Palestine is definitely a curious paradox. On the one hand, temperatures are rising (figuratively as well as literally) in the Gaza Strip, which is suffering from the onslaught of the continuous Israeli blockade. Fuel is allowed to run out, prompting the closure of factories and businesses. The food supply is scarce, forcing people to subsist on basics. The worst thing by far, though, must be the stifling feeling of being trapped in a not-so-large prison, when one takes into consideration the total population compared to the area of the Strip.

On the other hand, preparations are under way for the Palestine Investment Conference slated to take place in late May in the city of Bethlehem, itself another one of the large prisons created by Israel’s apartheid Wall. The Conference, however, will not dwell on such negative aspects. It will showcase Palestine as an attractive investment option. After all, it is commonly known that the higher the risk, the higher the return. In fact, those who have invested in Palestine’s telecommunications field, to name one sector, following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, have reaped handsome profits. So have those who invested in real estate. It is therefore not altogether surprising that such a Conference is being organised, even at this particular point in time. As the Conference organisers maintain, “You can do business in Palestine.”

The other paradox is that the Conference is being planned amid preparations for the 60th commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, which saw the creation of the state of Israel on Palestinian land and the forcible evacuation of Palestinians from their homes and their dispersion all over the world. This issue of This Week in Palestine is a sombre reminder of that cataclysmic year that is firmly etched in our people’s collective memory. Read the many and varied articles on the subject, ranging from personal testimonials and recollections to more academic writings. The Nakba will be commemorated in various parts of the world, from London and Edinburgh to Sydney and Los Angeles, and many other cities in between. It will be remembered through art, film, music, and song.

Light a candle on May 15 as your personal contribution to the commemoration of that fateful day.
The Nakba – 60 Years of Dignity and Justice Denied

By Ingrid Jaradat Gassner and Hazem Jamjoum

At the beginning of the 20th century, most Palestinians lived inside the borders of Palestine, which is now divided into Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. At that time, Palestine was one of several Arab territories that were part of the Ottoman Empire, and the indigenous Arab population aspired for independence and sovereignty.

There was good reason for optimism because the British High Commissioner in Egypt had promised that Britain would support Arab independence in exchange for support of the Allied war effort to bring down the Ottoman regime (MacMahon-Hussein correspondence), and US President Woodrow Wilson had announced his doctrine of self-determination for the post-World War I order. Moreover, the victorious states of the First World War appeared to abide by these promises. The Anglo-French Declaration (1918), for example, stated that the goal was “...the complete and final liberation of the peoples who have for so long been oppressed by the Turks, and the setting up of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations.”

This and the doctrine of self-determination were subsequently enshrined in the Covenant of the League of Nations (1919). In 1919, the Allied Powers members of the League of Nations decided to establish a temporary “Mandate System” in accordance with the Covenant of the League of Nations to facilitate the independence of these territories. The August 1920 Treaty of Sèvres between the Allied Powers and Turkey affirmed that Palestine “be provisionally recognised as an independent State subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone.”

Some 25 years later, however, the Palestinian people had lost Palestine. By the time the first Arab-Israeli war ended in 1949 with cease-fire agreements between Israel and Arab states, more than 500 Palestinian villages, with a land base of more than 17,000 km², were depopulated. In total, 750,000 – 900,000 Palestinians, representing half of the pre-war Arab population of Palestine or 85 percent of those in the territory that became the state of Israel, were displaced. Most of them became refugees; of the roughly 150,000 Palestinians who remained in those parts of Palestine that became the state of Israel on 14 May 1948, approximately 30,000 were internally displaced persons. An estimated two-thirds of Palestinian refugee homes inside the new state of Israel were destroyed; the remaining third were expropriated and occupied by Jewish settlers.

Israel had effective control over 78 percent of British Mandate Palestine, including areas that had been allocated to the Arab state under the 1947 UN partition plan.

On 11 May 1949, the UN General Assembly approved Israel’s membership in the United Nations without conditions. For the purpose of the United Nations and its dominant member states, Palestine and the Palestinian people had disappeared. “They had become an indistinct mass of refugees – not a nation, not a political entity, only a problem, and not a major one at that.”

This is what Palestinians refer to as Al-Nakba, meaning The Catastrophe.

The idea of transferring the indigenous population out of the country had played a key role in political Zionism from its early days, simply because most Palestinian Arabs were unwilling to part with their land and resisted Zionist colonisation. The Zionist movement and its colony in Palestine, however, did not have the power to acquire territory by force and implement a massive forced population transfer until late 1947, when both were made possible for the first time with the support of the international community (see Box 1).

“There shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our own country. The property owners will come over to our side. Both the process of expropriation and removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly.”

(Theodor Herzl, Diaries)

“If I was an Arab leader, I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country. Sure, God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs. We come from Israel, it’s true. But two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been anti-Semitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They see only one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?”

(David Ben-Gurion to Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress®)

The Role of the International Community in Causing the Nakba

World War I – 1947: Setting the stage for Zionist colonisation and armed conflict in Palestine

1916 – Britain and France sign a secret understanding (Sykes-Picot Agreement) in which they define their respective spheres of influence and control in West Asia after the expected downfall of the Ottoman Empire. Palestine is reserved for British control under this agreement.

1917 – Britain endorses the Balfour Declaration as a means to advance its
interests in the region. The one-page letter from Arthur Balfour, British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, to Lord Rothschild, head of the British Zionist Federation, grants recognition of and support for the idea of establishing a Jewish “national home” in Palestine through immigration and colonisation.

1919 to 1920 – Allied Powers and the League of Nations: States, winners of the First World War, entrust the temporary administration (“Mandate”) of Palestine to Britain, irrespective of the strong Arab opposition. The British foreign secretary had insisted:

“In the case of the ‘independent nation’ of Palestine, we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country. Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.”

1923 to 1947 – The British Mandate regime is engaged in the contradictory mission of leading Palestine to independence and, at the same time, facilitating Zionist colonisation.

• Full political rights are afforded to the Zionist colony in Palestine, whereas only civil and religious rights are granted to the Palestinian Arab majority.

• New land and citizenship laws facilitate Zionist immigration and colonisation. Already in the 1930s, the British administration grapples with a new phenomenon of landless peasants, and by the early 1940s, the average rural Palestinian Arab family has less than half of the agricultural land required for its subsistence.

• British Mandate authorities suppressed a series of Palestinian uprisings, including the “Great Revolt” (1936–1939), through military and administrative means, weakening Palestinian resistance. Palestinian Arab leaders are arrested, jailed, and deported, and thousands of Palestinian Arab homes are demolished. Some 40,000 Palestinian Arabs flee the country during the mid-1930s alone. Palestinian uprisings are suppressed in cooperation with Zionist militias that are trained and armed for this purpose.

• From the late-1930s onwards, British efforts fail to appease Arab-Palestinian resistance by slowing down the rate of Jewish immigration mainly because many Western states support and facilitate the resettlement in Palestine of displaced European Jews. Resettlement of Jewish refugees in Palestine is facilitated in violation of international commitments not to resettle displaced persons in non-self-governing territories without the consent of the indigenous population. At the same time, most Western countries, including the United States, refuse to admit Jewish refugees, despite the knowledge of Nazi persecution and atrocities.

1947–1949: Sanctioning Zionist colonisation and Israel’s population transfer

The United Nations takes up the “Question of Palestine” in 1947. By that time, new international legal norms, such as the prohibition of acquisition of territory by force and the right of people to self-determination, had become binding for states.

In the case of Palestine, however:

• requests by Arab states to discuss the independence of Palestine as a possible option are rejected, as well as requests for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning the legal status of Palestine and the authority of the United Nations to issue and enforce recommendations. The UN General Assembly rather appoints a special committee (UNSCOP) to formulate recommendations concerning the future status of the country.

• UNSCOP is unable to reach a consensus: the majority supports the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and the other Jewish, although they concede that

“[w]ith regard to the principle of self-determination, [...] it was not applied to Palestine, obviously because of the intention to make possible the creation of a Jewish National Home there. Actually, it may well be said that the Jewish National Home and the sui generis Mandate for Palestine run counter to that principle.”

The UNSCOP minority proposes one federal state for Arabs and Jews and is adamant in its prescient warnings of the consequences of partition:

“Future peace and order in Palestine and the Near East generally will be vitally affected by the nature of the solution decided upon for the Palestine question. In this regard, it is important to avoid an acceleration of the separatism which now characterises the relations of Arabs and Jews in the Near East, and to avoid laying the foundations of a dangerous irredentism there, which would be the inevitable consequences of partition in whatever form. [...] Partition both in principle and in substance can only be regarded as an anti-Arab solution. The Federal State, however, cannot be described as an anti-Jewish solution. To the contrary, it will best serve the interests of both Arabs and Jews.”

29 November 1947 – the UN General Assembly adopts Resolution 181 recommending the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, and an international regime for Jerusalem, against the express wishes of the indigenous population and states in the region. Although Jews constitute less than one-third of the population and own no more than 7 percent of the land, the proposed Jewish state is allotted 56 percent of Palestine; almost half of the population of the proposed Jewish state consists of Palestinian Arabs.

Britain and the United Nations fail to protect Palestinians during subsequent armed conflict: some 300,000 are forcibly displaced by Zionist forces while Palestine is still under the British Mandate regime (November 1947–14 May 1948). Some 500,000 more are displaced during the subsequent first Arab-Israeli war (15 May 1948–20 July 1949).

11 May 1949 – the UN General Assembly resolves that “Israel is a peace-loving State which accepts the obligations contained in the Charter and is able and willing to carry out those obligations.” It approves Israel’s membership in the
1949–2008: the “ongoing Nakba”

Palestinians reasserted themselves as a people after another quarter-century of resilience and struggle. Since the 1970s, the United Nations has reaffirmed that Palestinians are a nation entitled to self-determination, independence, and refugee return, but the lack of accountability has remained. Failure to hold Israel to account for its violations of international law and the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people explains why, 60 years later, the Palestinian refugee question has remained unresolved, while Israel continues to occupy and colonise Palestinian land and displace Palestinians with impunity. Two of the hundreds of examples of ongoing displacement are Kafr Bir‘im and Al-Wallajeh.

Estimated Number of Palestinians Displaced, by Period, 1922–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Palestinians Displaced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Mandate: 1922–1947</td>
<td>100,000–150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partition to Armistice (Nakba): 1947–1949</td>
<td>750,000–900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military rule in Israel: 1950–1966</td>
<td>35,000–45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 War</td>
<td>400,000–450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation: 1967–2006</td>
<td>300,000–400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,585,000–1,945,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By mid-2007, the total number of Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons, including descendants, was estimated to be 7.5 million.

Estimated Area of Palestinian Land Expropriated/Confiscated, by Period, 1922–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Area of Confiscated Palestinian Land (km²)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Mandate: 1922–1947</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partition to Armistice (Nakba): 1947–1949</td>
<td>17,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military rule in Israel: 1950–1966</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967 War</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22,285</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total area of historical Palestine (Israel and OPT) is 26,323 km².
generations about their destroyed village and their right to return there.

For more on Kafr Bir‘im, see Badil’s 2006 publication: Returning to Kafr Bir‘im at http://www.badil.org/Publications/Books/birim.pdf.

Al-Wallajeh (Jerusalem) – A Story of Multiple Displacement

On 21 October 1948, nearly all the homes of Wallajeh, located in the district of Jerusalem, were demolished by the Israeli army. Most of the residents were forced to flee to refugee camps in the West Bank and Jordan, where they number 12,500 today. More than two-thirds of the village lands were annexed to Israel, inaccessible to the villagers themselves.

Between the wars of 1948 and 1967, many of the villagers had set up temporary housing, living in caves or makeshift structures until, realising that it may take a long time before they would be allowed to return, they rebuilt homes on the village lands that had remained in the West Bank under Jordanian rule. In 1967, after Israel occupied the West Bank, including the new Wallajeh and nearby Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, it became very difficult to obtain building permits in Wallajeh. Homes built after 1967 without permits were now subject to Israeli demolition proceedings.

Further, in a bizarre twist, Israeli government surveys who mapped the occupied West Bank lands that were slated for annexation to Israel unwittingly included the Ein Juweiza neighbourhood of Lower Wallajeh. The move was not made public until 1981, when Israel’s Jerusalem municipality was “correctly” placed in charge of demolishing “illegally-built” Wallajeh homes. For more than 14 years, these residents with West Bank identity cards had no idea that they were living within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, since the Israeli municipality had provided no new schools, utilities, or services to the growing population.

Meanwhile, Wallajeh’s land was coveted. Its springs, fields, and olive trees had been eaten up by the Biblical Zoo, Jewish settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo, and the Teddy Kolleck Stadium. Israeli municipal authorities have asked Ein Juweiza residents, who comprise about half of Wallajeh, to sign a document recognising that their homes are in eastern Jerusalem, and that they, holders of West Bank IDs, are residing there illegally. Moreover, Israeli soldiers commonly arrest and fine Wallajeh residents while in their homes for entering Jerusalem without the proper papers.

In 2004, Israeli city officials announced a new plan to construct Giv‘at Yael, a settlement planned to house more than 55,000 Jewish residents, on the lands of Wallajeh and nearby Palestinian communities. In addition to the 49,000 dunums taken from the villagers in 1948, an additional 7,000 dunums have been confiscated for the settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo, 1,000 dunums have been confiscated for Israeli bypass roads, and approximately 4,000 dunums have been confiscated for the Wall and settlement expansion. The houses on the remaining 3,000 or so dunums of Wallajeh are under constant threat of demolition; 50 homes have already been destroyed by Israeli authorities, and 86 cases of demolition orders are currently being examined by the Israeli courts. The small Palestinian community is now completely encircled by Jewish settlements and the Wall, enabling the Israeli army to imprison its residents simply by closing down the one remaining access road.

The Right-of-Return Movement Today

Today, 60 years into the Palestinian Nakba, almost 75 percent of the Palestinian people are displaced, and Palestinian refugees present the world’s largest and longest-standing unresolved refugee case. Approximately half of the Palestinian people live in forced exile outside their homeland, while another 23 percent are displaced within the borders of former Palestine. Palestinian refugees and internally displaced persons still lack access to durable solutions and reparations, including return, restitution, and compensation, in accordance with international law and UN resolutions (see Box 2). Although more Palestinians are being displaced today in Israel, the OPT, Iraq, and elsewhere, effective protection is still not available for them. Rather than holding Israel to account, the international community has imposed sanctions against the occupied Palestinians since 2006. The results are more political and geographic fragmentation of the Palestinian people and unprecedented humanitarian crises, in particular in the occupied Gaza Strip – where 70 percent of the population are Palestinian refugees of the Nakba of 1948.

The return of the refugees and the reclamation of Palestine were the central goals of the Palestinian liberation movement from its inception following the Nakba. As with most other national liberation movements, armed struggle defined the strategy and tactics used by the movement to attain these goals. It is particularly important to recognise that the main arenas of the movement’s activity were countries like Jordan, Kuwait, and Lebanon, and as such the overwhelming majority of rank-and-file activists as well as the movement’s leadership were made up of first-generation refugees who had themselves been forcibly displaced by the Nakba.

As the movement grew in size and strength – particularly after the 1967 war – with the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), added emphasis was placed on the diplomatic aspect of the struggle. The PLO looked to international legal norms as an avenue for garnering support and achieving victories in the struggle for the return of the refugees. By the early 1990s, with the demise of the Soviet Union, the US-led victory in the Kuwait War, and the continually deteriorating situation of Palestinians in Palestine and Lebanon, the diplomatic avenue appeared to the PLO leadership as the only viable path to achieving the implementation of Palestinian rights; a path that led to the Madrid-Oslo agreements.

Photo Captions
1. Artwork by Tayseer Batniji
2. A Pioneering women photographer from Nazareth
3. Mieh Mieh Refugee Camp, Lebanon. UNRWA archive
4. Palestinian Refugee Displacement, Ramleh, 1948. UNRWA archive
Palestinian right-of-return activists immediately recognised the Oslo Agreement, and its subsequent peace process, as one which sidelined refugee rights. The agreement itself made no mention of Palestinian refugees, except insofar as it postponed discussion of the issue to future “final status negotiations.” As a result, the peace process effectively legitimised Israel’s division of the Palestinian people into Palestinians with Israeli citizenship (including those internally displaced); Palestinian refugees living in exile facing varying forms of discrimination depending on their host country; and Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza (including more than 1.3 million refugees). The PLO itself was effectively hollowed out into the newly established Palestinian National Authority, which has no mechanism for representing the Palestinian refugees outside of the West Bank and Gaza and, as such, is not accountable to them.

It is in this context that grassroots initiatives calling for the centrality of refugee rights began to emerge in the post-Oslo period. In 1995, activists organised the first Right of Return Popular Conference, which was convened opposite the Al-Fara’a Refugee Camp at an abandoned Israeli military detention centre, and brought together 1,500 people to discuss ways to build the right-of-return movement. Between 1996 and 2000, similar popular conferences were organised in Nazareth, Bethlehem, Gaza, Beirut, Copenhagen, Berlin, Washington, DC, Vancouver, and London. During this period, many people in Palestine and around the world had mistakenly believed that the peace process would bring a just and durable solution for the people of Palestine and, as a result, initially opposed highlighting the plight of Palestinian refugees for fear of disrupting this process.

A major change occurred with the failure of the peace talks and the outbreak of Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000. By then, the failure of the peace process had become obvious to all who cared to examine the issue. As Israel began the construction of its Separation Wall, it became much clearer that any future peace could only be brought about by dealing with the core issues of the conflict, foremost among them the rights of the Palestinian refugees. As the Intifada progressed, the budding refugee-rights movements made up of Palestinian refugees and their allies began to bear fruit in the form of right-of-return coalitions, notably in Europe and North America.

A major landmark in today’s right-of-return movement was the July 2005 Palestinian civil society call for a Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign directed at the Israeli state, with one of the three central demands of the campaign being the implementation of the Palestinian refugees’ right to return. This campaign has rapidly grown across the globe, with a growing list of unions, churches, and civil society institutions passing and implementing BDS resolutions, highlighting the centrality of the return of the refugees.

In this context, the Nakba continues for Palestinians, and so does their struggle for dignity and justice. Both continue to shape Palestinian identity from generation to generation, in the homeland and in exile.

The rights of displaced Palestinians and state obligations in international law

UN General Assembly Resolution 194, Article 11 (11 December 1948) resolves that “the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property [...]”

UN Security Council Resolution 237 (14 June 1967) calls for the return of all who had fled as a result of the 1967 War.

These UN resolutions and the rights of displaced Palestinians are grounded in numerous international law instruments, including:

Human Rights Law – Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law (Article 8).
- Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country (Article 13).

The obligations of states to protect these rights are elaborated, among others, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 2(3), 12) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Articles 5, 6).

