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Calendars, Martyrs, and Palestinian Particularism under British Rule



TAMIR SOREK

This article explores how political calendars and shared martyrology provided important markers of identity and symbolic tools for political mobilization in Mandate Palestine. The dates on the emerging Palestinian calendar grew out of the politicization and nationalization of traditional holy days, as well as the commemoration of politically significant events of the period, including those involving local Palestinian martyrs. Commemorative events were especially important for the advancement of Palestinian particularism, which could not rely on a distinct language and culture or a common religion. Although the Palestinian elite was well aware of the importance of these markers to identity formation, its ability to nurture them was limited by institutional weakness, lack of political sovereignty, and British antagonism to such events.

ON 1 MAY 1921, a series of violent clashes broke out in the Jaffa and Tulkarm regions of Palestine that resulted in the death of dozens of Arabs and Jews—the largest and most violent confrontation in the Palestinian-Zionist conflict to date. The turmoil reflected the unrest that had been growing among the Arabs in Palestine ever since the Balfour Declaration of 1917 promised Britain’s support for the Zionist project, a promise shortly followed by the British occupation of Palestine. Exactly two years later, on the second anniversary of the Jaffa/Tulkarm riots, Palestine’s leading newspaper at the time, *Filastin*, ran a front-page editorial headlined “Martyrs Day” (*yawm al-shuhada*), which read in part:

It has been two years since the day pure blood flowed from us. . . . We were distracted until then, but that day we were awakened by the roar of bullets. . . . Since that day, [our revival] has become rich in martyrs, abundant with memorial days. One hundred brave sons of Palestine became martyrs (*istashhadu*)—and they were not the aggressors—and now Palestine sees them as having died for the sake of salvation. Martyrs are an inevitable component of the revival of nations . . . for they provoke nations to action and renew their determination.

And if days start to look alike . . . , we have one guiding day that we will not forget, one day that is stained with blood, crowned with blackness. The memory of that day awakens in us all that went dormant; it restores . . . our enthusiasm and pushes us forward. That day is 1 May—Martyrs Day.

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Filastin's editorialist was clearly aware of the political role of martyrdom and collective calendars in the creation of a national identity. In his attempt to establish 1 May 1921 as a historic turning point in the Palestinian collective consciousness, he knew that he was actively nurturing a Palestinian Arab national identity under British rule. The text is therefore an excellent early example of the vital role both martyrdom and political calendars played in the formation of what Zertal has called “meta mythical consciousness.”¹

The political boundaries imposed on the Palestinians following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire came to be adopted as boundaries of political identity, especially since the creation of the new entity, an integral part of which was Britain's Jewish national home project, involved a clear threat to the demographic status quo. This threat, which constituted a shared and distinct collective experience, resulted in the politicization of a “Palestinian particularism” that coexisted with other collective identities, such as religious and local identities, as well as Arab nationalism.

Depending on circumstances and context, these identities can either complement each other or compete for importance and priority. The boundaries between Arab and Palestinian nationalism were especially fluid, and overlapping identifications were very common. That being said, different forces in Palestinian society gave differential weight to each element. “Palestinian particularism” refers here to the tendency to prioritize Palestinian solidarity over pan-Arab or Islamic identification, not an aspiration to substitute one with the other.²

The invention of modern nations frequently relies on preexisting markers of identity such as religion, language, shared myths about the origins and history of the group, daily customs, cuisine, and so on. The Arab inhabitants of Palestine did not share the same religion, and their language and daily culture did not differ much from the Greater Syria region in general. Pre-modern elements of Palestinian collective memory, such as the shadow of the crusades and the glory of Saladin's victory, constituted only useful “raw material” for the production of a national identity. In order to transform Palestine from a regional category into a political category requiring commitment and mutual solidarity, a more elaborated imaginative process was needed. This is why calendars and martyrs had special appeal to Palestinian nationalists.³ These elements aimed to unify Muslims and Christians, villagers and urban dwellers, and diverse geographical regions, and at the same time nurture a distinct Palestinian collective identity. Though martyrs and political calendars also served to cultivate Arab nationalism or Islamic pride in Palestine, new calendars and martyrs were less crucial for nurturing these identities.

An Emerging Calendar

The dates on the emerging Palestinian calendar have diverse origins and fall into two main categories: those that grew out of the politicization and nationalization of traditional holy days, and those commemorating politically significant events. A subcategory of the latter is the memorialization of martyrs, which will be discussed in a separate section.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

The most salient example of religious holidays is the Nabi Musa festival, which included a procession from Jerusalem to a shrine traditionally believed to be the tomb of the Prophet Moses.

Pilgrimages to the shrine have been recorded since the late thirteenth century,⁴ but the Nabi Musa festival became an official civic event only in the nineteenth century.⁵ With the emergence of an organized political opposition to Britain's Jewish national home policy, it became an important site of protest.

In 1920, the procession developed into violent riots, in which five Jews and four Arabs were killed. On 10 April, following these events, the Palestinian author Khalil Sakakini wrote in his diary: "Until now Muslim and Christian holidays were religious, but last year and this year they appear to be national holidays."⁶ It should be noted, though, that at the time the struggle was defined in terms of opposition to British policy and Zionist aspirations, but not necessarily in the terms of defending the nationalist idea of Palestine.⁷

Later, and especially from 1929 to 1936, the annual festival gradually became an expression of Palestinian national identity.⁸ This "nationalization" was reflected in a widening of the social groups participating in the procession, both geographically and demographically. From an event that initially attracted mainly residents of the Jerusalem area, it grew to include participants from Jaffa, Ramla, Lydda, Gaza, Hebron, Nablus, and even the Beersheba region.⁹

Christian participation also expanded. The presence of Christians and the absence of Jews marked the emerging sociopolitical division of the country—Arab Palestinian versus Jew—that endures to the present. As Halabi writes: "For the Arabs who witnessed this procession, the image of Christians and Muslims marching in unison, singing patriotic anthems, served as a 'model for reality,' a discursive construct that portrayed the elite as leading a modern nationalist movement free of communal discord."¹⁰ The rhetoric and symbolism of this event also became nationalist. By the early 1930s, the Nabi Musa banner itself had been transformed from a green cloth bordered in gold into a version of the Arab flag¹¹ but with an embroidered Dome of the Rock—a symbol that can represent both Palestinian particularism and Islam—at its center.¹²

Haj Amin al-Husayni, head of the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) and later the preeminent Palestinian leader, is most responsible for politicizing the festival, using it as an instrument to establish his leadership status in Palestinian society.¹³ As head of the SMC, he had access to considerable resources based on *waqf* assets, which he utilized to expand the pilgrimage's Palestine-wide participation. But then Britain's brutal suppression of the great Palestinian revolt (1936–39) included severe restrictions on the festival, which never again regained its former importance.

