

'The House of the Priest'

Christians and Jews in Muslim Societies

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'The House of the Priest'

A Palestinian Life (1885-1954)

Edited by

Sarah Irving

Charbel Nassif

Karène Sanchez Summerer



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To Salim Tamari



Contents

Foreword. Khoury's Memoirs as a Palestinian Palimpsest	IX
<i>Cyrus Schayegh</i>	
Notes on Contributors	XIII
Notes on Transliteration	XV
Maps of Niqula Khoury's Trips in the Levant, Western and Eastern Europe	XVI
Introduction	1
<i>Sarah Irving and Karène Sanchez Summerer</i>	
1 National Politics and Religion in Mandatory Palestine: Niqula Khoury and the Arab Orthodox Movement	30
<i>Konstantinos Papastathis</i>	
2 Eastern Orthodoxy: Snapshots on Arab Orthox in Palestine and Jordan from the Franck Scholten Photographic Collection, 1921–1923	54
3 Memories Containing the Most Significant Incidents and Events That Occurred during My Lifetime	68
<i>Niqula Khoury, translated and annotated by Sarah Irving, Charbel Nassif, Vicky Moussaed, Konstantinos Papastathis and Karène Sanchez Summerer</i>	
Bibliography	165
Index	171

Khoury's Memoirs as a Palestinian Palimpsest

Cyrus Schayegh

Let's start at the beginning, with the startling opening of Nikula Khoury's memoirs, with his assertion that he had lost the materials for his memoirs not once and not twice but three times, because of the 1910 Karak Revolt and the First World War and the *nakba*. "Here, I have returned yet again to collect these memories and to write them down for the fourth time," he concludes. "All I can hope for is that the luck of this account will not be, this time, that of its antecedents."

Khoury's hopes came true. You hold his memoirs in your hands. Even so, let me begin this preface with a note about those other three times, about absence and loss. They form a significant and inextricable part of this text—of its very existence.

Among them, the *nakba* stands out. It's a singularity, "the terrible catastrophe," to Khoury, and an event at the scale of a national collective, Palestine. This is not the case for 1910 and 1914–1918. The causes and forms of those three instances of politically motivated violence differ widely—and their outcomes vary wildly. It's in exile that Khoury writes his memoirs for the fourth time.

At the same time, the *nakba* can at all stand out because Khoury mentions it and the other two events in one breath. The fact that 1948 is extraordinary does not mean it exists in a void. It is alive with contexts and embedded in pasts, however historians may interpret them. To clarify: historians do not see 1910 as being related to 1948. World War I and specifically the British Balfour Declaration, issued in 1917, is trickier. It mentioned only Jews, not Arabs, by their own name and established only their political relevance in and for Palestine. This founded a pattern of presence-versus-absence that found a parallel in the result of the *nakba* and the 1948 War: Israeli statehood versus Palestinian statelessness. Put differently, while one can't claim that looking forward from 1917 the *nakba* was the only possible future of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine, one can't deny, looking backward from 1948, that the *nakba* had roots in 1917 (and other events, of course).

This "structuralist" statement is mirrored in Khoury's "subjective" lived experience, i.e. the memory he presents of it. To mention 1910, 1914–1918, and 1948 in one breath means to see and feel, present and represent them as fundamentally equal parts of one chain: his life. Together, they shape and show what his

life was all about to him: loss, time and again, but also and equally the dogged determination to go on and try again and push forward. These memoirs are a virtual triple palimpsest, then: a text penned on top of a fragmented version Khoury recalls, on top of another version, on top of yet of another one.

There is much here that invites reflection: Khoury's life as an educator, his evolving political work, the tensions within his Church, and relations to other Christian denominations, to name just four. While this is not the place to broach all these matters—not the least because I am not a specialist—I should note how deeply and structurally they are intertwined. Consider education, politics, and organized religion. They are not neatly separate parallel tracks in Khoury's life. Rather, each by necessity shaped his engagement in the others: a fundamental condition of how people live and make sense of their lives, crisscrossing categories that we historians tend to specialize in.

One point I found particularly remarkable in Khoury's memoirs is the multiple ruptures and way stations in his lifetime. While the most dramatic expression of this reality comes at the start of this text, instances are scattered throughout. For one thing, although Khoury's life is centered on Palestine, he also lived in (what would become) Jordan and in Egypt and Lebanon. These moves occurred in different and shifting family constellations and for different reasons, whether politics—the *nakba* exile in Lebanon—or work, be it his father's, who moved to Karak, or his own, when he sojourned in Cairo. One dimension—sometimes a cause, sometimes an outcome—of this pattern was Khoury's education. He was not schooled in one institution and place. His schooling may have been particularly eclectic, but not atypical per se. After all, a large number of different sociopolitical actors and stakeholders—local and imperial governments, native Churches, and missionaries, to just name three—rubbed shoulders in Palestine and surrounding countries. A more existential dimension of Khoury's periodic mobility concerns his children, not only those who lived but those who died. One of the most haunting sentences of this text is “we planted a baby in every city we lived in, Karak, Ramla, Jerusalem, and Birzeit, as a result of all the calamities we went through, but we thank God in every circumstance.” This is a real, and really personal, geography of loss. At the same time, Khoury turns death into life, loss into belonging. While he writes “buried” in other sentences, here, he says “planted,” as in a tree, a living being. Even if he and his kin are not in Palestine anymore, it's as if they—certainly as individuals and family members; perhaps also as Palestinians?—still have loved ones left behind.

Christian-Muslim relations are a recurrent theme in these pages. There is a fascinating tension here. On the one hand, Khoury, a follower of Hajj Amin al-Husayni, is a bona fide Palestinian nationalist of some standing; and he

is somebody who believes that both Christians and Muslims are Palestinians and nationalists. On the other hand, he often uses words like “astonished” to describe Christians’ or Muslims’ reactions to multi-religious political moments. This suggests that said multi-religious reality was tenuous. In everyday political occurrences Muslims and Christians continue to negotiate what is expected and “normal” and what is not. Multi-religious nationalism was not a *fait accompli*, but a project in the making. Thus, Khoury says he helped to head off a Christian-Muslim clash triggered by a (presumably) cocky Christian adolescent in Ramla, and that he asserted multi-religious nationalism when accepting the invitation to orate at the al-Aqsa mosque, in Jerusalem.

Another invitation Khoury accepted was that to head a Christian Palestinian delegation to the Balkans to convince Orthodox politicians and masses there to support the Palestinian cause at the League of Nations, in Geneva, where Khoury’s journey ends. (The specific context is the debate surrounding the British Peel Commission of 1938.) This journey demonstrates the continuation of at least some politically relevant religiously based ties between European and Middle Eastern ex-Ottoman provinces deep in the post-Ottoman world. This is not “just” a transnational story, then. It is rooted in a shared history—shared in that both Palestine and Balkan countries had been Ottoman and that Orthodoxy played an important role in both, too.

Let me conclude with a note related to the final chapter of Khoury’s life as covered in this memoirs, his exile in Lebanon. In late 1948, he writes, “I was allowed to take care of the church [of Wadi Shahrour] as the legitimate priest of the village from 15th November 1948, without a fixed salary, relying on what I received from the offertory basket, the feast day gifts and other spiritual services.” Indeed, the *nakba* settled Palestinian statelessness. Central to this reality was, and remains, exile from the homeland and/or not enjoying really full citizenship in the homeland, now Israel. This condition comes hand in glove with an existential structural precariousness and, related, dependence on others, in Khoury’s case Archbishop of Lebanon Elia Karam, who arranged the post in Wadi Shahrour for him. Being thrown into exile as a modern nation in the very age of the nation-state has been a rather distinct, extraordinary fate. And exile and the collective precariousness resulting from it is an existential experience of the highest order: one that even Palestinian individuals who have acquired another country’s citizenship feel and experience. All Palestinians, no matter their myriad places of residence and citizenships, share a profoundly existential trait, then—a national commonality whose sheer depth and soldering quality is second to none. But at the same time, the differences between individual Palestinians’ everyday lives are massive, indeed second to no other nation, either. Just consider Palestinians in, say, Haifa, Hebron, Amman, Beirut,

and Damascus—or Geneva, Moscow, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, and Cape Town. Even within one country of exile there are worlds of difference. Lebanon is a case in point, and Khoury a good example. He is dependent on Karam, sure—but at least he has somebody to be dependent on. Many other did not, be it because they did not have Khoury's pre-1948 capital and transnational networks that helped after 1948 outside Palestine, or for other reasons. The exilic end of Khoury's memoirs, then, is an apt reflection of the extraordinary complexity of post-*nakba* Palestinianness, of a nation at one and the same time more unified and more diverse than others.

Notes on Contributors

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is Professor at the Graduate Institute in Geneva. He was previously Associate Professor at Princeton University and, in 2005–2008, and Assistant Professor at the American University of Beirut. He is currently pursuing two principal book projects. One is an introduction for undergraduate students to questions of space and scale in modern history writing. The other is "The Middle East in the World: A Twentieth-Century History." Moreover, building on his work on modern empires, he is organizing "Modern transimperial and interimperial histories: forms, questions, prospects," a 2022 international conference, sponsored by the Pierre du Bois foundation. He is also interested in decolonisation and the Cold War.

The maps were produced by Zain Al Sharaf Wahbeh (Cambridge)

Notes on Transliteration

In transliterating Arabic and in general this volume generally follows the International *Journal of Middle East Studies* system. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule: personal names where a specific spelling was preferred and used by the individual in question or has become recognized as the norm over time. For ease of reading, diacritical marks have not been used, except to indicate the letters ayn and hamza. Capitalisation in transliterated Arabic sentences and book or journal titles occurs only in the first word and personal names.

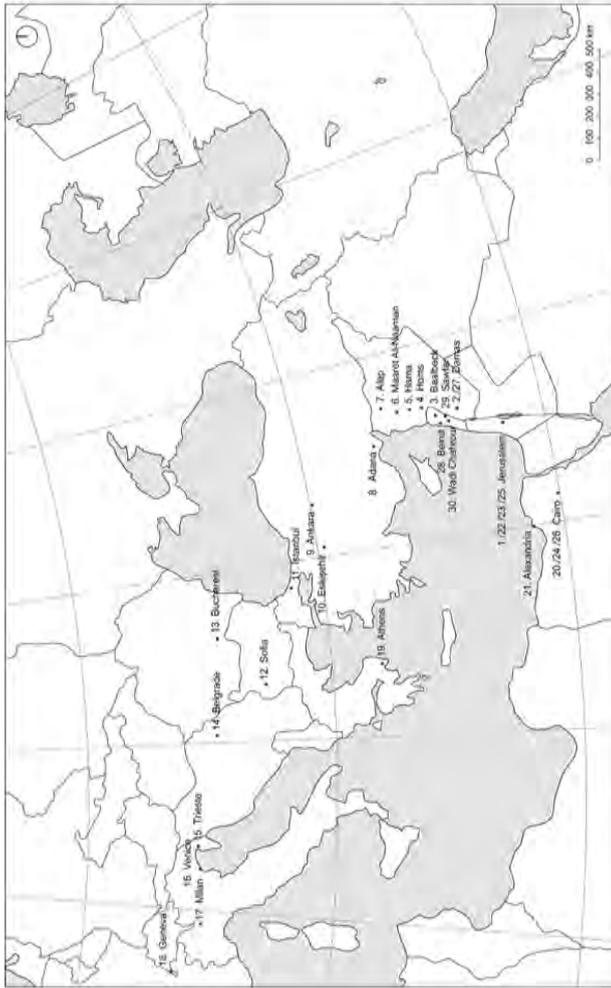
Maps of Niqula Khoury's Trips in the Levant, Western and Eastern Europe



Survey of Egypt: Railway Map of Palestine & Transjordan. 1922

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Birzeit (1885) | 3. Jerusalem (1901) | 5. Madaba (1910) | 7. Qatrania (1910) | 9. Ramla (1911) | 11. Birzeit (1917) | 13. Haifa (1920) | 15. Jerusalem (1926) |
| 2. Karak (1889) | 4. Karak (1905) | 6. Ziza (1910) | 8. Birzeit (1910) | 10. Jerusalem (1914) | 12. Ramla (1917) | 14. Ramla (1920) | 16. Ramallah (1932) |

MAP 1 Mapping Khuory's life and family trips (1885–1932)



Royal Geographical Society, British Council Map no. 1: Europe and the Middle East. London 1941 (English), 1944 (Arabic.)

1937

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Jerusalem (1/6/1937) | 7. Aleppo (4/9/1937) | 13. Bucharest (1/9/1937) | 19. Athens (5/10/1937) | 24. Cairo (9/1/1943) | 28. Beirut (3/1948) |
| 2. Damascus (2/9/1937) | 8. Adana (5/9/1937) | 14. Belgrade (10/9/1937) | 20. Cairo (13/10/1937) | 25. Jerusalem (8/12/1943) | 29. Sawfar (5/1948) |
| 3. Baalbek (3/8/1937) | 9. Ankara (6/9/1937) | 15. Trieste (18/9/1937) | 21. Alexandria (13/10/1937) | 1946 | 30. Wadi Charour (11/1948) |
| 4. Hama (3/8/1937) | 10. Eskisehir (5/9/1937) | 16. Venice (18/9/1937) | 22. Jerusalem (27/10/1937) | 26. Cairo (1/1946-3/1946) | |
| 5. Hama (3/8/1937) | 11. Istanbul (5/9/1937) | 17. Milan (18/9/1937) | 1943 | 1948 | |
| 6. Maarat Al-Naman (3/8/1937) | 12. Sofia (7/8/1937) | 18. Geneva (21/9/1937) | 23. Jerusalem (6/9/1943) | 27. Damascus (3/1946) | |

MAP 2 Mapping Khuury's trip to Eastern and Western Europa (1937) and his trips in the region (1943-1948)

Introduction

Sarah Irving and Karène Sanchez Summerer

This book presents the memoirs, written in the early 1950s but long ignored in an archive in Beirut, of the Palestinian clergyman, educator and nationalist Niqula Khoury. Born in 1885 in the village of Bir Zeit near Ramallah in the present-day West Bank, Khoury's recollections take us on a journey from the final decades of Ottoman rule, through the First World War and British Mandate rule in Palestine, and into the first years of the Nakba, as Palestinians refer to the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel, which drove over 700,000 from their homes. Alongside a number of other memoirs and autobiographies by Palestinians from this period—discussed below—Khoury's memoirs offer a personal perspective on the regional impacts of the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the Palestinian struggle for self-determination under British and political Zionist colonialism, and the experience of displacement and diaspora. Amongst other rare aspects of this memoir, it contains a highly unusual narration by a minor, regional actor of the workings of the Committee of Union and Progress or 'Young Turks,' their uprising against Sultan Abdel Hamid II, the attempts at counter-revolution, and the resultant decline of any impetus towards democracy or tolerance which might have existed in the CUP's early politics.

In particular, though, Niqula Khoury's own specific trajectory offers some unique insights into several important themes in Palestinian history. As a priest of the Orthodox Church (as well as the son and grandson of Orthodox priests), Khoury was a high-profile and energetic agitator against the domination of the Orthodox Church in Palestine by the Greek hierarchy. This movement, with its roots in the nineteenth century and in the *Nahda* (often referred to as the 'Arab renaissance'), extended across Ottoman Greater Syria and saw both clergy and laypeople demanding that their churchmen speak and preach in Arabic, that dues paid to the church were disbursed in the region, and that the Orthodox community have a say in key decisions.¹ Although a number of other national Orthodox Churches in former parts of the Ottoman Empire had

1 Merav Mack, "Orthodox and Communist: A History of a Christian Community in Mandate Palestine and Israel," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 42, 4 (2015), 385–393; Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: The Question of New Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50, 4 (2014), 589–593.

become autocephalous (locally-headed and -governed) during the 1800s, the fact that Palestine was not just another Orthodox land but the Holy Land made it unlikely that the Greek church hierarchy would relinquish its grip,² and the effects of this tension are still very much alive today in controversies over the sale by the Greek hierarchy of church land in Jerusalem to Israeli settlers.³ The history of this fraught relationship is analysed in more detail by Konstantinos Papastathis later in this volume.

The fight for an Arab presence and voice within the Orthodox Church is widely acknowledged as having been closely linked to the origins of a specific Arab nationalist consciousness and movement under the Ottoman Empire and British Mandate.⁴ As such, his accounts of his often conflictual relations with his superiors within the Orthodox Church also blend into Khoury's activities as a Palestinian nationalist, and the relationship between the religion and nationalism during the Mandate period. The role in the national movement of Palestinian Christians such as journalists and editors 'Isa al-'Isa, Emil Ghoury and Najib Nassar, or politicians Yaqub Faraj and 'Isa al-Bandak is well-documented, as are the complex dynamics which shaped the experiences of the various Christian denominations in Palestine during Mandate rule and the Nakba.⁵ But Khoury's memoirs are unusual in that he is not merely a prac-

2 Papastathis and Kark, "Colonialism and Religious Power," 590; Mack "Orthodox and Communist," 386; Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent over Real Estate," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37 (2005), 516.

3 See, for example, "Christian leaders protest sale of Jerusalem church land to settler group," *France24*, 11th July 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190711-christian-leaders-protest-sale-jerusalem-church-land-settler-group>, accessed 20th November 2019; Daniel Estrin, "Greek Orthodox Church Sells Land In Israel, Worrying Both Israelis And Palestinians," *NPR* 2nd December 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/12/02/565464499/greek-orthodox-church-sells-land-in-israel-worrying-both-israelis-and-palestina?t=1574238927328>, accessed 20th November 2019; Miriam Berger, "Betrayal in the Holy Land: The Greek Orthodox Church is secretly selling Jerusalem property to Israel," *The National*, 2nd April 2019, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/betrayal-in-the-holy-land-the-greek-orthodox-church-is-secretly-selling-jerusalem-property-to-israel-1.844272>, accessed 20th November 2019. For a longer and more in-depth treatment of the subjects, see Katz and Kark, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation," 509–534.

4 Mack "Orthodox and Communist," 387–393.

5 See, for example: Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011); Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Erik Freas, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Late-Ottoman Palestine: Where Nationalism and Religion Intersect* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Samuel Kuruvilla, *Radical Christianity in Palestine and Israel: Liberation and Theology in the Middle East* (London: IB Tauris, 2013).

tising Christian, part of the general community, but a priest and teacher of the largest Christian grouping, and a figure who energetically deployed his religious contacts and influence in the nationalist cause. Khoury's perspectives on both Muslims and other Christians within the Palestinian society of his day, and especially within the national movement, confound binary assumptions about Muslim-Christian or Orthodox-Catholic conflict, and indeed his attitudes towards other members of the Orthodox clergy at times highlight the role of personal envy and enmity within political dynamics, as well as of more researched motivations of ideology and material interests.

The most remarkable instance of this in his memoirs is Khoury's account of his journey across the former Ottoman provinces of south-eastern Europe on his way to the League of Nations special session at which the idea of partitioning Palestine was to be debated.⁶ As a vocal backer of the 1936–1939 uprising, to which the Peel Commission was a response, Khoury was deeply opposed to splitting the territory of Palestine between Jews and Arabs. As he travelled across the Balkans, he visited senior members of the Orthodox churches in Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria to ask them for support in Geneva, a presumption of influence which highlights the overlap between church and state in many of these countries in the interwar period. Khoury's enthusiasm for this trip and his encounters with senior Orthodox churchmen of states which only a generation or two earlier had, like Palestine, been Ottoman domains and which were now home to independent Orthodox churches must have encouraged Khoury's vision for both national and religious autonomy. This perspective on the relationship between Arab Orthodox Christians in the interwar period and their religious brethren in the Balkan states also highlights the links and contestations within and across the Orthodox world and going beyond the focus on Greece and Russia as the main Orthodox state actors. His account of the Geneva conference itself is also a rare window on Palestinian participation in the international machinations whose outcomes were imposed on the Palestinian people in such disastrous form.

This journey and the contacts Khoury made on it, however, also exposes one of the most difficult aspects of the memoirs to deal with, both intellectually and emotionally: the question of anti-Semitism within strands of Palestinian nationalism and Orthodox Christianity. As the more detailed discussion later in this Introduction shows, the anti-Semitic remarks Khoury makes throughout his memoirs must be neither ignored nor excused, particularly since his writing

6 For a full account of the development of the partition idea in British political thought, see Penny Sinanoglou, "British Plans for the Partition of Palestine, 1929–1938," *The Historical Journal*, 52, 1 (2009), 131–152.

of them was done after World War II and the universal knowledge and recognition of the Holocaust in Europe. However, to refuse to see Khoury's views in the context of their time or to neglect to analyse their location within the story of anti-Semitism in the Orthodox Church in particular is to lose some of the value they have in understanding the historical dynamics of anti-Semitism and thus of ways to counter it. This also highlights the necessity of comprehending the origins of Khoury's views, and rejecting twenty-first century political debates which attempt to weaponise accusations of anti-Semitism as a means to deny Palestinian rights to self-determination and human rights.

1 The Origins of This Book

The manuscript upon which this book is based was found in the archives of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut Lebanon in the summer of 2018, by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Charbel Nassif. It is written in formal Arabic, with some locally specific terms and occasional words from Ottoman Turkish. With the kind permission of Professor Salim Tamari from the Institute for Palestine Studies, the original manuscript was then translated, annotated and analysed in a shared effort by Sanchez and Nassif (and Vicky Moussaed for the translation) along with their colleague Sarah Irving and additional help from Konstantinos Papastathis. This introduction, by Sanchez and Irving, provides historical and methodological context to the memoir itself, whilst a brief intervention by Charbel Nassif reflects on issues of tone, reliability and egotism in Khoury's narrative and a chapter by Konstantinos Papastathis adds a broader sense of the politics of the Greek Orthodox Church, an institution which Niqula Khoury spent his life simultaneously embedded within and in conflict with and which remains controversial in its relationship with its Palestinian congregation to the present day.

The manuscript itself was apparently written in Lebanon in the 1950s or the early 1960s, shortly before Niqula Khoury's death in 1964. We thus do not have explicit details of Khoury's 'autobiographical pact,' the mutual understanding with his putative reader of the nature of the story he would tell and their relationship to his self-presentation.⁷ The time at which he wrote his account, late in his life, shows that it was not intended to advance his career or profile, although its tone and the way in which the narrator and his characters are

7 Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); Ralf Elger and Yavuz Köse (eds.), *Many Ways of Speaking about the Self: Middle Eastern Ego-Documents in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish (14th–20th Century)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010).

presented make it clear that Khoury was seeking to justify his actions at various points and to foreground his role in historical events. Almost forty years earlier, Niqula Khoury and his cousin Shehadeh had published a history of the Orthodox Church in Palestine which became an important document in the battle of representations and narratives within the greater war for control of the Greek Orthodox Church and its resources in the region. He was thus well aware of the potential value of a written account and its impact on wider discourse. And yet the prominence of family history and personal events within the manuscript, and indeed of quite considerable emotional openness at times of joy, distress and anger, also suggest that Khoury was recording events for his children, grandchildren and future descendants. An awareness of the effects of the written record is also suggested by the removal, before the manuscript was donated to the Institute for Palestine Studies, of a two-page section (pages 45–46 in the original, page 138 in this edition), which seem to have dealt with family finances or debts and with the issue of Palestinian collaborators with the British or the Zionist movement.

2 Palestine and Memoirs

Niqula Khoury's memoirs join a large and increasing field of autobiographies and diaries recounting parts of the late Ottoman, Mandate and immediate post-Nakba periods of Palestinian history.⁸ Over recent decades biographical and autobiographical sources have been invaluable in reshaping history writing on the Arab and Islamicate worlds, drawing attention to the methodological potentials of life stories and social biographies as ways of understanding the past, and adding richness and complexity, an emphasis on human agency and a prominent strand of humanisation to narrations of the region's history. Volumes of biography and microhistory such as the authoritative *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East* (first edition 1993) and *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel*, with their collections of historically, socially and geographically diverse subjects, have reinforced the sense that individual life histories have significant roles to play in serious historical research and analysis. Undoubtedly these add complexity to our understandings of the past, often disrupting accepted narratives and highlighting the fact that once we go beyond the larger patterns of history, individuals are rarely uncomplicated representatives of their

⁸ There are also increasing numbers of memoirs from later periods; these are now too numerous to address in the context of this discussion.

social groups; indeed, the editors of *Struggle and Society in Palestine/Israel* made this point in their introduction most strongly when they wrote that:

Just as ordinary people live in the shadows, so their life stories commonly remain obscure. Yet their lives frequently reveal a great deal of humanity and wisdom, as well as the harshness and brutality of everyday life, which rarely take center stage within conventional historical narratives.⁹

As a Palestinian, Arab, Orthodox, Christian, nationalist, religious, educated but at times economically impoverished man, son, father, brother, employee and rebel, whose life extends from the closing decades of the Ottoman Empire to post-Nakba exile, Niqula Khoury's story is just such a document.

Although autobiography is sometimes viewed as a Euro-American genre, rooted particularly in the Enlightenment, it has been present and, indeed, prominent in Arabic writings for a millennium and more.¹⁰ Indeed, one of the most prominent genres in early Islamic writings was that of the *sira*, or life-history, including famous biographies of the Prophet Muhammad by writers such as Ibn Ishaq and al-Tabari.¹¹ Memoirs covering the late nineteenth and first part of the twentieth centuries by Ottoman citizens and Arab Palestinians have been written and published since at least the 1930s, and from their inception they have fed into social and political debates—from questions of the loyalty and empire to assertions of Arab presence and legitimacy in the Holy Land.¹² Since the early 1970s, though, the quantity of published memoirs, autobiographies and diaries has steadily increased. A number of factors might be proposed to account for this: the increasing age of figures with memories

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- 9 Mark LeVine and Gershon Shafir, *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 1.
- 10 Dwight Reynolds et al, "The Fallacy of Western Origins," in *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 17–35.
- 11 Edmund Burke III and David Yaghoubian, "Middle Eastern Societies and Ordinary People's Lives," in *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East*, 2nd edition, ed. Burke and Yaghoubian (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 5.
- 12 Chloe Bordewich recounts how, in the 1930s, a flurry of autobiographical accounts of espionage and military activities in the Ottoman Levant were published in regional newspapers and as books, in some cases the latter also including letters written in response to the original publication and angrily rejecting allegations of collaboration with the Ottoman or British/French Mandate authorities, depending on the position of the writer. Bordewich regards these as a policing of loyalty in the face of the shift from Ottoman to European imperialism. "Diaries of an Ottoman Spymaster?: Treason, Slander, and the Afterlife of Memoir in Empire's Long Shadow," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 78 (2019), 122–123.

of the pre-1948 period and the sense of an imperative to record a pre-diaspora Palestine; the establishment of research institutions, principally the Institute for Palestine Studies but also academic departments and centres, concerned with building up a picture of the Palestinian past; and a broad readership engaging Palestine from various perspectives, whether driven by politics and solidarity or a more nebulous interest in the region's history and politics.

Initially, most of these memoirs appeared in Arabic, notable amongst them the voluminous memoirs of educational reformer and national campaigner Khalil al-Sakakini,¹³ the *Mudhakkirāt* and *Awraq Khāṣṣah* of the politician 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī (1899–1970),¹⁴ *al-Marahil* by lawyer and nationalist Omar Salih al-Barghouti (1894–1965),¹⁵ and *Yawmiyāt* by teacher, journalist and activist Akram Zuaiter (1909–1965).¹⁶ This group also includes *Rihla Jabaliyya*, *Rihla Sa'ba: Sira Dhatiyya* (published in English as *A Mountainous Journey: A Poet's Autobiography*) by the Nabulsi poet Fadwa Tuqan (1917–2003), and the novelist Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's *Al-Bīr al-Ūlā* (The First Well).¹⁷ Many of these were published in the 1970s or earlier, some by the PLO as part of an explicit project to record and publicise the history of Palestinians in Palestine, although some have appeared only very recently, such as the diaries of Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi, published by the eminent Khalidi family as *Mada 'ahd al-mujamalat* in 2014 and in abridged form in English in 2020.¹⁸ Their authors were all figures of some standing, members of the national movement and/or established writers, mainly from notable and privileged families and thus—despite the observations some made on daily life more broadly—reflecting the habits of Palestine's pre-Nakba ruling class.

At the other end of the spectrum, memoirs and diaries from much less influential and eminent authors have recently emerged and been edited, translated

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- 13 Khalil al-Sakākīnī, *Yawmiyyāt Khalil al-Sakākīnī*, ed. Akram Musallam with an introduction by Fayṣal Darrāj (Ramallah: Khalil al-Sakākīnī Cultural Centre, 2003).
 - 14 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī, *Mudhakkirāt 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī* [Memoirs of 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī] (Beirut: Centre for Arab Unity Studies, 2002); 'Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī, *Awraq Khassa* (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1974).
 - 15 Omar Saleh Al-Barghouti, *Al Marahel* ['Stages'], (Beirut and Amman: Al Mu'assasa al Arabiyya LilDirasat wal Nashr, 2001).
 - 16 Akram Zuaiter, *Al-haraka al-wataniyya al-filastiniyya 1935–1939: yawmiyat Akram Zuaiter* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
 - 17 Fadwa Tuqan, *Rihla sa'ba, rihla jabaliyya: sira dhatiyya* (Amman: Dar al-Shorouq, 1993); *A Mountainous Journey* (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Graywolf Press, 1990, 1993); Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, *The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood*, trans. Issa J. Boullata (Fayetteville, AK: University of Arkansas Press, 1995).
 - 18 Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi and Rafiq Hussein, *Exiled from Jerusalem: The Diaries of Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi* (London: IB Tauris, 2020).

and published in English. In some cases these are private records, released by family members long after the author's death, and published with an eye to social history and quotidian existence in Palestine rather than to an explicit sense of the Palestinian national narrative. Amongst these are the diaries of Ihsan Hasan al-Turjman (1893–1917), edited by Salim Tamari and recounting parts of the life of a young man growing up in Jerusalem and serving in the Ottoman army during World War One.¹⁹ Unlike the autobiographies mentioned above, written for publication by major figures in Palestinian arts and politics, Turjman was a middle-class figure who was died even before the British takeover of Palestine, and whose diaries reveal very ordinary—and yet illuminating—details of everyday Jerusalem life. Similarly, the diaries of Sami 'Amr, edited by Kimberly Katz, are a window into the life of a young man from Hebron, working in offices of the British Mandate administration in Jerusalem and recounting his daily thoughts—about politics and the war, but also about women in his workplace, family tensions, and all the normal concerns of a middle-class youth in his late teens and early twenties.²⁰ Perhaps the best-known of this more subaltern genre are the memoirs of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, a musician from Jerusalem whose full-length Arabic memoirs were edited into a shorter publication, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem*, by Salim Tamari and Issam Nasser.²¹

In between these two types of publication lie an increasing number of memoirs, mainly by Palestinians living in the diaspora, and written and published in English. This latter characteristic suggests a different audience is intended from the other earlier, Arabic-language autobiographies, but they are still intentional memoirs, written explicitly for publication and generally by members of the Palestinian intellectual and economic elite. Examples include the great scholar Edward Said's *Out of Place*,²² and his sister Jean Said Makdisi's *Teta, Mother and Me*, could perhaps be described as telling the story of the female branch of the Said family and a differently-gendered experience of dispossession.²³ The (medical) doctor Ghada Karmi has now released two well-received volumes of memoir, beginning with her girlhood in Jerusalem and recounting

19 Salim Tamari and Ihsan Turjman, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015).

20 Kimberly Katz and Sami 'Amr, *A Young Palestinian's Diary, 1941–1945: The Life of Sāmī 'Amr* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

21 Salim Tamari, Issam Nasser and Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948*, trans. Nadia Elzeer (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2014).

22 Edward Said, *Out of Place: a Memoir* (New York: Vintage, 2000).

23 Jean Said Makdisi, *Teta, Mother and Me: an Arab Woman's Memoir* (London: Saqi, 2005).

decades living in exile,²⁴ while Salman Abu Sittah, an engineer who has devoted his life to mapping Palestine's destroyed villages and ways of life, chronicles his pre-1948 youth in an elite Bedouin family and post-Nakba upbringing in Gaza and in diaspora in *Mapping my Return*.²⁵ Rosemary Sayigh, the anthropologist and wife of economist and nationalist Yusif Sayigh (1916–2004), recorded and edited his memoirs in the final years of his life, publishing them as *Yusif Sayigh, Arab Economist and Palestinian Patriot: A Fractured Life Story*.²⁶ What sets this final group apart is the disproportionate number of Christians amongst them, perhaps reflecting the historically higher educational levels amongst Christian Palestinians and their deep-rooted ties with European societies via the cultural and economic links such as trade, religion, missionary activities and the Capitulation. This image becomes even stronger if we include the memoirs of Atallah Mansour (1934–) and Elias Chacour (1939–), whose volumes are more explicitly aimed at raising the profile and issue of Christian Palestinians within the State of Israel.²⁷

Where, then, does Niquila Khoury's memoir fit amongst these? To a large extent, he belongs with the middle group, as a Palestinian from a peasant background whose childhood memories are fraught with poverty and precarious livelihoods. He also fits alongside Turjman, 'Amr and Jawhariyyeh as the author of a memoir in Arabic which lay unread for decades; it is not even clear that his account was completely intended for publication, although he does seem to write for an intended readership beyond his immediate family. But, unlike the authors of the more subaltern memoirs, Khoury's life took a turn which saw him working—and at times clashing—with the patriarchs and metropolitans of Orthodox churches, and attending conferences held by the League of Nations to discuss the possibility of partitioning Palestine. So, despite his humble birth, Khoury's defiant personality, strong will and organisational talents carried him into the upper echelons of Palestinian society during the Mandate period, working alongside other senior churchmen and politicians in his fights for the two causes which consumed him— independence of the Ortho-

24 Ghada Karmi, *In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story* (London: Verso, 2002); *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (London: Verso, 2015).

25 Salman Abu Sittah, *Mapping My Return: A Palestinian Memoir* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2016).

26 Rosemary Sayigh, *Yusif Sayigh, Arab Economist and Palestinian Patriot: A Fractured Life Story* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2015).

27 Atallah Mansour, *Waiting for the Dawn: An Autobiography* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975); Elias Chacour, *Blood Brothers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1984); *We belong to the land: the story of a Palestinian Israeli who lives for peace and reconciliation* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990).

dox Church from Greek domination, and the freedom of Palestine. As such, Khoury's life story gives us some unique insights into a range of subjects: not just the rare details of a late Ottoman peasant upbringing, but also details of the conflicts within the Orthodox church in the first half of the twentieth century and of the Palestinian fight for a homeland in the face of British colonialism and Zionist territorialism.

3 Christianity and Nationalism in Mandate Palestine

It has been widely documented since the interwar period that Christian communities were involved in Arab nationalism, at different levels and to different degrees, debating nationalism among themselves and with their Muslim peers.²⁸ The local archives of Christian communities across the Levant evidence to roles of the clergy, elites and popular mobilisation in different facets of identification with Arab nationalism although for a long time these have been understudied for the interwar period, due partly to difficulties in accessing the archives.²⁹

Christians constituted between 20% (c. 1920) to 11% (1949) of the total population of Palestine, divided into a dozen denominations, each with their own internal issues (Orthodox, Latins and also Protestant Palestinians, for example, struggled to establish their influence as Arabs vis-à-vis their foreign religious hierarchies),³⁰ but sharing obvious common grounds with their Muslim fellows. The mandatory system was a pervasive form of colonialism that lasted only thirty years, but was formative for the proto-national Zionist and Arab Palestinian scenes.³¹ Christian Palestinians shared many of the same concerns as Muslim Palestinians vis à vis British Mandate policies towards Zionism. The terms of the League of Nations Mandate awarded to Britain incorporated the

28 See, for example, George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938).

29 Karène Sanchez Summerer, "Entre négligence et secret. Entreprises archivistiques en Palestine," in *Archiver au Moyen-Orient. Fabriques documentaires contemporaines*, eds. Christine Jüngen and Jihane Sfeir (Paris: Karthala, 2019), 79–102. On the power structures, the political stakes in accessing archives, and writing people's histories in the Middle East, https://www.forum-transregionale-studien.de/fileadmin/pdf/Forum/Publikationen/Essays/Ghazaleh/Pascale_Ghazaleh_Essay_PDF.pdf;

30 Noah Haiduc-Dale has shown how these internal struggles reinforced their identification as Arabs, their sense of themselves as Arabs, and specifically as Palestinians.

31 Kimberley Katz, *A Young Palestinian's Diary, 1941–1945. The life of Sami Amr* (Austin: Texas University Press, 2009), 15.

Balfour Declaration, which called for a Jewish national home and favoured Jewish communities' needs over Arab ones. Arabs Palestinians, Christian and Muslim alike, were placed on the defensive and in a variety of ways sought to prevent the sale of land, to change British policies and to ensure Arab rights.³²

Orthodox and Catholic Arab stances intertwined with their Muslim peers in many aspects: they gathered in the Muslim-Christian Associations from the early years of the Mandate,³³ organised protests, participated actively in the sustained rebellion (1936–1939), and were represented in all of the delegations that were sent to London to plead the Arab cause (proportionally to their percentage in the population). Initiatives such as the 'national schools' 'transmitting the love of the homeland', like the Dusturiyyah School founded by Khalil Sakakini (an agnostic intellectual from the Greek Orthodox community),³⁴ reflect the early movement of the youth into the national movement. To a certain extent, the oecumenical educational project of French missionary schools in the 1920s was met with resistance by many of the boys enrolled, and missionaries' view on Arab Palestinian nationalism progressively took this mobilisation into account.³⁵

32 Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948*; Erik Freas, *Muslim-Christian Relations in Late-Ottoman Palestine: Where Nationalism and Religion Intersect*. Haiduc-Dale counters Yehoshua Porath's (Christians and Muslim as two immutable groups) and Daphne Tsimhoni's (Christians acquiesced to a marginal position as a minority) arguments on Christian participation in the national movement in Palestine. On Arabism as a protonationalism, see Ernest Dawn, "The Origins of Arab Nationalism," in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, eds. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih and Reeva S. Simon (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3–30; Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine 1917–1939: the frustration of a nationalistic movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979); James Jankowski and Israël Gershoni (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism: A History* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Emma Aubin-Boltanski, *Pèlerinages et nationalisme en Palestine: prophètes, héros et ancêtres* (Paris: Éd. de l'HESS, 2008); Leyla Dakhli, "Arabisme, nationalisme arabe et identifications transnationales arabes au xx^e siècle," *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, 103, 3 (2009) 12–25.

33 On Muslim-Christian Associations, see Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 38–50; Haiduc-Dale, "Rejecting Sectarianism: Palestinian Christians' Role in Muslim-Christian Relations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 26, (2015).

34 Khalil al-Sakākīnī, *Yawmiyyāt Khalīl al-Sakākīnī*.

35 Karène Sanchez Summerer, "Preserving Catholics of the Holy Land or integrating them into the Palestine nation? Catholic communities, language, identity and public space in Jerusalem (1920–1950)," in *Modernity, Minority, and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christians in the Middle East*, ed. Heleen Murre-van den Berg and Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 121–151.

The nationalism of Orthodox Christians has been overshadowed by the official stances of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (see Kostas Papastathis' article in this volume). Though Niqula Khoury insists on describing the Orthodox community as the main if not the sole source of Palestinian nationalism, he underlines in different parts of his memoirs the role of the papacy in supporting Palestinian Catholic communities, and in comparison deploring the role of the Orthodox Patriarchate in not defending the Arab Orthodox in their national fight. The official neutrality of the Holy See might have contributed, inaccurately, to an assumption of Catholic communities' tepidness on the national question in Palestine.³⁶ Palestinian nationalism debates and actions on the national question thus involved both Orthodox as well as Catholic communities (the latter made up of both Melkites and Arab Latin Catholics, the two most numerous Christian communities of Palestine).³⁷ Niqula Khoury mentions Gregorios Haggear (Hajjar), the Greek Catholic Bishop of Galilee, for his nationalist activism. Hajjar travelled around Europe in support of the Arab cause,³⁸ and was an interlocutor for the Peel Commission in 1937.

Several local archives allow a reassessment of the participation of Catholic Palestinians in the national movement, characterised by a variety of decisions and actions within the Latin Church itself during the 1920s and 1930s. In August 1923, the Catholic Committee for the National Defence in Palestine was created. The recent opening of the archives of Pius XII (1938–1958), cross-analysed with local archives (especially the Latin Patriarchate and Melkites archives) and the archives of the Oriental Congregations (Rome), for example, provide a more complex and nuanced image of the multifaceted European and Arab Catholic stances towards nationalism. The Melkite Bishop George Hakim (1943–1967) also mobilised in the region, in Europe and in the USA to support the claims of the Arab Higher Committee.³⁹ Hakim gave Pius XII a letter from the Mufti Hajj

36 On the Holy See positions and declarations in 1945–1948, Maria Chiara Rioli, *A Liminal Church. Refugees, Conversions and the Latin Diocese of Jerusalem, 1946–1956* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2020).

37 Karène Sanchez Summerer, *Oriental Brothers? Arab Catholics, Language, Identity and Diplomacy in Palestine (1918–1948)* (forthcoming). Some studies have overlooked it, other tended to depict Christians as a homogenous group and in a monolithic fashion, sometimes underlining their anti-Muslim positions.

38 Archives of the Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali, Melkiti, J. Haggear, Ponzona Personale, 2030, 19/11/1929, Letter to Cardinal Sincero, Prefect of Propaganda Fide; 2030, various correspondence of 1925, Report to the Holy See asking Catholics to buy lands and n°1278, 30/05/1932; correspondence with the Holy See; 27/07/1937 about the Partition plans.

39 Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem archives, Melkiti, Maximos G. Hakim: Hakim required a permit to travel to the US with a committee in order to plead the Palestinian cause.

Amin al-Husseini, 'seeking the support of the venerable Pontifical See for the Arab cause of Palestine' that would generate the 'vivid gratitude' of the Arab and Islamic worlds.⁴⁰ The letter presented the mufti as a potential ally of the Holy See in the Middle East. He issued several appeals to the Holy See to take a position against the Jewish nationalist movement and declare in favour of the Arab cause. The Latin Patriarch Luigi Barlassina, in recurrent anti-Protestant and anti-Zionist stances (and out of fear of bolshevism), encouraged the Latin population and clergy to reject Jewish immigration.⁴¹

Christians also participated actively in the national movement as editors of newspapers. *Sawt al-Shaab* (*Sawt Ashaab*, newspaper of the Christian Orthodox community of Bethlehem, was founded by Issa Bandak, who is mentioned by Niqula Khoury on page 40 of his manuscript, and who later became mayor of Bethlehem) and other publications reflect the pressure from Arab Palestinians on their hierarchy and within the general population for an Arab Orthodox Patriarch, but also an Arab Latin Patriarch.⁴² Advocacy journalism characterised the newspaper's policies between 1922 and 1939; it adopted the permanent motto in its heading: 'The holiest struggle [Jihad] is that which places man's liberty under the nation's banner and the nation's liberty under the banner of God'. The newspaper publicised, especially in 1935, the program and ideology of the new political party *Islah*,⁴³ raising the banners of nationalism. The

40 The Holy See called for 'a just and real peace through comprehension and mutual agreement respects for the rights of everyone'. AAV, ADAGP 10, 46, 3, fol 163 Tardini to al-Husayni, Vatican August 11, 1947; quoted by Rioli, *A Liminal Church*, 55.

41 Archives of the White Fathers, Rome, Melkiti, St Anne Seminar; Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem archives, Melkiti. On Hajjar's concerns over the growing Jewish presence in Palestine, AOC (Archivio storico della Congregazione per le Chiese Orientali), Melkiti, J. Haggear, Ponzona Personale, 2030, various correspondence of 1925; 19/11/1929, Letter to Cardinal Sincero, Prefect of Propaganda Fide; Report to the Holy See asking Catholics to buy lands and n°1278, 30/05/1932. On the Latin Patriarch Luigi Barlassina (1872–1947), his complex stance and its evolution towards Arab nationalism, Paolo Pieraccini, "Il Patriarca latino di Gerusalemme (1918–1940). Ritratto di un patriarca scomodo: mons. Luigi Barlassina," *Il Politico* 63, 2 (1998): 207–256.

42 AOC, Prop/Latini, 417, n°153, 27/10/1927 on the 'patriotism against foreign clergy' and the revindication of an Arab Latin Patriarch; *Sawt-Ashaab*, n°333, 18/05/1927, 07/07/1927, evoking the pressure on 'foreign' clergy to defend their 'nationality', 'the threats of the destruction of their nationality'. On the context of the newspaper *Sawt Ashaab*, Adnan A. Musallam, "Palestinian Arab Press Developments Under British Rule with a Case Study of Bethlehem's, *Sawt Ashaab*, 1922–1939," *Bethlehem University Journal*, 1986, 75–92.

43 *Sawt Ashaab* n° 897, 08/06/1935, p. 3, and n° 900, 29/06/1935, p. 4. The party *Islah* (Reform) was founded after the death of Musa Kazim al-Husayni, the chairman of the Palestine Arab Executive, by the mayors of Bethlehem, Acre, Gaza, Ramallah and Bayt Jala, in collaboration with the mayor of Jerusalem, Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi. Isa Bandak was part of the Executive of the secretariat.

diversity of this press and the national issues debated reflects the diversity of Palestinian society itself with respect to religious denominations and geographical and social origins, and the different modes of action towards nationalism. The debates over a 'national Arab cause' and its impact on Catholic internal relations and organisation, led to intense underground activity aimed at the Arabisation of the leading positions of the Patriarchate, and demonstrations, as seen in the Greek Patriarchate. The debates around the national cause are present in various type of archives. The Bethlehem magazine *Al-Ghad* (*the Levant*), for example, mentioned several cultural initiatives by Bethlehem students who in early 1937, during the Palestinian uprising, organised a literacy campaign for the 'national cause', as 'only an educated people can resist occupation', putting Catholic and Orthodox youth clubs in the front row.⁴⁴ Missionary societies could no longer pursue the political agenda of their homeland whilst totally disregarding the interests of the indigenous populations of the Middle East.⁴⁵

Beyond the various attitudes of the different Christian communities towards nationalism, the question of a common answer is mentioned quite early in Khoury's text, via the Committee of the Christian Union who issued for the first time a statement from all Christian communities. The diary of Father Alberto Gori, Custos of the Holy Land (1937–1949, later Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem 1950–1970), quoted in his memoirs written in the opening weeks of the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948–1949, details the difficult months of the Palestinian uprising of 1936–1939. Beyond religious, educational and charitable activities, he describes the continuous requests for concrete gestures of solidarity and financial and material aid from the Arab rebels fighting against the British authorities, in a climate of extreme violence, while the representatives of the local Christian communities were determined to reject the parti-

44 *Al Ghad*, Bethlehem, 1938, for ex.

45 Philippe Bourmaud and Karène Sanchez Summerer (eds), "Missions, Powers and Arabization," *Social Sciences and Missions*, 32, 3–4, 2019. Cf the reconfiguration of the Catholic Church's role post-1919, dispelling traditional suspicions of attempted Latinisation (religious procession in Bethlehem papal delegate, custos of Terra Santa, Italian banners, Arab banners, and papal colours prominently displayed 'Dieu préserve la Palestine des Anglais'.) On the other, the imposition of a new regional order based on the ideal of the modern nation-state via the Mandate system presented to missionary and ecclesiastical institutions the task of reconfiguring their role and position as mediators between contrasting political influences entering local politics and society without being dominated or manipulated by them. To the Arab Catholics, it meant finding ways of being local and Catholic (universal) at the same time, for ex. ASV (Archivio Segreto Vaticano), Archivio Delegazione Apostolica di Gerusalemme e Palestina, Monsignor Gustavo Testa, Busta 1, fasc 7, 1840/36 Latin Patriarch to Testa, Apostolic Delegate, 2/1/1937.

tion plan. In August 1947, the leaders of the eleven most important Christian denominations in the Holy Land addressed a declaration to political and religious authorities all over the world, stating that dividing the Holy Land meant violating its sanctity and infringing on the natural rights of the Arabs, the 'only true people of Palestine'.⁴⁶

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Niqula Khoury does not evoke them in his memoirs, but Christians also at times faced challenges within the Palestinian national movement. Some Muslim initiatives tried to present a non-secular nationalism and a more religion-based identification, mainly from the mid-1930s onwards (the Young Men's Muslim Association was established to counter the YMCA, for example). This trend derived partially from resentment at the over-representation of Palestinian Christians in British administration jobs, mainly due to their multilingualism and higher level of education, on average.⁴⁷ But according to Haiduc Dale, most actors in the national movement ensured the representation of Christians, and continuous interreligious cooperation, in order to show the British that Arabs were united in their struggle. Christians 'remained unabashedly nationalistic',⁴⁸ and their communal identity was not exclusionary or opposed to Palestinian nationalism, which was largely ethnically and territorially based, not confessional.

Khoury's memoirs give us an account of an Arab middle class trying to make sense of their position at local and regional level, a man whose personality can be seen as ambiguous and multiple, whose choices were connected to a wide range of local regional and transnational actors.⁴⁹ It revolves in important ways around national construction, contributing to an understanding of the complexity of the various discourses on nationalism and a more accurate

46 Custodia di Terra Santa, fol. A. Gorri memoirs. The Custodian also raised the idea of creating an enclave to better protect the Holy Places of Jerusalem and Bethlehem, a suggestion that was later adopted by UN Resolution 181 through the clause intended to internationalise a vast territory around the Holy City.

47 Karène Sanchez Summerer, *French in the Holy Land. Language, Diplomacy, Identity and French education in Palestine (1908–1948)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, forthcoming).

48 Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 14.

49 Gershon Shafir and Mark LeVine, "Social Biographies in Making Sense of History," 1–20. Rudolf Dekker (ed.), *Egodocuments and History: Autobiographical Writing in Its Social Context Since the Middle Ages* (Rotterdam: Verloren Publishers, 2002); Daniel Barteaux (ed.), *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981); Mary Ann Fay (ed.), *Auto/biography and the Construction of Identity and Community in the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave, 2002); Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett, *Telling Stories: The use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

sense of these which can only come from a connected history of the Orthodox in Palestine and beyond.⁵⁰

4 Niqula Khoury and Anti-Semitism

Niqula Khoury's memoirs touch on many difficult questions in Palestinian history, some of which are still very much live issues today. The question of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and a safe and internationally recognised homeland is as yet unresolved on the global level. As mentioned above, the competition for leadership in the Orthodox Church in Palestine/Israel, particularly Jerusalem, is ongoing today. Konstantinos Papa-stathis' chapter in this volume delves into the complex history of this relationship, providing context for Khoury's recollections in the memoir.

The thorniest issue is perhaps that of Khoury's numerous meetings with and support for various individuals who are known to have held anti-Semitic views, and Khoury's own anti-Jewish comments. The latter largely fall into the category of Orthodox Christian anti-Semitism, a doctrinal and ecclesiological strand embedded in hymns and liturgies with which the Eastern Orthodox churches—be they Russian, Serbian, Greek or other autocephalous Orthodox—have still, in the present day, not fully grappled. These views date from the Byzantine origins of the Orthodox Church and are centred on the notion of Jews as the community who rejected and executed Christ and whose religion, in theological terms, continued to do so.⁵¹ Local dynamics from across their histories also feed into the variations found in the various autocephalous churches.⁵² As Zygmunt Bauman points out, this model of anti-Semitism was

50 Tassos Anastassiadis, "Eastern Orthodoxy. An histoire croisée and connected history approach," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique moderne et contemporain* [Online], 2 (2020), <http://journals.openedition.org/bchmc/463>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/bchmc.463>. For a micro-global history approach to the subject, see John-Paul Ghobrial's current research project at the University of Oxford, 'Stories of Survival: Recovering the Connected Histories of Eastern Christianity in the Early Modern World' (<https://storiesofsurvival.history.ox.ac.uk/#/>).