Humanitarian Law – Fourth Geneva Convention
- Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive. If persons have to be evacuated for reasons of security or imperative military necessity, such persons shall be transferred back to their homes as soon as hostilities in the area have ceased (from Article 49).
- Signatory states and parties to the conflict shall facilitate in every possible way the reunion of families dispersed as a result of armed conflicts [...] (Additional Protocol 1, Article 74).

Law of Nations – Articles on Nationality/State Succession

The status of persons shall not be affected by the succession of states; they are presumed to acquire the nationality of the successor state. States shall take all necessary measures to allow persons who, because of events connected
with the succession of states, were forced to leave their habitual residence on its territory to return thereto (from Articles 5, 14).

**Law of State Responsibility – UN Guiding Principles on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation**

Victims of gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law should be provided with full and effective reparation, including return, restitution of legal status and property, compensation, rehabilitation, and satisfaction.

**Criminal Law – Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)**

Deportation or forcible transfer of population without grounds permitted under international law constitutes a crime against humanity (Article 75 (1)) and a war crime (Article 8 (2b) (viii)).

In practise, the international community has established three durable solutions for resolving refugee crises worldwide: repatriation (i.e., return, the only solution that is a fundamental right), resettlement in a third country, and local integration in the host country. Solutions are guided by the principle of voluntariness, i.e., by the informed choice of the refugees. Voluntary repatriation – returning to one’s home country – is considered the most desirable solution. Return, property restitution, and compensation are part of durable solutions, in particular where displaced persons are victims of population transfer, i.e., ethnic cleansing.

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iv. The Treaty of Peace between the Allied and Associated Powers and Turkey, signed at Sèvres, 10 August 1920, Part II, Section VII, Art. 94.


vi. Final Report of the United Nations Survey Mission for the Middle East (Part I); UN Doc. A/AC.25/6 cites a figure of 750,000 refugees. The total number of refugees rises to approximately 900,000 if the number of persons who lost their livelihood but not their homes is added.


viii. Christison, p. 94.


xvi. For the proposed texts of the questions to be submitted to the ICJ, see Iraq (UN Doc. A/AC.14.21); Syria (UN Doc. A/AC.14.25); and Egypt (UN Doc. A/AC.14/14).


xviii. Ibid., Chapter VII Recommendations (III), paragraphs 10 and 11.

xix. See, for example, UNGAR 2787 (1971) and UNGAR 3236 (1974).

xx. There is no single authoritative source for the exact number of Palestinians forcibly displaced since 1948, or for the exact amount of land expropriated from Palestinians by Israel since 1948. The figures above are based on available data and estimates. For a more detailed analysis of these figures and comprehensive references, see: Survey of Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons 2006-2007. BADIL Resource Center, www.badil.org.

I Come from There and Remember

By Gina Benevento, with Issam Nasser

Supervising public information for UNRWA, the UN agency which has provided humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees since 1950, means that my office is the port of call for anyone tracking down photographs of Palestinian refugees. And even though 15 May 2008, the sixtieth anniversary of al-Nakba, is still weeks away, there seems no end to the appetite for images of the 1948 refugee exodus. Requests from two European newspapers came in this morning. Yesterday it was Al-Jazeera and a major American TV network.

Looking over the photographs selected by Amani Shaltout, our dedicated archivist, my eyes linger on the faces. What happened to the old man being helped aboard a departing boat? Where is the young woman staring out at us from the back of a Haganah truck? There is almost a uniformity to these images. The faces inevitably express fear, confusion, sadness. The bodies are in flight – walking, running, being carried – helped by trucks and boats. And there are always tents – single tents, then rows, opening up to reveal fields of tents as far as the camera and eye can see.

But one photograph makes me stop. It is a photograph of two young girls pushing carts stuffed with bedding. I’ve seen the frightened, sad faces before. But it is what is behind the young girls that stops me: two large stone buildings, built in a popular European style. Palestinian refugee iconography focuses on that which is temporal – tents, trucks, mattresses slung over shoulders – all symbols of dispersion. But these buildings are permanent: homes and shops – part of what was once a stable and thriving Palestinian community. Only minutes earlier these young girls were not refugees. Their home, their school, their playground – everything familiar and dear – are still a few short blocks away.

I go back and look again at the first photos. Who were these people before they were turned overnight into refugees? I remember words from a poem by Mahmoud Darwish:

I come from there and I remember
Born as mortals are, I have a mother
And a house with many windows...

The old man and woman staring at us so stoically from the entrance to their tent: did their home have many windows? Had their life been a happy one? The 120,000 Palestinians who fled Haifa: whom had they loved and married? The 123,000 who fled Jaffa: what had they taught their children? What was their life a year, a week, a moment before? How many worlds had been lost?

And so began the work on “I Come from There and Remember” – a photo exhibition that evokes the life of pre-1948 Palestine – UNRWA’s commemoration to mark the 60th anniversary of al-Nakba. The exhibition premiers simultaneously in six locations – Jerusalem, Ramallah, Gaza City, Amman, Beirut, and Damascus – on 14 May 2008. Musical performances and lectures will focus on the exhibition’s theme of Palestinian life before 1948, and it is planned that all six exhibits will later tour universities, municipalities, and refugee camps. The exhibition is also available for hosting and touring, regionally or internationally.

“I Come from There and Remember” is sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC); the British Consulate General; the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture; the A.M. Qattan Foundation; and Casa Arabe.

Gina Benevento (conception and curating) is Chief of Public Information for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). She can be reached at g.benevento@unrwa.org.

Issam Nasser (conception and curating) is a photo historian and university lecturer. He can be reached at irnassa@ilstu.edu.

Photo Captions

1. Hanna Bisharat and family Garabed Krikorian
   Jerusalem, 1928. Collection: Arab Image Foundation / Mamdouh Bisharat Copyright (c) Arab Image Foundation
   Collection: Arab Image Foundation / Aida Krikorian Kawar Copyright (c) Arab Image Foundation
3. Saba and Zarifeh on roof of their home in Baka, Jerusalem. Rashia Salti

Photos are part of “UNRWA & Partners Commemorate 1948 - I Come from There ... and Remember”
UNRWA Commemorates 1948: 
My Father’s Lost Paradise 

By Najwa Sheikh Ahmed

I am a Palestine refugee who was born in Khan Younis Refugee Camp in the southern Gaza Strip. To me Khan Younis is home. It’s the place of my childhood friends and my memories. For a long time, I never thought or cared about my origins. To me al-Majdal, where my parents and grandparents come from, meant little: it was simply a place they remembered and spoke about.

All this changed when one day my teacher asked each of us to write an essay about our origins. I vividly remember how anxious and excited my father was when I asked him about this. He was like a child given the chance to talk about the thing he treasured. With passion, grief, and a sense of loss, my 70-year-old father spoke about al-Majdal, near Tiberias, where he grew up. His words touched me so deeply that at one point I stopped taking notes, although I didn’t stop listening to him speak with pride and sorrow about his beloved town. Al-Majdal was like a paradise, he said, a place where people lived very happily even though they had only enough to meet their basic needs.

My essay immediately drew my teacher’s attention, and I was asked to read it in front of the class. Gathering my courage and taking a deep breath, I began to read what my dear father had recounted to me. With the sound of the students’ applause, I felt a new sense of pride and a nascent passion to know more about my origins – the lost paradise, as my father called the town that he and my mother will never forget.

I delved into books in my search for my roots. The more I read, the more I wanted to read. It was like an inner spark glowing ever more intensely.

As the years passed, the only reference to my origins remained the books I read and the stories my mother told us. Then, in 1998, I had the chance to visit my two brothers in the United States. I was fortunate at the time because I was allowed to collect my visa from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv. On the way back from Tel Aviv, I asked my friend to drive me to al-Majdal. In the car, I tried to remember what my parents had told me about their home, the mosque in the centre of the town, the sweet fruits from the fig tree. I remember that day very clearly. My heart was beating fast. I felt elated. My body was shaking with anticipation.

When I got back to Gaza, my parents were anxiously waiting for me. All they wanted to hear about was al-Majdal: What had I seen? Was everything still as they described it? Was the mosque still there? With bated breath, they asked to hear more and more. I felt the loss, grief, and desperation in their voices. I wished that I could take them to visit al-Majdal, but unfortunately that was impossible.

What breaks my heart is that over the years my father often asks me about my colleagues from abroad, who are able to travel freely and who can visit al-Majdal. He asks me to find out from them if the places he remembers are still there or if they have been destroyed. Each time, I feel overwhelmed by his sense of loss. I feel helpless as I see him fighting against losing the thing that he has held so dear in his heart for so many years.

My grandparents died dreaming of their home, the fig tree, and the water from the spring. It pains me to know that my parents will likely pass away dreaming of the same thing.

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This article is part of UNRWA & Partners Commemorate 1948.

Photo Captions
1. Haifa Beirut and Beyond..., Al Funoun Dance Troupe
2. Safad 1946. PalestineRemembered.com
3. UNRWA Card, Baq’a Refugee Camp, Jordan. UNRWA archive
4. Artwork by Tamam al Akhal
The Nakba: Alonia, Ein Karem, and Deir Yassin
Palestinian Cultural Diversity and Ethnocide

By Dr. Ali Qleibo

The spiritual nature of Palestinian geography strikes deep roots in all the peoples who have settled the country throughout the past five millennia. The land itself exudes a prescient sense of the holy. Intimations of the Other, the elusive mystical feeling of a transcendent presence through whose grace the miracle of life continues, is inextricably related to the land. From the earliest Canaanite settlements, the human perception, intuition, and interaction with the natural environment structured and conditioned the unique socio-economic system, religion, and spiritual legacy of the Palestinian peoples. It is not fortuitous that the land of Canaan has come to be known as the Holy Land, with Jerusalem, the “holy place” known in Arabic as Al Quds, as its spiritual capital.

On the way to Dura, I dropped by to see my old friend, Um Nassar, in Beit Ummar. Though already April, it was cold and, despite my numerous summer visits, I had not been previously in or a ride past a back village street seems to open endless vistas on the Palestinian ethnic mosaic. The social-cultural pattern that emerges through familiarity with a cluster of neighbouring villages is astounding. Traces of biblical significance, signs of ethnographic interest, and vestiges of historical value keep prodding up to provide insights that reveal the ethnic diversity underlying the rich tapestry into which Palestinian culture has woven its relationship to nature. The current peasant classification of nature and its use for agriculture and animal husbandry still observes the same Canaanite system; the olive, fig, vineyard, and fruit tree in the orchards, the land for vegetables (mikhat), and the grazing ground for planting wheat. Our ancestors had punctuated the cyclical agricultural calendar with religious myths and ritual that were later incorporated into Jewish religion, traces of which emerge in Christianity. “Baal Hadad,” the great Canaanite epic, encapsulates in symbolic imagery the various cults, sacred sex rites, and human and non-human sacrifices – the mythos of the land.

Both Semitic and non-Semitic later settlers in Palestine adapted to the relationship established by the Canaanite with nature and made peace with the spiritual powers that guarantee fertility and survival. Baal reigned supreme. Until now land dependent on rainfall for irrigation is known as Baal land (ard ba liyyeh).

Kathleen Kenyon, in her seminal work Archaeology in the Holy Land, concludes: “History and archaeology show again and again how such bands, coming amongst a settled population, tend to adopt the material culture (which alone is reflected archaeologically) of that population.” (p. 209)

Ein Karem has a special magic for Jerusalemites of my generation – the birthplace of John the Baptist and, less than eight kilometres west of Jerusalem, the Palestinian village stands at the entrance of the woods that extend westwards to Beit Shemesh.

“Ein Karem is paradise on earth,” said Yusef, my friend from Ein Karem who is now a refugee in Jericho, as tears swelled in his eyes.

Two imposing monasteries delineate the outline of the city. Between the Franciscan monastery and the Russian monastery, the town huddles around the village mosque that handsomely crouches on the Virgin’s spring, the village’s water source. The houses string like a necklace overlooking the fruit orchards and vegetable patches which cascade to the valley that leads to Deir Yassin.

Mother, Aida, and I enjoy our visits to Ein Karem. Her aunt, el-Sit Naemeh, used to be the village school teacher.

“Alonia was more beautiful,” mother insists.

“Calonia (in peasant dialect) was a well-preserved Roman village, the colony in the foothills of the castle. The Roman army lived in the castle above and their civilian retinue lived in the colony downhill,” my friend Avraham once told me. “Crusader buildings added a special aura and gave it a medieval feel.”

Alonia was famous for its numerous water springs, its apricots, and its various species of plums, prunes, peaches, cherries, crab apples, quince, and pears. Though mother fondly remembers her childhood sojourns in Ein Karem at the Franciscan monastery during the apricot season (her father had the key to the Holy Sepulchre), she prefers Alonia where...
her family, the Nuseibeh family, had their country houses, orchards, and horses.

“Everyone from Jerusalem was there. The Husseini family also had their country houses ... and it was a time of great merriment with beautiful walks in the orchards.”

Of Alonia nothing remains except her uncle’s house right under the highway. Israelis have destroyed the village. Even the fruit trees have disappeared ... they have reverted to the wild and harder almond trees (prunes, peaches, plums, and apricots are usually grafted onto almond trunks) that clamber up the mountain towards the modern Mevasseret within earshot of the scene of the great massacre of the innocents of Deir Yassin.

“I was driving past Damascus Gate. There were many crying children and distraught people.” Ms. Hind Husseini many years ago described the background of Dar el Tifel orphanage. “The children were the survivors of the massacre and were homeless.” She stopped her car and brought all of them to her home near the Orient House. “There was no room in my house. We put mattresses on the floor from wall to wall. The children were terrified by the scene of the massacre. I kept trying to wipe their tears, entice them to eat, and calm them. Each of them is my child.”

I only know sad narratives of Deir Yassin’s massacre from the late Ms. Hind Husseini; and I only have joyful family memories of Alonia – the village with the numerous water springs, aromatic apricots, and the sweetest cherries, where the family horses were kept and where every summer all the family reunions took place.

Ein Karem, with its handsome houses, water spring, elegant mosque, and imposing monasteries, stays almost intact, beautifully restored. Every year it drowns in almond blossom. The village, of what has remained of Palestine, is the most beautiful.

I always wondered how the owners had the heart to flee from this paradise?!

“Within view of Deir Yassin, on the opposite mountain, the screams of terror must have been heard in Ein Karem,” Mother reasoned.

In the silence of the night I imagine them overcome with impotence and fear.

“How come they did not take shelter in the monasteries?” I asked Yusef.

“They panicked and ran away.”

“How soon after Deir Yassin did they leave?” I inquired.

“They fled almost the same day. After Deir Yassin they were led to believe that the Haganah was on its way to Ein Karem. They fled in terror.”

We often drive to Ein Karem, now a wealthy suburb of Jerusalem. The village has been restored by Israeli investors who transformed the handsome peasant homes into luxurious villas.

I am always astounded by the callous indifference of the wealthy Jewish immigrants. Liberal and humanistic in all other aspects, their attitude towards Palestinians seems paradoxical. How do they have the heart to live in stolen Arab property? How can they justify taking over – moving into – Arab villages, neighbourhoods, gardens, and family homes, over whose loss bitter tears had been shed by their rightful owners now suffering a life of squalor in the refugee camps?

“The myth of a land with no people for a people with no land strikes deep roots in the Jewish Zionist psyche,” explained Ibrahim in Dhahiryeh, south of Hebron, as he guided me through the qesariyyeh (as any old roman village with a marketplace that dates to the time of the roman Caesars is referred to in Palestinian peasant dialect).

Whereas Dura’s qesariyyeh, an impressive maze of medieval houses and shops bespeaking old wealth, had been bulldozed by the municipality to make room for commercial shops and homes, Dhahiryeh had been well preserved. The Turkish initiative to restore Fawzi Basha’s Ottoman fort set up a model for the local community. Al-qesariyyeh now stands in a state of forlorn abandon, pending restoration.

Ibrahim identified each house. He grew up in Dhahiryeh before the flow of cash in the early days of the occupation enabled almost everyone to leave for more convenient modern homes outside the old city.

The main dusty street is a string of shops with roman arches flanked by typical rural domestic architecture in various states of disrepair. Architectural remains of Roman, Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods overlap; silent witnesses to what once was a stop for the caravan route leading from Transjordan to Ashkelon and Gaza ... some thirty kilometres north of Beersheva.

“Could Alonia have had this type of architecture?” I pondered silently. Mother and Aida had unfortunately stayed behind in the comfort of the fort.

“Here was the jeweller ... This was the grocer ... There was the café ... Here was the cloth merchant...” Ibrahim’s recollections of his old quarter brought it alive in his mind’s eye.

I trailed behind through the dusty narrow lane impressed with the wealth of detail that survives in the architecture. The facades of the houses project palatial grandeur. Inside, the rooms retain the distinct traditional peasant character, the single two-floor chambers; the lower for animals and the upper for the owners.

“I had kept this as a surprise,” he said as he started walking down a staircase that led to a cave.

I was taken aback.

“This is where most of the people lived,” He pointed to the huge expanse under the shops and houses. “The majority lived underground with the sheep.”

I must have looked incredulous.

“It goes underneath the entire upper town.”

I was overwhelmed. I knew that the ancient Hurrite settlers, the precursors of the Canaanites, were cave dwellers but did not appreciate their pervasive influence. In al-Burj, ten kilometres away, I had asked Mohammad, my host from Dura, about the logic underlying burial of the dead in the same cave – a practice that had continued up to less than a century ago.

“They dead father and mother kept them company (kamu bitwannasu fihum),” he explained.

I looked at the vast expanse stretching out of the village. Modern cars and fast roads have dissolved distances.
once was a one-day camel ride is now traversed in half an hour! Modernism has also helped diminish the infant mortality rate. Rural demographic statistics reveal soaring figures despite the extensive immigration of Palestinian professional youth. Indeed, in the eighteenth century the country was sparsely populated. The villages had a far smaller population.

“In the loneliness of being, the dead provided company,” I mused.

I was brought back to the present. Ibrahim’s narrative about the qesariyyeh had a punch line.

“When the Jews came to Palestine in the nineteenth century,” he smiled, “they thought the country was empty. They saw no one, for no one lived on the land; everyone lived in the caves underneath!”

The diverse “peoples” that settled throughout history in Palestine had arrived each with its own developed cultural system that mediated and conditioned adaptation to the Canaanite civilisation. “Syncretism” as a conceptual tool far simplifies the highly individualised process of cultural assimilation that underlies present Arabic Palestinian ethnic diversity. On the one hand, each of these Semitic and non-Semitic “newcomers” had arrived in Palestine already with its own socio-economic religious system. On the other hand, the Canaanites themselves cannot be viewed as a homogeneous people. Rather they were a heterogeneous people in a dynamic process of self-definition through the deployment of their own religious, economic, political discourse.

