Among ARABS *and* JEWS

A Personal Experience 1936-1990

P. J. VATIKIOTIS

Born in Jerusalem in 1928, P. J. Vatikiotis grew up in the cosmopolitan and colourful town of Haifa, whose population was then evenly divided between Arabs and Jews. A member of the small Greek community in Palestine, he thus grew up alongside Arabs and Jews in the turbulent years of the 1930s and 1940s. He was at school with the later notorious PFLP leader Wadi Haddad and he lost a friend in the bombing of the King David Hotel. He writes with affection and humour of his friends in both communities and about what it felt like to be living in an increasingly polarised society.

The Second World War brought a temporary respite to the Arab-Jewish conflict, uniting British, Jews and Greeks against the Axis powers. But after 1945 the conflict resumed with increasing ferocity – with the Jews better organised and more determined – and he realised that the old cosmopolitan world that he knew in the Middle East was disappearing.

After four years at the American University in Cairo, Vatikiotis left Egypt in 1949 for the USA, seen off by three Jewish, five Arab, two Greek and two Anglo-Italian friends. Both in the USA and in Britain – he moved to London University in the 1960s – Vatikiotis helped to get Middle Eastern Studies established. One of the world's leading Middle East scholars, he continued to resist the creeping politicisation of his subject.

Among Arabs and Jews is written with a rare and objective insight into one of the world's most volatile areas, and is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand the politics and people of the region.

price
in UK only
£17.99 net

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Weidenfeld and Nicolson
London

George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd
91 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7TA

ISBN 0 297 82076 1

Photoset by Deltatype Ltd, Ellesmere Port
Printed in Great Britain by
Butler & Tanner Ltd, Frome & London

CONTENTS

PREFACE

This is not a volume of memoirs. Even if I had any to record they would not be of public interest. It is rather a collection of reminiscences about a personal experience directly or indirectly connected with – or even distantly linked to – the Middle East in general and the Arab–Israeli conflict in particular. It is only in this context that the reminiscences of an obscure academic, a retired professor of the University of London, could be of any interest to students of the modern and contemporary Middle East; provided they bear in mind that these are reminiscences of a limited personal experience, and therefore about the author's understanding of this experience in his own, perhaps idiosyncratic, private capacity. In any case, the only public role the writer could conceivably have derives from his published academic work, in the sense that what he wrote and published about the Middle East in the last thirty-five to forty years became and remains public.* He has had no other public role or persona. The early autobiographical chapters in the book are intended primarily to identify the writer, and partially to explain the presence of a Greek community among Arabs and Jews.

In forty years of university teaching in Egypt, the USA and Britain about the Middle East, I did not consider any kind of writing other than the odd academic book, article or review. Throughout the extensive travelling I did in the Middle East in connection with my academic work I constantly came across interesting new topics to be investigated, interesting people to become acquainted with, and a variety of publications to collect and peruse. I rarely found the time, nor did I have the inclination,

* See Appendix I.

to consider the implications of my own provenance from that part of the world, from which at the age ot twenty-one I moved to the Anglo-Saxon world. Nor did I before now, or at least until very recently, really ponder my childhood, youth, schooling and undergraduate days in the Middle East.

However, in 1981 I took part in a conference on 'Nationalism, state and religion in Egypt and the Sudan' in Haifa University. Among the participants was the late Professor Gabriel Baer, doyen of Egyptian studies in Israel, whom I had known for nearly thirty years. One evening we shared a taxi from our hotel to some function at the university. In the course of our exchange of reminiscences about the Mandate period in Palestine and wartime Egypt, Professor Baer suggested repeatedly that I ought to record these reminiscences in some form or other. I remained dubious about his suggestion until my sudden and fairly serious illness in 1986 and again in 1989 prompted me to commit something to paper. I did so with trepidation, and here it is.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I doubt very much if this book of reminiscences would have been completed, let alone published, had it not been for the encouragement, often amounting to gentle pressure, of George Weidenfeld, that of my friend and colleague Gaby Warburg, the odd surprises in my aged father's personal archive, and the patient and unstinting help of my editor, Benjamin Buchan. I am grateful to all of them.

I hope – perhaps vainly – that its contents will help to counter the common fantasies of many a Westerner's perception of the Middle East, and particularly those who still believe that it must be delivered from Western influence. I also hope I am leaving for the next generation of students of the Middle East a very personal record of Middle Eastern Studies in the West in the second half of the twentieth century which they may find a useful addition to their more formally recorded history.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION: FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Palestine Question and the Arab–Israel conflict have been with us, with the world, for nearly a century now. Millions of words have been written about them by academics, journalists, politicians, publicists and advocates of one or the other side of the conflict. It struck me that I never wrote – and did not particularly wish to write – about this major political issue or controversy of the twentieth century. After all, I was born in Palestine (Jerusalem) and spent the first seventeen years of my life there: my childhood, boyhood and adolescence. I went to school there before going to university in Cairo in 1944. I was surrounded by Arabs and Jews in school, in my neighbourhood, in the streets, on the bathing beaches and playing fields, in public places of entertainment or amusement, and in many parts of the countryside. I am, incidentally, neither an Arab nor a Jew. I knew that then and especially when relations between Arabs and Jews deteriorated during the fierce contest over the possession of that country: that is, from 1936 to 1948.

What is significant perhaps is that a Greek home, a Greek school and the Greek Church made sure that no Greek growing up in the Holy Land – in Palestine – forgot for a moment that he or she was neither Arab nor Jew, but plain Greek, even though he or she may have spoken one or the other language – Arabic or Hebrew – or both like a native. In my case, I was asked once in the United States by a professional linguist engaged in devising an Arabic-language teaching programme for the US Department of State to tell him my most memorable experience in learning an exotic language like Arabic. I am afraid I disappointed him: I had to tell him I could not do that since as far as I could remember I spoke Arabic simultaneously with Greek, my mother tongue. I only felt sorry for the

US taxpayer who paid my fare to and from Washington DC for that meeting.

Much later, in the 1960s and 1970s, I read frequent newspaper reports about airline hijackings by members of a faction of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), masterminded by one of the leading members, the late Dr Wadie Haddad. I dutifully followed the gloss and comments on these events by journalists as well as by my academic colleagues, and especially about the Fatah and other constituent organizations of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as well as about other aspects of the Arab–Israel conflict. I read about the poetry of the Palestinian revolutionary Mu'in Bseiso from Gaza and others. But I remained silent: I wrote not one word in the form of letters to newspaper editors, or feature pieces in magazines, or even articles in professional academic journals. I felt then that to write on these matters would risk betraying old friends of my youth.

Only in the intimacy of my private thoughts and recollections did I marvel at the now notorious Wadie Haddad I knew sitting only a couple of desks away from me in class in Haifa, or travelling on the school bus, or outside the evangelical church he attended. I also remembered vividly his father, our fierce Arabic master who had named his first-born son, Wadie's older brother, Caesar. I remembered Wadie in the track and field events on the school's sports day, his veins showing through his skinny face and wiry frame, warming up for the races. I remembered him as tense and secretive, but always a smiling model pupil.

Along with Wadie I remembered my closest school friend, also in our form, who went on with Wadie to the American University of Beirut (AUB) Medical School. He, Wadie and George Habash qualified in the same year, with Habash at the top of the class. I had gone to Cairo: it was cheaper and I wanted to be in an Islamic city where I could also improve my knowledge of literary Arabic and Islamic history. Many years later I re-established contact with my old school friend when the AUB invited me to give a series of lectures in May 1968, and I have remained in touch with him ever since. By then a senior dermatologist and head of the AUB Department of Medicine, he filled me in on Wadie's trials and tribulations, as well as his exploits as an internationally famous revolutionary. He told me once about Wadie's boast that his lot would one day overthrow King Hussein and take Jordan over. A

few years later, after Wadie's death ostensibly from leukaemia, his brother Rashid, with his family from Iraq, contacted my sister in Athens, I believe, who had been with his and Wadie's sister at the English High School for Girls in Haifa.

Mu'in Bseiso I remembered as a tall, awkward, quiet and sensitive freshman among the undergraduates I taught at the American University in Cairo in 1948–9. But there were so many others too whom I have come across in my peregrinations from those far-off days (especially the Second World War years) in the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Then there were all those Palestinians with me at university in Cairo; so many of them subsequently in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and the USA.

In February 1985 I had been invited by HRH Crown Prince Hasan of Jordan to give a paper on 'Jordan in the 1990s' to a small symposium of Jordanians which he chaired. While in Amman I spent an extraordinary evening over dinner at a Jordanian friend's home. The dinner party consisted of my host, a lapsed Jordanian Baathist and retired diplomat (former Jordanian ambassador to Rome and the Arab League), a mellowed ex-secretary of the Jordanian Communist Party, a Christian Arab refugee from Jerusalem, now a successful building contractor in Amman, and a retired Muslim east Jordanian mathematics schoolteacher. The host was a Christian originally from Irbid, in north Jordan, a place close to the centres of Arab nationalist movements. The communist was a Christian too, a Greek Orthodox from the Kerak-Madaba area of Jordan. His communism may have been no more than a natural continuation of his parents' and grandparents' loyalty to the Russian tsar earlier this century. The Greek Orthodox building contractor was a typical product of Saint George's School in Jerusalem in its better days. His principal concern since coming down from university with a science degree in 1947 was to remake his life and secure his livelihood in an Arab country. The only non-political friend in the party was the Muslim Jordanian retired schoolmaster.

What brought us together forty years after we had first met at university in Cairo transcended political differences: it was our shared experiences, or our common witness to important past events, and the camaraderie in our youth. That particular bond was impervious to and transcended the effects of political and/or

national and religious differences, the centrifugal forces of the conflict-ridden Middle East.

1

From the Argo-Saronic Gulf and the Aegean to the Holy Land: Yannis from Ydra comes to Acre

Like other Ydriotes, my grandfather Yannis struck out around 1865 or 1870 from the island of Ydra to Genoa and from there eventually to the Levant. He probably signed up on the crew of a Greek merchant vessel plying the eastern Mediterranean, the Levant coast between Izmir, Mersin, Beirut, Acre, Jaffa and Alexandria. I do not know how many times he crossed this route, what the ships he worked on carried for cargo, or how often he returned to Ydra. His family had settled in Ydra from the Peloponnese in 1710. During the war of independence they became prominent in the naval war against the Turks. One of them, George Vatikiotis, attained the rank of vice-admiral in the new Greek navy and served as a delegate in the Constituent Assembly of 1843–4 in Athens. This much background information I was able to cull from the island's archive. My grandmother, who lived on to be an octogenarian, could not enlighten us with dates, places or even dependable information about where her husband came from and how he happened to be where he was when she married him. When he died in 1913 his youngest son, my father, was only thirteen years old. Of his three older brothers, the oldest died in 1917, and the second, who along with other Greek nationals left in 1914 on board a French vessel headed for Crete, was never heard of again. Some say he died in Corsica. The third was a boy of about ten when he died of an illness around 1908.

In any event, this Yannis from Ydra turns up in Acre, St Jean d'Acre, a northern port of Palestine celebrated for its old walled city, which made it possible for the famous Ahmad Pasha al-Jazzar

(The Butcher),* with the aid of Captain Sidney Smith, to repel Napoleon's attack in 1798–9 and frustrate his whole Syrian campaign. As a schoolboy, on my various visits to a summer home in Acre outside the walled city in which lived my grandmother and her spinster sister, I often used to hike out to a small hill on the north-east approach to the Old City, overlooking the fields of Arab tenant and small-holding farmers. There was a local legend that, frustrated by his unsuccessful siege of Acre, Napoleon stood on top of that hill and threw his hat in the air in the direction of the walled city he could not subdue. Almost directly beneath that hill lies the Greek Orthodox cemetery in which are buried my grandfather and one of his sons, my uncle Aristoteles. My older uncle Panayotis is buried in Tiberias.

In early times Acre was of commercial importance. After Alexander's death it fell to Ptolemy, and its name changed from Akko to Ptolemais, a Roman colony. After the Islamic conquest its old name was restored as Akkeh. In 1104 Crusader King Baldwin of Jerusalem occupied it with the help of Pisans and Genoese who valued it as a trading harbour. Saladin reconquered it, although after the fall of Jerusalem the Knights of St John took control of the place, erected a church to their patron saint and renamed it St Jean d'Acre, making it the maritime capital of Syria. By the end of the thirteenth century Acre alone remained to the Christians of all their Syrian possessions. After the Muslim siege of 1291, however, Acre surrendered. It subsequently flourished as a major commercial depot, and in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries European consuls resided there.

Haifa across the bay was also becoming significant during the later stage of the Crusades. The Carmelites had established themselves on Mount Carmel (St Elijah). The memory of St Elijah is venerated by Christians and Muslims alike. Athlit and Caesarea to the west on the coast below Mount Carmel are also historically interesting and significant. Herod is said to have embellished Caesarea. It was captured in 1101 by Baldwin I, whose Genoese allies, in their share of the plunder, are reputed to have carried off the legendary Emerald Dish.†

* Ahmad al-Jazzar, Pasha of Acre, was a Georgian slave or Mameluke brought up in the Seraglio; perfidious, fanatical, selfish, rapacious and intolerant.

† See Edward Hogg, *Visit to Alexandria, Damascus and Jerusalem* (2 vols., London, 1835), vol. 2, pp. 180ff.

I suppose Yannis first saw Acre because his ship called into port at what is known today as the old harbour looking onto Venice Square, or more likely at the Genoese harbour further along the bay by Fakhura, either to discharge a cargo or to receive one – possibly grain, olive oil, currants and the like. How many times he had been to Acre before he settled down there I do not know; nor did anyone of his living relatives whom I was able to question. A Greek parish priest, my father's godfather, who might have known, died in 1944 when I was away at university in Cairo. As a boy I used to visit this priest's home in the Ajami quarter of Jaffa on holiday, but I never thought then to ask him about such matters, not even when he coached me on Greek irregular verbs. I merely used to kiss his hand and get sweets from him. These he always carried magically in a pocket of his under-robe, which he reached by dipping his hand inside his flowing black outer cassock. I remember the old priest had wide fixing eyes – now that I remember them I think he must have suffered from slight exophthalmia due to a hyperactive thyroid – was a strict disciplinarian and ruled his three grown-up (adult) sons with an iron hand. An occasion in that household that amused me was the weekly bath they all took in turns on Saturday afternoons somewhere above the kitchen. Each in turn, when finished with his bath, would be handed the bottle of raki (ouzo) to take a swig!