51 Jovan Byford, "Distinguishing "anti-Judaism" from "anti-Semitism": Recent championing of Serbian Bishop Nikolaj Velimirovi?," *Sociologija* 48, 2 (2006), 166–167; Jovan Byford, "Serbs never hated the Jews: the denial of antisemitism in Serbian Orthodox Christian culture," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40, 2 (2006), 162; Alexandru Ioniță, "Byzantine Liturgical Hymnography: a Stumbling Stone for the Jewish-Orthodox Christian Dialogue?" *Review of Ecumenical Studies Sibiu* 11, 2 (2019), 254–255.

52 Yuriy Tabak, "Relations Between Russian Orthodoxy and Judaism," in *Proselytism and Orthodoxy in Russia: The New War for Souls*, ed. John Witte and Michael Bourdeaux (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2009), 142.

based on the idea of sin and the Jews as a community which, as a result of its religious beliefs, was in a state of sin, however, salvation was possible through conversion to Christianity.⁵³ Khoury's own expressed opinions follow this typology, focusing on the notion of Jews as unrepentant sinners who continue to reject the lessons of Christ, and who—in his view—should not therefore be permitted to take political control of the Christian holy places of Palestine.

If the question of anti-Semitism in Khoury's memoirs remained there, it would be troubling enough. However, Baumann's differentiation between theological anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism has been questioned, not least on the historical grounds that even in the medieval period, if Jews did convert to Christianity they and their descendants remained subject to suspicions of 'crypto-Judaism', secret Jewish practices and general untrustworthiness, implying a belief in a racial, inherited nature to Jewishness and the negative stereotypes attached to it even in pre-modern thought.⁵⁴ A similar continuum can be seen in Khoury's associations with figures who, in addition to this medieval Christian Jew-hatred, also espoused the virulent form of anti-Semitism which arises not from ancient Christianity but from the conditions of modernity, and which found its most horrific culmination in the Holocaust.⁵⁵ This type of anti-Semitism, characterised by racialised ideas of the Jewish people (based on a supposed 'Jewish nature' and thus impossible to counter by conversion) and conspiracy theories about political domination and clandestine permeation of society, were held, for instance, by Miron Cristea, the Romanian Orthodox Patriarch and Prime Minister of a short-lived government appointed by King Carol II.⁵⁶ Whilst Cristea's anti-Jewish ideas were initially rooted in Christian litur-

53 Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 72.

54 See e.g. Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2018); contributions to James Renton and Ben Gidley (eds), *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe: a Shared Story?* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

55 This differentiation is drawn from Bauman's theorisation of the Holocaust in European society as the result of a racialised, pseudo-scientific discourse that was rooted in modernity; for Bauman, medieval-style Christian anti-Semitism formed a backdrop to modernity, which was 'necessary but not sufficient' for the mass extermination programme of the Holocaust: indeed, he baldly states that "Alone, antisemitism offers no explanation of the Holocaust" but must be "fused with certain factors of an entirely different character" (*Modernity and the Holocaust*, 13, 31–33, 72, 248). See also Sarah Ann Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the Jewish Question* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 27–49.

56 Narcisa Gales and Silviu Gales, "Miron Cristea's Administrative Reform as Prime Minister" (11 February 1938—March 6, 1939), *The USV Annals of Economics and Public Administration* 13, 1 (2013), 282–287; Rebecca Ann Haynes, "Reluctant Allies? Iuliu Maniu and Corneliu Zelea Codreanu against King Carol II of Romania," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 85, 1 (2007), 124.

gical rejection of Judaism (a marked strand in the Romanian Orthodox church and society⁵⁷), his political career reveals his espousal also of modern forms of anti-Semitism such as the belief in a Jewish-controlled media, in Jewish-Communist plots against the state, and in Jewish conspiracies to infiltrate a hitherto racially pure national society.⁵⁸ Although Cristea had resisted the rise to power (with the support of many Orthodox clergy⁵⁹) of the openly Nazi-sympathetic Iron Guard in Romania, this seems to have been largely because of its anti-monarchical ideas and calls for reform of the state. German diplomats in Bucharest in the run-up to WWII certainly viewed Cristea—who died in 1939—as supportive of Hitler and his policies, and it was largely under Cristea's prime ministership that c. 225,000 Romanian Jews were stripped of their citizenship, paving the way for mass deportations to the Nazi death camps during the war.⁶⁰

Given his engagement in both the internal workings of the Orthodox Church and of the politics of the time more widely, it would be hard to argue that Khoury was not aware of Cristea's policies and those of his recent predecessors in the Romanian government towards the Jews. When he wrote his memoirs in the 1950s, the fate of Romanian Jewry was well-known. Khoury may have felt a degree of liking and even brotherhood for Cristea on other grounds; both were, after all, devout adherents to orthodoxy, and Khoury as the struggler against Greek control in the Palestinian church may well have found inspiration in the Romanian church's history of disengagement from Greek leadership in the nineteenth century.⁶¹ But the fact remains that in writing passages such as:

When it was time to leave, I kissed his right hand and said: I, in the name of hundred thousand Arab Orthodox in Palestine, kiss this pure hand, asking on their behalf that you would prevent the Judaisation of the Holy Land, preventing those who crucified Christ from taking the opportunity

57 Joshua Starr, "Jewish Citizenship in Rumania (1878–1940)", *Jewish Social Studies*, 3, 1 (1941), 58; Lucian N. Leustean, "The Romanian Orthodox Church," in *Orthodox Christianity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century Southeastern Europe*, ed. Lucian N. Leustean (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 124–127.

58 Gales and Gales, "Administrative Reform," 282, 287; Ion Popa, "Sanctuary from the Holocaust? Roman Catholic Conversion of Jews in Bucharest, Romania, 1942," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 29, 1 (Spring 2015), 42–43.

59 Valentin Săndulescu, "Sacralised Politics in Action: the February 1937 Burial of the Romanian Legionary Leaders Ion Moța and Vasile Marin," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 8, 2 (2007) 266.

60 Gales and Gales, "Administrative Reform," 287; Popa "Sanctuary from the Holocaust," 39–42; Starr, "Jewish Citizenship," 57–58, 74–77.

61 Leustean, "Romanian Orthodox Church," 101–126.

to profane the pure places that He sanctified I was very overwhelmed when I spoke these words, to the point that tears filled my eyes. [...] He was particularly moved when I told him that the Catholics in Palestine have those who support them, and the Protestants have those who stand by them, but as for us, the Orthodox of this country, we are left as orphans with no one to take care of us or look upon us, having even our religious authority against us. Will you be a father to us, we the orphans? A tear fell from his eye and said: I give you my word to be a father to you and that Romania will be your mother ...⁶²

and declaring evident pleasure and pride in being given by Cristea a:

statement that he signed with his signature saying: Take this statement from me and publish it under my name; Palestine should remain Arab for its Arab people. We must not allow its partition or the Judaisation of any part of it for it is one Holy Land and the whole of it is precious to us, and we do not permit for the Jews to profane our sanctuaries. Therefore, we took this statement and sent a copy of it to the Arab Higher Committee in Jerusalem, to the Palestinian delegation in Geneva, and to many newspapers and telegraph companies both Arab and foreign ...⁶³

Khoury was at best ignoring and at worst implicitly declaring support for Cristea's legacies, and aligning himself with anti-Jewish statements by a man who committed anti-Semitic crimes on a grand scale.

Much better-known, at least in relation to Palestinian studies, is the case of Hajj Amin al-Husayni, a scion of one of Jerusalem's notable families promoted by the British Mandate administration to the newly-invented position of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and head of the equally British-orientalist creation, the Supreme Muslim Council.⁶⁴ Having led one of the main factions in Palestinian politics during the 1920s and 30s (with the help of the considerable resources of patronage and power the British had placed in his hands),⁶⁵ Husayni had fled Palestine in 1937, during the Palestinian Uprising of 1936–1939, and spent a substantial period of WWII in Berlin, in open collaboration with the National Socialist regime.

62 Memoirs, 122.

63 Memoirs, 122.

64 Philip Mattar, "The Mufti of Jerusalem and the Politics of Palestine," *Middle East Journal* 42, 2 (1988), 229.

65 Mattar, "Mufti of Jerusalem," 230.

Writing about Amin al-Husayni and his relationship with Hitler's government is an act which involves wading through a mire of highly politicised claim and counter-claim. The figure of al-Husayni has been used by opponents of Palestinian rights to build a language of 'Islamofascism,' in which Palestinians and Muslims are depicted as inherently and viciously anti-Semitic in their thought, and thus devoid of any right to self-determination in the contemporary Middle East. Even in supposedly serious scholarship, this discourse influences the way in which some mainstream academics view Arab political positions.⁶⁶ As an increasing number of studies have shown, however, Arab and Muslim rejection of fascism and active resistance to Nazism was widespread, including amongst Palestinians. This was rooted in many complex reasons, ranging from socialist political rejection of fascism, to a spirit of Semitic brotherhood with local Jews, to the realisation that the Nazi hatred for non-Aryan peoples would, once the political usefulness of Arabs ran out, turn upon them too.⁶⁷ Even before the scale of the threat that Nazi Germany posed to Jews across Europe became clear, Palestinian Arabs intervened in local debates on nation and identity to urge tolerance and co-existence between Christians, Muslims and Jews,⁶⁸ and in doing so they were part of a series of dynamic conversations which reflected diverse and shifting views within Palestine and a range of political groupings, not uniform support for any one leader, party or position.⁶⁹

66 Israel Gershoni, "Introduction," in *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion*, ed. Israel Gershoni (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 22–26.

67 See, for instance: Aomar Boum, "Partners against Anti-Semitism: Muslims and Jews respond to Nazism in French North African colonies, 1936–1940," *The Journal of North African Studies*, 19, 4 (2014), 554–570; Israel Gershoni, "Why the Muslims Must Fight against Nazi Germany: Muḥammad Najātī Ṣidqī's Plea," *Die Welt des Islams* 52 (2012), 471–498; Mustafa Ahmed Abbasi, "Palestinians fighting against Nazis: The story of Palestinian volunteers in the Second World War," *War in History* 26, 2 (2017), 1–23.

68 'Isa Bandak, a nationalist newspaper editor from Bethlehem, "offered a critique of 'religious fanaticism' in general, with the clear implication that both Christian missionaries and Islamic zealots could cause problems. [...] Bandak [...] stressed the importance of Muslims tolerating Christians as well as Christians tolerating, and indeed respecting, the country's Muslim majority" (Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 83–84). And Elias Nasrallah Haddad, a teacher and translator at the German-run Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem, in 1932 published the first Arabic translation of Gotthold Ephraim Schneller's *Nathan der Weise*, an Enlightenment classic which in its original form was a plea for the emancipation of Europe's Jews. Haddad's paratextual materials also argued strongly for religious and ethnic tolerance and harmony in Palestine (Sarah Irving, "Nathan der Weise in Jerusalem: Elias Haddad's Re-appropriation of Tolerance in Mandate Palestine," in *Translating Worlds: Christianity Across Cultural Boundaries*, ed. Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Saenz (Baden-Baden: Academia Verlag/ Collectanea Instituti Anthropos, 2019), 255–282).

69 See, for instance, René Wildangel's "More than the Mufti: other Arab-Palestinian Voices on

Nevertheless, Hajj Amin al-Husayni himself was a virulent anti-Semite, and that he knowingly and willingly participated in the Nazi project, although he declared himself ultimately disappointed with the extent to which his advice was listened to and acted upon by Berlin.⁷⁰ Despite Nazi use of the Palestine issue as a means by which to attract Arab support and attempt to destabilise Britain's position in the Middle East, those Arabs who took the bait received little real help beyond access to the Italo-German propaganda machine, reflecting the fact that most Nazis despised them as much as they despised the Jews.⁷¹ But Amin al-Husayni, having fled Baghdad after the fall of the fascist-sympathising Gaylani government to the British, made Berlin his wartime home with a stipend and office paid for by the German state, was convinced of the likelihood of a Nazi victory, and met with Hitler and other members of the Nazi regime.⁷² He also helped to recruit Muslims in Bosnia and Croatia for the German army.⁷³

What, then, do the twin cases of Miron Cristea and Hajj Amin al-Husayni suggest about how we should read Niqula Khoury's autobiography, and particularly his expression of anti-Jewish sentiments in it? Even using Baumann's problematic differentiation between a Christian theological dislike of Judaism and a racialised anti-Semitic prejudice against Jews as people, Khoury unfortunately steps into the latter category. Whilst many of his comments are based on religious disagreement, not all do; those which arise during this travel through the Balkans are founded in much more sinister stereotypes, and when combined with his links to Amin al-Husayni and Miron Cristea are evidence of an engagement with some of the most destructive tendencies of modern thought.

What must also, however, be drawn from Khoury's case is its historicity and the fact that it is *not* representative of Palestinian thought in general or Palestinian Christians in particular. As the examples of Palestinian anti-Nazism cited above highlight, Khoury's anti-Jewish ideas were both a political

Nazi Germany, 1933–45," in *Arab Responses to Fascism and Nazism: Attraction and Repulsion*, ed. Israel Gershoni (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 101–125, and Mustafa Kabha, "The Spanish Civil War as Reflected in Contemporary Palestinian Press" in the same volume, 127–136; Kenneth Stein, "The Intifada and the 1936–39 Uprising: A Comparison," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 19, 4 (1990), 66–67; Mattar, "Mufti of Jerusalem," 234.

70 Michael A. Sells, "Holocaust Abuse: The Case of Hajj Muhammad Amin al-Husayni," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 43, 4 (2015), 725–727.

71 R. Melka, "Nazi Germany and the Palestine question," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 5, 3 (1969), 229–230.

72 Anthony de Luca, "Der grossmufti' in Berlin: the Politics of Collaboration," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979), 129–131, 136; Mattar, "Mufti of Jerusalem," 237.

73 De Luca, "Der Grossmufti," 136–137.

choice and a religious prejudice, rooted in a specific historical moment, not an ingrained element of his identity as a Palestinian Christian.

5 Exaggeration, Ego and Truth: a Levantine Christian Cleric Reads the Memoirs of Niquila Khoury⁷⁴

A memoir is usually either an account of historical or noteworthy events, or an autobiography in which the writer aims to pass on their story. The author finds pleasure in retelling what they have been through, witnessed and experienced. It is a way to generate closeness and share intimacy with readers, to entice their emotion and affection. Almost inevitably, the autobiographer seeks to portray themselves in a favourable light. They recount, in general, their glorious past and achievements. If there exists a need to mention their own failures and misfortunes, it is often to show the injustice to which they have been subjected and how they overcame it, or perhaps to evoke humour through self-deprecating references. They are the hero of their own story.

Against this background, the memoirs of Niquila Al-Khoury might well leave us perplexed and confused. How is it possible that history has not retained the memory of an individual who seems to have given such vast and significant service to his party and religion? How has Niquila Al-Khoury gone largely unnoticed in the ecclesiastical and political history of Palestine? Why can't we find clear allusions to this wondrous life in history textbooks and encyclopaedias concerned with Palestine, or even trace a picture for him in the various archives?

The answer seems to lie with Niquila Al-Khoury's oversized ego and desire for self-aggrandisement. He considers his person more important and valiant than all others, and brings every event back to himself. We can conclude without doubt that Niquila excelled in teaching and pastoral services. As for his political engagement, it is clear that he believed he played a crucial role in the national struggle against the Zionist conquest of Palestine.

Going through Niquila's memoirs, we encounter expressions that reflect this inflated estimation of himself. Throughout his text, he reveals regularly suggests that everyone, especially those within the Orthodox community, looked up to him and constantly followed his lead. If it sounds a little farfetched to the reader that Niquila surpassed his comrades at the Jerusalem seminary in Arabic and Greek when they were ahead of him by one or two years, it is even more

74 This last part of the introduction was written by Charbel Nassif.

surprising when he states that everyone started befriending him in the hope of pleasing him so that he would choose them as cantors in the Cathedral. Niqula also notes that many students coveted and were jealous of the excellent position he enjoyed at school. This reflects the attitude of a proud teenager more than a mature man at the end of his life.

The use of the Arabic expression “we had a shining place among them” [p. 77] underlines the degree to which Niqula was seemingly obsessed with his own importance. Detail such as the story of the highest governor and the mutasarrif coming to school to attend his classes are unlikely to be totally truthful. His megalomania strikes again when he considers that none of the former priests could be found worthy, indeed were “worthless,” after he and Khalil Hakim were ordained and took up their positions in Jerusalem [p. 99]. This observation is far from any Christian spirit that Father Niqula should have shown towards his colleagues.

In other parts of his memoirs, Niqula Al-Khoury considers himself to be equal to the Melkite (Greek Catholic) Archbishop Grigorios Hajjar, a well-known and widely admired figure of the Mandate period.⁷⁵ He claims that Arab Higher Committee proposed his name to the Palestine Royal Commission (the Peel Commission). However, Yaqub Farraj insisted that the spokesman for the Christians before the Commission should be Archbishop Hajjar, since the testimony of an archbishop would carry more weight than that of a priest. It is notable that the memory of Hajjar is still alive to this day, which does not seem to be the case for Niqula Al-Khoury.

Reading these memoirs could lead us to believe that Niqula was a real star in the Orthodox countries, and that during his visit in 1927 his image covered the newspapers and his name occupied the headlines. This turned out to be imprecise, as the editorial team of this volume found when they undertook searches of databases of newspapers from the Balkans during the relevant period. Khoury often mentions people’s desire to kiss his hand as a sign of reverence and respect which looks to be somewhat exaggerated in the case of senior figures such as the locum tenens of the Patriarch of Serbia.

Khoury always sought to act, or at least appear, better than others. The testimony of the head of the tenants of the Orthodox Church in Cairo confirms this point when he remarks that “this is the first time in my life that I offer money to

75 Charbel Nassif, “The Melkite Community, Educational Policy and French Cultural Diplomacy: Archbishop Grigorios Hajjar and Mandatory Galilee,” in *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918–1948. Between Contention and Connection*, eds. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 105–125.

a clergyman that he refused to accept" [p. 135]. It should be noted that it is the priest's right to receive a contribution for liturgy and that it in no way indicates that he is materialistic.

In institutional terms, leaving Jerusalem in order to serve the Orthodox community in Cairo without the prior permission of the Patriarch of Jerusalem cannot be justified. A priest always depends on his bishop or a patriarch. It is up to the latter to decide on his transfer, according to canon law. The fact that he did not mention the patriarch's name during the litany of a wedding ceremony, in the patriarch's actual presence, indicates an excess of audacity.

Ending on a more balanced note, these memoirs should be taken with a grain of salt, given the cultural and historical circumstances both of Khoury's life and under which he wrote them. The imprecision of the memoirs is that of an amateurish spirit rather than of a real documenter. It might be that Khoury was writing to cope with all the upheaval he was living with, not having in mind that he would ever be read or even published.

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National Politics and Religion in Mandatory Palestine: Niqula Khoury and the Arab Orthodox Movement

Konstantinos Papastathis

Niqula Khoury was a prominent political and religious figure in late Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine. By articulating diverse but at the same time contextually interlinked discourses, he represented the paradoxes at a first sight embedded in the transition from the traditionalist late Ottoman Empire to the modern age of nationalism within the framework of colonialism.¹ On the one hand, Khoury was a conservative religious man, with respect for a traditionalist value framework and the dominant norms of social operation, holding fast to family ethics, social hierarchies and communal dividing lines. On the other, he was a *homo politicus*, with an active involvement at a local level in favour of the Young Turk Revolution (1908), and at a later stage an Arab Palestinian nationalist, and at the same time a charismatic leader of the Arab Orthodox congregation, representing its claims vis a vis the authoritarian administration of Church institution by the “foreign” Greek religious establishment.² His

- 1 Muhammad Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: the Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Ernest Dawn, “The Origins of Arab Nationalism,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3–30.
- 2 Elie Kedourie, “Religion and Politics,” in *The Chatham House version and Other Middle Eastern Studies*, ed. Elie Kedourie (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 317–342; P.J. Vatikiotis, “The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem between Hellenism and Arabism,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (1994), 916–929; Sotoris Roussos, “The Greek Orthodox Community of Jerusalem in International Politics: International Solutions for Jerusalem and the Greek Orthodox Community in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” in *Jerusalem: Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. L.I. Levine (New York: Continuum, 1999), 482–493; Sotiris Roussos, “How Greek, how Palestinian? The Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the mid-War Years,” *Sobornost* 17 (1995), 9–18; Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, “The Church and Landed Property: the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 43 (2007), 383–408; Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, “The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent over Real Estate,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37 (2005), 509–534; Konstantinos Papastathis, “Church Finances in the Colonial Age: the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem under British Control, 1921–1925,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49 (2013), 712–731.

imprint in the social developments of his time might be explored in three inter-related fields: a) the political, as a fervent anti-Zionist with close ties to the Grand Mufti Mohammed Amin al-Husseini; b) the intra-communal, as a leading representative of the parish clergy; and c) the intra-religious, with his place at the forefront of the Arab Orthodox movement against the Greek hierarchy. This essay focuses particularly on the third area of Khoury's activity, pointing out its links to the broad political developments and social processes which Palestine underwent before and after the historical cleavage of the First World War. In particular, the aim of this chapter is to elaborate on Khoury's role, paying special attention to his 'dialogue' with the Greek establishment regarding the national question as well as the hierarchical structures and authoritarian operational style within the Orthodox Patriarchate. The research questions addressed are:

1. What was Khoury's involvement in religious politics?
2. What was the stance of the Greek establishment towards Khoury? How did the Greek hierarchy 'respond' to his claims and allegations as a representative of the Arab Orthodox?

The sources on which this chapter draws include Khoury's *Memoirs* and his study on the Church of Jerusalem; state archives such as the British National Archives and the Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs; various collection of records published by officials of the Orthodox Church; and secondary bibliography. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first part is an account of historical developments within the timeframe of the late Ottoman and the mandatory periods which were dynamically related to the institutional structures, social operations and political position of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem. The second section deals with Khoury's works, i.e. his hitherto unpublished memoirs which appear in this book, and his co-authored work *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*. In particular, I critically explore the invented traditions related to the ethno-religious controversy between the Arab Orthodox and the Greek religious establishment, as well as the possible contribution of Khoury to their formation and/or deconstruction. To this end, this section pays special attention to the main ideological connotations of the controversy; and studies Khoury's influence in articulating the central Arab Orthodox demands. The third section focuses on the response of the Greek religious elites to the claims and allegations of the Arab Orthodox as reflected in Khoury's works, as well as the behaviour of religious officials towards Khoury both at an institutional and personal levels within the context of his role in the patriarchal elections in the 1930s. The concluding remarks will discuss the possible legacy of Khoury as a churchman in the religious landscape of Palestine.

1 Context

The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem is considered to be the oldest Christian institution in Palestine.³ Since the Ottoman conquest of Palestine (1517) and until the middle of the nineteenth century, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem was closely linked to the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, which had a major say in the appointment of its head and mediated on its behalf to the Porte.⁴ At the same time, the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre was established as the ruling authority of the Church of Jerusalem; it was restructured in accordance with the monastic system, with the Patriarch as head of the Confraternity and the monks as the basic human capital of the Jerusalem church. This state of affairs had important effects on the institution's legal, financial, and social operation. For instance, it could acquire only *vakf* real estate, the monks automatically bequeathed their properties to the Brotherhood,⁵ the Patriarch had almost absolute power over the institution,⁶ and the parish priests were not members of the Brotherhood and were responsible for education and charity, which was considered to be of secondary importance.⁷ These developments allowed the gradual hellenization of the Patriarchate, in the sense that its staffing by clerics coming from, or closely related to, the Ecumenical Patriarchate paved the way for Greek dominance in parallel to the Greek nation-building process.

The controversy within the Jerusalem Orthodox Church between the Greek establishment and the Palestinian congregation dates back to the nineteenth century. Overall, the 'politicization' of the religious sphere in the late Ottoman period entailed a gradual transformation of the Church's organizational structures from non-national sectarian representation to national-based com-

3 Anthony O'Mahony, "Christianity and Jerusalem: Religion, Politics and Theology in the Modern Holy Land," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 5 (2005), 91.

4 Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: a Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 176–177. C.f. Hasan Colak, *The Orthodox Church in the Early Modern Middle East: Relations between the Ottoman Central Administration and the Patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria* (Ankara 2015).

5 Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "The Politics of Church Land Administration: the Case of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 40, 2 (2016), 264–282.

6 Anton Bertram and John W.A. Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire and Report upon Certain Controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 79–94.

7 *Ibid.* 95–112.

munal affiliation. The partial supersession of religion as the cohesive element par excellence of the collective group prompted the Arab Orthodox, with the support of Russian diplomatic and church officials,⁸ to demand the laicization of communal power structures, the gradual removal of the Greek hierarchy and the subsequent takeover of ecclesiastical power by the indigenous community.

This controversy might be divided in three subsequent stages as regards the period under examination: a) after the Young Turk Revolution; b) the formative years of the British Mandate; and c) the election of the new patriarch in the thirties. As regards the first period, the indigenous Orthodox demanded the creation of a mixed council, through which they would have a say in the administration of communal affairs and financial management. Indeed, the so-called Turkish Order partially fulfilled some of the Arab demands, without however affecting Greek control.⁹ As regards the second period, the congregation asked for the implementation of reforms and demanded the exclusion of Greece from any protective right over the Patriarchate, i.e. the legal recognition of the alleged Greek character of the institution. However, despite the recommendation of the established British Commissions to inquire into these affairs,¹⁰ the Administration did not proceed to implement a structural reform of the Patriarchate's operations. The fact that it did not acknowledge Greece as the *protectrice* of the Patriarchate was not related to the Arab Orthodox protests, but to the British strategy of ending the capitulation regime over the territories under its competence,¹¹ a new state of affairs which was ratified in the San Remo conference (1920).¹² The third period of the controversy was

8 Derek Hopwood, *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1914: Church and Politics in the Near East* (Oxford 1969); Theophanes G. Stavrou, *Russian Interests in Palestine, 1882–1914: a Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1963); Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Russian Cultural Penetration of Syria-Palestine in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Luzav and Co., 1966); Denis Vovchenko, "Creating Arab Nationalism? Russia and Greece in Ottoman Syria and Palestine (1840–1909)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 49 (2013), 901–918; Elena Astafieva, "La Russie en Terre Sainte: le cas de la Societe Imperiale Orthodoxe de Palestine (1882–1917)," *Cristianesimo nella Storia*, 24 (2003), 41–68.

9 Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Orthodox Communal Politics in Palestine after the Young Turk Revolution (1908–1910)," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 56/57 (2014), 118–139.

10 Anton Bertram and Charles H. Luke, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire into the Affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (London: Oxford University Press: 1921); Bertram and Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*.

11 Public Record Office: F.O. 608/98/8.

12 Woodward E.L. & Butler R., *Documents on British Foreign Policy (1919–1939)*, First Series, Vol. VII, (London: HM Stationary Office, 1958), 162–170.

related to the long-term electoral process, which was linked to the communal struggle for the application of a new Fundamental Law that would put the Arab Orthodox on an equal footing in Church affairs. However, the Arab Revolt, the division of the Arab Orthodox camp between the competing factions of the Husseini and the Nashashibi families, and the Administration's hesitancy to implement its agenda, due to London's broad diplomatic considerations, were important factors for the failure to fulfil the aspirations of the congregation.¹³ Niqula Khoury played an important role in these historical events, both the formation of Arab Orthodox discourse as well as the structure of the religious power game. In the next section, the paper will discuss his contribution in more detail.

2 Niqula Khoury: The Communal Activist and Religious Historian

Khoury believed that social activism could not bear fruit unless it is linked to ideological consistency and comprehensive communication. For him, the Arab orthodox struggle should be grounded in "hidden historical facts",¹⁴ so as to deconstruct the myths of the Greek establishment that had the monopoly of the Church's historiography, and written in the indigenous language so that the community could at long last access its own cultural heritage. To this end, Khoury, together with his cousin Shehadeh Khoury who was also active in the Orthodox movement, published their work *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*. This historical account, based to a certain extent on the Bertram-Luke Report (1921), reflected the conclusions of the Arab Orthodox Congress in Haifa (1923) and aimed at proving Arab participation in the administration of church affairs throughout the institution's long existence. Moreover, it formed a response to the Greek narrative as reflected in the work of Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, *History of the Church of Jerusalem*,¹⁵ thus challenging the supposed Greek national essence of the Jerusalem Patriarchate. To this end, some Arab Orthodox writers including the Khourys constructed

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- 13 Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, "Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: the Question of new Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50 (2014) 589–605.
- 14 Shehadeh Khoury and Nicola Khoury, *Khulasat tarikh kanisat urshalim al-urthuduksiyya* (A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem) (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al Maqdis, 1925; republished by the Orthodox Society; Amman: Dar Al-Shorouk, 2002), 2.
- 15 Papadopoulos, Chrysostomos, *Historia tis Ecclesias Hierosolymon* [History of the Jerusalem Church]. (Alexandria: Patriarchate of Alexandria Press, 1910).

a historical narrative according to which the Greek establishment represented the hostile foreign Other that had usurped the local religious patrimony and property, and favored its own interests and not the general benefit of the community in its administration of patriarchal affairs. Moreover, the text captured the oppression of the laity and the parish clergy by the hierarchy in areas such as communal justice, education, financial management, and real estate exploitation; it flagged the alleged Greek falsifications, manoeuvres and intrigues by which they had established their dominance; and advocated the legal and civil character of the question.

In particular, the authors follow the typical periodization in line with the political and religious cleavages which have marked the history of Palestine: late antiquity; establishment of Constantinople and reformulation of the state structure of Roma Empire (325–637/8); Arab rule and the Crusades (638–1517); Ottoman rule (1517–1917); British Mandate (1917–). For them, the two first periods are identified with the creation, development and crystallization of the Eastern Orthodox Church and the establishment of the monastic movement. The first reference to the issue at stake within the religious power structure is made in relation to the definition of the term “Rum”. The Arab conqueror Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab issued a document, the so-called Pact of Omar,¹⁶ in which the Christian Orthodox are called the “Royal Nation”, indicating their links to Constantinople. However, according to the authors this term should not be identified with the Greeks, as Greek historians claim, but with the Byzantine Empire as such, which had a multiethnic state structure. The various ethnic communities subject to Constantinople, therefore, were actually “Byzantine” (Rum), regardless of their ethnic origins or religious belonging. In short, “Rum”

16 The other denominations and the large part of the academic community consider this document to be spurious and constructed by the Greek Brotherhood in order to protect its position vis a vis the various competing denominations, mainly the Latins and the Armenians. G. Golubovich, *Di Alcuni Errori Storici e de' Falsi Firmani Posseduti dai Greci*, in Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente Francese, Vol. IV (dal 1333 al 1345) (Quaracchi presso Firenze, Collegio di S. Bonaventura, 1923), 74–199; Bernardin Collin, *Les Lieux Saints* (Paris: Ed. Internationales, 1948), 73–76. Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: the Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 127–134; O.F. A Meinardus, “The Copts in Jerusalem and the Question of the Holy Places,” in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land* eds. A. O'Mahony, G. Gubber and K. Hintlian (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 113–114. For the Greek-Orthodox point of view, which accepts the validity of Omar's Pact see: Spyros Vryonis, “The History of the Greek Patriarchate of Jerusalem as reflected in Codex Patriarchicus no. 428, 1517–1805,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 7 (1981), 38–39; Niciphoros Moschopoulos, *La Question de Palestine et le Patriarcat de Jérusalem: ses Droits, ses Privilèges, Aperçu Historique* (Athènes: Messager d'Athènes, 1948), 19–22.

should not in essence be identified either with nationality or religious grouping, but with citizenship or nationality (*tabaiya*), state loyalties and a sense of historical community.¹⁷ For the authors, this period is the starting point of the arabization of the Jerusalem Church, mainly due to the prohibition on the use of any language except Arabic. In effect, until the Ottoman conquest (1517), the working language of the Patriarchate was Arabic, the church books were translated into Arabic, and the clergy, following the overall integration process of the local population, was to a large extent indigenous Arabs, while Greek-speakers were excluded from becoming bishops.¹⁸

According to Khoury, the turning point was the election to the patriarchal see of the Greek national Germanos (1537–1579), who ordained a Greek bishop whenever an Arab bishop passed away. In this way, Germanos managed to establish “racial sectarianism” as a dominant pattern of Church administration, despite the presence of Arab, Serb, and Georgian monks in the various monasteries and dependencies of the Patriarchate.¹⁹ Moreover, by establishing the monastic structure of church operations via the creation of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, as well as by personally choosing and methodically engineering the election of his successor, patriarch Sophronius (1579–1608), Germanos institutionalized a patrimonial system of religious power transition, which had a two-fold effect in the ensuing decades: a) safeguarding the reproduction of Greek authority within the institution; and b) opening the way for the Church of Constantinople to gain influence over the affairs of the Jerusalem Patriarchate.²⁰

Patriarchs Paisios (1645–1660) and Dositheos (1669–1707) further strengthened Greek control via the implementation of a set of administrative rules, which practically blocked the enrolment and promotion of non-Greeks within the Brotherhood. The first excluded the natives from becoming members of the Brotherhood, limiting its number solely to monks of Greek origin,²¹ and the second excluded any non-member of the Brotherhood from being elected bishop or patriarch.²² In effect, the only way for an Arab to become a Patriarch was to be from outside Palestine, such as Sophronius (1770–1775) or Anthimos (1788–1808).²³

17 Khoury and Khoury, *A Survey*, 26.

18 *Ibid.* 32–57.

19 *Ibid.* 72–77.

20 *Ibid.* 82.

21 *Ibid.* 91.

22 *Ibid.* 95.

23 *Ibid.* 107–108.

This state of affairs became institutionalized through the enactment of the so-called Fundamental Law of the Patriarchate (1875). For the Hourys, this law “is biased to the detriment of the rights of the nationals,” (haqq al-wataniin) because the involvement of the natives in the election process of the bishops and the patriarch is extremely limited.²⁴ Moreover, the promises given to the Arab Orthodox by patriarch Hierotheos (1875–1882),²⁵ or agreements signed between the two parties, such as that in the aftermath of the Young Turk Revolution, which stipulated the establishment of a mixed council for the Church administration, were never actually applied by the Greek hierarchy.²⁶ Finally, Houry and Houry believe that the new British Administration should intervene and settle the affair, and not maintain a neutral stance in the name of religious freedom, i.e. the idea that each community should administer each own affairs; allowing, thus, the Greek hierarchy to reproduce its power and continue its corrupt and arbitrary administration. Overall, the British should, in the Hourys’ view: a) reject the supposed Greek character of the Patriarchate; b) block any intervention of Athens in church affairs; c) acknowledge the rights of the indigenous Orthodox over the administration and the financial management of the institution via the creation of the mixed council; and d) expand the participation of the parish clergy and congregations in the election process of the patriarch and the bishops. In conclusion, for the authors the time had come to end Greek cultural imperialism.²⁷

This work seems to have influenced the report of the Bertram-Young Commission of Inquiry the following year (1925) regarding both its establishment and its conclusions. However, the opposition of the Brotherhood to this book and the passivity of the community leaders (i.e. the same who had decided at the Haifa Conference on the publication of this work in order to disseminate its decisions) resulted in poor circulation and a financial loss of four hundred Egyptian pounds to the authors.²⁸ This might be a reason why Houry in his *Memoirs* did not extensively refer to the Conference,²⁹ and why he presents the Patriarchate/ congregation controversy not so much in national terms, i.e. as the foreign hostile other v. the dominated native, but mainly religious, i.e. as the religious elites v. the parishioner underdogs. In any case, it was the first effort to present the Arab Orthodox cause within the new political environ-

24 Ibid. 135.

25 Ibid. 136–144.

26 Ibid. 146–172.

27 Ibid. 173–237.

28 Houry, *Memoirs*, 94.

29 Ibid. 94.

ment, and as such its contribution was valuable. On the other hand, although Khoury's *Memoirs* do not focus on the Arab Orthodox cause, the reader can find much material related to it through the narration of Khoury's experience with Church officials as well as his stance in relation to national and communal leaders, which influenced the overall development of the controversy between the Greek establishment and the Arab Orthodox. The material provided belongs to a number of fields with direct or indirect links to Church affairs, such as communal education, religious politics, national politics, and the development of social hierarchies. For instance, Khoury colourfully describes the poor educational network organized by the Orthodox Church,³⁰ and the contribution of the Arab Orthodox to the national movement.³¹ Moreover, he gives sensitive details about his own activities.

In particular, Khoury reproduces the idea of the divide between the institutional and the congregational layers of religious function. The first refers to the Patriarchate, and the second to the religious body as such. Khoury, however, implies that despite this relationship of dependence between the two actors, the community enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, in the sense that each parish was allowed by tradition to have a say, if not nominate, its own priest³² or preacher.³³ In brief, the community appointed the parish priest and the Patriarchate normally gave its consent and ordained the elected cleric, even in cases like that of Khoury, who played a leading role in the campaign against the Greek hierarchy.³⁴

The same applies as regards the Orthodox schools network. Khoury refers in negative terms to its aims, practices and quality, attributing its state of affairs mainly to the indifference of the Greek hierarchy, as the competent authority

30 Konstantinos Papastathis, "Missionary Politics in Late Ottoman Palestine: The Stance of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem," *Social Sciences and Missions*, 32, 3–4 (2019), 348–350; Konstantinos Papastathis, "Arabic v. Greek: the Linguistic Aspect of the Jerusalem Orthodox Church Controversy in late Ottoman times and the British Mandate," in *Arabic and its Alternatives: Religious Minorities and their Languages in the Emerging Nation States of the Middle East (1920–1950)*, eds. Heleen Murre-van den Berg, Karène Sanchez Summerer and Tijmen Baarda (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 270–275.

31 Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Arab Christians and the Palestinian Arab National Movement during the Formative Stage," in *The Palestinians and the Middle East Conflict*, ed. G. Bendor (Tel Aviv: 1978), 73–98; Laura Robson, "Communalism and Nationalism in the Mandate: the Greek Orthodox Controversy and the National Movement," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, xLI (2011), 6–23; Noah Haiduc-Dale, "Rejecting Sectarianism: Palestinian Christians' Role in Muslim-Christian Relations," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 26 (2015), 75–88.

32 Khoury, *Memoirs*, 69, 86, 98.

33 Ibid. 98.

34 Ibid. 99.

for its supervision. It is characteristic that Khoury describes the village school he went to learn the basics “more as homely gathering than a proper school”, from which he “did not benefit in any way”.³⁵ The next step in his training was the high school of Saint Mitri in Jerusalem, which was administered by the Patriarchate and aimed to train its graduates to become priests and teachers. On the other hand, the Arab Orthodox did enjoy to a certain extent an autonomous status in the administration, especially for those schools that were funded by the community. For instance, Khoury justified his move to Jerusalem with the community’s invitation to become the head of the National Orthodox School,³⁶ as well as the school’s impoverishment, due to the division within the community between the supporters of the Mufti and the Nashashibi family, which led to the lack of funding.³⁷

According to Khoury, his alignment with the Mufti affected his political activity both in a positive and negative way. On the one hand, it allowed him to become a representative of the Palestine cause both in the domestic and the international fora; disputing, thus, the stereotypical identification between religious and nationalism. On the other hand, his constant opposition to the leader of the Arab Orthodox laity, Yaqub Farraj, who was a political ally of the Nashashibi family and thus the opponent of the Mufti, allowed the Greek hierarchy to follow the *divide and rule* doctrine and maintain its dominance. In particular, Khoury believed that the party political dividing line within the Arab Orthodox camp was a major factor in the election of Timotheos (1935–1955) to the patriarchal see after Damianos passed away (1897–1931). According to his narration, the Arab parish priests organized a conference in Ramallah, which elected Khoury, a member of the Husseini party, to be the secretary of the Clerical Committee, the aim of which was to improve participation in the electoral process for the patriarchal see; thus, the overall promotion of the Arab Orthodox cause vis a vis the Greek hierarchy. On the other hand, both the Patriarchate and the lay Arab Orthodox Executive Committee, which was presided over by a member of the Nashashibi party, Yacoub Farraj, stood against the establishment of this organ and its aims.³⁸ For the Greek hierarchy, it would signify a reduction of its absolute control over the electoral procedure, while for the lay leadership it would pose a threat to its competence to represent the community as its sole political agent. Even worse, it would be under the influence of the Husseinis. It should be noted that such an interpretation is not plainly recor-

35 Ibid. 70.

36 Ibid. 95–96.

37 Ibid. 98.

38 Ibid. 101–102.

ded by Khoury in the text. However, judging from his overall stance towards Farraj and his involvement in party politics, this seems highly likely.

For the sake of historical accuracy, it should be noted that Khoury's accusation, according to which the lay leaders "were the direct reason behind his (i.e. Timotheos') election,"³⁹ is not properly substantiated either from the *Memoirs* or from any other archival source. It might be better explained by of Khoury's dislike of Farraj rather than the latter's mismanagement of the affair. In any case, this personal dispute was followed up by Farraj blocking Khoury's selection as representative of the Arab Christian clergy to the Peel Commission, putting in his place the Greek Catholic bishop of Haifa Gregorius Hajjar,⁴⁰ as well as his opposition to Khoury's participation as a delegate to the Orthodox countries to promote the Palestinian cause.⁴¹

On the other hand, the ecclesiastical justice system was under the absolute power of the Greek hierarchy. In particular, for Khoury, the Patriarchate controlled the church's decision-making process, having the power to rule since the president of the court was ex officio a member of the Greek Brotherhood. Khoury actually had inside knowledge, since he was appointed a member of the ecclesiastical court, quickly becoming the head clerk and consultant. He mentions in the *Memoirs* his effort to reverse the corrupted state of affairs, where bribery and corruption were features of its operation,⁴² and how he was further disliked by the Patriarchate, due to the loss of an important source of revenue.⁴³ On the other hand, it should be mentioned here that this state of affairs was profitable for all the parties involved in the ecclesiastical justice system, including the Arab Orthodox parish priests and laymen, who actually formed the majority in the two ecclesiastical courts, i.e. the Spiritual Court and the Mixed Ecclesiastical Court in each diocese (Jerusalem, Acre, Haifa, Nazareth, Jaffa, Gaza, etc.),⁴⁴ without though overstepping the authority of the local Bishop as the court's president. Of course, we cannot make the historical assumption that Khoury took advantage of his position as well, since there is

39 Ibid. 102.

40 Ibid. 111.

41 Ibid. 112.

42 A known example was the prosecution of the Bishop of Madava, Meliton, who was accused of fraud and forgery during his time as President of the Ecclesiastical Court of Appeal. GFOA: File B/36/1, Patriarchal Election Jerusalem (1934), *Benetatos to the Greek Foreign Office* (24 December 1934), reg. num. 13830; Public Record Office: Colonial Office [CO] 733/ 258/11, 'Wauchope to Cunliffe-Lister' (30 Nov. 1934).

43 Khoury, *Memoirs*, 103.

44 Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem Archives, File High Commission, *Locum Tenens of the Patriarchate to the Chief Secretary of the Mandatory Government*, no. 64 31/1/1931.

no substantial evidence about such an accusation. However, it should be made clear that corruption was a structural problem within the Church, and should not be attributed stereotypically to one or the other side.

Khoury gives a distorted narration of events immediately after the beginning of the Mandate, and the crisis within the Patriarchate when between 1908 and 1920 a group of monks with Athens' backing attempted to depose Patriarch Damianos from his See.⁴⁵ In brief, he considered it more as a dispute between Greece and the Patriarchate,⁴⁶ which refused its subordination to foreign control, rather than as an inter-church controversy in which each party made its alliances in order to serve its own ends. Patriarch Damianos was neither anti-Greek, nor against Athens' support, despite the fact that he was backed by the Arab community. The real issue at stake was gaining patriarchal power as such. The involvement of Greece was of course pivotal, but the final outcome depended on British policy in Palestine, a major tenet of which was the avoidance of any foreign interference in the prospective colony.⁴⁷ This is actually why the authorities declined any further Greek intervention. Khoury's allegations could not be met with indifference by the Greek side. The next section deals with this theme.

3 The Greek Narrative and Niqula Khoury

The religious elites viewed Khoury's polemic as a threat to their power, and their reaction had a two-fold aim: on the one hand, to deconstruct his political and religious discourse, and on the other, to place impediments in the way of him personally as a communal activist. To this end, this section will elaborate on two themes: a) the Greek argumentation vis-à-vis the Arab Orthodox

45 Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem during the Formative Years of the British Mandate in Palestine," *Asian and African Studies*, 12, 1 (1978), 77–121; Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem: Church, State and Identity," in *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, ed. A. O'Mahony (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 44–47; Sotiris Roussos, "Patriarchs, Notables and Diplomats: the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the Modern World," in *Eastern Christianity: Studies in Modern History, Religion and Politics*, ed. A. O'Mahony (London: Mellisende, 2004), 377–385.

46 Khoury, *Memoirs*, 93.

47 Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, File B/35 (8), reg.num 2764, Archbishop of Sina Porfyrios to A. Sachtouris (22-12-1918); Sotiris Roussos, "The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem," in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, eds. A. O'Mahony, G. Gubber and K. Hintlian (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 219.

claims, as reproduced by Khoury in his works; and b) the actions of the religious elites towards Khoury. The basic sources for this sub-section are two works, published after the publication of Khoury's *History*. The first is the *Refutation of the Allegations put forward by Sir Anton Bertram against the Patriarchate of Jerusalem*,⁴⁸ which presents the official position of the Patriarchate vis-à-vis the report of the Bertram-Young Commission, which in turn used Khoury's work as its source. The second book is the work of archimandrite Kallistos Miliaras: *The Holy Places of Palestine*.⁴⁹ Moreover, Miliaras's note to the Bertram-Luke Commission⁵⁰ provides important historical data on the Greek historical narrative.

For the hierarchy, its authority derives from three interconnected aspects of the Jerusalem Church's operation in time and space. First, the Patriarchate is organized as a confraternity in accordance to the monastic tradition, giving it a centralized administrative structure. Second, the Greek national character of the Patriarchate has an institutional validity, which derives from the various legal decrees that define it as 'Rum'. This is because, according to the Greek establishment, 'Rum' for the Ottoman legal order did not mean the subject, who belonged to the Orthodox community at large, but those with a Greek national consciousness and cultural belonging, who spoke Greek and were loyal to the canonically (i.e. non schismatic, such as the Exarchate Church) recognized Church institutions. Moreover, 'Rum' was translated in this way, i.e. 'Greek', by many western sources, both diplomatic and religious, which distinguished between the Greeks and other Orthodox nations, such as the Serbs or the Georgians.⁵¹

This is particularly clear in the sources regarding the Orthodox rights in the Holy Places, the protection of which was the primary duty of the Patriarchate against the usurping tendencies of competing denominations. Indeed, the fact that Jerusalem Church enjoys the religious status of Patriarchate is not attributed to political or other considerations, but precisely because of its Christian sanctuaries; as such, therefore, it could not have a pastoral character, "but a special character, that of a place of pilgrimage."⁵² The owner of these shrines "is the

48 Patriarchate of Jerusalem, *Refutation of the Allegations put forward by Sir Anton Bertram against the Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Greek Convent Printing Press, 1937).

49 Miliaras, Kallistos, *Oi Agioi Topoi en Palaistini kai ta ep' auton dikaiia tou ellinikou ethnous* [The Holy Places of Palestine and the Rights of the Greek Nation over them] (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 2002 reprint. First pub. 1928–1933 *Nea Sion*).

50 Miliaras, Kallistos, "Character and Composition of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem", in Anton Bertram and Harry C. Luke, *Report of the Commission* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 284–291.

51 Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 17.

52 Miliaras (1921), 287.

Hellenic race in its totality, having as its agent and representative therein the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre”.⁵³ This is because the Orthodox rights to the holy places, according to the Patriarchate’s narrative, do not belong to the religious group per se, but refer to national communities. In effect, the term ‘Rum Millet’ used in the various Turkish legal texts, “cannot include the orthodox people as a whole. For if such was the case, there was no necessity for a particular mention to be made in the sources of Shrine Law about the Iberians and the Serbs possessing special rights in the Holy Places, inasmuch as both these nationalities had such rights as could not be identified with those of the Greeks or Romans.” The term ‘rum Millet’, therefore “is restricted to the Greek nation”.⁵⁴

In this respect, the Orthodox Patriarchate constructed a historical scheme according to which the Orthodox Christians in Syria and Palestine should not be regarded as Arab, but rather as populations with Greek ethnic origins but that speak Arabic, i.e. *arabophones*.⁵⁵ While, however, the indigenous Christians used to be part of the ‘Rum Millet’, and thus ‘Greek’, Russian propaganda had lit the fire of phyletism within the Jerusalem church, promoting the idea that the local Orthodox were Arabs because they spoke Arabic and not Greek. They should, therefore, revolt against the Greek Brotherhood.⁵⁶ Having denounced, therefore, their supposed Greek identity, the local Orthodox population actually represented the *hostile other*, positioned against the reproduction of the Greek establishment’s power. As such, they neither had the right to intervene in patriarchal affairs, nor to put forward any claim over Greek national property.⁵⁷

On the other hand, the view put forward by Khoury about the existence of Arab patriarchs, which discarded the Greek narrative, was openly challenged by the hierarchy as a historical distortion constructed by the Russians.⁵⁸ For

53 Ibid. 290.

54 Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 17.

55 Meletios Metaxakis, *Ai Axiovséis ton Arabofonon Orthodoxon tis Palaistinis* [The demands of the arabophone Orthodox of Palestine] (Constantinople: Patriarchal Press, 1909); Karolidis, Pavlos, *Peri tis ethniki katagogis ton orthodoxon christianon Syrias kai Palaistinis* [On the ethnic origins of the Orthodox Christians of Syria and Palestine] (Athens: P.D. Sakellariou Press, 1909).

56 Miliaras (2002), 536.

57 Konstantinos Papastathis, “Constructing the ‘intra-communal out-group’: the Greek religious imperialism and the Arab Orthodox ‘quantité négligeable’”, in *Middle Eastern Christians and Europe: Diasporas—Relations—Entangled Histories*, ed. Andreas Schmoller (Zürich: Lit, 2017), 43–57.

58 Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 25.

the Patriarchate, the advocates of the Arab view quoted as evidence the work of the Greek patriarch Dositheos (1669–1707), who reported the existence of Arab patriarchs. However, according to the Greek side, Dositheos' reference was made “in order to justify the establishment of the Latins and other nations in the Holy Places”.⁵⁹ The Greek presence in the Patriarchate throughout its history is proven by a significant amount of historical sources, many of which are Latin. The only period for which the Greek hierarchy accepts the possibility of an Arab patriarch was between the years 1460–1530,⁶⁰ i.e. roughly the period from the fall of Constantinople to the conquest of Jerusalem. In any case, for the Greek hierarchy the available information “does not fully elucidate this period, nor have we any historical evidence for their activities”;⁶¹ and even in the case that the patriarchs within this period were Arabs, the patriarchal officials continue, there exists substantial evidence indicating the presence of the “Greek clergy in the Patriarchate and the Holy Places”;⁶² or as Miliaras reports, that even these Arab patriarchs were fluent in Greek.⁶³ In short, according to the Patriarchate, the Greek character of the institution throughout its history is undisputable.