Archaeological interpretations inform us that the Late Bronze Age witnessed great upheavals in the eastern Levant, a weakening of the Mycenaean civilisation, the destruction of a number of important cities in Anatolia, etc. The downfall of the traditional economic and political powers in the region opened the way for many groups of mostly Semitic peoples – among them the Israelites, Edomites, Moabites, Midianites, and Ammonites – to found a number of small states. The Arameans began to dominate Syria and spread into Mesopotamia. These events were connected to, and at times brought about by, the Sea Peoples who, in addition to the Greeks of Crete and the Greek settlements in Anatolia, may have come from as far away as northern Europe, the Balkans, and the Black Sea.

In fact, these independent city-states, not dissimilar from the early Greek polis, underlie Palestinian ethnic diversity and spark various signs, fossils, and vestiges in Palestinian peasant culture. Hellenic Greeks, Romans, Moslem Arabs, Crusaders, Ayyubid Kurds, and Ottomans provided a dynamic flux further enriching the extant ethnic diversity.

In al-Fawwar Refugee Camp it was difficult to find a man in his eighties. Those in their seventies, mom’s generation, had no memory of the land. They were mere children the day of the stampede. They were snatched by the hand or carried on the shoulders as the parents fled in terror for their lives. Theirs are second-hand narratives and give expression primarily to the heartbreaking longing for the lost paradise. The discourse of the Nakba has become dominated by two themes: the description of the moment of the tragedy – the ordeal and fear that coerced their flight from the homeland – and the subsequent victimisation of the Palestinian.

“What did the country look like?” I ask mother as we drive past lush green wheat fields that flank both sides of the road between Beit Shemesh and Beit Jibrin on Route 6. Cows herd quietly in the meadow, and the scene looks over-manicured with a few moshavs or kibbutzes dotting the horizon here and there. All traces of Palestinian presence have been thoroughly obliterated by the Israelis.

“I don’t know,” she answered. “I was too young...”

We reach the juncture of Beit Jibrin/Tarqumia and are almost half an hour from Gaza.

“We are within range of qassam rockets!” mother warns me. “Let’s return.”

We decide to return home through the West Bank via Hebron. The ride was pretty, but without our people it felt sterile. The crossing of the checkpoint puts us immediately back in traditional Palestine, and the first village is Tarqumia.

“Do I turn right or left to reach Hebron?” I ask a man heading on his donkey to the village.

“Turn to the left through Tarqumia. The other is the settlement road,” he warned.

We drive through the sprawling shabby suburb. The traffic slows down as I pass through the town centre. I stop as a taxi loads some passengers. A young man sees me, smiles, and comes over to the car.

“Masa el kheir, Dr. Qleibo. What a surprise! Please visit us ...” my student Omar welcomes me.

“I must reach the mountains before sunset.”

“Follow the road to Wadi al-Quf. It will lead you straight to Halhul.”

This would have been Palestine had it not been lost: familiar faces, our people, my students and their parents ... everywhere!

The tremendous loss underlying the Nakba is the overall systematic eradication of hundreds of Palestinian villages within the green line. The primordial mythos of the land is inextricably bound in the traditional relationship of our peasants to their ancestral land. The destruction of the villages, the dislocation and forced transfer of the indigenous people have produced a major lacuna in the field of Biblical scholarship, humanist studies, and the unique spiritual contribution of the Palestinian genius.

North of the Mediterranean, Greek philosophy was founded. In Palestine, on the southern shores, God revealed himself to humanity in the Judeo-Christian, Moslem tradition. The possibility of knowing, feeling, and grasping the ethnic diversity within whose ethnological context the Old Testament was written, Christianity was born, and onto which Palestinian Islam was grafted is now greatly diminished.

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"I Come from There... and Remember"
(Mahmoud Darwish)
انا من هناكяти ولي ذكريات
محمود درويش

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I was only six months old when this story happened, but I learned about it a generation later. I was moving house in Berkeley, California, and my father was helping in the effort. As I carried a small – by then almost antique – carpet into our new house, my father saw it and said, “Oh, so you ended up with the Moshe Dayan carpet.” My ears pricked up. “What do you mean?” “This is the carpet Moshe Dayan sat on when he came to a meeting at our family home.” Having not heard this story before, I stopped everything I was doing and asked him to explain.

I was born and lived in Upper Baq’a, a western suburb of Jerusalem. My great-grandfather, Tanas Daoud Halaby, had built our family home in the late 19th century – a traditional stone house, large enough for three generations of Halabys. It had a large veranda with a distinctive balustrade, a courtyard garden, and a red-tiled roof.

In January of 1948, Moshe Dayan, the Zionist military leader, had requested a meeting with the heads of families living in Baq’a. It was decided that the meeting would take place at our family home. Dayan came at the appointed time with his aide. After the first social courtesies, Dayan said, “Why don’t we all sit like the Arabs?” and then proceeded to sit down on the carpet with his aide. The people who were gathered in our living room looked at one another and said, “Let us sit like the Arabs,” and sat on the prearranged chairs, leaving Dayan and his aide on the carpet.

Dayan was apparently planning to bring some of his troops into the neighbourhood and wanted to find out what the people’s reaction would be. At the time the people in Baq’a were unarmred and not yet part of the conflict. They were resolutely opposed to any Zionist military control. Dayan was very disappointed in the outcome of the meeting; the next night he sent sappers to blow up our family home, but they mistakenly bombed the house next door, killing two teenage sisters in their beds.

Several days later my mother discovered an unexploded grenade that was thrown onto our veranda. This was the start of the Nakba for our family and the Baq’a neighbourhood. Immediately people began to arm themselves and take turns patrolling the streets at night.

My father and our neighbours defended our area as long as they could, but after the Deir Yassin massacre, they realised that they were no match for the brutality of the Zionist forces. People started to leave Baq’a for safer grounds, not realising that they were no match for the brutality of the Zionist forces. People started to leave Baq’a for safer grounds, not realising that they would never be allowed to return to their homes.

The father of Abu-Yaser was a farmer who sold what he cultivated – fruit, wheat, olives, and sesame – at the markets in Lid, Ramle, and Hebron. Abu-Yaser himself sold grain in Jaffa, where he used to enjoy listening to famous singers in concert. Then in Tel Aviv, he would play soccer with his Jewish friends, who oftentimes asked him if he needed anything, to which he would reply, “All I need is a pen with which to write my poetry.”

A handwritten note on Abu-Yaser’s office door is a stark daily reminder that on 8 July 1948, he and his family were forced to leave their home in Tel el-Safi and have never been allowed to return. Abu-Yaser now lives in Dheisheh Refugee Camp.

Abu-Yaser recalls that life in Tel el-Safi was simple yet comfortable. He remembers grinding coffee in the mornings before going out to work in the fields. Rhythmically knocking the wooden stick on the sides of the vessel in which he has put a handful of coffee grains and a couple of cardamoms, Abu-Yaser skilfully demonstrates how the coffee grinder doubles as a musical instrument. “At 8 o’clock in the morning you could hear people grinding coffee like this,” he explains. “I still grind my beans in this way,” he says handing each of us a cup of freshly brewed coffee.

Ever since he was a young boy, Abu-Yaser has been a keen poet. “I’m 83 years old now,” he says, “but writing poetry makes me feel like I’m 10 again.” He tells of how he would enjoy reciting his verses aloud, hearing the words “echoing” in the vastness of the Tel el-Safi countryside. His poems were about the weather, the seasons, and the landscapes. Today, they have become a channel for the pain of the last 60 years and the suffering of those around him.

As a boy in the mid-1930s, Abu-Yaser went to Bisan to study. There was no electricity at the time, and he used to watch in awe as the municipal labourers hung lanterns in the streets at night and enjoyed helping collect them again in the morning. Abu-Yaser used to love the railway that linked Bisan with Akka. He was reduced to tears when he visited Bisan again in the 1980s, after more than 40 years away, to find that the railroad no longer existed.

The father of Abu-Yaser was a farmer who sold what he cultivated – fruit, wheat, olives, and sesame – at the markets in Lid, Ramle, and Hebron. Abu-Yaser himself sold grain in Jaffa, where he used to enjoy listening to famous singers in concert. Then in Tel Aviv, he would play soccer with his Jewish friends, who oftentimes asked him if he needed anything, to which he would reply, “All I need is a pen with which to write my poetry.”
Al-Nakba of 1948: Older than sixty, for sure; but how long will it persist?

By Dr. Khalil Nakhleh

The need to re-focus our understanding of al-Nakba

I am not really certain when we started to label what happened to our people and our country, following the establishment of the state of Israel, as al-Nakba. But this is not really the important point. What is important, from my perspective as a Palestinian, is that there is a need to understand what happened to us in the late 1940s, why it happened the way it did, and what we should do to circumvent al-Nakba from persisting into our future.

Al-Nakba stands as a critical marker in the life of at least three generations of Palestinians since 1947–1948; and it will be indelible in the minds of future Palestinian generations. It is, no doubt, a violent severance and interruption of the Palestinians from their past: from their familiarity with their daily surroundings, their immediate environment, and their natural connection with their milieu. It is a process that led to the cleansing (i.e., killing and expulsion) of at least 86 percent of the indigenous Palestinian population who lived in the area that became Israel; and the erasure of at least 531 of their villages and towns, with the explicit goal of creating an exclusive Jewish state in the same area. Al-Nakba is an ongoing process of “memoricide” (to use Ilan Pappe’s term) — the wiping out of individual and collective memory in the hope that it cannot be rekindled. Al-Nakba process intended to erase our collective memory.

Al-Nakba process: agencies and targets

Al-Nakba was not a sudden happening that came from nowhere. What happened in 1947–1948 was the culmination of a colonial settler process, whose aim was (and continues to be) to dislodge the indigenous Arab population of Palestine and replace it with Zionist-Jewish settlers from other countries. These settlers and their descendents spearheaded a systematic process, which started in the early 1920s, of cleansing the land from its Palestinian population and transforming it into an extension of the globalised capitalist centre. The process is continuing today, with the direct and indirect sanctioning of the United States, Europe, and a multitude of their client states and non-state agencies.

In order to arrive at a clear and comprehensive understanding of this broad process, I propose to look at “al-Nakba Process” on two levels: the phases of its development and its targets. In terms of the phases, we can delineate three, somewhat overlapping, phases: the planning/designing phase, the implementation phase, and the completion phase. Embedded in these phases, I would highlight three clear targets: people, land, and institutions.

The planning/designing phase

This is recognised to have begun with the holding of the first Zionist Congress in 1897. The idea of establishing a Jewish National Fund (JNF), with the goal of acquiring Arab-owned lands in Palestine (and the region), for exclusive Jewish use, was proposed during that first Zionist Congress more than one hundred years ago. The idea of the JNF was formally approved in 1901, and was registered in Britain in 1907, with the explicit objective of acquiring lands and immovable properties “in Palestine, Syria, and in any other parts of Turkey and the Sinai Peninsulas.” It was later stipulated that the land that is acquired (irrespective of the means) and held by the JNF is “the inalienable property of the Jewish people, and only Jewish labour can be employed in the settlements.” Subsequently, a British commission concluded that “the land has been extra-territorialised. It ceases to be land from which the [Palestinian] Arab can gain any advantage now or in the future. Not only can he never hope to lease or cultivate it, but he is deprived forever of employment on that land ...” In May 1954, and through an official memorandum from the Israeli government, the JNF was subsumed formally as a company within Israel. The signed memorandum kept the objectives as found in the original registration, but stated that the JNF’s activities “in the State of Israel and in any area under its jurisdiction [are] for the purpose of settling Jews on these lands and properties.” Furthermore, the JNF was recognised as one of the arms of the World Zionist Movement. It is estimated today that 13 percent (or approximately 2.5 million dunums) of the land area in Israel is held by the JNF; the majority of which are lands belonging to Palestinian refugees — lands which were taken over as a result of the ethnic cleansing process.

As the Zionist arm of the colonisation of Palestine, the Jewish National Fund has been the paramount Zionist agency of al-Nakba.
Preparing for al-Nakba of Palestine followed a dual track: political-diplomatic and economic. The colonial settler process was codified (or formalised) in 1917 by the British Balfour Declaration, when the British government committed itself to “view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.” With the conclusion of WWI and the establishment of the League of Nations, Great Britain was designated by the League of Nations as the Mandatory Power for Palestine in 1923. The preamble to the British Mandate incorporated the Balfour Declaration, with minor adjustments.

This means that the Western powers – which emerged victorious from WWI and established the League of Nations, Great Britain was designated by the League of Nations as the Mandatory Power for Palestine in 1923. The preamble to the British Mandate incorporated the Balfour Declaration, with minor adjustments.

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In the meantime, the system of Jewish-Zionist education was separated from that of the prevalent system of the indigenous population and became fully centralised under the exclusive control of the Zionist movement, to which it allocated about 40 percent of its budget. The objective was clearly to inculcate the mythical claim of Zionism in the new generations of settlers; to strengthen the Zionist colonial control of the land; and to prepare for a separate hegemonic Jewish presence in Palestine.

Had Zionism not been a settler-colonial movement, with the objective to establish an exclusivist “Jewish national home” in Palestine, and had it not received the political, economic, and military support of the major Western powers who emerged victorious from the two world wars, this whole process, most likely, would not have culminated in al-Nakba. The recurrent insistence on dividing the land in order to allow for a hegemonic and exclusivist Jewish state in Palestine, against the explicit will of its indigenous population, which, sadly, persists until this day under the pretex of “negotiating” for peace, is the direct prelude for al-Nakba.

Any serious review of the machinations and deliberations – in the context of the United Nations and hegemonic Western powers that sought to operationalise the Balfour Declaration – leading to the creation of Israel would have to conclude that adopting the principle of dividing Palestine was a sure recipe for cleansing the indigenous population living in that area, i.e., a sure recipe for al-Nakba. Since 1937, with the Peel Commission, the push by Western capitalist powers was to partition Palestine, under the rubric of accommodating Zionist aspirations for a “Jewish homeland.” Since that time, no apparent serious effort was invested in the UN context, or by UN agencies, to avert al-Nakba. Palestinian society, then as now, was completely exposed and vulnerable to external forces, as well as to the control of internal agents of those forces. Its internal social, economic, and cultural structures lacked the required immunity to withstand those forces. Thus, a new Zionist-Jewish state was established in 1948 on a decimated indigenous, rural society, called Palestine.

The persistent push of the imperialist and capitalist centres then, and their client states, taking the cue from the Zionist movement, was for physically partitioning Palestine, to create a separate state for the Jews. Their objective was never to establish a just and democratic society in all of Palestine and to accommodate all its people. Such a position could have been possible to adopt then, had it been the goal. But this was never the plan of the Zionist movement; nor was it the intention of the Balfour Declaration, thirty years earlier; nor did it harmonise with the objective of creating a paramount Jewish colonisation agency (the JNF) nearly 46 years earlier.

Implementation and completion phase

I shall not dwell in much detail on this section because it is well documented and has been discussed by a number of historians, Palestinian and non-Palestinian, since the 1950s; it has furthermore been documented and analysed lately in a most comprehensive way by historian Ilan Pappe, in his fine book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006).

In a snapshot form, early cleansing operations started in December 1947.

At the time, the Palestinians constituted two-thirds of the population (whereas they made up nearly 90 percent of the population of Palestine at the beginning of the British Mandate in 1923). At the beginning of the cleansing operations, Palestinians owned about 97 percent of the land. As a result of the ethnic cleansing operations, 531 Palestinian villages were erased; more than 86 percent of the indigenous Palestinian population was destroyed, expelled, or displaced. Thus only 14 to 15 percent of the indigenous Palestinian population (about 130,000 – 150,000) remained in their homeland, while the rest became displaced and homeless refugees.

Whereas the Palestinians who remained on their own indigenous land (in Israel) number today about 1.3 million, the robbery of their land continues through government legislations. In 1967, the Israeli Knesset passed the “Law of Agricultural Settlement” that “prohibited the sub-letting of the Jewish-owned land of the JNF to non-Jews . . .” The law furthermore ensured that “water quotas set aside for the JNF lands could not be transferred to non-JNF lands.” The Palestinian minority in Israel, which constitutes now about 18 percent “has been forced to make do with just three percent of the land.” It is estimated that 70 percent of the land belonging to the Palestinians in Israel “has been either confiscated or made inaccessible to them.”

How do we prevent al-Nakba from persisting into our future?

I am convinced that al-Nakba process,
as discussed above, will persist in the Palestinian future unless and until we, and all the forces in the world that do not want to see a recurring Nakba, embark unequivocally on the following steps:

1. Stop thinking, acting, and aiming to divide historical Palestine as a pretext to finding a solution for the current unjust situation, which has been imposed on us as a result of the process of the last hundred years.

2. Work towards the dismemberment of the exclusivist, racist Zionist-Jewish-Israeli state and structures, in favour of one democratic, non-hegemonic state, for all the inhabitants of historical Palestine.

3. Highlight the historical evil perpetrated against the Palestinian people and work globally towards forcing the World Zionist Movement and the State of Israel to acknowledge their direct responsibility for perpetrating this historical evil and to take real restitution measures to rectify it.

Main sources consulted for this article:

An earlier version of this article appeared in CounterPunch.

Dr. Khalil Nakhleh is a Palestinian anthropologist, independent development and educational consultant, and writer. His latest two books are: The Myth of Palestinian Development (2004), and (co-authored with Tafeeda Jirbawi) Empowering Future Generations (2008). He is the editor of a forthcoming book, The Future of the Palestinian Minority in Israel. Dr. Nakhleh resides in Ramallah and may be reached at abusama@palnet.com.

Photo Caption
What is Treason?

By Mary Ğeday

What is treason? Have you asked yourself this question in your lifetime? Have you asked this question of yourself as a Palestinian? I have often asked. Have you tried to keep a record of the number of times you have committed treason? Have you asked yourself if all that you own, material or not, which is more than that which the radish-grower on the side of Surda will own, constitutes treason? Have you asked yourself if every trip abroad, more likely than not, not to work at a supermarket in Paterson, New Jersey, or Mesquite, Texas, constitutes that same treason?

When I listen to Marcel Khalife now, I think of Ruba singing with Sanabel at graduation, of the graduates getting visibly politically excited and of the administration on the podium getting anxious, and I think of Birzeit. Students at Birzeit University, from the less religious parties, play Marcel Khalife at every political occasion available to them, there, between the Administration Building and the Science Building. I wonder now if I ever heard Khalife’s “Ana Youssef, Ya Abi.” But I do not recall this particular song sounding between the hallways of Engineering, or as I walked down the steps of the cafeteria into the world below. I wonder if these students really heard the words of “Ana Youssef.” Did they ask themselves whether the song is a grieving documentation of treason, a documentation of a man “shahidan kal kamar,” as Khalife sings in another song about the most mundane and sublime of all documents, a passport?