Beyond Nabi Musa, there were several other attempts to politicize and nationalize traditional religious holidays and pilgrimages. Examples include the Nabi Salih festival north of Ramallah and the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (*mawlid al-Nabi*). The latter was celebrated especially in the Haifa region,¹⁴ and the Haifa-based (and Christian-owned) newspaper *al-Karmel* even "deconfessionalized" the holiday by having it commemorate "the birth of the honorable Arab prophet."¹⁵ In 1936, *Filastin* explicitly called for instrumentalizing religious holidays (arguing that this is what the Jews do) and suggested that Easter, like the Nabi Musa festival, could be used to promote national socialization.¹⁶ None of these other commemorations, however, resonated the way the Nabi Musa festival did, neither drawing participants from all over Palestine nor transcending specific regional or partisan boundaries.

POLITICAL COMMEMORATIONS

Writing in his diary during the Nabi Musa festival on 17 April 1919, Sakakini reflected on the difference between Jewish and Arab holidays. He noted that the former were “created as memorial days for tragedies” and resulted in “dulled” senses and “pain and sadness,” whereas Muslim holy days are “exciting” and left the Muslim “full of enthusiasm and energy.” He then added: “A nation whose holidays include only crying has no future.”¹⁷

Sakakini could not foresee that Palestinians would soon accumulate many memorial days commemorating tragedies and death—the days of remembrance that constitute the pillars of their national calendar even today. In this regard, Ernest Renan’s observation, diametrically opposed to Sakakini’s, that “defeat and mourning have greater importance for the national memory than victories”¹⁸ would seem more apt, given their effectiveness in mobilizing for struggle. Thus the incorporation of tragedies (which in the Palestinian case concerned recent events) into the collective Palestinian narrative was part of the discursive nationalization of Palestinian identity.

Sometimes efforts to create a national day failed completely, while other times a new date was celebrated for several years and then disappeared. The Battle of Hittin (4 July 1187) in which Saladin defeated the crusaders, for example, was celebrated from 1932 to 1937 by the Istiqlal party,¹⁹ which presented it as a victory of the “East” over the “West” to include the Christian population in the national community. Only a handful of the national days proposed had any success with the Palestinian Arab public.

Sakakini himself attempted to create a national day in spring 1919 when he suggested to the members of the Jerusalem chapter of the Muslim Christian Association (MCA)²⁰ that 9 May 1916, the date the anti-Ottoman Arab Revolt was launched, be celebrated annually as a day of independence. This was one of the failed efforts: while Jerusalem’s MCA marked 9 May that year, there is no evidence that it was ever celebrated again.

While arguing his case for 9 May to the MCA, Sakakini noted that “the Jews are already celebrating their independence since the Balfour Declaration.”²¹ Indeed, from 1918 through World War II, the Zionists in Palestine had made 2 November, the date the declaration was issued, a national holiday characterized by ceremonies in schools and other public institutions and festive articles in the Hebrew press.²² Clearly, for the Arabs of Palestine, the Balfour Declaration could only be a tragedy, and soon it became commemorated as such—the first of the tragic commemorations that have since marked their calendar.

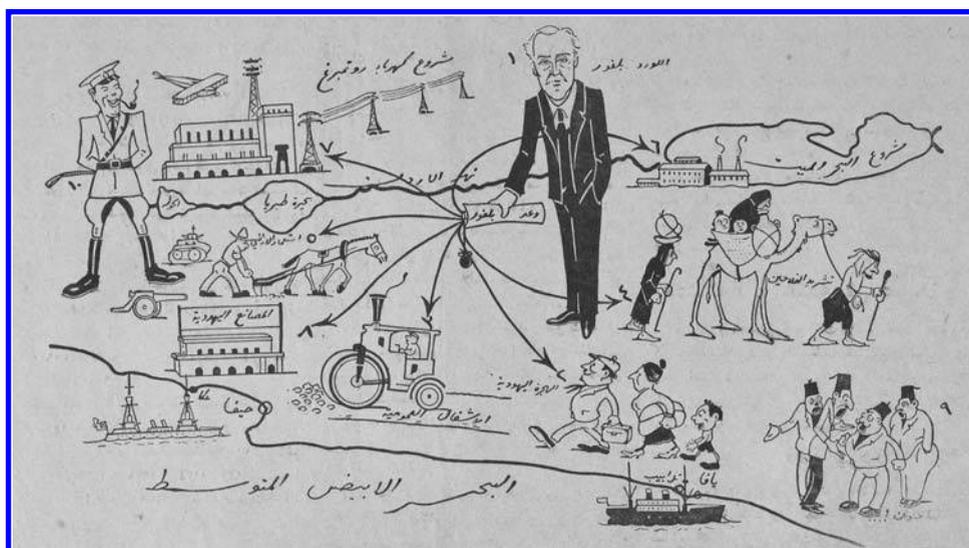
The second of November was thus marked by the Arab Palestinians as a day of mourning that included a general strike (though sometimes for as little as two hours). Shops were closed; newspapers were printed with black borders; buildings were hung with black crepe.²³ Press headlines announced the “black day of Palestine” and “the declaration of injustice and tyranny.” Unlike the Nabi Musa festival, Balfour Day had no religious significance, and the protests were often an occasion for Palestinian unity. On Balfour Day in 1923, for example, Jaffa’s MCA organized an event where Christians were invited with Muslims to Jaffa’s Great Mosque to celebrate the “participation of the Muslim and Christian brothers in the jihad for saving the country.”²⁴

The British authorities opposed the Balfour Day strike and in some years even tried to prevent it. Partly as a result, the Arab Executive²⁵ did not always announce it officially, but even when it did not,

there is evidence of spontaneous annual strike initiatives, for example by students in Arab schools (disobeying their principals).²⁶

Balfour protests took place across the country. Palestinian newspapers had reporters in all the main cities to provide detailed coverage of the strikes and rallies. Take, for example, the coverage of Balfour Day in *Filastin* on 3 November 1932. The main headline states: “General strike throughout the country to protest the notorious Balfour Declaration and ongoing colonial policy.” Much of the inside content was taken up with detailed reports of the protests in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tulkarm, Haifa, Acre, Jenin, Lydda, and Nablus. There was also a brief report on the Balfour Day strike in Beirut and by “Arab students” in Damascus.

