportation, health, Arabic courses, and more.

In the second chapter, “The Jerusalem Story,” you’ll find information about the political context of Palestinians who live in Jerusalem. It is the story of more than a century of colonization that is still threatening to ethnically cleanse Jerusalem of Palestinians.

In the third chapter, “The People of Jerusalem,” *Wujood* introduces you to Jerusalem’s communities. You can read about the history of Jerusalem’s neighborhoods and villages, as well as their political reality, community organizations, and grassroots initiatives. In addition, you’ll find maps of these areas and information about the recommended sites to visit.

In the last chapter, “Around Palestine,” you’ll find information about other Palestinian cities, from Akka (Acre) in the north to the Naqab (Negev) Desert in the south, from Jericho in the east to Jaffa in the west. Just like in Jerusalem, here too you will find the forced absence of Palestinian history, culture, and economy.

*Wujood* provides the part of the story that the occupation authorities are trying hard to hide. But it is not merely the story of an aggressive and systematic ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians. It is also the story of an entire community that has been left out of the picture but that has a lot to offer its visitors – centuries of history and heritage, beautiful nature, delicious food, generous families, inspiring grassroots initiatives, and more. Today, the city’s various parts are fragmented by walls and administrative boundaries. *Wujood* aims to reunite these parts to form the Jerusalem we historically know.

Whether you’re a Palestinian or a visitor, *Wujood* will help you discover a Jerusalem you might not otherwise know. It’s more than just a guidebook, it’s for anyone who wants to know the city’s story.

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**Buy Wujood**

1) Jerusalem: Grassroots Al-Quds office, 9 Harun Al-Rashid Street
- The Educational Bookshop, 19 Salah Eddin Street
- Sunbula, 15 Nablus Road

2) Ramallah: Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, Khalil Sakakini Street
- Al-Roua Bookshop, Akel Center
- Al-Ju’beh Bookshop, near Al-Manara roundabout
- Area D Hostel, Maliki building, Mosque Street, fifth floor

3) Bethlehem: Tanween Bookshop, Karkafeh Street

Get your electronic copy online through our website [www.grassrootsalquds.net](http://www.grassrootsalquds.net).

For more information about purchase and shipments, contact us at info@grassrootsalquds.org.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates about our sales points outside Palestine, Europe, and the United States.
Elias Halabi

Elias Halabi is a Palestinian artist and photographer who was born in Jerusalem in 1984 and who presently lives in Bethlehem. He holds a BA in sociology/psychology from Bethlehem University and a professional diploma in management and preservation of artistic cultural heritage in the Near East from the University of Eastern Piedmont Amedeo Avogadro in Vercelli, Italy. Combining his academic specialization with his passion for photography, he has mastered the art of photography based on social art.

Elias’s interest in photography started in England in 2009 while he was working in public relations and communications. He would often give public speeches about Palestine, yet he felt that there was something missing in his presentations. He searched for images that reflected the beauty of Palestine and its culture, but the majority of photos were of politics and life under Israeli occupation. This was the moment that Elias decided to pick up a camera and start taking photos. In 2011, his skillful lens gained the attention and award of the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) Vettor Giusti Tourism Award Poster Competition 2011–2013, which encouraged him to carry on with his mission to tell the story of his people and beloved land.

While most Palestinian photographers at the time focused on journalism and politics, Elias decided to show the other side of the coin, a side that is unfamiliar to many locals or internationals. He strove to reveal the rich cultural heritage and lifestyle of the Palestinians and the beauty and diversity of Palestine’s natural landscapes.

Over the past few years, Elias’s artwork has made its way into local and international solo and joint exhibitions, magazines, websites, and books. Being the first official photographer of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Nativity and working with a number of NGOs, governmental ministries, and consulates, he has been provided with a unique platform to reflect Palestine as he sees it.

Elias is currently preparing for his solo exhibition about Bethlehem at Bab IdDeir Gallery, uncovering for the first time some of his outstandingly remarkable photos of the Bethlehem governorate. The exhibition will feature religious sites, cultural heritage, landscape, and lifestyle.

To explore more of his work, visit www.eliashalabi.com or his Facebook page, Elias Halabi Photography.
Violence, Fast and Slow

Hosted by Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center

Investigations by Forensic Architecture/Center for Contemporary Nature

Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center is hosting the exhibition Violence, Fast and Slow, which presents some of the findings of Forensic Architecture research agency. The agency undertakes spatial and multimedia investigations of human rights violations across the globe. The research is exhibited as multimedia artwork using video, images, text, and sound. The final work, which is built on both aesthetic and critical architectural theories, and international human rights laws, is then shown in comprehensive and complex research exhibitions. The reasons for hosting the exhibition come from a critical context and with the aim to highlight the logic behind human rights practices and the language employed. We consider presenting Forensic Architecture’s work for the first time in Palestine primarily as an attempt to understand its practices as an international agency that addresses Palestine in its research and work, targeting international and Western audiences.