I wonder how many of the students at the graduation ceremony voted during student elections. I wonder how many of them thought of Khalife begging, in what to me is the voice of Palestine, “don’t sacrifice me twice, don’t make me the lamb again.” I wonder how many Palestinians think of Palestine as a lamb. I wonder how many of my students in my Mythology class thought of Palestine as a lamb. I often think how poorly I had taught that class. I think to myself that it was a literary crime not to have taught Racine’s *Andromache*, the story of the imprisoned Queen of Troy. Andromache chooses death for herself and her son rather than give herself up to marriage with the man responsible for the burning of Troy, despite his promise that by marriage she will secure the life of her son. I often think with great regret that I should have taught Palestinian songs, as many as I could gather, about the myth of peace, the myth of freedom, the myth of the goodness of human nature, the myth of community and loyalty.

Every year, shortly before Easter, on 17 March, New York City holds what might be the largest parade in the world for St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. I attended this parade every year during my studies in New York and went again to watch this year. At least a quarter of the crowd all along Fifth Avenue are Irish tourists who travel across the Atlantic especially to see Irish freedom and heritage celebrated and supported in New York. I cannot describe in few words how massive this parade is. It begins at 10 a.m. and ends often after 4 p.m., during which time what might be two hundred representative societies of the Irish community, mostly in New York City, parade with their bagpipe bands and other bands, with banners and tapestries of their counties in Ireland, their heroes and freedom fighters, and their saints, down Fifth Ave to a cheering crowd of Irish immigrants, Irish tourists, tourists and locals.

It is during this day that I most think of treason. I think of treason most on this day for two reasons: because it confirms that I am not home, my own treason, and it confirms the treason of the Arab world, and of the Palestinians themselves, as much as it does the treason of the Irish.

For years in the past, at least eight banners travelling, green and gold, ten metres across the Avenue, would read: ENGLAND GET OUT OF IRELAND. They see a tradition, and mostly a dozen beers at one of the thousand pubs along the corners of Fifth Avenue, tailing by some affordable name-brand shopping. It is clear to see that only the white-haired marchers, mostly walking with canes, see ENGLAND GET OUT OF IRELAND and believe it and know it. Sadly, this year, after a four-year absence, watching from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., I only saw one ENGLAND GET OUT OF IRELAND; and it makes quite a bit of sense, as much as it makes for an unspeakable disappointment and bereavement. It is a sign of our time, a time of negotiations and compromise in the name of capital growth, development, and modernisation, all of which reap nothing, as I saw in Belfast this past autumn, but shopping for some, and project housing without the barbed-wire for others.

Photo Captions
1. Wood Engraving, artwork by Moustafa Hallaj
2. Haifa Beirut and Beyond... Al Funoun Dance Troupe
3. A letter from Abdul Qader Hussein alleging the Arab League of abandoning him in the battle. 6 April 1948.
And it is the same treason in Palestine. It is the same treason in Jordan, in Egypt, in Morocco, in Qatar, in Lebanon, in Syria ... It is the same treason wherever you look. It is the same treason in the lecture halls and the research institutes of the Palestinian universities. It is the same treason in the books co-authored by Palestinians and Israelis. It is the same treason written by Palestinian academics and political figures at home or in the so-called diaspora, who propagate the vision of a better future for Palestinians in an amorphous entity they call a single, dual, triple state coexisting with Israel. The lie of coexistence has been a glaring beacon throughout history, since before the fall of Troy. There can only be one empire existing above a satellite of smaller empires existing at the expense of the dispensable peoples; it is no myth as is the myth of the chosen people, which is clearly no myth at all.

Mary Geday is a Palestinian from Yaffa.
Palestine Festival of Literature

Palestine has always made rich cultural contributions to the world and has given birth to poets, novelists, critics, essayists, and thinkers who have come to the forefront of Arab cultural life. During the last sixty years these births have been achieved under increasingly harsh conditions.

Palestinian life under a forty-year military occupation has often been desperate. Palestinian cities struggle hard to maintain a cultural life in the face of curfews and incursions. People who work in the cultural field make heroic efforts to keep lines of communication open with the world. The Palestine Festival of Literature, which takes place between 7 and 11 May, positions itself as part of that effort. It was inspired into existence by the call of the late great Palestinian thinker, Edward Said, to "reaffirm the power of culture over the culture of power."

Reading at events will be Ramallah’s own Mourid Barghouti, Palestinian/American poet and performer Suheir Hammad, and renowned Lebanese author Hanan al-Shaykh. Egyptian author Ahdaf Soueif will be returning to Palestine for her third visit. Also attending is the highly entertaining and engaging Booker Prize-winner, Roddy Doyle, whose best-known book The Commitments was made into a successful film. Acclaimed travel writer and historian, William Dalrymple, the author of a brilliant account of a journey through the Middle East entitled From the Holy Mountain will also attend. Sir David Hare, one of the best-known and most politically engaged playwrights in Britain will also be present. Hare’s claims to fame are many, but it is his monologue, Via Dolorosa, which he performed in 1998, that will have most resonance here. Other participants include Victoria Brittain, Nathalie Handal, Brigid Keenan, Jamal Mahjoub, and Pankaj Mishra.

The Festival patrons are some of the most celebrated writers in the world today: Mahmoud Darwish, Harold Pinter, Seamus Heaney, Chinua Achebe, and John Berger.

Partners in this festival include the British Council, the Ford Foundation, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, the A.M. Qattan Foundation, Bethlehem University, Birzeit University, the Bookshop at the American Colony Hotel, Dar Annadwa in Bethlehem, and Yabous Productions.

All events are free and unticketed, and all are welcome.

For more information, please contact Carol Michel (+970 598 198 392) or visit the website: www.palestinefestival.org.
Map courtesy of Eng. Michael Younan, CEO

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The Ongoing Nakba: Stories from Children in Shatila

These stories have been written by students in English and human rights classes at Tabaria Camp. They have been minimally edited. Some were written several years ago, some recently.

A Camp Child's Dream: By Usama Abou El Sheikh, 15 years old, from Tabaria, Palestine.

From my early childhood, I used to contemplate things that may be realistic for a child who lives in his homeland, but are imaginary for a refugee child, a child without a land. All that I dreamt about was an alley wider than ours, a garbage can in that alley where we could throw our garbage so that our camp would stay clean. Maybe once I feared and dreamt of a small train that would turn around me and put a smile on my face.

My dreams stayed dreams and I lost them as I grew up to become a teenager. My childhood dreams were lost without achieving it. I grew and I dreamt about was an alley wider than ours, a garbage can in that alley where we could throw our garbage so that our camp would stay clean. Maybe once I feared and dreamt of a small train that would turn around me and put a smile on my face.

My dreams stayed dreams and I lost them as I grew up to become a teenager. My childhood dreams were lost without achieving it. I grew and I dreamt about was an alley wider than ours, a garbage can in that alley where we could throw our garbage so that our camp would stay clean. Maybe once I feared and dreamt of a small train that would turn around me and put a smile on my face.

I know I will grow, my dreams will grow with me, and I won’t achieve them. But I will always follow my dreams even if I won’t catch them ... I will never stop dreaming ...

PALESTINE: By Abed El Rahman Zaaroura, 16 years old, from Saffouriyah, Palestine

I will start my story with a word which means everything to me: Palestine. Palestine lives inside me even though I do not live in Palestine. I live in Shatila – you know that small camp in Lebanon for Palestinian refugees. Shatila, the camp. What can I say about it?

For us as Palestinian refugees, Shatila means many things: it means wars of the past – 1982, and the battle of the camps to say the least. It means suffering in the present. Shatila means the absence of dreams for the future. However, it meant, means and always will mean one and only one dream: the dream of return.

I am from a village called Saffouriyah in north Palestine. The Israelis destroyed my village completely because they were scared of the love, happiness, and values that its inhabitants held. This is what my grandfather always tells me. My grandfather also told me that life in Palestine was very good. There is nothing better than living in your homeland among the people you love and you care for, he always says. There is nothing better than staying in the shadows of a tree in your village. There is nothing better than sitting on the earth of your land, our land in our homeland Palestine. There is nothing better than lying on the ground of Palestine contemplating its sky and listening to its birds singing.

I wish that I could sit in Palestine – that is all that I want from this life. Is that too much for me? All that I wish in this life is to save Shatila and free Palestine ... Is that too much for me?

We'll Return One Day: By Iktimal Sha’aban, 16 years old, from Dayshoum, Palestine

"One day we'll return to Palestine because our house is still awaiting us ... It is still awaiting its folks to return to the land and take care of it. We'll return because our big house is still there. I can still see it. The olive tree is still planted in the good land, and is watered by nostalgia ... There is our real house." My father says: "We'll be free and nobody will ask who we are. Nobody will ask us where do you come from, and when are you leaving?" "We'll return," my father assures me, "and we'll forget all the wars and humiliations we passed through in exile. Going back to our land will help us forget the pain of the past, and to work for the future."

My father used to repeat these words to my sister upon her return from a fruitless day of job hunting – even though she holds a B.A. in Philosophy (with honors) from the Lebanese University.

He said these words to my brother before bidding him the last farewell, promising to move his body to Palestine where he would rest. He also repeated it to my mother when she got a heart attack after the death of my brother, and when she was admitted to no hospital because we had no money. He always repeats it to me when I feel disappointed at his inability to satisfy my needs.

Like my father and brothers, I used to want to return to Palestine so that my sister would get a job, and for my mother to heal, and for us to live a dignified life. But now I want to return because I want to return, because I have the right to return. UN resolution 194 gives me this right. And resolution 242 states our right of self-determination. And we want to return.

Where To This Time? By Samar Sha’aban, 14 years old, from Dayshoum, Palestine

I am sick and tired of moving. The fear
of getting attached to friends clutches at my heart. I am so terrified about getting attached to places. From Shatila to Mazraa, to Ouzai, back to Shatila, then to Rawsheh, then Shatila another time. And from there where to?

I was born in Shatila a year before the Battle of the Camps broke out. My father and sister were killed in that war while my mother, brothers, sisters and I moved to Mazraa area, to live in a building inhabited by displaced Lebanese and Palestinians. My childhood was spent in the one-roomed Mazraa house. Our house in Shatila did not mean anything to me for I had left it at a very young age and before getting attached to it. Maybe places did not mean anything to me back then.

I started to discover the world in Mazraa. The four years I spent there taught me a lot. With Samia, Joumana, Bilal, Nidal, Nihal, and Amal, I learnt the meaning of cooperation through sharing the candies we used to buy together, or through accumulating the money we got at the Adha feast and then going together to the Luna Park.

When I was five years old, the owner of the building we lived in got permission to evict us from his building. So Bilal, Nidal, and Nihal went to the Horsh, Samia went to Hamra while we were transported by a mini bus to Ouzai where my mother had rented a small house.

On my first day in Ouzai, I cried until there were no more tears in my eyes. I was scared by the place, and I missed my friends and neighbours in Mazraa. Only my mother’s promise to visit them soon calmed me that day. Under the fig tree in Ouzai, and after playing with Zeinab and Manal, I started to like the new place and my new friends. There, the girls’ father used to sing to us, “Yesterday under the fig tree you said you loved me.” But as soon as I started to feel safe in my new home, my mother decided to move back to Shatila, to our house, to the place where I was born, and which did not mean much to me. Darine, Halimeh, Souhaila, Rasha, Insaf, Mohammad, Ihab, Soubhi, and Othman became the new friends whom I loved, was loved by, and played Koraimsheh and cards with.

My second mother, Um Mohammad, used to pamper me a lot. Most times, I used to find myself waking up to go and spend the night next to her. In Shatila, I learned that like Sobhi and Othman, I was Palestinian, while Nihal and Manal, my friends in Mazraa, were Lebanese.

My mother got married and handed us to our grandparents who lived in Rawsheh, in the Attar building for the displaced. A new place. Would I come to love it and have new friends? Would I find there a new Um Mohammad and new Nihal, Rasha, and Ahmad? What if I came to love them and had to leave them another time? No, I wouldn’t allow myself to love the place or its inhabitants. But the ice-cream man and our gathering around his car at sunset, the sea and walks on the seashore, the Rawsheh Rock, all hooked me to the place and its inhabitants.

One night, as I was returning home with Iktimal and Nisrine from a sunset walk, we read the paper hung on the building wall: “The building must be vacated in 20 days, or violators will be held responsible.”

Packing and bidding the place farewell, going to Shatila for the third time, to where I live now. In Shatila, I know many children and old people, but I try not to love them a lot…. That is why I am accused of being cold and distant! Maybe, but I don’t want to love people from whom I will be separated soon. Moving from Shatila to Mazraa, to Ouzai, back to Shatila, then to Rawsheh, and Shatila again has taught me new words and their meanings. I learned and lived separation, farewell, and instability. These places never gave me a sense of security. My constant moving did not allow me to get attached to them.

Currently I live in Shatila, but who knows where I will be next? I only want to leave Shatila to return to Palestine where I belong. Isn’t it my right to settle in one place like all human beings? To settle in a place where I could have a house that would embrace me and give me security? Such a place can only be there, in Palestine.
Neither here not there... by Farah Obeid, 19 years old, from Ikzim, Palestine

When I was a child, my parents used to put me and my sisters in their beautiful cage. We were not supposed to play with other kids in that narrow road that we had near our house. We never went down unless we wanted to get chocolate from our grandpa’s market. There was no specific reason they gave for not allowing us to be friends with other kids.

We left that simple camp and went to another one wider in space and wider with its problems. Still we don’t communicate because we’re not part of it and we don’t want to belong to here. From our distance in the “there” we hear the bad horrible stories of the camp, and “here” we face same problems even though we are not part of the camp. I go out to the university and daily I wish to get out from this empty place. I would pay my life to have a place outside the camp. I know then I won’t be able to enjoy those moments outside the camp, it’s enough for me to know that my sisters are doing so.

I don’t belong to the camp, and I don’t want to be a small thingy in it. Yet, I don’t belong to the outside, and I can’t be part of it. I’m still and always will be an intruder for not being one of its native residents. I’m not here nor there. I feel I belong to nowhere.

I thought I was living in the “real world,” but what is the definition of “real”? Is it the “ideal”? And what is “ideal”? Is it the simplicity of happiness or the complexity of ugliness?

Sometimes I laugh and many times I cry at my reactions toward the horrible stories I hear. They vary between pity and disbelief that such things could happen, and at the extreme aggression and circumstances that make such things happen. Then I go out to the other world where people are really narrow in their needs, their outlook on life, their problems, and their “FUTURE-TOMORROW” – a very nice word that people really miss in the camp, because their lives are mostly concerned with this place, living each day by itself. The light no more appears at the end of the narrow road.

Huge hole between here and there ... I should cross this distance so as not to fall down. I don’t want to stay here nor do I want to get there. I’m not from here and I don’t want to be there. I want to create my own world which is a very simple look of tomorrow. These horrible stories will strengthen my ability to resist the burdens of life upon my neck, and that simple smile would give me the hope of having another tomorrow and would energize me to look up, very high, to the sky and know that someday I would be there, and look down and wish people on earth to have that inner peace of soul and mind to realize that nothing is worth fighting and aggression.
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Al-Nakba: Bequeathal of Rights

By Dr. Norma Masriyyeh Hazboun

Two images are engraved in my mind in spite of the several images that shocked me during my interviews with Palestinian refugees in “camp communities” in the Gaza Strip while I was in the process of collecting data from the field as part of my PhD thesis.

First Image: An Old Man Weeping

Second Image: Grandmothers and Grandsons

These two images alone still pull me back to a past history, an existing present, and a future to be. They reflect a relationship of fusion and a sense of continuity among the grandparents’ generation – the first generation of the Nakba who are now a handful – and the generation of the sons – the second generation – and the successors’ generation – the third generation of the Nakba. The question we must ask is: What is common among these generations after 60 years of the Nakba?

In the post-Nakba stage, the camp has become a symbol for Palestine. The process of recalling common history has become the means to formulate the collective memory starting from the grandparents’ generation and ending with the sons’ generation today. “The sacredness of what used to be” has become the source to create a general mentality, a self-awareness, and a relation with the other.

According to common experience, if the group remains, then the culture will continue to exist. In light of this culture, a new collective track has emerged among Palestinians that can be summarised through the concepts of “challenge” and “determination.” The energy that is created by challenge and determination make it possible for Palestinians to rehabilitate themselves as an entity and to defend their existence, awareness, culture in the face of an everlasting threat to their existence and in response to the challenges posed by the Zionist scheme and Israeli occupation.

Within the framework of merging and assimilation and the feeling of steadfastness and unity with a group, the Palestinian refugee remains in the heart of the event in a dynamic rather than a static manner. It is the “memory of defiance” that not only inhabits each refugee since the Nakba but that challenges the other – the one who keeps on chasing and suppressing it.

Through the bequeathal of the real and unforgettable story and the collective commitment to asserting rights, the sense of belonging is powerfully and vigorously regenerated to reflect the state of estrangement and the sociology of exile – the physical and psychological exile of the victims of the Nakba.

Accordingly, I recall the first image of the Sheikh (old man) who started weeping before me. At once, I remembered the paintings by the Palestinian artist Ismail Shamout, the pioneer in representing the tragedy of Palestinian dispossession with the human being at its core. He embodied the Nakba of homelessness and exile of the Sheikh, the woman, and the child through his paintings in the aftermath of the Nakba. The old man said, “My daughter, look how we have ended up – in a house of just 80 square meters compared to the 15 dunums of land that we used to own in Majdal.” He goes on to say, “Where is the justice in this? Where is the international community? What is the solution for us? We will never give up hope. If I do not manage to go back, my sons and grandsons will instead ... If we stick to our rights, they will never be abandoned.” This venerable old man did not give up the hope of returning, so he was keen like his other contemporaries to pass on to his sons and then to their grandsons the true story and the unforgettable rights – his firm belief in the justice of his question.

The first image is linked with the second one, which will never be washed away from my memory as long as I live. No sooner did I enter a house to conduct an interview, than grandmothers started spontaneously and impulsively to call for their grandchildren, the third generation, and say to them, “Tell her, tell her where you are from!” Their immediate answer would be: “I am from Majdal, from Barbara, from Yabna, from Hamama, from Jaffa, from Zarnouqa, from Faluja.” Names of villages and cities were reiterated in every house I entered; some were names of villages I had never heard of before ... Camp children know them by heart despite the fact that they have never been to these places or lived in them.

As survivors, stateless Palestinian families not only bridged the social dimension through the creation of new social networks, but through political education they were able to provide the means by which Palestinian nationalism is protected and well preserved.

Identification with Palestine and the growth of Palestinian consciousness constitute a cyclical reaction to the post-1948 era when a new “Palestinianism” was created as the end product of the synthesis between family socialisation and the political ethics of Palestinianism.

In his book, The Israelis: Founders and Sons (1971), the Israeli writer Amos Elon describes the astonishment felt by Israeli soldiers, following their conquest of several refugee camps in the West Bank in June 1967, on discovering the strength of social ties among Palestinian refugees. He writes,

“Upon entering a refugee camp, one young soldier discovered that the inmates were still organized into and dwelled as small clans or neighborhood units according to the town, and even the street they had lived on prior to their desperation in 1948 ... Beersheba, Falougeh, Ramlah, Lod, Jaffa, ....”