Anyway, the father of this priest was one of the very few Greeks in Acre in the 1880s. There was a small Greek community there which consisted, as I could discover, of a physician, a senior public health officer, Dr Doukakis, a tavern keeper and cook (the priest's father), who hailed from the island of Cephalonia in the Ionian Sea, and one or two grain merchants, best known among these a certain Captain Yacoumi from the island of Chios, who was also for a time honorary Greek Consul. Nicolaki Bey Asimakopoulos was another Ottoman government physician who held the rank of colonel or brigadier, *qaimaqam*.

Acre was the seat of the diocese of Ptolemais in the Greek Church of the Holy Sepulchre. An archbishop, the representative of the Jerusalem Patriarch, was always resident in Acre until the 1930s. The few Greeks, along with most of the Arabic-speaking faithful of the Greek Orthodox Church, lived near and around the church and monastery of Saint George in the Old City. The social and community life of the few Greeks in the city revolved

particularly round the archdiocese – and in the evenings the Cephalonian's tavern, or one of the other taverns also run by the Greeks, Leonidas, Lukas, Anastasios and Hatzikostandis.

One must note that the religious community, or *millet*, in the Ottoman dominions was also a social and political unit, recognized by the authorities as an autonomous corporate structure. The Church did not simply minister to the spiritual needs of the faithful: it educated them; housed, fed and clothed those in need; baptized, married and buried them. The property holdings of the Holy Sepulchre Order were vast and the income from them handsome. Yet much of this was spent on maintaining all these services for the faithful, free of charge.

Many of the Arabic-speaking members of the Church had, by attending its schools, become thoroughly hellenized in speech at least, though, as it turned out later, not in sentiment. Nevertheless, they were distinctly separate from Arab Muslims who belonged to the Community of Islam. In fact, the Church school system was so vast that it encompassed elementary schools in some of the smallest towns and villages in Palestine and Transjordan; a first-class secondary school, Aghios Demetrios, in the Old City of Jerusalem, founded in the mid-nineteenth century; and a theological seminary of university standard, O Stavros (The Holy Cross), centred in a monastery with a church rich in mosaics, outside the Old City in what is today Rehavia. These institutions have since been closed down. The theological seminary was closed down around 1910. In recent years, incidentally, Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, tried to save the mosaics of the Holy Cross monastery and church by appealing to Unesco for help.

Even the gymnasium, Aghios Demetrios, which functioned until the mid-1960s, was closed down since there was hardly a Greek community left in Jerusalem and therefore no pupils. What took its place as a Greek-language institution was a small clerical school to educate and train the even smaller number of young Greek boys recruited from Greece before they are inducted into the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and the priesthood. On a visit to the Old City in 1988, however, I learned that Aghios Demetrios is once again functioning as a high school, following not a Greek but an Arabic (Jordanian baccalaureate, *tawjīhiyya*) curriculum. Greek is taught as a language, but teaching for all the set subjects in the

syllabus of that curriculum is in Arabic. The vast majority of the pupils consist of Greek Orthodox Arabs.

As is still the custom in certain parts of Greece and many parts of the Middle East, marriage in the 1860s was by arrangement (what the Jews call *sutkha* and the Greeks *proxenió*). Having befriended the few Greeks in town, Yannis, like other men before and after him, must have been brainwashed about quitting seafaring and urged to marry and settle down. The fact that he had no immediate family in Ydra other than a brother and an uncle whom he had quarrelled with (there was, of course, an extended family of other uncles, aunts, cousins and in-laws, some of whom had retained the original family name of Bikos)* must have further weakened his determination to remain a sailor. The usual procedure followed.

I was told that the tavern keeper and his wife arranged an engagement between Yannis and a local girl, Evmorphia, who for some reason or other lived in with the tavern keeper's family. She was much younger than Yannis, assuming the latter was born some time between 1845 and 1850. I suspect that Evmorphia was one of four or five children born to a poor Greek Orthodox family of Nazarene–Acriote origin. As a boy I remember seeing two of her brothers, both wearing the oriental–local dress (wide pleated pantaloons and fezzes), and some of her cousins in Acre. She, however, was thoroughly hellenized from a tender age. The Church and the tavern keeper's home had done their work well.

The engagement was proverbially and melodramatically a long one – seven years, I was told. Yannis must have continued to sail. The story came down that Evmorphia finally told him that if there was going to be a marriage he had to stay put in Acre and never go to sea again. Yannis agreed and they were married sometime in

* There is a place in the Epidauros region of the Peloponnese called Vatika, and I presume – without corroborating evidence – that when they moved from the Peloponnese (the Gytheion, Neapolis and Mani area) they abandoned the name Bikos for Vatikiotis, thus shedding the name that betrayed their Albanian–Maniati origins. From Ydra active involvement in the Greek War of Independence (1821–8) must have justified further in their minds their newly adopted 'native' name. As far as I could determine from the local Ydra archive, the family arrived on the island from the southern Peloponnese around 1710. In the summer of 1967 I met two elderly spinster sisters in the island of Ydra still carrying the name Bikos, but in whose possession were some papers, documents and objects belonging to one of our common ancestors, Vice-Admiral George Vatikiotis, going back to the Greek War of Independence.

1878 or 1879.* In any case, Yannis went into partnership with someone who ran a warehouse, or a grain clearing house, as well as a ship chandler's business, in Acre harbour. Evmorphia bore him five children, four sons and one daughter. By 1918 only the youngest of the sons, my father, who was born in 1900, survived. So did the daughter, who was older; she died in Tripoli, Libya, in 1960.

The eldest son, like other Greeks, was educated by the Church and became a teacher in its school system in Jerusalem. He died in 1917. While on a visit to the Old City of Jerusalem, I had occasion to revisit a few of the Greek monasteries in the surrounding countryside. I usually make a point of going to Aghios Savvas (whose fortress-like towers date from Justinian's reign) and Prophetes Ilias. The latter is enclosed within a high wall. Here I was met by the abbot, a bishop of the Greek Church, who told me he had known my uncle as a young man. Another uncle in Jerusalem (married to one of my mother's sisters) also told me he had known this long-dead uncle when the latter was a chanter at the chapel of Abba Theodosius.

The second son, Michael, had the same training and became a teacher in the Acre parish school, but, as was noted earlier, he vanished somewhere between Crete and Corsica in 1912–14. The third son, Aristotle, had an accident when he was about ten years old which hurt his spine. This injury was later complicated by meningitis which caused his death. The daughter married a French-educated Greek marine engineer from Magnesia and Smyrna (Izmir) who went by the gorgeous name of Dimitri Kasapouglou.

Trained as a marine engineer in one of the polytechnics in France, Kasapouglou was a Sinbad, a true man of the sea. He left home in Asia Minor and never returned. During the Second World War, he risked all kinds of dangers towing damaged vessels in the eastern Mediterranean into Allied ports for repairs. His sister, the youngest in his family, whom some of us met in her home in Castella (Piraeus) years later, in the 1950s or 1960s, told us how she

* On a recent visit to Acre I was unable to find any parish records in St George's dating from before 1922. The abbot told me that these have mysteriously vanished, are probably stored somewhere and may surface one day. During the Haganah's takeover of Haifa and Acre in the spring of 1948, the abbot further speculated, someone panicked and dumped the records somewhere, or possibly even allowed them to be scattered or destroyed.

remembered her long-lost brother like a dream. Kasapouglou was clearly someone who had led a most adventurous, albeit dishevelled life. Material possessions, a secure career and other such preoccupations were alien to him. He simply loved his work on the sea and otherwise drank. At the same time one could not but notice his high intelligence, his vast worldly experience and, strangely enough, his love for and erudition in Greek and French literature. In his sober moments he introduced me to the Greek satirists and humorists Xenopoulos and Souris when I was a very young teenager. Beside fluent Greek and Turkish, he also spoke French and Italian.

Whereas many Greeks in Palestine were *rayas* – that is, Christian subjects of the Ottoman Sultan – Yanis the Ydriote retained his Greek citizenship. He carried a Greek passport, issued and renewed periodically by the Greek consulate in Beirut, Lebanon. These passports are the only documents I have seen in my father's papers attesting to the identity of the old man, and they are now in my possession. My own Greek nationality is based on my registration in 1936 and 1949 as a *demotes* (i.e. a member of the *demos*) of Ydra. In fact the local (municipal) authorities of Ydra island simply refused at one point to correct my place of birth which, to be precise, is Jerusalem, not Ydra.

More recently, I successfully located my grandfather's registration in the municipal registers of the island of Ydra. His fastidiousness in travelling to Beirut or Jaffa to renew his passport was an expression of his pride and patriotism in being a Greek national, with Greece itself at that time being a newly independent state. These characteristics were shared by not a few members of the Greek minority in the Middle East, but not by the Levantine Greeks who, like other Levantines, sought the protection of any European power that seemed convenient.

The patriotism of Yannis, who probably did not visit his native land between 1885 and his death in 1913, was further shown on two different occasions. In the Graeco-Turkish (Thessaly) War of 1897, he had a choice between renouncing his Greek citizenship, becoming a *raya* and staying on unmolested in Acre with his family on the one hand, and exile on the other. He chose the latter, but I know not where he went. In the Balkan War of 1912 he faced the same problem, made exactly the same choice as before and spent six months in exile in Cyprus.

I believe it was in Cyprus that Yannis contracted pleurisy. He returned to Acre and died soon thereafter, leaving his family almost penniless if not destitute. My father was packed off as a boarder to the Aghios Demetrios gymnasium in Jerusalem, his mother and brother worked to support the family, and his sister was quickly married off to Kasapouglou.

Recently, my 90-year-old father showed me an interesting letter written in rather elegant Arabic handwriting from the late Greek Catholic (i.e. Uniate) Archbishop in Egypt, Boutros Medawar. I had met the Archbishop for the first time in Acre when I was eight or ten years old. He was then Maitre Kamil Medawar, an under-secretary of the Egyptian Ministry of Justice in Cairo. He was visiting my great-aunt (my paternal grandmother's sister) who had practically raised him as a child in Acre, and to whom he had remained devoted throughout his life. (My great-aunt died in Acre in 1947.) A francophone lawyer by profession, and a member of a prominent Christian family in Acre at the turn of the century which hailed originally from Sidon and Beirut, Kamil Medawar was a close friend of my father's family in Acre. Retiring rather early from the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, Kamil Medawar took holy orders as a monk with the order of Paulician Fathers in their Harisa monastery, high on Mount Lebanon. Soon after being ordained a priest, he was made bishop and subsequently archbishop of the Greek Catholic Church and community in Egypt. At least two of his brothers lived with their respective families in Egypt. One of them was a legal adviser to the company of up-market department stores owned by Sednawi, another prominent Christian family of Lebanese-Syrian origin in Egypt.

In 1973 I had Christmas lunch at one of the Medawar homes in Cairo where Archbishop Boutros Medawar was the guest of honour. After lunch, he took me aside for a brief chat during which he reminisced about his acquaintance with my grandparents in Acre. But it was not until I read his last letter to my father, written shortly before he died in his early nineties, that I learned an interesting detail about my grandfather's self-imposed exile, a detail incidentally that may be of interest to students of ethnic nationalism. According to the late Archbishop Medawar, friends in Acre tried in vain to stop my grandfather Yannis from going into exile. When they pressed him about leaving a wife and young family behind, he retorted: 'Would you change your faith? This is

what I am being asked to do by the Ottoman authorities when they offer me *raya* status. I refuse to change faith [*pisti* in Greek].' Yannis is reported to have declared in Greek to his well-meaning friends, 'Ego den allazo *pisti*!'

Nationality and religious faith were fused, in fact synonymous, in the old Ydriote's mind. The reporting of this incident by the Archbishop was prefaced in his letter to my father with the remark: 'I write you about this before I die, because there are many details about your father, "Barba Yanni", you do not know, for you were a young boy then, and Barba Yanni, in his own earthy way and after half a lifetime of seafaring, was a remarkable man.'

Somehow, the family survived the hardships of the Great War – including appalling famine – and when Allenby entered Jerusalem my father obtained his first job with the Civil Administration in 1919 or 1920. He remained with the Civil Administration of Palestine until 1948 when the British Mandate came to an end. After a brief tour of duty with the UK Claims Mission in Israel, he retired to Greece where he now lives. Somehow, between 1948 and 1953 he acquired British nationality and a UK passport, so that now he has dual nationality.

A fluent Arabist, an admirer of the British (much to our annoyance when we were animated by the first brushes with anti-colonialist ideas in secondary school and university) because of his long association with some of them, he could, I understand, have come to the UK to work in 1948 or 1953. Apart from family and financial reasons, he retired in Greece because, as he put it, Greece was his country. Not at all an admirer of Greek administrative 'genius' or lack of discipline – when compared to the discipline he observed among the British – the old man still opted for a native land he scarcely knew. Some may call this nationalism, others chauvinism. Yet it is a genuine sentiment. The story of his family in Acre, their connection with the Church and their tenacious Greekness (the wavers of the Kultur flag among us call it Hellenism) can be repeated about other families in the Middle East many times over.

Here was a man who for thirty years was a public servant loyal to the British; as an inhabitant of Palestine he had friends among both Arabs and Jews; and yet in the final analysis he discovered he was nothing more or less than a Greek, a foreigner, wholly and fiercely conscious of his religiously ingrained patriotism and paradoxically

of a cultural identity that antedated the modern Greek nation-state. Above all, after the Second World War he, along with others like him, was an *unwanted* foreigner, for he belonged to a minority that could not possibly identify with the new nationalism. And the strength – and ugliness – of nationalism, its very core, is *exclusiveness*. It cannot assimilate, let alone integrate, minorities.