In this exhibition, Centre for Contemporary Nature (CCN) presents two large-scale investigations in Palestine, where the ongoing Nakba is exemplified by both the displacement of people and the transformation of the environment. CCN is one of Forensic Architecture research divisions that is dedicated to examining environmental violence. The premise of CCN is that while historically, nature has been understood as a static, eternal backdrop against which human activity unfolds, today we must understand it as a situated historical project.

The two investigations are concerned with contiguous places: one in the Naqab and the other in Gaza. In both these locations, environmental destruction has become a means for border production – in Gaza the environmental destruction is mobilized as part of the production and fortification of the border and in the Naqab as a mode of weaponizing the fleeting threshold of the desert. In both, environmental destruction erupts with lethal physical force. These investigations thus describe forms of destruction that are both slow and fast, expanding the way of thinking about violence in the context of colonial domination. What is repeated in these investigative inquiries is the symmetry of ground and figure – a continuum of violence that links the slow killing of the land to the fast killing of the body.

We invite you to attend the exhibition as active and critical viewers of the logic behind the work and the ideas presented in these investigations in order to offer a Palestinian perspective to the agency. The exhibition continues until October 23, 2019. We’d also like to invite you to attend the discussions and workshops that will take place during the period of the exhibition, which will help us to rethink this work and other projects and initiatives that emanate from the notion of accountability of human rights principles and international law.

This exhibition is supported by the A. M. Qattan Foundation through the Visual Arts: A Flourishing Field project.
The Iraqi Army Martyrs Graveyard

By Bassam Almohor

Every time I think of our history, I become nauseated. I cannot finish even one history book about the loss of modern Palestine and how it was occupied, suppressed, taken, blockaded, divided, mined, and stolen. But something powerful drags us towards remembering tragedy, death, and loss. Here, we remember the Iraqi Army Martyrs Graveyard in Nablus (32.2171, 35.295).

Hidden among cypress trees inside the campus of Nablus Secondary Industrial School and protected by a low wall with an arched cement gate is a cemetery of forgotten Iraqi soldiers who were killed by the Zionist forces in the battle of Palestine in 1948. The cemetery contains the remains of around 200 mainly Iraqi soldiers, in addition to some other Arab soldiers from neighboring countries, including Lebanon and Jordan.

Clean and polished white headstones, recently placed in the dry brush, mark the resting place of these forgotten soldiers. Their names, clearly written in black paint that is visible from a distance, seem perhaps to beg to be remembered. In the middle of the graveyard, a memorial was built by the Iraqi army after the war of 1948. A two-meter stone column with a square head bears the words: “The Iraqi Army” in Arabic, and underneath is written, “The memorial to the martyrs of the Iraqi army,” decorated by two leaves in black old paint. Two dry wreaths still lie at the memorial, perhaps from the Eid last August when we remembered our dead.

All headstones bear the same title, and most of the soldiers were killed on the same day, June 7, 1948, perhaps in the battle of Jenin. “Martyr of Palestine Arabism” is written on all headstones, a phrase that bears with it the burden of loss that the Arabs have shouldered for the past 71 years. Several sad lines are engraved on every white headstone – the common title, the soldier’s name, his army division, date of death, and the country of origin. Some of them were left without a name, signifying that perhaps these soldiers had lost their dog tags when in battle, perhaps their bodies were so deformed that their dog tags got damaged and couldn’t be found, perhaps their remains were mixed together and couldn’t be identified.

The cemetery is located in Askar, at the edge of Askar Refugee Camp in Nablus which was established on the eve of the Nakba in 1948; a powerful location next to a refugee camp – those dead and those still living, dreaming of their return.

There is another smaller Iraqi army martyrs’ graveyard for those who fell during the battle of Jenin with the Israeli forces. It is located in Shuhada village, south of Jenin, where the remains of 40 soldiers are buried.

To visit the cemetery, you have to enter the main gate to the industrial school from the north, adjacent to Askar Refugee Camp. Turn left and cross the abandoned football field with the broken goal; you will see a barren rectangular plot of land with a wall surrounding it. Go beyond it to the next rectangular plot with high cypress trees and enter it from the main arched gate.

Before you go, call the industrial school to check whether the gate is open: 09 232 6818.

Bassam Almohor can be reached at almohor@gmail.com, 059 753 4681, or through Facebook: @palestinestreetlife.
**JERUSALEM**

**CONCERTS**

Thursday 31

18:00 Concert performed by Juan Paradel Solé from Spain, who is the titular organist of the "Sistine" Musical Pontifical Chapel Choir and who performs regularly at the liturgical celebrations conducted by the pope at Saint Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican. Organized as part of Terra Sancta Organ Festival. Church of St. Saviour.