The monastic structure of the Patriarchate's organization, the significance of the Holy Places as the imagined *raison d'être* of the institution, as well as the Greek national character of the Brotherhood's composition as reflected in its religious tradition and the Ottoman legal order, had three effects. Firstly, the indigenous parochial clergy and the lay community are excluded from the Church's governance and the management of its finances. Secondly, secondary importance was given to local Orthodox demands to improve pastoral care, charity work and education facilities. And finally, where the refusal to admit Arab Orthodox to the Confraternity is concerned, it is not rejected in principle—in theory all Orthodox faithful could become members.⁶⁴ On the other hand, according to the Patriarchate, the indigenous Christians “belong to the Orthodox faith, but from this it does not follow that they are entitled to share the rights on the Shrines enjoyed by the Greek Nation”.⁶⁵ However, practically this was the case, due to the dominance of the ethno-phyletist narrative of *Helleno-Orthodoxia* within the Jerusalem religious bureaucracy. In short, this

59 Ibid. 26.

60 Ibid. 39.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Miliaras (2002), II, 11.

64 Ibid. 724.

65 Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 18.

myth advocates the primordial, and thus essentialist, equation of Orthodoxy with the Greek nation. Within this ideological framework, the Greek monks defined the 'us' vs. 'them' distinction along ethnic lines. They considered the Arab congregation as institutional 'out-groups' with no historical right over the administration. The Arab claims over a common Church community were thus demonized and treated as an attempt to corrupt religious purity, which was identified with Greek dominance per se.⁶⁶

For a better understanding of the religious establishment's attitude towards Khoury, we should take into account that this was not a cohesive group, but divided into antagonistic power networks that, despite their ideological similarities and shared communal agenda, represented to a certain point diverse discourses and forms of church governance. The external actors, which influenced to a greater or lesser extent the outcome of this power game, were: a) the Arab lay community and parish clergy; b) the Ottoman and British political authorities; c) Athens, as the national centre; d) Russia, as the diplomatic protector of the Orthodox under Ottoman rule; e) the other Church institutions; and f) local political developments. Khoury, therefore, as an Arab national and communal leader well connected with the Ottoman and British administrations as well as a clergyman with links to the 'Orthodox Commonwealth' could not be discounted by the competing Greek groups.

Overall, it seems from his *Memoirs* that Khoury had ties with both factions within the Patriarchate depending on the issue at stake and the attitude of their leadership vis-à-vis Arab Orthodox claims. In particular, his relations with Patriarch Damianos seemed to be volatile, depending on the context. In 1910 Damianos looked after him in Jerusalem when Khoury took shelter after being forced to leave Karak, supporting him financially with a hundred and twenty gold francs.⁶⁷ At that time Khoury was a promising Arab teacher, and a member of the Young Turks. Moreover, Damianos was in the midst of internal strife with the Greek nationalist block within the Brotherhood, which disputed his authority, accusing him of being pro-Arab and pro-Russian. To address this problem Damianos had the backing of the Russian consul and the Arab congregation. Helping Khoury and his family might therefore be embedded within a broader strategy of identifying his rule with the locals as a means to maintain it, rather than as a pure act of charity. On the other hand, Khoury was not allowed to enroll to the theological seminary, established at the Monastery of the Cross,

66 Konstantinos Papastathis, "Secularizing the Sacred: the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem as a Representative of Greek Nationalism in the Holy Land," in *Modern Greek Studies—Yearbook 2014/15* (University of Minnesota, 2016), 37–54.

67 Khoury, *Memoirs*, 84.

where the novices of the Brotherhood were instructed. His exclusion was based on the pretext that it was necessary for new teachers to serve in the communal schools.⁶⁸

Khoury implies here that this was a tactic of the Greek establishment to prevent the natives from entering the Brotherhood. The alternative for those Arabs who wished to enter priesthood was to be ordained as parish priests after getting married, as in Khoury's case, thus excluding any possibility of such locals becoming a bishop or Patriarch. Moreover, Patriarch Damianos tried to block Khoury's ordination, despite his election by the community, and it was the British High Commissioner who pressured him to agree.⁶⁹ However, he did not ordain Khoury himself, as it is usually the case, but sent Bishop Meliton in his place in order to show his dislike.⁷⁰ It should be noted, though, that this event took place in 1928, when Damianos did face challenges of his power from within, which would force him to ask for help from the Arab Orthodox. In contrast, the fact that he finally accepted the ordination of the author of a "condemned" book, which actually rejected the invented historical narrative of the Greek establishment, indicates not so much the Arab Orthodox capacity to influence decision-making within the Church, but its capability to successfully lobby and gain the support of the political authorities.

While Khoury's ties to Damianos were not stable throughout the latter's term of office, his relationship with Timotheos was bad from the beginning. First, the new patriarch was a prominent Greek nationalist and as such by definition against a proponent of the Arab Orthodox claims. Second, he was a member of the religious elite and a close affiliate of Damianos, towards whose faction Khoury had a hostile attitude. Third, during the electoral process Khoury supported Timotheos' competitor for the see, Bishop Keladion. It is interesting to note that because of this paradoxical alignment of Khoury with the camp of Athens' protégé, the Greek consulate in Jerusalem paid him five pounds in 1931 and the same amount in 1932.⁷¹ It is characteristic that the Archbishop of Greece Chrysostomos Papadopoulos, the author of the aforementioned *History of the Church of Jerusalem*, against the narrative of which Khoury wrote his *History* as a response, welcomed Khoury in 1937 in Athens assuring him that both he and the Patriarch of Alexandria had asked the Greek government to endorse

68 Ibid. 74.

69 Ibid. 98–99.

70 Ibid. 99.

71 Historical and Diplomatic Archive of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, File B/36 III, sub-file Sacristan Endowment, Mpenetatos to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reg. num. 7283 (31/7/1933).

the Palestinians. Moreover, Chrysostomos was “astonished by the idleness of the patriarch of Jerusalem in the defense of the Palestinian cause and manifested his immense regret describing them as fools”.⁷² In effect, this alliance of Khoury with the opponents of his authority could not be met with indifference by Timotheos. Last but not least, Keladion as a *Locum Tenens* asked Khoury to prepare a small religious book, known as *Matari*. However, when Khoury completed it, Timotheos had already been elected and asked him to print it under his order, but Khoury refused. As he reports: “this was a cause to expand the dispute between me and the Patriarch”.⁷³ Moreover, Khoury resigned (but afterwards withdraw from his decision), stopped recognizing Timotheos’ authority, and did not celebrate his name as the local bishop in the mass,⁷⁴ i.e. acts which are against church law, when the Patriarch refused to hand over to him the medal sent by the Romanian Patriarch Cristea for him as a gesture of friendship after their meeting in Bucharest in 1937 (on the occasion of Khoury’s mission assigned by the Mufti for gaining international support for the Palestinian cause). In fact, Timotheos allegedly sent the medal back with an offensive note saying: “This man does not deserve this medal because he is a rebel, wandering through the mountains with other insurgent, rebelling against the government and the spiritual authorities”.⁷⁵ Moreover, he blocked Khoury’s appointment in Cairo and forced him to return to Jerusalem, where he was kept under supervision by the Greek hierarchy and Yaqub Farraj’s associates.⁷⁶

Timotheos’ allegations against Khoury were further supported by the latter’s mistake in meeting King Abdalaziz Al-Saud in Cairo, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Second Arab Orthodox Conference. There Khoury declared his loyalty to Saud, namely “that the Muslims and Christians in Palestine place their sacred sanctuaries under your custody and trust them to your poignant sword,” as the “king of Arabs, the father of Arabs and the master of Arabs,” and asked for the return of his political patron, Mufti al-Husseini, to Jerusalem.⁷⁷ However, this caused Khoury’s alienation from King Abdullah who, according to Khoury had already proposed that he should become the “Arabs’ Patriarch” and that he would get him to this position.⁷⁸ Abdullah could not accept any reduction of his authority within his Kingdom, especially for the

72 Khoury, *Memoirs*, 131–132.

73 Ibid. 104.

74 Ibid. 137.

75 Ibid. 137.

76 Ibid. 139–140.

77 Ibid. 144–145.

78 Ibid. 148.

benefit of his family foe. He personally blamed Khoury and, knowing his dispute with Timotheos, visited the Patriarchate and stated that the holy places “belong to the Greeks;”⁷⁹ thus sidelining Arab Orthodox demands. Khoury’s view might be a plausible explanation for Abdullah’s pro-Greek stance, but misses the big picture, namely that it was basically founded on diplomatic grounds. On the one hand, it was the imperative to protect the so-called Status Quo of the Holy Places,⁸⁰ part of which was allegedly the Greek character of the Patriarchate. On the other was the need to maintain good relations with Greece, a pro-Arab state which did not recognize the creation of the state of Israel.

4 Conclusions

Overall, the Greek religious establishment viewed Arab Orthodox claims as a threat to its authority. However, its strategy to counteract them was not—at least officially—founded on the national criterion, but was structured on an institutional/legal aspect, i.e. the monastic character of the institution or the supposed legally binding Greek custodianship rights over the holy places. Khoury as an author endeavoured to give concrete answers to the Greek narrative, and as an activist involved himself in various ways in the cause of his community, putting himself on bad terms with the Greek apparatus. On the other hand, what might be seen as a sharp dividing line between the two poles seems to be blurred in many instances according to the balance of power within the community. Khoury, for example, enjoyed the support of Patriarch Damianos when the latter was under Russian protection and on good terms with the Arab community after the Young Turk Revolution, and considered his internal opponents to be Greek nationalists; on the other hand, in the 1930s Khoury supported the opposite camp, became friends with bishop Keladion, and promoted him as a candidate for the patriarchal See. This might also explain why Khoury, condemned because of his book, was later placed on the hidden payroll of the Greek consulate; or why the new Patriarch Timotheos disliked him, which

79 Ibid. 148.

80 L.G.A. Cust, *The Status Quo in the Holy Places* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1980); Bernardin Collin, *Le Problème Juridique des Lieux-Saints* (Le Caire: Centre d’Etudes Orientales, Paris v—Librairie Sirey, 1956); Paolo Pieraccini, *Gerusalemme, Luoghi Santi e Comunità Religiose nella Politica Internazionale* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1997); Walter Zander, “On the Settlement of Disputes about the Christian Holy Places,” *Israel Law Review*, 3 (1978), 333–334.

caused (among other reasons) Khoury's attempts to settle in other ecclesiastical jurisdictions, such as Egypt or Syria. In respect to this, an intriguing question is why Khoury does not refer in his *Memoirs* to the Arab Orthodox demand for new communal regulations in place of the Fundamental Law, despite the fact that it was closely related to the election of Timotheos.⁸¹

The paradoxically non-exclusionary relationship between Khoury and the Greek hierarchy might be the first important finding of the reader. The second might be these many details of the communal and political power games of the Mandate period, which are missing from "official" accounts, and which might explain theoretically "unexpected" developments in the course of events. For instance, the incorporation of East Jerusalem in the dominion of Jordan would normally signify the transition of ecclesiastical power to the Arab Orthodox, but this was not the case. King Abdullah I's protection of the Greek establishment was attributed to foreign policy priorities, i.e. the respect of the Status Quo of the Holy Places as a means to safeguard state sovereignty over Jerusalem. However, Khoury's *Memoirs* shed light on another factor, namely Abdullah's suspicions of Arab Orthodox leadership for serving the ends of his political opponents.

Khoury was a priest, respected by his congregation, and an influential communal leader in the development of the national cause. His book on the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem was left as his legacy to the community and republished in 2002, being a pool of valuable information for its history as well as a tool for the propagation of its rights, still not fulfilled more than a century after their articulation. Khoury might not have been a well-known Christian political figure outside Palestine, like Yaqub Farraj or 'Isa Bandak, but he undeniably deserves a special place in the modern history of the local Church. This chapter aspires to contribute towards this direction.

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Eastern Orthodoxy: Snapshots on Arab Orthodox in Palestine and Jordan from the Franck Scholten Photographic Collection, 1921–1923

The amateur Dutch photographer Franck Scholten (1881–1942), author of the two volume publication *La Palestine illustrée* (1929, subsequent editions in English, German, and Dutch), traveled to Palestine at the beginnings of the 1920's. He died before completing his plan to produce further volumes of *La Palestine illustrée*, and the majority of his photos were never published. The Scholten Photographic Collection has been undisclosed so far, it is currently being digitised. This chapter presents only a few highlight of his photographs on Orthodoxy and Orthodox in Palestine.¹



FIGURE 2.1 Arab Orthodox Vendors in the Old City of Jerusalem, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jerusalem-chretiens_02_0071

NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

¹ About the Franck Scholten photographic collection, see <https://crossroadsproject.net/gallery>



FIGURE 2.2 Old City of Jerusalem, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jerusalem-chretiens_02_0011

NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

-1/; <https://www.nino-leiden.nl/collections/frank-scholten-legacy> and Sary Zananiri, “Documenting the Social: Frank Scholten Taxonomising Identity in British Mandate Palestine,” in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri (Leiden/ Boston: Brill, 2021), 266–306.



FIGURE 2.3 Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jerusalem-chretiens_02_0047

NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.4 Greek Orthodox Priests at the entrance of the Holy Sepulchre on the Holy Thursday, *Album Choses Intéressantes* 3, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Choses_Intéressantes_03_012

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FIGURE 2.5 Greek priests, *Album Jerusalem 1, 1921–1923*
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Jerusalem_01_018
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.6 *Villa Arabe*, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Jerusalem_o8_o31

NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.7 Orthodox Easter, with candles decorated for Palm Sunday, Jaffa, 1921–1923

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jaffa_28_0046

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FIGURE 2.8 Young Palestinian Orthodox girl celebrating Easter, Jaffa 1921–1923
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Porte_Entree_101-150_0008
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.9 Greek Pilgrims at the River Jordan on Epiphany, 1921–1923 (NB: the white marks are cropping by F. Scholten)
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jourdain_Mer_Morte_01_0037
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.10 Tour guides, dragomans and Greek Orthodox priests, Jordan River, 1921–1923
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jourdain_Mer_Morte_01_0031
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.11 Orthodox Pilgrims' camp, River Jordan, 1921–1923
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Jourdain_Mer_Morte_01_0020
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.12 Orthodox Priests in the Jordan Valley, 1921–1923
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Fotos_Doos_03_0549
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.13 Greek Orthodox Priest in Anjara, Jordan, 1921–1923, *Album Choses Intéressantes 1*
UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Choses_Intéressantes_01_024
NINO, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR THE NEAR EAST, LEIDEN UNIVERSITY



FIGURE 2.14 A Greek Orthodox Hermit and His House, Beit Hogla (East of Jericho) 1921–1923, *Album Choses Intéressantes 1*

UBL_NINO_F_Scholten_Palestine_Choses_Intéressantes_01_032

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Memories Containing the Most Significant Incidents and Events That Occurred during My Lifetime

Note:

I started writing down these memories when I was a child, but the Karak revolt in 1910 brought about the destruction of everything I had written up to that point. I resumed the work after that, but World War I yet again caused the loss of all that I had collected. I resumed a third time after the war, but in the terrible catastrophe of Palestine everything I had worked on and gathered up was destroyed.

Here, I have returned yet again to collect these memories and to write them down for the fourth time; all I can hope for is that the luck of this account will not be, this time, that of its antecedents.

1 Birth and Early Life

I was born in the village of Birzeit,¹ in the governorate of Ramallah in Jerusalem, Palestine, in the middle of the month of July (in the Eastern Calendar²) of the year 1885. I was born on a Thursday. Since this day is for the Greek Orthodox Church consecrated to Saint Nikolaos, they named me Niqula.³

1 Birzeit, 7.5 km north of Ramallah, is bordered by the village of Jifna and the lands of 'Ein Sin-
iya to the east, 'Atara to the north, Burham, Kobar and Al-Zaytouneh to the west, and Abu
Qash to the south. Literally "the well of oil," it was named for the olive oil stored in the har-
vesting cisterns, as there were many olive trees in the town. *Bir Zeit Town Profile*, The Applied
Research Institute, Jerusalem, 2012, 4–5.

2 The Gregorian calendar in current use was instituted by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. It replaced
the Julian calendar which Julius Caesar made official in 46 BC. The Orthodox Church of Jerus-
alem continues to use the Eastern/Julian calendar for its fixed dates, thus it celebrates Nativity
on December 25 on the Julian calendar, which corresponds to January 7 on the Gregorian cal-
endar. Thus, Niqula al-Khoury was born at the end of July 1885.

3 In the Byzantine tradition, each day of the week, in addition to the commemoration or feasts
indicated in the liturgical calendar, involves a special commemoration (Monday: angels and
archangels; Tuesday: John the Baptist; Wednesday and Friday: the Cross; Thursday: the Holy
Apostles and Saint Nicolas of Myre; Saturday: the martyrs, all the saints and the dead; Sunday:
the Resurrection of Jesus Christ).

Our family was known by the name Dar al-Qassis⁴ (the house of the priest) because three of our forefathers were priests. My father was the eldest son and had four brothers: Issa, Salem, Moussa, and Mitri, and one sister, Hanne, who married Issa al-Abdallah from the house of Shahin. When my father married Nusra, the daughter of Suleiman Mazid, he lived with his parents, grandfather, and his siblings in one house. His grandfather was the priest of the [Orthodox] community in BirZeit at the time.

I was my parents' third child; before me my mother gave birth to a girl called Rafqa and a boy called Khalil. Khalil died as an infant and Rafqa lived for seven years, and then she died too, shortly after my birth.

While this was happening to my parents, my uncle Mitri started studying at the Zion English School in Jerusalem.⁵ My uncles Issa and Salem, meanwhile, got married on the same day and continued living with their families in the same house that we inhabited together.

Our family's livelihood came from agriculture and raising livestock,⁶ as it did for the rest of the villagers. We had vineyards and fig and olive orchards, beside arable land, and we kept sheep, oxen, cattle, and donkeys. Our financial situation was moderate compared to that of other families in the village. Our family was well loved by everyone because it did not get involved in local disputes—rather, people in the village resorted to my grandfather to arbitrate between them when conflicts arose, because he was well known for his integrity and courage in speaking the truth, even at his own cost.

2 The Ordination of My Father as the Village Priest

When my great grandfather, Father Moussa, grew old and was not able to serve anymore, the community agreed to ordain my father as the village priest in his grandfather's place, after his father refused the role. He was ordained as a priest on 8th November 1891 during the rule of Patriarch Gerasimus.⁷

4 The priest is called *Qassis*, a word of Syriac derivation meaning elder or senior, because of the importance of his position, even if he is not yet old.

5 Located in Jerusalem, Zion English College was also the alma mater of the famous writer, educator and campaigner for reform of the Orthodox Church, Khalil Sakakini (Bedross Der Matossian, "Administrating the Non-Muslims and the 'Question of Jerusalem' after the Young Turk Revolution," in *Late Ottoman Palestine: the Period of Young Turk Rule* ed. Eyal Ginio and Yuval Ben-Bassat (London: IB Tauris, 2011), 225; Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 29).

6 At this time, village priests were not paid for their role, but received their religious robes and church utensils (Hanna Kildani, *Modern Christianity in the Holy Land* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2010), 57).

7 Gerasimus I (1839–1897) was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch (1885–1891) and the

He carried out the community's services even though there were two other priests ordained before him in the village: Father Ibrahim Daoud from the Shahin family and Father Ibrahim Abu Helwe from the house of Abdallah. This is due to the fact that the first was not much loved by the community, and the second was paralyzed in his hands and thus could not serve. I was six years and a few months old the day my father was ordained, and my brother Yaqub was three. As for Khalil, he was born that year, while my father was in Jerusalem for his ordination.⁸ Both of my cousins, Hanna son of Salem and Salame son of Issa, were also born around this time.

3 In the Village School

I learned the basics of reading and writing at the Greek Orthodox village school which was held in the attic of the home of the mukhtar or village head, Salame Abu Khalil al-Kila from the house of Um Eid. The schoolmaster who taught there was his brother, Suleiman al-Kila, who later became the priest of the city of Gaza. The school was more of a homely gathering rather than a proper school, and the teacher was in reality more of a concierge than a teacher, seeing guests in and out of the house all day. If perchance he did not have visitors, he would go to his spinning room and resume spinning wool and animal hair, or would give it up altogether and go to sleep, leaving the children alone to teach one another, as long as they were not so loud that all of the neighbours would hear them. It is very obvious that I did not benefit in any way throughout that year.

The following year, a new teacher from Tayba was appointed; called Daoud al-Khoury, he taught me the basics of reading, writing, and calculus. Two years later, they got us another new teacher, also from Tayba, called Hanna Musa al-Khoury. It was during his time that the school improved and we started to learn grammar, geography, religious history, catechism, and the basics of the Greek language. Two years later, they got us a fourth teacher, Salim Zaghloul from Ramallah, who was a drunkard. He ended up hitting me in the face with a truncheon, almost knocking out my eye. My father got so angry that he took

Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem from March 11, 1891 to February 21, 1897. Khoury and Khoury, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, trans. Raouf Sa'd Abujaber (Amman: Orthodox Central Council, 2002 (1925)), 145; Rustum, 233–239.

8 Khoury uses an Arabic transliteration of a Greek term which etymologically speaking means hand-stretching. Since the early Church, it is a symbolic and formal method of invoking the Holy Spirit during ordination.

me out of that school and sent me to the Protestant school. The teacher there, Butros Nasser, was preparing himself to take a preliminary exam in order to become a deacon. As a result, he did not care about teaching and left us children to teach one another. Given this situation, I spent seven years in village schools without getting any benefit worth mentioning. The only training I got was from my father in reading fluently; he used to wake me up every day before dawn to take me with him to church, where I would read for him the psalms, canons, and all the other items he needed for the service.

4 Our Life in the Village

About two years after my father's ordination, his grandfather Musa the priest passed away at the age of 85, having given sixty years of it to the service of the Lord. The year of his death was 1893. Patriarch Nicodemus⁹ had tried to persuade him to change his accustomed clothing and wear the *kalimavkion* and outer cassock, but he died—God have mercy on his soul—refusing to change his vestment from the black turban and the everyday *abaya*.¹⁰

On 6th September 1894, my brother Bulos was born, and was followed by another child called Hanna who died as an infant. Finally, my sister Aziza was born in 1898. Uncle Issa also had two other children, Yusif and Suleiman, as well as the eldest, Salame. Uncle Salem had two others as well beside Hanna; they were named Butros and Semaan. After uncle Musa got married, the house, despite its spaciousness, felt increasingly small around us and could not accommodate this great crowd. Children started to fight each other over silly things, then the mothers would pick up the fight, and finally the men would start quarrelling, until life in that house became hell.

My father got tired of this situation and made a bid for independence by building for us a small room next to the big house, but his brothers opposed that. He then went and rented an old house in the village that belonged to the Obeid family and we moved there. This was the first time we felt like a real family. However, we did not have any furniture or mattresses so all of us slept on

9 Nicodemus I was born in Constantinople on November 30, 1828. After holding important positions in the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre he was Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1883 until 1890. He died in 1910 (Khoury and Khoury, *Survey*, 142).

10 The *kalimavkion* is the typical headdress of the orthodox clergy, a black cylinder topped with a disk, similar to an inverted top hat. In noting his great-grandfather's refusal to wear it, Khoury may be attributing to him an Arab, rather than Greek, style of vestments in accordance with Khoury's own views on the Orthodox Church.

one mat without any bedlinen, covered with a single quilt, and our pillows were filled with hay. My clothing back then was barely one robe of rough material and one small shawl made of wool. My head was uncovered and I was barefoot from summer to winter, as were the rest of my siblings. We only had bread, oil, onions, olives and sometimes lentils for food.

Despite all this, my father took it upon himself, with the help of my mother, to build a house for us facing our old home. For this he cut stones from our vineyards and I would bring them to Birzeit on a small donkey that we bought for this purpose. He also used to produce lime with the help of other villagers, and I transported this to the town too. All of that was alongside his work in agriculture and in cultivating the vineyards, the figs, and the olives.

It appears that the fact that my father was building—[*A paragraph of 3 lines has been probably covered by another sheet. The text is not clear, but we can deduce that it is about a family conflict.*]

5 My Father Moves to Karak

After we finished building the new house and moved into it, my father was appointed as a priest for the town of Karak in Transjordan.¹¹ He went there alone, leaving us behind in the village with nothing to live on. Aziza was born soon after my father went away, and we were left in a quandary, with no one to help us, not even with a penny! Despite that, God aided us; my father was able to send us a small amount of money that we used to look after ourselves. After a year in Karak, testing the ground for us to move there, my father sent for us, so the rest of the family set out to Karak together. That was in the autumn of 1899. I was 14 years old then, Yaqub was 11, Khalil was eight, Bulos was five, and Aziza was six months old.

11 Karak lies to the south of Amman on the ancient King's Highway and is famous for its Crusader castle. Although it is now in the Kingdom of Jordan, it has long links with Palestine. During the Ottoman period it was often ruled from Nablus (providing sanctuary in 1834 to rebels against Ibrahim Pasha's occupation of southern Syria) and was for a long period dominated by the Majali family, originally from Hebron. Only in 1893, after several decades of raid and counter-raid between various groups in the region, did the Ottoman state reimpose its authority in Karak (Peter Gubser, *Politics and change in Al-Karak, Jordan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14–20). For Khoury's father to move there during this period was, therefore, a matter of shifting from one Ottoman town to another, rather than across an international border. The year's wait before the rest of the family followed him may, however, reflect the history of conflict the town had seen within living memory.

We arrived in Karak exhausted and drained after four days spent traveling on the backs of beasts. My father had by then prepared a house for us to live in, so we moved in. Once we settled there, people started coming to visit and welcome us, showering us with gifts and donations of wheat, flour, margarine, ghee, bulgur and such. From then on, we started to settle into our existence as a family; we began to organize our life and arrange our affairs. We went on to furnish the house and buy the clothing we needed.

The school of Karak back then was rather well organized.¹² We started attending it, and it was here that we began to understand the value of science, education and of schooling systems. We started to study serious subjects, and we all benefited. Even more than this, the teacher, Qustandi Salah from Ramallah, wanted to help my father in particular, so he took me under his personal care and started giving me private lessons to prepare me to enter the seminary school in Jerusalem from which he himself had graduated. I made significant progress, making up for the years wasted at the school in Birzeit. My brothers did well too and did not lose as much time as I had.

6 In the Seminary in Jerusalem

The Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem had established a seminary high school in the monastery of Saint Demetrios in Jerusalem to train priests and teachers. My father had been trying to get me into this school since we were in Birzeit, but every time he applied for me, every other family in Birzeit who had a youth seeking education would apply on their behalf too. The school ended up rejecting us all because the law of the Patriarchate stipulated that no more than one student could be accepted from each town. When they finally accepted Isaac the son of Salame Abu Khalil al-Kila from Birzeit, rejecting me, although I had gotten higher marks than him in the exams, my father was angry and quarrelled with the principal of the schools, Archimandrite Yusif. The latter, wanting to rub salt into my father's wounds, also accepted Niqla the son of the priest Suleiman al-Kila, Isaac's cousin, for the position allocated to Gaza. My father was so furious that he was determined to send me to a non-Orthodox school to get my education—and I wish he had. However, the people in Karak

12 According to Khoury's other writings, there were 87 Orthodox schools in Palestine and Transjordan, but only 16 of these re-opened after WWI and in the majority of these the situation was "dismal," with fewer than 800 students across the region. The school of Saint Demetrios educated the children of Greek emigrants and the first language taught in this school was Greek (Khoury and Khoury, *Survey*, 163, 201, 217–218).

mobilized in support of me and forced the Patriarchate to accept me for the seminary place reserved for the town of Karak. This is how I managed to enter the Patriarchate school in Jerusalem, in the middle of September of the year 1901, at the age of 16.

I stood out quickly amongst my colleagues and in Arabic and Greek I outdid many who had already been there for a year or two before me. My star shone there from my first year. The school principal also appointed me as the cantor for the cathedral church of Mar Yaqub in Jerusalem and delegated me to choose whoever I wanted to come along and help me with the work of chanting. Everyone started befriending me in the hope that I would choose them to go with me.

That year there was a very large number of visitors to Jerusalem for Easter, so they sent the pupils home, emptying the school to lodge them, and I travelled to Karak to spend the Easter vacation with my parents and my brothers and sisters. However, thieves ambushed us on our way and stripped us of our clothes and belongings, and if not for the kindness of the Creator, they would also have taken our lives. I arrived in Karak naked but for my undershirt and underpants.

After the end of the holiday I returned to school, and from then onward I only went back home for the summer vacation. I was a great success at school. I was loved by the principal and teachers and respected by my fellow students so that many envied me for the excellent position I enjoyed.

In early 1905, the Synod decided to change the school's curriculum from seminary studies to commercial subjects and to transfer it from Jerusalem to Jaffa, because they feared that its graduates would enter the Theological School of the Cross which belonged to the Greek Order.¹³ They excluded me and nine others who were frowned upon by the Patriarchate, under the pretext that they needed schoolmasters and priests and that we were old enough and should thus be working as teachers until we were ordained. I therefore left school in early March 1905 and returned to Karak, having spent only three and a half years there.

My colleagues at the seminary school included men who in the future became Bishop Nicholas Abdullah, Orthodox Metropolitan of Aksum in Ethiopia, Archimandrite Theodoritos the great translator and the president of the Ecclesiastical Court in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Bartholomew the rental agent, Najib Hakim the lawyer from Haifa,¹⁴ Naji Seiqali and Labib Eid from Acre, and others.

13 This refers to the tensions between the local Arab and incoming Greek priests and monks within the Orthodox church, an issue which recurs frequently throughout this memoir.

14 Najib al-Hakim was later one of the "politically ambitious" lawyers who, during the Man-

7 My Appointment as a Teacher at Karak

I went back to Karak with a thirst for learning, having both tasted its sweetness and grasped its value, so I tried to get into one of the boarding schools there to finish my studies; however, my father's financial situation was one impediment, besides the fact that he opposed my enrolment in any non-orthodox school. So without my father's knowledge I wrote to the Patriarch of Antioch, Gregorios Haddad,¹⁵ to ask him to help me gain a place at the Balamand seminary to complete my studies.¹⁶ He replied, God have mercy on his soul, that he could accept me in the beginning of the next school year. Fate, however, willed that his reply fell into my father's hands. When he found out what it contained, he feared that I would go to Balamand and join the monastic order, so he informed the Greek official responsible.¹⁷ He, clearly understanding my wishes, immediately contacted Jerusalem and had me appointed teacher at the Karak School with a salary of one and half French francs a month; he also instructed my father to get me married in order that I could be ordained as priest. This was my father's desire, so he was most delighted.

date period, joined the Palestine Arab Workers' Society and offered it their services. The PAWS was a trade union set up to organise Arab workers in Palestine and to confront the Hebrew Labour aims of the Histadrut, the only major forum for labour organising at that time. At times in the 1930s and 40s, PAWS was a powerful enough grouping to rival the power of the Supreme Muslim Council under Hajj Amin al-Husayni (May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of an Arab Society, 1918–1939* (London: IB Tauris, 2000), 134).

- 15 Gregorios IV Haddad (b. 1859, Lebanon) was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch from 1906 until his death in 1928 (Rustum, 325–380). On his succession of Meletius II as Patriarch of Antioch he became only the second Arab occupant of this role in over 160 years.
- 16 This was established in 1833, under the patronage of Patriarch Methodios, to reduce the proselytism of Latin and Protestant missionaries in the Orthodox community and to form a clergy strong in orthodox faith. It was closed in 1840 and then reopened in 1899, with the election of Meletius II (Dumani) the first Arab patriarch since the siege of Antioch since 1724, the date of the split in the patriarchate of Antioch. The school closed again at the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and opened its doors from 1921 to 1924 and then from 1936 until today. Souad Slim, *Balamand, Histoire et patrimoine* (Beirut: Editions Dar An-Nahar, 1995).
- 17 The Balamand Seminary was at the time entangled in the disputes between Greek, Russian and Arab Orthodox factions in the Levant during this period. This, along with the fear that his son might join a far-off monastery, seems to account for the reluctance of Khoury's father to permit his son to be educated there (Denis Vovchenko, "Creating Arab Nationalism? Russia and Greece in Ottoman Syria and Palestine (1840–1909)," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 49, 6 (2013), 912).

In mid-September 1905, I took charge of the school and began to teach there as the second schoolmaster. The first teacher and principal was Tomeh al-Khoury from al-Salt, the Turkish language teacher was Hanna al-Ammarin from Karak, and the third teacher for the young children was Jiryis al-Qassus, who was also from the town. The school for girls, however, was falling behind so I was put in charge of organizing and improving it, and also of teaching the upper grades. I completed my task most excellently.

8 Marriage and Family Life in Karak

My father was reassured by my appointment as a teacher and started planning to marry me off. Fearing I would marry someone from Karak and stay there for the rest of my life, he arranged my engagement to my wife Sara, the daughter of my uncle Salame Yusif al-Qassis from my father's family. The wedding ceremony was on 1st November 1906 at the church of Saint George in Birzeit. It was a simple one. Neither my mother nor any of my siblings attended, and my father, along with the village priest Issa Musa, blessed the marriage. After the ceremony we went back to Karak, and my mother was delighted. People called in to congratulate us and offered us plentiful gifts. Many dinners and feasts were held in our honour.

We lived in the same house with the rest of my family. Sara was very respectful of my parents, treating them as if they were her own. She also loved my siblings and served like her own family, and they respected her and loved her back. We all ate at the same table, my father taking care of all the household expenses, leaving us responsible for nothing except for what we ate and clothed ourselves with.

Bounty filled our house and my uncles Issa and Salem used to pass by regularly to take what their families needed by way of wheat, lentil, bulghur, kishk¹⁸ and so on. That was alongside the fact that we took nothing from our share of the family's livelihood back in Birzeit, leaving to their use the new house that we had built without their help.

We sent Yaqub to the commercial School in Jaffa where he stayed for only two years. Then the school moved back to Jerusalem after which it became a lay school and not a seminary. We sent Bulos there too. As for Khalil, he used to study at home with me. When I became the principal of the school at Karak, the families whose children were taught by us did not rest until my brothers Yaqub

18 A kind of dried yoghurt used in Levantine cooking.

and Khalil came to teach with me too, leaving the school entirely in our hands, with no strangers, except for the Turkish language teacher who was a functionary. My salary then was three French francs, Yaqub's two liras, and Khalil's one and half. My father's salary was two liras, along with the outsourced income and revenue of twenty to fifty liras a year that we used to get from selling some of the wheat. Life in Karak was very cheap in those days; meat, fish, poultry, and eggs were abundant and inexpensive, so we were living in abundance by the grace of God.

We managed to raise the level of the [Orthodox] school until it was better than anything Karak had seen before, so that it became better known than the government school. We also formed a students' choir, which made people even more eager to join the school. The parents' attachment to us grew, and as my father was so loved and respected by everyone we were also loved and respected, such that no banquet was hosted in town for any occasion that we were not invited to as the guests of honour. When the government was celebrating the birthday of the sultan or the anniversary of his crowning, or during the Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Fitr celebrations, I would give speeches in the name of the Christians. We had a shining place among them. My friendships with important functionaries and prominent military men deepened, so that even the *mutasar-rif* himself, the regional governor, used to come to the school and attend the classes I taught for my students. He particularly enjoyed *'Irab*.¹⁹

9 The Secret Party

There was in Karak a branch of the secret political party known as the Young Turks that aimed to replace the existing autocratic regime in the Ottoman Empire with a constitutional parliamentary government.²⁰ The famously tyrannical Sultan Abdulhamid fiercely opposed this party, annihilating any person accused of being part of it, seizing all his assets and belongings and exiling his family. Despite this, the majority of members of the Committee of Union and Progress were highly ranked employees and army officers. Therefore, when I started befriending them, they insisted that I become a member. I conceded to their wishes, joined the party and swore allegiance. They warmly welcomed

19 The system of case endings in written classical Arabic.

20 Officially the Committee of Union and Progress, CUP. Sultan Abdulhamid II had instituted constitutional government in the Ottoman Empire in 1876 but suppressed it after less than two years; the CUP was an initially underground movement pressing for a return to constitutional rule.

and honoured me to a point that I became like a brother to them. I soon became the associate secretary and the right hand of the president who was also the Mufti. All this happened without my father knowing anything about the party or my belonging to it. On the contrary, many times he used to rebuke me violently when I came home late, but I remained silent. He also was baffled by the visits of high-ranking officials and officers. They used to tease him, saying: we came specially to taste the Arabic coffee from your hands because we heard that only three people in the country make coffee that is drinkable—you, Issa al-Qassus, and Agha the commander of the gendarmerie.

He, as well as bishop Efthymios and all the men of the Orthodox community, the sheikhs, and notables in Karak, were even more baffled when I was named as a member of the committee chosen to test students for the schools run by the government, along with the Mufti, the military commander and the battalion chief, and the head of the telegraph and post office. This position was never given to a Christian during Ottoman rule. Other incidents occurred that caused astonishment and confusion. Among these was the occasion on which I gave a speech during an official celebration at the Serail in the presence of the Mutasarrif, important government officials, military officers, sheikhs, and notables from all over the country in their official dress. The Mutasarrif was so delighted with my words that he greeted me before the audience and asked for my speech so that he could publish it in the official paper. The attendees then came up to my father and congratulated him, delighting the Christian community. Other instances included those regular occasions on which the Mutasarrif visited me, staying for hours in the classroom to attend the lessons. Also surprising was the warmth with which officials and officers used to greet me whenever they encountered me and the frequent visits and outings we used to make together, and the power and influence I used to have with various government departments.

The biggest surprise for everyone was the visit to Karak of General Isma'il Fazil Pasha, the governor of Syria and commander-in-chief of all the military forces in the Arab countries [of the Empire]. He was one of the most prominent figures of the Young Turk party and its general inspector. When the party reached its goal, after freedom and the constitution were declared on 11th July 1908, he carried out a tour of inspection to everywhere that the party had centres and branches, so making them public.²¹

21 Isma'il Fazil Bey's tour of CUP branches must have occurred some time after the 'Young Turk revolution,' as he was Governor of Syria from 1909–1911. This was a period of major centralisation in the Ottoman Empire when the new regime sought to bring Arab area of the Empire more directly under the rule of Istanbul. Isma'il Fazil was dismissed when, in

When he arrived in Karak, he was received by the government, the army, the notables and leaders from all over the country in a grand welcome; there, he announced to the vast crowd the existence of the secret party. He paid tribute to those working for it on the ground, including the president and members; singling me out for significant praise, he held me close to him, hugged me, and lauded me for my loyalty and dedication in the service of the country and its improvement. Loud applause filled the place and everyone present stood in ovation, utterly astonished and shocked by this surprise. Tears filled my father's eyes and those of many other Christian leaders who did not expect that I could reach this degree of notability and privilege among the governors and the military, both Arab and Turkish. As soon as I reached home, I was surrounded by people offering their congratulations. The Christians in general were greatly jubilant that I was so privileged and my status in their eyes was raised manifold. As for my father, he started berating himself for all the times he had chided and scolded me because I came in late.

Belonging to the Young Turk party benefited me in ways that the highest academies could not offer because, at the time, Karak was almost a place of exile for Arab and Turkish officials who were supporters of freedom. It was obvious that members of the party should be civilian and military men who were both culturally and morally superior. Being in close and long-term contact with them, in and out of meetings, I took on many of their principles, ethics and knowledge and thus my perception and understanding were widened and my language improved. My manners were refined, my thoughts transcended the norm, and I learned ways to manoeuvre in social life and elite society. I realized the importance of education and pored over books, readings, and studies, seeking new heights and applying myself to the pursuit of excellence. If I had not enrolled in the party, I would have stayed idle, weak, and limited, possessing only simple knowledge and ideas of life, no one knowing about me.

response to this, Druze and Bedouin from the Hawran and Eastern Jordan rose up and, amongst other actions, destroyed a station on the Hijaz Railway, seen as a major symbol of Ottoman power in the area. His political opponents claimed that the uprisings, rather than an expression of broader issues, were due to Isma'il Fazil's failure to pay the accustomed protection money to the Bedouin and Druze, but he denied this (Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 109–110).

10 Our Family Life in the Meantime

Meanwhile life continued in our house, after the appointment of Yaqub and Khalil as teachers with me, in simplicity, calmness, stability and happiness. The attachment and affection of the people of Karak towards us grew; young men would gather around us and we would go with them to the river where I would hunt birds while Yaqub and Khalil fished. Hence, we all spent our days having fun, eating, drinking, and passing time in all innocence and integrity.

On March 5, 1908, God granted Sara and myself our first child, who we named Mariam, now known as Marie. Gifts and presents were bestowed on us from every side; from Muslims, Christians, officials and their wives; from flour, to margarine, bulgur, sugar or sweets, to clothing and poultry. We offered to our congratulators and visitors sugared almonds amounting to 16 pounds in weight! All that besides the drinks, the cigarettes, and the coffee! The total they brought us came to five tanks of margarine, 70 chickens and other poultry, as well as flour, bulgur, kishk, rice, sugar, and jars of homemade produce.

A man from an Ethiopian tribe also got to know us.²² He lived in the Ghawr—the Jordan Valley—near the Dead Sea²³ and started to supply us with the vegetables we needed because we could not find any at Karak. Since boars were abundant in that area, two weeks would not pass without him coming to us with one weighing more than fifteen pounds, for which he asked half a riyal, which is equivalent to ten piasters.

Despite all this, Yaqub did not like living in Karak. Not a week would go by without him troubling us at home, insisting that we leave Karak to go back to Palestine, despite knowing that it would be impossible for us all to live together in any one town of the country of Palestine. In vain we tried to convince him.

At the same time, the first symptoms of her illness started to affect my poor mother; she started feeling great pain in her head and began saying things that suggested some mental imbalance. It is most likely that it was a harmful blow to her head struck by uncle Issa that caused such disturbances to the mind of this virtuous woman, who lived and died in the most discreet manner.

22 While Khoury assumes that his provider of vegetables is of Ethiopian descent, it may be that he is referring to someone from the Ghawarna, the inhabitants of the Ghawr (Ghor), the Jordan valley, many of whom were (and are) darker-skinned than most of the regional population and have suffered considerable discrimination as a result (Gubser, *Al-Karak*, 52, 65–66).

23 Khoury uses the term Lake Lot, referring to the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah which was believed to have taken place near the Dead Sea.

Meanwhile Sara and I were blessed with a second daughter after Marie and we called her Martha. However, she died as a child. On 4th September of the year 1910 (Eastern Calendar), God granted us a third newborn whom we called Takla, who is still alive. Before she reached the age of three months, the counter-revolution broke out and so we left Karak and returned to Palestine.

11 On the Causes of the Revolt of the Year 1910

We got the news that the Sultan Abdel Hamid had given his people freedom and constitutional rights on 11th July 1908, only for him to rescind the order and declare that he was going to reign according to Mohammedan Law. As part of this, he gave instructions to his men that Christians should be eliminated in order to make the nation a purely Islamic one. We lived for a while exposed to the threat of death at any moment; we feared especially for my life because I was a member of the Young Turk party. However, God did not allow such a catastrophe to happen to the Christians, and He sent us deliverance at the last moment. The party was able to persuade the free officers from the army to join its side. They were led by Lieutenant Mahmud Shawkat Pasha, the Arab Damascene,²⁴ to Istanbul, where they defeated the army loyal to the Sultan, dethroning and capturing him and calling for his brother Mohammad Rashid Khalifa to replace him.²⁵ In such a way, this petty conspiracy aimed at massacring the Christians and eliminating the free men of the country was thwarted. Command of the Ottoman Empire then fell to the army and the men of the party. They started to organize their ranks and make the necessary arrangements to reward their adherents. It was expected that, but for this disaster, I would have won the lion's share and gained a better position in the government for myself and my brothers.

24 It is unclear why Khoury refers to Shawkat Pasha in this way; he was born in Baghdad and was stationed in Kosovo at the time of the revolt and the phrase does not seem to have an obvious metaphorical meaning.

25 Despite the enthusiasm with which the CUP's return of the Ottoman Empire was initially met, the years after the 1908 Young Turk revolution saw increasing disillusionment from many quarters, ranging from counter-revolutionary risings by the Sultan and other conservative forces to fear of the increasingly autocratic and ethnically Turkic bias of the CUP leaders, which culminated in the genocides against the Armenians and Assyrians of the empire during WWI. For a full account see Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).

Despite the fact that Abdul Hamid was destitute and was confined in Thessalonica, his followers did not disperse or acknowledge defeat and they started kindling the fire of counter-revolution throughout the empire. Their aim was to spread confusion and disorder so that the people would revolt and demand the restitution of the dethroned Sultan. They ignited revolts in the Balkans, Anatolia, Armenia, Yemen, and in the Jabal al-Druze, and from there, they reached Karak.²⁶

...

That night, there were no rebels left in the city. The army immediately entered and called on the fugitives to return to their homes and work. We returned, too, with them, on 4th December 1910, to find that our dwelling was hauntingly empty, echoing with the sound of hooting owls. We stayed at the school for girls under the government buildings and helped out families by providing mattresses, bed sheets, and food, even though we were afflicted ourselves, and only a few of us had survived this tragedy.²⁷

The leader of the revolutionary movement knew that the Christians had not participated in the revolt except under duress, that many of them even risked their lives to save other officials, members of the army, and their own families from death. Therefore, he decided to avenge those betrayed by the Karak Muslims. He asked my father to distinguish the Christians from the Muslims by making a distinctive mark on their clothes and the doors of their houses because the army was going to decimate the Muslims.²⁸ It was agreed that he would use the mark of the cross to differentiate between the two populations.

26 Although Khoury attributes the Karak revolt of 1910 to counter-revolutionary currents within the Ottoman Empire, most researchers locate its causes more locally, with the attempts of the central government to increase taxes and reduce stipends to the heads of the various tribes from 1900 onwards, exacerbated by the decision of the regional authorities in Damascus to raise taxes, ban breech-loading rifles and the carrying of arms within Karak itself, and to impose a census of the male population (Gubser, *Al-Karak*, 106–107; Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan*, 40, 118).

27 By 'us', Khoury seems here to mean the Christian community in general, as his direct family had not suffered fatalities.

28 Other sources attribute the role of telling the Christian communities to paint their doors with a cross in order to escape Ottoman retribution to 'Awda al-Qasus, a member of a well-known Karak Christian family. This seems like a more probable candidate than Khoury's father, as Qasus had been sent by the leaders of the revolt to Damascus as an envoy before the uprising started, to deliver a list of grievances to the authorities. He was also a member of the town committee appointed after the revolt to assess damages, property values and fines (Gubser, *Al-Karak*, 106–109; Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 198–204). Gubser also explicitly rejects a wider Arab nationalist background to the revolt, and does not seem even to consider it as having underlying counter-revolutionary tendencies (110).

The army started to take revenge, and the streets, alleys, neighbourhoods were all filled with dead bodies, with no one to bury them. Houses were looted and many were burned down. Thus, the city became a ruin in just one night. Many Muslims used the mark of the cross on their clothes and the doors of their houses too, and by this sign they were saved.²⁹

After suppressing the revolt and the rebels in the city, the army started pursuing those remaining in the villages and up in the mountains, regaining some of the stolen goods, although we did not get back except one bed cover from amongst our belongings.

12 The Return to Palestine

After the revolt, we stayed for a month in Karak, waiting for the roads to open and to make sure that we could safely walk back to our homeland. However, things moved slowly and the roads remained dangerous, so we had to take the Hejaz railway through Madaba and go from there to Jerusalem, despite the fact that it was mainly being used, at the time, to transport soldiers and munitions.³⁰ We rented some pack animals to take us to Qatrana station and from there we took the train to Ziza, close to Madaba. We arrived late at night and from there we went on foot to Madaba, about 3 hours from Ziza. We reached Madaba at around midnight.

The journey was exhausting and hard on so many levels. My mother had fallen off her mule near El-Qatrana station while holding Marie in her bosom. She fell right on her head. With the after-effects of the older concussion, the fear and terror that she suffered during the revolt, and the horrifying events she witnessed, she lost her mind and did not return to her senses until the day of her death.

29 Most historians paint a more random picture of the reprisals by Sami Pasha al-Faruqi's Ottoman forces against the rebels, but they were undoubtedly bloody (Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 198–204; Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London: IB Tauris, 1993), 40–41).

30 El-Qatrana and Ziza were both minor stations on the Hijaz railway which was built by the Ottomans to take pilgrims to Mecca and Medina and to provide a means to impose its rule more firmly on the often quasi-autonomous areas of what is now Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Although the recent construction of the railway helped the Khoury family to flee Karak—the permanent way had only reached Amman in 1902 and Ma'an in 1904—the presence of the railway also stoked the discontent which caused the revolt in the first place, as many of the desert tribes resented the increased state control it symbolised and the loss of pilgrim traffic by caravan which had represented a major source of income (Abujaber, *Pioneers over Jordan*, 40).

As we reached El-Qatrana, a rough blizzard started to blow and lasted for five days. We took refuge in one of the army tents for the duration of the tempest—about 18 souls in the one tent—spending our days and nights huddled together. If it were not for the army's care, providing food, drink and heating, we would have perished in that desert.

Our journey from Ziza to Madaba was also a perilous one. In the dark of the night we lost our way, roaming in a rank, wet land, sinking up to our knees in mud. If it were not for the kind mercy of the Creator, we would have succumbed.

We stayed in Madaba for two weeks and could not continue our journey to Jerusalem because of the downpours of rain and snow. We relied during that time on the hospitality of our uncles Eid and Daoud. After the weather cleared for a day, we carried on our way to Jerusalem, arriving late the following evening. We spent the night at the monastery of Saint Nicholas, hosted by the Patriarchate. We praised God for our safe arrival, yet we were worried for our father who stayed behind, alone, in Karak. Bulos was at the Saint Demetrius School. When he heard that we had arrived, his joy could not be contained and he came running to meet us. So we joined him, whom we had thought would be living alone, separated from the family, as if he was an orphan or an outcast.

The next morning, snow covered the whole city. Despite this, the Patriarch³¹ asked to meet me so he that could gain some insight into the circumstances of the revolt. I went to the meeting extremely embarrassed because I had on only the nightclothes in which I had fled Karak. However, he was very moved to see me in such a state and helped us with money, as well as paying us our delayed salaries. I came back from my visit with an amount equivalent to 120 gold French francs in my pocket, so I bought all the clothing, bedding, mattresses, and provisions that the family needed. We pressed on, walking to Birzeit where we were reunited with our relatives who received us as if we were newborn babies delivered after a hard birth. Among the most jubilant for our safe return were my grandmother, my grandfather, and my uncle Salame and his wife.

In addition to the kindness already mentioned, the Patriarch exempted us from service that year and ordered that we should be paid our salaries while we stayed in Birzeit, in compensation for the distress, pain, and terror we had

31 Patriarch Damianos was Patriarch of Jerusalem from 1897 to 1931. It was during his term of office that tensions between Arabs and Greeks within the Orthodox Church in Palestine reached a height, including efforts by members of the church to depose him around the time of the events described here (see p. 42 n. 113). The theme of Arab-Greek conflict in the Orthodox Church is described in greater detail throughout much of this volume.

experienced in Karak. Three months later, my father joined us. We spent the rest of the year together in Birzeit and were able to build two rooms and an *ivan*³² on our field near Dar Nasser al-Suleiman.

13 Memories of Karak

We stayed a total of twelve years at Karak. They were the happiest days not only of my life, but also of ours as a family. We lived in abundance, free from any worry or care, living a peaceful and simple life, loved and respected by everyone, Christian and Muslim, as well as the local officials. We had loyal friends with whom we spent unforgettable days, going from promenades to parties, rejoicing in honesty and innocence, far from any evil or its like.

Among the remarkable incidents that occurred when we were there was the miraculous healing of Khalil al-Qaymari at the church in Karak. This man was possessed by an evil spirit that used to tease and taunt him. He was from Yatta in Jabal Al-Khalil³³ and was living in Karak. When his family despaired, having taken him to doctors and sheikhs from the Muslim Sufi *tariqa*, they brought him to the church and bound him with iron chains to a column in the corner of the church.³⁴ Saint George appeared to him, broke his chain, and healed him. I personally was one of those who were present and witnessed this miracle. I heard the conversation between the man and Saint George.³⁵ There were more than seventy of us who witnessed this.