2

A Meimarachi becomes a monk: Brother Maximos from Crete comes to Jerusalem

The story of the coming of my mother's family to Palestine throws even more light on the Greeks generally in the Holy Land. If one bears in mind that the Order of the Holy Sepulchre got most of its recruits – if not all of them at one time – from Greece, one gets a picture of the totally Greek composition of this Order. It is only in the last one hundred years or so that a few Arabs – and these had to know Greek – became members of the Order. The few Arab parish priests were supernumeraries. Outside the Oecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul and the national autocephalus Church of Greece, I doubt if any Orthodox Church has been as thoroughly Greek as the one in Jerusalem in the nineteenth century.*

Recruits – novices, monks, priests, archpriests and bishops – streamed into Jerusalem from the Greek mainland and the islands. Many of them lived as ascetics in caves around Saint Saba (Aghios Savvas), Abba Theodosius, Prodhromos in the desert beyond Jericho near the Dead Sea, and other monasteries in the countryside around Jerusalem. Many of these caves, especially around Saint Saba, can still be seen today. They guarded churches and shrines; they quarrelled and brawled with Armenians, Roman Catholics and other denominations over who had the right to which corner of what holy shrine. They manoeuvred and politicked over the issuance of imperial decrees (*firmans*) from the Sultan, allocating

* See *The 1500th Anniversary of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem 451–1951* (Jerusalem, 1951). See also *Patriarch Timotheos A'* (Jerusalem, 1938). Both works are in Greek. Arab opposition delayed the formal recognition of the appointment of Patriarch Timotheos, elected in 1933, from receiving royal assent until 1940–1.

them privileges, rights and properties. The Patriarchate Library in Jerusalem is littered with tin cylinders containing these decrees and royal rescripts, alongside one of the few extant copies of the Didache.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century one such Greek recruit came from Hania (Candia, the ancient name of Crete) to Jerusalem via Mt Athos to join the Order as a plain monk. His name was Maximos Meimarakis (Italianate spelling: Meimarachi). The photographs I have seen of him in family albums show a fierce-looking man with a long beard. In one his hands, resting on his lap, remind one of the hands of a wrestler, not of a divine. For a while he was an ascetic living in a cave carved out of the rocky Judean hills. His food was sent up to him in a basket at the end of a rope. Once in a while, when the Greeks were in trouble with other denominations, he would be called upon, along with other ascetics, to contribute his brute force – that is, his fists – in settling the dispute. Only on these occasions did Maximos venture into the inhabited world. One such time he came out to perform similar duties and never returned to the cave.

Many of these volunteers into the Holy Sepulchre Order used to arrive with independent financial means; a few fairly rich. They would contribute their riches and worldly goods to the building of more shrines and monasteries, to the improvement or development of olive groves, fruit orchards and other agricultural lands belonging to the Patriarchate. Not that others did not invest their riches in more amorous adventures. As a young Greek I always simultaneously secretly admired and rationally deplored the exploits of some of them in that direction. One distant uncle, Leontios Trochalakis, also from Crete, spent fifty to sixty years (he died when he was over ninety) building with his own hands the monastery of Abba Theodosius. He even constructed single-handed a short road leading up to the entrance of the monastery and a walled fence around it. He planted the cypress trees on its grounds and tended the almond trees from which we, as small children, often made our own walking sticks.

Speaking of Greek monks and monasteries, in July 1967, immediately after the Six Day Arab–Israel War, on my tour of the West Bank newly occupied by the Israelis I visited Jacob's Well monastery (in Greek, *Fréar Iakov*), which was situated outside Nablus, opposite the Ballata Palestinian refugee camp in an area

known as Wadi al-Tuffah (Valley of the Apples). After I swung the bell of the gate several times, the gate was opened by a young Greek monk in his mid-twenties, armed with a sub-machine-gun, a revolver and a couple of hand grenades. As he let me in, leading me towards a small front parlour (the reception) of the monastery, he told me he was guarding the monastery against both Arabs and Jews, especially after fleeing and deserting Iraqi troops had tried to storm the monastery in their search for shelter. My host hailed from the island of Kalymnos in the Aegean, better known for its deep-sea divers and in the last century for the work of its natives in the digging of the Suez Canal in Egypt. He soon proved a knowledgeable guide on a quick inspection of Bronze Age exhibits in the small, well-kept museum of the monastery. But the main attraction in the compound across from the reception house was a recently discovered Byzantine basilica in the grounds where the Well of Jacob was located, the well at which Jesus stopped on his way from Judea to Galilee and asked the Samaritan woman for a drink of water (Gospel of St John).

After the usual refreshment tray of welcome and hospitality – ouzo or cognac, cherry or other fruit preserve, cold water and coffee – I took leave of my Kalymnian host monk, harbouring a great deal of admiration for his tenacity in guarding a shrine that had stood where it was for 2000 years, but also with a realization that even a biblical site, now a Christian shrine, like many others, was caught in the conflict between the other two monotheistic religions, albeit in a modern guise.

Maximos was also relatively well off and contributed many services to the Order as an abbot. For instance, he helped build the Prodhromos monastery by the river Jordan close to the Dead Sea. His brother, Manolis, my maternal grandfather, went from Crete to Rhodes Island, where he settled in Lindos, its ancient capital, and married a sixteen-year-old local belle, 'Kokkona' Zoe, of the house of Diakaki – another originally Cretan family, I presume. Manolis was, it seems, an itinerant pharmacist who travelled from village to village on a mule while still a bachelor. After his marriage to Zoe he settled down to being a schoolteacher. On one of my visits to Rhodes in 1956 I ran into an old man who claimed he had been a pupil of my grandfather. Whether Manolis received a dowry or not, I do not know. In any case, he settled his bride in a brand new house which still stands in St Paul's Bay, Lindos, today.

He and Zoe had six children, two sons and four daughters. But he died at the turn of the century, leaving a young widow with six young children to bring up. Here enter Brother Maximos.

Maximos felt responsible for his brother's widow and children. He therefore brought them all in two lots to Jerusalem between 1902 and 1904, set them up in free quarters in the Old City provided by the Patriarchate, supported them and generally looked after their welfare. The eldest son, Markos, he sent to the American University of Beirut where he gained a degree in commerce and business. The other children he educated in the Church schools. After a brief spell in the Greek colony, the widow Zoe built a small villa in the lovely quarter of Katamon near St Simeon monastery and forest, away from the Old City, married all her daughters off and gradually sold all of her property and other assets in Lindos. She died in 1937, leaving her children to quarrel unashamedly over the piddling inheritance. The eldest son, Markos, had left the family very early on to enter the business and financial world of Europe. He acquired wealth as a supplier of animal feed to the Greek armies in the Balkans during the Great War. Later he dabbled in the world of finance, operating out of France, the Congo and Jibuti in French Somaliland, where, as an enemy alien, he died in a concentration camp in 1943.

As a young girl of barely twenty, my mother witnessed the entry of Allenby to Jerusalem. She also remembered the Austrian troops serving with the central powers in the area. She and her sisters had received rather more formal education than was common for girls in those days. She was very close to her eldest sister, who was married to a salon photographer of the old Italian and French school (they do not exist anymore, alas). As a result she learned some of the trade and for a while looked after a branch studio of the business in Jaffa. There she met my father, who had been on one of his visits to his godfather – the priest referred to earlier. The latter, or his wife, must have arranged the rest in good old-fashioned style. They were married in August 1923 in the Greek Colony Club in Jerusalem, and the next day left to make their home in Kantara East on the banks of the Suez Canal, where my father was then working for the Palestine government.

But there were Greeks even in Kantara East, a godforsaken spot in the desert, in 1923. These were about equally divided between those working for the Maritime Company of the Suez Canal and

living on the west bank, or Kantara West, and those who worked for the Palestine Government – mostly the railways – and who lived on the east bank, or Kantara East. Crossing from one bank to the other was by ferry-boat, and when the 'government' Greeks referred to the Suez Canal types, they spoke of those living on the 'perapanta', or the other (far) side. They founded a lively community with its own church (St Spyridon) and school, organized their own celebrations commemorating various national–religious occasions and holidays, and generally continued to be as Greek in the diaspora as ever.

Despite the proximity of relatively civilized Port Said, Ismailia and Cairo, the Greeks in Kantara led a closely knit and contented existence for some ten years. Then in 1933 the Mandate government completed the construction of a harbour at Haifa in north Palestine about 12 miles south of Acre, and made Haifa the administrative and technical headquarters of its railways. And so it moved this community of 'government' Greeks from Kantara to Haifa.

3

From Kantara East on the Suez Canal to Haifa in Palestine

Winter 1933 found us in Haifa. I remember vaguely moving into a five-roomed flat off Jaffa Road right across from the yet uncompleted harbour. The backyard to the house extended to what used to be the waterfront. Once moved in, we children scampered out to the still-soft bottom of what soon became the mooring part of the harbour, losing a shoe now and then in its sinking, soft sand. Very soon, the major business thoroughfare of the new commercial and industrial Haifa, Kingsway, was constructed. Soon thereafter the pipeline terminal of the Iraq Petroleum Company was located in the bay (Kishon Bay) between Haifa and Acre in the north-east. Storage tank farms and other installations mushroomed beyond the Kishon river and the railway main workshops. A huge refinery, owned and operated by an Anglo-American company, Consolidated Refineries Limited, followed suit. A combination of British and American enterprise, coupled with the arrival especially between 1935 and 1939 of Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution in Europe, who brought technical, scientific, commercial and cultural talent, helped create a city of great vitality and, in certain quarters, charm. (These actually implemented aspects of the famous Abercrombie Plan.)

Our landlord, in this land governed by Britain under a League of Nations mandate, was a Persian. He had extensive real estate holdings throughout the city. We saw him only when he came to collect the rent each month. He belonged to a small but interesting Bahai community that had settled first in Acre in the late nineteenth century. Abdul Baha' Abbas, together with a few

trusted followers and his family, had fled persecution of his Bahai faith in his native Persia. He and his descendants came to own extensive agricultural lands in Acre, and other real estate in Haifa. His memorial shrine, perched on the slopes of Mount Carmel with its lovely garden and grounds, commands a splendid view of the lower city and bay. Some of his followers worked for various government departments: Land Registry Office, railways, customs. Some of them stuck to the rug and carpet trade. Shogi Effendi, the then leader of the Bahais, I remember best. He intrigued me whenever he emerged from his villa on Persian Road(!) in the German colony to take his daily constitutional. Short, dark, pale and very quiet, he would walk practically in the middle of the street, flanked by members of his trusted staff who walked a short step behind with hands folded in front of their laps as if in mobile silent prayer.

This landlord then was the occasion for me to hear the word *persis* (Persian) for the first time. He collected rent from Greek, Jewish and Arab tenants. The neighbourhood in that side-street between Jaffa Road and Kingsway was mixed and even included a few Italians, Armenians and Assyrians, the latter of whom seemed to have cornered the shoe trade. Four years in there made an odd impression on a boy between five and eight years old. Across the front courtyard of the house on one side of the alley was Abu Tewfiq, a greengrocer from Nazareth, a Christian Arab who looked almost as holy as his native town. At the top of the road just a few yards from Abu Tewfiq on the corner of Jaffa Road – a major thoroughfare – was The Fat One, as we called him. A recent arrival from Europe, this Jew ran a delicatessen-cum-petrol station. He cut salami and used the hand petrol pump with equal dexterity. Whereas the greengrocery of Abu Tewfiq swarmed with flies and was overpopulated by members of his extended family during all hours of the day, the delicatessen of The Fat One harboured no flies. But it smelled of lakerda – fleshy, delicious fish sold out of the salt barrel – to high heaven. Christians, Muslims and Jews were scattered all over the neighbourhood. European-style bistros, restaurants and cafés, recently opened by European Jews, crowded next to Armenian-owned photo studios, Assyrian cobbler holes-in-the-wall, Muslim greengrocers, Christian garages and Greek tailors and patisseries. A babel of languages surrounded us.

So this was Haifa. For us children the important thing was that it had a waterfront and therefore beaches to enjoy. The matter of different languages spoken around us did not strike us as extraordinary. After all, when one is under ten years old one hardly observes the uncommon. On the contrary, we were just becoming conscious of our environment, and this was the *commonplace* to us: the rule not the exception. In fact, it was when I went to more or less solidly monolingual countries like Greece, the United States (especially small towns of the Middle West) and England that I felt for the first time how suffocating it can be hearing just one language, one idiom, all the time.

There could not have been more than thirty to fifty Greek families in Haifa. Let us say, roughly, between a hundred and two hundred Greeks altogether. I remember with what pride and joy the community would once in a long while report the discovery of yet another Greek family. One or two such cases stick out in my memory. There was a stooping, skinny old master carpenter on Jaffa Road who went by the name of Yanni, i.e. John. The old man and his children were for all practical purposes Christian Arabs, and no one knew how long ago the family had settled in Haifa, or Palestine for that matter. When Greeks asked him how he had come by this glorious name of Yanni, the old man merely shrugged his shoulders, spread his palms outwards and remarked that God only knew. Then when the war came and the Greek government in exile was trying to raise a couple of army brigades and replenish the personnel of what was left of the navy, by the conscription of all fit, able-bodied Greeks of military age in the Middle East, Costa, the elder son of this Yanni, was one of the chaps inducted into the army. Lo and behold, their real family name turned out to be Glianos, originating probably from one of the Dodecanese islands – Samos or Leros. With no knowledge of Greek to speak of, the poor recruit learned it fast in Boot Camp; he would hardly have survived Greek NCOs otherwise. Another recruit into the navy, of a Greek father and an Arab mother, went round for days babbling about the mess of 'threads' around their pup tent in bivouac camp; the poor joker meant to say 'ropes'.

Many years later, on a visit to Haifa University in Israel in 1981, I met an Israeli Arab member of the teaching staff called Musa Karayanni. Anxious to meet me too, he told me he was Greek but did not know how or why; only that his family had lived in the Acre

region – actually, in one of its surrounding villages, Kafr Yasif, which was solidly Greek Orthodox. In visiting the famous Jazzar Mosque in Acre I ascertained that a craftsman by the name of Karayanni had been brought from Asia Minor to Acre in the mid-1770s to embellish the mosque constructed in 1775–7. Perhaps this could be Musa Karayanni's ancestor? He was.

Greek women married to Arabs managed somehow to hellenize their children by sending them to the Greek Community School, and by having them join the Greek Boy Scout troop, and the social and athletic club, Hermes, which was housed in a glorified hut. The latter managed in the years 1939–43 to field one of the best two or three soccer elevens in Palestine.

The school was an elementary one: it ran only six classes including infants and juniors. All subjects were taught in Greek. Geography lessons were about the geography of Greece, not Palestine or the Middle East. History covered both ancient and modern Greece. Religious education was pure catechism in the Greek Orthodox rite. The authorities, however, required the school to teach Arabic and English. What Arabic we did not learn in class we perfected in the streets, the playgrounds and shops. In any event, many of us spoke it long before we ever entered a classroom.

Contributions from the members of the community financed the school, the club and the Scout troop. No Greek, knowing at that time that his offspring might spend the rest of their lives in a non-Greek environment, thought to start their education otherwise. After all, a Greek identity came first: the *paradosis*, the heritage. Practical considerations, skills and training which would equip one for life, came second.