Thursday 24

18:00 Concert performed by Erzsébet Windhager-Geréd from Romania, who has been the organist of the Lutherische Stadtkirche in Vienna since 2006. Organized as part of Terra Sancta Organ Festival in collaboration with the Romanian Cultural Institute. Church of St. Saviour.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

Saturday 5, 12, 19, 26

10:00–19:00 Souk al-Makhour is a weekly farm-to-basket shopping market that offers Palestinian and Arabic traditional and authentic products and fresh organic fruits and vegetables, along with live music, cultural exchanges, art, nature exploration, and amazing local dishes that take into consideration vegans, vegetarians, and gluten-free options. Al-Makhour Valley, Beit Jala.

Saturday 26

11:00–19:00 The 19th Annual Olive Harvest Festival organized by Bethlehem Peace Center and the Environmental Education Center, in cooperation with local institutions, featuring a traditional market of olives, olive oil, olive trees, olive wood, traditional soap, traditional food, tile making, and embroidery, as well as various Palestinian folkloric shows. Manger Square and Bethlehem Peace Center.

**THEATER**

Tuesday 1

18:00–19:30 Meramieh is a play about refugees and their endless striving to return to their homes and lands. Organized by Al-Hara Theatre. Alrowwad Cultural and Arts Society, Aida Refugee Camp.

**HAIFA**

**CONCERTS**

Monday 25

18:00 Concert on the occasion of the 800th anniversary of the Pilgrimage of Peace of St. Francis to the Middle East, performed by the international concert organist, Eugenio Maria Fagiani presenting organ improvisations on episodes from St. Francis’ life. The event encompasses clips from the silent movie Brother Sun (1918), written by Mario Corsi and directed by Ugo Falena. This concert is part of the Terra Sancta Organ Festival. St. Joseph Latin Parish.

**RAMALLAH**

**BOOK LAUNCHES**

Monday 29

18:00 Shusmo book launch by Khaled ElAhmad about first impressions taken from a person’s name. A.M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

Sunday 20

17:30–19:00 Going Home: A Walk through Fifty Years of Occupation book launch by the Palestinian author Raja Shehadeh, followed by a discussion with Tania Tamari Nasir describing the book’s story of the intertwined past and present of Ramallah’s social, political landscape and its surrounding settlements over the last 50 years. The Palestinian Museum. For participation, please register at www.palmuseum.org.
EXHIBITIONS

Saturday 12
11:00–16:00 Opening of Echo, is a scientific, artistic, communal, and interactive exhibition in sound and its phenomena, organized by the Science Studio Educational Research and Development Program of the A. M. Qattan Foundation, on the phenomena of sound and hearing physics, soundscape in natural and urban acoustic environments, sound in musicology and musical instruments and sonification, the analysis and study of acoustic fields in scientific, engineering, biological, social and historical settings. The exhibition runs till the end of December 2019. Science Studio, A. M. Qattan – Al Masayef, Ramallah Recreational Complex, opposite Radana Park.

Wednesday 23
14:00–15:00 Guest Curator’s Tour, organized by the Palestinian Museum, with Dr. Tina Sherwell, to explore a long history of representations of the Palestinian landscape and its topographical changes over the years. The Palestinian Museum.

Wednesday 23
15:30-16:30 Objects-In-Focus: The Palestinian Gazelle, with artist ManalMahamid, presenting how the image of the gazelle reflects the case of distortion resulting from the game of role exchange and crossbreeding, the amputated gazelle probes the cultivation of culture of the civilized state that erases historical memory. The Palestinian Museum.

FILM SCREENINGS

Wednesday 16
18:00 A Cat in Paris, produced in 2010 and directed by Jean-Loup Felicioli and Alain Gagnol, is a 65-minute animated comedy-thriller in English with Arabic subtitles that features the story of Dino, a cat owned by Zoe, daughter of a widowed female police superintendent who becomes involved in crime. Dino follows a good-natured cat burglar on his nocturnal journeys across the roofs of Paris. The characters are drawn similarly to early Picasso figures with massive foreheads that merge into their noses. The film’s quirky aesthetics and fun dialogue make it one of the more inventive animated works in recent history. A. M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

Wednesday 23
18:00 Lime, produced in 1931 and directed by Mário Peixoto, is a 120-minute Brazilian silent film inspired by a haunting André Kertész photograph on the cover of a French magazine. This avant-garde silent masterpiece centers on the story of a man and two women who are lost at sea, their pasts unfolding through flashbacks. A. M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

Wednesday 30
18:00 Bless Their Little Hearts, produced in 1983 and directed by Billy Woodberry, is an 80-minute American film in English with Arabic subtitles, featuring a sensitive and thought-provoking depiction of everyday life in the story of Charlie Banks who is on what seems to be a never-ending search for steady employment. A. M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

LECTURES

Wednesday 16
17:00–19:00 “Material Heritage in Rural Palestine through a Reexamination of the Traditional Olive Oil Press” is a lecture presented by Maisoun Sharkawi to discuss her research on how cultural heritage has been underrepresented in Palestine’s literature, and how she has sought an industrial revival in the production of olive oil, a historically essential ingredient in the Palestinian economy. The Palestinian Museum. For participation, please register at www.palmuseum.org.