Even if I forget everything I have ever experienced, I will never forget the strange dream which I dreamt myself three days before the revolt broke out. I saw in it a light that surpasses that of the sun in brightness. I looked closer, and

32 An *ivan* is a rectangular hall or space, usually vaulted, walled on three sides, with one end entirely open. It provides a covered area attached to a building with some protection from sun or rain, but open to the air.

33 Usually known in English as the Hebron Hills.

34 Other evidence points to a longer history of Muslim participation in the life of the Orthodox Church in Karak, according to accounts such as: "many of them baptise their male children in the church of St. George, and take Christian godfathers for their sons. There is neither Mollah nor fanatic Kadhy to prevent this practice, and the Greek priest, who is handsomely paid for baptising, reconciles his conscientious scruples by the hope that the boy so baptized may perhaps die a Christian" (J.L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), 386–387).

35 St George, or al-Khader as he or his Islamic variant are known in Palestine, was regularly appealed to for help in curing cases of spirit possession or mental illness, at least into the mid-1920s (Chris Wilson, "Beyond Jerusalem Syndrome: Religious Mania and Miracle Cures in British Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 78 (2019), 29–31).

I saw a small door opened in the sky to the east. An angel was emerging from it, flying to the west, and leaving behind him a ray that looked like a ray of sunlight; he was saying: you will be refined like gold in the furnace.³⁶ He was followed by another angel in the same apparel, saying: do not be afraid my little flock,³⁷ for not a hair falls from your head without the permission of your Father in heaven.³⁸ He was followed by yet another angel, saying: those who endure till the end will be saved.³⁹

I fell on my knees and raised my hands to the sky, begging the Lord Jesus for mercy and for the forgiveness of sins. I screamed at the top of my voice, trembling at the terror of this scene, to the point that my father woke me up asking me why I was screaming. When he heard the reason, he told me that it was not a mere dream but rather a vision, for important events were bound to happen, and we prayed to God to protect us through them. Exactly three days later, the revolt broke out. That was on 21st November 1910, as I mentioned before. That day is also the feast day of the Entry of the Virgin Mary to the Temple.⁴⁰ We were saved by a miracle, praise be to God.

14 From Karak to Ramla

My father's stay in Birzeit was brief. The headmaster Aftimus, who had been with us in Karak, was appointed as the new headmaster in Ramla. The priest in Ramla at the time, Suleiman al-Deir, was disliked by the community there so their head asked the Patriarch to replace him with my father to please them. So it was, and my father left for Ramla in early July 1911.

At the beginning of the academic year, on 15th September 1911, I, too, was appointed as a teacher at the school in Ramla. As such, I took the family, my mother and Aziza, and moved there. The situation at Karak had calmed down by then, so Yaqub and Khalil returned to teach there, and Bulos returned to school to continue his studies.

However, fate was ever against us, wherever we went and anywhere we stayed. The moment we settled in Ramla, the Italians attacked Tripoli, Burka,

36 Cf. Zachariah 13,9; Ecclesiasticus 2,5.

37 Luke 12,32.

38 This is a common but false interpretation of Matthew 10, 30.

39 Mark 13,13; Mt 10, 22.

40 This feast is principally based on the Protoevangelium of James dated from the second century. In thanksgiving for the birth of their daughter Mary, Joachim and Anne decide to consecrate her to God, and brought her, at the age of three years, to the temple of Jerusalem and remained there until her twelfth year.

and Benghazi [in Libya], which was then ruled by the Ottoman Empire.⁴¹ This unjustified violation provoked the anger of the Muslims in the Ottoman countries. Mobs tried to assault Christians in Ramla, so they had to take refuge in the Latin monastery.⁴² As for me, I took my family back to Birzeit and then returned to Ramla with my father, and he and I stayed there for two months. When the situation calmed down, and the consuls of other states interfered in the matter, the Christians could return to their houses and their everyday lives. We brought the family back to Ramla again, and settled there.

A year of our lives went by in Ramla, with me working as the second teacher; Amin Massad was the assistant to the principal teacher and the headmaster. At the beginning of the second school year, on 15th September 1912, I was appointed headmaster of the school. I improved it so successfully that it became the talk of the town and beyond. I also established a student choir that was responsible for the chants in church on Sundays and feast days. As a result, people started coming from Jaffa to hear this choir sing, for it was the first of its kind in the diocese of Jerusalem, mainly because those students who were part of it were chosen for their wonderful voices.

War broke out that year between the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan states.⁴³ Dark days befell us and all Christians in the Ottoman Empire, and if not for the kind mercy of the Creator, it would have been the end of us. However, the enrolment of Christians in military service, and the participation of their young

41 Italian troops invaded Libya, the last North African territory of the Ottoman Empire, in autumn 1911, after a decade of encroachment. For CUP supporters and other Ottomans, this became a matter of both imperial and Islamic pride, with many major CUP figures fighting there in 1911–1912. In the Empire more generally, anti-Italian discourse acquired wider anti-European and anti-Christian tones, as Khoury states here (Ryan Gingeras, *Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire 1908–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 56, 72–75, 154–156).

42 The rarity of such events is highlighted by the fact that this became known as “the Ramla incident,” and that the leaders of the Muslim community in the city had apologised to the Christians apparently within hours of the disturbances. Indeed, Christians had initially taken part in the demonstrations against the Italian invasion of Libya but had withdrawn when the atmosphere became too aggressive (Evelin Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine: Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper Filastīn (1911–1914)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 108–109).

43 This war lasted from October 1912 to May 1913. The combined armies of the Balkan states (Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro) overcame the numerically inferior and strategically disadvantaged Ottoman armies, and achieved rapid success. Almost all remaining European territories of the Ottoman Empire were captured and partitioned among the allies (Edward Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912–1913* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003)).

men alongside the Muslims in this war, contributed greatly to calming the situation and stopping the persecution of Christians.⁴⁴ From our family, two were sent to serve in this war: Salame and Hanna; Salame was killed and Hanna returned. The death of Salame, may God have mercy on him, affected the whole family deeply. Meanwhile, my mother's sickness got worse and shaped our daily lives.

During this period, Sara gave birth to a baby boy we named Ibrahim after my father. He was the bearer of great joy, except that God willed him to come to his side before he turned six months old. He died in Ramla and was buried there. This was the first sorrowful heartbreak we really felt from our children, because Martha, who had died in Karak, had not lived long enough to have us grieve for her death, but died only a few days after her birth.

15 World War I

Calamities fell upon us in succession after the Karak revolt, one woe after the other. On 4th August 1914, war broke out between Russia, England and France on one front and Germany, Austria, and Turkey on the other. People endured such great sorrows and miseries during this merciless, brutal war that even mountains would have crumbled under these burdens. Men between 18 and 45 years old were forced to join the army, leaving behind at home the women, elderly, sick and children. The government seized all the crops, produce, and animals, causing huge numbers to die of hunger. Then the plague of locusts broke upon us, sweeping everything in its path and leaving the population with no food. Various epidemics, including cholera, also broke out among both soldiers and civilians, almost emptying the country of its people.⁴⁵

44 The subject of non-Muslim soldiers in the Ottoman army is a fraught and controversial one. Christians had, in fact, been recruited into the Ottoman army since 1835 and the issue of whether they should be subject to compulsory military service was intertwined with the general question of the status of non-Muslims in the Empire during the Tanzimat reforms and under the Islamicisation of Ottoman identity under Abdulhamid II. General conscription was, however, a central plank of Young Turk constitutionalist policy and introduced only in 1909, to mixed responses from the Christian millets. Public opinion partly blamed Christian troops for the Ottoman defeat in the 1912–1913 Balkan War, and during WWI Christian soldiers were often given menial tasks rather than fighting, and were accused by Turkish chauvinists of deserting at higher rates than Muslim fighters (Mehmet Hacisalihoğlu, "Inclusion and Exclusion: Conscription in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Modern European History* 5, 2 (2007), 264–286).

45 Estimates vary, but around 300,000 people probably died in Greater Syria during WWI, from a variety of causes. Khoury lists some, to which might be added hoarding by mer-

I was the first among my brothers to be summoned for military service. I was first assigned the position of clerk at the clothing and munitions warehouse in Jerusalem, and then that of the officer responsible for issuing stores. Having this post was the reason my brothers, relatives, and friends were able to get convenient and safe postings too.

I appointed Yaqub clerk of the clothing warehouse in Ramla, Khalil clerk of the rations store, and Boulos clerk of the fodder stores. As well as this, Hanna was assigned as a guard at the warehouse, along with Khalil and Issa al-Taqi. Many other men who had asked for less arduous positions, away from the battlefield, were able to get them because of my friendship with the senior officers who were in charge of allocating posts.

I spent the whole three years of the war in Jerusalem, while my brothers were in Ramla with our parents. We did not have to endure suffering or distress, by the grace of God and the blessing of our parents, except at the end of the war; some people out of jealousy and envy desired revenge so I was jailed for seven days. The truth, however, was soon uncovered, and I was sent back to my former position, where I remained until the fall of Gaza into the hands of the British army and then of Ramla, and Lydda after it, followed by Wadi al-Sirar. Next their scouts reached Qastal, and I was called to bear arms to defend Jerusalem ... whereupon I left Jerusalem for Birzeit and from there I went to Ramla with Yaqub, while Khalil and Bulos were there, leaving my father, Aziza, Sara, Marie, and Takla in Birzeit.

We mourned many from our family and loved ones during this war, beginning with the death of my mother and uncle Salame in its earlier days. Then, when conditions worsened, we suffered the loss of my grandfather Hanna, my grandmother Aziza, uncle Musa, uncle Ghattas and his wife and son Shehada, the pillar of the house, his sister Mariam and her husband Niqula, my aunt Hanne and her husband, uncle Abdullah and his wife and two daughters Aziza and Nehma the wife of uncle Salem, and many others from amongst our relatives and friends, such as Muslim al-Aranli and his son Yusif, Ibrahim Abu Yaqub and so on and on. Their deaths marked our souls deeply. As well as all these there was the death of Zarifa, Sara's sister, who was killed by the bullet of a Turkish soldier who was trying to steal her jewellery.

My father and the rest of the family stayed for three months in Birzeit after our separation. We were traumatized because the British cannons were incessantly bombarding the town from Ramallah, since the Turks were still occupying

chants and elites, European naval blockades, and poor weather (Najwa al-Qattan, "Fragments of wartime memories from Syria and Lebanon," in *Syria in World War 1: politics, economy and society*, ed. M. Talha Çiçek (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 131).

it. The Turks were inflicting unrestrained cruelties on the population, until my brother Yaqub risked his life to sneak in and smuggle the family out, bringing them to Ramla in whatever garments they had on. The Turks had already looted the rubble that was all that remained to us of this world. We emerged from this war as we had escaped from the Karak revolt: almost naked and happy to be alive, thanking God for his mercy and for saving us almost miraculously from the midst of our afflictions.

16 Our Family Life during the War

Sara took on the role of both man and woman during the war, especially after the death of my mother. She had to take care of the household and lands in Birzeit, harvesting the olives, grapes and figs, as well as going to Ramla to help out my father and brothers and sometimes assisting me in Jerusalem. Exhausted by this strenuous existence, at the beginning of the war in Jerusalem she gave birth to a daughter we named Olga who died soon after and was buried there. Then she gave birth to another son whom we named Ibrahim but who also died as an infant and was buried in Jerusalem. At the end of the war, she gave birth to a son we named Musa, who died in Birzeit and was buried there. In this way, we planted a baby in every city we lived in, Karak, Ramla, Jerusalem, and Birzeit, as a result of all the calamities we went through, but we thank God in every circumstance.

17 Our Situation after the War

We did not suffer during the war as much as we suffered after it. When the locusts plagued the country during the war, my father went to Karak and brought back with him a plentiful amount of wheat that sustained us and our relatives for a long time. As soon as this supply ran out, God opened another door of sustenance for us. He softened the heart of the head of the army stores in Ramla. An Arab officer from Homs, for whom my brother Khalil used to work, he started sending us provisions from the warehouse to honour my father.

However, after the war, the price of wheat rose and rose, and this means of survival ceased. As we were without work, there was nothing left in the house—no provisions, clothes, mattresses, covers or furniture. We were greatly distressed. I started going to the neighbouring villages to buy wheat and then reselling it in Ramla to ensure the survival of our family. Working with the army

used to pay well but my brothers refused to join. On top of this, the government sold huge quantities of wheat to the people at very low prices, slowing down the business we used to depend upon.

As a result of all this, I was obliged to open a school on my own to make a living. At the same time, I started editing and publishing articles in the army newspaper for half an Egyptian pound per column, and so I was able to provide for the family, with the help of God. Meanwhile, the Patriarchate inaugurated schools in Transjordan, so Yaqub and Bulos started working there. As for Khalil, he invested with the teacher Jiryis al-Khoury in opening a hostel in Tayba near Lydda station; it made a huge profit but we saw nothing of it. However, only a few months later he went bankrupt and had to sell the place to the lowest bidder and go back to teaching. He took a teacher's job again at the monastery school and went back to chanting at the Church of Mar Yaqub.

In mid-September 1918 the Patriarchal schools in Palestine reopened, paid for by the Greek state. The teachers who had worked for the Patriarchate before the war were called upon to return to their former positions, so I went back as a headmaster for the school in Ramla, with a monthly salary of 10 Egyptian pounds. I organized the classes, set the curriculum, and resumed work with vigour and zeal. I was able to revivify the school: I restarted the choir, gathered the graduates and launched an alumni society that I named the Economic Charitable Society. Speeches and homilies were delivered in its halls, and conferences and debates were hosted in it. So again, the community gathered around me, as it had before the war, and we started a new life with new courage.

18 Muslim-Christian Relations in Ramla

No city is free from mobs that threaten its security. As there are in other places, so there was among the Muslims in Ramla a rabble that during the Italian war tried to assault the Christians. Likewise, among the Christians were some hooligans who, after the British occupation, tried to avenge themselves, believing that being under a Christian country they would be aided in that.

Acting upon this incorrect belief, they started assaulting their Muslim fellow-citizens, insulting the Islamic faith, and slandering the Quran. Their arrogant insolence led them to throw garbage at the Muezzin while he was at the minaret, which led to strained relations that almost provoked a terrible disaster. I seized every opportunity to combat such a spirit, but it was like trying to blow ash. This continued until Easter, when all the notables from the community and many of the Orthodox families gathered to attend the service of Easter Monday

and the procession around the church which followed it.⁴⁶ While the priests were processing around the church and the cantors singing, a young drunkard broke out from the crowd and started insulting Islam and Mohammed's religion at the top of his voice, while Muslims were standing around the church fence watching. When they heard the insults to the religion of their prophet, they were livid and attacked us with stones, batons, switchblades, and pistols, wanting to kill every person in the churchyard. With the help of the wise men and leaders of the community, in the forefront of whom was the late Salim Ibrahim Zabana, I instantly took hold of the situation and intervened. We cancelled the prayers, and made the priests leave the procession, take off their vestments and go inside the church. Using batons and truncheons we drove apart the young men accumulated in the churchyard until everyone left for home and calm returned. This prompt action from our side, and the arrival of their elders who also came to help separate the crowd, deterred the Muslims from being hasty and reckless. Half an hour after the incident, the Muslim leaders gathered and visited me at home to congratulate me for the determination and firmness I had shown in putting an end to this evil.

The municipality of Ramla later organized a dinner in the orthodox monastery in Ramla in honour of General Allenby, the British imperial governor in Palestine. I gave a speech there that had a great impact on the souls of the Muslims, whose attachment to me grew and they started revering me almost as if I were holy.

The leaders of the Christian community grasped the situation and realized for themselves that I had saved them from a terrible massacre on Easter day, having heard many Muslims saying that "if it was not for the strong stand that Master Niqula took on that day, there would be no Christian surviving in Ramla today." They backed me up and followed my instructions in a way that enabled us to put an end to the ignorant troublemakers, handing some of them over to the government which sentenced them to prison them as a lesson to others. Wanting to eradicate every misunderstanding that could have taken root between the two parties, I beseeched the Christians to buy an ornate chandelier and present it to the Great Mosque. On Friday, before the faithful left the mosque, we went with our gift and offered it to them. We were a large crowd representing all the families in Ramla. The Muslims were astonished by this surprise and every spark of discord between them and the Christians was destroyed. Soon after, they themselves made a similar gesture towards us.

46 In Arabic *ba'th*, originally a Syriac word with means Resurrection. The liturgical service includes an outdoor procession three times around the church after the Divine Liturgy, which is the symbol of the Resurrection and the Gospel.

In the end, with the help of some loyal friends, we established a club for young people that brought together a big team of educated young men from both sides, and of which I was elected as president. It was the first club of its kind in all Palestine, and soon after, the rest of the country copied its example.⁴⁷

19 Among the Community

The Orthodox schools were paid for by the Greek authorities for one year only. The Greek state aimed to bring the Patriarchate under her control and thus presented to the Patriarch a plan to relieve the Patriarchate's debts, and to take charge of its *waqfs*, schools, and churches that fell under the See of Jerusalem. The Patriarchate did not appreciate the idea of being under the strict control of the government of Greece and pleaded before the congregations to reject these bonds. The community rallied to help, so the Mandate authorities submitted to its wishes and those of the Patriarchate and stopped the Greek state interference in the Patriarchate and the community. Therefore, the schools were back in the hands of the Brotherhood [of the Holy Sepulchre] which proceeded to cut the teachers' salaries by half and went back to their corrupt ways of manipulation, recklessness and mismanagement. This led me to resign from the Patriarchal schools and join the government education system.

20 The First Orthodox Conference in Haifa

The Orthodox community in Palestine and Transjordan had been rejuvenated by the declaration of the Constitution in 1908 and demanded from the Patriarchate specific reforms related to, among other things, the administration, churches and schools. This movement resulted in the establishment of a mixed board with an annual budget of 30,000 French francs at its disposal to carry

47 The date of these events is not clear and could, from Khoury's chronology, be 1918 or 1919. The Muslim-Christian Associations which spread across Palestine in the early years of the Mandate are generally thought to have been founded by Raghīb al-Dajani in Jaffa in May 1918 and to have held their first national conference in January–February 1919 (Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 156). Despite these and other demonstrations of the unity of Muslim and Christian Palestinians, the British Mandate authorities, informed by Orientalist assumptions about the region, insisted on regarding Palestinian Arabs only in religious terms, expressing surprise at the level of coexistence they witnessed and thus imposing an effective 'divide and rule' policy (Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians*, 25–27).

out this reformation. They embarked on the restructuring in 1910; however, when the war was declared in 1914, the funds were cancelled and the board dissolved.

After the end of the war, the leaders of the community demanded that the Patriarchate re-establish the board and accord it the funds designated for it in the past, but the Patriarchate refused under the pretext that they came out of war heavily indebted. Hence, they called a conference in Haifa in July 1920,⁴⁸ bringing together all the Orthodox in Palestine and Transjordan. I was a participant, representing the Greek Orthodox community in Ramla, alongside Jiryis al-Dahdala. This conference made many decisions and elected an executive committee to ensure that they were enacted.⁴⁹ At this conference, the first of its kind, I got to know many leaders of the Palestinian and Jordanian Orthodox community and established friendly relations with many of them, some continuing to this day.

21 The History of the Church of Jerusalem

One of the many decisions of this conference was to write the history of the Church of Jerusalem, recording its genesis and the major events it witnessed up until the present time and its current transformation by Greek influence.⁵⁰ I stepped in to undertake the task. My cousin, Shehada Khoury, had already begun to write such a history so we decided to collaborate to complete it and to publish it at our own expense. It cost us four hundred Egyptian pounds to print, having taken out a loan at the exorbitant interest rate of 30%. That was the cause of our ruin because the Brotherhood exerted all its power to lay obstacles

48 Khoury's manuscript states that this conference took place in 1920, but this is likely to be a typographical error for 1923, when a major gathering fitting this description took place (Anton Bertram and John W.A. Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire and Report upon Certain Controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), 273–278).

49 R.S. Abujaber, *Al-Nahda al-'arabiyya al-urthûduksiyya fi 'arja' al-Batriarkia al-Maqdissiyya, 1865–2015*, Vol. 1–2 (Amman: National Press, 2016). This first Arab Orthodox Congress was organised in Haifa under the authority of Iskandir Kassâb and Ya'qûb Farrâj, gathering delegates from all the Palestinian (27) and Transjordanian local committees. It led to the constitution of an Executive Committee; see also Bertram and Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate*.

50 Shahada Khuri wa Niqula Khuri, *Khulasat tarikh kanisat Urshalim al-urthuduksiyya*, (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Maqdis, 1925); also published in an English translation by Raouf Sa'd Abujaber (Amman: Orthodox Central Council, 2002).

in our path, so that the leaders of the community also gave up on us and we were left with piles of books on our hands, unsold but for a few copies.

22 Our Life in Ramla after the War

Between the end of the war in 1918 and the fall of the year 1926, Sara and I had five children who were born in Ramla, of whom three, George, Julia, and Toufic, passed away, and two survived: the current George born on 3rd May 1921 while the fires of revolt between Arabs and Jews were at their peak in Jaffa,⁵¹ and the current Olga born in April 1923. George became extremely sick when he was four years old so we sent him to the French Hospital in Jerusalem where he stayed for almost a month, in a critical condition, but the Lord healed him as if in a miracle. The day he returned to Ramla was a day of joy and gladness, as it was on the day of his birth and christening.

23 Our Move from Ramla to Jerusalem

I worked as a teacher in the government schools in Ramla from the beginning of October 1922 till the end of July 1926. In the summer of that year, the Orthodox community invited me to Jerusalem to take over the administration of its national school in preparation for my ordination as a priest there. Three delegations had visited me in Ramla and persisted until I signed a three year contract with them, according to which I would be in charge of the school administration for 15 Egyptian pounds a month, plus 30 pounds for housing per year. At the beginning of October 1926, Sara, Marie, Takla, George, Olga, and I moved from Ramla to Jerusalem, and left my father with Aziza in Ramla. Bulos had moved to Egypt, where he was named cantor for the Syrian Dormition church,

51 This refers to the unrest in Jaffa and surrounding villages from 1–6 May 1921. Although interpretations differ in emphasis, most roughly concur with the official investigatory commission that the disturbances began with a fight between socialist factions in Tel Aviv and that, when some of those involved fled south to Jaffa, the local residents believed that they were being attacked by a Jewish mob and retaliated with escalating violence. Although the Haycraft Report placed the blame for much of the violence on Jaffa's Arab population, it acknowledged that a combination of rising Jewish immigration, labour issues, and left-wing political agitation had created the atmosphere of tension and resentment in which the outburst of violence could take place (Thomas Haycraft, *Palestine Disturbances in May 1921: Report of the Commission of Enquiry* (London: Stationery Office, 1921), 17–60).

while Yaacoub still taught in Transjordan, and Khalil still taught in Jerusalem where he joined us.

I restructured the National Orthodox School⁵² in Jerusalem and raised it to the level of the European and American schools so that students who got their diploma from it were not required to take an entrance exam for the Zion School, the Bishop's School and the Terra Sancta College.⁵³ Along with some students and other young men and women who enjoyed singing, I formed a choir, the first of its kind, for the church of Mar Yaqub. I also founded a Boy Scout troop and Cubs group for the students, and a Rover Scouts group for the young men from the Orthodox Club. I also had to give Christian education lessons to the Orthodox students who were getting their education in foreign schools, so I used to go once a week to the Bishop's School and the Zion School. As for the students in the Frères and Terra Sancta colleges,⁵⁴ I used to gather them

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- 52 Here Khoury again exaggerates his role. According to a German Archaeological Institute report on 'The Arab schools of Jerusalem' (1905; original not found; translation in French in the Archives du collège des Frères of Jerusalem), the National Orthodox school building was acquired in 1900 (near Bab al-Khalil) with the intention of attracting Arab orthodox pupils (who were at the time mainly enrolled in Russian schools and other missionary institutions). The previous director had been sent to 'Europe' (the source does not specify where) to be inspired by examples there. In 1905, it enrolled 320 pupils and benefited from a good reputation. The fifth to seventh grades attended the Orthodox seminary.
- 53 Established in 1847, the Bishop Gobat (diocesan) school combined religious and primary education with training in manual labour and proselytised mainly among Orthodox Christian denominations (Charlotte van der Leest, "Conversion and Conflict in Palestine. The Church Missionary Society and the Protestant Bishop Samuel Gobat," PhD thesis Leiden University, 2008 <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/12957>, chapters 4 and 7). Gobat was a Swiss Calvinist and the second Protestant bishop of Jerusalem (under the agreement between the British and the Prussian Governments in 1841, for a joint bishopric for Anglicans, Lutherans and Calvinists) he carried on a dynamic mission in his diocese. The Terra Sancta college was a secondary school, intended to develop into a Catholic university for 'young Arabs' (here Khoury refers to this part of the school, one year after the opening of the Hebrew University in Mount Scopus), under the auspices of the Vatican. It opened its doors in 1923, with the clear intention of constituting a Catholic cultural and educational counter-initiative to the Protestant schools and associations, and organised many lectures and post curricular cultural activities (in English and Arabic, the school offered a bilingual education). In the first 3 years (1923–1926), it taught around 180 pupils (in 1923, 60 Catholics, 50 Orthodox, 50 Muslims and 20 Armenians, the Jewish pupils' applications were all rejected, contrarily to other Catholic educational institutions); Paolo Pieraccini, "Un Università cattolica a Gerusalemme? L'Opera Cardinal Ferrari e il collegio francescano Di Terra Santa," *Antonianum* (Fasc.1), 2006, 136–161.
- 54 The Collège des Frères des écoles chrétiennes of Jerusalem, a Lassalian institution, was founded in 1876 and until WWI welcomed most of the Catholic elites as well as 30 to 40% of Orthodox pupils from various denominations and 30 to 40% of Muslims (between 400 and 600 pupils were enrolled during the first years of the British Mandate). The diploma

on Thursday afternoons and give lectures on Orthodox Christian education. Teacher Nehma Tlayl helped me by gathering the ladies every Friday evening, to give them religious teachings, as well as teaching the boys and girls at the Sunday school every Sunday after liturgy at the Church of the Forty Martyrs with the help of some committed Orthodox women.

On top of all of this, the trustees of the church of Mar Yaqub and the leaders of the community put me in charge of giving homilies every Sunday and feast-day at the church, so I carried out this task too.⁵⁵ Since my name started to be well-known in Jerusalem and elsewhere, some schools and boards asked me to give speeches and lectures on various topics. I gave numerous talks and addresses at the Young Men's Christian Association in Jerusalem, the Zion School, the Bishop's School, the Friends School in Ramallah,⁵⁶ the Syrian Orphanage School (Dar Al-Aytam) in Jerusalem,⁵⁷ and many other places and occasions. Add to that the lectures that I used to give at the Orthodox clubs and organizations in Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Ramallah, Tayba, Jaffa, Ramla, Lydda, Acre, Haifa, and Nazareth, and the articles I wrote in newspapers, and

of Les Frères as well as the alumni association and network guaranteed a career in several administrations. Its prestige lasted at least until the end of the 1920s, but it faced more difficulties when French stopped being a semiofficial language and the French protectorate over Christian communities ceased; Karène Sanchez Summerer, "Preserving the Catholics of the Holy Land or integrating them into the Palestine Nation (1920–1950)?" in *Modernity, Minority and the Public Sphere: Jews and Christian in the Middle East*, eds. Heleen Murrevan den Berg and Sasha Sabbah-Goldstein, 121–151 (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

- 55 The Palestinian scholar Issa Boullata recorded in his memoirs of his Jerusalem boyhood in the 1930s and 1940s that "Not all Orthodox priests of my parish church [Mar Yaqub, or St James, near the Holy Sepulchre] gave sermons, but those who did, like Father Nicola Khoury in my schooldays and Father George Khoury later on, gave very good homilies that were simple and quite effective. Confessions of sin to the priest were hardly ever heard in detail, except from those who asked for them" (Issa Boullata, *The Bells of Memory: A Palestinian Boyhood in Jerusalem* (Westmount, Quebec: Linda Leith Publishing, 2014), 69).
- 56 A Quaker school established by American missionaries in Ramallah in 1889, initially for girls and with a boys' college from 1901, and still operating today.
- 57 The Syrian Orphanage school was a philanthropic institution that offered educational and vocational training. It was founded in 1860 by Johan Ludwig Schneller, a German Lutheran missionary; during the Mandate period, it held the reputation of being an excellent vocational institution as well as having a 'pro-Arab' character (the director was in direct and regular with Hajj Amin al Husseini) (Roland Löffler, 'The metamorphosis of a pietist missionary and educational institution into a social services enterprise: the case of the Syrian orphanage (1860–1945)', in Heleen Murrevan den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands, Western missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, 151–174 (Leiden: Brill, 2006); and Gil Gordon, 'Die Schneller Dynastie, Drei generationen protestantischer Missionarbeit in Orient', in Haim Goren and Jakob Eisler, *Deutschland und Deutsche in Jerusalem*, 117–136 (Jerusalem: Keter, 2016)).

the pamphlets I printed and published under my name and the name of the club, conducting in it a fierce campaign against the Patriarchate and the men of the Brotherhood until they became truly tired of me.

24 My Ordination as a Priest for the City of Jerusalem

We spent an excellent first year at the school and its reputation soared in Jerusalem. We started attracting students in large numbers, until we could not accommodate them even after we increased the number of teachers to seven. Since I lived at the school with my family, the club had to rent a house for me in Al-Baqa'a Al-Fawqa, in the house of Daoud Nasser Abu Jidam. The school progressed in organization, order, and education. However, after two months, municipal elections were held in Jerusalem. The community split, and with it split the men of the club, between a group that supported the Mufti and his candidate from the Orthodox community Nakhle Kattan, and another supporting the Nashashibi followers and their candidate, Yaqub Farraj.⁵⁸ This division in the community led to the school being neglected, and since it depended on the contributions of the community, the situation degenerated. Teachers started teaching without a salary, leaving the school and looking for work elsewhere and, as a result, students started moving to other schools.

The community needed a priest so they elected Khalil Hakim,⁵⁹ Jiryis Yaqub who was from Beit Sahour but was at the time living in Cairo, and me. They asked that Khalil Hakim and I should be ordained and that Yaqub be recalled from Cairo. The Patriarch and the synod agreed to ordain Khalil Hakim and send for Jiryis Yaqub from Cairo but they refused to accept me, under the pretext that the Patriarchate could not afford to pay salaries for more than two

58 Yaqub (also Yacoub and other spellings) Farraj was a prominent member of the Greek Orthodox community and in Palestinian politics during the Mandate period, and cousin to the well-known Orthodox reformer Khalil Sakakini. As Khoury observes here, he was associated with Raghīb Nashashibi's National Defence Party (Ḥizb al-Fidā' al-Waṭānī), perceived by some as a more moderate/collaborationist body than the Husseini-backed Palestinian Arab Party, with which Khoury's own sympathies lay. Farraj appears regularly in Khoury's narrative, often as his competitor for Orthodox opinion.

59 A Jerusalem community social media project report in 2018 that: "Khouri Khalil Hakim, beloved priest of Mar Yacoub Greek Orthodox Church (situated next door to the Holy Sepulchre Church), officiated at almost every baptism, wedding and funeral in Jerusalem from the 1930's to the mid-1950's," and stated that Hakim was also a painter of icons. (British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library, 21st June 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib/posts/khouri-khalil-hakim-beloved-priest-of-mar-yacoub-greek-orthodox-church-situated-/2026147704122597/>).

priests. However, the community insisted that I should be appointed before the others and they wrote to the High Commissioner, who pressured the Patriarch and the synod and obliged them to consent to the wishes of the community. They agreed, despite themselves, to ordain me.

On the night of the feast of the Three Doctors,⁶⁰ on 30 November 1928 (Eastern calendar), Khalil Hakim was ordained a deacon in the Holy Sepulchre and on the feast of the Presentation of the Lord to the Temple, on 2 February 1928, he was ordained priest in the church of the Monastery of Our Lady at Harat Al-Nasara (the Christian Quarter), and I as deacon at the same time.

On Sunday 7 February 1928, which coincided with Meatfare Sunday,⁶¹ the community asked that my ordination take place during daytime at the church of Mar Yaqub so that every community member would be able to attend. The Patriarch accepted their request and sent for Archbishop Meliton to ordain me, while he himself went to Jericho.

On the appointed day, the Church and the place of the Resurrection were packed with people who came from Jerusalem and beyond to attend my ordination. The scouts troop was keeping order, so the ordination took place in a quiet and solemn atmosphere. After the liturgy, everyone headed towards Bab al-Khalil, led by the scouts, followed by school students, community leaders, and association members, as in a march. They passed by the Patriarchate court and from there they were picked up by cars to be dropped at the house in al-Baqa al-Fawqa where they all had lunch. Telegrams of congratulation poured down on me, and delegations from all over Palestine and Transjordan came to visit me, some of them bringing gifts. My father was very glad and overjoyed to welcome all the visitors.

That was one of the greatest days ...

After Khalil Hakim's ordination and my own, we found that the previous priests had been worthless. I was in charge of the church of Mar Yaqub throughout all the forty-day Lenten season directly after my ordination, and started preach-

60 The Three Doctors or Three Hierarchs refers to saints Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. Under the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), disputes raged in Constantinople about which of the three hierarchs was the greatest. The hierarchs appeared together in a vision to Saint John Mauropous, bishop of Euchaita and said that they were equal before God. The bishop dedicated the thirtieth day of January to commemorate all three hierarchs in common as a way to seal this month in which each of them are commemorated independently (1st: St Basil; 25th: St Gregory; 27th: translation of the relics of Saint John Chrysostom).

61 Meatfare Sunday is the third Sunday prior to the commencement of Great Lent. It is traditionally the last day before Easter for eating meat.

ing right away on Sundays and feast days. The community was longing to be preached to, so the turnout increased and many from other western Jerusalem communities started attending expressly to hear the homilies. I brought order and harmony to the church in such a way that quiet and attentiveness ruled over it and people started coming forward for confession and communion. A new spirit of life sprang up within the congregation. I also started public readings of the prayer of Saint Basil⁶² on Lenten Sundays instead of it being done covertly, and the believers who heard it started praying in reverence. I kept on preaching particularly on the evenings of the Holy Week. On Holy Friday, I gave my first homily at the Church of the Resurrection which had a deep impact on the souls of those who heard it. The Patriarch and monks were present, and the church was crammed. The Patriarch and Archbishops were really impressed and congratulated me for it even though they held enmity and hatred towards me. As for the community, it marvelled before the fact that they now had priests who preached and could be trusted, so I gained a higher status among them.

Despite all this, my pastoral work did not stop me from continuing my accustomed activities from before my ordination. I kept on directing the school until the end of the school year. The solicitations to give lectures out of town for Orthodox clubs and associations multiplied, and the requests from foreign associations gushed on me so that my time was no longer mine but belonged to public service. In the beginning Father Khalil was flexible and lenient. We agreed that I would do the external service and he would meet the community's internal needs. Then we would split the income equally.

In the summer of that same year, the Patriarch gave Father Khalil and me permission to confess and wear the Epigonation.⁶³ At the same time, the synod decided to name me a member of the ecclesiastical court, and I soon became the court's clerk and consultant. I became the point of reference in almost

62 The Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom is the most celebrated divine liturgy in the Byzantine Rite. The Divine Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great is now used only ten times a year: on the five Sundays of Great Lent, Holy Thursday and Holy Saturday, on the Eves of the Nativity and Theophany, and on the feast day of Saint Basil (1st January). In this context, the prayers of Saint Basilios are the anaphora of the liturgy. Usually, the priests tend to read this prayer secretly or even to omit it because it is too long. This prayer is an excellent theological exposition of the history of salvation: the creation, the fall of man, the incarnation of Christ and the redemption.

63 A lozenge of stiff embroidered cloth worn on the right side by priests and bishops. The epigonation may be awarded to a priest upon his elevation to a confessor or to the rank of oikonomos or after many years of service. Nowadays, most priests wear it (Nancy Patter-son Ševčenko, "Epigonation," in *Orthodox Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991/2005, online version consulted 26th December 2019)).

everything, especially when Archimandrite Theodoritos, the great translator and my only friend in the fraternity, began presiding over it. I was thus able to prevent bribes and nepotism, so that the court's decisions were respected and observed by the government. This did not please the men of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre and their subordinates, so they started opposing me because this court used to bring in money to many of those whose consciences are dead and who enjoyed making a profit from the calamities of others.

25 Our Family Life in Jerusalem

We moved from Ramla to Jerusalem on October 1st, 1926. On September 5th (Eastern Calendar), corresponding to 18th of September (Western Calendar), 1927, Mary was wedded to Bishara Yusif Barghout from Ramla. The wedding service was celebrated by my father and by father Gabriel Al-Bayouk, who was ordained a priest that year, and Archimandrite Makarios, head of the church of Ramla. On January 15th (Eastern Calendar), corresponding to the 28th (Western Calendar) 1928, Hanna was born in Dar Daoud Nasser Abu Jiddam in al-Baqa al-Fawqa. On February 7th (Eastern Calendar), 20th (Western Calendar) of that same year, I was ordained a priest, when Hanna was 22 days old. In May of the same year, Bulos got married in Alexandria and none of us were present at his wedding except Khalil.

26 The Conference of Orthodox Arab Priests

In the spring of the year 1932, the thrice blessed Patriarch Damianos passed away. Priests from all over Palestine and Transjordan called for a conference to be held in Ramallah, where they would agree upon a unified position and unite their voices, formulating a position for themselves as the shepherds and true leaders of this community. As such, they would have a voice that would be heard by the leadership and that would have an important influence in the next Patriarchal election.

Meanwhile the Synod in Jerusalem had elected Archbishop Keladion, Metropolitan of Acre, as Patriarchal *locum tenens*. The Brotherhood and the executive committee of the Orthodox conference in Haifa joined forces to oppose the priests and their plans and expended all their efforts to block the conference. Despite this, the conference was held on the intended date of 30th August of the year 1932 in the chosen location, Ramallah. It was attended by more than sixty priests representing most of the towns and villages of Palestine and

Transjordan. The conference took many decisions aimed at strengthening the position of the priests in the church, to improve their living both materially and morally, to improve the situation of the community and reform the schools, churches, *waqfs*, ecclesiastical courts, and so on. It also elected an executive committee to follow up on the application of these decisions, and I was unanimously elected secretary of this committee.

The men of the monastery were disturbed by this bold move since no priest had ever claimed any rights from them before that. They resolved to break our unity, under the motto “divide and conquer,” their only capital and weapon in the face of difficulty. So they promoted some priests to the rank of Economos⁶⁴ and allowed them to wear the epanokalmavkion⁶⁵ and the pectoral cross, breaching the clerical law which entailed that it was unlawful for a married priest to wear the epanokalmavkion, a consecrated emblem for monks.

They widened the pit of dispute between the clerical committee and the committee of laymen presided over by Yaqub Farraj. They terrified him into believing that we had only made this move in defiance, to disparage him; hence, the government started to oppose us. It was a vain hope to try to implement any of the decisions, even after we contacted the government in London, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the League of Nations, and many other religious and political commissions.

As a result of this division, the men of the monastery proceeded to break the law and elect Patriarch Timothaos without the participation of priests in the election. Nonetheless, Yaqub Farraj and his committee did not shy away from giving orders to priests to refrain from pronouncing the Patriarch’s name in church, despite the fact that they were the direct reason behind his election⁶⁶ ... and they were also the ones who made the priests say it again.

64 οἰκονόμος, is a compound word from οἶκος (home) and the verb νέμω (dispense) which meant the one who takes care of the house. An oikonomos is usually the diocesan or patriarchal finance officer. He has the function of administering the properties and the income of an eparchy or a patriarchate (Clugnet, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, 110).

65 An epanokalmavkion is a veil, usually black, worn with a kalimavkion, a stiff cylindrical head covering worn by monks and by bishops, who were often chosen from among the monks (Clugnet, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, 52–53).

66 This is a highly disputed view from Khoury, which exaggerates the role of the parish clergy in the electoral process. A parish priest from each Metropolitan See and/or Bishopric was nominated by the lay community to participate in the electoral Council. Each member of the Council wrote the name of the person whom he considered to be worthy of the patriarchal office. After the list of candidates was prepared, the members of the Council, including the parish priests, nominated three persons, who would get the majority of votes. In this part of the process, there were ‘native’ priests from Jerusalem. Afterwards, the Synod of the Patriarchate elected the Patriarch from these three candidates. The

In the meantime I completed copying the micro Euchologion,⁶⁷ also known as Aghiasmatarion or the concise mega Euchologion, during the office of Archbishop Keladion, who appreciated and respected me despite our differences of opinion. He was as proficient in Arabic as a native speaker and was zealous in maintaining the reputation of the Church, so he asked me to revise the language and the content of the book, to compare it to the original Greek to make sure it was free from any linguistic or substantial errors or weaknesses in structure, in order to reprint it and distribute it to the priests as it is indispensable for them. I took this work very seriously despite my many other activities and began to revise it by comparing it to the original Greek, using the book of the late Hawawini, who translated it from Russian.

I sorted it into a correct classification, coherently, separating the sacramental service from the rest of the spiritual services. I added an appendix of explanations and annotations that would help the priest understand what he was doing. I also omitted some of the services that the priest could find in other books, and added services and prayers that were not present in the previous edition. In addition I added the funeral service for children from the Russian

participation of the Arab parish clergy in the elections was therefore secondary, and their involvement in the election being discussed here would actually legitimize the whole procedure, serving Greek ends. This explains the insistence of the lay community on blocking the participation of Khoury and the other Arab priests (“Imperial Regulations of 1875: Law of the ‘Roman’ Patriarchate of Jerusalem”, in Anton Bertram and Charles H. Luke, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire into the Affairs of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem* (London: Oxford University Press: 1921), 244–247; Anton Bertram and John W.A. Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Government of Palestine to Inquire and Report upon Certain Controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926); Konstantinos Papastathis and Ruth Kark, “Colonialism and Religious Power Politics: the Question of new Regulations within the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem during the British Mandate,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 50 (2014), 589–605; Konstantinos Papastathis, “Religious Politics in Mandate Palestine: The Christian Orthodox Community Controversy in the Thirties”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43:3 (2016), 259–284).

- 67 The Euchologion is one of chief liturgical books of the Byzantine Church. It contains the parts for priests and deacon at vespers, orthros, the three Divine Liturgies, the rites of sacraments, monastic tonsure, Blessing of Waters, and funerals, as well as other blessings and canons. On the Arabic versions of Euchologia, cf. Charbel Nassif, *L'euchologe melkite depuis Malatios Karmé jusqu'à nos jours: les enjeux des évolutions d'un livre liturgique*, PhD Thesis, Catholic Institute of Paris, 2018. Khoury refers to the early book published at New-York in 1913 by Raphael Hawawini (1860–1915), a bishop in Ottoman Syria and then in the USA, canonised as St Raphael of Brooklyn (Basil Essey, “Saint Raphael Hawaweeny, bishop of Brooklyn: ‘The Good Shepherd of the Lost Sheep in America,’” in *The Orthodox Christian World*, edited by Augustine Casiday (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 338–344).

translation because it was a better version than the one found in Greek books. The book was a work of such thoroughness in its linguistic precision, its accurate translation, and its exact indexing and order that his Eminence was very pleased. He congratulated me for it very warmly.

When it the time came to print the book, the mission of his Eminence had come to an end and Timothaos was Patriarch. I was asked to accept that the printing take place under the order of Patriarch Timothaos, a request I refused, insisting that it be printed under the order of the *locum tenens* Keladion. This was grounds to expand the dispute between the Patriarch and myself.

27 The Disappearance of My Brother Yaqub

One of the most painful events, that deeply affected my spirit and the agonies of which still cause me pain in my chest to this day, was the strange disappearance of my brother Yaqub. It was one of the mysteries of our times that I still cannot fathom until this hour.

This man was sane and balanced and used to teach in Ajloun in Transjordan. During the summer break of the year 1929, he went on vacation to Beirut and Damascus. On his way back, on the Damascus-Irbid road, thieves surprised him and stopped the car that he had taken with other travellers. He tried to run away. They started shooting at him; he escaped safely but arrived in Al-Husn having lost his mind. He stayed as a guest of the local leader Salti Pasha Ibrahim who sent us a telegram with the news.⁶⁸ We got him back to Jerusalem in a miserable state. We tried to treat him for two years, putting him in the hands of doctors specialized in mental health, who found nothing wrong in his mind. However, he was not getting any better; on the contrary, he always wanted to be secluded and isolated, fasting from food and drink for forty days, thinking that the

68 Salti Pasha Ibrahim was a sheikh in the northern Jordanian town of al-Husn and one of the founders of Hizb al-Tadamun (the Solidarity Party) in the 1930s; this was the main political grouping which advocated a specifically Jordanian identity which crossed religious and ethnic lines, thus attracting Christian and Circassian leaders (Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 32). It was also, however, accused at the time of being sympathetic to Zionist land purchases in Transjordan (Yoav Alon, *The Shaykh of Shaykhs: Mithqal al-Fayiz and Tribal Leadership in Modern Jordan* (Redwood: Stanford University Press, 2016), 126). From a Greek Orthodox family, he had participated in some of the Orthodox conferences and meetings in Palestine and Transjordan in the 1920s and 30s, which is presumably how he was able to recognise Yaqub and contact his family (Ayoub Family Website <http://ayoufamily.net/ayoub-karadsheh-origin/>, accessed 7th April 2020).

Judgment Day was near, and constantly reading the Bible, especially the Revelations of John the Theologian, to the point that he started having visions of a cosmic war between the Archangel Michael and his army, and Satan and his army, saying: woe to the world after the year 1940.

In the summer of the year 1932 he retired to a vineyard that was property of the house of our Uncle Ghattas near the Saqi spring.⁶⁹ One day, some people saw him heading toward the highway that leads from Jerusalem to Nablus near the village of Ein Siniya. There, every trace of him disappeared, and no one could remember seeing him anywhere since.

The taxis were on strike on that day, so I did not get the news until the next day. It fell on me like a thunderbolt. I immediately went to the police in Ramallah. I rented a car and drove all around the country, sometimes accompanied by our brother in law Abu Yusif, T other times by Khalil, and sometimes alone, searching every town, ruin, city, cavern, cave, forest, graveyard, or pool of water in our search for him. We circulated his picture to every newspaper, police station, and city or town municipality, offering a 20 pound reward for anyone who would bring us his tarboosh or shoe or any piece of his clothes. However, despite all this labour and these efforts and expenses, we could not find of any trace of him. This left us all broken-hearted, especially my father, who did not for one moment cease remembering him and reminiscing about him.

28 The Death of My Father

We spent six months looking for Yaqub and we paid out more than two hundred pounds in this cause, but all our efforts, labour and money were gone with the wind. My father had this one thing on his mind, waking and sleeping, crying and lamenting. In vain I tried to console him, bringing him home with me and offering him the most delicious meals and the best fruits to cheer him up—but it is impossible for a father to forget his son.

What further added to his distress and hastened the shortening of his days was the madness of Khalil and Aziza after this painful event. Upon Khalil's insistence, we had asked for a girl from the house of Al-Zananiri from Jerusalem for him to marry, but when Butros Salem came from America with his wife's daughter Georgette, Khalil left the Zananiri girl and insisted on marrying this other woman in spite of my will and that of his father. He did not hold

69 Many thanks to George S. Rishmawi for help in identifying this location, between Bir Zeit and Ein Siniya.

back until he married her, leaving me to bear the criticism and indignation of the Zananiris. As for Aziza, she crossed every limit in her behaviour, falling in love with a person from Kfar Yassif and bringing him home. He would eat, drink and sleep within sight and hearing of my father. I was utterly furious but did not show it, because I did not want to upset my father, who advised and reproached her hopelessly, exasperated, supplicating God to give him rest from her. When the situation got worse, with our neighbours from the lower part of the village, al-Baqa al-Tahta, criticizing us, he found it necessary to put an end to this mockery, especially after it emerged that the man was a deceiver and was playing with her, having his parents oppose the marriage. So our father took her and went to Birzeit. We tried to delay him a week in Jerusalem so we could all go together, but he insisted on leaving before us, so we agreed in the interests of keeping Aziza away from Jerusalem.

On a Wednesday in 1934, falling on 11th July in the Eastern calendar, corresponding to the 24th, while my father was getting ready to go to church in Birzeit, he felt a pain in his chest, and shortly after he gave up his spirit with none of us with him but Aziza! He passed away at the age of 79, spending 43 years of it in the service of the Lord, during which he was the example of the good shepherd and the devout pious priest, may God have mercy on him. I received this sad news while serving holy liturgy at the church of Mar Yaqub. It fell upon me like a thunderbolt, especially the fact that I did not get to see him, say my last goodbyes properly, and receive his blessing and favour.

After liturgy, we went immediately to Birzeit where we—Father Khalil Hakim and I—put his priestly garments on my father. In the afternoon, Archbishop Aristarkhus and his entourage arrived from Jerusalem. More delegations from Jerusalem, Ramla, Lydda, and Ramallah also came, along with Father Aoude Al-Shawareb from Karak, Father Yaqub Al-Hanna from Ramla, and other priests from Bethlehem. We prayed over his body in the church and each of Father Yusif Harb, Father Yaqub Al-Hanna and Father Awdah Al-Shawareb delivered their eulogies of him. The Mufti also sent two representatives to attend the funeral and offer us condolences on his behalf.

This pure body was buried in the soil, wept over by his family, relatives and friends while his pure soul soared to the skies to continue serving the heavenly altar before the throne of the Lamb.⁷⁰

After the burial, we went back to Jerusalem to accept condolences from friends and loved ones, from different countries, different religions and com-

⁷⁰ Cf. Revelations 7, 17 (King James Version): For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

munities. We offered a liturgy and a funeral service for his soul at the church of Mar Yaqub for the ninth and the *arba'een* or fortieth day, and these were attended by many from different communities.⁷¹ The newspaper *Mira't Al-Sharq* published in memoriam a small biography and obituary penned by its owner Bulos Shehada,⁷² and an article by Shehada Khoury that had beautiful effects on the spirit.

May God have mercy on that pure soul and may it dwell with him eternally in heaven.

29 The General Strike of 1936

The flow of Jews to Palestine increased during the next two years. The Arab traitors and brokers also increased in number.⁷³ The mandatory state encouraged the flow of emigration and the handing of land to the Jews. Our national leaders protested and shouted but no one answered. It was deemed necessary to commit an act that would draw the attention of the world to the injustice, abuse, and oppression happening in the Holy Land. The leadership therefore decided to initiate a strike in all areas of work, throughout the whole country. This decision was implemented starting on the first of May 1936. All the stores, shops, factories, industries, schools, transportation, cafes, and clubs closed. The workforce halted completely in the cities and villages, although the government tried unsuccessfully to stop it happening. Ten individuals from among the country's leaders were elected to form the highest body under the leadership of the Mufti, to supervise the strike and direct it on the right course. The work was organized and the body took the shape of a government to rule the country's affairs. In every village, a committee was established to represent this body and to implement its orders.

71 The *arba'een* is a commemorative service which occurs forty days after death, commonly practiced amongst both Christians and Muslims in the Levant.

72 Shehadeh (1882–1943), an Anglican from Bethlehem, was also active in Palestinian politics, and was husband of Mary Sarruf, a women's rights activist and journalist who also wrote for the newspaper (Andrea Stanton, *"This Is Jerusalem Calling": State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 145).

73 Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows, Palestinian collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948*, University of California Press, 2008; 4, the author is tackling the controversy (as there is no unequivocal definition of treason in this context) around the counting and the motives of the 'samasirah' (land brokers) who returned in full force after the Arab Revolt (1936–1939) (p. 189). 7% of the land was acquired by Jews before 1948. In the 1930s, land sales became a central issue in Palestinian politics (see also: Awqaf archives Institute for Islamic Relief Research and Heritage Revival, Abu Dis, Friday sermons 60/1/5.3/35/6).

