



The Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS)

Highlights from the Documentary Archive



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he library of the Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS) was established simultaneously with the institute in 1963 in Beirut. The main objectives of the library align with those of the institute: preserving cultural heritage and Palestinian intellectual production, and monitoring developments concerning the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli

conflict through documentation and research. Over the years, the library has increased its acquisitions and expanded its role to become the first library in the Arab world that specializes in the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict, and one of the most important libraries in the world in its field of specialization.

In 1984 a decision was made by the IPS board of trustees to name the library in honor of Dr. Constantine Zurayk, one of the founders of the IPS and its honorary president for a quarter of a century, in recognition of and gratitude for his years of service.

The library of the IPS in Beirut comprises over 60,000 items that include hundreds of Arab and international periodicals and newspapers, rare collections of photographs, cinematic documentaries, a collection of maps of Palestine and its cities, and maps published by the Israeli government for the cities and

regions of the occupied territories. It furthermore holds a set of posters, copies of all documents issued by the United Nations and its agencies related to the Arab-Israeli conflict since 1947, all reports and documents issued by the League of Arab States and its specialized committees, and university theses related to the Palestinian cause and Israeli and Zionist affairs.

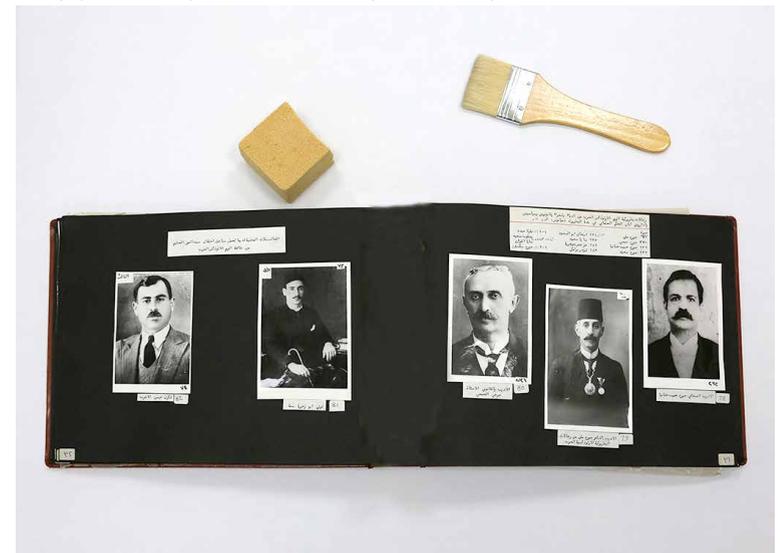
In 2003, the bibliographic information of the entire library's collections was made electronically available in an online catalog, which allows researchers and beneficiaries to search and retrieve bibliographic information anywhere in the world through accessing the link <https://library.palestine-studies.org/>.

The "Closed Area" book archives of the IPS library contain 1,128 titles that include special collections of rare books, among them books issued by the British Mandate government, and documents from official Arab and Zionist sources. For example,

The Archive of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut is organized into eight sections: "Closed Area" book archives, Private Papers, Other Documents Kept at the Library, Microfilms, Photo Collections, Documentary Films and CDs, Arab and Foreign Documents, and the Electronic Archive of Social History in Palestine.

the library includes the *Official Gazette of the Mandate Government* (1922–1948), valuable collections of the Mandate government's correspondence with the Colonial

Photographs are carefully cleaned, labeled, and digitized before they are stored.





Processing photographs before they are stored.

Office, reports of the British Royal Commissions of Inquiry and of the international commissions that visited Palestine, reports issued by the US State Department, and the resolutions of the successive Zionist conferences (since 1897) in Hebrew, German, and English.

The Private Papers collection maintains the papers of political and military personalities who donated their private files to the institute. They are unique, original handwritten documents that comprise private papers, correspondences, petitions, memos, statements, meeting minutes, conference decisions, discussions with delegations, photographs, and maps. Many of these documents were included in the activities of leaders of the Palestinian national movement.