The sense these reports conveyed of a Palestine united in simultaneous protest was reinforced by the paper’s front-page cartoon, which portrays Lord Balfour himself at the center of a map of Palestine holding his declaration. Arrows from the declaration lead to various scenes representing the gains Zionism made under the protection of British military force, including an increase in unfettered Jewish immigration, the establishment of Jewish factories and mechanized agriculture, a close relationship with the Department of Public Works,²⁷ and the winning of two major concessions (the Rutenberg electricity project and the Dead Sea mining project) by Jews. Also depicted is a Palestinian peasant family uprooted by Zionist land purchases and a group of urban Arabs heatedly arguing, presumably over British policy (instead of acting against it).



The front page of *Filastin* on 2 November 1932

Integral to the Balfour commemorations was the concrete demand that Britain end its commitment to the Zionist project. Opposition to the Balfour Declaration required action, and the collective body expected to act was the imagined community of Palestinians. A page-wide, black-framed announcement in *Filastin* on 2 November 1929 captures this idea in nine lines:

The Balfour Declaration:

Outrageous injustice—shameful iniquity
A blot of shame in the twentieth century’s history.

Great Britain:

Must efface this shame that harms its interests and contaminates its dignity.

The people of Palestine:

Must actively work to this goal by

- (1) Not selling land to Jews.
- (2) Encouraging patriotic [*wataniyya*] commerce and production.

A similar message appeared on Balfour Day 1931 in *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, the SMC's mouthpiece:

O Palestinians! Remember the notorious Balfour Declaration on 2 November and unify your efforts . . . to abolish this abusive commitment and to achieve your liberty and independence. . . .
O Arabs and Muslims in East and West! Remember Palestine the martyr [*al-shahida*] and do not forget your sacred sites there and history with many pages of glorious, dignified, and courageous battles.²⁸

Formalized public Palestinian commemoration virtually disappeared during the 1936–39 revolt, when Palestinian political structures and institutions (including the recently established Arab Higher Committee [AHC]) were paralyzed, the leadership arrested or exiled, and interfactional strife became widespread. The British also increased press censorship when the revolt broke out, and the tightened restrictions continued through World War II. Some national commemoration resumed with the reestablishment of the Palestinian Arab party²⁹ in 1944 and the revival of the countrywide Balfour Day strike in 1945. A description in *al-Difa'* of the strike in Jaffa in 1946 gives a sense of the atmosphere:

On the day of the notorious Balfour Declaration the city was striking completely. The strike included all the sectors and public movement stopped completely. Retailers, stores, and institutions were closed. The streets were emptied of cars, coffee shops and restaurants were closed, and people gathered in public places. Yesterday, the notorious day of remembrance, not a single person departed from the national consensus. . . . The residents of the neighboring villages participated in the strike, the transportation between them and the city stopped, and the villagers avoided coming to the city.³⁰

In other words, as it became increasingly clear that a decision on the country's future was imminent, the commemoration of Balfour Day took on a new urgency.

National Martyrology

As can be seen in the attempt to make 1 May 1921 into "Martyrs Day", the process of creating national calendars and national martyrology at times converged, as some of the annual celebrations performed or suggested were dedicated to the commemoration of martyrs.

A DEEP TRADITION

Themes of self-sacrifice and martyrdom are deeply ingrained in Islamic tradition.³¹ For thirteen hundred years, Islam has been the hegemonic religion in Palestine, and accordingly, it commands the widest common arsenal of symbols, representations, and practices for all Palestinians, including the Christian minority. Formulators of modern secular ideologies in the Middle East

have therefore utilized an array of Islamic symbols and concepts (such as jihad, al-Buraq, or *al-ard al-muqaddasa*)³² as well as martyrdom.³³ Christian images of martyrdom, especially the crucifixion, were also part of the cultural “tool kit” of the wider population,³⁴ Christian themes having pervaded Palestinian culture and discourse (particularly of the literary classes).

The Ottoman Empire’s adoption in the nineteenth century of European institutional and symbolic elements (e.g., civil courts, architectural style) did not impede the growing importance of national martyrdom as an element in the construction of political identities.³⁵ In this context, the traditional meaning of sacrificing oneself for God was secularized, and the modern *shahid/šehit* (“martyr” in Arabic and Turkish, respectively) was seen as sacrificing himself for the nation.

Palestinian national martyrology was developed in these political-cultural conditions. As indicated above, for the Arab inhabitants of Palestine in the first decades of the twentieth century, the supposed nation for which the martyrs were dying was fluid, and changed with evolving political circumstances. For example, before World War I, national feeling in Palestine often took the form of Ottoman patriotism,³⁶ as when Is‘af al-Nashashibi, a young poet from a notable Jerusalem family, described those killed in the 1909 countercoup against the Young Turks as *shuhada’* (“martyrs”) for the “Ottoman nation.”³⁷

During the war, the emerging Arab national movement embraced as martyrs the activists from Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine hanged by the Ottoman military in 1915–16.³⁸ While their deaths appear to have been less widely and enthusiastically commemorated in Palestine than in Syria and Lebanon³⁹—especially under the short-lived (October 1918–July 1920) Arab government in Damascus⁴⁰—there is anecdotal evidence of commemoration there as well, even if it was less institutionalized. In March 1919, for example, shortly after the first Palestinian Arab Congress (which considered Palestine part of Syria), Jaffa’s Arab Club sponsored a play about the tyranny of Jamal Pasha that ended with the actors waving the Arab flag in front of the corpses of the 1916 martyrs, with the audience joining them in singing the Arab national anthem.⁴¹

In April 1918, five months after the Balfour Declaration, the Rashidiyya School Club in Jerusalem prominently displayed a large map of Palestine inscribed with the following lines of poetry: “The Blessed Land of Palestine/Is the land of the sons of Ya‘rub⁴²/O the best land of all, do not despair/I have no other love but you/We shall sacrifice our souls for your sake.”⁴³ In other words, Palestine had become a place worth dying for. With the French occupation of Damascus and the end of the dream of Greater Syria, Arab Palestinians (many of whom had been enthusiastic backers) increasingly articulated their political identity in more local Palestinian terms.⁴⁴