This is not to say that Haifa Greeks were oblivious to their immediate surroundings: this city of Arabs and Jews and hovering in the background a variety of European and American missionaries. As most of them were on the Mandate government's payroll, they felt economically secure. Had they been mainly entrepreneurs, their outlook and behaviour might have been different. In fact, the very few serious entrepreneurs among them – especially those in the import–export, shipping or insurance business – developed wider and more extensive contacts, particularly with the Jewish community. One such case was the shipping partnership Gaspi–Asimacopoulos. The latter's father was

Nicolaki Bey Asimacopoulos, government physician of the local Ottoman authorities in Acre before the Great War, mentioned earlier.

With more Jews arriving from Europe, the city began to split up into separate quarters. There was the old Arab section in the east with its suks; the Old and New Merkez, commercial centre of the bustling Jewish community, close to the harbour; Jaffa Road going towards Haifa West with its mixed inhabitants – Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Italians, Armenians. Beyond that new arrivals from Europe continued the development of Bat Galim, a beach resort, night-life attraction and generally fun city. A British garrison was posted there. What used to be fields, largely cultivated with succulent small cucumbers for mischievous kids to steal, between Jaffa Road and the foot of western Mount Carmel, was soon built up by both Jews and Arabs as the Zeitun quarter, Kiryat Eliahu and Kiryat Eliezer.

Between east and west Haifa in the centre of town the German descendants of the Templars in the main had their orderly and neat colony with their neatly arranged cottages and detached bungalows, which they built as early as the 1860s, bacon and wurst butchers, bakers and florists. The older ones among them went about with shaven heads and wing collars; their kids could be seen barefooted in the streets in the hot summer. I do not remember having seen any of the older Germans with even a faint smile on their lips. Then one day in 1939 most of them packed up and boarded ships in harbour that had come to fetch them. It was apparently difficult to find too many among them who were not Nazis.

Beyond the German colony one finally approached the all-Jewish quarters of Hadar HaCarmel and up the mountain to French Carmel, Panorama in Central Carmel and Ahuza. These were literally transplanted European townships with theatres, concert halls, parks, gardens and the earliest department stores, such as the famous Hephzi-Bah. Here the Jews were exclusive with their schools and complete run of public services. Fractious and querulous as any Mediterranean community, their competing organizations provided splendid sporting and cultural facilities: the Alliance Israelite, the Maccabi, the Hapoel, the Betar. Soon enough, whereas the Arabs could boast of no more than two cinemas, the Jews had put up the latest in cinema hall architecture,

film programmes and entertainment. They served everyone who paid – Jew, Arab, Englishman and foreigner. And they welcomed money from any nationality. The biggest spenders were the Arabs, for what could appeal more to the 'emerging' Arab townsman than a European nightclub-restaurant with a variety of food, drink and entertainment run by charming Hungarians? Yet the Jew never got confused: he knew what he was about, and what it was all about. He was marking time towards something more exclusively Jewish: an independent Israel.

On the other hand, the Arab, poor chap, had many benefactors, especially in the 1930s. At first arrogantly dismissive and belittling of the Jews (one of the popular slogans they chanted in the 1930s which sticks in my memory was 'Falastin bladna we'l yahud klābna' – 'Palestine is our country, and the Jews are our dogs') and also suspicious and tired of the Englishmen who governed them, he welcomed other charmers who solicited his loyalty. By temperament and background attracted by talkers and prophets, the Arab hurried to embrace Il Duce. The latter was familiarly loud: he promised to humiliate the English fishermen and shopkeepers and to make the Arab king over the newly arrived scum of Europe – the Jews. He had a superb organization: educational, colourful, full of ceremony and pageantry, and he had money that the Italians in Italy could ill afford. And so, youngsters like us came to hear about the Balilla – the organization of the Gioventu Fascista, Mussolini's answer to juvenile delinquency and a splendid propaganda arm for his policy of 'Mare Nostrum' in the Mediterranean.

It should be noted that politically inclined youth in those days were the most active recruits of Scout troops. Surely old man Lord Baden-Powell had not conceived of the Scout movement as a haven for politically motivated youth. But in Palestine each community, religious sect, what have you, expressed its identity and separateness in, among other institutions, a Scout troop. The latter did not indulge in many of the healthy activities Scouts are known for. Mostly it paraded, led funeral processions and honoured religious, communal and national celebrations.

But these organizations lost much of their membership to the Balilla in the 1930s. Arabs took to it like ducks to water – yet only Arabs who were Christian. Many of the poorer ones among the latter attended the huge Italian school run by the Salesian Order, Scuola Salesiana Don Bosco all'Estero. Those who could afford a

fee paid a nominal one, something like ten piasters or two shillings a month. Most of them could not afford the fee and were enrolled free of charge. Black-robed young priests – who looked more like propagandists than men of God – taught these wide-eyed characters the glories of Il Duce and the new 'Roman Empire' in the classroom. They manifested the greatness of Il Duce's global schemes in the fantastic up-to-date playgrounds, the new equipment. Best of all, they proved that it would all come true soon when they clothed these poor chaps in a smart blue-grey Balilla uniform, taught them how to march to music, sing 'Giovinezza' and perform *en masse* colourful exercises in the huge parade ground, and shipped them off with great fanfare on Italian ships to Il Duce's paradise for a three-month holiday each year. I do not think the place has seen smarter con-men, either before or since.

The Greeks, however, were no better. They had heard of their own little 'Duce' back home with his fabulous youth organization, the Neolea. To be sure, it was all rather far away. But a Neolea branch was formed by the Greeks in Egypt. It never reached our small community in Palestine. One wonders if the Mandate authorities would have prevented the formation of a branch: they already had Balilla all over the place. What events in Greece really contributed to were the arguments and frequent fights in the cafés. The Greeks congregated at the Café Trianon (also a patisserie and restaurant) every Sunday morning to drink beer, sip ouzo or retsina and munch on delicious little *barbounakia* (small red mullet). They would play and bet on *tavli* (backgammon), billiards and dominoes. Like Greeks everywhere else – especially outside Greece – they had brought their political divisions with them in the diaspora. The eternal dispute between the Venizelists (Republicans) and the Constantinists (Royalists) hashed and rehashed, argued and gesticulated the whole unholy mess of Greek politics from the 1916 National Schism onwards. In the middle of this huge café sat the owner: a fat, greying, gruff Greek from the Peloponnese, who barked instead of talking. He would throw a quick glance around the place, checking up on the customers between counting waiters' fiches and money.

Meanwhile, in school we discovered what a great place Greece was, how absolutely true the Orthodox creed was, and how second-rate all this environment about us was. We were, of course, too young to think about reconciling this overinflated greatness

with which the teacher brainwashed us with the reality of Greece in the 1930s as a small Balkan client state. But even then, the more chauvinistic adult Greeks – and the teachers were that – lived in transient worlds: the integration of the *ethnos* would surely happen some day. Indirectly, we were given the vague though vicious impression that the Jew was anti-Christian (and who was more Christian than a Greek? some kids believed Jesus was a Greek!); that the Muslim followed a phoney, mad prophet; and that the Englishman who governed had some mysterious diabolical power to outfox everyone and so rule most of the world. Throughout Lent and on Good Friday we all sang the absolutely mesmerizing Byzantine hymn 'Ti Ypermacho', composed by probably one of the most gifted chant lyricists in all of Byzantium to honour the Emperor, who was also head of the Church. It was completely irrelevant, yet so moving by virtue of its bald martial tone and content that it never failed to arouse the emotions of the congregation. In fact, despite the unharmonious, atonal genre of Byzantine music, this hymn still moves many Greeks today.

Consequently, in the streets and playgrounds, one always felt a latent, unarticulated superiority to the locals. Compulsory Arabic classes in school were a bore at that age, even though many of us spoke the language fluently. It was a bind not only because it was a different language to learn – we discovered a few years later that classical Greek was the biggest of all pains – but primarily because most of the kids were snobbish when it came to the Arabs. They associated Arabic with the natives. To learn English was, after all, to acquire an important means to a livelihood. Strangely enough no one bothered with Hebrew. Within three to four years, I learned – if not comprehended – a great deal about Solon and Athens, Lykourgos and Sparta, Thermopylea and Marathon, Salamis, Xerxes and Alexander – the glories of ancient Greece – but never any of the warts that iconoclast Thucydides later told me about. I was pumped with nonsense about Germanos, the bishop of Old Patras, and his raising of the Independence War standard at Aghia Lavra in 1821, the Ypsilantis brothers, Kolokotronis, Miaoulis. The priests fed me pabulum about Heraclius Stavrophoros and the Paleologi, always eschewing the livelier mundane vagaries and ills of the Byzantines.

By the time I was eight, the Pope in Rome, I and my little friends were convinced, had the appearance of the Devil with horns, a tail,

stake in hand and all. If the children bumped into a priest from the Société des Frères, a Dominican, Franciscan or Carmelite friar, some of them would mumble – often audibly enough – 'Off with you, Satan'. Some of the kids would congregate over the Easter holiday, trying to concoct ways and means of making life difficult for Roman Catholics. Devilish schemes like dropping red powder paint into the marble container of Holy Water outside the church door appealed to us. We had observed that the faithful dip their hands automatically into the bowl, before crossing their foreheads with the Water. What a marvellous idea to have them all walk out with faint red crosses splashed across their foreheads! We never dared go into one of their churches: we considered it sacrilegious and sinful.

So here we were in an environment where all the outward manifestations of authority were basically British – policemen, magistrates, postage stamps, road signs, the wording on coins and banknotes, identity cards – albeit mitigated by Arabic and Hebrew, a concession to the two communities the British ruled over. But the community had turned us into fanatic Greeks encumbered by all the ignorant chauvinism of nationalism.

Then one marvellous spring it happened and we found ourselves caught between the Arab gone wild and the Englishman thinking about the gathering storm in Europe. Jews were pouring in from Europe by the hundreds and the thousands. As youngsters we did not fully appreciate their tragic plight. We simply saw and heard new things – shops, factories, more and more doctors' shingles outside doors and buildings with strange central and East European and German names, better music over the wireless, fabulous (in local terms) Jewish soccer elevens, splendid swimming pools and beach resorts. Rents went up, and whole families of five or six souls lived 'happily' in one room. Buxom girls clad in short-shorts, and boys with short khakis, heavy field boots and sporting knapsacks over open-necked denim-blue shirts crowded the trains, getting off at *kibbutz* stations. Good public transport – Leyland and Thorneycroft buses – littered the main roads and avenues from the Bay to the Carmel. The Egged Bus Company made it possible for all of us to travel by road to practically any part of the country. Europe, and with it modernity, had really come to Palestine in force.

The Arabs forcefully protested this influx of their 'cousins' with a

General Strike that lasted for six months. My mother, who after thirty-five years in the country still placed a masculine ending to a feminine pronoun, noun and verb in her efforts to speak Arabic, soon could not cope with the queues and with the bargaining for the odd kilogram of sugar. Very soon some shops, at least one in each neighbourhood, were opening for an hour or two to serve their regular customers. Some of these shopkeepers, however, paid for this service with their lives: they were assassinated as traitors to the cause.

The competitive Greeks now had worthier competitors, especially in sports: soccer fixtures against the Reali School and the Alliance Israelite in Hadar HaCarmel, and swim meets against one or another of the new Jewish clubs (Hapoel, Maccabi, Betar) in the new Bat Galim baths on the beach. However, it was not easy – even for the supple, adaptable Greeks – to establish close and amicable relations with the newly arrived European Jews. The Greeks' relations with the native Arab community, especially its Christian members, were close and of very long standing, going back to the previous century. Intermarriage rendered them in some cases even more intimate. And, after all, the Arabs had just proclaimed their rebellion against the British Mandate, specifically because it failed, or refused, to stem the influx of Jews from Europe into the(ir) country. To put it mildly, the Greeks found themselves in a difficult position, caught between their old friends, acquaintances, neighbours and, in some instances, relatives, the Arabs, and the new arrivals in the Jewish community.

The Jews were the new favoured clients of British authority, and the livelihood of the Greeks derived from their services to the Mandate authority. How far could they go in their support of or sympathy with the Arab rebels? This was not a hypothetical question; it was real. When strikes were called in government departments by Arab staff or employees to protest Mandate policy, the Greeks were directly affected. Should they observe the strike call or ignore it and carry on working?

There was a comical side to some of these demands by the Arab rebels: as, for instance, when they expected those in sympathy with or in support of their rebellion to grow beards and wear a fez or a *kafiyya* and *'igal*. Despite the ridicule they risked, several Greeks complied with both of these requests, which were intended to distinguish the Arab and pro-Arab camp from the enemy:

namely, the British and their clients and allies, the Jews. At the same time, the Greek community elders urged all Greeks, young and old, to wear lapel badges bearing the Greek flag!

None of this affected us in the small community school where every pupil was Greek or hellenized. But it tended to limit the 'go' areas for us: there were now no-go areas, especially in the Jewish parts of the city; not so much because these were dangerous, but in order not to offend the Arabs. Many Greeks felt that they had to make some gesture of support for the Arab boycott of Jewish areas, shops and other trading and business establishments. Those breaking the boycott, especially among the Arabs, risked severe punishment, including death as traitors. Soon the dents in tenuous Arab solidarity were used or abused in order to settle old political scores between factions, or more often personal feuds. There were a spate of assassinations of Arabs between 1937 and 1939 and beyond, ostensibly for betraying the cause: for example, selling land to the Jews, or maintaining any kind of contact with the Jews and/or the Mandate government, or even for heading a left-oriented Arab trade union movement that was not subservient to the Mufti, as in the belated case of Sami Taha in Haifa in 1947.

4

From Jaffa Road to Mosul Lane

No. 5 Mosul Lane was at the top left-hand corner of a short, steep private cul-de-sac road, off Vine Street, now known as Hagefen. Hagefen is the main road connecting the heart of the German colony (old Carmel Avenue) with an important crossroads, leading to Hadar HaCarmel, that of Mountain Road to Mount Carmel via Camelia Court, and the Bahai Shrine on the slopes of the Carmel dominating the town and bay below. Largely a foreigner's (ethnic minorities') no-man's land, Hagefen separated the Arab quarters of Wadi Nisnas and beyond in the south and east from the newly developed residential areas going up towards Mount Carmel and the Jewish quarter of Hadar HaCarmel in the north and west. It was a kind of twilight area or neighbourhood where Mandate government officials, well-to-do-merchants, a few professionals and foreigners resided.