The private papers collection includes the papers of the famous Palestinian personality Akram Zuaiter (1909–1996) that consist of four collections and cover the period from 1911 to 1939 – around 7,000 pages. They highlight the positions of the parties that played a major role in

the early history of the development of the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Zionist conflict. Another example is the papers of Fawzi al-Qawuqji (1890–1977), the leader of the Arab Liberation Army in the Palestine War. His collection includes 2,800 papers and is divided into two titles: Military communiqués of the Arab Liberation Army (the 1947–1948 wars), and a set of letters and documents dealing with al-Qawuqji's activities from 1926–1927 and in 1936 in Palestine. The library also includes the papers of Dr. Elmer Berger (1908–1996), who served as the president of the US-based American Jewish Alternatives to Zionism association; they comprise 18,000 documents that cover more or less all activities of this association from the fifties to the late 1970s. The papers of the Palestinian educator Ahmad Samih Al-Khalidi (1869–1952) are also in the same personalities category; they consist of nine notebooks and 1,061 papers under the titles “Palestine as I Knew It (1896–1948)” and “Palestine in Half a Century: I Saw It Collapse.” Here you also find the papers of Jerusalem mayor Rawhi Al-Khatib

(1914–1994), whose documents are divided into five files that cover the period from 1967 to 1981; they include documents issued by him and by other Palestinian, Arab, and Israeli entities and personalities and focus on the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem and the attempts to Judaize the city. The papers of the writer Asma Toubi (1905–1983) who belonged to the Arab *Nahda* (Renaissance) movement are also in this category. They include three handwritten letters in Arabic from 1944 and 1946 addressed to Asma Toubi, letters handwritten in English to and from Asma Toubi, and a note in French, dated March 3, 1948, from the Christian Union Committee in Palestine that addresses all religious and political organizations worldwide, and the papers of Al-Khoury Nicolas Al-Khoury (1885–1954); they contain 64 photocopied pages of his handwritten diary that covers events in Palestine during the British Mandate.

The archive includes another set of rare documents that do not meet the definition of an “original document,” which means that they are not in the handwriting of the owner and not solely in possession of the institute. Nevertheless, these documents are rare and important. Some are in the form of photocopies of the original, such as papers and diaries of Arab men who were contemporaneous with the Palestinian national work, in addition to papers of politicians, soldiers, and foreign officials who played an important role in the history of Palestine.

The indexing of papers and private documents is carried out according to the following criteria: number; address; author; date of writing; size; personal history of author; contents; terms of use; language; copyright terms; place of preservation.

The Other Documents Kept at the Library section also contains copies of original documents. There is the collection of documents of the labor movement in Palestine that consists of 942 papers, divided into five groups that cover the period from 1925 to 1948. Among them are 319 papers written by Michel Mousa Sindaha that deal with Palestinian Arab workers from the occupied territories who worked in Israel, detailing the number of these workers, the pressures and factors that contributed to their working in Israel, the phenomenon of racism against them, their wages, and their participation in the national struggle against the occupation. The library also includes 376 pages of published papers that deal with political and military developments regarding the Palestinian question after World War II, such as the meeting of the Arab League Council in Bloudan; the London Conference on the Palestinian question, held in September 1946 and January 1947; as well as the Palestinian question at the United Nations meeting in its second session. It also includes the collection of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which consists of 1,400 pages in English and deals with details about Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons (date of birth, date of arrest, reason for arrest, etc.). The documents were reproduced from the originals and also include papers of politicians and military and foreign officials who played an important role in the history of Palestine. They thus include the papers of Sir Wyndham Deedes, who played an important role at the beginning of the British Mandate over Palestine, and the letters of Viscount Edmund Allenby, who led the allied armies and defeated the Ottoman Empire in Palestine between 1917 and 1918.

These documents were acquired from St. Anthony's College at Oxford University.

This Other Documents category also includes a set of microfilmed diplomatic documents (964 reels) that include documents from various foreign ministries and from colonies worldwide regarding the British War on Palestine, as well as British government documents on the situation in Palestine, correspondence from British consuls accredited in Jerusalem (1856–1903 and 1911), British state department records on the internal affairs and foreign policy of Palestine (1930–1945), and correspondence between US diplomats and the consuls accredited in Jerusalem and the US State Department (1925–1941).

The section titled Microfilms includes a valuable collection of microfilm documentation of old Palestinian newspapers and periodicals, newspapers issued in the occupied territories, and foreign, Hebrew, and Arabic newspapers. They include *Falastin* (1911–1967); *Al-Karmel* (1912–1939); *Al-Difa'* (1934–1967); *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* (1927–1936), and others. There are also complete collections of major Jewish newspapers and periodicals in English and Hebrew since their publication, the most important of which are: *The Jerusalem Post* (1950–); *The Jewish Chronicle* (1841–1975); *Haaretz* (1919–); *Ma'ariv* (1967–2001); *Al-ha-Mishmar* (1965–1987); and *Yediot Aharonot* (1968–). In addition, there are microfilms of the documents and decisions of the Zionist conferences since the first conference in 1897. The library's total microfilm holdings are about 5,957 reels.