Friday 18
18:00 Artist talk with Javier Toscan elaborating on his work during his two-month residency and his project that develops visual and technical research on water politics in the West Bank and Gaza, showing the control of water as a vital resource by a colonial power. A. M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

Tuesday 22
18:00 “Ground Truth” by Eyal Weizman, organized as part of “Palestine from above” public program project. Weizman demonstrates how the use of aerial imaging is manipulated to erase the colonized. Instead of leaving gaps in maps or renaming places, pixel and grain sizes are manipulated to read inconvenient truths out of historical aerial images. A. M. Qattan Foundation Theatre.

Wednesday 16
17:00–19:00 “Must Be Heaven” by Elia Suleiman. The exhibition will run till October 9, 2019. Ramallah Cultural Palace. For more information about the festival’s program, please visit http://pcd.fil.ps/rguest.

Friday 4
17:00–18:00 Circus performance organized by the Palestinian Museum and Palestine Circus School that explores the idea of freedom of movement in a different way by providing a trail in the museum with circus specialties stations to be placed in various locations around the terrace and the garden for participants of all ages and their families to have an extraordinary experience at the museum. A second performance will run from 19:00 to 20:00. The Palestinian Museum. For participation, please register at www.palmuseum.org.

Friday 4 – Tuesday 22
The tale of Sheikh Sa’ed Village is a series of workshops organized by the Palestinian Museum with writer Ahlam Bsharat and artists Haneen Nazzal and Hiba Saleem to explore the impact of the violent act on the identity, social relations, and economy in Sheikh Sa’ed Village through creative writing, comics, animation, and shadow theater. In the course of six sessions per workshop, the first participating group will work with the writer, Ahlam Bsharat, to develop stories that narrate the lived experience in Sheikh Sa’ed based on a field visit to the village. After that, the second group of participants will visualize the written stories as comics, while the third group will animate these comics using shadow theater. The series will result in a short film, a comic book, a booklet of the final texts, and artistic postcards. The Palestinian Museum and Sheikh Sa’ed Village. For more information and participation, please register at www.palmuseum.org.

Tuesday 15 – Thursday 31
7:00–18:00 Olive harvesting is an initiative organized by Dar Zahran Heritage Building for volunteers to participate in picking olives in the only natural preserved area in Ramallah. Terrafida. For participation, please register at info@darzahran.org.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Tuesday 1 – Thursday 3
9:00–12:00 International Law orientation course, organized by Al-Haq Center for Applied International Law, for international organizations employees and diplomatic staff, presenting key legal issues regarding the occupied Palestinian territories and international humanitarian law. Al-Haq Center for Applied International Law.
**Cultural Centers**

**Al Ma’mal Foundation** for Contemporary Art
Al-Jawalda St. #8, New Gate, P.O.Box 14644, Jerusalem 91146
Tel: 02-6283457, Fax: 02-6272312
Email: info@almamalfoundation.org, www.almamalfoundation.org

**Palestinian Heritage Museum**
Abu Obeida St., P.O.Box 19377, Jerusalem.
Tel: +972 2 6272351, Fax: +972 2 6272341
Email: info@dita-museum.org
website: www.dita-museum.org

**The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM)**
Jerusalem 11 Azzahra St., Shihabi Building
Tel: +972(0)2-626-3230, Fax: +972 (0)2-627-1711
PO Box 65678, Jerusalem, 91666
Email: info@ncm.birzeit.edu, http://ncm.birzeit.edu
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/esncm/
Birzeit University,
Old Girl’s Hostel, Birzeit, Tel: 02-281-9155/6
Ramallah Tel: 02-2956970-1, Fax: 02-2956971
Beit Sahour Tel & Fax: 02-2748704
Tchaikovsky Musical School Tel & Fax: 022778606
Nablus Tel & Fax: 09-2387773
Gaza Tel & Fax: 08-2628903

Photo courtesy of ESNCM

**Yabous Cultural Centre**
10 Al Zahra St, P.O.Box 54874
Jerusalem, Palestine
Tel: 009722 6261045, Fax: 009722 6261372
Email: office@yabous.org, Website: Yabous.org

**Dar Al Sabagh Centre for Diaspora Studies and Research**
Center for Cultural Heritage Protection
Star Street, Bethlehem, Tel and Fax: +970-2-2742225,
Email: daralsabagh@cchp.ps, daralsabagh
Facebook: Dar Al Sabagh Diaspora Studies and Research Centre