Directly opposite this short Mosul Lane, across Vine Street, was the administrative headquarters building of the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), which was controlled by British managers assisted by a large number of local Arab office and other staff. A sloping alley directly opposite Mosul Lane led to the St Luke's Anglican Church compound. Just before it on the left was a part of the old Government Hospital, together with some offices of the Public Health Department. Next to this, on the corner, stood a large turn-of-the-century house occupied by the numerous fair-haired Bushnaq family, so-called because they were Arabic-speaking Bosnians and the Arabic word for Bosnia is Bushnaq. A few yards across Hagefen Street to the right of Mosul Lane, on the

left-hand corner of Mountain Road, stood the Government Secondary School, and directly opposite it more of the old Government Hospital, which later housed the British Council. Immediately next to the latter was the English High School for Girls, which closed down at the end of the spring term of 1948.

We occupied the second floor of our block, with a balcony looking down on Mosul Lane and Vine Street, a veranda looking out to the harbour and bay – on a clear day we could see as far as Acre – and another balcony in the back, looking down on a 1920s 'mansion'. The mansion was Ottoman in style and was being used as British Military Police headquarters during the war. One heard the occasional screams of the difficult inebriated trooper while police were trying to sober him up or discipline him. The landlord of our block, who lived on the ground floor of the premises, was a Maronite Arab from El-Jesh, high on the mountain range on the Palestine–Lebanon border. He worked as an ambulance man for the Public Health Department, mainly for the local Government Hospital. He belonged to a tightly-knit and well-organized small community of immigrants from El-Jesh, all of them Maronites, and several with rich relatives in the USA. I recall that one day one of his relatives appeared driving a huge American automobile.

The floor below us was occupied by another Maronite from Lebanon and his newly arrived beautiful young bride. A quiet, well-dressed and dignified man, he worked for a well-known Lebanese contracting company and later also became Lebanese Consul in Haifa. He spoke French with his wife, who was straight out of a convent school run by a French order of nuns. The couple occasionally gave huge dinner parties to a bizarre collection of Arab guests. Several foreign languages were spoken by these guests – English, French, even Italian – but not Arabic. One could say these people represented the 'swinging set' of those days (late 1930s, early 1940s). Here were French-educated, French-speaking Levantines, enjoying the relative prosperity offered by the British Mandate in wartime Palestine.

We got to know this couple better when they had their first child, a lovely girl they called Myrna, and we were recruited for babysitting duties. We discovered that this gentleman, our Maronite Lebanese neighbour came from an interesting, if not altogether remarkable family. His older brother was well known in the intellectual salons of the European-educated Arabs from Beirut

to Jerusalem: an itinerant tutor and member of the literati set, gaunt and intense. His younger brother had just qualified in medicine and joined the Trans-Jordan Frontier Force (TJFF) as a medical officer, wearing that force's colourful red-sashed uniform, but subsequently emigrated to the USA.

Across from our landing, the top-floor flat of the adjoining block was occupied by yet another Lebanese Christian couple. We were unable to observe a visible means of livelihood for the man of the house: that is, nobody knew what he did for a living. But he was always very elegantly dressed and well groomed. There was gossip that he was a professional gambler.

Just below and across from our block was a three-storey house with varied and interesting occupants. Its owner, a Roman Catholic Arab, lived on one floor with his wife and three children. He was, I believe, a rich landowner and businessman. Directly on the floor below, facing our veranda, lived a senior police colonel, Commandant of the Palestine Police, Northern Area Command, with his wife. They had no children, at least none with them at home. The colonel's bodyguard was an Arab police sergeant, who I remember often stood about in the lane servicing and cleaning his larger than average hand gun. On the ground floor lived a Bahai Persian, who was a senior official in the Mandate's Land Registration Department. He tended his beautiful garden to the side of the house by the driveway with the help of a gardener. He was married to the great-niece of Abbas Effendi, founder of the Bahai sect, and they had two daughters who attended the English High School for Girls across the road. Their mother was an earlier product of the English Girls College in Jerusalem. The older daughter married a Pakistani army officer towards the end of the war and left for the subcontinent. The younger one stayed behind, married an Israeli of Moroccan origin, and still lives in the same house. Her maternal grandfather was a traditional calligrapher (*khattat*) with extensive landholdings in the Bahai compound near Acre. There were also two Roman Catholic Arab brothers who lived somewhere in that building. They were, I remember, very vociferously pro-Italian and pro-fascist. It was a special pleasure to give them the two fingers, as the British would say, when the Greek army trounced Mussolini's troops in Albania in 1940.

Across on the other side of the cul-de-sac were only two houses in those days, and a fairly extensive olive grove (now completely

built up). One of the houses was occupied by a provincial Arab lady, a country woman, together with her son and two daughters. The daughters always moved and did things together; they both worked for the central telephone exchange. Her son was the head groundsman and porter of the English High School for Girls. He wore the typical native Palestinian (urban) dress, consisting of a *shirwal* and *umbaz*. In 1938 his mother gave us the puppy that was to be our lovely pet dog, Hera, till 1947.

The other house was a three-storey structure built in the early 1930s. On the top floor lived a senior British officer – a Scotsman, I believe – of the Port Authority. I cannot remember who occupied the middle floor. The ground floor was occupied by an Arab medical doctor who served as senior medical officer in the government, with his wife and three daughters.

Mosul Lane, then a private cul-de-sac, marked the end of the built-up area of town; behind it lay Carmel. During the war years, however, prosperity among the educated/professional Arabs was reflected in house building (in fact, a minor construction boom) on a new road, directly behind us and parallel to Hagefen. It came to be known as Abbas Street (Sharia Abbas), presumably because it was directly below and adjoining the Bahai Shrine and Gardens on the slope of the Carmel. Residents of the new street were mainly successful Protestant Arabs. They included the Habibis (some of these later prominent in the Palestine Communist Party) and the Haddads, the family of Dr Wadie Haddad of more recent PFLP and terrorist notoriety. Some residents were government officials; others were professionals or merchants.

One Christian Arab family, in particular, intrigued me. The husband, a Roman Catholic from Aleppo, I believe, was chief clerk of the department of the chief mechanical engineer of the Palestine Railways. His wife was a handsome red-headed lady. Their two teenage boys – also red-headed – attended the École des Frères, and they all spoke French at home. Most interesting was their 1930s Morris or Austin saloon car, which stood in the driveway to their garage and was driven only on family outings.

The building activity later extended westwards towards Stella Maris on Mount Carmel and below to the new Jewish quarters between Carmel and Bat Galim via Haifa West, Kiryat Eliahu and Kiryat Eliezer.

Vine (or Hagefen) Street itself featured a few modern apartment

blocks (mansion flats) occupied by leading Christian Arab merchants, the chief surgeon of the Italian hospital and an old-time Greek engineer who was a survivor from Ottoman Palestine, and whose tall bland-looking daughter was the PA to the General Manager of Palestine Railways. A Greek customs official, originally from the island of Cephalonia, and his young family also lived on that road. Midway on Vine Street, between our house and the German colony, lived an Armenian family my parents had known in Kantara East, and an old Greek character married to a Jewish lady from Odessa. He was a technician working for one of the Mandate government departments. In his time, he had lived briefly in Egypt and worked occasionally as an extra on the stage of the Cairo opera house. He amused his friends with his theatrical talents: he could imitate several languages without knowing any of them, and, with a kitchen pan on his head, he looked uncannily like Benito Mussolini. In 1947–8 he was one of two Greek victims of the Arab-Jewish quarrel. He was caught in crossfire and a sniper's bullet dispatched him. The other victim was equally a character in the community, but for different reasons. He hailed originally from the island of Castellorizo, near the south-western coast of Turkey –farthest of the Dodecanese group of islands. On a particularly bad day during the Arab-Jewish clash, he insisted on going out to fetch more ouzo (he was a heavy drinker). While crossing an alley connecting Jaffa Road with Kingsway, he was hit by sniper fire and killed.

Beyond the crossroads of Hagefen and Carmel Avenue there was a partly made-up side extension or access going up a hill at the foot of the Carmel where an interesting and prominent character in the Arab community had his home. Originally from a village in the Galilee, this gentleman owned a music (gramophone and records) shop in the Old Merkez downtown on Jaffa Road, practically next to the first Jewish department store, Hephzi-Bah. He also owned a classy hotel with a restaurant and beer garden bistro in a pine tree copse in the German colony, across the avenue from the older and more famous Bross brothers German *Beerstübe* garden. His children tried desperately to de-arabize themselves: to acquire a new identity, preferably an Anglo-Saxon one. His son, Toy (a concocted nickname for Theophile, after his grandfather, the head of an originally Greek Catholic family in the village of Kafr Yasif), drove a flashy pre-war MG sports car, wore trendy clothes and

tried consciously to cut a smooth, suave and cool figure. His daughter cultivated a persona that was an imperfect cross between a sporty English lady of the countryside and a Hollywood actress. As the separation between the Arab and Jewish communities increased in 1946 and 1947, this man's hotel and beer garden became an important amusement centre for the social events and other entertainments of the Arab community. And we, the Greeks in town, so to speak, occasionally serviced it: we supplied the musical entertainment, for a price.

Beyond the English High School for Girls, the road leading to the Armon cinema area and the exclusively Jewish Hadar HaCarmel was another mixed area situated between the Arab and Jewish parts of town. Here too the inhabitants were varied: Armenians, Christian Arabs and a few foreigners. Here too the Arabs were from the more prosperous and educated Protestant community: rag trade merchants, schoolmasters, civil servants, lawyers, doctors and pharmacists. Alongside these there were a few assimilated Jewish families.

Such a mosaic of people, of inhabitants, could only be 'governed' by a complete outsider, the British. The concept of the Mandate was a most interesting one: an ingenious, handy device for legitimizing alien rule over a territory which was populated by a kaleidoscope of people and religions, themselves the remnants (or legacy) of an earlier imperial device, the *millet* system of the Ottomans. Only hopeless romantics, inexperienced do-gooders, self-appointed saviours and unsolicited redeemers could concoct unrealistic projects for such territories: namely, policies based on nationalism and national self-determination, and independence as sovereign nation-states. Where their dreams became reality they produced unhappiness for all concerned.

The nearest Arab quarter to us was Wadi Nisnas, mainly but not exclusively inhabited by Christian Arabs of all denominations. There were a few Muslims. The latter, however, were concentrated further east in the Old City, Halisa and Wadi Rushmiya beyond Haifa East. Wadi Nisnas was mainly a collection of short, steep streets, a maze of alleys and a few local shops. It was densely populated. Below it were more Arab and mixed Arab–Jewish neighbourhoods, such as Allenby Road, which stretched across town from the German colony to the old centre of town, Ein Dor, Jaffa Road, the old and new Merkez and the *sahet el-hanatir* (Garry

Square) at the entrance of the Old City, market (bazaar), leading to the main mosque in the Jrayni. Dotted here and there were Roman Catholic missions and schools, the École des Frères, the Dames de Nazareth, the Salesian school and the Carmelites. There were also a few Cypriots and Maltese: the former mainly craftsmen and shopkeepers; the latter minor civil servants and schoolmasters.

In addition to the Bross *Beerstübe*, other landmarks in the German colony were the typically German butcher, the bakery (*Konditorei*), the dairy and an old hospital. The latter also had an entrance from Jaffa Road. It was a solid structure dating back to the late nineteenth century. The Templar mission of the mid-nineteenth century had contributed a great deal to the planned development of Haifa. It was a city that had always enjoyed excellent local government. Its municipal authority was headed by very good Jewish and Arab mayors and town clerks. It boasted – and still does – the best communal relations between Arabs and Jews. Haifa was and remains the most sophisticated and cosmopolitan urban centre of Palestine and now Israel, in addition to being its gateway from the sea and its leading industrial centre. In my days, its population was evenly divided between Arabs and Jews, almost a fifty-fifty ratio.

On a very recent visit to Israel, it was a relief to escape from Tel Aviv to Haifa. I felt a *de facto* separation between the religious south, including Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the more secular, cosmopolitan north, Haifa, Acre and the Galilee. Whole neighbourhood streets in Carmel Ahuza sounded like they did back in 1939–44; German was spoken everywhere, including the popular bar of the Shulamit Hotel. A kind of protest against the New York-accented religious fanatic settlers in the south? Perhaps. It is difficult to believe one is living in the 1990s when one is surrounded by people who demand that the country must be cleared of everyone who does not share their religious faith (i.e. all non-Jews); who insist that they and the land they occupy are sacred. It is equally difficult to run a country as an open democratic state in the face of such beliefs. In fact, if such beliefs came to prevail or predominate, Israel might not survive for long as a modern democratic state – it might even not survive at all. I have always wondered if the Greeks sensed this danger in 1948. Of course, there was the crucial matter of a livelihood: they had to move on in order to survive economically but, highly chauvinistic

themselves, did they perhaps also appreciate the impact of Jewish exclusiveness?

To those of us in the city, the only manifestations of an armed Arab rebellion were the presence of larger contingents of British troops and tighter police security under emergency regulations. Every so often we would read an item of news in the press about marauding bands of Arab rebels, in the Judean hills, in the heights of Samaria or on the plains of Galilee, usually against an isolated police fort, a railway station, a water tower or a Jewish settlement. The odd foray by armed Arabs in town would elicit a massive security drive by British security forces on Arab quarters, searching for arms and rebels or their sympathizers; people would be rounded up, herded somewhere, questioned and released – all at tremendous expense to the British taxpayer at home. Then there would be the odd assassination of this or that 'traitor'.

The Palestinian Arabs had formed an Arab Higher Committee to act as the supreme political authority and command of their struggle against the policies of the Mandate government whenever these favoured the Jews, and to stop Jewish immigration into the country. Presided over by the Mufti, Haj Amin al-Huseini, among the Committee's members were representatives of several political factions in the Arab community. The Arab rebellion prompted the Mandate government to proscribe and disband the Committee, and several of its members were arrested and exiled. The Mufti, however, escaped to Iraq, where he became involved in another Arab revolt against the British in 1940, collaborated with Axis agents and once again escaped arrest by fleeing via Iran and Turkey to Germany, where he spent the rest of the Second World War working for the Nazis. It was largely his domination of Arab politics in the conflict in Palestine which spawned assassinations and other internecine struggles in the Arab camp. He could not countenance either opposition or an alternative leadership of the Palestinian Arab cause. He owed his pre-eminent position partly to his religious functions (Mufti of Palestine and head of the Supreme Muslim Council, which also controlled, or had access to, vast funds) and partly to the Mandate authorities, which appointed him Mufti in the first place.