This story and many others reaffirm the notion of a “rights bequeathal” to the Nakba generations, which has induced the Israeli authorities, right from the first year of Israeli occupation, to embark on a policy of normalisation of the right to return among refugees.

This process of normalisation has been manifested in different forms: Continuous

Photo Captions
1. “Return of the Soul - The Nakbah Project” (2007-2008), from Tank Art, Jane Frere
2. Palestinians pre-1948
3. Shatila Refugee Camp 1982, Lebanon. UNRWA archive
4. Palestinian students protesting 1947 Partition Plan, Orient House archive
calls for resettling of refugees – inside and outside – the Occupied Territories; alternative housing, such as what happened in the Gaza Strip in the early 1970s; alteration of the names of blocks in refugee camps from names of original villages to labels such as A, B, C, etc.; the same applies to renaming the titles of camp mukhtars. Moreover, the name of town/village of origin is not stated under place of birth in the Israeli identification card. An old man showed me his Israeli ID, in which a Hebrew phrase lorashom (not registered) is used instead of the name of his original village. By eliminating the place of birth from the ID, the Israeli authorities thought that the Palestinian refugees would forget their attachment to their original towns/villages, which revolves around the vision of return.

This assumption is emphasised in Dayan’s statement of June 1973 when he declared: “As long as the refugees remain in their camps … their children will say they come from Jaffa or Haifa; if they move out of the camps, it is hoped that they would be attached to their new land.” (The Jerusalem Post, 13 June 1973.)

The refugee camps represent a visible reminder of the Nakba and the refugees’ plight in 1948. They also constitute a focal point for Palestinian identity and resistance. The Israelis have been seeking an end to the refugee camps since the early 1950s; they assumed that they would be able to sever the refugees’ link with their homeland and their desire to return to it – their sense of nationhood and right to self-determination.

The questions, therefore, remain: Did the Israeli policy to eliminate the refugee camps succeed? Why does the word awda (return) terrify many Israelis? Are the right of return, the right to independence, and the right to sovereignty divisible in the Palestinian context? Given their history of negating Palestinian rights – individually and collectively – were the Israelis able to stop the Palestinian voices demanding their rights? On the contrary, Palestinians have responded to the Nakba in a number of definable patterns, which have been maintained from 1948 to the present day.

And yet, Israel continues its litany of NO’s: No to the return of refugees; No to an independent state; No to the partition of Jerusalem; No return to the 1967 borders.

At the same time, Israel has also ignored the unifying power of exile and homesickness that nurtures and strengthens the Palestinian national consciousness.

Nakba is not only history but also a lasting present in the Palestinian individual and collective consciousness as long as the right to return is still a distant dream and as long as the occupation continues with its practices that target the Palestinian’s individual and collective existence as well as the political and cultural existence on the land of Palestine.

In the aftermath of the Nakba, its victims must dig deep into past history and excavate the memory between two spaces and times – pre- and post-1948 – so as to be able to retrieve themselves, given that they belong to the land and are the living proof of its real sacredness, through enriching their national identity and protecting it from elimination and denial. It is this UNFORGOTTEN RIGHT that enabled the Palestinian refugees to hold their ground in the face of all projects that aimed to liquidate their question.

Dr. Norma Masriyyeh Hazboun is currently chairing the Department of Social Sciences at Bethlehem University. She can be reached at normah@bethlehem.edu.
Australia Remembers al-Nakba

By Sonja Karkar

This year in Australia, with a new government in office, everything seemed ripe for change. Indeed, our new prime minister made it his first moving public gesture to say “sorry” to the indigenous people of the land, and a great weight seemed to fall from our collective shoulders. There is hope too for the wretched refugees locked away for years in Australia’s infamous detention centres—quietly their refugee status is being acknowledged, and they are slowly being absorbed into Australia’s multicultural mix, no one remembering that “we do not want people like that here.”

With a Labor government, there is hope too for a change of direction on Palestine and Israel. There had been a lot of talk about reverting to an even-handed policy before the elections and with the government’s foreign policy still in the pipeline, few thought that any statement out of the ordinary would be made until it is released. It was, therefore, quite a shock to hear that Prime Minister Rudd would move a motion honouring Israel’s 60 years of independence in the parliament while ignoring 60 years of Palestinian dispossession and suffering—the catastrophic upheaval of Palestinian society. That moving of the motion came and went, but not before Palestinian advocacy and support groups made it public knowledge, much to the chagrin of the politicians who had hoped to keep it quiet.

The Palestinian Nakba or “Catastrophe” was not a one-off historical event beginning in 1948, but has been a continuous process of systematic violence, destruction, demonisation, and oppression inflicted by the new nation-state of Israel on generations of indigenous Palestinians. That is what Australians need to see and hear this year on this sixtieth anniversary of their precocious existence. Instead, they are seeing Israel officially lauded by our politicians and being given resounding plaudits in our newspapers. And these articles, which most often appear with no balancing opinion or letters, far outweigh any articles published in defence of Palestine. The even-handed media policy seems only to have merit when a rare opinion on Palestine is given space. Then the reader is treated to the pros and cons with official imprimaturs from the Israeli embassy and/or Australia’s Zionist Federation.

In such an Israel-saturated environment, Palestine’s voice struggles to be heard. Yet every now and then, opportunities emerge that capture the imagination of the Australian public. One such moment was the launch of a newspaper advertisement for the “NOT IN OUR NAME” campaign, to protest the prime minister’s Israel motion in parliament. In just three days, Palestinian advocacy and support groups throughout Australia rallied together and produced more than 400 signatures from ordinary Australians and organisations, many of whom have had no involvement with Palestinian activism. Although the names endorsing the protest statement were enormously important, it was the willingness of everyone to provide the financial support for the costly newspaper advertisement that was really extraordinary.

Needless to say, an article, an editorial, and letters attacking the protest as “dissent from the usual left-wing, anti-Israel suspects” accompanied the advertisement in The Australian. Given that it is Australia’s only national newspaper and one that reports daily on the Palestine/Israel conflict, one would like to believe that it would be above partisan politics, but not so. It has declared its bias all too often and now, more than a month after our statement appeared in its pages, some of the signatories are being attacked—in particular two of Australia’s powerful unions—by articles that label them anti-Semitic: an accusation that makes criticising Israel synonymous with the “new anti-Semitism.”

As al-Nakba draws closer, these attacks are designed to frighten off anyone or any organisation of significance from endorsing the follow-up campaign: this time, to request Australia’s prime minister and leader of the opposition to move a bipartisan motion in the Parliament acknowledging 60 years of Palestinian suffering as a consequence of Israel’s creation. If nothing else is done for al-Nakba in Australia, these two campaigns have brought Palestine to the attention of the highest levels of government and the media. They have also made a number of human rights and church groups uncomfortable because now they are being challenged to take a stand on Palestinian human rights rather than avoid it on the pretext of its being too political. Whether the prime minister accedes to our request or not, we believe that we have at least demonstrated to so many different groups and people that there is a voice for Palestine in Australia.

So, which organisations brought about this shift in Palestinian advocacy? Effectively, it was a combined effort of every person and group wanting to bring truth, reason, and justice into a debate that has been hijacked by the Israel lobby since the 1950s. It was led by Adelaide’s Australian Friends of Palestine (AFOPA) and Melbourne’s Australians for Palestine (AFP), and Women for Palestine (WFP), and has since been supported in equal measure by groups in the other states, including members of the Independent Australian Jewish Voices (IAJV) who have been maliciously vilified for having the courage to speak up. The speed with which the word got around demonstrated the effectiveness of networking—a very strong feature of the Queensland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (QPSC), which is in constant contact to provide the support needed to those taking responsibility for the campaign.

And it is not over yet. Endorsements for the letters are still coming in. Some people are writing their own letters and sending them on to the prime minister. Petitions are circulating. Representations are being made to members of parliament. The approaches cover a broad spectrum of Australian society, and that is as it should be.
– churches, trade unions, human rights organisations, peace groups, politicians, lawyers, academics, eminent persons. For everyone involved, the question of fairness and compassion is paramount, and for a prime minister who has already acknowledged the suffering of our own indigenous people, the case for Palestine should be just as compelling.

In any event, al-Nakba will not pass unmarked or unnoticed in Australia on 15 May. In Melbourne, AFP and WFP will be joined by members of the Palestinian community in a candlelight vigil that we hope will bring many Palestinians in their beautiful national dress to the streets of Melbourne. Others have the option of wearing the Nakba T-shirt, specially designed by Melbourne artist Dora McPhee, showing an almost barren olive tree: its outstretched branches and roots representing the displacement, dispossession, and suffering of a fractured Palestinian society under occupation and its bare roots gripping the land of Palestine from which it had grown, long before there was ever a State of Israel. Ribbons with the keffiyeh pattern will allow every person to declare support for the Palestinians. They come with a card that explains the meaning of al-Nakba and the full extent of Israel’s ethnic cleansing project. In fact, both T-shirts and ribbons are available to everyone and have already been taken up enthusiastically by other groups in Australia and overseas.

The vigil will be followed by a film screening of Mohammad Alatar’s Jerusalem: The East Side Story and other documentaries – a tribute by the Palestinian community to all Palestinians who have suffered, and hopefully, an experience for Australians who all too rarely see the Palestinian narrative. In Sydney, another Palestinian group, the Coalition of Peace and Justice for Palestine (CJPP) will be holding a reception at the State Parliament where special guest Ali Abunimah – co-founder of Electronic Intifada – will speak to the assembled guests. In other parts of the country, vigils and rallies will take place with Fair Go for Palestine (FGFP) mobilising in Queensland, the Melbourne Palestine Solidarity Network (MPSN) in Melbourne, and the Perth branch of Australian Friends of Palestine Association (AFOPA) in Western Australia.

The biggest photographic and art exhibition yet shown in Australia on the Palestinian narrative will be staged by AFP and WFP in Melbourne on 17 and 18 May. British photographer Rich Wiles has been invited to Australia to exhibit his works, Portraits of Palestine, as well as the works of the children from the Lajee Centre, Aida Refugee Camp in Bethlehem – Our Dreams and our Nightmares and Dreams of Homes. These exhibitions have been staged in Britain, all over the European continent and in the United States. They are haunting portrayals of Palestinian life of both the present and past memories. Rich Wiles will also speak about his experiences working with the children in the refugee camp in the shadow of the Separation Wall and Israel’s ever-present occupation army and how every minute of their lives is a continuation of the original Nakba.

As part of this exhibition, WFP will present the Palestinian historical record in seven panels of collage named Dispossession – Parts of a Whole, which was a collective effort put together in 2002 under the guidance of Melbourne artist Dora McPhee. Her own talents and extraordinary understanding of Palestinian history will be displayed in a selection of oil paintings from her previous exhibitions entitled Palestine Lost and Disappearing Palestine.

Although the photographs and paintings capture particular moments in time, they are indeed an accurate portrayal of every Palestinian’s story, and few could fail to be moved by a people existing without freedom in the most humiliating of circumstances. For visitors who want to learn in more detail about the current situation, power-point presentations will be given by Michael Shaik, the public advocate for AFP; book readings on the meaning of al-Nakba for the children of the camps will be given by Rich Wiles; and Ali Abunimah will speak on prospects for the future at public and private lectures. Books, brochures, and various reading materials will be available, as well as slide shows and films. And for those who want to appreciate the rich history and culture of Palestinian traditions, there will also be samples of exquisite embroideries and products reminiscent of Palestine’s past agricultural abundance.

In Australia’s capital city Canberra, Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine (AJPP) plans to organise meetings between politicians and Ali Abunimah when he arrives to speak at the Australian National University. Ideally, this would coincide with a bipartisan motion in the parliament that would not only acknowledge the enduring narrative of indigenous Palestinians and the suffering that has been visited on them over the past 60 years, but also their courageous journey in their struggle for the right to exist in their own land. AFP, WFP, and AFOPA are still working towards that end. We will have to wait and see if the Australian government is indeed committed to an even-handed policy on Palestine and Israel. If it is not, our work will be really cut out for us in the weeks and months ahead.

The focus right now though is on that solemn week in May. Through a website created for that purpose (www.1948.com.au), Australia’s Palestinian advocacy and support groups will be offering the public the most comprehensive exposé of the Palestinian tragedy within their means, but all with the same passion for justice, freedom, and peace that unites every supporter of Palestine and its long-burdened people across the globe. Perhaps this year will see the changes for which we have all been working; perhaps this year, the Palestinians will be free to pursue their dreams. But if not this year, it will happen.

Sonja Karkar is the founder and president of Women for Palestine in Melbourne, Australia, and also a founding member of Australians for Palestine and the editor of its websites. She can be reached by e-mail at: sonjakarkar@womenforpalestine.org or by phone at: +61 3 9882 9236.

For more information, visit www.australiansforpalestine.com or www.1948.com.au.

Photo Captions
1. Looking at Palestine, Tareq Al Ghossien
2. Palestinian Refugee Camp 1949, UNRWA archive
3. Australia Remembers al-Nakba
4. Ramleh Surrenders, 1948
The Journey of the Soul

By Jane Frere

Many people ask me why a Scottish artist should be interested in creating a work of art that addresses a Palestinian historical issue. The question puzzles me, as though some are even confused as to Palestine’s existence – a place that, as time passes, is becoming increasingly associated only with the dusty-coloured plates of our Sunday school bibles. As an artist, my interests have always tended to veer towards humanity, and as a citizen of a shrinking globalized world increasingly wired with 24-hour communication technology, it is difficult to ignore the daily deluge of painful images that come out of this beleaguered region.

However, I did not set out to undertake a project about Palestine; it transpired through an unintentional process of chance events and a journey of accumulated experiences.

My concern with war and the plight of refugees began many years ago. I was working as a theatre designer on a project in Athens called Woman and War, with writer John McGrath and director John Bett. Using ancient Greek texts and contemporary testimonies, this work focused on the unfolding crisis in Bosnia.

My working drawings included piles of shoes and clothing suspended from lines – the last visible relics of some of the victims of ethnic cleansing. For financial reasons, the project was never fully realised, but after considerable research I was haunted by the image of what it is to be a refugee – wrenched from your home, left with only the belongings you can carry or the very clothes that you are wearing, and denied the settled life that most of us take for granted.

Soon afterwards, during the Edinburgh Festival, I became involved as a tour manager and producer of an international theatre company from Poland, Teatr Biuro Podróży. Once again the production addressed war and its repercussions of displacement. Clearly, audiences inured by the dulling effect of the media, responded to the power of art, and the company’s compelling outdoor production Carmen Funebre became the hit of the Edinburgh Festival and went on to travel around the world to more than 45 countries.

It was while working with another Polish theatre group in a small Jewish town called Lublin that I made frequent visits to a nearby concentration camp, Majdenek.

Visiting Majdenek is particularly harrowing; the Red Army liberated its inmates, 40 percent Jewish, 35 percent Polish and many other nationalities from across the globe, before the Nazis were able to clear away the evidence of their atrocity. It is as though it has been caught in a time warp, with the remains of clothes neatly on display, children’s toys, spectacles, hair, ashes, and pairs of shoes piled high: a potent reminder of the hundreds of thousands who had walked into the death camp and had not walked out, symbolic of the millions who were murdered in the Holocaust.

Unlike the infamous Auschwitz Camp, which receives half a million visitors each year, far fewer people visit Majdenek; and on the three occasions that I was there to ponder the question of how mankind can be so utterly abhorrent and brutal to fellow man, I was almost always alone.

During my last visit, however, I was moved by a group of visitors who had probably lost relatives there; on leaving, they had planted small Israeli flags – the Star of David – on the ground outside. At first I was confused by this image, pondering the blue and white flag that has become so blood-drenched since its creation. This provoked my thoughts on what is happening now in Israel, and I began to wonder about the next stage in the tragic history of that period, which led to the creation of Israel, and contemplated the consequences.

The people without a land required a land without people, and the creation of the state of Israel, as is now being revealed by Israeli historians such as Ilan Pappe, required a very deliberate strategy to pursue what has only latterly become known as ethnic cleansing – the violent expulsion of one group of people to satisfy the political goals or merely the bigoted prejudices of another.

By immersing myself in the literature, culture, and filmography of Palestine, I came to understand that the Nakba – the catastrophe – as the Palestinians call it, was not a single event buried in the past, but a continuing source of catastrophe for Palestinians, the Middle East and, indeed, the wider world. During my research, I came across one particular documentary by the Egyptian-Canadian director Tahanii Rached, which had a particular resonance for me. Soraida, a woman of Palestine, was a moving portrait of life under occupation; in the film a larger-than-life character kept recounting her dreams and, in particular, her description of a nightmare, in which...
she saw Palestinians being hung from clothes lines, lodged in my mind, 

"Why are they doing that to the poor people?" she asks in her dream. "Because they are Palestinian," replied the voice in her head. "They are in a state of suspension, able to touch neither heaven nor earth."

So powerful and troubling was this image that it became in effect the lynchpin for the Nakba Project. As an artist I was considering how I could use my work to help ensure that, amidst the apparently conscience-free celebration of the creation of Israel on Palestinian soil, the 60 years of suffering of the Palestinian people should not go unmarked. My initial discussions with the Al Hoash Gallery in East Jerusalem were positive and encouraging. The director, Rawan Sharaf, gave me an almost immediate approval, and the Nakba Project was under way. Fadi Shurafa was assigned as the project co-ordinator during my assignment as artist-in-residence at Al Hoash.

My aim was to engage Palestinian artists in a training programme that would allow them to pass on the methodology to young Palestinians in workshops to produce some of the key ingredients for the installation I had in mind. This was not as simple as it may sound. I wanted to create an installation comprising thousands of tiny figures, symbolic of the three-quarters of a million Palestinian refugees driven from their homes in 1948 and the millions still denied the right to return to their homeland. Alongside this I wanted to have written testimonies from "first witnesses" – genuine, authoritative, and personal accounts of what happened to them in the fateful days of 1948. I also wanted to hear their voices whispering their witness around the installation.

Firstly the training would involve anatomy lessons – essential to have a sense of proportion in crafting the small wire figures, which were to symbolise a relative who became a refugee in 1948. In addition, it required costume research, which set young people to thinking carefully about the kinds of clothes that their grandparents or other relatives might have been wearing when they were given a moment’s notice to leave their homes. Ironically it turned out in some of the refugee camps across the region, where we set up the workshops, that a new generation was woefully uninformed about the history of the Nakba and even the details of their own family’s exodus. So the workshops provided the stimulus for cross-disciplinary education, a requirement for initiative and personal research, family history, and then practical engagement in contributing to a global artwork that would symbolise the tragedy that befell not one but successive generations of Palestinians.

I have had many humbling experiences in my personal journey into the lives of Palestinian refugees. I insisted on living with families in the camps to share their discomforts and learn more about how they often managed to live in very poor conditions. I was constantly encouraged by the dignity and courage repeatedly displayed by those I met, with their phenomenal hospitality and the warm support they gave to the project.