**Palestine Museum of Natural History**
Mar Andrea, Antonia Street, Bethlehem
Tel. 979-22773553 info@palestinenature.org
www.palestinenature.org/visit
Facebook: Palestine Museum of Natural History

**A.M. Qattan Foundation**
27 An-Nahda Women Association Street, Al-Tira, Ramallah – Palestine, P.O. Box 2276, Postal Code 90606
Telephone: +970 2 296 0544/+970 2 296 3280, Fax: +970 2 296 0544
Email: info@qattanfoundation.org, www.qattanfoundation.org

**Popular Art Centre**
Al-Ain Street, Box 3627, El-Bireh, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 240389, Fax: +970 2 2402859, Mob: +970 0 598947907
Email: info@popularartcentre.org, www.popularartcentre.org
Facebook: PopularArtCentre
http://twitter.com/PAC_ArtCentre
http://instagram.com/pac.artincentre

**Sareyyet Ramallah- First Ramallah Group**
Al-Tirah Street, P.O.Box: 2017, Ramallah: West Bank, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 295 27 06 / 970 2 295 26 90
Fax: +970 2 298 06 83
E-mail: sareyet@sareyet.ps / art@sareyet.ps, www.sareyet.ps
Facebook: Sareyet Ramallah

**The Palestinian Circus School**
Al Manzel Street, Birzeit
Tel: +970-2-2812000, Mobile: +972-59 2812001
Email: Info@palcircus.ps, www.palcircus.ps
Facebook: The Palestinian Circus School

**The Palestinian Museum**
Museum Street, PO Box 48, Birzeit, Palestine
Tel: +970 2 294 1948, Fax: +970 2 294 1936, Email: info@palmuseum.org
Facebook: The Palestinian Museum
Twitter: @palmuseum
Instagram: palmuseum
ACCOMMODATIONS

Ambassador Hotel  By Ambassador Collection
Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, 91196, Tel: 541 2222, Fax: 582 8202
reservation@jerusalemambassador.com, www.jerusalemambassador.com
Facebook: @amb.jerusalem
(118 rooms; b/f; cf; m/r; res)

Ambassador Boutique
By Ambassador Collection
5 Ibn Abu Taleb, Jerusalem
Tel: +972 2 632 5000, Fax: +972 2 632 5029
Email: boutique@ambassadorcollection.com

Ambassador City
By Ambassador Collection
Star Street, Bethlehem
Tel: +972 2 275 6400, Fax: +972 2 275 3736
Email: city@ambassadorcollection.com

Austrian Hospice of the Holy Family
Via Dobrosa 37, P.O.Box 19600, Jerusalem 91194
Tel: +972 2 628 6800, Fax: +972 2 628 6818
Email: office@austrianhospice.com, Website: www.austrianhospice.com

Casa Nova - Jerusalem Hospice Guesthouse
Casanova Street, New Gate
P.O.Box 1321 Jerusalem 9101301 Israel
Tel: 02 627 1441, 02 626 2974, Fax: 02 626 4370
Email: casanovaj@custodia.org, https://casanovaj.custodia.org/

Christmas Boutique Hotel
Al Ben Abi Taleb Street, Jerusalem
Tel: 02 626 2588, Fax: 02 626 4417
christmashotel@bezeqint.net

Gloria Hotel
Latin Patriarch St. 33, Jerusalem
Tel: 02 2431, Fax: 02 2401
gloria@netvision.net.
(104 rooms; m/r; res)

Jerusalem Hotel
15 Antara Ben Shadal St., Jerusalem
Tel: 02 3282, Fax: 02 3282, raed@jnhotel.com, www.jnhotel.com
Facebook: Jerusalem Hotel

Knights Palace Hotel
Freres Street, New Gate, Jerusalem
Tel: 02 2537, Fax: 02 2539
Kp@actcom.co.jl
(50 rooms; m/r; res)

Pontifical Institute
Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center
3 Paratroopers Road, P.O. Box 20531, Jerusalem, 91204
Tel: 02 9111, Fax: 02 1996, www.notredamecenter.org
Facebook: Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center

Ritz Hotel Jerusalem  *****
8 Ibn Khaldoun Street, P.O.Box 19186, Jerusalem
Tel: +972 (0)2 626 9900, Fax: +972 (0)2 626 9910
Email: reservations@jerusalenritz.com, www.jerusalenritz.com,
www.facebook.com/RitzHotelJerusalem

Seven Arches Hotel  *****
Mount of Olives, Jerusalem, 91190
Tel: 626 7777, Fax: 627 1319
svmarine@bezeqint.net, www.7arches.com

St. George Hotel
6 Amr Ibn Al A’as Street – Jerusalem
P.O.BOX 69272 Jerusalem 91544
Tel: +972 2 627 7232 , Fax: +972 2 627 7233
E-mail: info@stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com

Tantur Hills Hotel
Hebron Road 303 (before Rachel's Tomb)
P.O.Box 19250, Jerusalem 9119201
Tel: +972 2 565 8800 Fax: +972 2 565 8801
reservations@tanturhills.com, www.tantarhills.com

Caesar Hotel
Al Masyoun, Ramallah
Tel: 022979400 Fax: 022979401
info@caesar-hotel.ps, www.caesar-hotel.ps

Carmel Hotel  *****
Al-Masyoun, Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: 2997222 Fax: 2996966,
www.carmelhotel.ps
74 rooms & suites, 20 hotel apartment, Spa, Gym, 2 Bars, 6 conference rooms, 2 restaurants, and indoor parking.