Despite its reinforced strength and superior equipment, the British army found it difficult to combat the marauding bands of rebels, which could move freely in the rugged terrain of the

countryside and then melt away among the village and town populations. They could also flee across frontiers to Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The RAF was more successful in attacking rebel concentrations from the air. Still, they presented a serious security problem, especially where the protection of scattered and isolated Jewish settlements was concerned. The police tried to secure their defence of isolated areas behind Taggart forts: named after Charles Taggart, who was instrumental in setting up a network of these throughout the country. In 1937 the Mandate government had recruited a body of Jewish supernumerary rural policemen (reminiscent of the rural Ghafir system in Eygpt?), the Jewish Settlement Police (Mishtevet Ha-yishuvim Ha-'Ivrim, and colloquially, *Notrim*), who helped guard Jewish settlements. Many of us believed at the time that the Jews were happy to do this because it meant training in security for their adult male population short of all-out military training. The latter became available to them with the war. In the meantime the unorthodox visionary British soldier, Orde Wingate, provided the first systematic training for this new police force in night-time mobile defence. In this way, the force was both armed and trained by the British. I believe the late General Moshe Dayan's military career had such humble beginnings.

Security improved. Soon the marauding Arab rebels were no match for the new security measures. Badly organized, ill-trained and ill-equipped, very poorly led and without united political direction, their haphazard attacks began to diminish. Improved government and police intelligence, extreme and confusing factionalism in the Arab ranks as well as the intervention of Arab politicians, especially from Iraq, had forced the Palestinians in October 1936 to call off their six-month strike, and less than three years later the rebellion petered out. It was the outbreak of the Second World War that finally put an end to this emergency in Palestine.

5

Palestine and the Second World War

The Allies, Britain in particular, had to deal with several military difficulties and political problems in 1941–2 in the Middle East. The attitude of the Arab states in the Middle East was doubtful, beyond their apparent hostility to Britain and what they saw as British-protected Zionism. Interestingly though, the British Mandate's dealings with the Jewish Agency – the Jewish community – in Palestine were also uneasy and abrasive, so that security in Palestine came to be based almost entirely on military force.

This difficult situation was exacerbated by the controversy over the nature and extent of a future Zionist state. It also bred in the factionalized Zionist movement in Palestine itself extremist groups which believed in speeding up the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine by the exercise of terrorism against the British. The most spectacular act of these terrorist groups was the assassination of the Minister of State for the Middle East, Lord Moyne, in Cairo on 6 November 1944, two months after I had arrived in Cairo and in the first term of my undergraduate course at the university.

In addition to its political difficulties with the Arab–Jewish conflict in Palestine, Britain faced parallel and more dangerous problems in Egypt and Iraq, in both of which countries it was still theoretically the arbiter of power. The Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 turned out to be as ineffective a guarantee against the undermining of the war effort and for the maintenance of security in Egypt as the Palestine White Paper of 1938 in Palestine. Both were essentially acts of appeasement: the White Paper restricting

Jewish immigration to a specified quota for five years was intended to buy Arab acquiescence in Palestine; the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty was to strengthen the security and ensure the safety of the Suez Canal against any threat from the recently established Italian fascist presence in Ethiopia, and to render the Egyptian population and its political leaders friendlier.

However, neither of these measures hindered, let alone stopped, the nurturing and further radicalization of anti-British political groups in dependent states; if anything, one of them widened the gulf between Britain and the Zionists in Palestine, and the other heightened anti-British political agitation and propaganda in Egypt. The latter tended, moreover, to undermine the popularity of the one political party in Egypt, the Wafd, which was willing to collaborate with Britain, and exposed it to attacks led by the monarch and his pro-Axis court politicians.

In the face of the mounting Axis military threat from the Western Desert, Britain had to use force throughout the region to ensure the security of its position. This enabled it eventually, with a combination of victories on the battlefield and the suppression of sedition, to carry out its later successful operations in southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. A lightning campaign to clear the Italians out of Ethiopia was supplemented by an early successful campaign against the Italians in Cyrenaica, and was followed in February 1942 by a controversial use of force by the British Ambassador in Cairo to compel the Egyptian monarch to appoint a government acceptable to Britain.

The previous summer a hastily constructed force was deployed against Iraq to bring down the pro-Axis Geylani government in Baghdad and restore British control in Mesopotamia. This was followed by another lightning campaign to rid Lebanon and Syria (the Levant) of Vichy French control. The collapse of France early in the war (June 1940) opened the way for the Germans to demand and get operational base facilities in Vichy-controlled Syria. Then the consequences of the French collapse in North Africa were handled in equally forceful and summary fashion. What remained was the handling of the difficult leader of the Free French, General de Gaulle, who demanded an equal and prominent role in the disposition of the French-mandated Levant states of Lebanon and Syria.

These difficulties had made more real the threat of an Axis

encirclement via the Western Desert, the Caucusus, the Levant and Mesopotamia, and more urgent the need to protect the Suez Canal and the oil-bearing Persian Gulf region. Happily for the Allies, the Italians got bogged down in Albania, rendering the original threat they constituted for the Middle East less credible and more remote. The German threat remained, however, and too close to the Egyptian delta for comfort, until it was removed by the British victory at El Alamein and the Soviet one at Stalingrad. I remember how in those terrible days of the war the local Greeks went about congratulating themselves for having resisted the Axis onslaught against their country for longer than the mighty French.

Considering the experience of the Great War, the economic problems were dealt with methodically and effectively with two objectives in mind: first, to facilitate supplies of essential food and other commodities, and to utilize the available infrastructure of transport and communications facilities and other services most effectively; and second, to avoid economic hardship for the indigenous population and thus improve security. So although the war was sometimes very near, those of us in the Middle East at the time were spared widespread physical destruction and economic hardship or deprivation. Much of this was achieved by the Middle East Supply Centre, basically a British institution strongly supported by the Americans, which oversaw the distribution of basic commodities such as wheat and other essential food staples, and the allocation of harbour, shipping and transport facilities.

The importance of the Middle East in the war was reflected in the appointment of a cabinet-rank Minister of State in Cairo responsible for much of the above, thus allowing the military to concentrate their efforts on fighting the war. This importance is further underlined by the fact that the Allies were first to challenge the Axis occupation of Europe from the Middle East.

Before November 1942 many of us felt that Rommel's successes in the Western Desert had shown the Middle Easterners the vulnerability of Britain and its allies in the region. That is one reason why El Alamein was more important than a military victory, and why the hastily prepared campaign against the pro-Axis government in Iraq and the one against the Vichy French in Syria and Lebanon were equally important in our view.

More generally, and on the domestic front, we observed that the war had encouraged the development of local industry in the

region, which gave further impetus to the rise of native labour unions and to the development of a local infrastructure of road, rail and other means of communication. But inflation went hand in hand with superficial prosperity, and rationing was a short-lived experience.

The war made Egypt the centre of wartime politics and diplomacy, for in that country there were many governments in exile, along with the reconstituted remnants of their military forces – Greeks, Poles and others. The expanded activities and operations of the SOE in southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean were organized from Egypt – Middle East Command – and this inevitably turned Egypt into the centre for spies. Some of the training facilities for undercover and commando operations were located in Palestine. That was how some of us met members of the Greek Commando Unit, known as the 'Sacred Brigade', which, led by Colonel Tsigantes, fought with the British in North Africa and Italy.

It is not only that the Allies could not depend on the local states and their governments, which were anti-British anyway; also they could not impede, let alone stop, the relentless erosion of British influence in the region. It was not difficult to project the accelerated decolonization process after the war. For the British, whatever they did, the war marked the beginning of the end for them in the region; so when they withdrew from India in 1947, withdrawal from everywhere else in the Middle East was only a matter of time. Britain's major ally in the war, the USA, served as a willing catalyst in this process.

As Britain lost popularity and influence in the region between 1938 and 1948, the Americans' push to displace Britain and France as the dominant power in the Middle East was perhaps imperceptible at first, but it was nonetheless relentless. American influence having begun with its oil concessions in Arabia dating from before the war (prospecting was temporarily halted during the war), the landings in Algeria (Operation Torch) in the summer of 1942 and the establishment of vast air transport and training facilities in Egypt in the same year marked for many of us the entry of the United States into the Middle East as a weighty world power. And very soon the Americans began to have a greater influence on the evolution of the Palestine Question, an influence reflected in the shift of Zionism's attention and propaganda effort to the United States.

Although the British still had the major responsibility in the Middle East, it soon became clear that they would not withstand the giant American steamroller. After a period of steep economic decline and a primary concern with the reordering of affairs in post-war Europe in relation to the new superpower across the Atlantic, Britain was eventually forced to cede its position in the Middle East: a painful process of concessions by a country trying desperately to maintain world power status via an abject dependence on the United States; a process culminating in the Suez episode of 1956.

The Soviet Union stood to gain from the decline of Britain in the Middle East too. Its role as a major ally in the war against fascism and in the liberation of Europe brought the Soviet Union, as an emergent superpower, certain advantages: Middle Easterners actively sought to revive old, small Marxist organizations and political groups dating back to the Great War, and looked to the new superpower in the East for encouragement and support. In Cairo, for example, several Marxist – communist and Trotskyite – groups became active in the immediate post-war period, 1945–7; their particular views and arguments were now heard on the university campus, and their handbills and other publications were seen. More literature and discussion groups were to be found in their newly opened bookshops.

Interestingly, though, the people of this political persuasion whom I came across personally were mainly Jews, Armenians and native Copts; few were Muslim Arabs. The Greeks among them were naturally influenced more by the leftist movement in Greece and its evolution during the occupation, and less by events in the Middle East itself or in Egypt proper. When in uniform, several of these had been involved in the Greek mutiny of 1944.

There were those among us who suspected that the Soviet Union hoped for a foothold in the Middle East via such local political organizations and a Jewish/Israeli connection, particularly since both of these new political constellations were anti-British. Furthermore, the first communist-inspired and led mutiny or uprising in the Allied forces in the Middle East erupted in Egypt, in units of the Greek navy and army in Alexandria and Cairo. But as I have already intimated, the Greek mutiny was no more than an extension of the political conflict on mainland Greece: the EAM/ELAS conflict with the Greek government.

On the ground, in Palestine, however, we witnessed the wider and more lasting impact of the war on the Jewish community and its Zionist leaders. David Ben-Gurion, in particular, displayed his charismatic and architectonic qualities as a political leader when he shifted Zionist efforts to the USA, appreciating quite early the crucial role of a large Jewish community of the Diaspora to be mobilized in support of a Jewish state in Palestine. This signalled the Zionist movement's conclusion that Britain could no longer be the deciding power in the disposition of the political aspirations of at least the Jews in Palestine.

At the same time, Ben-Gurion was keen to lay the foundations of a highly trained military force under the political control of the Jewish Agency, as he became convinced that a Jewish state had to be gained on the ground – and perhaps in the battlefield. The instrument was to be the Haganah, which became the nucleus of Israel's defence forces. The other indispensable instrument for the creation of an independent state was the institutional infrastructure, and Ben-Gurion presided over the development of the economic, educational, fiscal, social and military infrastructure of the Jewish state, which was already in place by the end of the war.

While this kind of original – perhaps profound – political thinking and clear vision characterized Zionist leaders like Ben-Gurion, we did not see its counterpart among Arab leaders in Palestine or elsewhere. Most of us wondered what Britain would do after the war. Legal and illegal Jewish immigrants kept pouring into Palestine in defiance of the British ban, especially from displaced person camps in Europe, where Jewish Agency agents were able to recruit and transport them under Haganah protection.

In view of all these consequences of the Second World War, there were many of us who by 1945 realized that the world we knew in the Middle East was soon coming to an end. For the Greeks, it meant that between two and four generations in Egypt and Palestine would have to relocate themselves elsewhere. But whereas my grandfather could venture from the island of Ydra to Genoa, Corsica and Marseilles before stopping in Acre, his descendants had fewer options: a return to their country of origin or immigration to the Americas; a move from a relatively open, cosmopolitan environment, which was now becoming more nationalistic, particularistic and closed, to a powerfully dominant and digestive or assimilating one in the industrial Anglo-Saxon

world, demanding cultural, social and political integration of all immigrants.

A minor detail: I am certain that, had this move not occurred, my own children would not now carry a Greek name and sound very British in language and culture. Instead they would sound very Greek and be at home in at least two or three other languages. They would not have had to travel to Ydra to visit the small local museum and archive in order to learn something of their ancestry and origins.

The war meant that we got a 4–5 year respite from the unpleasantness of the Arab–Jewish conflict in Palestine. In fact, the Greeks now had similar interests to the British and the Jews, albeit at some distance away, since their country suffered Axis occupation. More Jews were being exterminated in Europe, and thus more of them who could escape flocked into Palestine. None of these three parties – British, Jews and Greeks – were at that moment particularly concerned with the Palestinians. The latter, in turn, were quite unsympathetic to the plight of the British in trying to stop the Nazi onslaught from the Western Desert nearby or in Europe. 'Forward Rommel' they screamed (in Egypt, at least), as they taunted Europeans in the streets. They were satisfied with the calamity that had befallen their arch-enemy, the Jews, at the hands of the Nazi Germans, now the common enemy of the British, the Jews and the Greeks. Openly proclaiming their support of the Axis powers in the war, the Palestinians had hoped that they would vanquish their enemies, the British and the Jews. The Greeks, who were never (especially in Greece) particularly friendly towards Jews, were at that time nevertheless proud of the fact that on the orders of the Athens Police Commissioner, himself a descendant of a Bavarian family, Greek families hid members of the relatively small Athenian Jewish community and thus saved them from the terrible fate that surely awaited them at the hands of the Gestapo and the SS.

While the Palestinians were cheered up by the prospect of assistance to their cause from the Axis, many young Jews volunteered to fight alongside the British in the Western Desert, and in the Levant and Mesopotamia lightning campaigns against Vichy forces and the Geylani regime respectively; later they also took part in the Italy campaign. It was from among these volunteers that the first élite units and command of the Haganah

and later the IDF emerged (Moshe Dayan, Yigal Alon and others) to give creditable accounts of themselves in the 1948–9 Palestine war (the war of independence for Israel) and subsequent wars with the Arabs.

Ever attracted by the semblance if not the substance of fair play, the British seemed deliberate in their utilization of detachments of the Arab Legion (their own creation in the first place) for security service in Palestine. These detachments undertook the guarding of military installations: camps, ammunition dumps and other depots.