The intercommunal violence of 1 May 1921 provided the emerging Palestine-specific patriotism with its own martyrs. Jaffa’s MCA looked after the city’s Arab victims and took the lead in organizing joint Muslim-Christian religious ceremonies. Indicative of the conscious effort to reach beyond the localities directly involved, the Jaffa chapter published a call for all MCAs throughout Palestine to collect donations for the injured and the families of those killed.⁴⁵ Besides the joint ecumenical ceremonies, which provided an opportunity to demonstrate Muslim-Christian fraternity, speakers from each community participated in the religious ceremonies of the other. The speakers in these interreligious visits emphasized the common fate of Christians and Muslims in the face of the Zionist threat.⁴⁶

The adoption of the term “martyr” to describe those who died in the conflict was gradual. Immediately after the riots, for example, *Filastin* described the Muslim and Christian dead as *qatla* (“those who were killed”). On the fortieth-day commemoration, the same newspaper used the terms *dahaya* (“victims”) and *shuhada’* (“martyrs”) alternately. On the first anniversary of their deaths, they were referred to as victims, but by the second anniversary (1923), as already noted, *Filastin* not only uniformly presented them as martyrs but advocated the creation of an annual “Martyrs Day” to commemorate them.

THE 1930 MARTYRS

While *Filastin* in 1921 had created an early rhetorical link between the commemorated martyrs and Palestine, it had not explicitly described them as patriots who died *for Palestine*. Moreover, no attention was paid in the press to the martyrs’ personal identity: their names were not even mentioned. The individualization of martyrology, which allows a more focused glorification of each martyr and greater emphasis on his motives, had to await the high-profile executions of three Palestinian men on 17 June 1930. On that day, Muhammad Jamjum of Jaffa, ‘Ata al-Zir of Hebron, and Fu’ad Hijazi of Safad—the first “national Palestinian martyrs”—were hanged for taking part in the massacre of Jews during *Thawrat al-Buraq* (the Buraq Revolt), known in the West as the “Wailing Wall riots” of August 1929.

Fu’ad Hijazi was quoted extensively in the Palestinian press for his explicit references to martyrdom. According to family members and prison cellmates, he had declared his intention to die for the nation. In his will, published the day after the hangings, he explicitly asked that “the day of my hanging should be a day of joy and cheers, and so should 17 June every year. This day should be a historic day in which speeches are delivered and anthems sung in memory of our blood shed for Palestine and the Arab cause.”⁴⁷ Hijazi used the same rhetoric in a letter he wrote to the vice president of the Arab Executive, proclaiming that “[my] heart was full of joy and happiness since I would be hanged for Palestine, the beloved country.”⁴⁸

The British authorities were aware of the potential political fallout of the commemoration and attempted to pressure Arab Executive members to restrict the event. In a telegram to the secretary of state for the colonies in London, the officer administering the government of Palestine wrote that “it is the declared intention of the Arab Executive to consider the holding annually of commemoration services and erect a tomb to ‘the Martyrs.’ I am convinced that firm action now may lead the Executive to abandon any such intentions.”⁴⁹ Indeed, after the execution, the Executive did announce that 17 June would be commemorated annually⁵⁰ and organized memorial rallies every year until it was disbanded in 1934.

The press also published poems dedicated to the new martyrs, the most famous of which was “Bloody Tuesday” by Ibrahim Tuqan.⁵¹ The commemoration was repeated on 17 June for the next five years. The martyrs were glorified by newspapers across the political spectrum, from the MSC’s *al-Jami’a al-‘Arabiyya* to its rival *Filastin*, whose owner was affiliated with the opposition,⁵² and irrespective of whether their ownership was Muslim or Christian. Even the Palestinian Communist party, in spite of its universalistic orientation, celebrated the national memorial day.⁵³ Furthermore, while the Buraq Revolt itself was imbued with Muslim symbolism (as the name indicates), both Muslim and Christian writers utilized metaphors of martyrdom that were

unmistakably Christian. In several newspapers (as well as in Ibrahim Tuqan's poetry), the word "crucifixion" was used for the executions.⁵⁴

While the newspapers wrote that the executed men had died for the "nation" or the "homeland," sometimes the reference was to the Arab nation ("they are those who irrigated with their pure blood the roots of the tree of Arab independence"⁵⁵), while other times it was to "the Arab nation in Palestine" ("deep sadness" in the chest of "every member of the Arab nation in Palestine, men, women, and children"⁵⁶). Following the fortieth-day ceremonies, *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* wrote: "Yesterday Palestine marked the fortieth day for the martyrdom of three of her sons, Fu'ad Hijazi, 'Ata al-Zir, and Muhammad Khalil Jamjum [who were martyred] for her freedom and independence."⁵⁷ In *Filastin*, the most consistent voice of Palestinian particularism, their sacrifice was simply "for Palestine." The editorial published under the title "Martyrs Day" on the first anniversary of the execution ended with the words: "For Palestine Hijazi, al-Zir, and Jamjum died, and for her they sacrificed their youth and power. . . . For Palestine they devoted their blood and for them Palestine devotes her boundless tears."⁵⁸

Even when the three were described as having died for the Arab nation, their identity as Palestinians was highlighted. On the fourth anniversary of the execution, *al-Difa'* published an editorial clarifying that martyrs are the necessary price Palestine must pay for freedom: "Is it possible that Syria has martyrs, Iraq has martyrs, Egypt has martyrs—and every country that revolts against colonialism would have martyrs, but Palestine hit by colonialism would not have martyrs?"⁵⁹

Demonstrations and memorial ceremonies after the execution took place in all the major cities and towns of Palestine (Safad, Hebron, Jenin, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nablus, Haifa, Acre, and Tulkarm), as did the general strike on the first anniversary. These same cities also sent condolence delegations to the ceremonies near the martyrs' tombs in Acre on the first three anniversaries. But while there were protests over the executions throughout the Arab and Muslim world, there were no reports of delegations from abroad attending memorials inside Palestine or holding anniversary commemorations. A symbolic cartography was emerging, and the new martyrs were martyrs of Palestine.

The symbolic resonance of the 1930 martyrs is clear in a flyer published on the fifth anniversary of the execution by an underground group from the Tulkarm/Qalqilya region named "The Red Palm." The flyer called for the annual celebration of the martyrs and the assassination of Palestine's British rulers in punishment for their execution.⁶⁰

The Martyrs Day of 1935, however, was the last to be commemorated by the Palestinian press. By 17 June 1936, the revolt was already underway, and press censorship had greatly tightened. In any case, for the young Palestinian national movement, the 1930 martyrs would soon be overshadowed by the heroic image of the martyrs who fell between 1936 and 1939.