Gemzo Suites Fully Furnished Executive Apartments
Al-Bireh, Ramallah, P.O. Box 4101, Tel, 02-2409729,
gemzo@palnet.com, www.gemzosuites.net

Lavender Boutique Hotel
Al-Nuzha Street 24 , Ramallah
Tel 297 7073
reservation@lavenderboutiquehotel.com, www.lavenderboutiquehotel.com

Millennium Hotel Palestine Ramallah
P.O Box 1771, Palestine, Ramallah, Al Masyoun
Tel: +970 2 2985888 Fax: +970 2 2985333
reservations.mhра@millenniumhotels.com, www.millenniumhotels.com

Taybeh Golden Hotel
Main Street 100 , Taybeh (Ramallah District)
Tel 289-8440
info@taybehgoldenhotel.com, www.taybehgoldenhotel.com
ACCOMMODATIONS

Bethlehem

Nativity Bells Hotel
City Center - Manger Street,
Tel: 00 972 2 2748880, 2748808, Fax: 00 972 2 2748870
Email: nativitybells@psenet.com, www.nativitybellsHotel.ps
https://www.facebook.com/NativityBellsHotel/  
Ibda'a Cultural Center Guesthouse
Dheisheh Refugee Camp, Bab al-Mohayem, Bethlehem
Tel +970 02 277 6444, info@ibdaea48.org www.ibdaea48.org
Ibda'a Cultural Center

Nablus

Al Yasmeen Hotel
Nablus
Tel: 09 233 3555 Fax: 09 233 3666
info@alyasmeen.com, www.alyasmeen.com

Jericho

Jericho Resorts ****
Bisan Street, Near Hisham Palace, 162 Jericho,
Tel: 232 1255, Fax: 232 2189
reservation@jericho-resorts.com, www.jericho-resorts.com
Jericho Resort Village

Oasis Hotel – Jericho
Jerusalem Street, Tel: 02 2311200, Fax: 022311222
Email: info@oasis-jericho.ps, website: http://www.oasis-jericho.ps
www.facebook.com/OasisJericho, Snapchat: oasis hotel

Rawabi

Rawabi Hotel Rental Apartments
Rawabi 666, Palestine
Mobile: 059 420 4378
rent@rawabi.ps

RESTAURANTS

Bethlehem

360°
Casanova Street, New Gate
P.O.Box 1321 Jerusalem 9101301 Israel
Tel: 02 627 1441, 02 626 2974, Fax: 02 626 4370
Email: casanova1@custodia.org, https://casanova1.custodia.org/

Al Diwan Restaurant Ambassador Hotel
Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, 91196, Tel: 541 2222, Fax: 582 8202
reservation@jerusalemambassador.com www.jerusalemambassador.com

Nablus

Al Yasmeen Hotel
Nablus
Tel: 09 233 3555 Fax: 09 233 3666
info@alyasmeen.com, www.alyasmeen.com

Jericho

Jericho Resorts ****
Bisan Street, Near Hisham Palace, 162 Jericho,
Tel: 232 1255, Fax: 232 2189
reservation@jericho-resorts.com, www.jericho-resorts.com
Jericho Resort Village

Oasis Hotel – Jericho
Jerusalem Street, Tel: 022311200, Fax: 022311222
Email: info@oasis-jericho.ps, website: http://www.oasis-jericho.ps
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Email: casanova1@custodia.org, https://casanova1.custodia.org/

Al Diwan Restaurant Ambassador Hotel
Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, 91196, Tel: 541 2222, Fax: 582 8202
reservation@jerusalemambassador.com www.jerusalemambassador.com

Restaurants

Borderline Restaurant Café
Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem 97200
Tel 532 8342, contact@shahwan.org
Italian Cuisine

Cheese & Wine Rooftop Restaurant
(Pontifical Institute Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center)
Tel 627 9177, restaurant@notredamecenter.org, www.notredamecenter.org
Notre Dame Rooftop/cheese & Wine Restaurant

Jerusalem Hotel Restaurant (Kan Zaman)
15 Antara Ben Shadat St., Jerusalem
Tel 628 3282, Fax: 6283282, raed@jrsotel.com, www.jrsotel.com
Jerusalem Hotel