The Greeks were preoccupied with their own wartime tribulations: refugees fleeing the famine (particularly during the terrible winter of 1941–2) and other hardships of the Axis occupation of Greece, a querulous and unstable government in exile in Egypt and the remnants of an army and navy in Egypt and Palestine. We raised money and organized patriotic functions and venues for the liberation of Greece. Early on the Arabs thought we were ridiculous: how could we withstand the great Axis steamroller?

The Roman Catholics, among the Christian Arabs, supported Mussolini's Italy. The majority of Muslims, taking their cue from their leader, the Mufti, were generally pro-Nazi or pro-German. This reminds me of an Arab Roman Catholic family in a small close off Jaffa Road by Ein Dor, neighbouring on the Greek Consulate. Throughout 1935 and 1936 they kept playing Italian songs made popular during the Abyssinian campaign loudly from their veranda. Another Roman Catholic Arab, a colleague of my father's, would recite daily in the office the progress and exploits of the Italian General De Bono in Ethiopia. In the winter and early spring of 1941, when it became clear that the Wehrmacht would invade Greece, another Arab colleague of my father's asked how the Greeks would cope against the German juggernaut; My father retorted, 'We will mobilize our women to resist the Italians and our men to fight against the Germans.'

One lovely June morning our immunity to the unpleasantness of war was ended by a sharp daylight Italian air raid that destroyed much of the Iraq Petroleum Company oil terminal tank farm in Haifa bay. This was quickly followed within a few days by a second daylight raid, which produced several casualties; the atmosphere became tense. During this latter air raid we were caught swimming outside the Government Hospital – on a small beach run by an

extraordinary character, Abu Nassur, who could be seen of an evening walking down Jaffa Road with his huge Alsatian dog, Rex. On the days when he took his walk without Rex, he explained that Rex was at work: Abu Nassur supplemented his income by renting Rex out as a guard dog. During another daylight raid, around noon on a Friday, many of the Arab faithful were attending prayers in one of the larger mosques in East Haifa. They came out to applaud the German air raiders and were unfortunately strafed by one of the attacking aircraft. There were several casualties.

Anti-aircraft defences were, at this stage, non-existent. They were not finally organized and in place until the more concentrated air blitz mounted by the *Luftwaffe* from Syria in the following year (1941). However, there were sirens in place to sound the alarm, usually almost simultaneous with the sound of exploding bombs – not the best early warning system, I dare say. For us the sound of the alarm was the real nuisance as the siren was located on the roof of the IPC Administration Headquarters building on Vine Street directly opposite our home.

An immediate effect of the first Italian air raids was that the Arab inhabitants became subdued: no more strutting about proclaiming how the Axis would fix us all – Greeks, Jew and British. Soon they seriously considered their own physical safety and began to move out of the city, taking up temporary residence in neighbouring villages and provincial towns of the Galilee, especially Nazareth, Tiberias and the villages surrounding Acre. Some of the property vacated by the departing Arab middle class was very upmarket and in desirable locations: it could now be leased at drastically reduced, even peppercorn, rents. Yet the original demarcation line between Arab and Jewish quarters in the city remained and survived the temporary exodus of the Arabs.

The new experience in 1941 of Stukas and Messerschmitts, which kept us awake and in shelters during most moonlit nights, reached the Arab inhabitants too. They could see, for the first time, that war was a terrible state, not a contest of words and speeches. However, when during one of these air raids some government department offices and installations were hit, causing casualties, on the morrow many of the Arab civil servants simply did not report to work. It was not their war, after all, and there was no patriotic compunction to keep up their end in the war effort: to

keep the roads open or the trains rolling. And they still hoped for the victory of the Axis over their British enemy.

It was during this period, 1941–4, that for once Greeks and some Jews in town felt a certain affinity in travail. Just before the war and in 1940–1 a number of Jews from Greece (mainly Salonica) – the very fortunate ones who escaped being transported to the concentration and extermination camps in Europe – arrived in Palestine. The Salonica Jews, who belonged to the 65,000-strong prosperous community in Thessaloniki, were Greek in all respects. They joined our local Greek clubs and societies; they socialized with Greek families; and they were welcomed into the community and its social activities. Many of them joined the annual 'panegyri' (festival) of the Greek community at the copse of St Elijah's Russian Church in central Carmel. But these Salonica Jews also became the vanguard of the expanded labour force in the docks, needed by a busier wartime harbour. The more enterprising among them responded to the Greek – and Jewish – community's need for Greek culinary delicacies by cornering that trade. Jewish or not, they were, like most provincial Greeks, distinguished by mouths full of gold teeth.

It was also a time when Greeks, young and old alike, became acutely aware of how alien they were in that passionately contested Holy Land; they were now, more than ever before, patriotic Greeks fully engaged in the wider world struggle against the Axis, the fascists. I recall, for instance, how they travelled in coaches on uncomfortable roads to military camps in order to catch a glimpse of their not-so-popular monarch, King George II of the Hellenes, formally handing the colours to the newly formed Greek Brigade that was to be incorporated into the Allied Command structure in the Middle East.

Several fresh recruits to the Brigade came from the small community in Palestine. Their induction marked a landmark for the whole community. Nothing else mattered; on these occasions Jews and Arabs did not exist. They sang the anti-Italian, anti-fascist songs of the Albanian campaign – a triumph of Greek arms against overwhelming military and natural odds, 1940–1 – made famous by the Greek diseuse, Sophia Vembo. They put on amateur musical productions written by a contemporary popular composer and lyricist, Mimis Traiforos, who wrote many of Vembo's songs. They named their pet dogs 'Musso', short for Mussolini, and

satirized the latter-day Roman 'hero' with the famous ditty, 'Duce, Duce'. They circulated humourously obscene postcards, further belittling the Italian Napoleon. The same Greeks, in the meantime, frequented Jewish-owned and run places of entertainment, attending concerts by new orchestras in Jewish concert halls.

The economic boom (superficial and temporary as it may have been) which came with war seemed to benefit many of the Arabs too: contractors, merchants and middlemen. Many of them became rich, transferring their newly acquired wealth to neighbouring Lebanon and other safer havens farther away in Europe. There was also an influx of Arabs from neighbouring Lebanon and Syria as unskilled and semi-skilled workers in a vastly expanded Palestine labour market. Several of the females among these new migrants worked as domestics in the more affluent homes.

Secondary school was an interesting, if at times bizarre, experience, especially for those of us who had moved to it from the Greek Community School or other private schools. Run along English public school lines by successors to the Scottish Presbyterian mission in northern Palestine, the school's governing body was presided over by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem. In addition to the complement of English masters, many of them recently down from university and clearly more interested in their Christian mission among 'lesser peoples' than in high wages, there were a few Arab and Jewish masters. These taught either Arabic or Hebrew language, although some of the Jews taught sciences too.

There were, however, very few Jewish pupils in this school, for the Jewish community ran its own school system, leading to its own institutions of higher learning, the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Polytechnic (Technion) in Haifa, and the Kadourie and Shemen Agricultural Colleges. The few Jewish pupils at this school were children of the very few senior Jewish civil servants in the Mandate administration, and of recent refugees from Europe not yet properly assimilated in the Palestine Jewish (sabra) 'culture', especially its Zionist/national home dimension, and who hoped their children would proceed to further or higher education in Britain or America. But there was also the inhibiting policy of this kind of school: it allowed no more than one-third non-Christian pupils.

There were Church of Scotland schools (schools of the Scottish mission, that is) in Tiberias and Safad such as the Scotch College

which, after 1936, became St Luke's School for Boys in Haifa. St George's School in Jerusalem dated back to 1914, and was located next to St George's Anglican Cathedral. Even older were Bishop Gobat's School – popularly known among the local Arabs as the Mutran (i.e. the Bishop's) School, which to this day has its 'spiritual' descendant in Jordan – situated on a hill outside the south-eastern corner of the city wall, reopened after the Great War, and the English High School for Girls. All these schools were overseen by a governing body chaired by the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem. In Jaffa too there was a Scots Ladies Girls School that was originally an orphanage.

Under the rule of Muhammad Ali Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt, in Syria (1883–40) Protestants were represented in Jerusalem by American Presbyterian missionaries and the English Episcopal mission to the Jews. With the help of Lord Palmerston, and that of the British Consul-General in Egypt, and the arrival of the British Consul in Jerusalem, an Episcopal (Anglican) Church was set up. Muhammad Ali was well disposed towards the project, and the British Ambassador in Istanbul, Lord Ponsonby, pressed the Porte to approve. A firman for the Church was issued in 1841 and was consecrated in 1849, and a firman of Toleration of Protestants was issued in 1850. One of the obstacles to be surpassed was Ottoman Sharia law. When Caliph Omar conquered Jerusalem in 638, he recognized the existing churches in the city on condition that no new ones be erected. With a bit of legal casuistry it was argued that neither England nor the Ottoman Sultan were party to this agreement, and therefore it did not apply to any new arrangements between them. Anyway, an English bishopric was established in Jerusalem in 1849, supported by the King of Prussia, and the American missionaries withdrew to Lebanon where they were already active in large numbers.*

More interesting were the Arab pupils. Most of them were the children of *Protestant* Arab families. The inroads of British and American overseas evangelical and other Protestant missions since the mid-nineteenth century into the Arab population and community were quite deep. The Protestant missions became more effective after the Great War when the Greek Patriarchate in

* On the Protestant mission and schools, see James Finn, *Stirring Times, or Records from Jerusalem Consular Chronicles of 1853 to 1856* (London, 1878), vol. 1, pp. 101–11 and 133–41.

Jerusalem faced serious economic difficulties and consequently a steep decline of its influence: it could no longer provide the old facilities for the education, health and social welfare of its Arabic-speaking communicants.

The more aspiring among the Arabs sought and found upward economic and social mobility in their conversion to the Western Protestant churches or denominations, where money and power lay. It was the prospect of pecuniary benefit and a better future which earned these converts the sobriquet '*taifat al-shilen*', i.e. the sect or community of the shilling! Legends came down about conversions to Protestantism for the amusement of others in the sectarian rivalry so common in the Levant. There was one about a 'khouri shalah' (literally, the priest – presumably Greek Orthodox. – who disrobed, took off his clerical habit). He hailed from Kafr Yasif, a traditionally solid Greek Orthodox village. One of his descendants, I was told, was my mother's dentist in the thirties.

Until 1918 the local Arab community received considerable benefits from the Patriarchate: housing, food, clothing allowances, some of it thanks to the generous contributions of members of the Russian Imperial family. But this did not prevent the Arabs from seeking to wrest control of the Patriarchate from the Greeks. The Greeks for their part, based their rights on historical and practical grounds. The Arabs, according to the Patriarchate, had contributed nothing materially to the reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre and Resurrection Church in 1819 after it had been destroyed by fire. Its reconstruction was paid for mainly by Greek *rayas* (i.e. Greek subjects of the Ottoman Sultan). There was thus recurrent conflict since the 1870s between the local (Arab) Orthodox community and the Greek Order of the Holy Sepulchre over the administration of the Patriarchate's properties and revenues. The Arabs claimed that until AD 534 the Patriarchs of Jerusalem were Arabs, and that for two centuries after 1350 Arabs wielded considerable power in the Holy Sepulchre Church, Gethsemane, Bethlehem and Nazareth. But the Patriarchate held that the Holy Sepulchre Order (Brotherhood) had always been an exclusively Greek institution since its founding in the fourth to fifth centuries AD. However, since the middle of the nineteenth century Russian interests tried, via the Russian Consulate and Russian mission schools, to influence these disputes by supporting the claims of the Arab community against the Greek Patriarchate and

Order, even encouraging them to secede from the Jerusalem See. The British, on the other hand, tried to normalize the situation by negotiating a new ordnance for the Holy Places which became law in 1941.*

Whatever the motives, it was clear to us that the most educated, politically aware, socially sophisticated and upwardly mobile Arabs were the Protestants. Hence, their children were sent to private English schools. They were on the whole more secular and, on the surface at least, more attuned to the values and perceptions of Protestant Anglo-Saxon education. They tended to favour English as their second language rather than the French learned by those Arabs who had come under the earlier influence of Roman Catholic missions: for example, the Society of Jesus, Christian Brothers (Frères) with their French-language *lycées*, or the several orders of nuns with their schools for Arab girls – Dames de Nazareth, Sacré Coeur. Mère de Dieu and others.

It was the Arabs, more than the Jews, who were vulnerable to the predatory educational and other proselytizing activities of foreign 'saviours'. As a community, the Arabs became highly fragmented depending on whether they were schooled by the French (Frères, Lycée), Germans (Schneller), Russians (Maskobiyye), Italians (Salesian, Carmelite, Terra Sancta), British (St George's, Bishop Gobat's, St Luke's) or Americans (Quakers Friends). This sectarian formal education resulted in pro-French, pro-Italian, pro-German, pro-Russian, or pro-Anglo-Saxon political preferences.

This was for the better-off among the Arabs. The poor had to attend the school system provided by the Mandate government, and this was both limited and crowded. The Muslim élite, especially of older Jerusalem and Acriote families (the notables and effendis), sent their children to private Arab schools, such as al-Nahda in Jerusalem, the Najah and Salahiyya† schools in Nablus, and to the Mandate-supported Arab College, which was an

* See A. H. Pollock, Jerusalem District Commissioner, Confidential Memo, 'The Status Quo in the Holy Places in Palestine', FO, August 1950, E 9403/1785/31/1949. One of the earliest and most thorough treatments of these matters, including the clash of European Power interests in the Holy Land as of the mid-nineteenth century, is James Finn, *Stirring Times, op. cit.*

† I am not certain if this school was a more modern 'reincarnation' of the old Islamic *Salahiya*, founded by Saladin (d. 1193) Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi; hence the name Salahiyya.

institution for the brightest and best on their way to university, especially Oxbridge. The Christians sent theirs to the National Orthodox schools in Jaffa and Haifa.

Like an earlier generation of Protestant Arabs who were prominent in the secular Arab nationalist or renaissance movement at the turn of the century, this generation played an active role in the equally secular communist movement, with its dimensions of trade unionism and internationalism, during and after the war. What is interesting is the fact that many of them were originally Greek Orthodox. Then, when the impoverished Greek Orthodox Church could no longer retain their loyalty, they drifted either to the Russian Church or to one or another of the Protestant missions, and both institutions were far richer than the Greek Patriarchate in Jerusalem. Thus many of the provincial families transferred their loyalties to the Tsar and Tsarina, their new benefactors. The children of many of these families surfaced as prominent members of communist parties in the 1940s: the Issas, Ghouris, Kousas, Habibis, Naqqaras and others in Palestine; the Mdanats in Trans-Jordan; the Helous and Hawwas in Lebanon. It was all Russian, after all. Lenin was successor to the Tsar.