The library contains collections of historical photographs that amount to around 10,000 items. Work has

begun to design an archival database of these photographs that contains records for each image and includes the following metadata: collection name, photographer, title, source, date (if available), size, image description notes, number of copies, and subject headings, with a special field to display the image.

Among these photo collections is the collection of the photographer Wassef Jawhariya that consists of 859 photos in seven albums, complete with indexes that contain extensive commentaries on each individual photo. It covers an entire historical period and aims to highlight the features of political and social life in Palestine in the early twentieth century and during the British Mandate period. Furthermore, this section includes the collection of professional photographer Khalil Raad, who photographed Palestine and the Holy Land between 1890 and 1945, which contains about 3,000

Native boy selling fish and bread: 2 prints (small size, 13 x 18 cm), 1 glass negative (9 x 12 cm). Khalil Raad Collection.



gelatin glass negatives. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) collection consists of 107 images sourced from the Information and Culture Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization and covers the period from 1920 to 1948. A special collection consists of 469 images from private sources that cover aspects of life in Palestine from 1900 to 1948. In addition, the IPS archive contains 1,369 photos of pre-1948 Palestine, the 1948–1949 war, the 1967 war, the destruction of the Mughrabi neighborhood in Jerusalem, Israeli figures, the Golan Heights, the 1967 Palestinian exodus, etc. They also include the British Museum's collection of 202 photographs that cover the British Mandate period in Palestine, with a focus on British forces, and UNRWA's collection of 630 photographs of Palestinian refugees and their camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jordan.

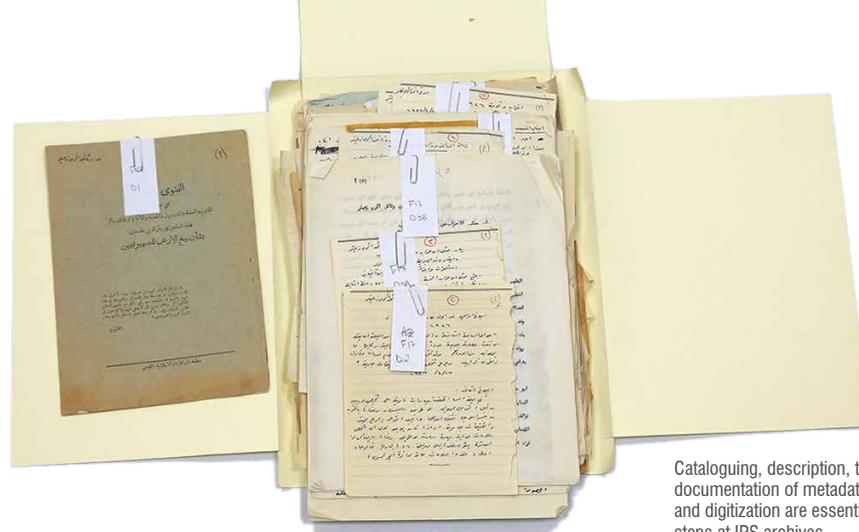
The library has embarked on developing a special section for documentary videos, films, and DVDs that deal with Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, in addition to CD-ROMs. There are 52 video films, 33 DVD films, and 60 CDs.

Arab and foreign documents have been collected since the series of documentary books issued by the institute in Arabic and English was discontinued (namely the Palestinian-Arab Documents series and the International Documents on Palestine series that covered the period from 1965 to 1981). The library has continued daily documentary work, however, and has collected Arab and foreign documents since 1982 until today. Selected Arab, foreign, and Israeli newspapers and magazines, and official, governmental, and private websites are surveyed on a daily basis to extract documents such as government statements, reports, United Nations resolutions, interviews, and other documents; they are then categorized in special files and made available to researchers. A chronology of the most important events related to the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict has been recorded daily and posted on the IPS website since 2006. A database of Palestinian, Arab, and international documents on the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict has been created to ensure their preservation and electronic accessibility. Approximately 2,700 documents have been entered in the database so far, out of the thousands of documents kept in files in the library.