La Collina Bistro and Restaurant
Tantur Hills Hotel, Hebron Road 303
Tel: +972 2 5658800 Fax: +972 2 5658801
Email: reservations@tanturhills.com, www.tanturhills.com
On Waze: Tantur Hills Hotel

Meejana Lounge (at St. George Hotel)
6 Amr Ibn Al Aas Street – Jerusalem
P.O. Box 69272 Jerusalem 91544
Tel: +972 2 627 7232, Fax: +972 2 627 7233
E-mail: info@stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com

Pasha’s
Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem 97200
Tel 582 5162, 582 8342, contact@shahwan.org
Oriental Food

Bab idDeir Cafe & Bar
Deir Quarter - Manger square, Bethlehem
Tel: 2769222
facebook/BabidDeirCB/

Fawda Restaurant Chef’s Table
A modern take on Palestinian cuisine
Hosh Al-Syrian Guesthouse, off Star Street, Bethlehem
Tel: 02-2747528, Email reservations@hoshalsyrian.com
Bookings required at least a day in advance

Shams Al-Aseel
Enjoy Palestine’s nature and cuisine
Al Makhrouf Valley, Beit Jala, Tel: 059-461-6011 / 052-744-2003
www.fb.com/shamsalaseel.palestine
RESTAURANTS

Azure Restaurant  Our home is yours
Mediterranean and Steaks
Tel and fax numbers +972-2-2957850, Email: Azure.rest@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/Azure.restaurant

Martini Bar
AlNasyoun, Ramallah
Tel: 2979400
Facebook: Martini Bar, Martinbar_ramallah

Pronto Restocafe  Italian Restaurant Est. 1997
Dr. Issa Ziadeh St., Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: 02-298-7312 or 0599-795-978, prontocafeeramallah@gmail.com
Facebook: Pronto Restocafe, prontoramallah

Zeit ou Zaater
Rukab St., Ramallah
(02) 295 4445, Email: zeitouzaater@gmail.com
Facebook: zeitouzaater

Zest
Issa Ziadeh Street, Ramallah, Palestine
Tel: 02.295.3555, E-mail Info@zest.ps
Facebook: ZESTRestaurantOfficial, zestrestaurantofficial

Qburger
Burger
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Shrak
Shawarma & Falafel
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Siroter
French Cafè & Bakery
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Quick Sandwiches Shop
Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
Tel: 02 282 5599
https://www.facebook.com/QCenterRawabiOfficial/

Zeit ou Zaater
Nablus
Tel: 09 233 3555 Fax: 09 233 3666
Info@alysameen.com, www.alysameen.com
Facebook: zeitouzaater

ATTRACTIONS

Levantine Gallery
Affordable originals, top quality prints and Arabic calligraphy
16 Christian Quarter Road, Old City Jerusalem
Tel: +972-2-970 7790 Mob: +972-52-675 4276
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Birzeit Brewing Co. Shepherds Beer
Brewing Beer of Palestine with passion for friends
Municipality street, Old town, Birzeit
Tel: +972 2 2819111, Mobile: +972 56 277 8665
Email: info@bbdc.ps, Website: www.shepherds.ps
Facebook: Shepherds Beer
Have you booked your tour?

Poster
Making Palestinian Art Accessible to Everyone. Get yours now!
7A President Square, AHBalo’, AlBireh
Tel: 02 2426466, Mob: 0592847732
zanani@zawyeh.net, www.zawyeh.net
**Attractions**

**Taybeh Brewery**
- Proudly Brewing & Bottling Premium Palestinian Beer since 1994
- Near the rotary, Taybeh Village, Ramallah District
- Tel: 02-289-8868, taybeh@palnet.com, www.taybehbeer.com
- [Visit on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/taybehbeer/)
- Opening Hours: Monday- Saturday 8 AM-3:30 PM

**Taybeh Winery**
- Making Boutique Palestinian Wines since 2013
- Main Street, Taybeh Village, Ramallah District
- Tel: 02-289-9440, info@taybehwinery.com, www.taybehwinery.com
- [Visit on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/TaybehWinery/)
- Opening Hours: Daily 9 AM-5 PM

**Zawayeh Gallery**
- 7A President Square, Al-Bata', Al Birah
- Tel: 02 2426486, Mob: 0597994997
- zanani@zawayeh.net, www.zawayeh.net

**Telepherique & Sultan Tourist Center**
- Enjoy the panoramic view of Jericho
- Elisha's Spring, P.O.Box 12, Jericho
- Tel: + 972 (2) 2321580; Fax: + 972 (2) 2321598
- Info@jericho-cablecar.com, www.jericho-cablecar.com
- [Visit on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/JerichoCableCar)

