



Why Sani Matters

A Personal Tribute



By Kegham
Balian

S

ani, the publisher, tried hard to change the title and some of the content. I refused.

“An honorable man has two aims: to die fighting or achieve victory. I want no life if we’re not respected in our own land. If our words are not heard echoing in the world, I shall carry my soul in my palm, tossing it into the cavern

of death! Either a life to gladden the hearts of friends or a death to torture the hearts of foes.” [Credit to the unknown translator]

These were the final words of a Palestinian rebel, broken by the capture of Nazareth by Israeli forces in 1948, before he shot himself, as recounted in Elia Suleiman’s painfully brilliant masterpiece *The Time That Remains*, released in 2009.

It is 2023. These words have echoed around the world, social media sees to that, if only that. And Palestinians owe a big chunk of gratitude to Sani, who co-founded *This Week in Palestine* in 1998 and has since provided quality content in every single issue, bar none, for the past 25 years, spanning 300

issues. You might not agree with every issue; you might not agree with every article – I don’t – but at least you can read it. You have the option to contribute to it, to debate it, to create dialogue around polemical topics, which eventually ought to yield a common ground: diversity in ideas and opinions is the cornerstone of any healthy society that seeks to engender the potential for actual progress. No two ways about it. And *TWiP* does just that.

For Sani, it is a labor of love for his country, away from remuneration and comfort. *TWiP* has had its offices raided, its social media pages hacked, its website hacked, Sani’s personal account hacked, or worse, censored, his livelihood in Jerusalem threatened, yet he still pushes onward, all in the name of a noble pursuit: Having the courage to say what needs to be said while effusing said courage to all those around. Sani wouldn’t see this; he is far

Testimonies

It’s a pleasure to see a publication of such caliber that underscores community concerns, analyzes national issues, provides political insight, and promotes the arts, all the while veering from partisan and political affiliation. If this is not true nationalism, I do not know what is. To top this, the publication is published with unparalleled professional graphic design.

“Today an orchestra, tomorrow a state,” what a beautiful message of hope you end the article with.

*Rami Meo
Sydney, Australia*

TWiP Celebrates **300** Issues



too modest to see this. So allow me to be the bad guy instead: It is all neat and quaint to shower him and his cherished brainchild with trite formulations – “Bravo Sani!” “*Alf Mabrook!*” – but a paper isn’t run on best wishes and congratulations. As Sani once wrote: even humanitarian projects need support.

How do we make that happen? Local support. Not supranational. Local. You, Palestinians. Your neighbors, your children, your writers, your artists, your leaders, your people who have a generational stake in this land and not a contractual ephemerality. In a media landscape where political institutions with vested interests in disseminating ideologies absorb news outlets, prancing in pathos around Palestinians ad nauseam – only you can contribute to your own

independence. *TWiP* deserves to stand tall on its own, the only local Palestinian English-language magazine fighting the good fight by educating and informing.

After all, how will others value what we have if we don’t value it ourselves?

Keep going Sani! Thank you, and *Alf Mabrook* to you and your team.

Kegham Balian is a columnist at The Armenian Weekly. He also writes for This Week in Palestine.

SCAN
TO SHARE



Testimonies

Congratulations on the nineteenth anniversary of your launching of *This Week in Palestine*. Beginning with your first issue and up to now, I have been reading and enjoying each and every issue. I have also observed with lots of appreciation how you have developed it over the years. It definitely has become a national archive. The credit, dear Sani, goes to you, your foresight and perseverance and the teams you have working with you.

Best wishes for continuous success and further achievements.

Best,

*Siham Atalla
Ramallah, Palestine*

[referring to the January 2023 issue of *TWiP*, themed “Historical Palestine”]

This was probably the best edition ever! Bravo!

*Diana Butto,
Nazareth, Palestine*