Work on the establishment of the electronic archive of social history in Palestine began after the scientific conference on family papers held by IPS in 2008. The foundations and rules for the archive's work were laid down through introductory meetings with a committee that represented various interested parties; the committee still meets periodically to develop this archive. Efforts have been made to expedite placing this archive on a special site that constitutes a rich source of information for researchers in the fields of social sciences and humanities. The archive can be accessed online at <http://archive.palestine-studies.org/>.

The social history archives are saved on a large server and amount to about 41,000 pages that range from documents to photos, notes, newspapers, and other rare published and unpublished documents. They include memoirs from 1948 to 1961 by Aziz Shaheen, a Palestinian historian from Ramallah; the collection of documents of the lawyer and politician Mustafa Irsheid that date back to the Ottoman, British, and Jordanian periods; the papers and photos collected by the advocate Yahya Hammouda that include hundreds of pages and cover his tenure as the transitional head of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, his work as chairman of the Palestinian National Council, and his tenure as head of the Jordanian Bar Association; and the memoirs of Saeed Al-Nashef from the village Taibah al-Muthalith, who participated in The Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 and sought refuge in Iraq, Germany, and Bulgaria before returning to Palestine after the end of World War II. His memoirs cover this period of his life.

Great care is taken to ensure the proper preservation, cataloguing, and digitization at IPS. To this end, the IPS has, over the past several years, set up features of a modern archive to allow it to properly house its paper, photograph, rare book, and microfilm collections. Such spaces, located within the Center for Documentation and Research, include a cool-room where the physical archives are kept and which meets international protocols and standards for housing collections in a fire-resistant environment with fire extinguishers and smoke and heat detectors, protected from possible damage from flooding or other forms of water damage, insects, mold, and fungus.



Cataloguing, description, the documentation of metadata, and digitization are essential steps at IPS archives.

The cool-room consistently maintains ideal temperature and humidity ranges and allows no uncontrolled natural or fluorescent light. These conditions preserve and extend the life of the archival holdings.

To ensure their preservation and longevity, archival items are cleaned and simple reparations may be made on paper documents before they are stabilized and placed inside custom-made, acid-free “four-flaps,” envelopes, and boxes.

The primary purpose of description in the archive is to identify, contextualize, preserve, and exhibit information regarding collections, while maintaining the original order and provenance of these collections. Description occurs on three levels, maintained on Excel sheets until a suitable database is made available, and identifies the document, the file, and the collection levels.

Making a collection accessible to the highest level requires providing information from the lowest level regarding the document, photograph, etc. Every document of the collection is given an accession number, is physically described, and contains a summary of its contents. It is searchable by keywords or subject headings that are carefully chosen

according to the contents of the specific document. Even though this is a time-consuming process that requires a close reading of the contents of every single item, it is important because the more detailed a document description becomes, the more information is relayed to researchers and made accessible via summaries and keywords. Close readings also enable the linking together of related documents, allowing a researcher to access other relevant documents in addition to those that interest him or her in the first place.

Digitization is an integral aspect of the care of collections. It protects historical documents from further deterioration and damage by eliminating repetitive handling and further preserves its existence in digital format. IPS adheres to international standards and best practices for digitization, producing both high- and low-quality images for preservation and for use, respectively. The institute is currently in the process of digitizing its photo, private paper, and poster collections for use by researchers and the public.

IPS long-term goals and future plans include continuing the processes of cataloguing, preserving, and digitizing

its entire collection. Ultimately, the goal is to offer an open-access digital resource that is available to the public worldwide, while committing to International Council of Archives (ICA) principles of access to archives to the greatest extent possible. IPS also intends to acquire new collections, as progress is made, both in order to preserve them for posterity and to enrich the archives' holdings and attract as many researchers and users as possible, especially considering the sustained growth in the academic of study of Palestine around the world.

*All article photos are courtesy of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

Dr. Maher Charif is head of the research department at the Institute for Palestine Studies and an associate researcher at the French Institute of the Near East in Beirut. He specializes in modern and contemporary history and has authored several books pertaining to the history of the Palestinians and their national movement, and to the modern and contemporary Arab intellect.

Hala Zeinelabidin is a librarian and information and documentation specialist, she is the head librarian of the library of the Institute for Palestine Studies (Beirut, Lebanon). With a BA in documentation and library science from the Lebanese University in Beirut, she has gained more than 40 years of experience in working in Arab studies centers.



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