From its modest beginnings, the project has grown to more than fulfil the original global vision. Not only will it provide a centrepiece to commemorate the Nakba for Palestinians in many parts of the region, but it will be seen by a wider audience at the Edinburgh Art Festival, one of a series of festivals that surround the main Edinburgh International Festival during August when the Scottish capital becomes the cultural focus of the world.

* The Nakba Project would not exist without the encouragement and support given by many organisations and individuals who have generously helped either financially or in kind – too many to thank all individually. But I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved, particularly those still in refugee camps 60 years on.

Jane Frere is an artist without borders. Trained at Central St. Martins College and the Slade School of Art in London, she has worked internationally as a theatre designer and also as a creative producer, taking remarkable performances into unusual places around the world. Her triple-screen video installation on the theme of the Nakba was shown at the Maski Festival in Poland in 2006 alongside performances by Al Kasaba Theatre. She is commissioned to produce a new video work for the Palestine Gallery opening shortly in London. "Return of the Soul" will be exhibited at the Patriothall Gallery in Edinburgh from July 30 to August 17.
A tribute to

Professor John Dugard
UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2001–2008)

John Dugard’s life and work have combined academic expertise and civic courage in the service of the people of South Africa and Palestine.

Born in Fort Beaufort, South Africa, in 1936, his early professional career as a legal academic and international law expert was linked intrinsically with the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

In his role as UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (2001–2008), Prof. Dugard found that “Israel’s prolonged military occupation constitutes forms of colonialism and apartheid.” He opposed the Quartet’s decision in 2006 to impose sanctions against the occupied Palestinian people and has been tireless in reminding the diplomatic community that all members of the United Nations have a legal obligation to protect the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and must take measures to ensure that Israel respects international law. (See, for example, his reports to the UN Human Rights Council, June and September 2006, and January 2007.)

Prof. Dugard’s term as UN Special Rapporteur has come to an end. He is currently a professor of law at the Centre for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria. The Palestinian people will always remember him for his courage.
Mohammad Bakri is probably the most widely acclaimed Israeli-Arab actor and filmmaker today. He has starred in countless films and has appeared on stage in Palestine, Israel and abroad.

Bakri was born in the village of Bi’neh in the Galilee in 1953 and went to elementary school there. He attended high school in Haifa and studied acting and Arabic literature at Tel Aviv University from which he graduated in 1976.

Since that year Bakri has been acting professionally at various theatres in Israel and Palestine. He has appeared at the Habima Theatre, Israel’s national theatre, and the Cameri Theatre in Tel Aviv, at the Haifa Theatre, at Jerusalem’s Khan Theatre, and at Al-Kasaba Theatre in Ramallah. He also took part in TV programmes for children, often appearing as a storyteller.

Bakri has performed in many plays, ranging from the classics such as Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Henrik Ibsen’s Hedda Gabler, and Federico Garcia Lorca’s The House of Bernarda Alba, to plays written by Arab playwrights such as The Immigrant by George Shehadeh, The Clown by Muhammad Al-Maghout, and The Night and the Mountain by Abdel Ghaffar Makkawi.

He has also appeared in one-man plays which he adapted to the stage and directed as well. “The Pessoptimist,” based on the eponymous novel by Palestinian writer Emil Habibi, is perhaps the most popular of Bakri’s one-man plays. “The Anchor” is another such play written by Syrian author Hanna Mina. The play, “Abu Marmar” about Palestinian prisoners, was written by Bakri himself.

Bakri also directed several plays, such as Arthur Miller’s A View from the Bridge, and Samir and Yonathan, which is based on the book by Daniella Carmi about a Palestinian boy, Samir, who enters an Israeli hospital for surgery. The initial fear and antagonism that he feels is mitigated by his bond with Yonathan, an Israeli boy also at the hospital.

Likewise, Bakri has achieved local and international success on the silver screen. As an actor he starred in “Haifa” (1995) by Rashid Mashharawi; “The Milky Way” by Ali Nassar, which won the Wolgin Award at the 1997 Jerusalem International Film Festival; “Beyond the Walls” (1984), nominated for an Oscar as Best Foreign Language Film at the 1984 American Academy Awards, and “Beyond the Walls II” (1994), both by Uri Barabash; “Hanna K.” (1983) by Greek director Costas Gavras; and “Private” (2004) by Italian director Saverio Costanzo and which won the Golden Leopard award for best actor at that year’s Locarno International Film Festival.

As a movie director Bakri has two documentary films to his credit: “1948” and “Jenin ...Jenin,” the film that he made following the Israeli incursion into the Jenin refugee camp in 2002 and which created a lot of controversy in Israel, with most movie theatres refusing to screen it.
Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory
Edited by Ahmad H. Sa’di and Lila Abu-Lughod

Nakba, Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory is about what 1948 has meant for Palestinians, as refracted through their memories, individual and collective, rendered public through being elicited by researchers and grandchildren, volunteered creatively, or presented in conventionalized memorial practices. The essays by a group of established and emerging scholars, all of whom are doing research on Palestinian memory, contribute important material to the ongoing historical reconstruction of the events of 1947 and 1948 and supplement the careful oral historical work that is being done by Palestinian research centres.

But that is not the main purpose of this book. “We are less concerned about what these memories tell us about what happened in the past than what work memories do, and can do, in the present. Among the important work that memory does is to affirm identity, manage trauma, and make political and moral claims. We look especially at how memories are produced, when people are silent, when collective memory proliferates, and what forms Palestinian memories of the cataclysmic events of 1948 take, recognizing that no memory is pure or spontaneous,” the editors of the book relate.

This book, with essays on such varied topics as the gender of Nakba memory, the cumulative and repetitive quality of the narratives in the ongoing disposessions, the deep meaning of places like Jaffa and destroyed villages like Qula or Deir Abban memorialized in books written by their former inhabitants, and the mourning work of films like those of Nizar Hassan, is not just a collection of individual testimonials or personal reflections. Instead, it is a sustained examination of the nature, shapes, and determinants of Palestinian collective, social, or cultural memory. It is from the memories of ordinary Palestinians made public in a variety of contexts—including trials about massacres in Israeli courts—that one can draw conclusions about the larger significance of the Nakba. What ultimately emerges from the essays in this book about how Palestinians remember the Nakba is a strong sense of the claims that social memory makes about what happened in the past and what ought, morally, to be done in the present.

The Nakba was many things at once: the uprooting of people from their homeland, the destruction of the social fabric that bound them for so long, and the frustration of national aspirations. The Nakba meant the destruction in a single blow of all the worlds in which Palestinians had lived. For many, theirs was a dynamic, prosperous and future-oriented society. The Nakba marked a new era dominated by estrangement, and often poverty. Nothing in their history or that of neighbouring countries had prepared Palestinians to imagine such a catastrophe. The fact that the Nakba took place within a short period – a matter of months – made it hard to comprehend; there was little time to reflect.

Although the emphasis in the book is on the ways Palestinian memories are narrated and represented, the cumulative effect of the memories collected and analyzed is to affirm that something terrible happened to the Palestinians as a direct result of the military and political will to create the state of Israel. Their stories must slip through the holes in the wall of the dominant story of 1948 and open it up to questioning, both factual and moral. Like the Wall that, though declared illegal by the International Court, is now being erected to keep Palestinians out of Israel, in the process confiscating more of their land and making their lives on the ground even less viable, the Israeli narrative needs to be dismantled. Palestinian memories of 1948 offer a way to begin—a beginning that might lead, through acknowledgment of what happened, to a better future, one that is not based on hardened identities, silencing of Palestinians, and continuing violence.

The first part of the book, entitled “Places of Memory,” begins with Susan Slyomovics’s chapter, “The Rape of Qula,” which refers to the destruction of a Palestinian village. The section ends with Lila Abu-Lughod’s moving chapter, which chronicles her father’s return to Jaffa, his hometown in pre-1948 Palestine, and explores the author’s relationship to these memories and places. The second part, entitled “Modes of Memory,” includes chapters by Lena Jayyusi, Rosemary Sayigh, and Haim Bresheeth. “Faultlines of Memory,” the final part of the book, contains chapters written by Omar Al-Qattan, Isabelle Humphries and Laleh Khalili, Samera Esmeir, and Diana Allen. The book concludes with an afterword in which Ahmad Sa’di explores the relationship between representation, history, and morality.

Ahmad H. Sa’di is a senior lecturer in the Department of Politics and Government at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. He has published widely on political, social, and economic aspects of the lives of Palestinians in Israel.

Ghassan Kanafani: Larger than Life

“Everything in this world can be stolen, except the love that emanates from a human being towards a solid commitment to a just cause.” – Ghassan Kanafani

On the morning of Saturday, 8 July 1972, Ghassan Kanafani finished drinking coffee with his family and got into his car with his 17-year-old niece, Lamis, to show her around downtown Beirut. A bomb that had been planted in the car by the Israeli secret service took both their lives that morning. Kanafani was 36 years old.

A refugee from Akka (Acre), Kanafani edited the Nasserist newspaper Al-Muharrir in Beirut in the early 1960s, and joined the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM), which later became the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). He is credited as the first editor to publish the works of renowned cartoonist Naji Al-Ali.

During his tragically short life, he published eighteen books, wrote hundreds of articles, short stories, and plays, and produced numerous paintings and sketches. Thirty-six years after his death, Ghassan Kanafani’s name and face are still spray-painted on the walls and hearts of Palestine – a symbol of a people’s struggle for justice and dignity. His pen was at least as dangerous to Zionist oppression as the guns and armaments of the Arab resistance.

Rosemary Sayigh

Although Rosemary Sayigh was born and raised in Britain, Beirut is her actual home, and the Palestinians have been her people for more than 50 years now. Married to renowned Palestinian economist Youssef Sayigh and raising three children in the midst of the intensive Palestinian political organising that characterised Lebanon in the 1960s and 1970s, and the subsequent Israeli invasions and civil war in the 1980s, Rosemary Sayigh – anthropologist and oral historian – has produced academic work that is unique in many ways.

In her most recent work, Voices: Palestinian Women Narrate Displacement (2007), Rosemary Sayigh reflects on her own personal arrival in Beirut less than a decade after the Nakba and admits that, despite marriage into a Palestinian family, it was many years before she became aware of the depth of the rupture and devastation caused in 1948.

With sensitivity and care in all her books, Rosemary Sayigh has accomplished the difficult task of letting ordinary Palestinian men and women – those who raise and lose children in the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon, and those who create homes that are subsequently demolished – take on a major role in explaining the complex realities of political and armed struggle.

Rosemary Sayigh has been a teacher to generations of academic researchers and a model for those who seek to combine fine academic work with a clear moral stand for justice and the dignity of the person.


Walid Khalidi: Dean of Palestinian Memory

Crucial to reversing the Nakba is understanding who the Palestinians were before the fall of Palestine, why the Nakba happened, and what the Nakba was and continues to be. Also crucial is the protection of Palestinians’ knowledge of themselves, their surroundings, and their narrative. In the face of a hegemonic Zionist narrative – one that portrays the Nakba as an unintentional by-product of an Arab-Israeli war and the result of Arab evacuation orders – the person who took on all these challenges combined was Professor Walid Khalidi.

Born in Jerusalem in 1925, Khalidi studied in London and Oxford, and from there launched an impressive academic career. The product of his 55 years of research now forms the cornerstone of the counter-hegemonic Palestinian narrative.

In 1963, Khalidi co-founded the Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS), a research institute dedicated to the study of Palestinian issues. His photographic history of pre-1948 Palestine, Before Their Diaspora (IPS, 1984), provides an unmatched portrayal of Palestinian life in the 70 years preceding the Nakba. In the late 1980s, he led the project that produced All That Remains (IPS, 1992) – arguably the most important piece of research on the scope and magnitude of the Nakba.

Khalidi has been criticised by Palestinians for his role in the negotiation process and the associated PLO compromise on the goal of the secular democratic state, implicitly sideling Palestinian refugee rights. Despite this, his research forms a basis for understanding those rights and a means for future generations of Palestinian refugees to learn about and remember the Palestine to which they demand to return.

Abu Arab: Voice of Refugees’ Return

The whole story is that I want to return to my land
A liberated country, free of all false pretenders
However much you try to tempt me with money, I will not drop my rifle
Until I liberate the mountains of my homeland and return to the land of my ancestors

– Abu Arab

Known as the poet and singer of the refugees’ return, Abu Arab was born Ibrahim Mohammad Mattar in the small Galilee village of Al-Shajara in 1931. After his uncle was killed and his father injured while defending the village in 1948, Abu Arab and his family fled to Lebanon and then to Homs in Syria.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather, a poet during the Arab Revolt in the 1930s, young Abu Arab gained notoriety singing patriotic songs at public events in the camp. In 1960, he formed his first musical troupe – the Palestinian Popular Folklore Troupe – which performed in refugee camps in Lebanon. When his cousin Naji Al-Ali, the infamous Palestinian political cartoonist, was assassinated in 1987, Abu Arab renamed his band the Naji Al-Ali Popular Folklore Troupe.

Abu Arab’s more than 300 songs – many of which have become anthems of the Palestinian liberation movement – typify Palestinian patriotism through such themes as refugee return, freedom for political prisoners, and the centrality of struggle to attain justice.
Review date: 17 April 2008

“Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist. Not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Hunefis; and Kefar Yehushua in the place of Tal al-Shuman. There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.”

– Moshe Dayan, address to the Technion in Haifa, 1969.

The attack on collective memory, in the Nakba context, is more dangerous than the sheer expulsion of the population and loss of property. The site we are reviewing in this issue (www.palestineremembered.com) is a good example of cyber defence lines against memory loss or distortion.

The bilingual Arabic-English site is packed with information. It greets you with a mostly black background, some red and white colours and, at the top-right of the screen, a symbolic picture of an old man holding the keys to his home. The main page has two navigation menu bars on top, followed by three-column navigation and another list of links in the page footer.

The topmost menu bar has a Home link, a Satellite View (aerial maps from Google Earth), a Google-powered Search, Donate (to support oral history, in particular, and to add comments), Contact Us (address and online correspondence form), and a link to the Arabic version.

The second line of the top navigation also starts with a Home link, then Pictures (pre- and post-Nakba, sorted by area and offering the space for visitors to add comments), Maps (all sorts of maps, old and new, including Google Earth maps), Oral History (interviews sorted by district and available online in video format), a Zionist FAQ (answers to Zionist propaganda), Zionist Quotes (based on declassified documents and personal diaries), The Conflict 101 (a beginners’ crash course), R.O.R 101 (an essay about the right of return), Site Members (registered website members by district), and About Us (mission statement).

The left column of navigation starts with About Us and Maps and continues with Refugee Camps (a listing of all camps in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, with related information on each). A second section in this menu, marked in red and starting with Acre and ending with Tulkarem, lists all districts and provides information on each (including links to villages, oral history, satellite view, and pictures). The left column ends with another black block listing links to Guest Book, Satellite View, Videos (movies on various related topics), Register (membership form), Donate, Contact Us, and Useful Links (many related sites organized in few categories).

The second and third navigating columns are related to the main navigation menus with more details – mainly individual articles on various related issues. For example, here you’ll find a chronology of Palestinian history as well as poems remembering Palestine and a section on the Gaza siege, which seems to be the most recent part of the site.

The footer provides a convenient way to navigate as it lists most of the main links in one place with a focus on oral history, which is an interesting project. The What’s New link has not been updated recently.

Overall, the site is a great collection of important and useful information and well worth a bookmark. It could benefit significantly from a re-touch of design, information structuring, and content update.

Abed A Khooli, IT/KM specialist

Mr. Khooli can be reached at akhooli@arabic2000.com.
Note: Please make sure to contact the venue to check whether the programme is still running.

EAST JERUSALEM (02)
Centre for Jerusalem Studies at Al-Quds University, tel. 628 7517; Palestinian Art Court- Al Hoash, 627 3501; Palestinian National Theatre (PNT), tel. 628 0957; St. George’s Cathedral, tel. 628 3261; Turkish Cultural Center, tel. 540 0592

CONCERT
Thursday 29
19:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition entitled “In the Footpath of Khaled Hourani” (through May 11 daily), Pasha Room, American Colony Hotel
Thursday 15
19:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition entitled “Return of the Soul” (through July 15 daily), Al Hoash Gallery

CONCERTS
Thursday 22
17:30 The Tunnel (meeting point Center for Jerusalem Studies), Center for Jerusalem Studies
Sunday 25
10:00-13:00 Jebusite Jerusalem Ain Silwan Tunnel (meeting point Center for Jerusalem Studies), Center for Jerusalem Studies

BETHLEHEM and BEIT JALA (02)
Bethlehem Peace Centre, tel. 276 6677; Bethlehem University, tel. 274 1241; International Centre of Bethlehem (Dar Annada), tel. 277 0047; Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), tel. 240 7611

ART
Friday 9
17:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition entitled “The Last Scene” by the Palestinian artist Muhammad Harb (through June 2 daily), Dar Annada
17:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition entitled “Palestinian Prisoners- Pain & Freedom” by the Palestinian artist Ahmad Abu Hania (through June 2 daily), Dar Annada
Saturday 10
11:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition entitled “Right of Return ... is a Right” (through May 17 daily from 10:00 till 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Center
Monday 12
11:00 Inauguration of a photographic exhibition entitled “Galia” (through May 17 daily from 10:00 till 18:00), Bethlehem Peace Center

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES
Friday 2
09:30-12:30 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Center
11:00 Bright Stars Festival entitled “Carry your Pillow and Follow us” in cooperation with Radio Bethlehem 2000, Dar Annada
Friday 9
09:30-12:30 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Center
Friday 16
09:30-12:30 Friday Club, Bethlehem Peace Center

TOURS
The tours “Jerusalem, a Palestinian Perspective” are organized by the Center for Jerusalem Studies of Al-Quds University (CJS). The dates of the tours are to be confirmed. For further information please call the Center for Jerusalem Studies, tel.02-628 7517
Saturday 3
10:00-14:00 Abraham a Dynasty of Prophets, (meeting point Hind Al Husseini College), Center for Jerusalem Studies
Sunday 18
10:00-15:00 The Nakbe Qalonia Ein Karem & Wadi Fukin (meeting point Hind Al Husseini College), Center for Jerusalem Studies

BUTIYAH (BETHLEHEM)
29 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
18:00-21:00 Festival of the Body – A Time to Ngoo by The Palestinian poet Idan Ghorab
29 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
19:30 Performance of the play Islands by the Palestinian director Bithina Canaan Khoury, Dar Annada
30 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
19:30 Performance of Goats & Sheep by the Palestinian director Bithina Canaan Khoury, Dar Annada
30 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
18:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized by Ashtar Theater, Bethlehem Peace Center
30 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
11:00 Inauguration of a photographic exhibition entitled “I Come From There and Remember” on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Al-Nakba (through May 28 daily), Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center
30 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
18:00 First Sunday, Bethlehem Peace Center
30 April (www.buthiyyah.org)
17:00 Dardesh at BPC “Summer & The Working Mother Kids” organized by BPC and Nafees Women’s Center, in cooperation with The faculty of Education-Bethlehem University, Bethlehem Peace Center