'IZZEDINE AL-QASSAM: PRECURSOR TO REVOLT

Shaykh 'Izzedine al-Qassam, a Muslim preacher who called for armed struggle against British rule, was killed with four of his followers in a clash with British troops on 20 November 1935.⁶¹ Two days after his death, *Filastin* published a testimony by 'Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi, a journalist who had seen al-Qassam on 17 June 1930, the day the three men were hanged: "I saw him with

gloomy face, overcoming a tear, in his eyes a terrible spark, his body trembling with anger. He was almost unaware of his surroundings. I saw him hurrying to the mosque and I followed him. There he delivered a fiery sermon.”⁶² The accuracy of this report is less important than the evident attempt to construct a continuous martyrological narrative linking al-Qassam to the earlier martyrs.

Al-Qassam’s funeral was massive. According to *Filastin*, it was attended by 30,000 people, but very few political leaders.⁶³ There were reasons they kept their distance: the Muslim elite saw the populist/religious elements of al-Qassam’s movement as a threat to their control,⁶⁴ while advocates of a more secular nationalism, who considered Islam as only one legitimizing element among others, feared that his religious activism would disrupt the balance among such elements.⁶⁵ By the fortieth day of his death, however, the leaders’ indifference had disappeared with their realization of the symbolic power of his image.⁶⁶ From then on, the various political parties competed in praising al-Qassam and in appropriating his martyrdom for their political agendas.⁶⁷

In contrast to Haj Amin al-Husayni, a late adopter of al-Qassam, *Filastin*, in the words of Dale, “immediately nationalized the religious leader, denuding him of any Islamic content.”⁶⁸ The newspaper used what were reported to be al-Qassam’s last words as the title of its coverage of his death: “We will not surrender—this is a jihad for God and for homeland [*watan*].”⁶⁹ In this quotation, the Islamic justification for martyrdom was joined to the Hellenistic-Roman ideal of *pro patria mori*. In its extensive coverage of the funeral the following day, *Filastin* mentioned that delegations came from all parts of Palestine, and highlighted the fact that the coffins were wrapped with the Arab national flag. Compared with its commemoration of the 1930 martyrs, *Filastin* adopted a more pan-Arab line, emphasizing al-Qassam’s Syrian birth and the fact that he had previously taken part in the Syrian revolt against the French in 1919–20. Dale argues that al-‘Isa, *Filastin*’s editorialist, used this rhetoric to reduce the impact of the martyred leader’s religious message.⁷⁰

The pan-Arab Istiqlal party was similarly eager to cultivate the emerging myth of al-Qassam’s martyrdom. One of its founders, Akram Zu‘aitar, was among the few known political figures to attend al-Qassam’s funeral. On 6 February 1936, Istiqlal organized a ceremony in Haifa. In a report about the event, *al-Difa’* provided the names of speakers, as well as of those who sent telegrams and money to the families. The pan-Arab orientation of the party was evident in the inclusion of three speakers from outside Palestine (Jordan, Aleppo, and Hama), although most of the speakers were Palestinian and financial donations came only from Hebron and Jerusalem, not from outside Palestine.⁷¹

The Palestinian revolt (1936–39) erupted five months after al-Qassam was killed, and according to both popular remembrance⁷² and scholarly observation,⁷³ his death should be considered an early stage of the revolt itself. The revolt, in which thousands of Palestinians lost their lives,⁷⁴ added a significant layer to Palestinian martyrology. Sacrificing for Palestine became a virtue appreciated by the mainstream. The Palestinian historian ‘Isa al-Sifri dedicated his 1937 book, *Arab Palestine: Between the Mandate and Zionism*, to “those who were martyred/those who fill the prisons/those who were arrested, exiled, and persecuted/those who fought with faith/those who tasted the bitterness of life/—**for Palestine**.”⁷⁵

With the growing number of Palestinian casualties during the revolt, *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* each called separately for building a monument to the "unknown martyr" (*al-shahid al-majhul*). On the first anniversary of al-Qassam's death, *Filastin's* editorial column suggested

Just as the West invented a symbol [*ramz*] of heroism and courage after the Great War, a symbol for the unknown soldier, the nation that is so brave in its jihad and its heavy sacrifices should invent an eternal symbol for the unknown martyr who fell in defense of his nation, his soul and his property.⁷⁶

The editorial also notes that Jerusalem's National Committee⁷⁷ had decided to build a memorial to commemorate the unknown martyrs. Two weeks later, *al-Difa'* raised the same idea with a similar argument:

Commemorate, O Arabs of Palestine, the unknown martyr. Commemorate the one who was martyred and was not known among you, except by his father and mother. Establish for him a symbol like the symbol that was established in different European capitals (the unknown soldier). . . . Then a symbol for him will be established in every city, and delegates will visit it, children will see it on their way to school, and the people will surround it with memory and reverence.⁷⁸

The nationalist motivation for cultivating unifying symbols would increase even as internal tensions between Palestinians grew. By 1938, the revolt had become mired in internal conflict along class and political lines.⁷⁹ The partial overlap between class and sectarian lines (and the overrepresentation of Christians in government jobs) triggered sporadic anti-Christian rhetoric and violence, which at least some Christians perceived as a threat,⁸⁰ especially at a time when their relative weight in the Palestinian elite was declining.⁸¹ Although the AHC was committed to Muslim-Christian solidarity, the decentralization of the rebel leadership sometimes made it possible for local rebels to engage in anti-Christian propaganda.⁸² For the AHC, the Istiqlalists, and local Muslim and Christian leaders opposed to sectarianism, a shared martyrology may have been a way to support national unity at a time of crisis.

THE DE-FORMALIZATION OF MARTYROLOGICAL COMMEMORATION

By 1930, there were ten Arabic dailies and weeklies in Palestine. The Palestinian political institutions were more developed. Although the Arab Executive was not an elected body and did not have any legal authority, the fact that it united respectable Muslim and Christian figures from various parts of the country allowed it to foster annual commemorations of the three men's martyrdom across the country for several years, especially since this commemoration enjoyed a near-consensus among the various Palestinian political parties. The public visibility of martyrological commemoration was closely related to the level of control imposed by British authorities, which fluctuated throughout the Mandate period. At the beginning of the British occupation, the press was subjected to strict supervision by the Criminal Intelligence Department, a supervision that was loosened gradually until it was eliminated by 1928.⁸⁴ From then until January 1933, when a new and very strict press ordinance was issued, the system of press control underwent reorganization,⁸⁵ which meant that press supervision was minimal.