We were especially troubled by a lack of food and drink. I sent the family to Birzeit where everything was available. I stayed alone at home, but after a while I found living on my own disturbing, so I went and brought them to Jerusalem in the Anglican Archbishop's car, the only car that was allowed to move in all of Palestine.

Deaths increased during this period, and I started going from the house to the town and from the city to the house on foot two, three, and sometimes four times a day. We were living in al-Baqa al-Fawqa. The distance between the house and the city was one hour, and this occurred during the hot months of summer. The fatigue affected my health, and I started feeling pain in my feet.

The incidents of robbery, banditry, denunciations, assassinations, and kidnappings from homes and from the streets increased. Spies also multiplied. The government started arresting, exiling, and imprisoning people as a result of mere accusations or a simple denunciation. I had to visit these people, especially the prominent leaders, and take them gifts despite the crisis situation and the dangers that I risked from the government, the Jews, and the outsiders that were hired by the Jews to assassinate any citizen who opposed them. It was evident that the Mufti felt the dangers I was going through in my trips. He appointed two of his men to protect me wherever I went and to guard my house at night, but the protection is God's. The Lord fortified me, praise and thanks be to Him. I emerged from this crisis safely by the virtue and care of the Almighty.

It is worth mentioning that some, including Fakhri Al-Nashashibi, the relative of Ragheb Al-Nashashibi who was the leader of the opposition, took advantage of this situation and were about to sacrifice the whole nation for the sake of their own benefit. He pretended to show ardour and national enthusiasm, and compelled the port's workers in Jaffa to walk out even though the Arab Higher Committee exempted these workers from the strike, fearful that the port would be moved from Jaffa to Tel Aviv.⁷⁴ The Jewish dream became a reality when the workers went on strike based on the advice of the fake patriot. The ships were transferred from Jaffa to Tel Aviv and the workers' only source of income was cut off. Not only Jaffa, but all of Palestine lost a major

74 Khoury's version of these events is clearly that of a Husseini partisan and opponent of the Nashashibis. Whilst Zachary Lockman's study of labour relations in Mandate Palestine acknowledges the major role that factional conflict—rather than the financial gain alleged by Khoury—played in Fakhri Nashashibi's establishment of the Arab Workers' Society, he also points out the genuine grievances of the Jaffa port workers, which had not been met despite having been raised as early as 1934. This highlights how the issue of class often cross-cut official Palestinian nationalism, with the elites heading the main factions often out of step with popular needs and opinions (*Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 223–229).

source of income, giving up many livelihoods in return for a small material gain. Fakhri Al-Nashashibi thus condemned the whole nation. However, God Almighty took revenge and he was killed by a zealous jihadist's gunshot in Baghdad.⁷⁵ This jihadist avenged the whole country and nation for the acts of this low traitor!

Another of the traitors was the lawyer Hasan Sidqi Al-Dajani,⁷⁶ from Jerusalem, who was hired by the Jews to obstruct the relationships between Christians and Muslims. These intruders were afraid to see these two foundations of this nation united in speech and work. They paid him 15,000 Palestinian pounds to obstruct the relationships between the two communities. He started printing flyers for both sides; at times on behalf of the Muslims against Christians and their religion, and at others on behalf of Christians against Muslims, their religion, and Prophet. It happened that a few copies of these despicable and obscene flyers fell into my hand. I addressed a word about it in the church of Mar Yaqub during the Liturgy and the funeral of Dr Futi Frayj's sick mother.⁷⁷ A lot of the Mufti's people attended, standing in the middle of the church, and listening to what I said. They then went and told the Mufti. After liturgy, I

75 During the Palestinian Uprising the Husseini-Nashashibi rivalry took on more deadly overtones, with the Nashashibi-backed 'Peace Bands' collaborating with the British to undermine the revolt. Fakhri Nashashibi (1899–1941) was assassinated by gunmen linked to the Husseinis in Baghdad in 1941 (Matthew Hughes, "Palestinian Collaboration with the British: The Peace Bands and the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–9," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51,2 (2016), 292–293).

76 Hasan Sidqi Dajani, member of a prominent family of Jerusalem, was killed in mid-October 1938. According to Hillel Cohen, 'He was a political activist [...] and had organised a joint Jewish-Arab drivers' strike in 1931. He also had contact with the Jewish Agency Executive [...]. He offered to organise an Arab labor party that would not oppose Zionism' (*Army of Shadows*, 130 and note 45). He was one of the leaders of the Arab strike in 1936 and the Dajani family contributed to the financial support of rebels. Dajani wanted to testify in front of the Woodhead Commission which came to Palestine in mid-1938 to examine prospects for implementing the Peel partition plan but received a letter of threat from Amin al Husseini and changed his mind (CZA Central Zionist Archives, S25/10098, 23/05/1938, Political information, <http://www.zionistarchives.org.il/en/Pages/ArchiveSearchResults.aspx?k=S25%2f10098&t=T3>).

77 Medical doctor and Minister of the Economy in the short-lived Government of All Palestine founded in Gaza under Egyptian sponsorship by Hajj Amin al-Husayni. Frayj was the son of a carpenter in Bethlehem who, graduating from the Schneller School in 1913, was hired as a teacher, enabling him to study medicine at the Syrian Protestant College (Liat Kozma and Yoni Furas, "Palestinian Doctors under the British Mandate: the Formation of a Profession," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 52 (2020), 94; Hamid Abdeljaber, "Interview with Mr Issa Nakhleh, 22 October 1998," United Nations Oral History Project <http://digitization.s3.amazonaws.com/digibak/OralHistory/Digitized%20Transcripts/NAkhleh22Oct98TRANS.pdf>, accessed 11th November 2020).

visited him and informed him about the hate being spread, and showed him the flyers. He knew their source so we then set out a plan to fight it.

30 Takla's Marriage

In the meantime, on 4th October 1936 (Eastern Calendar) corresponding to the 17th (Western Calendar) Takla was wedded in Birzeit to Anis Ibrahim Naser in a simple ceremony, given the conditions prevailing in the country.

31 Breaking the Strike

Nearly a week after Takla's wedding, the Arab kings and leaders intervened and asked the Arab Higher Committee to break off the strike, pledging that they would work together as one to save the Holy Land and to prevent its Judaisation. The Committee responded to their advice, accepting their pledge and ordering the people to cease the strike. Everyone went back to their jobs and occupations. Life slowly returned to normal in the country after being burdened by these six months of strike, in which we lost huge amounts of money and the port of Jaffa forever. Losing this port to Tel Aviv was one of the main elements that allowed the Palestinian Nakba to happen. The Jews started smuggling in emigrants, weapons, and munitions through this port without any control or accountability.

32 The Palestine Royal Commission

After the country calmed down, London sent on its behalf a commission, the Royal Commission, to study the case of Palestine and write a report offering a solution to this impossible conflict. As this Commission sailed from London, both heroes, Ragheb Al-Nashashibi and Yaqub Farraj—the only Christian representative in the committee—resigned from the Arab Higher Committee, to show it that there was a party that was dissatisfied with the policy that the Mufti was pursuing. As for the rest of the members of the Committee, they decided not to make any contact with the Commission because it was considered to be merely a calming measure. Many commissions visited the country under many names, but none of them could change the decision of the government of London. Any person who tried to deal with the Commission was also threatened with death.

The Commission arrived and the government used everything in its power to make people meet with them. No one dared to accept, either from the Mufti's side or from the oppositionists—who did not even dare to leave their houses unless they were protected by English police.

Meanwhile, "Mister Rezk,"⁷⁸ the deputy director of secret intelligence in the government of Palestine, came to visit me, accompanied by a civilian. I thought at first that the latter was a Christian officer from the intelligence services, but it turned out, as we talked, that he was a Jew from the Zionist Organization. Mister Rezk requested that I present myself as a witness before the Commission on behalf of the Christians, telling me that the government would greatly appreciate this step and would reward me for it with great distinction. The Jews were ready to recompense me with any amount I asked in return for this favour. I shamed and berated them strongly which made them leave the house, incapable of achieving anything. I then called the Mufti and informed him about what happened, for fear that they would try to tempt another person with their promises and attractive offers as they had with me.

In the end, the Arab kings and leaders asked the Arab Higher Committee again to contact the Commission and supply it with all the necessary information, so the Committee inclined to their request and met with the Commission. In the meantime, the Commission had asked to hear the opinion of the Arab Christian religious leaders. The Committee proposed my name to the Commission for that task. However, Yaqub Farraj insisted that the spokesman for the Christians before the Commission should be Archbishop Gregorios Hajjar, the archbishop for the Greek Catholics in Haifa, under the pretext that the testimony of an archbishop has more value than of a priest.

After the Commission completed its task, they packed their bags and went back to London while people waited for their report. Then, all of a sudden, they surprised everyone with a plan for the partition of Palestine. This report was a huge slap in the face for the Arab kings and leaders and a disappointment to all my countrymen. It was therefore obvious that trouble would return to the country and that the people would revolt against both the government and the Jews.

78 The Arabic in Khoury's manuscript is رڨز/rkz. It seems likely that this is a phonetic rendering of Riggs, which would mean that Khoury is referring to Alfred William Riggs, a Deputy Superintendent in the Palestine Police who was based in Jerusalem and who was accused of involvement in torturing Palestinian arrestees (Matthew Hughes, "A History of Violence: The Shooting in Jerusalem of British Assistant Police Superintendent Alan Sigrist, 12 June 1936," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 45, 4 (2010), 736. Thanks to Seán William Gannon for helping to locate this identification).

33 General Disorder in the Country

As soon as people heard about this report, there was widespread turbulence across the land, with strident demonstrations breaking out in every part of the country. The voices of protest and condemnation rose loud from all sides. In some towns, the demonstrators clashed with the English police and the Jews. Many were injured or killed from both sides.

The fires of revolution flared up in a way the country had never witnessed before. Armed groups were formed and took the high mountains as their headquarters, and they started assaulting the Jews and the English. They launched attacks in the streets, in houses, colonies, and on highways, without mercy or pity, lynching every traitor who supported the Jews and the authorities against their countrymen, burning down their houses and plundering their belongings.

The government was infuriated by these combatants and started to impose collective punishments on every town where an attack on the army occurred. They demolished their houses and villages, confiscated their belongings and provisions, and imprisoned their relatives in jails and detention centres where they would inflict upon them all kinds of torture.

34 The Balkan Delegation

Prince Adel Arslan,⁷⁹ who was living in Geneva, had already written many times to His Eminence the Mufti, pointing out to him the importance of sending an Orthodox delegation from the Palestinian Arabs, presided over by an Arab Orthodox clergyman, to the Orthodox kingdoms of the Balkans, to inform the governments of these countries, people, and religious leaders about the danger threatening the holy places in Palestine since the seizure of the country by the Jews. It would also urge them to aid the Palestinian Arabs in their efforts to prevent the Judaisation of the Holy Land. His Eminence used to transmit these letters to Yaqub Farraj, considering him the representative of the Orthodox, and

79 Adel Arslan (brother of the better-known Shakib Arslan) was a Lebanese Druze politician and soldier who, having held various offices in the Ottoman Empire, took part in Amir Faisal's short-lived Damascus government and the Syrian Uprising of 1925–1926. He also briefly served in the cabinet of Syrian President Husni al-Zaim (1949) (Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif, "Revisiting the Druze politics in Palestine under British Colonial rule," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 40, 3 (2018), 240). Along with the Palestinian pan-Arabist Awni Abd al-Hadi he headed the Palestinian Arab delegation to the League of Nations in Geneva in 1937.

even the representative of all Christians in Palestine. He used to receive these letters and throw them away, because there was not one amongst the priests in Palestine that was fitted for the task except me and he did not want me to be in the spotlight and to detract from his glory.

Nevertheless, when it was time to present the Palestinian cause before the League of Nations in Geneva,⁸⁰ the Committee sent a delegation to defend our cause, but Prince Adel sent another telegram to the Mufti urging him to send an additional delegation to the Balkans. Yaqub Farraj had already resigned from the Committee by then. So the Mufti sent for me, calling on me to take up the task, along with Emile Al-Ghouri. He also asked Yaqub Farraj to appoint alongside us anyone he wanted and to get us an authorization from the Patriarch, speeding up the preparations so that we could travel before it was too late. Farraj pretended that it was enough to send the two of us alone, claiming that he found no one in the community more fitting. He declared his readiness to help us fundraise from all over the country so that our travel expenses would be met by the community and not the Committee. We believed his suggestions, informed the Mufti, and started preparing for the journey. However, Farraj had in fact called the Patriarch, recommending to him not to give me any permission or referral. In addition, he called all the Orthodox committees in the country and banned them from giving so much as a penny to our expenses. The delegation that then toured the country for that very purpose could not collect more than 70 pounds. The Mufti had offered to pay for our expenses, but we had refused, trusting in the community.

Thus, we left Jerusalem with only this small amount of money on us.

We left Jerusalem on 1st September 1937, passed through Lebanon, and arrived in Damascus on the morning of the next day, on Thursday 2nd September 1937. We met with Fawzi Beik Al-Azma, head of the group for the Defence of Palestine in Syria,⁸¹ and the representative of the Orthodox Patriarch, because

80 As a result of the findings of the Peel Commission, the idea of partition was discussed by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in a series of sessions from July 30th to August 18th, 1937, hearing extended evidence from the Colonial Secretary of the British Government, William Ormsby-Gore, and receiving written petitions from Zionist and Palestinian Arab organisations (UNISPAL, "Minutes of the 32nd (Extraordinary) Session of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations," <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/0/FD05535u8AEF0DE052565ED0065DDF7>, accessed 11th November 2020).

81 It is not entirely clear to which organisation Khoury is referring. Nabih al-Azma was head of the Palestine Defence Committee, the main Syrian grouping working on behalf of the Palestinian struggle at this time, so it is possible that this is a typographical error on

the Patriarch himself was not in Damascus, and with many other committees and groups. Yousef Al-Issa, the owner of *Alif Ba'* newspaper, was so supportive of the idea of our delegation that he singled it out in an extra article in the paper. At our hotel we received Hajj Said Beik Thabet, the President of the Organization for the Defence of Palestine in Iraq, and Abdel Rahim Beik Al-Husseini, the son of the late blessed Musa Kazim Pasha Al-Husseini.⁸² We also met many figures from various Arab nations who were gathering for the Islamic Conference that was about to be held in Bludan to discuss the Palestinian Cause.⁸³ In the evening, we were invited to a tea party at the club of the League of National Action,⁸⁴ where we were acquainted with some of the finest and most educated men in Damascus, something that lifted our spirits and overwhelmed us with the honour they bestowed on us.

We left Damascus on Friday before noon in a car to Aleppo. We passed by Baalbek, Homs, Hama, and Ma'arrat Al-Naaman and arrived in Aleppo at exactly eleven at night. We spent the whole of Saturday in Aleppo, visiting the governor Ata Beik Al-Shehaby and many other personalities, and in sightseeing at the citadel and the city. On the morning of the following day, on Sunday 5th September at seven in the morning, we took the Orient Express train heading to Constantinople. We travelled for three hours within Syrian territory, arriving at ten in the morning at the Turkish border where the train stopped at the first Turkish post.

Khoury's part (Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 561–565).

- 82 Said al-Haj Thabet was an Iraqi nationalist politician who would have been in Damascus at this time as a prelude to attending the Bludan Conference; the well-known Palestinian leader Musa Kazim al-Husayni did not have a son called Abd al-Rahim. It is possible that Khoury meant Abd al-Qadir, later the most famous of Musa Kazim's sons, who commanded Palestinian forces in the 1948 war and was killed at the Battle of Castel.
- 83 The Bludan Conference of 1937 was the first pan-Arab summit, held in Bludan, Syria on 8 September 1937. It was called by the Arab Higher Committee in response to the Peel Commission which recommended the partition of Palestine, then under British control, into Arab and Jewish states.
- 84 The League of National Action had been formed in 1933 as a pan-Arab organisation (as differentiated from a Syrian nationalist one) with the objectives of struggling against French Mandatory domination and, implicitly, colonial rule in other Middle Eastern mandates including Palestine. Its priorities, according to Philip Khoury, were: "Arab sovereignty, independence, and comprehensive Arab unity, and it particularly emphasized the need for economic development and integration in order to wage a successful struggle against the exploitation of foreign powers and against feudal landlords" (Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 400–401).

We then started our journey through Turkish territories, passing by strange-shaped high mountains covered with trees, wide valleys, and many rivers. Among the most famous Turkish cities we went through were Adana, Ankara, and Eskisehir. The most striking thing about this route is the many tunnels that the train goes through. There were more than forty tunnels, and it took the train a quarter of an hour to go through the longest of them. At nine in the evening of Monday 6th September, we arrived on the eastern side of Istanbul, stopping at the last station of the Orient Express, called Haydarpaşa. From there, we sailed in a launch across the Sea of Marmara to the western part of the city, moving thus from the Asian continent to the European one in just twenty minutes.

The time we spend in the train from Aleppo to Istanbul was 38 hours.

35 In Constantinople

I do not think that there exists in the world a greater vista than that of this everlasting historical city, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire of old, and the Ottoman Empire of more recent times! No sight can capture hearts as this one can, gazing over the hills divided by the river,⁸⁵ appearing on both shores as a bride on her wedding night, with her high castles, beautiful buildings, domes, and minarets, with ships drifting back and forth over the water, illuminated by the electrical lights that decorate the shores as if they were stars shining on the sea, with ships, boats and feluccas floating back and forth, adorned with electric lights in different shapes and colours.

We arrived in this great city on the evening of Monday 6th September 1937. On the next morning, we met with His Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch in the Phanar,⁸⁶ and were welcomed joyfully and graciously. We put our case before him, and it concerned him greatly. He blamed the Patriarchate of Jerusalem for not giving enough attention to the cause and expressed his deepest regrets for being unable to make any formal proclamation because the Turkish authorities had forbidden him to be involved in political matters. However, he promised to call and ask the Greek representative in the city to help us. I pointed out that his Holiness the Pope had already voiced his opinion on the issue, and the Archbishop of Canterbury had pronounced his, leaving the world waiting for the highest authority of the Orthodox Church to speak, since it possesses the

85 A reference to the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus.

86 Benjamin I (in office 1936–1946). Now known by the Turkish transliteration Fener, the Phanar area of the city was home to the Patriarchate and other sites of Orthodox culture and worship.

largest share of the holy places in Palestine.⁸⁷ Tears filled his eyes, and he sighed and said:

when the Pope speaks he has those who would back him up, when the Archbishop of Canterbury does he has his supporters, but as for me, the prisoner of this place, robbed of all freedom and autonomy, who shall stand by me or back me up if I speak? Despite this, I am going to submit a report to the League of Nations concerning the holy places and ask the Greek government to stand by your side.

87 Because of the continuous disputes between the various Churches for control of the Christian sanctuaries, the Ottoman Porte established the so-called Status Quo to regulate the custodianship rights and privileges of each religious community over the Holy Places. Under the Capitulations regime, the Great Powers played a major role in its formation as protectors of their co-religionists within the Ottoman state. According to Cust, the term 'Status Quo' is generally defined as: 'the arrangements existing in 1852 which corresponded to the Status Quo of 1757 as to the rights and privileges of the Christian communities officiating in the Holy Places have to be most meticulously observed, and what each rite practiced at that time in the way of public worship, decorations of altars and shrines, use of lamps, candelabra, tapestry and pictures, and in the exercise of the most minute acts of ownership and usage has to remain unaltered' (p. 1). The Status Quo was later ratified by the international treaties of Paris (1856) and Berlin (1878). The maintenance of the Status Quo was a strategic aim of the British Mandate. In particular, it stipulated the protection of the rights of each community over the Holy Places, and assumed the responsibility of setting up a special commission for resolving outstanding questions on the proper operation of the Status Quo (art. 14). The Jerusalem Orthodox Patriarchate acquired the praedominium, especially due to the support of the powerful Orthodox community of Constantinople and succeeded in maintaining it later with the support of Russia (see: L.G.A. Cust, *The Status Quo in the Holy Places* (Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1980); Bernardin Collin, *Le Problème Juridique des Lieux-Saints*, Vol. I–II (Cairo: Centre d'Etudes Orientales, Paris v—Librairie Sirey, 1956); Paolo Pieraccini, Gerusalemme, *Luoghi Santi e Comunità Religiose nella Politica Internazionale* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1997); Niciphoros Moschopoulos, *La Question de Palestine et le Patriarcat de Jérusalem: ses Droits, ses Privilèges. Aperçu Historique* (Athènes, 1948); Walter Zander, "On the Settlement of Disputes about the Christian Holy Places," *Israel Law Review*, 3 (1978), 331–366; Sélim el Sayegh, *Le Statu Quo des Lieux Saints. Nature Juridique et Portée Intrenationale, Corona Lateranensis*, 21 (Roma: Libreria editrice della Pontificia università lateranense, 1971); Oded Peri, *Christianity under Islam in Jerusalem: the Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Times, The Ottoman Empire and its Heritage*, 23 (Leiden: Brill, 2001); Roberto Mazza, "Churches at War: The Impact of the First World War on the Christian Institutions of Jerusalem, 1914–1920," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45 (2009), 207–227; Marlen Eordegian, "British and Israeli Maintenance of the Status Quo in the Holy Places of Christendom," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 35 (2003), 307–328; Konstantinos Papastathis, "Religious Politics and Sacred Space: The Orthodox Strategy on the Holy Places Question in Palestine, 1917–1922," *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 65 (2013), 67–96.

We thanked him, and asked for his blessing and prayers. We left His Holiness, bidding him farewell most warmly and reverently, then he ordered one of his clergymen to accompany us on a tour around the historical and archaeological places in the city. He was most astonished when he saw me wearing my usual clothing and said: "How did they let you in the country with this outfit! The archbishop of Lebanon⁸⁸ came here two months ago and they captured him, stripped him off his clerical vestment, and shaved his beard and head. He came to me crying, but it seems that the grace of the Holy Sepulchre has kept you safe."

After visiting the Patriarchate and the church and seeing the door where the Ecumenical Patriarch Gregorios was hanged during the Greek revolt,⁸⁹ we toured around the city and viewed its streets, markets, palaces, and buildings. We wanted to visit the Yıldız Palace, the residence of the Sultan Abdel Hamid, but we were not able to because a military meeting presided over by Mustafa Kemal, the new Turkish president, was being held there. We did visit the Topkapi Palace where we saw marvels and curiosities!

Finally, we visited the great Hagia Sophia mosque where the architects were working on removing the plaster that hid the mosaics, icons and frescos that adorned its walls when it was a church for the Greek Orthodox.⁹⁰ Under it was revealed the wonders of Byzantine art that delight the heart and captivate the mind with their glory and splendour. When we entered the church, we were amazed by its grandeur and magnificence and by the icons, images, and carvings that appeared on the ceiling and walls after the plaster was removed. We also saw the sanctuary, the choir stands, and the ambon still standing tall like the high domes. We were told that when the Sultan attended Friday pray-

88 Elias Karam was Metropolitan of Mount Lebanon from 1934 until his death in 1969. The incident recounted by Khoury, of an assault on him in Istanbul as a result of his clerical vestments, seems not to be recorded elsewhere.

89 Gregorios V was Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople during several periods from 1797 to 1821. At the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence, Gregory V was accused (in his capacity as leader of the Rum Millet) by Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II of failing to suppress the Greek uprising. On Easter Sunday in April 22, 1821, the patriarch and several other bishops were hanged by a mob, his body being left for two days on the main gate of the Patriarchate compound. The executions resulted in the flight of many Orthodox from Istanbul and became a major motif for the Greek nationalist movement (Lucien J. Frary, *Russia and the Making of Modern Greek Identity, 1821–1844* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 31).

90 Louis Bréhier, "La découverte des mosaïques de Sainte-Sophie," *Journal des Savants* 5, 1939, p. 233; Thomas Whittemore, "Les mosaïques de Sainte-Sophie (communiqué)," *Revue des études byzantines* 166, 1932; p. 255; Yücel Erdem, Tibet Aksel. 'Les restaurations de Sainte-Sophie,' in *Anatolia Antiqua*, Tome 3 (1995), 219–235.

ers there, no less than six thousand worshippers came along with him, which is not unimaginable because the existing hallway before the church entrance could fit more than two thousand people.

36 In Sofia the Capital of Bulgaria

We left Istanbul at half past two in the afternoon on Tuesday 7th September, heading to Sofia on the European Express, and arrived at quarter to six in the afternoon on the 8th, with the journey between Istanbul and Sofia taking almost 28 hours.

We stayed in a luxurious hotel in Sofia called the Hotel Bulgaria, facing the royal palace. We immediately contacted the Minister of Propaganda and Publishing, asking him for a meeting, and were given an appointment at 11 in the morning on the following day, Thursday. We also contacted major newspaper publishers, who rushed to meet us and took our pictures, while we explained our mission and cause. The newspapers were published the next day with our pictures and story in the headlines. What is worth mentioning is that all Sofia's newspapers were interested in the Palestinian Cause and holy places, leading a fierce campaign against the British policy that aimed to Judaicise the country.

On the morning of Thursday 9th September, we visited the seat of the Metropolitan where we met with the acting archbishop because the Metropolitan was in Carlsberg on that day, traveling to London. The Acting Archbishop showed an interest in the cause and called His Eminence the Metropolitan in Carlsberg, explaining our case to him and asking him to raise it with prominent people in London. He also called the ministers in the capital and asked them to take care of us and assigned as well his personal secretary to accompany us while we visited these ministers and met with the king. At eleven o'clock sharp we met with the Minister of Propaganda and Publishing, accompanied by the Metropolitan's secretary who was getting ready to head to Geneva the next morning to join his country's delegation that had preceded him to the League's sessions. We explained to the minister the Palestinian Cause in detail and asked the government of Sofia to aid us at the League of Nations. We clarified to him all the dangers that would befall the holy places if the country fell into the hands of the Zionists. He expressed great concern about the issue and criticised us for the delay in raising awareness of it. He promised us that he would convince his fellow ministers, who had preceded him to Geneva to stand by the Arabs' side when the Palestinian Cause was tabled for discussion at the League. We thanked him and bid him farewell as he got up and politely walked us to the door of the office.

We then met with the acting Prime Minister, accompanied by the Metropolitan's secretary; he also welcomed us warmly and graciously and promised to write to the Prime Minister, who was already in Geneva, about our visit and to urge him to help us. From there we visited the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, Doctor Sarafov, who also welcomed us effusively and also promised to help us.⁹¹

We then headed to the royal palace, where we wrote our names in the guest-book and were received by the chief of the palace staff, General Blatov.⁹² His Highness Tsar Maurice⁹³ looked upon us with kindness and sent the General to visit us at our hotel to pass to us his sympathy with Palestine and the Cause and to inform us that he had sent word to his country's delegation in Geneva, asking them to support our Cause and to ensure that the partition of the Holy Land would not happen. We thanked His Highness for his compassion and generous inclination towards us.

What is worth mentioning is that the hospitality which we were shown in Sofia, whether by the government and the Tsar or by the religious leaders, the press or even the general population, which was something we had never witnessed in any other country. Wherever we went, we received honour and respect, even the soldiers and police—after our pictures were published—started to salute us with military salutes and some people even tried to kiss my hand! We went into a restaurant in the city to have lunch and upon seeing us, some clergymen stood up and invited us to sit at their table. And at the hotel we were staying at, they offered us a kind of hand soap that we found nothing comparable to in all of Europe.

37 In Bucharest the Capital of Romania

We stayed in Sofia for three days. After our mission there was completed, we took the train at half past nine in the evening of Friday 10th September, heading to Bucharest, where we arrived at exactly four in the afternoon on Saturday 11th. The travelling time between the two countries was about 18 hours.

91 The official Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria at this time was Georgi Kyoseivanov, who was also Prime Minister of a government which was closely affiliated to the interests of Tsar Boris III. Dr Sarafov seems to be a deputy or stand-in for Kyoseivanov.

92 This may be a mistyped reference to the recently-deposed royalist Prime Minister, Pencho Zlatev, or a distortion due to the various languages and alphabets involved in the production of the text.

93 Although Khoury writes Maurice, he is referring to Boris III (1918–1943).

In Bucharest we stayed in its grandest hotel, the Senvasaki.⁹⁴ We headed immediately to the Patriarchate Court to meet with the Patriarch of All Romania, Miron Cristea.⁹⁵ However, he was not present at that time, so his secretary received us and we handed him the name of our hotel and my card. From there we headed to the University to meet with a student from Damascus named Emile Marqada to whom Yusif Al-Issa had directed us.⁹⁶ The student being absent on that day, we were received by the Dean of the university, who honoured us exceedingly when he found out that we were from Jerusalem, kissing my right hand multiple times and asking for a blessing.

Back in the hotel, the Patriarch's secretary called us and set an appointment to meet with His Beatitude at ten in the morning on Monday 13th. Soon after, the Damascene student Emile Marqada came to us and took great care of us, sending for the most important newspaper owners, magazines and telegraph companies to interview us about the Palestinian Cause and the holy places. On the following day, Sunday 12th, the press published our interviews and pictures in the headlines, writing exhaustively about the cause.

Public opinion in Bucharest was supportive of our cause. The journalists commented significantly on our visit to Romania, some of them inviting the government in Bucharest to take a stand and replace Russia in safeguarding the Orthodox and Orthodoxy in the East. They urged it to give the Holy Land care and attention in honour of the holy places that are present in this country, pointing out the great risks if the country fell into the grasp of the Jews.

94 This name is an approximation of that given by Khoury in his Arabic manuscript. Despite considerable searches, we could not locate the name of a prominent hotel in Bucharest similar to this in the 1930s, but this may be the result of problems in transliterating the name between different languages.

95 Miron Cristea (1868–1939) was elected Metropolitan Primate of Romania in 1919 and crowned Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church on November 1, 1925. As discussed in the Introduction to this volume, he was also responsible for stripping over 200,000 Romanian Jews of their citizenship, referring to them as “parasites,” just before WWII.

96 Marqada was a Syrian clergyman (later a priest at the Greek Orthodox Mariamite Cathedral in Damascus) who spent considerable time in the Balkans in the interwar period. While in Romania he took part in research into Arabic printing and books in the region, and on his return to Syria continued to translate both fiction and non-fiction from Romanian into Arabic, including several pieces published in the Ministry of Culture journal *Marifa*. (Ioana Feodorov, “The Arabic Book of the Divine Liturgies Printed in 1745 in Iași by Patriarch Sylvester of Antioch,” *Scrinium* (2020), 6; Barbu Delavrancea, “al-jadda: qisa (Grandmother: a story), translated by Emil Marqada,” *al-Marifa* 61 (January 1967), 90–95; “Lenin w-al-kitab (Lenin and the Book, translated by Emil Marqada from an article in Viața Românească, București, April 1956, 5–8),” *al-Marifa* 99 (May 1970), 249–255).

Emile Marqada also took us to the Church of Saint Sylvestros that stands in one of the most beautiful neighbourhoods in Bucharest. There we attended Divine Liturgy celebrated by Father Youhanna, the Economos of the seat of Romania, accompanied by an archimandrite and a deacon. At the end of liturgy, he said some words about the Palestinian Cause and the holy places, pointing out the importance of our mission here in Bucharest and directing the attention of the crowd towards us. Therefore, after liturgy, they stood in the churchyard and greeted us. We had lunch that day on the table of that righteous father who welcomed us with cordiality and honour.

38 Meeting His Beatitude the Patriarch

At ten in the morning on Monday 13th September 1937 we headed to the Patriarchal palace to meet with His Beatitude the Patriarch Miron Cristea, patriarch of the Romanian Kingdom. No one can appreciate the prominent status this man enjoyed, unless he visits Romania and witnesses for himself his outstanding position in the country. He is the king, the government, the people; he is everything for everyone in Romania. When we entered his presence, he honoured us with the most excellent and cordial reception. We firstly discussed with him the mission for which we came and then the discussion developed to encompass the political Palestinian Cause, the religious aspect, and the relationship of the community with the Greek Patriarchate, and so on. The secretary was taking notes of all the conversation in shorthand.

The Patriarch was greatly concerned about the Palestinian Cause and the holy places and was also worried for the community. He promised to open Orthodox schools in Palestine at the expense of the Romanian government, and to accept six Palestinian students in the Romanian University every year; these would later form a nucleus of educated Orthodox clergy in Palestine.

He also sent a telegram to the Romanian delegation in Geneva urging them to stand by our side in the League and to influence other delegations to support us as well. And he wrote an additional memorandum to the League on this issue and promised to supply us with letters of recommendation to get other parties to help us. He then ordered his secretary to take us around the different ministries with interests in the cause and to accompany us to the royal palace, where we would register our names on the waiting list so that we could meet with the king when he came back from his trip three days later.

This meeting went on for an hour and a half. When it was time to leave, I kissed his right hand and said:

I, in the name of hundred thousand Arab Orthodox in Palestine, kiss this pure hand, asking on their behalf that you would prevent the Judaisation of the Holy Land, preventing those who crucified Christ from taking the opportunity to profane the pure places that He sanctified

I was very overwhelmed when I spoke these words, to the point that tears filled my eyes. He was also moved and noted down a very serious statement that he signed with his signature saying:

Take this statement from me and publish it under my name; Palestine should remain Arab for its Arab people. We must not allow its partition or the Judaisation of any part of it for it is one Holy Land and the whole of it is precious to us, and we must not permit the Jews to profane our sanctuaries.

Therefore, we took this statement and sent a copy of it to the Arab Higher Committee in Jerusalem, to the Palestinian delegation in Geneva, and to many newspapers and telegraph companies both Arab and foreign.

He was particularly moved when I told him that the Catholics in Palestine have those who support them, and the Protestants have those who stand by them,⁹⁷ but as for us, the Orthodox of this country, we are left as orphans with no one to take care of us or look upon us, having even our religious authority against us. "Will you be a father to us, we the orphans?" A tear fell from his eye and he said: "I give you my word to be a father to you and that Romania will be your mother. As a token of this unprecedented visit of an Orthodox priest from the Holy Land to Romania, I offer you the medal of the Holy Cross."

When we left his Beatitude, having been lavished with hospitality and respect, his private secretary accompanied us to the royal palace, where we were received by the master of ceremonies and registered our names on the waiting list. In the meantime, we visited the prime minister, the ministry of foreign affairs and the ministry of propaganda and publishing. There we were warmly

97 Here, Khoury is referring to the Capitulations and related phenomena, which started in the fifteenth century as equal legal agreements allowing foreign traders to operate in the Ottoman Empire but which, as European imperialism expanded, morphed into a means under which states such as Britain and France claimed significant non-Muslim populations in the Empire as being under their protection, allowing them to interfere in internal Ottoman affairs. In particular France claimed the right to represent Catholics in the Ottoman Empire, and Britain to 'protect' Protestants and Jews. Russia was also self-proclaimed protector of the Orthodox subjects as well. Although this status was theoretically disputed, it was practically respected on the ground.

and affably received, having told them about our mission. They all promised to contact the Romanian delegation in Geneva to ask them to aid us in our cause. The newspapers and news agencies were also interested in our meetings, especially the one with His Beatitude, and commented extensively on them.⁹⁸

On Tuesday 14th September, on the Feast of the Holy Cross,⁹⁹ we went to attend Divine Liturgy at the Cathedral near the Patriarchal palace at around ten o'clock in the morning. We found the church packed with worshippers, many of whom were highly ranked. Many important figures from the palace and officials were also present, as well as ambassadors from Orthodox countries and the Romanian army officers. The Patriarch's secretary welcomed us and led us to the sanctuary. He introduced me to Archbishop Benjamin, Metropolitan of Bucharest,¹⁰⁰ who was going to celebrate the liturgy, the Patriarch being absent. Also present was another Romanian archimandrite who spoke Greek and who I had already met when he had visited Jerusalem. He started lavishing me with praise, so his Eminence insisted that I join them in the service despite already having had coffee and smoked.¹⁰¹ The resident priest at the church offered me one of the most lavish and marvellous clerical outfits to wear. I concelebrated with him the liturgy,¹⁰² and he gave me prominence over the others, including the archimandrites, under the pretext that I was a priest of the Holy Sepulchre! He also asked me to pray some Ecphonesis in Arabic,¹⁰³ saying: "we love the Arabs and respect their language." When we got to the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, he ordered that I go out, stand before the Icon of the Master, and utter them there in Arabic.

98 Khoury may have been either naively enthusiastic or self-aggrandizing here: a survey of several hundred digitally available Romanian newspapers from the period of the visit and several weeks afterwards (conducted for this volume) revealed only very brief and oblique references. Khoury and his colleague seem to have been overshadowed by domestic events, by the visits of Cardinal Eugene Tisserant and the Patriarch of Poland, and by the death of the Czechoslovak elder statesman Tomáš Masaryk.

99 More precisely the Feast of the Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross, which commemorates the finding of the Cross of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem by Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine in 326.

100 Khoury seems here to have confused the title of the man he met; Archbishop of Bucharest is one of the official styles of the Patriarch of Romania, so at this time would have been Miron Cristea. Benjamin was the patriarchal vicar, not the archbishop.

101 According to Byzantine tradition, lay and clergy are required to fast from all food and drink and abstain from marital relations in preparation to receive the Eucharist. The fast begins no later than the sunset or the midnight before.

102 The term concelebration refers to the practice of having many priests officiating jointly at Mass.

103 ἐκφώνησις. Exclamatory or emotional closing words at the end of prayers.

At the end of liturgy, His Eminence stood and improvised a homily in Romanian about the significance of this feast, connecting it to the holy sanctuaries and the danger they were facing. He said:

this revered father who joined us in this Divine Liturgy service today is the emissary of your Orthodox brothers, keepers of these sanctuaries back home. He wants you to know that these places which the Lord of glory himself honoured by living there, are in danger of falling into the hands of the Jews, who crucified Christ! Do you accept, you Romanians, that these places where the Lord Jesus Christ was born, lived, ministered, performed miracles, suffered, was crucified, died, was buried, ascended to the sky, and sent the most Holy Spirit to his pure disciples ... these places with blessed historical heritage, fall under the authority of the Jews!

His discourse was passionate and touching, as far I could understand from the archimandrite who was translating the gist of what was being said, and he cried during his preaching, as did many of those listening.

When the liturgy ended, the majority remained standing in church, waiting for me to leave. As I exited along with His Excellency, the flock rushed to salute me and be blessed by kissing my hand as if they saw Christ or one of his disciples!

The whole city was closed on that day in honour of the feast, so many clergymen, university professors, and journalists visited us at the hotel, where Emile Marqada acted as our interpreter, as he was proficient in Romanian.

On Wednesday 15th we had an appointment with the Patriarch to receive from him the letters of recommendation he had promised. When we arrived at the patriarchal palace to do this and to bid His Beatitude farewell, he insisted that we stay for two more days in Bucharest in order to meet with the King upon his arrival in the capital. We were inclined to comply with his orders. We also met the Polish ambassador, who was Orthodox, and he promised to write to his government's delegation in Geneva about the need to help us. He also put his car at our disposal for the rest of our stay in Bucharest.

As we left His Beatitude's presence, we received a telegram from Prince Adel Arslan in Geneva saying that we needed to drop everything and head to Geneva. The League had started its meetings and had proceeded to discussions of the Palestinian Cause. We therefore returned to the Patriarch and excused ourselves, bidding him farewell and asking for his benediction. He implored us to visit Bucharest again after we are done with the consultations, in order to meet the King, saying that this meeting would bring about many benefits to the cause of our country on both the political and communal fronts. Then he patted me on the shoulder and said: You will be my agent in the Holy Land!

As we went back to the hotel and were preparing to leave for Switzerland, we received a telephone call from Awni Bey Abdel Hadi in Geneva,¹⁰⁴ insisting that we should stop in Belgrade before heading to Switzerland, so we bought tickets to Belgrade instead.

39 In Belgrade the Capital of Yugoslavia

We left Bucharest at nine in the morning on Thursday 16th September 1937, arriving in Belgrade at exactly one in the morning on Friday the 17th, 16 hours after leaving Bucharest. On the next day we met with the Minister of Transport in the Belgrade government, Mehmed Beik Spaho,¹⁰⁵ to whom we were carrying a letter from His Eminence the Mufti. He respected our initiative so he gathered Yugoslav Muslim leaders and presented us to them. He had also contacted the publishers of the official newspaper (*Vreme*) who took our pictures and interviewed us. In addition to this, he contacted his fellow ministers, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Minister of Information, commending us to them. The Belgrade delegation had already left for Geneva but they all agreed to recommend us and our cause to them. We left his presence, bidding him a respectful farewell, to visit the Acting Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Propaganda, and also the Royal Palace where we wrote our names in the guestbook. We were met there by the master of ceremonies because Prince Paul, the King's uncle and Prince Regent, was absent, but letters of recommendation from all these to the Yugoslavian delegation in Geneva had been sent via Mehmed Beik Spaho.

¹⁰⁴ Awni Bey Abdel Hadi was a Palestinian nationalist who under the Ottomans was involved in al-Fatat (the Young Arab Society) and the first Arab Congress in Paris in 1913, and was secretary to Amir Faysal during the short-lived Hashemite government in Syria. During the Mandate period he was a founder and Secretary-General of the Istiqlal Party, a secular political party which aimed to break the dominance of the Hussayni and Nashashibi factions in Palestinian politics and to promote pan-Arabism (Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris 2006), 15, 86).

¹⁰⁵ Dr Mehmed Spaho (1883–1939) was one of the first Bosnian Muslim politicians in what in the interwar period was called the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia), and first held ministerial office in 1918. He died in mysterious circumstances—possibly poisoned by political opponents—in 1939. He held the position of Minister of Transport in the government of Milan Stojadinović (M. Epstein (ed), *The Statesman's Year-Book: Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1937* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1937), 1396).

We headed afterwards to the court of the Orthodox Patriarchate who was informed about our presence by Mehmed Beik. We were received with great, not to say unprecedented, warmth by his Eminence the Patriarchal *locum tenens* Monsignor Irfiyalous, for the Patriarch had passed away.¹⁰⁶ I was unable to withdraw my hand from his as he wanted to kiss it! He had become concerned about our cause, especially after reading the letter of the Romanian Patriarch Miron Cristea, and issued an important declaration. We sent a copy of it to Geneva, Palestine and to both Arab and foreign newspapers. He also wrote to the Yugoslav delegation in Geneva urging them to help us and stand by our side.

He told us, as we were conversing, that when the Balfour Declaration was issued, he was in London, and was invited to the house of one of his father's friends, a member of the House of Lords. As Balfour was declared late in the evening, he was being blamed by his friends for this late night, he said: "I, during this night, was very busy taking the role of Judas Iscariot, with the sole difference that he sold Christ himself to the Jews and I Christ's Country to them!" Everyone present hurled abuse at him, but he said: the interests of the empire demanded this.¹⁰⁷

His Eminence was enthusiastic when we told him that most of the Holy Places in Palestine are Orthodox and that only Orthodoxy would lose if the dream of the Jews was realized and Palestine became their property. He promised to stand by our side and to compel his government to stand by our side as long as the Muslims supported us. After our mission in Belgrade, we went to Switzerland, passing through Italy.

40 In Geneva, Switzerland

We left Belgrade at half past eleven in the evening on Saturday 19th September and arrived in Geneva at eight o'clock in the morning of Monday 21st. Our journey from Belgrade to Geneva thus lasted 32 hours by express train. We

¹⁰⁶ The deceased Patriarch here can be identified as Varnava Rosić, who died in July 1937. Until the appointment of his successor, Gavriilo Dožić, in February 1938, the Serbian church was overseen by the Metropolitan of Zagreb, Dositej Vasić, now canonised as Dositheus the Confessor. As this does not match the name of the priest who welcomed Khoury, this may have been another member of the regional clergy who was acting in an official capacity in Belgrade itself. Thanks go to Dr Bojan Aleksov for helping to identify Dositej as the interim head of the Serbian church in this period.

¹⁰⁷ There is no corroborating evidence for this anecdote, which is more instructive as a reflection of Khoury's beliefs about the custodianship of the sacred sites of Palestine than, necessarily, of Balfour's actual assessment of his actions.

passed through many famous cities in Italy, such as Trieste, Venice and Milan. We then entered Switzerland and passed through Lausanne, the renowned city where the international conference was held that gave Turkey the Bosphorus and Dardenelles back, then through Montreux, famous for the abolition of the Capitulations in Egypt.¹⁰⁸ Finally, we arrived in Geneva, at the headquarters where the League of the Nations meets. It was crammed with delegations from the 52 member countries of the League. We stayed at the hotel called the Victoria where the Palestinian delegation were based. The delegation consisted of Awni Bey Abdel Hadi, Alfred Rock, and Prince Adel Arslan, who was presiding over the Syrian delegation.

As soon as we recovered from the journey, they came to us, along with Tawfic Beik Al-Soueidi, the Iraqi Minister of Foreign Affairs, Emile Beik Al-Khoury the reporter of Al-Ahram, Ibrahim Al-Shinty, owner of the newspaper Al-Difa', and a Muslim prince from India. They greeted us as we briefed them about the results of our journey and how we were met with sympathy towards our cause in the Balkan counties. They were delighted with our success and were amazed at the important results we were able to achieve despite the limited time. Prince Adel held a dinner in our honour that night that was attended by all the aforementioned and other prominent Arab figures. Emile Al-Khoury, the Al-Ahram reporter, sat next to me at the dining table and told me: "there is no need to send a telegram to reassure your families that you arrived safely, for I sent an additional one today to Al-Ahram to inform them of your arrival, so they will read it tomorrow in the paper."

After dinner we visited the Egyptian delegation, which consisted of Wasif Ghali Pasha the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister, Doctor Hafez Akiki Pasha the ambassador of Egypt to London, and a number of staff and specialists; the Iraqi delegation presided over by Tawfic Beik Al-Soueidi; then the delegations of Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, to whom we gave the letters that their religious leaders and fellow ministers supplied us with. They all promised to stand by our side.

On both Tuesday and Wednesday the 22 and 23 of September, we visited many delegations, among them the representatives of Turkey, Iran, Albania, Afghanistan, Poland, Haiti, Honduras, Brazil, Ireland, Greece and others. Mis-

108 The Lausanne Conference was the main settlement dealing with the former territories of the Ottoman Empire after WWI. The 1837 Montreux Convention Regarding the Abolition of the Capitulations in Egypt was an international convention which led to the abolition of the Capitulations, the widely resented extraterritorial legal system for foreigners in Egypt which gave them immunity from local courts and various trade privileges.

ter Polítis,¹⁰⁹ the Greek delegate who insisted that he did not want to see any member of the Arab Palestinian and Syrian delegation except me, met with me individually. I convinced him to support us; however, he concluded that he needed to refer back to Athens because the instructions he had were contrary to our wishes.

We spent these two days in ceaseless effort, day and night, meeting with different countries' delegations, convincing them about the justice of our cause and urging them to support us. We left no delegation unmet except the English and the French who refused to see us. Some delegations were convinced of our rights and would side with us, while others were under English and French influence or misled by the Jewish propaganda so they kept to their former opinions.

What is worth mentioning is that the Jews had stronger propaganda. They spent large amounts of money hosting balls, tea parties and banquets, to the extent on one occasion of paying six thousand pounds sterling for a bottle of Parisian champagne! They also had permanent access to the League's headquarters and had assigned seats as if they were already a member nation, with open permission to speak and discuss the Palestinian Cause.¹¹⁰

As for us, we were not granted access to the meeting room unless we got a special pass from the Egyptian or Iraqi delegations. Our seat was with the reporters, around 400 of them, as observers with no right to speak!

On Wednesday 23rd September, Wasif Ghali Pasha,¹¹¹ the president of the Egyptian delegation, gave a comprehensive speech about the Palestinian Cause that had a deep impact on every person from every delegation, no matter to

109 Nikolaos Polítis (1872–1942), Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs under Venizelos in the 1920s, expert in international law, and proactive member of the League of Nations (Rudolf Holsti, "In Memoriam: Nicolas Politis: 1872–1942," *The American Journal of International Law* 36, 3 (July 1942), 475–479).

110 Whilst the Jewish Agency did not have official status at the League of Nations in the way that, for example, non-state organisations such as the PLO would at the UN in later decades, it had had a considerable presence there for some time by 1937, both because of its role as the official Jewish body in the eyes of the Mandates system and because it was represented on the council established earlier in the 1930s to steer the League's response to the large numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany after 1933 (Greg Burgess, *The League of Nations and the Refugees from Nazi Germany: James G. McDonald and Hitler's Victims* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 57–58).

111 A member of the eminent Coptic family which also included Dr Butrus Ghali (first president of Egypt, assassinated 1910), and Dr Butrus Butrus-Ghali (1922–2016), Secretary General of the United Nations 1992–1996. Wasif Pasha (1878–1958) was a son of Butrus Ghali and a leading Egyptian politician and diplomat (Arthur Goldschmidt, "The Butrus Ghali Family," *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 30 (1993), 187).

what side they leaned. However, the Jewish influence at the League had twisted this speech, getting the newspapers to write distorted reviews of it. The Egyptian delegation protested against these manipulations, so the General Secretariat discredited the reports and issued the correct information.

On Thursday 24th, the designated date to vote on the Partition of Palestine, we obtained our permits from the Iraqi delegation early in the morning and rushed to the meeting room at the crack of dawn to take our assigned seats. At the given hour, the room was absolutely packed with delegations and newspaper reporters. Then the Jewish delegation arrived and was seated in its place.

The discussion was centred on the plan for the Partition of Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish. Mr De Valera, the Irish delegate,¹¹² made a fierce statement against the plan and the Mandate state in front of the president of the British delegation, Mr Anthony Eden, the British Foreign Secretary, who did not utter a word. After a heated debate between partisans of the partition and those opposing it, it was decided that the plan satisfied neither the interested parties nor the League. Therefore, they postponed the discussion on the Palestinian issue for another six months, giving the Mandate state a chance to find a solution that would be acceptable to both parties, the Arabs and the Jews. This decision had a huge impact on the Arabs and the countries supporting them. It was considered a marvellous success for the Arabs of Palestine in general, and for us in the Orthodox delegation in particular, because its main actors were the Balkan states we visited and who promised to help.

We left the meeting room with our heads held high. People came up to congratulate us, while the Jewish delegation left with their heads lowered, their tails between their legs.

In the meantime, we visited all the delegations of the states that supported us to thank them. That night we did not sleep, for joy filled our hearts. We met

112 Although Eamon de Valera is best known for his role in the Irish uprising of 1916 and later as Taoiseach of the independent Republic of Ireland, he also acted as the country's Minister for External Affairs for long periods, and in 1938 was elected President of the Assembly of the League of Nations. His opposition to the partition plan is thus in keeping with the general slant of his foreign policies (Ronan Fanning, "De Valera's foreign policy," in *Eamon de Valera*, ed. P. Brennan (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1986), Retrieved from <http://books.openedition.org/psn/5220>). De Valera stated in his speech that partition was not a solution to the problems of Palestine and would not satisfy what he saw as the main interested parties—Arabs, Jews and international Christians. He also met with Moshe Shertok, head of the Jewish Agency's political department, who noted de Valera's opposition to Britain and the idea of dividing Palestine in his diary (Rory Miller, "An Oriental Ireland: thinking about Palestine in terms of the Irish Question during the Mandatory era," in *Britain, Palestine and Empire: the Mandate Years*, ed. Rory Miller (London: Routledge, 2016), 166).

with the Egyptian and Iraqi delegations along with important Eastern figures from India, Iran and Afghanistan, and spent a night overfull with joy and gladness. After our duties were done and we were free from formalities, we went touring around Geneva, looking at its streets, buildings, and parks for the first and last time.