TOURS
Sunday 11
9:00 Bethlehem and Its Cities, a visit to the Mar Saba Monastery, Herodium and Shepherds’ Fields, PACE

RAMALLAH (02)
Al Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque, tel. 296 5292; Ashlar Theater, tel. 298 0037; Birzeit Ethnographic & Art Museum, tel. 298 2976; Franco- German Cultural Centre, tel. 298 1922; Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, tel. 298 7374; Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), tel. 240 7611; Ramallah Cultural Palace, tel. 298 4704; Ramallah Friends Meeting House, tel. 298 4420

ART
Thursday 1

Electronic exhibitions: “Right Turn” by Raed Bawayah, http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu/home

Electronic exhibitions: “Memory Triptych” by Rana Bishara, Mervat Essa, Sandi Hilal, http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu/home


Saturday 3
15:00 Inauguration of posters exhibition entitled “Nakba-60” organized by Badil Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, Ramallah Cultural Palace

Wednesday 14
Inauguration of a photographic exhibition entitled “I Come From There and Remember” on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Al-Nakba (through May 28 daily), Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center

CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES
Tuesday 6
Concert for school children, organized by the...
DANCE
Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival, organized by Sareyyet Ramallah

Thursday 1
18:00 The AB Dance Company- Finland, Ramallah Cultural Palace
20:00 Tarek Halaby- Palestine, Ramallah Cultural Palace

Friday 2
19:00 Folkwang Tanzstudio-Germany, Al Kasaba
19:00 Jo Strømgren Kompani- Norway, Al Kasaba

Saturday 3
18:00 Compagna Zappala Danze- Italy, Al Kasaba

Sunday 4
19:00 Yella (German with Arabic subtitles) in cooperation with Goethe Institute, Al Kasaba
19:00 A Friend of Mine (German with Arabic subtitles) in cooperation with Goethe Institute, Al Kasaba

Monday 5
19:00 Cobosmica- Spain, Ramallah Cultural Palace

TOUR
Sunday 4
12:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized by Ashtar Theatre, Freedom Theatre
15:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized by Ashtar Theatre, Birzeit University

PLAYS

PLAYS
Al Manara Theatre Days, organized by Al Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque
Sunday 11
19:00 Opening, Al Kasaba
Monday 12
19:00 Return to Haifa- Belgium, Al Kasaba
Tuesday 13
19:00 Dyab, Al Kasaba

LECTURE

LECTURE
Wednesday 14
18:00 "The Economics of Occupation & the Business of Development: A Critical Look at Economics, Business & Palestinian Rights" by Sam Bahour & Shir Heva, Ramallah Friends Meeting House

ART

ART
Sunday 18
18:00 Inauguration of an art exhibition, presented by the Faculty of Fine Arts of Al-Najah University and CCF, CCF

FILMS

FILMS
Tuesday 13
18:00 Les Soeurs fâchées- Me and My Sister, CCF

Thursday 20
18:00 Resistances, proposed by CCF & TAM (Women Media and Development), produced by Les Instants Video (Marseille), CCF

Tuesday 27
18:00 Keda Reda, presented by the French Cultural Center, in partnership with Al-Kasaba, CCF

SPECIAL EVENT

SPECIAL EVENT
Monday 12
14:00 Street Circus; "La Fanfare Muette" organized in partnership with MCRC (Multipurpose Community Resource Center, Old City)

TOUR

TOUR
Sunday 4
9:00 Nablus and Its Cities, PACE

HEBRON (02)

HEBRON (02)
Children’s Happiness Centre, tel. 229 9545; Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), tel. 240 7611;

PLAYS

PLAYS
Tuesday 27
15:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized Ashtar Theatre, Children’s Happiness Centre

Wednesday 28
15:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized Ashtar Theatre, Children’s Happiness Centre

TULKAREM (09)

TULKAREM (09)
Ashtar Theater, tel. 02 298 0037

PLAY

PLAY
Wednesday 21
12:00 Story of Said Al Masoud, organized by Ashtar Theatre, Khadori Collage
East Jerusalem (02)

**Al-Jawal Theatre Group**  
Telefax: 628 0555  
Alruwah Theatre  
Tel: 628 2626  
airuwhatheatre2000@yahoo.com

**Al-Ma’mal Foundation for Contemporary Art**  
Tel: 628 3457, Fax: 627 2312  
info@almamalfoundation.org  
www.almamalfoundation.org

**Al-Urmawi Centre for Mashreq Music**  
Tel: 234 2005, Fax: 234 2004  
info@urmawi.org, www.urmawi.org

**Ashtar for Theatre Productions & Training**  
Telefax: 582 7218  
info@ashtar-theatre.org, www.ashtar-theatre.org

**British Council**  
Tel: 628 7111, Fax: 628 3021  
information@ps.britishcouncil.org  
www.britishcouncil.org/ps

**Center for Jerusalem Studies/Al-Quds University**  
Tel: 628 7517  
cjs@planet.edu, www.jerusalem-studies.alquds.edu

**Community Action Centre (CAC)**  
Tel: 627 3352, Fax: 627 4547  
www.cac.alquds.edu

**French Cultural Centre**  
Tel: 628 2451 / 626 2236, Fax: 628 4324  
ccfjeru@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

**Gallery Anadiel**  
Tel: 628 2811, Fax: 626 4403  
www.anadielgallery.com

**Hakawati Group**  
f.abousalem@tiscali.fr

**Issaf Nashashibi Center for Culture & Literature**  
Telefax: 581 6232  
issaf@alqudsnet.com

**Jerusalem Centre for Arabic Music**  
Tel: 627 4774, Fax: 656 2469  
mkurd@yahoo.com

**Palestinian Art Court - Al Hoash**  
Telefax: 627 3501  
info@alhoashgallary.org, www.alhoashgallary.org

**Palestinian National Theatre**  
Tel: 628 0957, Fax: 627 6293  
pnt@palnet.com

**Public Affairs Office**  
Tel: 628 2456, Fax: 628 2454  
www.uscongen-jerusalem.org

**Sabreen Association for Artistic Development**  
Tel: 532 1393, Fax: 532 1394  
sabreen@sabreen.org, www.sabreen.org

**Sanabel Culture & Arts Theatre**  
Tel: 671 4338, Fax: 673 0993  
sanabeltheatre@yahoo.com

**The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music**  
Tel: 627 1711, Fax: 627 1710  
info@ncm.birzeit.edu, www.birzeit.edu/music

**Theatre Day Productions**  
Tel: 585 4513, Fax: 583 4233  
tdp@theatreday.org, www.theatreday.org

**Turkish Cultural Centre**  
Tel: 540 0592, Fax: 532 3310  
kudustur@netvision.net.il  
www.kudusbk.com

**Yabous Productions**  
Tel: 626 1045; Fax: 626 1372  
info@yabous.org, www.yabous.org

Bethlehem (02)

**Al-Harah Theatre**  
Telefax: 276 7758  
alharahtheater@yahoo.com  
info@alharah.org, www.alharah.org

**Alliance Française de Bethléem**  
Telefax: 275 0777  
alfrance@ps.britishcouncil.org

**Arab Educational Institute (AEI)-Open Windows**  
Tel: 274 4030  
www.aeicenter.org

**Artas Folklore Center**  
Tel: 276 0533, 0599 938 0887  
artasfc@yahoo.com

**Bethlehem Academy of Music/ Bethlehem Music Society**  
Tel: 277 7141, Fax: 277 7142

**Bethlehem Peace Center**  
Telefax: 276 6677  
info@peacenter.org, www.peacenter.org

**Cardinal House**  
Telefax: 276 4778  
info@cardinalhouse.org, www.cardinalhouse.org

**Catholic Action Cultural Center**  
Tel: 274 3277, Fax 274 2939  
info@ca-b.org, www.ca-b.org

**Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation**  
Tel: 276 6244, Fax: 276 6241  
info@bethlehem2000.org  
www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp

**Inad Centre for Theatre & Arts**  
Telefax: 276 6263  
www.inadtheatre.org
International Centre of Bethlehem-Dar Annadwa
Tel: 277 0047, Fax: 277 0048
addar@annadwa.org
www.annadwa.org

ITIP Center “Italian Tourist Information Point”
Telefax: 276 0411
ltipcenter@yahoo.com

Palestinian Heritage Center
Telefax: 274 2381, 274 2642
mahasaca@palestinianheritagecenter.com
www.palestinianheritagecenter.com

Palestinian Group for the Revival of Popular Heritage
Telefax: 274 7945

Sabreen Association for Artistic Development
Tel: 275 0091, Fax: 275 0092
sabreen@sabreen.org, www.sabreen.org

Tel: 274 7945

Tent of Nations
Tel: 274 3071, Fax: 276 7446
tentone@p-pl.com, www.tentofnations.org

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
Telefax: 274 8276

The Higher Institute of Music
Telefax: 275 2492
highiorn@hotmail.com
www.thehigherinstituteofmusic.ps

Turathuna - Centre for Palestinian Heritage (B.Uni.)
Tel: 274 1241, Fax: 274 4440
pdaoud@bethlehem.edu, www.bethlehem.edu

Hebron (02)

Al Sanab Centre for Studies and Heritage
Tel: 256 0280
email: sanabelssc@yahoo.com
www.sanabelssc.org, www.sanabel.ps

Association d’Echanges Culturels Hebron-
France (AECHF)
Telefax: 222 4811
info@hebron-france.org, www.hebron-france.org

Badil Centre
Tel: 277 7086

Beit Et Tiff Compound
Telefax: 229 1559
tdhebron@akudsnet.com

British Council- Palestine Polytechnic University
Telefax: 229 3717
information@ps.britishcouncil.org
www.britishcouncil.org.ps

Children Happiness Center
Telefax: 229 9545
children_hc@yahoo.com

Dura Cultural Martyrs Center
Tel: 228 3663
nader@duramun.org, www.duramun.org

Palestinian Child Arts Center (PCAC)
Tel: 222 4813, Fax: 222 0855
pcac@hotmail.com, www.pcac.net

Theater day production Yes Theater
Telefax: 229 1599,
www.yestheatre.org, info@yestheatre.org

The International Palestinian Youth League (IPYL)
Tel:222 9131, Fax: 229 0652
itv@ipyl.org, www.ipyl.org

Jericho (02)

Jericho Community Centre
Telefax: 232 0007

Jericho Culture & Art Center
Telefax: 232 1047

Municipality Theatre
Telefax: 232 2417, Fax: 232 2604

Jenin (04)

The Freedom Theatre/Jenin refugee camp
Tel: 250 3345
info@thefreedomtheatre.org

Nablus (09)

British Council- Al Naja University
Telefax: 237 5950
information@ps.britishcouncil.org
www.britishcouncil.org.ps

Cultural Centre for Child Development
Tel: 238 6290, Fax: 239 7518
nuteleb@hotmail.com, www.nuteleb.cjb.net

Cultural Heritage Enrichment Center
Tel: 237 2863, Fax: 237 8275

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 238 5914, Fax: 238 7593
ccfnaplouse@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

Nablus The Culture
Tel: 233 2084, Fax: 234 5325
info@nablusculture.ps, www.nablusculture.ps

Ramallah & Al-Bireh (02)

A. M. Qattan Foundation
Tel: 296 0544, Fax: 296 0546
info@qattanfoundation.org, www.qattanfoundation.org

Al-Kamandjâti Association
Tel: 296 3091
info@alkamandji.org, www.al-camandji.org

Al Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque
Tel: 296 5292, Fax: 296 5294
info@alkasaba.org, www.al-akasaba.org

Al-Rehahal Theatre
Tel: 296 8031
aralahal@hotmail.com

Amideast
Tel: 240 8023, Fax: 240 8017
westbank-gaza@amideast.org, www.amideast.org

Ashtar for Theatre Production
Tel: 296 0307, Fax: 296 0326
info@ashtar-theatre.org, www.ashtar-theatre.org

Baladna Cultural Center
Tel: 295 8435

BirZeit Ethnographic and Art Museum
Tel: 296 2976
www.virtualgallery.birzeit.edu

British Council
Tel: 296 3293-6, Fax: 296 3297
information@ps.britishcouncil.org
www.britishcouncil.org.ps

Carmel Cultural Foundation
Tel: 298 7375, Fax: 298 7374

El-Funoun Dance Troupe
Tel: 240 2853, Fax: 240 2851
info@elfunoun.org, www.el-funoun.org

First Ramallah Group, Sareyyet Ramallah
Tel: 295 2706 - 295 2690, Fax: 296 0583
sirreyeh@palnet.com, www.sirreyeh.org

Franco-German Cultural Centre Ramallah
Tel: 298 1922 / 7727, Fax: 298 1923
info@ccf-goethe.org, www.ccf-goethe-ramallah.org

Greek Cultural Centre - “Macedonia”
Tel: 298 1730/ 298 0546
makdona@palnet.com

In’ash Al-Ulsa Society- Center for Heritage & Folklore Studies
Tel: 240 1123 / 240 2876, Telefax: 240 1544
usra@palnet.com, www.inash.org

Khali Sakakini Cultural Center
Tel: 298 7374, Fax: 296 6820
sakakini@palnet.com, www.sakakini.org

Manar Cultural Center
Tel: 295 7937, Fax: 295 7958

Mazra’a Qibliyeh Heritage and Tourism Centre
Tel: 281 5825
mazraaheritage@yahoo.com
www.geocities.com/mazraaheritage/

Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art PACA
Tel: 296 7601, Fax: 296 1849
paca@paca-ps.org, www.paca-ps.org

Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE)
Tel: 240 7611, Telefax: 240 7610
pace@p-pl.com, www.pace.ps

Popular Art Center
Tel: 240 3891, Fax: 240 2851
info@popularartcentre.org, www.popularartcentre.org

Ramallah Cultural Palace
Tel: 298 4704 / 298 2105, Fax: 295 2107
rcc-events@ramallah-city.org
www.ramallahculturalpalace.org

RIWAQ: Centre for Architectural Conservation
Tel: 240 6887, Fax: 240 6986
riwaq@palnet.com, www.riwaq.org

Sandouq Elajab Theatre
Tel: 296 5638, 295 3206
sandouqelajab@yahoo.com

Shashat
Tel: 297 3336, Fax: 297 3338
info@shashat.org, www.shashat.org

Sharek Youth Forum
Tel: 296 7741, Fax: 296 7742
info@sharek.ps, www.sharek.ps

The Palestinian Institute for Community Education
Tel: 298 6121 / 2, Fax: 298 8160
palerinist.org

The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
Tel: 295 9070, Fax: 295 9071
info@nmc.birzeit.edu, www.birzeit.edu/music

The Palestinian Circus School
Tel: 0545- 671 911 or 0599- 926 107
www.palcircus.ps, info@palcircus.ps

The Palestinian Network of Art Centres
Tel: 296 0036, 296 434898, Fax: 296 0326
iman_aoun@yahoo.com

Young Artist Forum
Telefax: 296 7654
yal@palnet.com

Gaza Strip (08)

Al-Qattan Centre for the Child
Tel: 283 9929, Fax: 283 9949
reem@qcc.qattanfoundation.org
www.qattanfoundation.org/ps

Arts & Crafts Village
Telefax: 284 6405
artvlg@palnet.com, www.gazavillage.org

Ashtar for Culture & Arts
Telefax: 283 3565
alash@palnet.com

Fawanees Theatre Group
Telefax: 288 4403

Culture & Light Centre
Telefax: 286 5986, ifarah@palnet.com

French Cultural Centre
Tel: 286 7883, Fax: 282 8811
cfpgaza@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

Gaza Theatre
Tel: 282 4860, Fax: 282 4870

Global Production and Distribution
Telefax: 288 4399
art.global@yahoo.com

Goethe Institute
Tel: 284 7595, Fax: 284 7595

Hoist Cultural Centre
Tel: 281 0476, Fax: 280 8896
mcrq@palnet.com

Theatre Day Productions
Telefax: 283 6766
tdpgaza@palnet.com
**Accommodation**

**East Jerusalem (02)**

**Addar Hotel** (30 suites; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 3111, Fax: 626 0791
www.addar-hotel.com

**Alcazar Hotel** (38 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 1111; Fax: 628 7360
admin@jsrcazar.com, www.jsrcazar.com

**Ambassador Hotel** (122 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 541 2222, Fax: 582 8202
reservation@jerusalemambassador.com
www.jerusalemambassador.com

**American Colony Hotel**
(84 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 9777, Fax: 627 9797
info@americancolony.com, www.americancolony.com

**Austrian Hospice**
Tel: 626 5800, Fax: 627 1472
office@austrianhospice.com
www.austrianhospice.com

**Azzahra Hotel**
(15 rooms, res)
Tel: 628 2537, Fax: 628 2401, kp@actcom.co.il

**Capitol Hotel**
(54 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2561/2, Fax: 626 4352

**Christmas Hotel**
(37 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2588, Fax: 626 4417

**Commodore Hotel**
(45 rooms; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 1414, Fax: 628 4701

**Gloria Hotel**
(94 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 628 2431, Fax: 628 2401
gloriah@netvision.net.il

**Golden Walls Hotel**
(112 rooms)
Tel: 627 2416, Fax: 626 4658
info@goldenwalls.com, www.goldenwalls.com

**Holy Land Hotel**
(105 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2888, info@holylandhotel.com
www.holylandhotel.com

**Jerusalem Hotel**
(14 rooms; bf; mr; res; live music)
Tel: 628 3282, Fax: 628 3282
raed@jsrhotel.com, www.jrshotel.com

**Jerusalem Claridge Hotel**
(30 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 234 7137, Fax: 234 7139
claridge@palnet.com

**Jerusalem Meridian Hotel**
(74 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 5212, Fax: 628 5214
jerusalem-meridian.com

**Jerusalem Panorama Hotel**
(74 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2277, Fax: 627 3699
panorama@trendline.com.il

**Hashimi Hotel**
Tel: 628 4410, Fax: 628 4667
info@hashimihotel.com

**Knights Palace Guesthouse**
(50 rooms)
Tel: 628 2537, Fax: 628 2401, kp@actcom.co.il

**Lawrence Hotel**
(30 rooms; business facilities; res)
Tel: 628 4208, Fax: 627 1285
karine@actcom.co.il

**Legacy Hotel (ex. YMCA)**
(49 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 0800, Fax: 627 7739
info@jerusalemlegacy.com

**Metropol Hotel**
Tel: 628 5207, Fax: 628 5134

**Mount of Olives Hotel**
(61 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 4877, Fax: 628 4427
info@mtolives.com, www.mtolives.com

**Mount Scopus Hotel**
(65 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 582 8891, Fax: 582 8825
mtsescopus@netvision.net.il