Not coincidentally, it is in this period that we find the most elaborated martyrological rhetoric in the Palestinian press.

The Palestinian press was a powerful tool in the countrywide propagation of the national calendar and commemoration of martyrs. According to Ami Ayalon, *al-Difa'* and *Filastin* each had a circulation of 7,000–10,000. More important than the circulation numbers, however, is the fact that newspapers were read aloud in public places.⁸³ This meant that tens of thousands of people, from Gaza in the south to Nazareth in the north, shared the content and could imagine themselves as part of a community commemorating and protesting the Balfour Declaration, for example, or grieving over the death of 'Izzedine al-Qassam.

The 1933 Press Ordinance was amended six times between 1936 and 1945, with the regulations becoming progressively tougher.⁸⁶ The amendments and new regulations made possible the frequent suspension of newspapers during the revolt⁸⁷ and stricter supervision during World War II. Under these circumstances, expressions of national sentiments were relegated to seemingly apolitical sections like the sports column,⁸⁸ and explicit commemoration of national martyrs was not possible. Thus, whereas press commemoration of Balfour Day was tolerated, probably because the authorities considered it less “inflammatory,” reference to 17 June as “Martyrs Day” or glorification of al-Qassam disappeared from the Palestinian press from the start of the revolt until 1948.⁸⁹

With the Arab Palestinian press unable to play a role in nurturing the martyrology of revolt during these years, poetry, which is spread by word of mouth, became an important alternative. Poets such as Ibrahim Tuqan, 'Abd al-Rahim Mahmud, and Abu Salma played an important role in this regard.⁹⁰ Especially important in this context is Nuh Ibrahim, who wrote his poems in a colloquial Arabic accessible to the large circles of illiterate peasants who became dominant at the later stages of the revolt. Ibrahim had a significant impact on the popularization of the myth of al-Qassam,⁹¹ and with it he provided unifying symbols to peasants and urban Palestinians.⁹²

Ibrahim, who had himself been a student and follower of al-Qassam, constructed an image of his former teacher as an Arab Palestinian, rather than Muslim, hero, and the overriding sentiment expressed by his martyrological poetry is one of Palestinian national unity.⁹³ In his widely known poem “O What a Loss, 'Izzedine,” he called him “a martyr for all Palestine.”⁹⁴ National unity and Muslim-Christian solidarity are also important elements in his poetry: “Say not ‘Christian’ and ‘Muslim’/We all are brothers of blood,” for example, is a line from “The Homeland Is for All,” one of his best-known poems. He is also remembered for the famous “From Akka Prison,” dedicated to the three prisoners executed in 1930. After he was killed in a battle near Tamra on 28 October 1938, Nuh Ibrahim became known as the martyr-poet.⁹⁵ The oral poetry of the revolt was recited far and wide and had great resonance at the time (its canonization as an intellectual project led by Tawfiq Zayyad and others occurred decades later). Nonetheless, it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which this poetry provided the unified and coherent national vocabulary across local contexts possible in a countrywide press.

Conclusion

Palestinian national identity emerged from the common experience of Arabs who faced the same colonial effort to dispossess them. Shared experience by itself, however, does not create a sense of

shared identity without cultural processing and the creation of myths and symbols related to this collective experience. Political calendars and shared martyrology thus became important markers of identity and symbolic tools for political mobilization in Mandate Palestine. They were especially important for the advancement of Palestinian particularism, which could not rely on a preexisting common religion or distinct language.

Because the creation of a stable political calendar requires the use of a state or state-like mechanisms, the success in building it was very limited. The Arab Executive, the Supreme Muslim Council, and later the Arab High Committee did not represent a sovereign state, and therefore lacked the ability to mobilize sufficient resources or to establish hegemony-producing mechanisms such as a national education system. Still, their support for establishing a stable date on the calendar was necessary for a commemoration to take hold. Suggested dates for national holidays that did not enjoy the support of these institutions were ephemeral (e.g., 9 May as “Independence Day”) or were limited to a certain region (*mawlid al-Nabi* for Haifa) or party (the battle of Hittin for Istiqlal).

The collective political calendar of the Palestinians in Mandate Palestine included very few events embraced by the public: the Nabi Musa festival, Martyrs Day commemorating the June 1930 executions, and Balfour Day. Balfour Day was the only date commemorated both at the beginning and the end of the British occupation. Its endurance is at least partly explained by the tangible political implications of the declaration, which were continuously visible to most Palestinians. Even the commemoration of the Balfour Declaration, however, shrank drastically after the revolt and its devastating impact on Palestinian institutions. The Nabi Musa festival gained its status as a national holiday because it was a political instrument of the SMC, which had the resources to maintain and expand it, and also had a structural interest in shaping its meaning as a distinct Palestinian national event.

Martyrological memory also depended to a large extent on institutional support. Before 1930, no martyrs were commemorated by an annual memorial day in Palestine, even though intellectuals had discussed the establishment of such a day. In the years following the 1915–16 executions and the 1921 clashes, Palestinian national institutions and press did not exist or were not developed enough. Similarly, annual memorial days for martyrs were not practiced after 1935 because of the institutional breakdown during the revolt. The formalized calendar was also vulnerable to the restrictions and censorship imposed by the British authorities. Commemoration of martyrs in less formalized ways, such as oral poetry, was a more successful and durable project, and this martyrology would continue to be part of Palestinian political memory and national memory in the decades to come.

About the Author

Tamir Sorek is an associate professor of sociology at the University of Florida. The author would like to thank Michelle Campos and anonymous *JPS* reviewers for their helpful comments, as well as *JPS* editor Linda Butler for her thorough and outstanding editing of the original text.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Idit Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
- 2 In this context it is worth emphasizing that my aim here is not to illustrate the relative salience of Palestinian particularism but to show the important role of calendars and martyrs in the attempts