In the evening we met with Prince Adel, Awni Bey Abdel-Hadi and Alfred Rock to draw up plans for our next steps. It was decided that Emile Al-Ghuri and I would go first to Paris and London and then come back to Geneva to head with Prince Adel to Romania. There we would meet with King Carol, because a member of his court was a close friend with the Prince. After that we would visit Greece and other Orthodox countries.

However, winds always blow against the sailor's wishes ... For as we were getting ready to put this plan into action, we received telegrams telling us of the assassination of Mr Andrews in Nazareth,¹¹³ the deterioration of the situation in Palestine in general, the flight of the Mufti to Lebanon, and the arrest of the members of the Arab High Commission and their deportation to the Seychelles!¹¹⁴ So our plans were turned upside down, and we were left with no authority to fund such a trip. So our new agenda was restricted to visiting Athens and then coming back via Egypt ... and so it was.

113 An Australian, Lewis Yelland Andrews (1896–1937) was the District Commissioner for the Galilee during the British Mandate. He was assassinated, along with a British policeman, by a rebel group calling themselves the Black Hand Qassemites (after the Islamist anti-colonial leader Izz ad-Din al-Qassem, killed by British forces in 1935) on his way to prayer services at Anglican Christ Church in Nazareth on 26 September 1937. Whilst Zionists in Palestine named him “one of the most respected British district commissioners” and a proponent of Jewish communities arming themselves, Palestinian nationalists saw him as biased towards Jewish settlement and pointed to his repression of the General Strike which had signalled the start of the Palestinian Uprising in 1936 (Sylva M. Gelber, *No Balm in Gilead: A Personal Retrospective of Mandate Days in Palestine* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1989), 100–101; Matthew Hughes, *Britain's Pacification of Palestine: The British Army, the Colonial State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 3–5; Henry Laurens, *La Question de Palestine: une Mission sacrée de la civilisation* (Paris: Fayard 2002), 373).

114 In an attempt to quash the Uprising, the British deported a number of Palestinian nationalist figures (Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi (leader of the Reform Party), Fuad Saba, Yaqub al-Ghusayn and Ahmed Hilmi Pasha ‘Abd al-Baqi (all also AHC members), and Istiqlal Party leader Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim, who was arrested despite not being involved in the AHC) to the island of Mahé in the Seychelles, which the British Empire had used for confining political opponents since WWI. Amin and Jamal al-Husayni both escaped, Amin to Lebanon and Jamal to Baghdad (Zeina Ghandour, *A Discourse on Domination in Mandate Palestine: Imperialism, Property and Insurgency* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), x, 91–92, 166–167; Deryck Scarr, *Seychelles Since 1770: History of a Slave and Post-slavery Society* (London: Hurst & Co, 2000), 104).

41 In Athens the Capital of Greece

We left Geneva by train to Venice on the 28th September, sailing from there to Piraeus and on to Athens where we arrived on 5th October. We stayed a whole day in Venice, that miraculous city standing tall in the sea with all its streets paved with water and traversed by gondolas! We visited the great church of Saint Mark, with wild pigeons covering its square and coming to peck from our hands. We also visited the famous and historic Palace of Venice ...

On the evening of Friday 2nd October, we sailed from the city, arriving the next morning in Brindisi, and from there we continued to Piraeus. The sea being calm, we arrived on Monday 5th October, and from there headed by car to Athens.

Among the first people we met there was his Beatitude the Archbishop, Metropolitan Chrysostomos, acted also as the Patriarch of All Greece, and whom I knew from days past in Jerusalem, when he was the headmaster of the Patriarchate's Theological School of the Cross.¹¹⁵ On this visit we were accompanied by Nicolas Al-Bandaq, the brother of Issa Al-Bandaq the mayor of Bethlehem.¹¹⁶ His Beatitude honoured our delegation and told us that His Beatitude Nicolas, Patriarch of Alexandria had visited Athens for the same purpose, presenting a report to the government imploring them to help the natives and prevent the Jews from installing themselves in Palestine, dreading the loss of the holy places and their eradication from existence. He also informed us that he himself did not fall short in his duties and would not relent in asking the same of the government. His Beatitude was astonished by the idleness of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the defending the Palestinian

115 Chrysostomos I (1868–1938) was Metropolitan of Athens from March to December 1923, when he became the first Archbishop of Athens and All Greece, serving until his death on 22 October 1938. As well as being one of Greek Orthodoxy's most senior churchmen, he was a popular leader, an "accomplished church historian," and, politically, a Venizelist who until his death was one of the main impediments to the takeover of the Greek church by the dictatorial Metaxas regime (Grigorios D. Papathomas, "History of the Church of Greece in the Twentieth Century," in *The Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Christine Chaillot (Bern: Peter Lang, 2011), 47–50; Panteleymon Anastasakis, "The Church of Greece under Axis Occupation" (University of Minnesota PhD thesis, 2009), 36, 51, 105–109, 132). He was a member of the Brotherhood, but Patriarch Damianos expelled him together with Meletios Metaxakis from Jerusalem, due to their endeavour to depose him in the so called church crisis of 1908–1910. He is the author of the "History of the Church of Jerusalem", a representative work of Greek perspective on Church affairs.

116 Issa Bandak, from a well-known Bethlehem family, served as an official and politician under the Ottomans, British and Jordanians, as well as journalist and educator.

Cause and showed his great regret, describing them as fools. He also helped us to organize meetings with the Ministers of Religions, Foreign Affairs and Information, but we found them all tepid and lacking interest in the Palestinian issue. As we confronted some of them with the conflict between the patriarchate and the community, we were able to deduce that the Patriarchate in Jerusalem had written to some asking them not to look after or help us.

Even so, several major newspaper owners visited us at the hotel and we gave them an extensive interview on the two issues, the political and the religious, which they published along with our pictures. They directed blame at the Patriarchate and the Brotherhood, criticizing them with harsh words because of what they had heard from us of their shortcomings in their duties and for how they soiled the reputation of Greece and religious men with their deplorable, corrupt behaviour. Some of them were in Athens at the time and got to read in the newspapers what was written about them because of us.

The representative of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Athens back then was Archimandrite Benedictos—who was my colleague in formation and an old friend of mine—so he hosted a lunch in our honour and beseeched me not to humiliate him in his position through my campaign against the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre. He also took us on a tour to historical and archaeological places in Athens, including the Acropolis, and honoured us greatly in the hope that, while in the Greek capital, we would hold back from talking about the scandals and disgraces of the Brotherhood.

42 In Egypt

We attended the Divine Liturgy on 10th October 1937 in Athens and were astonished by how filled the church was with worshippers who stood there in devotion and reverence. On the afternoon of that same day, we sailed from Piraeus on a small Greek boat to Alexandria. Our sea voyage this time was exhausting and rough because the sea was raging. Almost all the passengers were struck by seasickness, especially from the island of Crete to Alexandria, and we were not able to keep any food down until we reached Alexandria.

After landing, we headed immediately to my brother Bulos' house; he received us with questions and concern for he had been keeping up with our journey and activities in the newspapers. We rested briefly and then went up to visit the Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Nahas Pasha and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Makram Abid Pasha, to express our gratitude to the Egyptian government for its delegation's stance towards our cause in Geneva.

Afterwards, we visited His Beatitude the Orthodox Patriarch¹¹⁷ and thanked him for the report he filed to the Greek government concerning Palestine. While we were there for the meeting, we found that Bishop Nicolas Abdallah, who was my colleague during training at the seminary of Saint Mitri in Jerusalem, Nasser Al-Roubdi from Ajloun, and Dr Najib Sa'ati from Jerusalem were also at the Patriarchate headquarters so they felicitated us on our successful efforts and for what we had accomplished in the Balkan capitals and at the League of Nations in Geneva.

Finally, we called at Al-Hilal publishing house and thanked the owners of the newspaper for their honourable position in respect of our cause and for publishing the news of our journey. We lunched at the table of my brother Bulos and in the afternoon we took the train to Cairo where we arrived at exactly 7 o'clock in the evening of Tuesday 13th October 1937.

As soon as we arrived at the station we found it crowded with delegations that had come to welcome us, from the Palestinian diaspora, the Young Men's Muslim Association, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Association for the Defence of Palestine, and from the Syrian Orthodox community in Egypt, reporters from newspapers and magazines, and various personalities from among the Egyptians, the Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians and others. They were headed by Mohammed Ali Al-Taher, the owner of Al-Shura Newspaper in Egypt, who is a zealous Palestinian, one of the greatest and most enthusiastic nationalists and amongst the most loyal to the cause, who presented to us the welcoming crowds and introducing us to every single delegation, while photographers took our pictures at every move.

We lodged that night at the Hospice Hotel,¹¹⁸ most of whose guests were those leaders of Palestine who had fled the government,¹¹⁹ so they gathered around us in the lobby to hear more about the details of our journey, for they had read about it briefly in the newspapers. We spent a good deal of the

117 Nicholas v of Alexandria (1876–1939).

118 The Arabic in Khoury's original manuscript is literally a translation of the English phrase into Arabic, although the letters used suggests the French pronunciation of Hotel (هوسبس أو تيل). Our research has not managed to find a hotel in Cairo by this name in the late 1930s.

119 During the 1936–1939 Palestinian Uprising, many political leaders were arrested by the British and imprisoned or deported to British colonies in Africa or the Seychelles; those Khoury met in Cairo had managed to flee before being seized. During the Ottoman period Egypt was a haven for Greater Syrians escaping censorship and political strictures (such as the editors of the well-known *nahda* journal *al-Muqtataf*) or seeking the cultural efflorescence of Cairo, and many Palestinian families had relatives and business interests in Egypt (such as that of the major Palestinian scholar and commentator Edward Said), so the political exiles were able to settle within an existing Shami community.

night recounting the unfolding of our expedition. Everyone listened with great interest, acknowledging that our efforts had turned out well.

On Wednesday 14th, we visited the Coptic Orthodox Patriarch¹²⁰ and the Greek Catholic Patriarch,¹²¹ and were treated to lunch by Mr Mohammed Ali Al-Taher. In the evening we visited the Young Men's Muslim Association where a luxurious tea party was held in our honour, attended by many notables, Egyptians and others, who asked many questions about our findings during our trip. Then the president of the association, Mohammed Said Beik, leaned towards me to tell me not to visit the Sheikh Al-Azhar because of his unpatriotic tendencies and even said: this man is a turbaned Englishman and it is not fitting for respectable men like you to visit him!

That night, we also visited the Muslim Brotherhood hall. Among those welcoming us were 30 Palestinians from amongst the students of Al-Azhar who exceeded in honouring and celebrating us. People were stunned when they saw that as I was leaving the quarters of the Brotherhood, a number of its members—turbaned Sheikhs—stood up there to bid me goodbye!

On Tuesday 15th, the Palestinian diaspora organized, in our honour, a lavish lunch attended by more than 70 people from different Arab countries. More than 18 orators including Egyptians, Iraqi, Syrians, Lebanese, Hijazis, Yemenis, and Moroccans gave speeches. They praised our honourable achievements and the efforts we had made in our journey, acclaiming our patriotism and loyalty, commending us for unifying the word of Muslims and Christians in Palestine. All of them were pointing at me admiringly for my patriotism and endurance of all the burdens of travel at my age, resisting the resentment of the Mandate state in their obstinacy and persecution! At the end of their speeches, Mr Emile replied to the speakers, thanking them and declaring that we did only what duty called for ... However, the invitees insisted on hearing from me before the end of the ceremony, so I stood up amidst the applause of the crowds and gave a comprehensive account that can be summed up thus: the Palestinian Cause does not concern solely the Arabs in Palestine but is the Cause of all Arabs. Then I contrasted the Jewish position with the Palestinian one, finishing up by saying:

If the Jews in Palestine called out to the Jewish world for help, all the Jews on the face of the earth would step forward with money, weapons and strong men, but as for us, the Arabs of Palestine, who have suffered for a

120 Pope John XIX of Alexandria (1855–1942).

121 Cyril IX Moghabghab (1855–1947).

quarter of a century between iron and fire, fighting worldwide Zionism and the greatest Empire in the world, every time we called out for help we have heard nothing from our Arab brothers in the neighbouring countries, except compliments and admiration for our patriotism and praise for our unity. If we go on like this, the Jews will eat Palestine for breakfast and Egypt for lunch, followed by the rest of the Arab world as successive meals!

This resonated greatly and was repeated on every tongue and in every paper. When we visited Mohammad Mahmoud Pasha, the former prime minister of Egypt, news of our words had reached to him and he said: "This is what I have been shouting for ten years now ..."

On Sunday 18th October I was asked by the officers of the Orthodox Church of the Archangels, which served the Syrians in Cairo, to serve the Divine Liturgy, replacing Father Jiryis Yaqub, the priest there, who was away attending to a funeral in New Cairo.¹²² I celebrated the Divine Liturgy that day aided by the Greek deacon, servant of that Church, and gave an eloquent homily after the gospel, which had a great impact on the faithful. At the end of the liturgy, I was offered a sum of money by Prince Michel Lutfallah, the head of the pastoral council, as remuneration for my service. I refused to accept it and the Prince, surprised, said: this is the first time in my life that I offered money to a clergyman who refuses to accept!

He also held for us a lunch banquet at his palace. Overflowing with praise in my honour, he said to the invitees: this is the first clergyman I have ever encountered who has dignified the title, and kept his soul above materialism. When the news of my acts spread to the members of the community, seeing how Muslims met us with hospitality and respect, they started to admire me. Invitations fell upon us from every side. No day would pass by without a lunch, dinner or tea party being held in our honour.

At that time, many of the Palestinian leaders were living in Egypt, fleeing the persecution of the British Authorities in Palestine. They started to gather around me and we would go out for walks. This surprised the Egyptians, seeing a Christian priest among Muslim scholars, hand in hand walking down the streets of Cairo and visiting its associations ... We stayed in Cairo for about two weeks and then I went back to Palestine alone, while Emile Al-Ghuri stayed in Egypt with his family.

122 At the time, this term referred to the Heliopolis area of the city.

43 The Return to Palestine

I returned to Palestine on Tuesday 27th October 1937, after an absence of about two months. Despite the worsening crisis in the country and the intensifying revolt, turning it into a battlefield, the newspapers welcomed me in the best possible way. They honoured all the efforts I had made for the country, all the difficulties I endured, the troubles I had to put up with, and the money I spent, praising my patriotism, loyalty, and dedication to the country and to the nation. Different delegations and people from the cities and villages visited me at home, congratulating me on my safe return and on the success of my mission. And yet, the Muslims of the country showed more gratitude and appreciation for my endeavours than most of the Christians. The only people who did not appreciate my trip were the Orthodox community in Jerusalem and my relatives in Birzeit. As for the rest of my compatriots, they received and honoured me greatly, some of them placing me just after the Mufti in importance.

The government surrounded me with an army of spies who were watching my every breath, but the presence of many friends who are loyal to me and to their country among the security agents meant that these traitors had no chance to harm me, despite their countless attempts to quash me.

Neither the determination of the investigators and nor the betrayal of some traitors halted my activity, or stopped me from contacting the leaders of the rebels, or lessened my zeal and enthusiasm. Rather, I would often attack the government with fiery speeches I delivered on various occasions and would scold it with sharp words in articles in the newspapers that people read eagerly, asking for more. In addition, I was in touch with the Mufti and other national leaders who had sought refuge in Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt. I regularly visited those figures who were in detention centres and prisons, and I actively intervened in liberating the innocent from the hands of the rebels, and some of the combatants from the hands of the government.

Meanwhile, the rebels kidnapped Father Yaqub Al-Hanna with three of his brothers and three of his cousins.¹²³ They almost killed them because of Bishop Hajjar's denunciation of them. I went north and saved him from the pit of water they had put him in. Then, I went to Lebanon to mediate with the Mufti to release his entire group.

123 Yaqub al-Hanna was, like Khoury, a nationalist member of the Orthodox Church. The two of them had been involved in organising a 1934 conference of nationalist Orthodox Palestinians which was chaired by Shehadeh Khoury.

44 The Romanian Decoration

The Romanian Patriarch Dr Miron Cristea kept his promise and sent me the Medal he had pledged to give me when I visited him in Bucharest. I had received a letter from my friend Emile Marqada, [the student] from Damascus, informing me that His Beatitude had sent me the medal by way of Patriarch Timothaos of Jerusalem. Several times I enquired at the Patriarchate but every time they denied receiving anything from the Patriarch of Romania. Finally, I replied to Marqada who told me the truth. He said that the Patriarchate of Jerusalem returned this medal to its sender with a message saying: This man does not deserve this medal because he is a rebel, wandering through the mountains with the insurgents, rebelling against the government and the spiritual authorities!

When I found out this painful truth, I saw red with rage. I immediately resigned from all my roles for the seat of Jerusalem. Newspapers rushed to inquire about the reason behind this resignation; I was questioned from every side but I couldn't make any statement because of the stifling conditions under which the country was labouring at the time. Patriarch Timothaos knew how to retaliate and to choose the perfect circumstances for revenge!

Finally, when the truth was divulged to some of my friends, Bishop Kiladhion and the translator intervened.¹²⁴ I was persuaded to withdraw my resignation and go back to service. However, I did not recognize the authority of the Patriarch and did not mention his name in the liturgy. None of the priests in Jerusalem dared to mention his name either, for fear of me, noting that the rest of the priests in the eparchy did the same. Indeed, at the marriage of a Greek couple to which the Patriarch and I were both invited, I did not mention him in the litanies when I concluded the vows alone even though he was standing by my side.¹²⁵ The bride was the sister of Mr Antippa, the British High Commissioner's secretary.¹²⁶ The High Commissioner's deputy was also present along with the Greek consul, the Romanian consul, and many bishops.

124 It is not clear who Khoury means by "the translator," but it probably refers to his long-standing friend, first mentioned as one of his fellow pupils at the Orthodox college, "Archimandrite Theodoritos the great translator" (pages 74 and 101).

125 During the divine liturgy, the celebrant would normally evoke the name of the local bishop as a mark of his authority over the Local Church. Khoury's omission of this custom was thus a public indication of his disunity with the Church's hierarchy.

126 Angelo George Antippa, Chief Clerk to the Secretariat of the Palestine Government. Thanks to Steven B. Wagner for help in identifying Mr Antippa.

45 Personal Circumstances

I borrowed from Salim Khalil Al-Salfiti an advance payment of four hundred Palestinian Pounds with an interest rate of 15 % and I paid (end of the page)

Pages 45–46 of the manuscript are missing

... The trial of traitors, spies, loyalists to the government and the Jews, being sentenced to the death penalty and put on display on the highways with the judgment and the reason for their execution hanging around their necks. Yet, despite the large number of troops and munitions provided by the government to eradicate the revolution, they were unable to put an end to it.

In the end, the government resorted to a devilish trick. They gave out instructions to some Arab policemen to flee from their camps with their rifles and munitions and pretend that they had escaped to join their revolutionary brothers. However, these were spies and eyes of the government against the combatants, leading them to their hiding places, and so they were able to arrest many of the combatant leaders and heroes.

At the same time, some traitors and spies seized this opportunity, encouraged by the government, to deliberately kidnap people from their homes and shops or to kidnap rich educated children and only release them on payment of a ransom, in order to harm the reputation of the combatants and soil their image. Many innocent people were assassinated during this period.

As a result, chaos prevailed; panic and fear crept into people's hearts. People became afraid for their lives, souls, and money. Control over the situation slipped away from the hands of the combatants and of the government together, so life became loathsome and bitter, turning the country into a second hell. Order and control were left to the nation's rabble and to bands of thieves and traitors.

The situation kept going from bad to worse, until the fires of World War II were ignited in the autumn of 1939. Both combatants and non-combatants from among the men of Palestine had had enough of life and, as the government wanted to disentangle itself from this mayhem to focus on the greater problem of the War, this revolution brought itself to an end. Bit by bit everyone returned to normal life. However, the country was at the end of its strength. People were without sustenance because the revolution had impoverished everyone and worn out our resources and economy.

The British addressed this issue by creating work for the locals, leading to the enrichment of many opportunists.

46 My Nomination as Priest for the Church of the Syrians in Cairo

World War II took the people of Palestine by surprise while they were struggling between life and death. The cost of basic necessities such as food, clothing and rent had become exorbitant, which led to the spread of theft, robbery, hold-ups on the roads, and burglary of houses, shops and individuals in broad daylight. People like me were at risk of death either by assassination or because of severe poverty and lack of means. In the middle of all this, Father Jiryis Yaqub Al-Sahouri, the priest of the Orthodox Church of the Archangels for the Syrian Orthodox in Cairo, had passed away. The community therefore asked for me to become a priest there along with the Archimandrite Malatios Al-Sawiti. I was fed up with Jerusalem and the people in it; firstly because of the doings of the spiritual leaders there, secondly due to the positions of the community, and the state of my personal life as a third, so I accepted their invitation and went to Egypt on September 6th 1943 and took up my role the next day.

Since I was well-known among the men of the community and the church officers, I did not face any difficulties. More so, the homily I delivered on the first Sunday I served the Divine Liturgy there had a pleasing resonance to everyone. Malatios, having established a club for the young people, agreed with me to work on strengthening and reviving it. We started giving talks there every Wednesday, one and then the other, as well as alternating preaching on Sundays. We also agreed on a division of tasks, splitting them equally between us. We carried out our work in an atmosphere of order, calm and mutual respect, such as the community in Egypt had never witnessed before. This increased their honour and respect for us.

However, it did not please the Patriarch of Alexandria to see that peace and accord were reigning in the church and that the community was united in loving and respecting us, and appreciating our efforts. He started writing to the board of the community about me, saying that I was a rebel against authority, hating the Greeks, and that I came from Jerusalem to Cairo without the permission of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. Finally, he decided that he could no longer accept me unless I went back to Jerusalem and got a letter from Patriarch Timotheos confirming that I could serve in the seat of Alexandria.¹²⁷ He had arranged with Timotheos to deny me the post and replace me with Father Nicolas Al-Hreish whose wife was his niece. Therefore I was forced to go back.

¹²⁷ Strictly speaking, the Patriarch of Alexandria was within his rights, as Khoury should indeed have obtained permission from both his own patriarch and that of the see that he had transferred to before taking up such a position.

It was obvious that Patriarch Timotheos would stand against me and would not allow me to return to Cairo!

I went back to Jerusalem on December 8th 1943 after spending three months in Cairo, respected and honoured by everyone there. As expected, Timotheos did not allow me to go back to Cairo, denying me my worth and keeping me servile under his authority in Jerusalem.

47 My Life in Jerusalem after Coming Back from Cairo

My first trip to the Balkans and my trip to Cairo were a powerful weapon used as propaganda against me before the members of the community. Most of them started to despise me as a foreign priest who was concerned about his personal interests and did not care for the welfare of the community. The Patriarch promised [text obscured] Yaqub Farraj, his supporters, and the Jerusalemite priests, treated them as a way to spread their propaganda against me among the different circles and classes, not only in Jerusalem but in other towns and villages.

I lived through horrors after my return from Cairo. The Patriarch fuelled this fire against me, and sent me to Haifa at the beginning of the Holy Forty-day Fast under the pretext that a large number of the community there were in disagreement with their priest, Father Hanna Nassar. As they wanted to be able to take communion it was necessary for me to undertake this task. This meant that once again I left my community during the Fast, having already left them twice before, which harmed my reputation still further.

Nevertheless, there were those among the members of the community who perceived the Patriarch's intention. They forced him to send for me to come back from Haifa, to attend Holy Week in Jerusalem, so I returned to Jerusalem on the evening of the Great Holy Wednesday of the year 1944 and celebrated Easter there.

As soon as I settled in Jerusalem, the snitching and spying went back to the way they were before. I was twice accused before the military commander-in-chief of the city of Jerusalem of being in contact with the Mufti and holding secret deliberations.¹²⁸ However, after an investigation and examination, they decided that these allegations had no basis in truth, and this actually reversed the situation, so that a strong friendship grew up between me and

128 Khoury has, of course, already proudly declared to his readers that he was indeed doing this.

the commander-in-chief, and he started asking for my opinion on many problems. When the conflict between the Muslims and Christians in the North escalated, the High Commissioner was instructed to send me, along with the Mufti of Safad, Ragheb Al-Nashashibi and Khalil Al-Sakakini to settle the matter! And when the court sentenced Ibn Al-Zhabbah, the murderer of Yaqub Al-Khazen,¹²⁹ to the death penalty the High Commissioner was told to consult me before approving such a verdict. I recommended that he did not implement the death penalty lest the conflict between the two parties intensify.

The machinations of the gossips therefore turned against them. My word became sacred to the commander-in-chief of the army, who distanced himself from politics. I also presented through him a report to the Government in London that addressed both the political and communitarian issues.

48 My Visit to King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in Cairo

The Second World War ended in 1945. Due to the troubles it faced, the British government freed a large number of prisoners, let those in administrative detention go, and recalled those nationalist leaders who had been exiled to the Seychelles. Among them was Jamal Al-Husseini whom the whole country celebrated from the river to the sea as they would welcome a victorious king.¹³⁰ Life went back to normal and political activity was resumed in the country.

Early in January 1946, King Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the ruler of the Arabian Peninsula, paid an official visit to Egypt, staying as a guest at the King of Egypt, Faruq. People from all the Arab nations gathered to greet him. The executive committee of the Second Arab Orthodox Conference, too, decided to take part in greeting His Majesty on behalf of the Orthodox Arab people of Palestine and

129 Information on this case is scant, but it seems to be referred to briefly in Tania Forte's PhD thesis when an interlocutor talking about conflict between families in the Deir al-Asad region of the Galilee mentioned that "Yakub al Khazen had olives in Rame ... in 1942, they killed him" (Tania Forte, 'On the making of village: Transactions, land and histories in the Galilee,' PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2000). This seems to be corroborated by an anonymous posting on the Facebook page of a Palestinian rights group, The Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Displaced People, which claims to reproduce a Mandate-era Zionist document in translation. This reports that an elder of the powerful al-Khazen family had been murdered in a clash between rival Christian families (27th June 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/ADDPR/posts/837039479703827/>, viewed 9th March 2020).

130 Jamal al-Husayni had been arrested by the British in 1941 after fleeing Baghdad, where he was living in exile after the 1936–1939 Palestinian Uprising. He was exiled to Southern Rhodesia but allowed to return to Palestine in 1946 (Pappe, *Rise and Fall*, 309, 321).

Transjordan. As I permanently represented the priests on this committee, they agreed to send me along with Issa Al-Bandaq, Yaqub Joumai'an, Hanna Salame and Antoine Atallah, although the last two resigned at the last minute.

So I went to Cairo with Issa Al-Bandaq and Yaqub Joumai'an. Emile Al-Ghouri tried to join us in Cairo but we refused. We were carrying with us two gifts. One of them was for King Abdulaziz: a piece of shell with the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Resurrection engraved on it, between them a palm tree, and above them two crossed swords and the Saudi flag. The other was for Faruq: a rosary of seashells and a cigarette box also made of seashells. When we arrived in Cairo, we visited the Abdeen Palace, wrote our names in the guestbook, and presented Faruq's gift to the official steward who in turn gave it to His Majesty. He replied with a letter of thanks addressed in my name as I was the head of delegation.

After this, we contacted Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Kuhaimi,¹³¹ the consul of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jerusalem, to ask him to arrange a date for us to meet with the king. He replied to us saying: The interview will be at eight o'clock on the evening of 16th January 1946.

At the appointed time, as we were getting ready to leave the hotel, we were surprised to see King Abdulaziz' car stopping at entrance of the hotel with the Saudi flag fluttering on the front. People were surprised that it had parked at the hotel's entrance and started looking in to see why it stopped there and who it was carrying. Sheikh Abdulaziz descended from it, approached us and, to our amazement, called us to get in, saying: The King graciously sent it for you to take you to visit him. We climbed into the car and drove to Al-Zafaran Palace amid much surprise and astonishment.

Al-Zafaran Palace, its spacious courtyard and the road leading to it, were all filled with electric lights of different shapes and colours. The Egyptian and Saudi flags fluttered everywhere and the palace was packed with delegations from various countries that had come to greet the King. When we got out of the royal car at the entrance of the inner palace, a group of Egyptian police and another of Saudi guards saluted us officially. We then met with the Saudi foreign affairs minister, the Master of Ceremonies and some members of the entourage, who greeted us. We were led us to the waiting room to await our appointment. Among the others in the room was Jamal Al-Husseini. He leaned over to me and implored me to seize this opportunity to ask His Majesty to pursue the return of the Mufti to Palestine. I said to him: "I have not come from Palestine, sir, except for this purpose, so trust in God ...". Before us was the

131 Al-Kuhaimi was a significant figure in King Abdulaziz' government who, during his career, occupied a variety of posts including Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon and Iraq.

Lebanese delegation, composed of about thirty persons, among them bishops, archimandrites, Muslim scholars and Druze sheikhs. They went in to meet him, led by Sami Beik Al-Khoury,¹³² the brother of the president of the republic and the Lebanese Minister-Delegate in Cairo. They stayed standing in his presence for only six minutes, not even sitting or being offered coffee.

After they left, we entered the Royal court room. The king had with him only his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Yusuf Yassin,¹³³ and Abdulaziz al-Kuhaimi standing at a distance.

When we entered His Majesty's presence, he stood eagerly and took two steps forward to welcome us, so we went closer to salute him amidst his greetings. He ordered us to take a seat, pointing me to a chair next to him. Out of reverence and politeness, I did not take it and wanted to sit on the next one but he took me by my hand and gave me the chair on his right hand side. Before me, there was small table with nothing on it. As the gift was with me in a small wooden box decorated with seashells and wrapped with the green Saudi flag, I placed it on that table, unwrapped it, took it out of the box and presented it to His Majesty saying:

Your Majesty: this meeting reminds us of the encounter at which the priests of the Holy City came out to receive the great caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab,¹³⁴ may God be pleased with him, when he came as a conqueror to Jerusalem, and how they handed him the keys of the city ... We, the Christian¹³⁵ Arabs, have come all the way from Palestine expressly to declare to your majesty our loyalty and allegiance. We have brought with us for your Majesty this humble gift, which, although unworthy to

132 Sami Beik was brother of Bechara al-Khoury (1890–1964), Lebanon's first president after full independence from French Mandatory rule.

133 Shaykh Yusuf Yassin (1892–1962) was a senior advisor to Ibn Saud whose roles included foreign minister and Saudi delegate to the Arab League, as well as significant roles in negotiating Saudi Arabia's oil treaties and military relations with the USA. Originally from Lattakia, he was one of a number of Levantines who were employed in the early days of the Saudi kingdom for their administrative and linguistic skills (Thomas Lippman, *Crude Oil, Crude Money: Aristotle Onassis, Saudi Arabia, and the CIA* (Westport, CT: ABC-CLIO, 2019), 15–19, 149–154; Robert Vitalis, *America's Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 83, 108; Leslie McLoughlin, *Ibn Saud: Founder Of A Kingdom* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 83, 128–156).

134 According to the apocryphal Muslim treaty known as the Pact of Umar, the caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab came to Jerusalem in 637 after the conquest of Jerusalem and toured the city with Sophronius.

135 In Arabic نصارى Nazarene is a title applied to Jesus, who grew up in Nazareth. This term is used to refer to the followers of Jesus, i.e. Christians.

be presented to as great a King as yourself, carries the same and significance as that of the keys on that occasion.

The gift was ready, so I presented it to His Majesty. He accepted it gracefully and started examining it under the electric light. Then he looked at me as if requesting of me further clarification, so I continued to speak, pointing to the engraved pictures saying: "This means, Your Majesty, the Muslims and Christians in Palestine place their sacred sanctuaries under your protection and trust them to your sharp sword." He shook his shoulders and looked at me, saying: "Who am I to be the protector of the sanctuaries of both Muslims and Christians in Palestine?" I said: "You are the King of Arabs, the father of Arabs and the master of Arabs. If the Arabs do not turn to you when they are tormented, to whom will they resort?" He said:

God forgive me ... I am not the King of Arabs, neither the father of the Arabs nor the master of Arabs, but I am the brother of Arabs and the servant of Arabs, God bless you and give us more like you ... I swear to God, if I owe the Muslims gratitude, then you deserve to be acknowledged twice over!

I told him: "Palestine is a slain sacrifice that implores and cries out to your majesty. Will you listen to its people and reassure them of the future of their country and their sanctuaries?" He replied: "I, my children, and all that belongs to me are a ransom to Palestine and its people. Comfort your brothers, the Arabs of Palestine, Christians and Muslims, that Palestine is Arab and will remain Arab for its Arab people, God willing."

As the Arabic coffee was ready to be served, Issa al-Bandaq pronounced a speech befitting the occasion, and we all drank and then asked for the permission to leave. However, he did not allow us, but said:

It would be my pleasure to meet with you tonight, to hear from you about the important things that are happening in Palestine, for Palestine is the heart of Arabism and the center of our concern these days. I entreat you to relax and turn this meeting into a family gathering. Like a father speaking with his children, be free to speak up and let our conversation be frank and simple.

Here then, we discussed the Palestinian Cause and the positions of both England and the USA towards it. As Prince Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein¹³⁶ had been

136 Sharif Hussein bin Ali's son Abdullah had been named Amir of Jordan under a League

proclaimed King of Jordan the previous night, we discussed that too. In the meantime, we had already asked for permission to leave three times, seeing that many delegations were waiting outside for their turn. However, enjoying the conversation, he did not allow us to leave until a quarter to nine. We had stayed with his majesty for three quarters of an hour!

When he finally permitted us to leave, we stood up to bid him farewell so he stood up with us and accompanied us a few steps [towards the door] ... I grasped his hand and barred him from moving and kissed it saying: "I, on behalf of my brothers, all the Arabs of Palestine, Muslims and Christians, kiss this generous hand in hope, and in their name beseech you not to fail us." He said: "Ask and God will be willing, every request made by the people of Palestine will be met regardless of its nature ..." I said: "The urgent hope that the people of Palestine put in Your Majesty at present is to toil for the return of the Mufti, the authority and leader of the country, which without him is like a body without a soul."

Apparently, he was not expecting such a request from me, as he pressed my hands between his with expressions of wonder and surprise showing on his face. He looked me in the face and said:

Bless you, most respected elder ... God bless you for your wonderful patriotism and infinite loyalty. A nation in which such a soul survives is worthy to be granted every wish. Please convey to your brothers, the Arabs of Palestine, Christians and Muslims, my warmest greetings and best wishes. Tell them that all their desires will be fulfilled, God willing.

I kissed his hand again and thanked him affectionately for the care, compassion and kindness His Majesty had shown. We left while he was still wishing us good fortune. He ordered his foreign affairs minister to accompany us to the door of the Palace and ordered Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Kuhaimi to take us back to the hotel in the royal car. When we emerged from the room, everyone stared at us in astonishment at the hospitality which had been lavished on us, and especially for the long time that we were granted in his presence, and for transporting us back and forth in his own car!

A large crowd of people from Palestine, Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq and the other Arab countries were sitting at the entrance of the hotel, waiting for our

of Nations Mandate held by Britain in 1921; in May 1946 Jordan was declared fully independent of British Mandatory control and he formally became king. Given Khoury's anti-Hashemite views and Ibn Saud's longstanding conflict with the family, both would presumably have been opposed to this move.

return, after seeing the royal car take us to Al-Zafaran Palace. How great was their surprise when they saw us coming back to the hotel in the same car! As soon as we emerged from it, as Sheikh Abdulaziz bid us goodbye and returned to his master, we had throngs of people gathering around us, including representatives of Arab and foreign newspapers, and of radio stations and telegraph companies, to hear about the conversation that had taken place between us and the King of the Arabian Peninsula. Issa Al-Bandaq took charge of explaining the details, while the correspondents wrote down carefully in shorthand the accounts as the audience asked for the details of each point and phrase. Meanwhile the wellwishers piled upon us, astonished by the noble gestures bestowed on us and that no other delegation had received, however far they had come from the ends of the Arab world to greet his Majesty.

The following day, the details of this historic visit were published on the front pages in large print. Four radio stations broadcast accounts: Egypt, Palestine, the Near East, and London. The representative of Palestinian Radio called me that night and told me that the radio station in Jerusalem would broadcast the details of the visit the next day, so I sent a telegram to my son George telling him to listen to it with the family. When the program was broadcast, he tuned it in at home. The presenter started by retelling my conversation with the King of the Hejaz in detail, so George and the rest of my household were overjoyed with gladness.

A considerable number of friends came the next day to congratulate us, including Bishop Nicolaos Abdulallah, Archimandrite Malatios al-Sawiti, Prince Michel Lutfallah,¹³⁷ Bechara al-Habash,¹³⁸ Mikhael al-Biouk, Hanna Pasha al-Bisharat,¹³⁹ and George Abu Lohaf. Prince Michel hosted a tea party

137 Michel Lutfallah was the son of Habib Lutfallah, a Syrian Greek Orthodox émigré to Egypt who, through a series of successful business ventures, had become an influential figure in Cairo and wider Syrian circles. Habib Pasha and his sons were close to the Hashemites and provided financial support to the family and to the Arab nationalist cause during WWI; as a result, they were given the hereditary title of amir by Sharif Husayn bin Ali, hence Khoury's reference to him as Amir or Prince. Michel Lutfallah was one of the founders of the Party of Syrian Unity in 1918 and of the Syrian-Palestinian Congress in 1921, along with other prominent Arab nationalists including Riad al-Solh, Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar, Shukri Quwatli, Shakib Arslan and Rashid Rida (Philip Shukry Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 222–247).

138 A Cairo merchant and figure in the Greek Orthodox community.

139 Bisharat was a successful businessman with origins on both sides of the Jordan River. Brought up in Jordan and Jerusalem, he and his brothers made their fortunes in Palestine and Egypt as contractors for the British and US armies. Despite their good relations with both British and Jewish inhabitants of Mandate Palestine, Hanna Bisharat's grandson also

in our honour, Bechara al-Habash a luncheon and George Abou Lohaf a dinner. On the next day Hanna al-Bisharat hosted lunch and because he was so glad, he paid for my hotel bills for all my stay in Cairo ... All in all, we were throughout this visit honoured and flattered by everyone.

As for Emile Al-Ghouri, he was maddened because we had not let him join us on our visit. He instructed his new friend, the Mukhtar Issa Al-Toubbeh,¹⁴⁰ to call for my return so I that would not enjoy all the honours that were bestowed upon me in Egypt. Envy pierced his heart when he saw the notables of Palestine and the Arab countries running to visit me. He witnessed Jamal Al-Husseini turning away from him to talk to me, introducing me to prominent Arab and Muslim figures! So the Mukhtar sent me a telegram calling me to return to Jerusalem because an important community issue necessitated my speedy return!

What is noteworthy is that a member of the King Ibn Saud's entourage—I believe it was his foreign affairs minister—had written to the Mufti in Paris informing him of the details of this visit. Among the contents, it said that none was able to move his Majesty Ibn Saud and bring him to tears except this honourable elder, Father Niquila.

49 The Impact of this Visit on King Abdullah's Soul

King Abdullah, who had been proclaimed King of Jordan while I was in Egypt, knew me personally for I had visited him once with Doctor Yaqub Nazha.¹⁴¹ On that occasion he welcomed me warmly and with respect and throughout our conversation it became clear that he had been following closely the news of my journey [to Geneva] and that he appreciated my patriotic stand. He also

records that his father fought in the 1936–1939 Palestinian Uprising (George Bisharat, "Talbiyah Days: At Villa Harun ar-Rashid," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 30 (2007), 88–89, 93–98).

140 Issa al-Toubbeh was a well-known figure in Jerusalem's Christian communities, a writer and businessman, and sympathised with Khoury's desire to Arabise the Orthodox Church. He owned the Mukhtar Café at which the famous Palestinian writer and educationalist Khalil al-Sakakini and his friends habitually gathered in what became known as the *Sa'leek* or Vagabonds circle of reforming intellectuals (Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea*, 182–184).

141 Nazha was a doctor who, having graduated from the American University Beirut during WWI, practised in Jerusalem for much of the Mandate period and worked in a number of medical organisations under both British and Jordanian rule, including joining the founding council of the Red Crescent ("Al-hilal al-ahmar," *Encyclopedia Palestina*, <https://www.palestinapedia.net/> accessed 8th April 2020). He was also famous for his height (Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (eds), *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948* (Northampton MA: Interlink, 2014), 129).

invited me to join him for Iftar during the month of Ramadan. He proposed that I become the Patriarch of the Arabs and said that he was ready to make this happen!

However, when he heard about my visit to his enemy Abdulaziz ibn Saud and about the conversation that took place between us, he was furious, and started to say threatening and intimidating things. When Issa al-Bandaq, as the head of a delegation from Bethlehem, visited him to congratulate him on becoming king, soon after our return from Cairo and his Majesty returning from London, he denounced our delegation that had declared Ibn Saud guardian of the Christian and Muslims sanctuaries in Jerusalem. So al-Bandaq disclaimed all that was said during the visit and attributed it to me, saying that he was in disagreement and so on, until he finally got up and kissed his hand and asked for his forgiveness. So King Abdullah forgave him and accepted his repentance. Yaqub Jumia'an had already asked for forgiveness and pardon, blaming everything on me alone, so he was under the impression that I was the one who sought such a visit and had been the instigator. Therefore, he swore on his father's head to take vengeance on me.

As he was well aware of the discord and tensions between me and the Patriarch, he visited the Patriarchate in Jerusalem and entrusted to the Patriarch and his men the holy sanctuaries, declaring that no Arab could enter these places because they belong to the Greeks! He also renewed Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's pledge, but to the Greeks in particular, despite the existence of Arab Christians in Palestine in general and of me in particular. This was a means to strengthen the authority of the Greek Patriarchate and to give them means to crush the rights of the Arab community and set them against me in particular.

However, I took into account neither the Patriarchate, nor the traitors among the men of the Jerusalemite community. For the Muslim leaders of the country in particular adored me. They esteemed my patriotic stance and praised my loyalty, to the point that no conference or national meeting would be held without me being among the first invitees. I would give speeches in every party, meeting or conference, and they would be met with acclamation and admiration.

50 The Celebration of the Establishment of the League of Arab Nations

People met the news of the establishment of the League of Arab Nations with joy and jubilation. Celebrations were held in all the Arab countries in jubilation at the birth of this league, building up expectations and hopes of it. The Arabs of Palestine were doubly joyful because they believed that Palestine would not

be forgotten after the unification of the words and efforts of the Arabs. For this reason, Jamal Al-Husseini, the vice president of the Arab High Commission, and his honourable colleagues called for a special gathering to be held in the Al-Aqsa Mosque after Friday prayers on the first of May, 1946, in celebration of this happy occasion.

On the appointed date, the consuls of the Arab countries, along with the Christian and Muslim leaders of the country, flocked to Al-Aqsa to attend the celebrations. I was among the invitees. When I arrived at the door of the mosque, accompanied by some notables from the community, Jamal Al-Husseini welcomed me and led me to the minbar, from whence the Imam preaches the Friday homily to the believers. This was the first time that a Christian priest was ever seen on such a stand! Almost six thousand people were present.

The orators started their speeches. I was not ready to give one yet but the master of ceremonies surprised me by declaring: now for the words of his honour Father Niquila Al-Khoury who is well known for his patriotism and loyalty. I had no choice but to speak. So I stood up with the eyes of this huge crowd all fixed on me, and gave a spontaneous speech that had a great impact on the souls of those who heard it to the point that, forgetting the sanctity of the place, they started interrupting it with great applause. The master of ceremonies drew their attention to the setting, saying: The sign of appreciation in the mosque is saying "Allah Akbar and Alhamdulillah," so the place thundered with this expression. I continued speaking, saying: "I was honoured to visit the sovereign of the peninsula king Abulaziz Al-Saud three months ago when he was in Egypt and he had asked me to convey to you his greetings and good wishes." I recounted to them all the details of the visit and what was said. Then I said:

I kissed his honourable right hand on your behalf and beseeched him in your name to do all that is in his capacity to bring the master and leader of this county back to it, which without him is like a body without a soul. He promised me to employ all his efforts for this cause and ordered me to convey to you his greetings and good wishes and to reassure you on his behalf that every request made by the people of Palestine will be granted. He puts himself, his children and all his money at the disposal of Palestine and its honourable people ...

So the place thundered with "Allah Akbar and Alhamdulillah," repeated over and over!

When the celebration was over, I descended from the minbar. The Arab consuls stepped forward to greet me and congratulate me, then came the members

of the Arab High Commission, then the Muslim Sheikhs and leaders of the country, then came forward more than sixty young fellows from among the educated Muslims, who kissed my hand. I left the mosque in something like a procession, surrounded by Muslim scholars, leaders, and consuls. Among them were also people from Birzeit and the surrounding villages who carried the news to Anis, Takla, Nassib, and to others from the people of Birzeit. The late Nassib and his siblings regretted that they did not attend this event.

51 The Return to Normal Political Activity in the Country

The country went back to a more normal life after the exiled members of the Arab Higher Committee returned. Political meetings multiplied and people started to arm themselves, getting ready for an emergency.

A meeting for the southern region, attended by about seven thousand men, was held in the Jerusalem locality of Sheikh Jarrah. Among them were consuls from Arab countries who did not usually attend such political meetings. I spoke during this meeting, encouraging people to arm. My words were excellent and instilled a lot of comfort in the Muslims. The Christians were pleased to hear them, especially the people of Ramallah. Consuls of the Arab countries congratulated me too.

This meeting laid the foundation for the General Arab Conference that was planned for Haifa. Around a month after this meeting, at the end of July 1946, this national Conference was held. It gathered together most of the figures from around the country and I gave a fiery enthusiastic speech that was interrupted many times by warm applause.

At the end of the conference, I had lunch at the table of Yaqub Al-Husseini, the brother of Jamal, and his brother Toufic, also known as Abu Saleh. Toufic's wife and daughter were also with us at the table, serving us food and attending to me in particular.

52 The Coming of the Mufti to Egypt

At the end of August 1946, the Mufti arrived in Egypt after being politically excluded from the country for 11 years. On 26th September I went with Bulos to greet him in Alexandria. He welcomed us most warmly and talked with me about my visit to Ibn Saud. He thanked me for my patriotic stand in general and my advances to Ibn Saud in particular. He held in my honour a lunch banquet at his palace; Bulos did not attend out of shyness and reserve, despite being

invited. He was impressed by my meeting with the Mufti and said that he was following my news from his exile.

After the Mufti moved to Cairo, I had met with him many times and suggested the evacuation of women, children, the elderly, and the sick and infirm from Palestine. I also called for men between 18 and 50 years of age to bear arms and defend the country. He asked me to write this suggestion down and send it to the Arab Higher Committee, which I did, but the League of Arab Nations prevented the execution of this request.

In particular, I visited the Mufti once during the Hijri New Year to congratulate him. His court was filled with other wellwishers from all the Arab countries. He presented me to them, saying: I present to you, sirs, the revered Father Niqula Al-Khoury, the leader of Palestine, to which I directly replied: His honour wanted to tell you that I am one of the soldiers of the leaders of Palestine! Everyone laughed at this insight!

53 The Anglo-American Committee

Britain did not want to take sole responsibility for the partition of Palestine, so it drew the United States with it into this heinous crime. Therefore, a committee of 12 members, half of whom were Americans and the other half British, arrived in the country at the beginning of 1947. A lot of Palestinians met the committee and reiterated their refusal to allow the Jews to come to Palestine. Bishop Georgios Hakim,¹⁴² Pastor Najib Qubain¹⁴³ and I met the committee on behalf of the Christian communities. I gave testimony on behalf of the Orthodox community of Palestine.

The Committee submitted its report to the United Nations in New York. It recommended the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. The General Assembly endorsed the recommendations and decided to execute and implement them.

142 Known officially as Patriarch Maximos v, Georgios Hakim (1908–2001) was born in Tanta and ordained at the Saint Ann Seminary on July 20, 1930 and bishop of Akka on June 13, 1943. He was elected patriarch on November 22, 1967 and remained in office until 2000 (Lawrence Joffe, "Obituary: Maximos v." *The Guardian*, Sat 28 Jul 2001 [<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2001/jul/28/guardianobituaries> accessed 29th November 2019]).

143 Later the first Arab bishop in the Anglican Church in the Levant (Kevin Ward, *A History of Global Anglicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 197).

54 The Decision is Issued and the Work Begins

The General Assembly of the United Nations decided on the partition of Palestine on 29 November 1947. The fighting raged between the Arabs, who did not have any weapons, and the Jews who had a range of weapons and were supported by British forces both secretly and publicly. Many people were killed, especially in those cities with large Jewish populations, such as Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem.

Many people sold their livestock, their land, and their wives' jewellery and bought weapons and ammunition. However, what value did these measures have in the face of the preparedness of the Jews?

At this time we lived in al-Tor in Jerusalem. Here we appointed guards from among the men of the neighbourhood, but we could not provide them with the necessary weapons and ammunition. So it seems that the Jews perceived the weakness at this point and started attacking it, surrounding it with burning fires. Then, the Jewish Haganah forces conquered the Montefiore neighbourhood that separated us from the old city. We were forced to go down to the old city and to live in the Girls' Orthodox School next to the Orthodox Patriarchate.

55 The Formation of the Committee of the Heads of the Christian Communities

The situation in Jerusalem deteriorated seriously during the month of December 1947. The assassination of defenceless people by the Jews increased—through throwing explosives into crowds, demolishing houses while people were in them, and by ambushing the ordinary people in the streets and roads. The Arab Higher Committee instructed me to form a committee among the Christian clergymen, including all the communities, to protest against these attacks before the League of Nations and to support the people in their struggle. I gathered all the heads of the communities at my house and we formed a committee called The Committee of the Christian Union. For the first time in history, the Orthodox priest gathered alongside the Latin, the [Greek] Catholic, the Syriac, the Armenian, the Coptic, the Ethiopian, and the Protestant priests. We wrote down a strong message of protest and sent copies of it to the League of Nations, the UN Security Council, and the heads of the various Christian churches.

As well as issuing this statement, this commission donated to the national movement all it could in the way of means and resources, encouraging the fighters. In addition, I had met with Father Ibrahim Ayyad, the president of the

Latin spiritual court, and the leader and combatant Abdul Qader al-Husayni in Birzeit. I also urged the people all over the country to defend the nation. However, the main thing that was impeding everyone's efforts was the lack of weapons and ammunition! In vain we tried to turn to the Higher Arab Committee and the Arab nations. I avow and declare here that if the people of Palestine had had sufficient weapons and ammunition, the Jews would not have been able to hold one inch of Palestine! The blowing up of Ben Yehuda Street and of the headquarters of the Jewish agency, which were both situated in the middle of Jewish neighbourhoods, are among the strongest proofs of the capacity of the Arabs of Palestine to meet the Jews' acts in the same manner.¹⁴⁴

56 My Visit to Lebanon and Syria

We spent three long months in this period of the conflict—sleeping and waking to the firing of mortars and guns, the sound of the explosions, the cries of children, and the wailing of women. We visited the hospitals filled with the injured, to console them and bring sweets, fruits and cigarettes. We had no weapons or munitions, while the Arab countries and their people watched us from afar, providing neither money, nor men, nor war supplies.

Meanwhile, I heard that the Mufti was in Syria. I left Jerusalem on March 1, 1948 and went to Damascus where I contacted him, explained to him the truth about the situation, and briefed him on everything he needed to know. I insisted on asking for weapons and ammunition. Many leaders of the country had demanded the same thing before, with the great combatant Abdul Qader al-Husseini at their head. The Mufti tried to tackle the issue and went back to the League of Arab Nations, insisting that they supply the country with weapons and munitions, but “one would only be heard if he called among the living. However, there was no life in those being called upon.”