**Fun Factory Rawabi**
- Spacious indoor amusement park that introduces fun, comfort, and happiness for all ages.
- Q Center, Rawabi 666, Palestine
- Tel: 059 594 9026, https://www.facebook.com/funfactoryrawabi/

**Rawabi Extreme**
- Exciting outdoor games in the beautiful nature of Palestine.
- WaDina, Rawabi 666, Palestine
- Tel: 059 420 4377, https://www.facebook.com/RawabiExtreme

**Sa'adeh Science & Technology House- Alnayzak**
- We bring joy and science together and it's for everyone!
- Location: Al Haq Street in The Old City of Birzeit
- Tel: +970 2 281 9523 +970 2 281 9040
- Email: sciencehouse@alnayzak.org, www.sciencehouse.ps
- [Visit](https://www.facebook.com/Alnayzak - Science and Technology House)

**Travel Agencies**

**Dhaker Travel, Ltd.**
- 14 Azzaarsa St., P.O.Box 19055, Jerusalem
- Tel: +972 2 6283235, Fax: +972 2 627 1574
- Email:Dhaker@netvision.net.il

**George Garabedian & Co. L.T.D.**
- Tourist & Travel Bureau
- 24 Salahin St., Jerusalem
- Ticketing: +972-2-6283394, Incoming: +972-2-6283398
- ggc@ggc-ja.com, www.ggc-ja.com

**Samara Tourist & Travel Agency**
- 1 Greek Orthodox Pat. Rd., P.O.Box 14058, Jerusalem 91140
- Tel: +972-2-2421873, Telefax: +972-2-2421956
- info@samaratours.com, www.samaratours.com

**Golden Globe Tours**
- Ensal St, Ensal Center, Arna Tower, 5th floor
- Box 4181, El Bireh, Ramallah-Palestine
- Tel: +972 2 2421878, Fax: +972 2 2421879, Mob: +972 56 2550031
- Email: info@gg-tours.ps, Web: www.gg-tours.ps

**Tour Operators**

**Fraternum Tours Ltd.**
- P.O.Box 21727, Jerusalem 9121701
- Tel: +972 2 6767117 or +972 2 6767227, Fax: +972 2 6767266
- Email: fraternum@bezeqint.net, Web: www.fraternumtours.com

**Laila Tours & Travel**
- Grand Park Hotel, Second Floor, Manger Street – Holy Land
- Phone: +970 2 2777997/+970 2 2764886, Fax: +970 2 2777996
- Mobile: +972 528412911, Email: team@lailatours.com
- www.lailatours.com, [Visit on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/LailaToursTravel)
Sumud for Now

One can argue that sumud, or steadfast perseverance, is a Palestinian ideological theme and a political strategy par excellence. It is not a new concept, and many have written extensively about it. It’s actually a basic prerequisite to any path that we Palestinians have chosen or will choose in order to achieve our freedom and our independent state. In many, if not all, cases, our mere existence constitutes a formidable challenge to those who would like us to vanish into thin air. Can’t get any more basic than that.

Strategists claim that winning a war means achieving the goals set for it. We all know though that superiority in strength does not guarantee victory. Vietnam was certainly not stronger militarily than the United States, and Hezbollah wasn’t anywhere near as powerful as Israel in 2006. Regarding us, I will give you one guess as to who the stronger party is! It would be great if the fantasy of David and Goliath could work for us, but I wouldn’t count on it. So what do we do? How do we achieve our independence after decades of de-development, with economic hardship and political schism, to mention a few of our qualifications? I hope you’re not expecting a magical formula from these 500 words. However, as dim as the situation appears, there is indeed a light at the end of the tunnel.

I don’t believe that many would agree with me that the solution to our problem will not come from within. I believe we are too weak to have any meaningful impact politically. We surely have proven to be a class-A nuisance and pain in where the sun doesn’t shine, but no more than that. The proof is actually in the pudding. Don’t get me wrong, there is plenty that we can do before we get to the solution. First and foremost, we need to be steadfast till that moment comes. Teachers need to continue teaching, painters need to keep painting, surgeons need to operate and heal, poets need to compose poems, and cellists need to bow their cellos. This is sumud. We need to pave the way for students to pursue their higher education, we should continue to empower women, establish and strengthen the rule of law, and build our infrastructure, schools, hospitals, and factories. Oh, there is so much we need to do.

Now for the good news! The geopolitical situation both regionally and globally is most definitely changing. Don’t be fooled by empty rhetoric, theatrical stunts, and futile economic sanctions. There are new powers emerging from the East that will challenge the existing world order which, in fact, is showing signs of weakness and disintegration. The collapse of Thomas Cook, yes, but Brexit (for starters) is what I’m talking about. In less than ten years, we will be living in a different world. Only then will there be hope of solving the question of Palestine.

Long live Palestine.

Sani Meo
Publisher
Don't Wait Investigate

Early detection of breast cancer increases survival rate to more than 90%