- to cultivate this collective identity. It is noteworthy as well that I do not intend to analyze the sociopolitical developments that led to the emergence of Palestinian nationalism, as these processes have been discussed in detail elsewhere. See Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: The Free Press, 1993); Meir Litvak, *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Muhammad Y. Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929* (London: Cass, 1974). Gerber, Haim. *Remembering and Imagining Palestine: Identity and Nationalism from the Crusades to the Present*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
- 3 On the importance of calendars for the construction of collective identities, see Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Eviatar Zerubavel, "Easter and Passover: On Calendars and Group Identity," *American Sociological Review* 47, no. 2 (1982), pp. 284-89; Eviatar Zerubavel, "Calendars and History: A Comparative Study of the Social Organization of National Memory," in J. K. Olick, ed., *States of Memory: Continuities, Conflicts, and Transformations in National Retrospection* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), pp. 315-37; Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). On the importance of martyrs in modern nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991); G. L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); W. Lloyd Warner, *The Living and the Dead: A Study of the Symbolic Life of Americans* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959).
 - 4 Although the shrine was most likely constructed by the Mamluk sultan Rukn al-Din Baybars (1223-77), the popular Palestinian narrative ascribes the initiation of the Nabi Musa holiday to Saladin (1138-93). Some scholars believe in the historical accuracy of this narrative (Gerber, "Remembering and Imagining Palestine, pp. 63-68) while other see it as part of a wider modern mythology related to Saladin that was created as a response to the mounting challenges Middle Eastern and Islamic societies confronted in the nineteenth century. (Awad Halabi, "The Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival in Jerusalem, 1917-1937: From Local and Islamic to Modern and Nationalist Celebration," University of Toronto, 2007.:91). At all events, there is a consensus that the Nabi Musa holiday in modern times has been popularly associated with Saladin and the struggle against the crusaders.
 - 5 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 91.
 - 6 See journal entry for 10 April 1920 in Khalil Sakakini, *Yawmiyyat Khalil al-Sakakini: Yawmiyyat, rasa'il wa-tammulat: Al-kitab al-thalith, ikhtibar al-intidab wa-asi'lat al-hawiyya, 1919-1922*, ed. Akram Musallam (Ramallah: Markaz Khalil al-Sakakini al-Thaqafi: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Muqaddasiyya, 2004), p. 219.
 - 7 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 149.
 - 8 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 168.
 - 9 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," pp. 212-15.
 - 10 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 266.
 - 11 The flag was the green, red, black, and white Arab national flag from the 1916-18 Arab Revolt and that later became known as the Palestinian flag. See Tamir Sorek, "The Orange and the Cross in the Crescent: Imagining Palestine in 1929," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 3 (2004), pp. 269-291.
 - 12 Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, "The Nebi Musa Pilgrimage and the Origins of Palestinian Nationalism," in Bryan Le Beau and Menachem Mor, eds., *Pilgrims and Travelers to the Holy Land* (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 1996), p. 100.
 - 13 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 217-39.
 - 14 Halabi, "Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival," p. 201.

- 15 "The birth of the honorable Arab prophet," *al-Karmil*, 21 October 1921, p. 1.
- 16 "Mihrajanat al-mawasim wa-istighlaluha," *Filastin*, 2 April 1936, p. 1.
- 17 Sakakini, *Yawmiyyat Khalil al-Sakakini*, vol. 3, p. 128.
- 18 Ernest J. Renan, "What Is a Nation?" in G. Eley and R. G. Sun, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 41–51.
- 19 Yuval Ohana-Arnon, "Mifleget al-Istiqlal: Reshito shel radiqalism Falastini: 1930–1937," *Katedra* 12 (1979), pp. 91–109.
- 20 Following the British takeover of Palestine in 1918, about fifteen political clubs were founded by upper-class Muslims and Christians in the major Palestinian towns. They formed a national body, the Palestine Arab Congress, which opposed the Balfour Declaration and Zionist immigration. Some scholars consider these associations to be the first manifestations of a national movement among the Arabs in Palestine. See Bayan N. al-Hut, *al-Qiyadat al-mu'assasat al-siyasiya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* (Beirut: The Institute of Palestine Studies, 1981); Abd al-Wahab Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1978); Porath, *Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*.
- 21 See journal entry for 3 May 1919, Sakakini, *Yawmiyyat Khalil al-Sakakini*, vol. 3, p. 142.
- 22 Elie Podeh, "Shonut betokh mifgan shel ahdut: Hagigot yovel ha-zahav le-hatsharat Balfour (1967) be-Yisrael," *Yisrael* 17 (2010), pp. 59–90. In the first few years after the declaration, the celebrations included public rallies as well.
- 23 W. B. Quandt, P. Jabber, and A. M. Lesch, *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 26.
- 24 "Al-Ijtima' al-kabir fi Yafa," *Filastin*, 2 November 1923, p. 1.
- 25 The Arab Executive was elected by the third Arab Congress in 1920 and played a role in leading the Palestinian national struggle until 1934.
- 26 Thomas M. Ricks, "Khalil Totah: The Unknown Years," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 34 (2009), pp. 51–77.
- 27 The Department of Public Works was an engineering unit of the British government in Palestine, responsible for paving roads and building bridges and ports. Its priorities were biased on Zionist needs, and *Filastin* frequently complained about the preference it gave to Jews as employees and providers.
- 28 *Al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, 2 November 1931, p. 1.
- 29 The Palestinian Arab party was established by the Husayni family in 1935 and was dismantled during the revolt.
- 30 *Al-Difa'*, 3 November 1946, p. 1.
- 31 David Cook, *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); K. Lewinstein, "The Revaluation of Martyrdom in Early Islam," in M. Cormack, ed., *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 79–91.
- 32 Musa Budeiri, "The Palestinians: Tensions between Nationalist and Religious Identities," in Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, eds., *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 191–206.
- 33 For a discussion of the prevalence of the Islamic notion of martyrdom in the discourse of the Palestinian national movement in the 1960s and 1970s, see Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982).
- 34 The theme of crucifixion would continue to be evident in Palestinian national poetry, including in the text of poets with Muslim origins and a secular world view, such as Mahmud Darwish, Muin Bseiso, and Tawfiq Zayad. See A. Davies, *The Crucified Nation: A Motif in Modern Nationalism* (Portland, OR: Sussex Academic Press, 2010), p. 89–107.
- 35 Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 66.