The League of Arab Nations was meeting in Damascus that day. However, they gathered and ended the meeting without issuing any statement or inform-

¹⁴⁴ This refers to two major attacks carried out by Palestinian Arab forces in the 1948 conflict which ended with the establishment of the State of Israel. In February 1948 two stolen British army trucks containing large bombs were detonated on Ben Yehuda Street, having been driving there by a pair of British army deserters. The blast killed around 60 people. On 11 March 1948 a car bomb exploded in the courtyard of the Jewish Agency, killing 12 and wounding over 40. (Moshe Naor, *Social Mobilization in the Arab/Israeli War of 1948: On the Israeli Home Front* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 140; Christopher Caden and Nir Arielli, “British Army and Palestine Police Deserters and the Arab-Israeli War of 1948,” *War in History* (2018), 13–14).

ing anyone about what was going on. This pointed to the treason that had become apparent since then. I stayed for one week in Damascus, but it was in vain. I sent a written request to the High Arab Commission, saying: I have two thousand Christian men who are ready to go into battle and defend the country with myself at their head; we do not ask for money, clothing, or food, we only ask for weapons and ammunition. This request provoked an upheaval among the leaders of Palestine in Damascus and among the members of the League and the government of Syria. Many visited me at my hotel to ask about the truth of this news. Shehadeh Khoury from among the notables of Safad, a rich man who was living in Tiberias,¹⁴⁵ knew about this noble request and was jubilant. He visited me privately, thanking me for this project and said:

I put myself, my children, and my money at your disposal from now ... Insist upon and demand this without flinching because you raised the status of the Christians in the whole East. See how the Muslims in the cafes and societies are taking you as an example of patriotism and praise your loyalty and diligence.

That same night, Abdul Qader Al-Husseini,¹⁴⁶ along with two other young men from the Al-Rihawi family, visited me, admiring this spirit of mine. Abdul Qader said that I would have a place in his tent so he could enjoy my thoughts and be blessed with my presence. As for going into the battlefield, he would replace me as long as they could get supplies of weapons! The two young men said: "We are all your soldiers and servants, reverend, and all that we hope from you is that you seek to get us weapons and ammunition. Also, that you advise the

145 Shehadeh and his brother Tawfiq, brothers from a family of notables from Safad in the northern Galilee, spent their summers living in Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee, for which they owned a fishing monopoly granted by the government (Rosemary Sayigh, *Arab Economist, Palestinian Patriot*, 102–103).

146 Abdul Qadir al-Husayni (1907–1948) was a Palestinian Arab nationalist of the family of Jerusalem notables. After graduating in chemistry from the American University in Cairo, he worked in the settlement department of the British Mandate government, but eventually moved to the Hebron area during the 1936–1939 Arab revolt in Palestine to lead the struggle against the British. In 1938, Husayni was exiled and in 1939 fled to Iraq, where he graduated from the military academy. He moved to Egypt in 1946, but secretly returned to Palestine to lead the Army of the Holy War in January 1948. Husayni was killed while reconnoitring an area of Qastal Hill, near Jerusalem, shrouded by fog, in the early hours of 8 April 1948 (Ilan Pappé, *Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: the Husaynis 1700–1948* (London: Saqi, 2017), 270–273, 308–365; Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: the Palestinian National Movement 1949–93* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 697 n. 56).

Beik not to risk his life and be impulsive in the next battle.” These three spent the evening with me until ten o’clock, then bid me goodbye and left. Two days later, I heard about the death of Abdul Qader al-Husseini and the horrors at Deir Yassin. The Mufti renewed his request for weapons and munitions to the Arab League, but no-one answered. I was convinced that the Arab resistance would soon collapse and that an imminent catastrophe was inevitable. I left Damascus for Beirut, to find a job and a house for my family before the dangers worsened ...

57 In Beirut, Lebanon

I had contacted the Patriarch of Antioch, Alexandros,¹⁴⁷ and briefed him on the situation, asking him to help me find a place as an official priest to the city of Beirut. He was initially reluctant, fearing that the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Timothaos, would be angry. However, at my insistence, he said: if Bishop al-Salibi agrees, then I will not hesitate. So I left Damascus and came to Beirut to meet with al-Salibi. The next day, when I went down to the cathedral of Saint George in Beirut to attend the Divine Liturgy, having started the blessed forty-day Lenten fast, I met with Archimandrite Bulos al-Khoury, who was the vicar of the Bishop of Beirut. The Bishop had been elected to be ordained as Metropolitan of Tyre and Sidon. He told me that there was a pending intention to appoint me as his successor, given my knowledge of the Greek language. I went with him after liturgy to the court of the Archdiocese in Beirut. Archbishop al-Salibi received me with warm welcomes and reiterated in my hearing what I had already heard from his former vicar, Archimandrite Bulos al-Khoury. I thanked him for this trust and left full of confidence and hope.

Not a week went by after this meeting before Rajai al-Issa from the notables of Acre informed me that the intention of Archbishop al-Salibi towards me had changed, and that those who turned him against me were people from Palestine, but he did not want to tell me who they were.

When I had met with Archbishop al-Salibi and asked him about this case, he said that he was waiting for the Patriarch’s approval for this appointment and did not mention anything to the contrary. So I went to Damascus and informed the Patriarch that the matter now rested upon his consent. He said: in two days, I am going to Beirut. Meet me at the house of the Archdiocese on that day at

¹⁴⁷ Alexander III of Antioch was born in 1869, ordained as a priest in 1900 and as a bishop in 1903. He was the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East from 1931 until his death in 1958.

this specific time. As agreed, His Beatitude arrived. I went to greet him and reminded him of my case. His Beatitude and His Excellence met in private for an hour. Then, al-Salibi summoned me and told me that in three days I would get an answer. After the three days went by, the reply came in the negative, arguing that he did not want to disturb relations between him and the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

I went back to the Patriarch and repeatedly asked the archbishop to reconsider this rejection, but I could not convince any of them until the Archbishop of Lebanon, Elia Karam, came to visit me at the hotel and offered me the position I wanted in his eparchy. He said that he had been informed of the conversation between the Patriarch and the Archbishop of Beirut and told them: I am not afraid of the wrath of Patriarch Timotheos and I accept Father Khoury on my own responsibility. I thanked him and asked for a position that comes with a house from the *waqf* to shelter my family when they came to Lebanon. However, he said that at the time there were no empty houses except one in Sawfar,¹⁴⁸ which he offered to me. This man was more humane than the Patriarch and Archbishop Salibi.

58 The Final Migration of Our Family to Lebanon

What I expected happened. The resistance of the Arabs of Palestine collapsed after the death of the commander and *mujahid* Abdul Qadir Al-Husseini. On the same day, the Jews took over the village of Deir Yassin, where they committed atrocities and transgressions that chill to the bones, weakening the morale of the Arabs, breaking them so that they began to retreat and collapse.¹⁴⁹

George visited me in Beirut to inform me of the fears and perils that the family was going through in Jerusalem. I ordered him to return immediately

¹⁴⁸ Sawfar is a village in the Aley District of the Mount Lebanon Governorate.

¹⁴⁹ The massacre at the village of Deir Yassin, near Jerusalem, took place on 9th April 1948. An Israeli admission that the massacre took place, the details of the number of fatalities, and the effort to memorialise the dead have all been highlight politicised, with Palestinians seeking recognition and, on the Israeli side, the massacre fell victim to the conflict between Labour and Revisionist Zionism, with the former citing unrealistically high numbers of dead in a bid to discredit the latter's connections to the Stern Gang/Lehi perpetrators of the killings. Most historians now concur that around 100 people, mainly civilians, were killed either during the Stern Gang invasion of the village or when prisoners were murdered afterwards (Benny Morris, "The Historiography of Deir Yassin," *Journal of Israeli History* 24,1 (2005), 80, 98–191; Thomas Abowd, *Colonial Jerusalem: The Spatial Construction of Identity and Difference in a City of Myth, 1948–2012* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), 107–109).

and bring them to Lebanon before the danger worsened and the catastrophe fell. At the same time, I wrote to my father-in-law, Bishara, in Ramla, telling him to save himself and his family and leave Palestine quickly. So Bishara took his family and went to stay in Amman. As for George, he came with the family to Beirut. They arrived on the evening of Wednesday, April 28, 1948, and stayed at the America Hotel where I was staying. They were in a deplorable state, in shock at the horrors they heard, saw, and lived during the two months that I had left them to come to Syria and Lebanon.

Easter Sunday was on May 2 that year, 1948, according to the Western Calendar. The day after they arrived was Maundy Thursday. We went to the cathedral of Saint George to attend the Liturgy and the washing of the feet. After the liturgy, I met with Archbishop Elia Karam who ordered me to go to the village of Gharzouz¹⁵⁰ to celebrate the Easter service because the people were in need of a priest. He handed over the keys to the house in Sawfar, which he had promised to give to my family. I went to Gharzouz immediately, and George took the family to Sawfar. As for Hanna, he stayed in Amman, intending to take the plane on Friday to join his family.

I arrived in Gharzouz in the evening, in the pouring rain, and immediately started the Gospel Readings service. We celebrated Good Friday by reading the Service of the Great Hours and Vespers at noon and the Burial Service in the evening. We also had the Divine Liturgy service on both Saturday and Sunday, with many of the parishioners coming forward for confession and communion. After liturgy I bid them goodbye and headed to Sawfar to be reunited with my family.

The family arrived there on Thursday evening, in another downpour, while I was in Gharzouz. Melhem Matta lodged them at the Sursock residence that night. The next day they opened up the house and stayed there although the mattresses were drenched in water and the rooms flooded. On Friday evening, the 30th April, Hanna's plane landed. They were slightly reassured despite the extreme cold and lack of food, for in those days Sawfar was empty of food, drink and people.

On Sunday evening, the festival of Easter, I arrived in Sawfar. We met all together for the first time since 1st March 1948. We stayed in Sawfar, suffering bitterly from the lack of sustenance, for even bread had to be ordered from Beirut, craving for even thyme and olives during this period. On top if the lack of food was the cold and the lack of bedding, covers, clothing and income ... We were even more penniless than we had been in Tanburah. Our wait for the

150 Gharzouz is a village of the Jbeil (Byblos) district in Mount Lebanon Governorate.

appointed May 15, when the Arab armies would attack in Palestine, soothed our hardship and misery, allowing us to bear what we saw and heard of the tragedies taking place in Palestine.

59 The Long-Awaited May 15

The day of 15th May that our hearts skipped their beats for was finally here. The English announced the end of the Mandate during the middle of the night, and a few minutes later the establishment of the State of Israel was declared. The Jews had taken Haifa and Jaffa two days before that, and the remnants of the two cities were arriving in Beirut in a pitiful condition.

Early on the morning of Saturday, May 15, 1948, the Arab armies invaded Palestine under the leadership of King Abdullah bin Al-Hussein—with the hearts, eyes, hopes and aspirations of the Arabs of Palestine with them—and advanced until they had Netanya and Tel Aviv within their reach. The commander-in-chief issued proclamation after proclamation and made declaration after declaration: The process of ridding Palestine of the Jews does not need more than ten days ... after these ten days the Jews will be thrown into the sea ...

While people were waiting for the fulfilment of these promises, some of them packed their belongings, preparing to return home. But then they were surprised by the declaration of a truce. After the month of the truce passed by, the fighting resumed, and their hopes were revived once more. Then they were surprised again by something even more futile and bitter than the truce! Ramla and Lydda and their villages fell into the hands of the Jews, taken without even a fight.

Girls and women were raped and disgraced, pregnant women were disembowelled, the elderly, children, sick and infirm were slain, and people were driven out of their houses and homes barefoot, naked and humiliated. The Jews seized their homes, belongings, lands, livestock and all the houses and inheritances that their ancestors had built up. They roamed aimlessly in the open, waiting for the goodness of benefactors and the alms of the givers.

The advance of the Arab armies into Palestine was not to expel the Jews from the land and to hand it over to its rightful proprietors as they claimed, but rather to expel the legitimate Arab landlords and hand it over to the Jews, their enemies, with all that is in it!

The Arab armies returned to their bases safely—thank God—after this impressive victory they achieved in the battle of Palestine. They were received by their countries and peoples with pride and cheers. They organized for them

celebrations and festive nights. They had completed their mission in Palestine remarkably well—for they had not only delivered the country to the Jews and displaced its people, but helped those vicious men to defile dignity, humiliate women, loot wealth and assault the vulnerable. All of this must be remembered for these triumphant armies are engraved in our hearts in letters of fire and brimstone. Cheers and a thousand cheers to the Arab kings and rulers and their countries, their governments and League ... and their peoples as well ... This is a great lesson for the people of Palestine to rely only on themselves and to trust no one else. For the poet was right when he said:

Nothing can scratch your skin like your own fingernails
so take care of your own affairs!

60 George's Marriage

We had engaged George to a lady from Ramla, Aida the daughter of Daoud Nino, in the spring of 1947. Our wish was to host for him a huge wedding party in Palestine that would be attended by all the leaders of the country and the consuls of the Arab countries, making it a historic day and a wonderful celebration. However, the circumstances at the time stopped us from following our wishes. The more we waited for an improvement in the situation, the worse it became, until, in the end, the passage between us was cut off, so we went to Lebanon knowing nothing of the fiancée and her family.

In early July 1948, Abu Yusif, our brother in law, visited us in Sawfar and told us that the fiancée and her family were in Salt. We immediately called them and set a date for the wedding. On the appointed day, George and I went alone to Transjordan where we celebrated his wedding at the house of our brother-in-law Abu Yusif, in Amman, on 28th July 1948. No other family members were there except for Marie and I, for we were not able to invite his mother and the rest of his siblings because of the circumstances in Palestine and the difficulty of transport and travel then. After the ceremony, we went back to Lebanon and, soon after, George was hired by the American University, followed by Hanna, thanks be to God.

61 From Sawfar to Wadi Shahrour

We spent five and a half months in Sawfar, where I was appointed as a priest for the vacationers from Beirut and other cities who spend their summer

there, from the 1st July 1948 to the 15th October of the same year, with a monthly salary of 150 Lebanese Liras. When the vacationers left Sawfar, and the weather grew cold, we asked the archbishop of the eparchy, Elia Karam, to transfer us to a warmer and more suitable place. He arranged for us to move to Wadi Shahrour.¹⁵¹ However, a certain group from amongst the people of Wadi Shahrour were not pleased by this transfer, so I remained there for a month without work as a refugee among the other Palestinian refugees. After the month went by, the archbishop reached an understanding with the opposing group and I was allowed to take care of the church as the legitimate priest of the village from 15th November 1948, without a fixed salary, relying on what I received from the offertory basket, the feast day gifts and other spiritual services.

At first I used to pay the rent from these earnings, so nothing worth mentioning was left. However, starting on 10th February, 1950, we moved into a house owned by the *waqf*. We lived there without rent except for the electricity we used, so our situation improved to some extent, thank God.

62 Bishara Uur Father-in-Law and His Family Come to Lebanon

Our father-in-law, Abu Yusif, lived in Amman with his family after they left Ramla. However, because of the lack of work opportunities and the high cost of living, especially the rent, he moved to Lebanon with his family and stayed with us in Wadi Shahrour from March 1949. After a while he had the good fortune to start working as a driver with the UNRWA.¹⁵² His son Yusif, meanwhile, worked as a telephone operator at the American University, with his uncle Hanna.

Meanwhile, George and his family moved to Beirut, where his job was located.

Hanna's job also obliged him to stay in Beirut. As for Olga, she was employed as a teacher in the American School for Girls in Sidon. So we, the presbytera [my

¹⁵¹ Wadi Shahrour is a village of the Baabda district in Mount Lebanon Governorate.

¹⁵² The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was founded in late 1949 to provide welfare—housing, sanitation, health and education—for the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. As suggested here, however, it also became an extremely significant employer of Palestinians in these countries and, in the years immediately after the Nakba, “Having connections to an UNRWA employee was of immediate value for impoverished families, as it could improve someone’s chances of receiving favours, such as quicker and better services” (Randa Farah, “UNRWA through the eyes of its refugee employees in Jordan,” *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 28, 2 & 3 (2010): 398, 401).

wife] and I, were left alone in Wadi Shahrour. However, this did not weigh on us because our brother-in-law Yusif and his family were near us.

In summer 1950, our dear Talka visited us in Wadi Shahrour with her husband and children, which brought us great joy. After staying with us for 15 days they returned to Palestine, leaving us aching. Soon after, my father-in-law Abu Yusif also moved with his family to Beirut. All of a sudden we started feeling the solitude, alienation and loneliness, because there was no one left from our parents or relatives to keep us company.

In autumn 1950, Aziza and her husband moved to Poland, and this affected me deeply.

63 The Death of Our Dear Bulos in Alexandria

The year 1950 was one of ill-luck and death. At the beginning of the year, the late Nassib Nasser, the brother of our brother-in-law Anis and the pillar of his family, died. His death had a deep impact on his family and ours. Later, on December 29, 1950, we were surprised by the death of our dear Bulos in Alexandria. This painful news was a great blow to my soul, especially as he had repeatedly asked me to visit him before he died but I could not because I was hard-pressed with work and money, and because of the restrictions imposed on refugees. He died downtrodden and helpless, pierced to the heart. He did not see any one of us at his bedside when he gave up his spirit, something which will remain bitterly engraved on my heart for the rest of my life. Every time I remember this, tears fill my eyes and I feel the pain cutting through my chest, and I lament for the loss of his steadfast morals, his Christian heart and his wonderful loyalty. Bulos was not only my brother. He was to me like my eldest son; I brought him up, taught him, raised him, and tired myself out over him when he was little. He looked up to me as a son to his father and respected me as a son respects his father ... May God have mercy on this pure and blameless soul! May you be with God my beloved brother and faithful loyal son!

64 The Death of Uncle Issa and Uncle Salem

We offered a liturgy and a funeral service for Bulos' soul at the Church of Saint John the Baptist for the Greek Orthodox in Wadi Shahrour, attended by His Eminence Archbishop Elia Karam and a delegation from the Arab Higher Committee, notables of Palestine who took refuge in Lebanon, and Muslim scholars. Before we commemorated his *arba'een* we were shocked by the death of our

uncle Issa, which moved us deeply especially because he had asked to see me before his death but I was unable to obey because the government of Amman was pursuing me. Nearly two months went by and we were bereaved again by the death of uncle Salem, this kind-hearted and sincere human being who died due to the neglect of his children in his old age and to his loss of sight. I felt so deeply for him because he died almost like Bulos, downtrodden and helpless and seeing no one at his bedside to show him kindness and mourn over him. His children were wicked and did not shed a tear of sorrow for his loss! May you be with God all you who departed and God Almighty encompass you with His great mercy ...

65 The Silver Jubilee

We hoped to draw a curtain on the painful events that afflicted us over the previous two years, welcoming the year 1952 with optimism, and hoping that perhaps Almighty God would have compassion on us and put an end to our misfortune and miseries. So I wanted to celebrate on the 2nd February 1952, the twenty-fifth anniversary of my entry into the priestly life, for I was ordained a deacon on 2nd February 1928. I had to tell the community about it. When the Orthodox youth movement in Wadi Shahrour heard this—it was a branch that was newly established six months earlier in the town, and I had assumed the responsibility of instructing and guiding it—they took it upon themselves to hold the ceremony at their own expense and make that day the inauguration of the branch as well, so it would be a double feast. They contacted the guardian of the parish, Archbishop Elia Karam, and my friend in Damascus Archbishop Malatios Sawiti, and His Beatitude the Antiochian Patriarch Alexandros who ordered that I would be promoted to the rank of Protopapas¹⁵³—that is first among priests—and instructed the Archbishop of the diocese to perform the accustomed rituals and give me wear the cross to wear. His Eminence came on 1st February to attend vespers and after the prayer he called me to the centre of the church, in front of his seat, to read the prayer over my head,¹⁵⁴ and then said kind words in which he praised me for my steadfast service of the Church and the country, which was very moving for me. Then he gave me a valuable and historic crucifix to wear.

153 From the Greek for a primary priest or arch-priest. It is an ecclesiastical office which gives the priest preeminence over other priests. (Clugnet, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, 131–132).

154 Here, Khoury uses a transliteration in Arabic of a Greek term for prayer.

Upon this, I stood in royal door of the sanctuary and gave a deeply moving and impressive impromptu speech, at which His Eminence could not hold back his feelings and wiped his tears many times.

After the prayer, His Eminence and his entourage came to the house where they congratulated me, accompanied by many people from among the sons and daughters of the community. On the morning of the following day—the day of the presentation of the Lord to the temple—I served the Divine Liturgy alone, as the Archbishop was busy with other affairs. The liturgy was attended by a group of youths from the movement in Beirut, along with the movement choir. The church was filled with worshippers so the liturgy was very wonderful and solemn, pleasing to everyone. A group of young men and women from the youth movement came forward to partake of the Holy Sacrament.

After liturgy, everyone headed to the house to congratulate me, and I spoke to the crowd, and after that everybody ate lunch at the school, courtesy of the youth movement. During the celebrations, Father Yaqub Al-Hanna delivered a speech and I thanked the speakers and the youth of the movement and the people of Wadi Shahrou. This was a remarkable day.



The end of the memories

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Index

Notes to the index

The largest part of this book consists of the memoirs of the person Niqula Khoury. The person Niqula Khoury therefore does not have his own main entry in this index. All themes and events related to his life are indexed directly as a main entry with the abbreviation 'NK' if the entry directly concerns Niqula Khoury (e.g. 'family life of NK', 'political involvement of NK', etc.).

In his memoirs, NK does not mention the last names of his family members. In order to avoid ambiguity family members have been entered under their first names with a cross-reference from a main entry with the family relationship (e.g. 'cousins of NK see Butros; Hanna; Mariam; Niqula; Salame; Semaan; Shehadeh; Suleiman; Yusif').

Page references in **bold type** indicate a more in-depth treatment of the subject.

- Abdallah family 70
Abdeen Palace (Cairo) 142
Abdel Hamid II (Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, r. 1876–1909) 1, 77, 77n20, 81, 82, 88n44, 117
Abdulaziz Al-Saud (Ibn Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, r. 1932–1953)
Hashemite dynasty vs. 48, 145, 145n136
Lebanese delegation visiting Ibn Saud in Cairo 143
NK heading delegation visiting Ibn Saud in Cairo 47, **141–147**, 148, 149, 150
presentation of gift 142, 143–144
on Palestinian cause 144–145, 149
Abdullah I (King of Jordan, r. 1946–1951)
installed as king 144–145, 144–145n136
leading Arab invasion of Palestine (1948) 158
pro-Greek stance of 48, 49
reaction to NK's visit to King Abdulaziz al-Saud 47–48, 147–148
Abdullah (uncle of NK) 89
Abid Pasha, Makram (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egypt) 132
Abu Qash 68n1
Abu Saleh (Toufic al-Husseini) 150
Abu Yusif (Bishara Uur, father-in-law of NK) 157, 160, 161
Abu Yusif (brother-in-law of NK) 105, 159, 160, 161
Acre 13n43, 40, 155
lectures by NK in 97
Acropolis 132
Adana (Turkey) 115
Afghanistan, delegation at League of Nations 127, 130
Africa 133n119
Aftimus (headmaster in Karak and Ramla) 86
Agha (gendarmerie commander) 78
Aghiasmatarion (micro/concise mega Eucharistion) 47, 103–104, 103n67
al-Ahram (Egyptian newspaper) 127
Aida (daughter-in-law of NK) 159
Ajloun (Transjordan) 104, 133
Akiki Pasha, Hafez (ambassador of Egypt in London) 127
Aksum (Ethiopia) 74
Albania, delegation at League of Nations 127
Aleppo, NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 114–115
Alexander III (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, r. 1931–1958) 155, 155n147, 156, 162, 163
Alexandria 101, 161
NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 132–133
NK visiting Mufti in 150–151
Alexios I Komnenos (Byzantine Emperor, r. 1081–1118) 99n60
Aley District (Mount Lebanon) 156n148
Al-Husn (Jordan) 104, 104n68
Alif Ba' (Syrian newspaper) 114
Allenby, General Edmund (British imperial governor of Palestine) 92
Al-Zaytouneh (Palestine) 68n1
America *see* United States

- America Hotel (Beirut) 157
 American School for Girls (Sidon) 160
 American University (Beirut) 147n141, 159, 160
 American University (Cairo) 154n146
 Amman xi, 72n11, 83n30, 157, 159, 160, 162
 al-Ammarin, Hanna (Turkish language teacher) 76
 ammunition *see* armed support for Palestinian cause
 'Amr, Sami 8, 9
 Anatolia 82
 Andrews, Lewis Yelland (District Commissioner for Galilee) 130, 130n113
 Anglican Church 151n143
 Anglo-American Committee, NK giving testimony to 151
 Anis (brother-in-law of NK) 110, 150, 161
 Anjara (Jordan) 66 *ill.*
 Ankara 115
 Anthimos (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1788–1808) 36
 anti-Nazism 20, 21
 Antippa, Angelo George (Chief Clerk to the Secretariat of the Palestine Government) 137, 137n126
 anti-Protestantism 13
 anti-Semitism 16–22
 anti-Semitic statements by NK 3–4, 16, 18–19, 21, 122
 Arab/Palestinian nationalism and 3–4, 20
 in Christianity/Orthodox Christianity 3–4, 13, 16–17
 Miron Cristea 17–19, 21
 Jews as sinners 16–17
 by Muslims, Amin al-Husseini 20–21
 racialised 17, 21
 stripping Romanian Jews of citizenship 18, 120n95
 theological vs. modern 17–18, 17n55, 21
 al-Aqsa mosque (Jerusalem) 142
 NK giving speech at xi, 149
 Arab cause *see* Arab/Palestinian cause
 Arab general strike (1936) 107–110, 130n113
 activities and family situation of NK during 108, 109–110
 Arab Higher Committee 12, 19, 149, 150, 161
 Arab general strike and 108, 110
 arrest and deportation of members 130, 130n114
 instructing NK to set up Committee of the Christian Union 152–153
 Peel Commission and 110–111, 114n83
 NK bypassed as spokesman before Peel Commission 23, 111
 request for armed support from 151, 153, 154
 resignation of Farraj and al-Nashashibi 110, 113
 return of exiled members 150
 see also Farraj, Yaqub; [al-]Husseini, Hajj Amin; [al-]Nashashibi, Raghib
 Arabic language
 Arabic language skills of NK 22, 74
 (auto)biographies in 4, 6, 7, 8, 9
 speaking and preaching in 1, 43, 123
 translations into 20n68, 36, 103, 120n96
 as working language of Patriarchate 36
 arabisation, of Orthodox Church of Jerusalem 1, 36, 147n140
 Arab-Israeli War (1948–1949) 14, 158–159
 see also Nakba
 Arab lay community 40, 45
 Arab Orthodox Executive Committee 39, 102
 exclusion from church governance/oppression by Greek establishment 35, 44
 nomination of priests for participation in electoral Council 102–103n66
 Arab League *see* League of Arab Nations
 Arab nations *see* League of Arab Nations
 Arab Orthodox Christians 10, 30, 94
 anti-Semitism and 3–4
 Arab-Greek conflict 36–38, 84n31
 exclusion from Brotherhood/church governance 35, 36, 44, 45–46
 Greek narrative/argumentation 41–48
 struggle for equality/presence in Church 2, 34, 122
 see also Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church
 contribution to national movement 2, 11, 12, 38

- degrees of autonomy/influence in
 decision making 38, 39, 46
 division among x, 39, 136, 139, 140, 148
 girls 61*ill.*
 merchants 54*ill.*
 NK vs. Jerusalem community 136, 139,
 140, 148
 relation with Balkan Orthodox Christians
 3
 supposed Greek identity of 43
see also Orthodox Church of Jerusalem;
 Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Arab Orthodox Congress
 First Arab Orthodox Congress (Haifa,
 1923) 34, 37, 93–94, 94n48–49, 101
 Second Arab Orthodox Conference (Jaffa,
 1931) 47, 141
- Arab Orthodox Executive Committee 39,
 102
- Arab/Palestinian cause 11, 14
 accomplishments at League of Nations
 (1937) 129–130, 133
 collaboration between Christian com-
 munities 152
 presentation at League of Nations (1937)
 113, 124
 publicity for 118, 120, 123, 123n98, 125,
 129, 132, 135, 136, 146
 reception of delegation of Arab Ortho-
 dox Palestinians/at League of Nations
 112–136
 request for armed support for 151, 152–
 153, 154, 155, 159^o
 support/lack of support for,
 Britain 11, 110–111, 144
 Bulgarian support 3, 118
 Catholic community 11, 12–13, 14
 Greek support 46, 131–132
 King Abdulaziz al-Saud 144, 144–145
 NK calling for armed support 150,
 151, 152, 153
 NK on Jewish vs. Palestinian position
 and support 134–135
 Orthodox Church/community of Jeru-
 salem 115, 131, 132, 136
 Romanian support 3, 121–124, 126
 Yugoslavian support 126
see also delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Palestinians; League of Nations
- Arab/Palestinian nationalism 82n28
 anti-Semitism and 3–4, 20
 Christian involvement of/identification
 with 2, 10–16, 38, 39, 43, 136n123
 class and 108n74
- Arab Palestinians
 depiction as anti-Semitic 20
 memoirs by 6
 rejection of fascism/Nazism 20, 21
 revolts/violence between Jews and 95,
 108, 111–112, 152–153
see also Arab general strike; Arab
 Revolt
see also Arab Orthodox Christians;
 Muslim Palestinians, Christian
 Palestinians
- Arab patriarchs 13, 43–44, 75n15–16
- Arab renaissance (*Nahda*) 1
- Arab Revolt (1936–1939) 3, 14, 107n73, 112,
 130n113–114, 136, 138, 147n139
 betrayal during 138
 cooperation of Orthodox and Catholic
 Arabs with Muslims 11
 end of 138
 flight/exile of Palestinian leaders 19,
 130, 133, 133n119, 135, 136, 141n130, 142,
 150, 154n146
 Husseini-Nashashibi rivalry during 34,
 108–109, 109n75
see also Arab general strike; Palestinian
 cause; partition of Palestine, League of
 Nations
- Arab rule of Palestine 35
- Arab Workers' Society 108n74
- al-Aranli, Muslim 89
- al-Aranli, Yusif 89
- arba'een* (commemorative service forty days
 after death) 107, 107n71, 161
- archives, Catholic 12
- armed support for Arab/Palestinian cause,
 NK calling for 150, 151, 152–153, 154,
 155
- Armenia 82
- Armenian Christian Palestinians 152
- Armenians 35n16, 81n25
- Army of the Holy War 154n146
- Arslan, Prince Adel 112–113, 112n79, 124, 127,
 130
- Arslan, Shakib 112n79, 146n137

- Association for the Defence of Palestine 133
- Association for the Defense of the Rights of the Displaced People (Palestinian rights group) 141n129
- Assyrians 81n25
- Atallah, Antoine 142
- ‘Atara (Palestine) 68n1
- Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal (president of Turkey, r. 1923–1938) 117
- Athens 37, 41, 45, 128, 131
NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 46, 131–132
- attacks
by Arabs on Jews 153, 153n144
by Jews on Arabs 152–153
see also Christian-Muslim conflicts/riots
- Austria 88
- autobiographies *see* memoirs
- autonomy, NK’s vision on national and religious 3
- Awrāq Khāṣṣah* (‘Awnī ‘Abd al-Hādī) 7
- Ayyad, Ibrahim (president of Latin spiritual court) 152–153
- al-Azhar, Sheikh 134
- Aziza (grandmother of NK) 89
- Aziza (niece of NK) 89
- Aziza (sister of NK) 71, 72, 86, 89, 95, 105, 106, 161
- al-Azma, Fawzi Beik 113
- al-Azma, Nabih 113n81
- Baabda district (Mount Lebanon) 160n151
- Baalbek (Lebanon) 114
- Bab al-Khalil (Gate of Hebron, Jerusalem) 99
- Baghdad 21, 81n24, 109, 130n114
- Balamand seminary 75, 75n16–17
- Balfour Declaration (1917) 11, 126, 126n107
- Balkan delegation *see* delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians
- Balkans 82
- Balkan War (1912–1913) 87–88, 88n44
- al-Bandaq, Issa (mayor of Bethlehem/news-paper editor) 2, 13, 13n43, 20n68, 49, 131, 131n16
visit with NK to King Abdulaziz al-Saud 142, 144, 146, 148
- al-Bandaq, Nicolas 131
- al-Baqa’a al-Fawqa 98, 99, 101, 108
- al-Baqa al-Tahta 106
- al-Baqi, Ahmed Hilmi Pasha ‘Abd 130n114
- Barghout, Bishara Yusuf (husband of NK’s daughter Marie) 101
- al-Barghouti, Omar Salih Akram 7
- Barlassina, Luigi (Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1920–1947) 13
- Bartholomew (archimandrite) 74
- Basil the Great, Saint 99n60, 100, 100n62
- Battle of Castel 114n82
- Bauman, Zygmunt 16, 17n55, 21
- al-Bayouk, Gabriel (priest) 101
- Bayt Jala 13n43
- Bedouins 9, 79n21
- Beik, Mohammed Said 134
- Beirut xi, 104, 160
NK visit and move to Beirut 155–158
- Beit Hogla 67 *ill.*
- Beit Jala 97
- Beit Sahour 98
- Belgrade, NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 125–126
- Benedictos, Archimandrite (representative of Patriarchate of Jerusalem in Athens) 132
- Benghazi (Libya) 87
- Benjamin I (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, r. 1936–1946) 115n86
NK visiting 115–117
- Benjamin (Metropolitan of Bucharest, probably Miron Cristea) 123
- Benjamin (patriarchal vicar) 123n99
- Ben Yehuda Street (Jerusalem), attack in 153, 153n144
- Berlin
Mufti in 19–20, 21
Treaty of (1878) 116n87
- Bertram-Luke Commission/report (1921) 34, 42
- Bertram-Young Commission of Inquiry/report (1925) 37, 42
- Bethlehem 13, 13n43, 97, 106, 148
- biographies
Arabic 6
see also memoirs
- al-Biouk, Mikhael 146
- Al-Bīr al-Ūlā* (Jabra Ibrahim Jabra) 7

- birth
 of children of NK 80, 81, 88, 90, 95
 of NK 1, 68
- Birzeit x, 68n1, 76, 86, 110, 150
 bombings of 89–90
 death of NK's father in 106
 early life of NK in 1, 68–72
 NK moving from 72
 NK returning his family back to 84–85, 87, 89, 90, 108
- al-Bisharat, Hanna Pasha 146–147, 146–147n139
- Bishara Uur (Abu Yusif, father-in-law of NK) 157, 160, 161
- Bishop Gobat (diocesan) school (Jerusalem) 96, 96n53, 97
- bishops
 Arab Orthodox 151n143
 election/ordination of 36, 37, 46
- Black Hand Qassemites 130n113
- blasphemy 91–93
- Blatow, General 119
- Bludan (Syria) 114, 114n82–83
- Bordewich, Chloe 6n12
- Boris III (Maurice, Tsar of Bulgaria, r. 1918–1943) 119, 119n93
- Bosnia 21
- Bosphorus 115n85, 127
- Boullate, Issa 97n55
- Boulos *see* Bulos
- Brazil, delegation at League of Nations 127
- Brindisi 131
- Britain 88, 122n97
 role in partition of Palestine 151
- British Mandate government/administration 1, 2, 35, 144, 145n136, 151
 attitude towards/effect on Muslim-Christian relations 10, 34, 93n47
 contact of NK with 45
 end of Mandate 158
 Palestinian Christians in administration jobs 15
 Palestinian collaboration with 5, 109n75, 138
 persecution of Palestinian leaders by 19, 130, 133, 133n119, 134, 135, 136, 141, 141n130, 142, 150, 154n146
 policy towards Zionism 10–11, 107, 118, 122n97, 130n113, 152
see also Balfour Declaration; partition of Palestine
 and (reform of) patriarchal power 33, 37, 41, 46
- British National Archives 31
- Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre 43, 131n115
- bequeathment of property of monks to 32
- Damianos vs. 45
- establishment and organisational structure 32, 36, 44
- exclusion of non-Greek/Arab orthodox monks 36, 44, 45–46
- NK vs. 98, 101, 132
 opposition to survey by NK of history of Orthodox Church of Jerusalem 37, 94–95
 opposing Conference of Orthodox Priests 101–102
 power of 35, 35n16, 40
 schools under 93
- brothers-in-law of NK *see* Abu Yusif; Anis
- brothers of NK *see* Bulos/Boulos; Hanna; Khalil; Yaqub
- Bucharest 18
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 47, 119–125, 137
- Bulgaria 3, 87n43
 delegation at League of Nations 127
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 118–119
 support for Arab/Palestinian cause 3, 118
- Bulos (brother of NK) 71, 72
 death of 161, 162
 education of 76, 84, 86
 in military service with NK 89, 91, 95
 move to/life in Egypt 95, 101, 132, 133
 NK visiting 132, 133, 150
- Burham (Palestine) 68n1
- Burka 86
- Burke III, Edmund 5
- Butros (cousin of NK) 71, 105
- Byzantine Empire 35, 99n60

- Cairo x, 98
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Palestinians in 133–135
 NK visiting King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in
 141–147
 Timotheos blocking appointment of NK
 as priest in 47, 139–140
- Capitulations (Ottoman Empire) 116n87,
 122n97, 127, 127n108
- career/professional activities of NK
 cantor at cathedral church 74
 editorial/writing/publishing activities
 91, 97–98
*see also Survey of the History of the
 Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*
- member of ecclesiastical court 40, 100–
 101
- priest,
 in Jerusalem 95, 98–101
 in Lebanon xi, 155–156, 157, 159–160
 nomination as priest in Cairo 24, 47,
 139–140
 promotion to rank of Protopapas
 (primary priest/arch-priest) 162
 Silver Jubilee as priest 162–163
 secretary of Clerical Committee 39
 secretary for EC of Conference of Ortho-
 dox Arab Priests 102
 teacher/school administrator x, 23, 45,
 75–77, 86–87, 91, 93, 95–98, 100
see also political involvement of NK
- Carlsberg 118
- Carol II (King of Romania, r. 1930–1940) 17,
 124, 130
- Castel, Battle of 114n82
- Catholic Committee for the National Defence
 in Palestine 12
- Catholic Palestinians 10, 35n16, 44, 152
 cooperation with Muslim Palestinians
 12–13
 missionary activities 75n16
 participation in national movement 12–
 13, 14
 support to 12, 122, 122n97
- Catholic schools/universities, Orthodox
 pupils in 96n53–54
- censorship 133n19
- Chacour, Elias 9
- character of NK *see megalomania of NK*
- charity 32, 44, 45
- children of NK x, 80, 81, 88, 90, 95
*see also George; Hanna; Ibrahim; Julia;
 Marie; Martha; Musa; Olga; Takla;
 Toufic*
- choirs, student choirs established by NK 77,
 87, 91, 96
- Christ Church (Anglican church, Nazareth)
 130n113
- Christian-Muslim conflicts/riots 81, 82–83,
 87, 91–93, 141, 141n129
 NK intervening in 3, 92–93, 141
see also Karak Revolt
- Christian-Muslim relations x–xi, 10–12, 20,
 20n68, 85, 85n34, 87–88, 93n47
- obstruction by Jews 109
 in Ramla 91–93
- Christian Palestinians
 involvement in/identification with Arab
 nationalism 10–16
 memoirs of 9
 newspaper editors 13–14
 in Ottoman army 87–88, 88n44
 percentage of total population 10
 tolerance of/co-existence with Muslims
 and Jews 20, 20n68, 93n47
*see also Christian-Muslim relations
 see also Arab Orthodox Palestinians;
 Catholic Palestinians; Protestant
 Palestinians*
- Christopher II (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of
 Alexandria, r. 1939–1966) 139, 139n127
- Chrysostomos I (Patriarch of All Greece, r.
 1923–1938) 131, 131n115
- Church Crisis (1908–1910) 131n115
- Church of the Forty Martyrs (Jerusalem) 97
- church governance/administration
 exclusion of Arab lay community/paro-
 chial clergy 35, 44
 power networks representing diverse
 forms of 45
 racial sectarianism in 36–37
- Church of Jerusalem *see Orthodox Church
 of Jerusalem*
- Church of the Resurrection (Jerusalem)
 142
- Church of Saint John the Baptist (Wadi
 Shahrour) 161
- Church of Saint Sylvestros (Bucharest) 121

- citizenship xi
 nationality/citizenship vs. religious
 grouping 36
 stripping of citizenship of Romanian Jews
 18, 120n95
- class, Arab/Palestinian nationalism and
 108n74
- clergy
 Arab 45
 exclusion and oppression by Church of
 Jerusalem 35, 44
- Clerical Committee, election of NK as secre-
 tary of 39
- clothing
 of monks and bishops 100, 100n62, 102,
 102n65
 of NK 72, 117, 117n88, 162
- co-existence, of Christians, Muslims and
 Jews 20, 20n68, 93n47
- Cohen, Hillel 109n76
- Collège des Frères des écoles chrétiennes
 (Jerusalem) 96, 96–97n54
- colonialism/colonisation 1, 10, 30, 114n84
- commander-in-chief of Jerusalem, friendship
 of NK with 140–141
- commercial school (Jaffa) 74, 76
- Committee of the Christian Union 14, 152–
 153
- Committee of Union and Progress (CUP,
 Young Turks) 1, 81n25, 87n41
 NK's membership of/involvement in 45,
 77–79, 81
 see also Young Turk Revolution
- communal and political power games 49
- Conference of Nationalist Orthodox
 Palestinians (1934, chaired by Shehadeh
 Khoury) 136n123
- Conférence of Orthodox Arab Priests
 (Ramallah, 1932) 39, 101–104
 NK as secretary of executive committee
 102
 opposition by Brotherhood of the Holy
 Sepulchre 101
- conflicts *see* Arab general strike; Arab
 Revolt; Christian-Muslim con-
 flicts/riots; family conflicts
- conspiracy theories
 against Christians 81
 against Jews 17–18
- Constantinople 35, 44, 114, 115
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Palestinians in 115–118
- Constitution of the Ottoman Empire, restora-
 tion (1908) 93
- conversion
 of Jews 17
 of Orthodox Christians 75n16
- Copts 152
- corruption 45
 NK on corruption within the Orthodox
 Church 37, 40–41, 93, 132
- cousins of NK *see* Butros; Hanna; Mariam;
 Niqula; Salame; Semaan; Shehadeh;
 Suleiman; Yusif
- Crete 132
- Cristea, Miron (Patriarch of Romania, r.
 1919–1939)
 anti-Semitism of 17–19, 21
 awarding medal of the Holy Cross to NK
 47, 122, 137
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Christians at 120, 121–124
 support for Palestine Cause 121–124, 126
- Croatia 21
- Cross of Jesus Christ 123n99
- Crusades 35
- 'crypto-Judaism' 17
- CUP *see* Committee of the Christian Union
- Cust, L.G.A. 116n87
- Cyril IX Moghabghab (Greek Catholic Patri-
 arch, r. 1925–1947) 134, 134n121
- al-Dahdala, Jiryis 94
- al-Dajani, Hasan Sidqi 109, 109n76
- al-Dajani, Raghib 93n47
- Dale, Haiduc 15
- Damascus 82n28, 104, 120
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Palestinians in (1937) 113–114
 NK visiting Mufti in (1948) 153–154
- Damianos I (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1897–
 1931) 84n31, 131n15
 Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre vs.
 41, 45
 death of 39, 101
 relationship with NK 45, 46, 48, 84
- Daoud Nasser Abu Jidam 98, 101
- Daoud (uncle of NK) 84

- Dar-al-Qassis ('the house of the priest', epithet for NK's family) 69
- Dardenelles 127
- Dar Nasser al-Suleiman 85
- daughters of NK *see* Julia; Marie; Martha; Olga; Takla
- Dead Sea 80, 80n23
- death
 - of children of NK x, 81, 88, 90
 - of father of NK 105–107
 - of mother of NK 89
 - of NK 4
 - of uncles of NK 88, 89, 161–162
- Deir-al-Asad (region, Galilee) 141n129
- al-Deir, Suleiman (village priest of Ramla) 86
- Deir Yassin massacre (1948) 155, 156, 156n149
- delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians ('Balkan delegation') xi, xvii *ill.*, 126–130
 - in Alexandria 132–133
 - in Athens 130–132
 - in Belgrade 125–126
 - in Bucharest 47, 119–125, 137
 - in Cairo 133–135
 - in Constantinople 115–118
 - funding of 113
 - in Geneva xi, 126–130
 - NK heading xi, 112–115
 - return to Palestine 136
 - in Sofia 118–119
 - in Syria 113–114
 - see also* League of Nations session on partition of Palestine
- deportation *see* persecution
- diaries *see* memoirs
- diaspora, Palestinian
 - in Egypt 133, 134
 - memoirs from 8–9
- al-Difa'* (newspaper) 127
- Divine liturgy
 - NK attending,
 - in Athens 132
 - in Beirut 155
 - in Bucharest 121, 123–124
 - NK refusing to evoke names of bishops in his 137, 137n125
 - NK serving,
 - in Cairo 135, 139
 - in Gharzouz and Wadi Shahrour (Lebanon) 157, 163
 - of Saint John Chrysostom/Saint Basil the Great 100n62
- Dositelj Vasić (Dositheus the Confessor, Metropolitan of Zagreb, 1931–1945) 126n106
- Dositheos II (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1669–1707) 36, 44
- dragomans 63 *ill.*
- dreams, NK dreaming of Karak Revolt 85–86
- Dusturiyyah School 11
- early life of NK 9, 10, 68–69
- Easter 60 *ill.*, 61 *ill.*, 140, 157
- Eastern calendar 68n2
- Eastern Europe, map of 1937 trip to xvii *ill.*
- Eastern Jordan 79n21
- Eastern Orthodox Church
 - anti-Semitism in 16
 - creation and development 35
- Eastern Orthodoxy, in photos 54–67
- East Jerusalem 49
- Ecclesiastical Court (Jerusalem) 40, 74
 - NK as member of 40, 100–101
- ecclesiastical institutions, reconfiguration of role and position 14n45
- ecclesiastical justice system 40
- Ecclesiasticus*, 2:5 86, 86n36
- Economic Charitable Society (alumni society, Ramla) 91
- Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople 32
- Eden, Anthony (British Foreign Secretary) 129
- editorial/publishing activities of NK 91, 97–98
- see also* *Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*
- education 35
 - importance and state of education in Orthodox Church 32, 38, 44, 70–71, 73
 - of NK x, 70–71, 73–74
 - Orthodox pupils/students in Catholic schools/universities 96n53–54
 - see also* schools
- Efthymios (bishop) 78
- ego of NK *see* megalomania of NK

- Egypt 49, 95, 133n119
 Egyptian Delegation at League of Nations 127, 128, 128–129, 130, 132
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 132–135
 NK visiting King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in 141–147
 Palestinian leaders in exile in 133, 135, 136, 154n146
- Eid, Labib 74
 Eid (uncle of NK) 84
 ‘Ein Siniya (Palestine) 68n1, 105
 elites 31, 37, 41, 42, 108n74
 religious elites vs. NK 41, 42, 46
 enclaves 15n46
 England *see* Britain
 Enlightenment 6
 epanoklimavkion (veil worn by monks and bishops) 102, 102n65
 Ephraim, Gotthold 20n68
 epigonation (lozenge of stiff embroidered cloth) 100, 100n62
 Epiphany 62 *ill.*
 Eskisehir (Turkey) 115
 espionage
 autobiographical accounts of 6n12
 during Arab Revolt 138
 on NK 140
- Ethiopia 74
 Ethiopian Christians 152
Euchologion (liturgical book of Byzantine Church), revision of concise *Euchologion* by NK 47, 103–104, 103n67
 European Express 118
 European imperialism 122n97
 Exarchate Church 42
 exile 9, 77
 of NK ix, x, xi–xiii, 6, 155–158
 of Palestinian leaders/supporters xi–xii, 79, 108, 133n119, 141, 141n130, 150, 151
see also persecution
- facism, rejection by Muslim Palestinians 20
 Faisal I (King of Syria, 1920) 112n79, 125n104
 family background of NK 9, 10, 69
 family conflicts 71, 72
 on boyfriend of Aziza (sister of NK) 106
 lack of support for NK’s efforts for Palestinian cause 136
- family life of NK
 in Birzeit (early life) 1, 68–72
 in Birzeit (later life) 85, 89, 90, 108
 during and after First World War 90, 95
 in Jerusalem 101, 152
 in Karak 73, 76–77, 80–81, 85–86, 90
 loss of family members during First World War 89
 map of NK’s life and family trips *xvii ill.*
 in Ramla x, 86–88, 95
 in Sawfar 157, 159
 in Wadi Shahrour 160
 family trips, map of (1885–1932) *xviii.*
 Farraj, Yaqub 2, 49
 Amin al-Husseini vs. 98, 98n58
 dispute with clerical committee 102
 NK vs. 23, 39, 40, 47, 98n58, 111, 113, 140
 organising first Arab Orthodox Congress 94n49
 resignation from Arab Higher Committee 110, 113
 Faruq I (King of Egypt, r. 1936–1952) 141, 142
 al-Faruqī, Sami Pasha (Ottoman governor) 83
 fascism, Muslim rejection of 20
 fasting 123, 123n101, 140
 al-Fatat (The Young Arab Society) 125n104
 father-in-law of NK *see* Abu Yusuf (Bishara Uur)
 father of NK 76, 77, 85, 89
 background 69
 death and funeral 105–107
 move to/in Karak x, 72, 72n11, 82–83, 84, 90
 move to/in Ramla 86, 95
 paternal pride and expectations of 75, 78, 79, 99
 as priest 69–70, 72, 86
 Feast of the Holy Cross 123–124, 123n99
 Fener (Phanar, Turkey) 115, 115n86
 financial situation of NK/NK’s family 5, 9, 45, 69, 75, 108n74, 157
 salary xi, 75, 77, 91, 160
see also livelihood of NK/NK’s family
 First Arab Congress (Paris, 1933) 125n104
 First Arab Orthodox Congress (Haifa, 1923) *see* Arab Orthodox Congress

- First World War 1, 8
 casualties in Greater Syria 88n45
 loss of materials for NK's memoirs during ix, 68
 loss of NK's family members during 89
 NK's (family) life/situation after 90–91, 95
 NK's (family) life/situation during 88–90
 relation with *nakba*/Arab-Israeli War ix
 Forte, Tania 141n129
 France 88, 122n97
 Franck Scholten Photographic Collection (1921–1923) 54–57
 Frayj, Dr Futi 109, 109n77
 French Hospital (Jerusalem) 95
 French Mandate for Syria and Lebanon 114n84
 friendships (of NK) 23, 85
 with military commander-in-chief 140–141
 with Mufti 39, 140
 with prominent people 77, 78, 79, 94
 Friends School (Quaker school, Ramallah) 97, 97n56
 Fundamental Law of the Patriarchate (1875) 34, 37, 49
 funerals
 of brother of NK (Bulos) 161
 of father of NK 106–107

 Galilee 141n129, 154n145
 Gavrilo v (Dožić, Serbian Orthodox Patriarch, r. 1938–1950) 126n106
 al-Gaylani, Rashid Ali 21
 Gaza 9, 13n43, 40, 70, 73, 89
 General Arab Conference (Haifa, 1946) 150
 general strike *see* Arab general strike (1936)
 Geneva *see* League of Nations session on partition of Palestine (Geneva, 1937)
 genocides 81n25
 George, Saint (Islamic variant: al-Khader), miracles by 85n35, 85
 George (second son of NK named George) 95, 146, 156–157, 159
 George (son of NK, died as infant/child) 95
 Georgette (wife of NK's brother Khalil) 105–106
 Georgia 42