**New Imperial Hotel**
(45 rooms)
Tel: 627 2000, Fax: 627 1530

**New Metropole Hotel**
(25 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 628 3846, Fax: 627 7485

**New Swedish Hostel**
Tel: 627 7855, Fax: 626 4124
swedishhost@yahoo.com
www.geocities.com/swedishhostel

**Notre Dame Guesthouse**
Tel: 627 9111, Fax: 627 1995

**Petra Hostel and Hotel**
Tel: 626 6618

**Pilgrims Inn Hotel**
(16 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 2416
info@goldenwalls.com

**Rivoli Hotel**
Tel: 628 4781, Fax: 628 4879

**Savoy Hotel**
(17 rooms)
Tel: 628 3366, Fax: 628 8040

**Seven Arches Hotel**
(197 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 628 7777, Fax: 627 1319
sevenarches@trendline.co.il

**St. Andrews's Scottish Guesthouse**
“The Scottie” (17 rooms + 1 hostel)
Tel: 673 2401; Fax: 673 1711
standje@netvision.net.il, www.scotshotels.com

**St. George Hotel**
(144 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 627 7232 - 627 7323, Fax: 628 2575
stgeorge1@bezeqint.net, www.hotelstgeorge-jer.com

**St. George's Pilgrim Guest House**
(25 rooms; bf; res)
Tel: 628 3302, Fax: 628 2253
sghostel@bezeqint.net

**Strand Hotel**
(88 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 628 0279, Fax: 628 4826

**Victoria Hotel**
(50 rooms; bf; res)
Tel: 627 4466, Fax: 627 4171

**Bethlehem (02)**

**Alexander Hotel**
(42 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 277 0780, Fax: 277 0782

**Al-Salam Hotel**
(26 rooms; 6f; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 276 4034, Fax: 277 0551
samhotel@p-ol.com

**Al-Beraka Youth Hostel**
(19 rooms)
Tel: 222 9288, Fax: 222 9288

**Beit Al-Baraka Youth Hostel**
(19 rooms)
Tel: 277 0702, Fax: 277 0706
bhotel@p-ol.com

**Bethlehem Inn**
(36 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 274 2424, Fax: 274 2423

**Bethlehem Star Hotel**
(72 rooms; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 274 3249 - 277 0285, Fax: 274 1494
htstar@palnet.com

**Casanova Hospice**
(60 rooms; mr; res)
Tel: 274 3981, Fax: 274 3540

**Casanova Palace Hotel**
(25 rooms; bf; res)
Tel: 274 2798, Fax: 274 1562

**Everest Hotel**
(19 rooms; bf; mr; res)
Tel: 274 2604, Fax: 274 1562

**Grand Hotel**
(107 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 274 1802 - 274 1440, Fax: 274 1804
grandhotel_beth@hotmail.com

**Golden Park Resort & Hotel (Beit Sahour)**
(54 rooms; res; bar; pool)
Tel: 277 4414
Tel: 276 0967/8, Fax: 276 0970

Nativity Hotel
Tel: 277 0650, Fax: 274 4083

Hebron Hotel
Tel: 225 4240 / 222 9385, Fax: 222 6760

Jericho Resort Village
Tel: 232 1590, Fax: 232 1598

Al-Deir (11 suites; cf; mr; res; ter)
Tel: 283 8100/200/300, Fax: 283 8400
AlDeira@P-IS.com

Grand Palace Hotel
Tel: 283 0001/2/3/4, Fax: 283 0005

Adam Hotel (76 rooms; bf; cf; mr; res)
Tel: 282 3521/19

Jericho Resort Village (55 rooms)
Tel: 232 2444, Fax: 992 3109

Hebron Hotel
Tel: 225 4240 / 222 9385, Fax: 222 6760
e-mail: hebron_hotel@hotmail.com

Regency Hotel (76 rooms; su; res; tb; cf; bf)
Tel: 225 7389/98, Fax: 225 7388
regency@palnet.com, www.hebron-regency.com

Manarah Hotel
Tel: 295 2122, Telefax: 295 3274
manarah@hotmail.com, www.manarahhotel.com.ps

Merryland Hotel (25 rooms)
Tel: 298 7176, Telefax: 298 7074

Rocky Hotel (22 rooms; cf; res; ter)
Tel: 296 4470, Telefax: 296 1871

Pension Miami (12 rooms)
Tel: 295 6808

Plaza Hotel
Tel: 286 1832

Al-Deira
Tel: 282 6801

Zahrat Al-Madain
Tel: 282 6801

Key:
su = suites, bf = business facilities; mr = meeting rooms, cr = conference facilities; res = restaurant,
ter = terrace bar; tb = turkish bath, cf = coffee shop; gm = gym; pf = parking facilities, sp = swimming pool
East Jerusalem (02)

3 Arches Restaurant
Tel: 569 2692, Fax: 623 5192

Al-Diwan (Ambassador Hotel)
Tel: 541 2213, Fax: 562 8202

Al-Mihbash
Tel: 628 9185

Al-Shuleh Grill
Tel: 627 3768

Amigo Emil
Tel: 628 8090, Fax: 626 1457

Antonio's (Ambassador Hotel)
Tel: 541 2213

Arabesque, Poolside & Patio
Restaurants
(American Colony Hotel)
Tel: 627 9777, Fax: 627 9779

Armenian Tavern
Tel: 627 3854

Askidinya
Tel: 532 4590

Az-Zahra
Tel: 628 2447

Blue Dolphin
Tel: 532 2001, Fax: 581 1737

Borderline Restaurant Café
Tel: 532 8342

Café Europe
Tel: 628 4313

Café Imperial
Tel: 628 2281, Fax: 627 1530

Chinese Restaurant
Tel: 626 3465, Fax: 626 3471

El Dorada Coffee Shop & Internet Café
Tel: 626 0993

Four Seasons Restaurants &
Coffee Shop
Tel: 628 6061, Fax: 628 6097

Goodies
Tel: 585 3223

Kan Zaman (Jerusalem Hotel)
Tel: 627 1356

Lotus and Olive Garden
(Jerusalem Meridian Hotel)
Tel: 628 5212

Moon Light Pizza
Tel: 627 2577

Nafoura
Tel: 626 0034

Notre Dame - La Rotisserie
Tel: 627 9114, Fax: 627 1995

Panorama Restaurant
Tel: 626 3344

Papa Andreas
Tel: 628 4433, Fax: 627 5224

Pasha's
Tel: 582 5162 - 532 8342

Patisserie Suisse
Tel: 628 4377

Pizza House
Tel: 627 3970 - 628 8135

Popular Arab
Tel: 583 3226

Salizar Restaurant
Tel: 628 9061

The Gate Café
Tel: 627 4262

The Patio (Christmas Hotel)
Tel: 628 2588 - 626 4418

Victoria Restaurant
Tel: 628 3051

Bethlehem (02)

Al-Aseel
Tel: 298 0456

Angelo's
Tel: 295 6408 - 298 1455

Azure Restaurant &
Coffee Shop
Telex: 295 7850

Baba's Brunch
Tel: 297 6614

Baladna Ice Cream
Telex: 295 6721

Birch Café
Tel: 297 6614

Caesar's (Grand Park Hotel)
Tel: 298 6194

Café De La Paix
Tel: 298 0880

Café Mocha Rena
Tel: 298 1460

Casablanca
Tel: 298 7658

Chinese House Restaurant
Tel: 296 4081

Darna
Tel: 295 0590 / 1

Diwan Art coffee Shop
Tel: 297 3043

Elite Coffee House
Tel: 296 5169

Ein Al-Marj (Birzeit)
Tel: 281 0220 / 1

Fawanees
Tel: 298 7046

Kings
Tel: 296 4040

KSM - Caterers
Tel: 295 6813

Mac Chain Restaurant
Tel: 297 2125

Mac Simon
Tel: 297 2088

Mr. Donuts Cafe
Tel: 240 7196

Mr. Pizza
Tel: 295 3678

Muntaza Restaurant &
Garden
Tel: 295 6835

Osama's Pizza
Tel: 295 3270

Plano Restaurant
Tel: 298 7995

Pizza Inn
Tel: 298 1181 / 2

Plaza Restaurant & Park
Tel: 295 6200, Fax: 296 4993

Pollo-Loco (Mexican)
Tel: 298 1984

Pronto Resto-Café (Italian)
Tel: 298 7312

Rukab's Ice Cream
Tel: 295 3467

Saba Sandwiches
Tel: 296 0116

Samer
Tel: 240 5338 - 240 3088

Sangria's
Tel: 295 6808

Shukeireh Restaurant
Tel: 297 5233

Sinatra Café & Cheese Cake
Tel: 297 0128

Stones
Tel: 296 6038

Tabash (Jinfa village)
Tel: 281 0932

Tal El-Qamar Roof
Tel: 298 7905 / 6

The Orthodox Club
Tel: 295 6520

Tomasso's
Tel: 240 9991 / 2

Tropicana
Tel: 297 5661

Urobian Coffee shop
Tel: 295 7031 - 296 6505

Vatche's Garden Restaurant
Tel: 296 5966 - 296 5988

Zan Restaurant and Pub
Tel: 297 0548

Zarour Bar BQ
Tel: 295 6767 - 296 4480

Fax: 296 4357

Zeit ou Zaater
Tel: 295 4455

Ziryab
Tel: 295 9093

Gaza Strip (08)

Al-Andalus
Tel: 282 1272 - 283 3769

Al-Deira
Tel: 283 8100 / 200 / 300

Al-Diwanea Tourist
Tel: 282 5062

Alladin
Tel: 282 3355

Al-Marsa
Tel: 286 3599

Al-Molouke
Tel: 286 8397

Al-Salam
Tel: 282 2705, Telex: 283 3188

Al-Sammak
Tel: 286 4385

Al-Sammak Ghornata
Tel: 284 0107

Al-Sayyad
Tel: 283 4779

La Mirage
Tel: 286 5128

Lido
Tel: 286 4198

Matouq
Tel: 282 6245 - 282 1399

Roots - The Club
Tel: 288 8666 - 286 3999

282 3777

Whispers
Tel: 282 1011
Cyber Palestine

As Palestine continues its struggle for independence, it has already begun to acquire sovereign cyberspace recognition. A difficult three-year international debate resulted in the "Occupied Palestinian Territory" being officially assigned the two-letter suffix, "ps," in the ISO 3166-1 list for the representation of names of countries or territories. The successful struggle to attain country code 970 led the way for the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the international corporation that manages the country code Top-Level Domain (ccTLD) system on the Internet, on 22 March 2000, to assign Palestine its unique country identifier, "ps," in line with other sovereign nations such as .fr for France and .ca for Canada.


TOURISM: Ministry of Tourism www.visit-palestine.com, Arab Hotel Association www.palestinehotels.com, Arab Travel Association www.visit-holyland.com


United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)


TOURISM: Ministry of Tourism www.visit-palestine.com, Arab Hotel Association www.palestinehotels.com, Arab Travel Association www.visit-holyland.com


United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)
Population and Demography (revised - 2007)
Projected Population (1/12/2007)
(Census - 2007, Preliminary Finding)

Palestinian Territory .............................................................................................................. 3,761,646
West Bank (All governorates) .................................................................................................. 2,345,107
Gaza Strip .................................................................................................................................. 1,416,539
Jerusalem Governorate ............................................................................................................. 362,521

Sex Ratio (1/12/2007) ................................................................................................................. 103.0%

Population by Sex (1/12/2007)
Male ........................................................................................................................................ 1,908,432
Female .................................................................................................................................... 1,853,214

Fertility rate (2006) ..................................................................................................................... 4.6%
Average Household Size (1/12/2007) ....................................................................................... 5.8%
Palestinian Territory ................................................................................................................ 5.5%
West Bank ................................................................................................................................ 5.5%
Gaza Strip................................................................................................................................ 6.5%

Land Use and Agriculture
Palestinian Territory (PT) Area (Km²).......................................................................................... 6,020
Area of PT by Type of Use (different reference periods)
  Agricultural Land (2006) ........................................................................................................ 24.6%
  Forest and Wooded Land (2005) ............................................................................................. 1.5%
  Palestinian Built-up Land (2000) ........................................................................................... 9.7%
Area of built-up land in Israeli Settlements of the total area of West Bank (August, 2005) .... 3.3%
Cultivated Area (Km²) - 2005/2006 ............................................................................................ 1,826.1

Beds per 1000 population (End 2005)....................................................................................... 13.3%

Health (2006)
No. of hospitals (2006) ................................................................................................................ 78
Doctors per 1000 population (2006) ......................................................................................... 1.6
Nurses per 1000 population (2006) .......................................................................................... 2.1
Beds per 1000 population (2006) ............................................................................................. 1.4

CPI and percent change in Palestinian Territory in March 2008 Compare with February 2008
170.26 ......................................................................................................................... 1.24%

GDP per capita at constant prices (RWB and GS) - US$ ......................................................... 1,117.1
Quartely GDP at constant price in millions of US $ (RWB & GS) for the 4th Quarter 2007 .... 6,062.2

Number of Establishments in Operation in Private Sector and Non Governmental Organization Sector by Economic Activity (2006)***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and Restaurants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, storage and communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate, Rental and Business Activities</td>
<td>821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Intermediation</td>
<td>4,185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Community, Social and Personal Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imports of Goods (2006 million US$) ..................................................................................... 2,835.4
Exports of Goods (2005 million US$) .................................................................................... 339.1

Average number of persons per room (housing density)** ...................................................... 3.3

(WRB and GS)=Remaining West Bank and Gaza Strip
* RWB and GS at constant prices: 1997 is the base year: revised version
** It's primary results
*** Revised Figures

Prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
Tel: 02-240 6340, Fax: 02-240 6343
e-mail: diwan@pcbs.gov.ps - URL: www.pcbs.gov.ps
The Ottomans named the lands around the village of Deir Yassin “Khirbet Ain Al-Tut,” because so many berries grew in its midst, but the village owes its name to a renowned local sage known as Sheikh Yassin. Neither the connection to the sage nor the berries did Deir Yassin much good when Israeli terror groups perpetrated a massacre in the village, killing more than 200 people, including at least 70 women and children. The name Deir Yassin has been synonymous with massacre since then.

Many of the original Arab homes dotting the hill still exist, inhabited by Israelis. The orphans of the massacre were raised in the Dar Al-Tifl Al-Arabi orphanage in Jerusalem, set up under the auspices of the late Hind Al-Husseini (the equivalent of a modern-day Muslim saint). The majestic family home next door to the American Colony Hotel was given to be a school for orphaned and underprivileged children.

The neighbourhood of Deir Yassin now goes by the name of Giv’at Sha’ul.

(From Palestine: A Guide by Mariam Shahin)
Bethlehem's Refugee Camps

The Aida Refugee Camp was established in 1950 on 16 acres of land between Bethlehem and Beit Jala. Its name originates from a popular coffee shop of the same name located nearby. The camp’s 4,000 residents came from 17 destroyed Palestinian villages, largely from the western Jerusalem (Beit Natif, Deiraban, Ras Abu Ammar, Allar, Malha) and western Hebron (Beit Jibrin, Ajjouj) regions. After the 1967 occupation, virtually all the camp’s residents were within a half-hour’s drive of their former homes, but none were permitted to return.

The Beit Jibrin Camp is wedged between the fork of Bethlehem’s two main roads, Manger Square Road and the Hebron Jerusalem Road. The camp is also known as Azzeh Camp, after the Azzeh family from the destroyed village of Beit Jibrin, who compose about 60 percent of its residents. With 1,800 residents, this is one of the smallest officially recognized Palestinian refugee camps.

The Dheisheh camp spreads along the rolling slopes of the southern West Bank, two kilometres south of Bethlehem. Established in 1949 on 108 acres of land within the municipal boundaries of Bethlehem, Dheisheh is now home to approximately 11,000 refugees and their descendents. They originate from some 45 villages in the western Jerusalem (Zakariyeh, Beit I’tab, Ras Abu Ammar, Jrash, Al-Walajeh) and western Hebron (Beit Itab, Beit Jibrin) districts.

(From Palestine: A Guide by Mariam Shahin)
The Last Word

Dignity and Pride

Although I was born and raised in Jerusalem, I never actually saw an Israeli until I was seven years old. My first encounter happened to be with a soldier in full army gear. It must have been around June 13, 1967, right after the war of that year. I do not recall being afraid, but I do seem to remember the feeling of cautiously observing someone totally unfamiliar – from afar, naturally – lest he or she might hurt me.

The week before that day, my family and I were staying with our neighbours who lived on the first floor of our two-storey house. Along with the sounds of shooting, explosions, and even the crying of wounded soldiers, I also clearly remember during that week feeling left out as I watched the older children of both families playing cards, Monopoly, and Totopoly! Little did I know that I was living the second Palestinian Nakba, when the remaining part of historic Palestine came under occupation. Little did I know that I was witnessing a new era of displacement and an injustice done to a people whose only crime was to belong to this land. Today, 41 years later, injustice still prevails. This month, as we commemorate the 60th anniversary of Palestine’s first Nakba in 1948, injustice still prevails. I wonder, how can I preach justice to my children when the world has not done justice to us, Palestinians?

Yet 60 years onwards, our cause is not only alive but has also proved to be, time and again, the world’s number one sore point. Armed with education and technology and remaining loyal to the land, Palestinians today are more adamant than ever to keep their torch lit until their predicament is resolved. Sixty years after our Nakba, the majority of Palestinians live outside Palestine, mostly in refugee camps; yet they are all united in calling Palestine home. Albeit many mistakes were committed along the way, the vast majority of the countries around the globe, including the countries of Western Europe, have become decisively pro-Palestinian in their predispositions. According to Afif Safieh, our current ambassador to Washington (and soon to be our ambassador in Moscow) “being pro-Palestinian is no longer a left-wing phenomenon, but across the board … from now on, we are the mainstream.” A look at any Security Council vote on the issue of Palestine can surely attest to that.

The world is becoming smaller, and we are all trapped in this global village. If you cough today in Somalia, the satellites up there pick it up. If you imprison a million and a half people and stop supplying them with fuel and commodities, you can be sure that the world is watching. If you kill a child or an innocent civilian, the world also watches, and you lose people’s sympathy. Awareness is at an all-time high, and I would like to believe that human consciousness is up there too. The time is ripe to put this human tragedy to an end.

This issue of This Week in Palestine is dedicated to the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of our Nakba, our catastrophe. Palestinians have been wounded gravely, but far from mortally and, as long as we preserve our culture and our steadfastness, there will always be hope that one day justice will prevail again and all will live in dignity and pride.

Sani P. Meo

Emily Jacir

“Memorial to 418 Palestinian Villages which Were Destroyed, Depopulated and Occupied by Israel in 1948”

Refugee tent and embroidery thread, 8' X 10' X 12', 2001

This piece is a document (or the remains) of a three-month community-based project. More than 140 people came through my studio to sew, memorialize each village and socialize; oftentimes there was live Arabic music. The people who made this Memorial were bankers, lawyers, filmmakers, dentists, consultants, playwrights, artists, activists, teachers, etc.
PALESTINE
HOPE UNLOCKED