- 36 Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, p. 77–80.
- 37 Michelle Campos, "'Shared Homeland' and Its Boundaries: Empire, Citizenship and the Origins of Sectarianism in Late Ottoman Palestine, 1908–1913" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2003), p. 57.
- 38 Kayyali, *Palestine*. For details on the Palestinians who were executed in 1915 and 1916, see al-Hut, *al-Qiyadat al-mu'assasat al-siyasiya fi Filastin*, pp. 46–52.
- 39 According to Bayan al-Hut, they were not commemorated in Palestine; see al-Hut, *al-Qiyadat al-mu'assasat al-siyasiya fi Filastin*, p. 48.
- 40 James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 175–81.
- 41 Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000), p. 106.
- 42 According to popular mythology, Ya'rub (a name that appears in Islamic genealogies) is the forefather of the Arabs. Mentioning him in this context is probably a way to emphasize the Arab identity of Palestine.
- 43 Kayyali, *Palestine*, p. 50.
- 44 Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*; Porath, *Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*.
- 45 *Filastin*, 14 May 1921, p. 1.
- 46 *Filastin*, 11 June 1921.
- 47 *Al-Yarmuk*, 18 June 1930.
- 48 Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestine Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), p. 6. Porath mentions that a later letter to the same addressee, in which Hijazi denied the charges and begged the Arab Executive to lobby for his pardon, was not published at the time. The selective publication of Hijazi's letters was part of the conscious production of martyrological myth.
- 49 A telegram sent by the officer administering the government of Palestine to the secretary of state for the colonies, 30 July 1930. British National Archive, CO733/181/5.
- 50 Porath, *Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 5–6.
- 51 A. Abu-Ghazaleh, "Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 1, no. 3 (1972), pp. 37–63.
- 52 One prominent exception was an article by As'ad Shuqayri, "The Mufti of Acre," published in *Mirat al-Sharq* in June 1931 (quoted in "Rosh ha-oppozitsia ha-muslemit neged qidush rotshim," *Davar*, 25 June 1931, p. 4). Shuqayri argued against considering the three to be martyrs, since they did not actively sacrifice their lives. It is noteworthy that both al-Shuqayri and the newspaper *Mirat al-Sharq* had received money from the Zionist movement for publishing pro-Zionist articles (see Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917–1948* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008], pp. 29, 117) and therefore it is possible that this article was one of them. At the same time, unlike most of the "articles by request," this one was signed by its author.
- 53 Avner Ben-Zaken, "Communism as cultural imperialism: The affinities between Eretz-Israeli communism and Arab communism 1919–1948" [in Hebrew] (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2006), p. 236.
- 54 See "The crucifixion conspiracy," *al-Yarmuk*, 23 June 1930, p. 1; "On the cross," *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, June 26 1930, p. 1; "The situation in Palestine and the Arab countries before the crucifixion of the three martyrs of Palestine," *Filastin*, 26 June 1930, p. 2.
- 55 Appeared in black frame on the first page of *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, 26 June and 27 June 1930.
- 56 *Al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, 25 June 1930.
- 57 *Al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, 28 July 1930, p. 3.
- 58 *Filastin*, 17 June 1931, p. 1.
- 59 *Al-Difa'*, 17 June 1934.

- 60 Mustafa Kabaha, "The Role of the Press and Its Discourse in the Arab-Palestinian National Struggle" [in Hebrew] (PhD diss., Tel-Aviv University, 1996), pp. 131–32.
- 61 Samih Hamuda, *al-Wa'i wa-l-thawra: Dirasa fi hayat wa-jihad al-Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Dar al-Shuruk, 1986); Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning*; Ghassan Kanafani, *The 1936–39 revolt in Palestine*, (Washington D.C.: Committee for Democratic Palestine, 1972).
- 62 *Falastin*, 22 November 1935.
- 63 Kanafani, *The 1936–39 revolt in Palestine*, p. 33.
- 64 Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning*.
- 65 Noah Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification: Palestinian Christians in Mandate Palestine, 1918–1948," (PhD diss., New York University, 2010), p. 206.
- 66 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," p. 35.
- 67 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," p. 35; Porath, *Palestine Arab National Movement*, p. 142.
- 68 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," p. 205.
- 69 *Filastin*, 20 November 1935.
- 70 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," p. 205.
- 71 *Al-Difa'*, 7 February 1936.
- 72 Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis, MN, and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).
- 73 Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning*.
- 74 For detailed statistics, see Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest*, appendix 4 "Note on Arab Casualties in the 1936–1939 Rebellion" (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971), pp. 846–52.
- 75 'Isa al-Sifri, *Filastin al-'Arabiyya bayna al-intidab wa-l-sihyuniyya* (Jaffa: Matba'at Maktabat Falastin al-Jadida, 1937). Bold letters in original.
- 76 "The unknown martyr," *Filastin*, 20 November 1936, p. 2.
- 77 The national committees were established across various localities at the beginning of the Palestinian revolt in 1936 and were subjected to the Highest Arab Executive but kept a large degree of autonomy.
- 78 "Al-Shahid al-majhul," *al-Difa'*, 3 December 1936, p. 4.
- 79 Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*.
- 80 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," pp. 227–68.
- 81 Bayan N. al-Hout, "The Palestinian Political Elite during the Mandate Period," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 9, no. 1 (1979), pp. 85–111.
- 82 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," pp. 227–68.
- 83 Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine: Printing and Literacy, 1900–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), p. 143.
- 84 Aida Ali Najjar, "The Arabic Press and Nationalism in Palestine, 1920–1948" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1975), p. 82.
- 85 Najjar, "The Arabic Press and Nationalism in Palestine," pp. 82–99.
- 86 Najjar, "The Arabic Press and Nationalism in Palestine," pp. 100–103.
- 87 Najjar, "The Arabic Press and Nationalism in Palestine," pp. 153–57.
- 88 Tamir Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State: The Integrative Enclave* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 14–30.
- 89 Still, newspapers found indirect and subtle ways to highlight the importance of 17 June. On 17 June 1936, *Filastin* republished the cartoon that appeared on Balfour Day in 1932, and except for the accurate date, the entire first page looked like it appeared on Balfour Day.

- 90 Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998) p. 184–87.
- 91 Samih Shabeeb, "Poetry of Rebellion: The Life, Verse and Death of Nuh Ibrahim during the 1936–39 Revolt," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (2006), pp. 65–78.
- 92 Nimr Murqus wrote in his memoirs that as a child in Kafr Yasif he was taught the poems of Nuh Ibrahim and other poets. Also, when Murqus was in third grade, Nuh Ibrahim himself came to their classroom. Nimr Murqus, *Aqwa min al-nisyan: Risala ila ibnati* (Kafr Yasif: Nimr Murqus, 1999), pp. 37–38.
- 93 Haiduc-Dale, "Nationalism and Religious Identification," pp. 231–33.
- 94 Shabeeb, "Poetry of Rebellion."
- 95 Khalid 'Awd, *Nuh Ibrahim: Sha'ir thawrat 1936–1939* (Nazareth: 'Ayn Abl I Association, 1995); Nimr Hasan Hajab, *al-Sha'ir al-sha'abi al-shahid Nuh Ibrahim* (Amman: al-Yazuri, 2006).