 Georgian Orthodox Church 42
 Gerasimus I (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, r. 1885–1891/Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1891–1897) 69n7
 Germanos I (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1537–1579) 36
 Germany 88
 Gershon, Shafir 5, 6
Al-Ghad (magazine) 14
 Ghali, Butrus-Butrus 128n111
 Ghali, Dr Butrus (President of Egypt, r. 1908–1910) 128n111
 Ghali Pasha, Wasif Butrus (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Egypt) 127, 128–129, 128n111
 Gharzouz 157, 157n150
 Ghattas (uncle of NK) 89, 105
 Ghawr (Jordan Valley) 80, 80n22
 al-Ghouri, Emile 2, 113, 130, 134, 135, 142, 147
 al-Ghusayn, Yaqub 130n114
 girls' education/schools 76, 82, 97
 Girls' Orthodox School (Jerusalem) 152
 Gobat, Samuel (Protestant bishop of Jerusalem) 96
 Golden Horn 115n85
 Gori, Father Alberto (Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1949–1970) 14
 Government of All Palestine 109n77
 government schools, NK as teacher at 93, 95
 grandparents/great grandparents of NK 69, 71, 84, 89
 Greater Syria/Syrians 1, 88n45, 133n119
 Greece 87n43
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 130, 131–132
 NK meeting Greek delegation at League of Nations 127–128
 as one of main Orthodox state actors 3
 protective rights/control over Patriarchate 3, 33, 93
 support to Arab/Palestinian cause 131–132
 Greek Brotherhood *see* Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre
 Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church 148
 Arab Orthodox resistance against 1–2, 5, 9–10, 30, 31, 32–33, 34–41, 45, 137n125

- Greek narrative/argumentation on 41–48
 history/evolution of 35, 36–37, 42–44
 public indication of disunity with 137n125
- Greek identity 35, 43
- Greek language 43, 44, 73n12
 language skills of NK 74
- Greek nationalism 12, 45, 46, 48, 117n89
- Greek Orthodox Palestinians 152
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate/patriarchs 14, 44
 authority of 36, 148
 support to Arab/Palestinian cause 131–132
see also Damianos I; Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church; Timotheos I
- Greek Orthodox priests 57 *ill.*, 58 *ill.*, 63 *ill.*, 65 *ill.*, 66 *ill.*
- Greek religious establishment, attitude towards NK 45–47
- Greek Revolt/Greek War of Independence (1821–1829) 117, 117n89
- Gregorian calendar 68n2
- Gregorios IV Haddad (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch, r. 1906–1928) 75, 75n15
- Gregorios V (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, r. 1797–1821 during various periods) 117, 117n89
- Gregory the Theologian, Saint 99n60
- Gregory XIII (pope, r. 1572–1585) 68n2
- Gubser, Peter 82n28
- al-Habash, Bechara 146–147, 146n138
- Haddad, Elias Nasrallah 20n68
- al-Hadi, Awni Abd 7, 112n79, 125, 125n104, 127, 130
- Haganah (Zionist paramilitary organisation) 152
- Haga Sophia Mosque (Constantinople) 117–118
- Haggear, Gregorios *see* Hajjar, Gregorios
- Haiduc-Dale, Noah 10n30, 11n32
- Haifa 40, 97, 111, 140, 152, 158
 First Arab Orthodox Congress (1923) 34, 37, 93–94, 94n48–49, 101
 General Arab Conference (1946) 150
- Haiti 127
- Hajjar, Gregorios (Greek Catholic Bishop of Galilee) 12, 23, 40, 111, 136
- Hakim, George (Melkite Bishop, 1943–1967, Patriarch of Antioch, 1967–2000) 12, 151, 151n142
- Hakim, Khalil (priest) 23, 98, 98n59, 99, 100, 106
- al-Hakim, Najib (lawyer) 74, 74–75n14
- Hama (Syria) 114
- Hanna (brother of NK) 71, 88, 89
- Hanna (cousin of NK) 70, 71
- al-Hanna, Father Yaqub 106, 136, 136n123, 163
- Hanna (grandfather of NK) 89
- Hanna (son of NK) 101, 157, 159, 160
- Hanna (uncle of NK's brother-in-law Yusif) 160
- Hanne (aunt of NK) 69, 89
- Harat al-Nasara (Christian Quarter, Jerusalem) 99
- Harb, Father Yusif 106
- Hashim family/Hashemites 145n136, 146n137
- Hawawini 103
- Hawran 79n21
- Haycraft Report 95n51
- Haydarpaşa (Turkey) 115
- headdresses, Orthodox 71, 71n10
- healings, NK witnessing 85
- Hebrew University (Mount Scopus) 96n53
- Hebron xi, 8, 72n11, 154n146
- Helena, Saint 123n99
- hermits 67 *ill.*
- Hierotheos (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1875–1882) 37
- Hijaz Railway 79n21, 83, 83n30
- al-Hilal (publishing house, Alexandria) 133
- Histadrut (forum for labour organising) 75n14
- Historical and Diplomatic Archive (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Greece) 31
- History of the Church of Jerusalem* (Chrysostomos Papadopoulos) 34, 46
- Hitler, Adolf 18, 20, 21
- Ḥizb al-Fidā' al-Waṭānī (National Defense Party) 98n58
- Holocaust 4, 17, 17n55
- Holy Forty-day Fast 140

- Holy Places 44
 enclave to protect 15n46
 Orthodox rights/prædominium over
 42–43, 44, 48, 49, 116n87, 126,
 126n107
 publicity for 118
 regulation of custodianship rights and
 privileges (Status Quo) 116n87
The Holy Places of Palestine (Kallistos Mili-
 aras) 42
 Holy See, position on Arab/Palestinian cause
 12, 13, 13n41
 Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem) 56–57 *ill.*,
 99
 Holy Week 140
 homilies (by NK) 97, 97n55, 100, 139
 Homs (Syria) 90, 114
 Honduras 127
 Hospice Hotel (Cairo) 133, 133n118
 Hotel Bulgaria (Sofia) 118, 119
 housing situation of NK/NK's family 71–72,
 73, 76, 82, 98, 156, 157
 al-Hreish, Father Nicolas 139
 Husayn Bin Ali, Sharif 146n137
 al-Husseini, Abdel Rahim Beik 114,
 114n82
 al-Husseini, Abdul Qader 114n82, 153, 154–
 155, 154n146, 156
 Husseini family 125n104
 Husseini-Nashashibi rivalry 34, 39, 98,
 108–109, 109n75
 al-Husseini, Hajj Amin (Grand Mufti of Jerus-
 alem, 1921–1948) 19, 75n14, 97n57,
 109n77, 136
 anti-Semitism of/collaboration with
 Nationalist Socialist regime 19–
 21
 exile,
 in Berlin 19–20, 21
 in Egypt 150–151
 in Lebanon/NK pleading for return
 47, 130, 130n114, 142, 145, 150
 leading General Strike (1936) 107, 108,
 109–110
 NK's alignment with x, 31, 39, 136,
 140
 NK visiting,
 in Egypt 150–151
 in Syria 153
 Peel Commission and 109n76, 110–111
 requesting support for Arab/Palestinian
 cause 12–13, 125
 appointment of NK to head delega-
 tion of Arab Orthodox Palestinians
 112–113, 136
 request for arms 153, 155
 Yaqub Farraj vs. 98, 98n58
see also Arab Higher Committee
 al-Husseini, Jamal 130n114, 141, 141n130, 142,
 147, 149, 150
 al-Husseini, Musa Kazim Pasha 13n43, 114,
 114n82
 al-Husseini, Toufic (Abu Saleh) 150
 al-Husseini, Yaqub 150
 al-Husseini, Prince Abdullah Bin *see* Abdul-
 lah I
 Iberians 43
 Ibn Ishaq (d. 150/767) 6
 Ibn Saud *see* Abdulaziz al-Saud
 Ibn al-Zhabbah 141
 Ibrahim Abu Helwe, Father (from house of
 Abdallah) 70
 Ibrahim Abu Yaqub 89
 Ibrahim Daoud, Father (from house of
 Shahin) 70
 Ibrahim Pasha 72n11
 Ibrahim, Rashid al-Haj 130n114
 Ibrahim (son of NK) 88, 90
 India, delegation at League of Nations 130
 Institute for Palestine Studies (Beirut) 4, 5,
 7
 interwar period, involvement of Christians in
 Arab nationalism 3, 10–16
 investigation of NK's activities, by British
 Mandate government 136, 140
 Iran, delegation at League of Nations 127,
 130
 Iraq 154n146
 delegation at League of Nations 127, 128,
 129, 130
 Ireland, delegation at League of Nations
 127, 129, 129n112
 Irfiyaous, Monsignor (according to NK Patri-
 archal *locum tenens* for Serbian Orthodox
 Church) 23, 126
 Irish uprising (1916) 129n112
 Iron Guard 18

- Irving, Sarah 4
 al-'Isa, 'Isa al- 2
Islah (political party) 13
 Islamic Conference (Bludan, 1937) 114,
 114n82–83
 Islamic faith, insulting of 91–93
 'Islamofacism' 20
 Isma'il Fazil Pasha (Ottoman general/Gov-
 ernor of Syria, r. 1909–1911) 78–79, 78–
 79n21
 Israel
 establishment and recognition of State of
 1, 48, 153n144, 158
see also Nakba
 Israeli Declaration of Independence (14 May
 1948) 158
 Issa al-Abdallah (uncle by marriage of NK)
 69
 Issa Musa (village priest, Birzeit) 76
 al-Issa, Rajai 155
 Issa (uncle of NK) 69, 71, 76, 78, 80
 death of 161–162
 al-Issa, Yusif 114, 120
 Istanbul *see* Constantinople
 Istiqlal Party (Palestine) 125n104, 130n114
 Italy 126–127
 invasion of Libya 87, 87n41
 Jabal al-Druze 82
 Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim 7
 Jaffa 40, 87, 97
 commercial school 74, 76
 conflicts between Arabs and Jews in 95,
 95n51, 152
 occupation of (1948) 158
 port strike and move of port to Tel Aviv
 108, 110
 James, Protoevangelium of 86n40
 Jawhariyyeh, Wasif 8, 9
 Jbeil (Byblos) district (Mount Lebanon)
 157n150
 Jerusalem 19, 68, 76, 83, 84, 105, 106, 133
 Christian sanctuaries in *see* Holy Places
 conquests of 44, 143, 143n134
 (family) life of NK in x, 89, 90, 95, 101,
 140–141, 152
 fights between Arabs and Jews in 152
 Holy Sepulchre 56–57 *ill.*, 99
 mayor of 13n43
 in memoirs 8
 municipal elections 98
 Old City 54 *ill.*, 55 *ill.*
 restructuring of National Orthodox
 School by NK 95–98
 Villa Arabe 59 *ill.*
 Jewish Agency 109n76
 attack on 153, 153n144
 representation at League of Nations 128,
 128n110, 129
 Jewish immigration/settlement 11, 13,
 95n51, 107, 110, 118, 122, 131, 151
see also Judaisation of Palestine
 Jewish propaganda 128
 Jewish refugees 128n110
 Jews/Jewish community
 access to Catholic schools 96n53
 conspiracy theories against 17–18
 conversion of 17
 delegation at League of Nations 128–129
 land sales to/handing over land to 11,
 107, 107n73, 158
 NK on Jewish vs. Palestinian posi-
 tion/cause 134–135
 obstruction of Muslim-Christian relations
 by 109, 111
 persecution of *see* anti-Semitism
 revolts/violence between Arabs and 95,
 108, 111–112, 152–153
see also Arab general strike; Arab
 Revolt
 support by British administration 10–11,
 107, 118, 122n97, 130n113, 152
 tolerance of/co-existence with Muslim
 and Christian Palestinians 20,
 20n68, 93n47
 Jifna 68n1
 John Chrysostom, Saint 99n60, 100n62
 John Mauropoulos, Saint 99n60
 John the Theologian 105
 John XIX (Pope of Alexandria/Coptic Ortho-
 dox Patriarch, r. 1928–1942) 134, 134n120
 Jordan x, 66 *ill.*, 72n11, 83n30
 incorporation of East Jerusalem 49
 independence of 145n136
see also Transjordan
 Jordanian Orthodox community 94
 Jordan River/Valley 62–65 *ill.*
 Joumai'an, Yaquub *see* Jumai'an, Yaquub

- journeys *see* trips
 Judaisation of Palestine 118, 120, 122, 124, 126
 see also Jewish immigration/settlement
 Judaism, 'crypto-Judaism' 17
 Judgment Day 105
 Julia (daughter of NK) 95
 Julian calendar 68n2
 Julius Caesar 68n2
 Jumia'an, Yaqub 142, 148

 kalimavkion (clerical headdress) 71, 71n10, 102n65
 Karak (Jordan) 74
 family life of NK in 73, 76–77, 85–86, 90
 NK as member of Karak branch of Young Turks 45, 77–79, 81
 NK's move/flight from x, 45, 72–73, 81, 83n30, 90
 NK as teacher in 75–77
 NK witnessing miracle in church in 85
 visit of Isma'il Fazl Pasha to 78–79
 Karak Revolt (1910) 68
 loss of NK's possessions/materials for memoirs during ix, 68, 83, 90
 NK on causes of 81–83
 prophetic dream/vision of NK of 85–86
 Karam, Elia (Archbishop of Lebanon/Metropolitan of Mount Lebanon, r. 1934–1969) 117, 117n88, 161, 162, 163
 arranging post as priest for NK xi, 156, 157, 160
 Kassāb, Iskandir 94n49
 Kattan, Nakhle 98
 Katz, Kimberley 8
 Keladion (archbishop, metropolitan of Acre and Patriarchal *locum tenens*) 101
 assigning NK revision of micro Eucho-logion 47, 103–104, 103n67
 relationship with NK 46, 48
 Kfar Yassif (Arab town in Israel) 106
 al-Khader (Islamic variant of Saint George) 85, 85n35
 Khalidi family 7
 al-Khalidi, Hussain Fakhri 7, 13, 130n14
 Khalil (brother of NK, died as infant) 69
 Khalil (second brother of NK named Khalil) 70, 72, 90, 101, 105
 bankruptcy of 91
 education of 76
 marriage of 105–106
 in military service with NK 89
 as teacher 77, 80, 86, 91, 96
 Kharmi, Ghada 8–9
 al-Khazen, Yaqub 141, 141n129
 al-Khoury, Archimandrite Bulos 155
 al-Khoury, Bechara (President of Lebanon, r. 1943–1953) 143n132
 al-Khoury, Daoud (teacher at village school) 70
 al-Khoury, Emile Beik (reporter) 127
 Khoury, George (priest) 97n55
 al-Khoury, Hanna Musa (teacher at village school) 70
 al-Khoury, Jiryis (teacher) 91
 Khoury (name) 69
 Khoury, Philip 114n84
 al-Khoury, Sami Beik (Lebanese Minister-Delegate in Cairo) 143, 143n132
 Khoury, Shehadeh (cousin of NK) 5, 34, 89, 94, 107, 136n123
 Khoury, Shehadeh (rich man from Tiberias) 154, 154n145
 Khoury, Tawfiq 154n145
 al-Khoury, Tomeh (teacher/principle at Karak school) 76
 kidnappings
 during Arab Revolt 108, 136, 138
 NK mediating in 136
 al-Kila, Isaac (son of village head, Birzeit) 73
 al-Kila, Niqula (son of Suleiman al-Kila) 73
 al-Kila, Salame Abu Khalil (from house of Um Eid, village head, Birzeit) 70, 73
 al-Kila, Suleiman (schoolmaster at village school and priest, Birzeit) 70, 73
 Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes 125n105
 Kobar (Palestine) 68n1
 Kosovo 8n24
 al-Kuhaimi, Sheikh Abdulaziz (Consul of Saudi Arabia in Jerusalem) 142, 142n131, 143, 145–146
 Kyoseivanov, Georgi (Prime Minister of Bulgaria, 1935–1940) 119, 119n91

 labour relations
 in Mandate Palestine 108n74
 see also Arab general strike
 Labour Zionism, Revisionist vs. 156n149

- Lake Lot 80n23
- land sales/handover
to Catholics 13n41
to Jews 11, 107, 107n73, 158
- Lang, Cosmo (Archbishop of Canterbury, r. 1928–1942) 102, 115, 116
- Latin Catholic Palestinians *see* Catholic Palestinians
- Latin missionaries 75n16
- Latin Patriarchate
Arabisation of leading positions of 14
archives 12
- Latins, Greek denomination vs. 35n16
- Lattakia (Syria) 143n133
- Lausanne 127
- Lausanne Conference (1922–1923) 127n108
- lay community *see* Arab lay community
- League of Arab Nations 143n133
establishment of 148–150
invasion of Palestine (1948) 158–159
request for arms support from 151, 153–154, 155
- League of National Action (pan-Arab organisation) 114, 114n84
- League of Nations session on partition of Palestine (1937, Geneva) xi, 3, 9, 10, 102, 113n80, 118, 124, 128n110
accomplishments for Arab/Palestine cause 129–130, 133
delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians at xi, 112–115
delegations/support at 127
Afghani delegation 130
British delegation 128, 129, 130
Bulgarian delegation 118, 127
Egyptian delegation 127, 128–129, 130, 132
French delegation 128
Greek delegation 127–128
Indian delegation 130
Iranian delegation 127, 130
Iraqi delegation 127, 129, 130
Irish delegation 129, 129n112
Jewish delegation 128, 129
Palestinian Arab Orthodox delegation (headed by NK) xi, 112–115, 126–130, 127, 128
Palestinian delegation 112n79, 122
Romanian delegation 121, 123, 127
Syrian delegation 127
Yugoslavian delegation 125, 127
see also delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians
- Lebanon 113
exile 130, 136, 142
Amin al-Husseini in 47, 130, 130n114, 136, 142, 145, 150
NK in ix, x, xi–xiii, 6, 155–158
Lebanese delegation visiting King Abdulaziz Al-Saud in Cairo (1946) 143
NK as priest in xi, 155–156, 157, 159–160
- Lehi (Stern Gang, Zionist paramilitary and terrorist organization) 156n149
- Lenten season 99–100, 99n61, 100n62
- LeVine, Mark 5, 6
- Libya, Italian invasion of 87n41
- literacy campaigns 14
- liturgical books, revision of concise Eucharistion by NK 47, 103–104, 103n67
- liturgies, NK refusing to mention name of Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem in 24, 137
- livelihood of NK/NK's family 9, 69, 72, 76, 77, 80, 85, 90–91, 160
- Lockman, Zachary 108
- locust plagues 88, 90
- Lod *see* Lydda
- Lohaf, George Abu 146–147
- London 11, 118, 126, 130, 146
- Luke*, 12:32 86, 86n37
- Lutfallah, Habib 146n137
- Lutfallah, Prince Michel (head of pastoral council, Orthodox Church of the Archangels) 135, 146–147, 146n137
- Lydda 91, 97, 106
fall of 89, 158
- Ma'an 83n30
- Ma'arrat Al-Naaman (Syria) 114
- Mada 'ahd al-mujammalat* (Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi) 7
- Madaba 83–84
- Mahé (Seychelles) 130n114
- Mahmoud Pasha, Mohammed (Prime Minister of Egypt, r. 1928–1929/1937–1939) 135
- Mahmud Shawkat Pasha (lieutenant) 81, 81n24

- Majali family 72n11
 Makarios, Archimandrite 101
 Makdisi, Jean Said 8
 mandatory system 10
 see also British Mandate govern-
 ment/administration; French Mandate
 for Syria and Lebanon
 Mansour, Atallah 9
Mapping my Return (Salman Abu Sitteh) 9
al-Marahil (Omar Salih al-Barghouti) 7
 Mariam (cousin of NK) 89
 Mariam (daughter of NK, later known as
 Marie) 80, 81, 83, 89, 95, 101, 159
 Mariamite Church (Damascus) 120n96
 Marie (daughter of NK, previously known as
 Mariam) 80, 81, 83, 89, 95, 101, 159
 Mark, 13:13 86, 86n39
 Marmara, Sea of 115
 Marqada, Emile (Syria student/clergyman,
 later priest at Mariamite Church, Damas-
 cus) 120–121, 137
 marriage of NK 75, 76–77
 see also children of NK
 Martha (daughter of NK) 81, 88
 Mar Yaqub (cathedral church, Jerusalem)
 91, 97n55, 106
 NK forming choir/as cantor 74, 96
 NK ordained as priest at 99
 services/homilies by NK 97, 99–100, 107,
 109
 Masaryk, Tomáš (President of Czechoslov-
 akia, r. 1918–1935) 123n98
 massacres
 Dear Yassin 155, 156, 156n149
 Lydda 158
 Ramla 158
 Massad, Amin (assistant to principal teacher
 and headmaster in Ramla) 87
Matari (micro/concise mega Euchologion)
 47, 103–104, 103n67
 Matta, Melhem 157
Matthew
 10:22 86, 86n39
 10:30 86, 86n38
 Maurice (Boris II, Tsar of Bulgaria, r. 1918–
 1943) 119, 119n93
 Maximos v Hakim (Melkite Bishop, 1943–
 1967/Patriarch of Antioch, 1967–2000)
 12, 151, 151n142
 Meatfare Sunday 99, 99n61
 Mecca 83n30
 medals, NK being offered medal of the Holy
 Cross by Patriarch Miron Cristea 47, 122,
 137
 media coverage, on Palestinian cause 118,
 120, 123, 123n98, 125, 129, 132, 135, 136,
 146
 Medina 83n30
 megalomania of NK
 signs in memoirs of 22–23, 79, 96n52,
 100, 123, 135, 136, 144, 147, 148, 149, 150,
 151
 see also reputation
 Meletius II (Patriarch of Antioch, r. 1899–
 1906) 75n15–16, 131n15
 Meliton (Bishop of Madava) 40n42, 46, 99
 Melkites 12, 23, 151
 see also Catholic Palestinians
 memoirs (from Ottoman, Mandate and post-
 Nakba period, not by NK) 5–10
 accounts of espionage and military activ-
 ities 6n12
 of Christian Palestinians 9
 definition of memoirs 22
 from diaspora 8–9
 increase in 6–7
 language of 7, 9
 purpose/readership 7
Memoirs (Niqula Khoury) 31
 dating of 4
 imprecision in 23–24
 language and translation 4
 purpose of memoirs 4–5
 target group/readership 5
 Metaxas, Ioannis (Prime Minister of Greece,
 r. 1936–1941) 131n15
 Michael (Archangel) 105
 migration
 Greek immigrants 73n12
 Jewish immigrants 13, 95n51, 107, 110
 Milan 127
 Miliarus, Kallistos 42, 44
 military activities, memoirs on 6n12
 military service 88, 88n44
 of NK and brothers in First World War
 89
 Minister of Propaganda and Publishing (Bul-
 garia) 118

- miracles, NK witnessing miracle in church in Karak 85
- Mira't Al-Sharq* (newspaper) 107
- missionary schools 11
- missionary societies/institutions, reconfiguration of role and position 14, 14n45
- missions of NK *see* delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians; League of Nations session on partition of Palestine
- Mitri (uncle of NK) 69
- Mixed Ecclesiastical Court 40
- modern anti-Semitism *see* racialised anti-Semitism
- Mohammad Rashid Kalifa (Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, r. 1909–1918) 81
- Monastery of the Cross, NK rejected enrollment to theological seminary 45–46, 74
- Monastery of Our Lady, church of the (Harat Al-Nasara) 99
- monastic movement/structure 35, 36, 42, 44, 48
see also Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre
- monks
attempt to depose Patriarch Damianos from See 41
bequeathment of property to Brotherhood 32
exclusion of non-Greek 36, 44, 45–46
- Montefiore (neighbourhood, Jerusalem) 152
- Montenegro 87n43
- Montreux 127
- Montreux Convention Regarding the Abolition of the Capitulations in Egypt (1837) 127n108
- mother of NK *see* Nusra
- Mount Lebanon 156n148
- Moussa *see* Musa/Moussa
- Moussaed, Vicky 4
- Mudhakkirāt* ('Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī) 7
- Muḥammad (the Prophet) 6
- Mukhttar Café (Jerusalem) 147n140
- al-Muqtataf* (*nahda* journal) 133n119
- Musa/Moussa, Father (great grandfather of NK) 69, 71
- Musa/Moussa (son of NK) 90
- Musa/Moussa (uncle of NK) 69, 71, 89
- Muslim Brotherhood 133, 134
- Muslim-Christian Associations 11, 93, 93n47
- Muslim-Christian relations *see* Christian-Muslim relations
- Muslim Palestinians
depiction as anti-Semitic 20
persecution after Karak Revolt 82–83
recruitment by German army 21
rejection of fascism/Nazism by 20, 21
relation with Christian Palestinians 10–12
cooperation with Catholic Palestinians 12–13
participation in Orthodox Church life 85, 85n34
reputation of NK among 148
supporting NK's efforts for Arab/Palestinian cause 136
tolerance of/co-existence with Christians and Jews 20, 20n68, 93n47
- Nablus 72n11, 105
- al-Nahas Pasha, Mustafa (Prime Minister of Egypt, r. 1928/1930/1936–1937/1942–1944/1950–1952) 132
- Nahda* (Arab renaissance) 1
- Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe, 1948) xi, 1, 110, 158–159, 160n152
experiences by Christians 2
loss of NK's materials for memoirs during ix, 68
other memoirs on post-Nakba period 5, 6, 7, 9
relation with First World War ix
name of NK 68–69
- al-Nashashibi, Fakhri 108–109, 108n74
- Nashashibi family/party 125n104
collaboration with British 109n109
Nashashibi-Husseini rivalry 34, 39, 98, 108–109, 109n75
see also Farraj, Yaqub
- al-Nashashibi, Raghīb 98n58, 108, 110, 141
- Nassar, Hanna (priest) 140
- Nassar, Najīb 2
- Nasser, Anis Ibrahim (brother-in-law of NK) 110, 150, 161
- Nasser, Butros (teacher at Protestant school) 71
- Nasser, Issam 8

- Nasser, Nassib (brother of NK's brother-in-law) 150, 161
- Nassif, Charbel 4
- Nathan der Weise* (Gotthold Ephraim) 20n68
- National Defence Party (Ḥizb al-Fidā' al-Waṭānī) 98n58
- nationalism 30
 multi-religious x–xi
 non-secular 15
 relation between religion and 2, 39
see also Arab nationalism
- national movement *see* Arab/Palestinian nationalism
- National Orthodox School (Jerusalem) 39, 96n52
 NK restructuring/directing 95–98, 100
- 'national schools' 11
- National Socialism (Germany) 19
- Nazareth 40, 97, 130
- Nazha, Doctor Yaqub 147, 147n141
- Nazi death camps 18
- Nazi Germany 128n110
 use of Palestine issue to gain Arab support 21
- Nazism, rejection by Muslim and Christian Palestinians 20, 21
- Near East 146
- Nehma (aunt of NK) 89
- Netanya 158
- newspaper coverage, on Palestinian Cause/Holy Places 118, 120, 123, 123n98, 125, 129, 132, 135, 136, 146
- newspaper editors
 Christian 13–14
see also Bandaq, Issa
- Nicholas Abdallah (Bishop and Orthodox Metropolitan of Aksum, Ethiopia) 74, 133, 146
- Nicodemis I (Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1883–1890) 71n9
- Nicolas V (Patriarch of Alexandria, r. 1936–1939) 131, 133, 133n117
- Nikolaos, Saint 68
- Nino, Daoud (NK's son's father-in-law) 159
- Niqula (husband of cousin of NK) 89
- Nusra (mother of NK) 69, 86
 death of 89
 mental illness of 80, 83, 88
- Obeid family 71
- oikonomos/Economos (rank of diocesan or patriarchal finance officer) 102, 102n64
- Old City (Jerusalem) 54–55*ill.*
- Olga (daughter of NK, died as infant) 90
- Olga (second daughter of NK named Olga) 95, 160
- Organisation for the Defence of Palestine (Iraq) 114
- Oriental Congregations (Rome), archives 12
- Orientalism 93n47
- Orient Express, NK's journey from Aleppo to Istanbul 114–115
- Ormsby-Gore, William 113n80
- Orthodox Christians
 anti-Semitism and 3–4, 16–17
 of Constantinople 116n87
 conversion of 75n16
 as "Royal Nation" 35
see also Arab Orthodox Christians
- Orthodox Church
 anti-Semitism in 16–17
 origins 16
see also Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church; Orthodox Church of Jerusalem/Palestine
- Orthodox Church of the Archangels (Cairo)
 NK serving Divine Liturgy at 135
 NK's nomination as priest for 139–140
- Orthodox Church of Cairo 23–24
- Orthodox Church of Constantinople, influence on Jerusalem Patriarchate 36
- Orthodox Church of Jerusalem/Palestine 1
 Arab-Greek conflict 1, 2, 10, 32–34, 84n31
see also Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church
- arabisation of 1, 36, 147n140
- competition for leadership 16
- demand for reform of Patriarchate 32–33, 93
- exclusion and oppression of Arab lay community/parochial clergy 35, 44
- history of 5, 34, 94–95
- status as Patriarchate 42
see also Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Orthodox Club (Jerusalem) 96

- Orthodox Easter 60*ill.*, 61*ill.*
- Orthodox Palestinians *see* Arab Orthodox Christians
- Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
demand for reform by congregation 32–33, 93–94
ecclesiastical justice system 40
Greek national character of 42
Greek state interference in 41, 93
history/origins 32, 42
lack of support to Arab/Palestinian cause 115, 131, 132, 136
NK vs. 41, 48, 49, 139, 140
NK resigning from all roles for 137
organisation/structure 31, 42, 44
racial sectarianism by 36–37
real estate exploitation by 32, 35
rights/prædominium over Holy Places 42–43, 44, 48, 49, 116n87, 126, 126n107
see also Damianos I; Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church; religious elites; Timotheos I
- Orthodox schools 73n12, 91
- Ottoman army 8
Christians/non-Muslims in 87–88, 88n44
- Ottoman Empire/period 30, 35, 77
Balkan War (1912–1913) 87–88, 88n44
Capitulations 116n87, 122n97, 127, 127n108
centralisation 78n21
demise of 1, 87n41, n43
Islamicisation 88n44
memoirs on 5, 6, 8, 10
NK's contact political authorities 45
restoration of constitution (1908) 93
settlement of former territories 127n108
Tanzimat reforms 88
trade in 122n97
- Out of Place* (Edward Said) 8
- Pact of Umar 35, 35n16, 143n134
- Paisos (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1645–1660) 36
- Palace of Venice 131
- Palestine 136
history of 35
NK and family returning to Palestine after Karak Revolt 81, 83–85
Ottoman conquest of (1517) 32, 36
Palestine Arab Executive 13n43
Palestine Arab Workers' Society (PAWS) 75n14
Palestine Defence Committee (Syria) 113n80
Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) 7, 128n110
Palestine Royal Commission *see* Peel Commission
Palestinian Arab Party 98n58
Palestinian cause *see* Arab/Palestinian cause
Palestinian diaspora (Egypt), NK meeting with 134–135
Palestinian leaders, flight/exile during Arab Revolt 19, 130, 133, 133n119, 135, 136, 141n130, 142, 150, 154n146
Palestinian nationalism *see* Arab/Palestinian nationalism
Palestinian Radio (Jerusalem) 146
Palestinian refugees 136, 160, 160n152, 161
Palestinians
request for endorsement by Greek government 46–47
revolts/violence between Jews and 95, 108, 111–112, 152–153
see also Arab general strike; Arab Revolt
Palestinian Uprising *see* Arab Revolt
Palm Sunday 60*ill.*
papacy, support to Catholic Palestinians 12
Papadopoulos, Chrysostomos (Archbishop of Greece) 34, 46–47
Papastathis, Konstantinos 4, 12, 16
Paris 130
Treaty of (1856) 116n87
parishes, autonomy in nominating own priests 38
partition of Palestine 122, 129n112, 151
rejection by Christian communities 14–15, 19
see also League of Nations session on partition of Palestine; Peel Commission
Party of Syrian Unity 146n137
Patriarchate of Jerusalem *see* Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
patriarchs
Arab 13, 43–44, 75n15–16
contacts/work of NK with 9

- election/ordination of 36–37, 39, 46,
101, 102, 102n66
- Greek 14, 36, 44
- power of 32
- Paul (Prince Regent of Yugoslavia, r. 1934–
1941) 125
- PAWS (Palestine Arab Workers' Society)
75n14
- Peace Bands 109n75
- Peel Commission (Palestine Royal Commis-
sion) xi, 3, 12, 109n76, 110–111
- Arab Higher Commission and 110–111,
114n83
- NK blocked for selection as representative
for 23, 40, 111
- Permanent Mandates Commission (League
of Nations) 13n80
- persecution, of Palestine leaders/supporters
ix, x, xi–xiii, 6, 9, 19, 79, 108, 130, 133,
133n119, 134, 135, 136, 141, 141n130, 150,
151, 154n146
- Phanar (Fener, Turkey) 115, 115n86
- phyletism 43
see also Arab/Palestinian nationalism
- pilgrims/pilgrimage 42, 62 *ill.*, 64 *ill.*, 83n30
- Piraeus 131, 132
- Pius XII (pope, r. 1939–1958) 12–13, 116
- Pius XI (pope, r. 1922–1939) 115
- PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) 7,
128n110
- Poland 127, 161
- political involvement of NK x, 30, 31, 39
in Committee of Union and Progress
(Young Turks) 45, 77–79, 81
- contacts with senior politicians 9, 39
see also [al-]Husseini, Hajj Amin
- head of delegation of Arab Orthodox
Palestinians xi, xvii *ill.*, 112–132
- political and traditionalist values of NK
30
- reputation/knownness in political history
of Palestine 22, 49
- Politis, Nikolaos (Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Greece) 128, 128n109
- Porath, Yehoshua 113n32
- Port of Jaffa, strike and move to Tel Aviv
108–109, 110
- poverty 9, 139, 157
- power *see* religious power structure
- Presentation of the Lord to the Temple, feast
of the 99
- press coverage, on Arab/Palestinian cause
118, 120, 123, 123n98, 125, 129, 132, 135,
136, 146
- priests/priesthood
access to priesthood/appointment of
priests 38, 46, 139–140
- Greek Orthodox 57 *ill.*, 58 *ill.*, 63 *ill.*,
65 *ill.*, 66 *ill.*
- liturgical books for priests 103–104,
103n67
- NK as priest *see* career/professional
activities of NK
- participation in election of patri-
archs/bishops 102, 102–103n66
- promotion of 102, 162
- responsibilities of 32
- tensions between local Arab and incom-
ing Greek 74n13
- training of 73
see also village priests
- prisoners 141, 156n149
- processions, Easter 92, 92n46
- propaganda
against Christian-Muslim relations 109–
110
- against NK 140
- Italo-German 21
- Jewish 128
- Russian 43
- proselytism, of Latin/Protestant missionaries
in Orthodox community 75n16
- Protestantism, anti- 13
- Protestant missionaries 75n16
- Protestant Palestinians 10, 122, 122n97, 152
- Protestant school, NK at 71
- Protopapas, promotion of NK to 162
- al-Qassem, Izz ad-Din 130n113
- al-Qassis, Salame Yusif (uncle and father-in-
law of NK) *see* Salame (uncle and
father-in-law of NK)
- al-Qassus, Issa *see* Issa (uncle of NK)
- al-Qassus, Jiryis (teacher, Karak school) 76
- Qastal/Qastal Hill (near Jerusalem) 89,
154n146
- al-Qasus, 'Awda 82n28
- El-Qatrana (Jordan) 83–84, 83n30

- al-Qaymari, Khalil, healing of 85
 Qubain, Najib (pastor) 151
 Quwatli, Shukri 146n137
- racialised anti-Semitism 17, 21
 racial sectarianism 36–37
 radio broadcasts, on Arab/Palestinian cause 146
 Rafqa (sister of NK) 69
 Ramallah 1, 13n43, 68, 73, 97, 105, 106, 150
 British bombardments on/Turkish occupation of 89–90
 Conference of Orthodox Arab Priests 39, 101–104
 Ramla 97, 106, 157, 159
 brothers of NK in military service at army warehouse 89, 90
 Christian-Muslim relations in 91–93
 fall of 89, 158
 family life of NK in x, 86–88, 95
 father of NK as priest in 86
 moves by NK/NK's family to/from,
 from Birzeit 86, 90
 to Jerusalem 95, 101
 NK as teacher/headmaster in 86–87, 91
- real estate exploitation 32, 35
 Red Crescent 147n141
 Reform Party (Palestine) 130n114
 refugees
 Jewish 128n110
 Palestinian 160, 160n152, 161
Refutation of the Allegations put forward by Sir Anton Bertram against the Patriarchate of Jerusalem (Patriarchate of Jerusalem) 42
 Rezk, Mr (probably Alfred William Riggs, Deputy Superintendent, Palestine Police) 11, 11n78
- religion
 politicisation of 32
 relation between nationalism and 2, 39
 religious elites *see* elites
 religious grouping, citizenship/nationality vs. 36
 religious politics 31, 32
 religious power structure 34, 35, 36, 45, 49
 see also Greek church hierarchy/Greek control over Orthodox Church
 reputation of NK 22, 23, 49, 77, 78, 79, 85, 92, 97, 100, 140, 148
 see also megalomania of NK
Revelations (King James Version), 717 106, 106n70
 Revisionist Zionism, Labour vs. 156n149
 revolts *see* Arab Revolt; Karak Revolt; Young Turk Revolution
 Rhodesia 141n130
 Rida, Rashid 146n137
 Riggs, Alfred William (“Mr Rezk”, Deputy Superintendent, Palestine Police) 11, 11n78
 al-Rihawi family 154
Rihla Jabaliyya (Fadwa Tuqan) 7
Rihla Sa’ba: Sira Dhatiyya (Fadwa Tuqan) 7
 robbery 108
 of NK’s brother Yaqub 104
 of NK on way to Karak 74
 Rock, Alfred 127, 130
 Roma Empire 35
 Romania 3, 18, 19
 anti-Semitism in 17–19
 see also Cristea, Miron
 delegation at League of Nations 127
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 47, 119–125, 130, 137
 support for Arab/Palestinian cause 3, 121, 123
 Romanian Jews, stripped of citizenship 18, 120n95
 Romanian Orthodox church
 anti-Semitism 17–18
 disengagement from Greek leadership 18
 Romanian University 38
 Romans 43
 al-Roubdi, Nasser 133
 “Royal Nation”, Christian Orthodox as 35
 “Rum” (Byzantine), term/definition 35–36, 42
 “Rum Millet”, term/definition 43
 Russia 3, 45, 88, 122n97
 Russian Orthodox Church 3, 16
 Russian propaganda 43
- Sa’ati, Dr Najib 133
 Saba, Fuad 130n114

- Sa'eleek* (Vagabonds circle of reforming intellectuals) 147n140
- Safad 154, 154n145
- Safad, Mufti of 141
- al-Sahouri, Jiryis Yaqub (priest, Orthodox Church of the Archangels, Cairo) 98, 135, 139
- Said, Edward 8, 133n119
- Said family 8
- Saint Ann Seminary (Tanta) 151n142
- Saint Demetrios (monastery, Jerusalem) 73
- Saint Demetrios School (Jerusalem) 73–74, 84
- Saint George Cathedral (Beirut) 155, 157
- Saint George Church (Birzeit) 76
- Saint Mark's Church (Venice) 131
- Saint Mitri seminary/high school (Jerusalem) 39, 133
- Saint Nicholas monastery (Jerusalem) 84
- al-Sakakini, Khalil 7, 11, 69n5, 98n58, 141, 147n140
- Salah, Qustandi (teacher at village school) 73
- Salame (cousin of NK) 70, 71
- Salame, Hanna 142
- Salame (uncle and father-in-law of NK) 69, 71, 76, 84
death of 88, 89, 162
- salary of NK *see* financial situation of NK/NK's family
- Salem *see* Salame
- al-Salibi, Elia (Archbishop of Beirut) 155–156
- Salt 76, 159
- Salti Ibrahim Pasha (local leader of Al-Husun) 104
- Sanchez-Summerer, Karène 4
- sanctuaries *see* Holy Places
- San Remo Conference (1920) 33
- Saqi spring (between Birzeit and Ein Siniya) 105
- Sarafov, Doctor (deputy for Georgi Kyo-seivanov, Bulgaria) 119
- Sara (wife of NK) 76, 89, 90, 95, 160–161
giving birth 80, 81, 88, 90, 95
- Sarruf, Mary (women's rights activist) 107n72
- Satan 105
- Saudi Arabia 83n30, 143n133
- Sawfar 156, 156n148, 157, 159
(family) life in 157, 159
NK's move from 159–160
- al-Sawiti, Archimandrite Malatios 139, 146, 162
- Sawt al-Shaab* (Christian Orthodox newspaper) 13
- Sayigh, Rosemary 9
- Sayigh, Yusif 9
- Schneller, Johan Ludwig 97n57, 109n77
- Schneller Orphanage/School *see* Syrian Orphanage/School
- Scholten, Franck *see* Franck Scholten Photographic Collection
- schools
access to Jews 96n53
commercial 74, 76
funding of 39
girls' 76, 82, 97
government 93, 95
missionary schools 11
'national schools' 11
NK opening own school 91
Orthodox schools 38–39, 44, 73n12, 91, 93
quality of 38–39
village schools 39, 70–71, 73, 75–76, 86–87
- scouts clubs, established by NK 96, 99
- Sea of Galilee 154n145
- Sea of Marmara 115
- seclusion 67*ill.*
- Second Arab Orthodox Conference (Jaffa, 1931) *see* Arab Orthodox Congress
- Seiqali, Naji 74
- self-determination, right to 1, 4, 16, 20
- self-esteem of NK *see* megalomania of NK
- Semaan (cousin of NK) 71
- seminary of Balamand 75, 75n16–17
- Seminary of the Cross (Jerusalem) 131
NK's exclusion from 45–46, 74
- seminary high school (Monastery of Saint Demetrios, Jerusalem)
curriculum change and move to Jaffa 74
NK at 73–74
NK's brother at 84
see also Theological School/Seminary of the Cross
- seminary of Saint Mitri (Jerusalem) 39, 133

- Senvasaki Hotel (Bucharest) 120, 120n94
 Serbian Orthodox Church 3, 16, 42
 Serbia/Serbs 3, 42, 43, 87n43
 Seychelles, exiles in 130, 130n14, 133n19, 141
 Shahbandar, Abd al-Rahman 146n137
 Shahin family 69, 70
 Shahin, Issa al-Abdallah (uncle by marriage of NK) 69
 Shahrou, Wadi xi
 Shami community 133n19
 al-Shawareb, Father Aoude 106
 al-Shehaby, Ata Beik (governor of Aleppo) 114
 Shehada, Bulos 107, 107n72
 Shehadeh (cousin of NK) 5, 34, 89, 94, 107
 Sheikh Jarrah (Jerusalem) 150
 al-Shinty, Ibrahim 127
 Shrine Law 43
al-Shura (newspaper, Egypt) 133
 Sidon 160
 silver jubilee as priest (NK) 162–163
 sisters of NK *see* Aziza; Rafqa; Zarifa
 Sitteh, Salman Abu 9
 Sodom and Gomorrah 80n23
 Sofia, NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 118–119
 al-Solh, Riad 146n137
 Sophronius IV (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1579–1608) 36
 Sophronius (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 634–638) 143n134
 Sophronius V (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1770–1775) 36
 al-Soueidi, Tawfic Beik (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Iraq) 127
 Southern Rhodesia 141n130
 Spaho, Mehmed Beik (Minister of Transport, Yugoslavia) 125–126, 125n105
 spirit possession 85, 85n35
 Spiritual Court 40, 153
 spying activities *see* espionage
 standard of living of NK 77, 80, 85, 90, 157
see also financial situation of NK/NK's family; livelihood of NK/NK's family
 Status Quo in the Holy Places 116n87
 Stefan I (Metropolitan of Sofia) 118
 Stern Gang (Lehi, Zionist paramilitary and terrorist organisation) 156n149
 Stojadinović, Milan (Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, r. 1935–1939) 125, 125n105
The Storyteller of Jerusalem (ed. Salim Tamari, Issam Nasser) 8
 strikes 109n76
 Arab general strike (1936) 107–110, 130n13
Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East (Edmund Burke III, David Yag-houbian) 5
Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel (Mark LeVine, Shafir Gershon) 5, 6
 Sufis 85
 Suleiman (cousin of NK) 71
 Suleiman Mazid (grandfather of NK) 69, 84
 Supreme Muslim Council 19, 75n14
 Sursock residence (Sawfar) 157
A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem (Niqla and Shehadeh Khoury) 31, 34–37, 42, 46, 49, 94–95, 94n50
 Switzerland, NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 126–131
 Synod of the Patriarchate (Jerusalem) 101, 102n66
 Syria 49
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in (1937) 113–114
 NK's 1948 visit to 153–154, 157
 Palestinian leaders in refuge 136
 Syriac Palestinian Christians 152
 Syrian Dormition church (Egypt) 95
 Syrian Orphanage/School (Dar Al-Aytam/Schneller Orphanage, Jerusalem) 20n68, 97, 97n57, 109n77
 Syrian Orthodox Christians 43, 133
 Syrian Orthodox Church (Cairo) *see* Orthodox Church of the Archangels (Cairo)
 Syrian Palestinian Congress 146n137
 Syrian Protestant College 109n77
 Syrian Uprising (1925–1926) 112n79
 al-Tabari, Muhammad ibn Jarir (d. 310/923) 6
 al-Taher, Mohammed Ali 133, 134
 Takla (daughter of NK) 81, 89, 95, 110, 150, 161
 Tamari, Salim 4, 8
 Tanburah 157

- Tanta 151n142
- Tanzimat reforms 88
- Tayba 70, 91, 97
- teaching career of NK *see* career/professional activities of NK
- Tel Aviv 95n54, 108, 110, 158
- Terra Sancta College (Jerusalem) 96, 96n53
- Teta, Mother and Me* (Jean Said Makdisi) 8
- Thabet, Hajj Said Beik 114, 114n82
- Theodoritos, Archimandrite (president of Ecclesiastical Court, Jerusalem) 74, 101, 137n124
- theological anti-Semitism 17–18, 17n55, 21
- Theological School/Seminary of the Cross (Monastery of the Cross, Jerusalem) 131
- NK's exclusion from 45–46, 74
- Thessalonica 82
- Three Doctors/Three Hierarchs, feast of the 99, 99n60
- Tiberias 154, 154n145
- Timotheos I (Patriarch of Jerusalem, r. 1935–1955)
- election of 39, 40, 49, 102
- NK vs. 46, 48
- allegations against NK on meeting King Abdulaziz al-Saud 47–48
- blocking NK's appointment as priest in Beirut 155, 156
- not accepting medal for NK from Cristea 137
- not approving nomination of NK as priest in Cairo 24, 139–140, 148
- not authorising delegation of Arab Orthodox Christians 113
- publication of micro Euchologion/*Matari* 47, 104
- Tisserant, Eugene (cardinal) 123n98
- Tlayl, Nehma (teacher) 97
- tolerance, and co-existence of Christians, Muslims and Jews 20, 20n68, 93n47
- Topkapi Palace (Constantinople) 117
- al-Tor (Jerusalem) 152
- al-Toubbeh, Mukhtar Issa 147, 147n140
- Toufic (son of NK) 95
- tour guides 63 *ill.*
- Transjordan 72, 73n12, 91, 93, 159
- see also* Jordan
- Treaty of Berlin (1878) 116n87
- Treaty of Paris (1856) 116n87
- tribes 80, 83n30
- Trieste 127
- Tripoli, Italian attack on 86
- trips
- family trips xvi *ill.*
- regional trips (1943–1948) xvii *ill.*
- to Eastern and Western Europe (1937) xvii *ill.*
- see also* delegation of Arab-Orthodox Palestinians
- Tsimhoni, Daphne 11n32
- Tuqan, Fadwa 7
- al-Turjman, Ihsan Hasan 8, 9
- Turkey 88, 114–115, 127
- NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox Palestinians in 115–118
- Turkish Order 33
- Umar ibn al-Khattab (Caliph of the Rashidun Caliphate, r. 634–644) 35, 35n16, 143, 143n134, 148
- uncles of NK *see* Abdullah; Daoud; Eid; Ghattas; Issa; Mitri; Musa/Moussa; Salame
- United Nations General Assembly, partition of Palestine 151, 152
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) 160n152
- United States 105, 143n133
- role in partition of Palestine 144, 151
- UN Resolution 181 15n46
- UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) 160n152
- UN Security Council, Arab protests on Jewish violence to 152
- vakf* real estate 32
- Valera, Éamon de (President League Nations, later Taoiseach of Ireland, r. 1959–1973) 129
- Varnava (Rosić, Serbian Orthodox Patriarch, r. 1930–1937) 126, 126n106
- Venice 127, 131
- Venizelos, Eleftherios (Prime Minister of Greece, r. 1910–1920/1928–1933) 128n109
- Victoria Hotel (Geneva) 127
- Villa Arabe (Jerusalem) 59 *ill.*
- village priests
- NK's father as village priest 69–70, 72, 86
- payment of 69n6
- see also* priests/priesthood

- village school
 NK at 39, 70–71, 73
 NK as teacher at 75–76
 NK as teacher in Ramla 86–87
Vreme (Yugoslavian newspaper) 125
- Wadi al-Sirar 89
 Wadi Shahrour (Lebanon) 160n151, 162, 163
 (family) life in 160
 NK's move to 159–160
- weapons *see* armed support for Arab/
 Palestinian cause
- wedding of NK 76
 West Bank 1
 Western Europe, map of NK's 1937 trip to
xvii ill.
- Woodhead Commission 109n76
 World War II 4 138–139
- Yaghoubian, David 5
 Yaqub (brother of NK) 70, 72
 disappearance of 104–105, 104n68
 mental problems after robbery 104–105
 in military service with NK 89
 smuggling family from Birzeit to Ramla
 90
 as teacher 76–77, 80, 86, 91, 96, 104
- Yassin, Sheikh Yusuf (Minister of Foreign
 Affairs, Saudi Arabia) 142, 143, 143n133,
 145
- Yatta (Jabal Al-Khalil, Hebron Hills) 85
Yawmiyyāt (Akram Zuaiter) 7
Yawmiyyāt Khalil al-Sakākīnī 7
 Yemen 82
- Yildiz Palace (Constantinople) 117
 YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association)
 15, 97
- Youhanna, Father (priest, Church of Saint
 Sylvestros, Bucharest) 121
- Young Arab Society (al-Fatat) 125n104
 Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)
 15, 97
 Young Men's Muslim Association 15, 133,
 134
- Young Turk Revolution (1908) 30, 33, 37, 48,
 81
 counter-revolution by Sultan/conservat-
 ive forces 81n25, 82, 82n26, 82n28
see also Karak Revolt
- Young Turks *see* Committee of Union and
 Progress
- Yugoslavia
 NK with delegation of Arab Orthodox
 Palestinians in 125–126
 support for Arab/Palestinian Cause 126,
 127
- Yusif, Archimandrite 73
 Yusif (brother-in-law of NK) 160, 161
 Yusif (cousin of NK) 71
*Yusif Sayigh, Arab Economist and Palestinian
 Patriot* (ed. Rosemary Sayigh) 9
- Zabana, Salim Ibrahim 92
Zachariah, 13:9 86, 86n36
 al-Zafaran Palace (Cairo) 142, 146
 Zaghoul, Salim (teacher at village school)
 70
 al-Zaim, Husni (president of Syria, 1949)
 112n79
 al-Zananiri family 105–106
 Zarifa (sister-in-law of NK) 89
 Zion English School (Jerusalem) 69, 69n5,
 96, 97
- Zionism 135
 British Mandate policies towards 10–11,
 107, 118, 130n113, 152
 Zionist colonialism 1, 22
see also Jewish immigration/settlement
- Zionist Organization 111
 Zionists 118
 Zionist territorialism 10
 Ziza 83–84, 83n30
 Zlatev, Pencho (Prime Minister of Bulgaria, r.
 1935) 119n92
 Zuaiter, Akram 7