Yet there were a very few, like the Khouris and the Boutagis, also converts to Protestantism, who remained loyal to the Western camp. Girgis (read George), the head of the Khouri family, was a successful and popular town clerk and chief executive of the Haifa municipality under an equally popular Jewish mayor, Shabtai Levi. Boutagy was a successful businessman, hotelier and restaurateur. Similarly inclined, if not closely associated with these, were the Greek Catholic Saads from the Galilee, but originally from Sidon in Lebanon, suave, musical and sporting a thicker European cultural veneer. They presided over one of the few interesting westernized salons in their mansion-style house in the German colony, on a street, bordering the main road to Haifa West. Others were the Sayeghs, a talented Anglo-American-educated family, active in the Arab nationalist movement then and later, headed by a father who was a Protestant minister in Tiberias, the Revd Abdullah Sayegh. His counterpart, so to speak, in Jerusalem was the Revd Saleh Saba, whose son, Fuad, the very first Anglo-American-educated chartered accountant and public auditor, was also prominent in the Arab nationalist movement.

There were lesser merchants and tradesmen in this Protestant

Arab constellation, many of them of Lebanese origin, mainly in the rag trade. The Abu Fadel brothers' shop in the Khayyat Parade on Jaffa Road by the central post office was known to everyone for its sportswear and sporting goods; so were the Musallam and Adas clothing shops. Further up the road in the centre of the old Merkez was Matalon's, a haberdashery. Matalon was a Greek Jew and all Greek housewives were his regular customers for years.

If the educated Protestant élite of the Arabs were closely identified with Anglo-Saxon education and soon associated with the new communist wave, the Greek Orthodox Arabs were even more deeply involved in the Arab nationalist and later the Arab communist movements. Their involvement in these movements had more interesting – in parts even bizarre – roots and antecedents. As we have seen, Tsarist Russia sought, as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, to establish its influence over both the Holy Sepulchre and the Arab community. In addition to keeping up the Shrines, Moscow responded to the needs of the Greek Orthodox Arabs by opening free schools for them, and part of a whole generation received their formative education in these schools: *awlad el-maskobiyye*, as they came to be known. Up on the wall of their humble homes went the portrait of the tsar and the tsarina; their children were weaned on the greatness of the Russian 'Qaysar'; fairy tales of Russian gold roubles were spread far and wide. Some of these children constituted thirty years later the nucleus of the new Arab communist parties: the Ghouris, Eissas, Kusas, Hababis and Naqqaras in Galilee, the Mdanats in Jordan.

Before the Great War and during the inter-war period, Palestine was not simply the arena of an Arab–Jewish contest over its possession, but also the hunting ground of foreign power interests. The target of the latter were the Christian Arabs. No foreign Christian missionary operation succeeded among the Muslim Arabs or the Jews. Their major success in conversion occurred among the poorer Eastern Christian sects, mainly from the Greek Orthodox Church to Protestantism, or earlier in the nineteenth century from Orthodoxy to Roman Catholicism. As a result, the Arabs in Palestine embarked upon their contest with the Jews as a highly fragmented community – as the carriers of competing foreign culture veneers – which eroded their indigenous identity and undermined any sense of affinity or solidarity with the Muslim majority of their fellow Palestinians. In

short, they lacked the sense of a 'national' community. The few Greeks in Palestine, incidentally, were paranoid in their mistrust of these foreign religious missions or influences, especially since Greek national identity was so closely linked to the Greek Church.

I remember being rather shocked on the occasions when I visited any of my Arab school friends to hear them speak English or French at home. In my home speaking a language other than Greek, when we were children, was strictly forbidden. And yet, my older brother and sister embarked on their serious musical training with Jewish teachers and in a wholly Jewish musical environment. I myself was taught the cello by a Viennese Jew; I went to his home in Hadar HaCarmel for my lessons. We also frequented Jewish concert halls (Pevsner Hall in Hadar HaCarmel sticks in my memory), art exhibitions and Jewish-owned cinemas. Consumers of cultural activities had nowhere else to go. We travelled on Jewish-owned and run buses, especially Bus No. 4 route from downtown to the Carmel via Mountain Road, and alternatively the Germany colony.

It was at one of these buses in 1938 or 1939 that a small Arab boy emerging from one of the alleys in the Wadi Nisnas Arab quarter hurled a home-made explosive device (probably a Molotov cocktail) before scurrying back into the maze of alleys. The bus had slowed down on approaching a stop. Only a few days before, a very nasty bombing (by the Irgun) of the Central Arab Fruit and Vegetable Market had claimed many lives. I thought the bus episode a rather weak, inadequate retaliation, even though I was on that bus and quite shaken by the explosion. But it highlighted the difference in the effectiveness of the two sides – the Jewish and the Arab – in the contest.

The pudgy, smiling chief accountant of the Palestine Railways –a Scotsman, I think – ran his own evangelical sect. It met, or rather held prayer meetings, on Sundays in a barracks-type hall on the corner of Allenby Road and Carmel Avenue on the edge of the German colony. The jubilant voices of recent Arab converts and potential recruits could be heard some distance around, praising the Lord in good puritanical hallelujahs. The faithful, especially the females, all looked dour and pious, in plain attire and without make-up. It saddened me to see so many otherwise cheerful Mediterraneans transformed into sombre, solemn puritans. One in particular, a pupil in our school, whom I shall call William, was

terribly fat and jolly. But one day he proclaimed to us he was six months old: a born-again Christian. He rarely smiled after that.

The main Arab Protestant community, however, had a new large church in a rather posh part of town, bordering on the Jewish Hadar quarter, just below the Armon cinema. Many of the faithful lived nearby in that particularly upmarket area: chemists, lawyers, dentists, doctors, teachers and a few senior civil servants. But this was separate and distinct from the smaller English community's church, St Luke's, between Mountain Road, Allenby Road and Vine Street. The poorer Eastern denominations, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Armenian, even the Maronite, were huddled in their older churches in the old Ottoman market part of the city. And all were dominated or overlooked by the masive central mosque with its minaret, in the Jrayni, in the middle of the old city.

When we lived on Jaffa Road briefly in the mid-1930s, we witnessed the Jews going to prayers in their neighbourhood synagogues, their observance of Shuvot, Purim, Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashana and Hanuka festivals. The babel of unharmonious individually chanted prayers sounded to us like one big cacophony. We learned about their kosher dietary rites by watching the *shohet* kill poultry for several housewives in the open inner courtyards of typical Middle Eastern houses. We learned about their funeral rituals simply by following the tail end of a Jewish funeral procession all the way to the old cemetery towards Haifa West. We bought their *mazza*, unleavened bread, because we liked it as crackers. We were introduced to their wurst and other sausages, which were available in shops run by refugees from Europe. But we also enjoyed the *falafil* and *ful* sandwiches of itinerant Arab vendors, as well as *sahlab* and other hot, creamy drinks and sweets in the winter. Fresh pasteurized milk was introduced by the new Jewish Co-operative Dairy. So were properly packed fresh fruit and vegetables. In this connection *Tnuva* became synonymous with grapes and bananas as we were growing up. But we shopped in both Arab- and Jewish-owned stores and grocers. We sipped tea with lemon and drank Eagle Star beer at mainly Jewish-owned bistros from Mount Carmel to Bat Galim – fun city on the beach, where we also swam in an Olympic-size open-air swimming pool. All of this was to change suddenly and drastically in 1947 as we shall see later.

An occasion which left a lasting impression on me and

highlighted the close link between religion, ethnicity and politics was the funeral of the Greek Catholic Bishop Hajjar in Haifa; I believe it was soon after the outbreak of the Second World War. Clearly involved in the Palestinian nationalist cause and perceived by his flock of Greek Catholic Arabs not simply as their religious or sectarian leader but more significantly as a leader of the Arab (beyond the Palestinian) nationalist movement, Bishop Hajjar had been the victim of a motor accident on the coastal Haifa to Tel Aviv highway. The mourning was massive, and his funeral an occasion for an Arab popular protest against the British Mandate, Jewish immigration and the Jewish national home. The funeral procession was more like a mass political rally with speeches and slogan chanting, in which took part not only Greek Catholic Arabs but also Arabs from other Christian denominations as well as Muslims. I confess that, for a funeral procession, the sea of humanity marching in it – a potential mob – was quite frightening.

An equally frightening experience was being caught swimming in the sea when Italian attacking aircraft rained down incendiary bombs during one of their daylight air raids in the summer of 1940, referred to earlier. This time, though, there were no Arabs or Jews around. Six of us – all Greeks – had gone for a swim at the relatively private beach by the new Government Hospital in the western end of town. We had just entered the water and managed to swim out to the float where we intended to rest and sunbathe. But we had not reckoned with the war in the Mediterranean. It was just before noon when all hell broke loose: Italian aircraft dropping their loads and British anti-aircraft guns going at them full blast. We all smartly took cover under the float as the bombs from the air sent up spouts of foaming sea water nearby and shrapnel flew about us. When it was all over and we came out on the beach the notorious Abu Nassur (with his dog Rex) was waiting for us. Looking after this bit of bathing beach was one of his many jobs around town. The air raid had concentrated its attack on the Government Power and Railway workshop installations in the eastern end of town. As we walked towards the main road to take the bus home, we were confronted by a fast traffic of cars, vans and ambulances bringing in casualties. The war was the reality of that moment and day, not the quarrel between the Arabs and the Jews.

More traumatic was the experience of witnessing the immediate aftermath of an assassination, or being caught in a bombing. The

latter could occur in any crowded public place, such as a market or a cinema. But it could also occur on public transport conveyances –buses and trains. The Arab rebels in the 1936–9 rebellion bombed buses and derailed trains. So did the Jewish terrorists against the Mandate authorities in the 1940s.

The more serious trouble, being dangerously caught between Arabs and Jews, came in the period 1945–8, when extremist groups in the Jewish community – Irgun, Lehi and the Stern Gang – took up arms against the Mandate authorities, and its British military and civilian personnel. There was also the occasional sniping with the Arabs in the early stages of the armed conflict for the control of Palestine. Zero hour for the start of the more serious skirmishes between the Arabs and the Jews was the vote on the UN Partition Resolution of 29 November 1947. It was as if, on a signal, Arabs and Jews squeezed the trigger and exchanged fire. I have already noted the two members of our small Greek community who were accidental victims of Arab–Jewish sniping in the city. Since most people had to get to their places of work and generally carry on with the daily routine of their lives, it was not always easy to keep out of the way of the crossfire. Mandate government installations and British personnel were, of course, prime targets, especially of Jewish terrorist groups.

The British kept protesting to one and all that they had tried their best to resolve the Arab–Jewish conflict in Palestine: thus the 1936 Peel Commission with its recommendation of a partition plan (i.e. to partition the country between the two communities); the Anglo-American Palestine Commission ten years later, in 1946, which concluded that the conflict could not be resolved because the differences between the Arabs and the Jews were irreconcilable; not to mention all the other gestures, such as the 1939 White Paper restricting Jewish immigration to Palestine and the earlier unsuccessful attempts to promote local autonomy as a step towards self-rule for both the Arab and Jewish communities. The original British sin, however, was cardinal: Britain made contradictory promises to the two irreconcilable rival claimants to Palestine. Inevitably, the conflict became intractable; the parties to the dispute – the two main antagonists in particular – intransigent and beyond compromise, let alone accommodation or agreement. In desperation the British gave up and passed the problem on to the high-minded but otherwise ineffectual United Nations organization in New York.

What they really did in practical terms was to abandon the bone that was Palestine for their 'wards', the Arabs and the Jews, to fight over. While the British themselves were loath to use force, even when at one time they had some 100,000 troops in Palestine, they invited their competing wards, or clients if you wish, to do exactly that. Those of us who belonged to neither community were still caught in the middle of that evolving conflict and exposed to the certain dangers of armed violence around us. However, once the Mandate holders – the bosses, or *t'afendika* as the Greeks would put it – decided to quit, it was a clear signal for us to get the hell out of the way. And we dispersed; not in the same manner (the fear and panic) as the Palestinian Arabs, but in the sense of going back to where our ancestors came from. For most of us this meant Greece, but for the more ambitious younger generation it meant emigration to North America (the USA and Canada), Australia and South Africa. The exodus was almost total, so that on one of my recent visits to Israel in 1981 I managed to visit nearly a hundred per cent of what was left of the Greek community in Haifa in one afternoon in the home of an old friend. Having rung the bell of the house, a very attractive young lady of about 21 answered the door; when I asked for her mother (a contemporary of mine) by name in Greek, she turned around and called out in Hebrew, 'ima' (mummy). The young lady had just been discharged from the IDF, having completed her compulsory national service. Born and raised in Israel, this young lady was an assimilated non-Jewish or Christian Greek Israeli, a rather novel permutation in the mosaic of nationalities in the Middle East. And where did that admittedly rare instance leave the proposition that Israel is or should be an exclusively Jewish state? The young lady's parents, by the way, kept a thoroughly traditional Greek home.

What was memorable about the outbreak of hostilities between the Arabs and the Jews, and the escalation of that violence the more the British distanced themselves from the conflict and prepared to depart from the scene, was the vociferous bravado of our Arab acquaintances, the talk of neighbours and the general assumption that the Jews did not stand a prayer against the more numerous Arabs, supported as they were by their fellow Arab neighbours. But one could not help noticing that it was mainly Arabs who were leaving Palestine; Jews, on the contrary, were coming in by every possible route and conveyance, and mainly illegally.

We knew of the illegal Jewish refugees whom the Haganah underground ferried from Europe to the shores of Palestine, and read about the Royal Navy's and security forces' efforts to stem the flow. Captured illegal immigrants were interned in camps at Athlit, a few miles south-west of Haifa on the coast. The war became uglier when the Irgun, and its splinter Stern and Lehi groups, became involved. A Christian Arab public health officer regaled us with examples of Jewish determination, and especially the instance when the *SS Patria*, loaded with illegal refugee immigrants, was blown up in Haifa harbour one day with great loss of life.

As the Jewish Agency and other organizations of the Yishuv determined to bring more Jews into Palestine in anticipation of the new state of Israel, the British tightened up their security measures, and the British armed forces found themselves at war with the Jews in Palestine. The Arabs did not become involved until it became clear that the United Nations would consider the partition of Palestine (November 1947). By that time Britain had virtually removed itself from the contest on the ground in Palestine, and the two communities, Arab and Jewish, confronted each other directly. It was, of course, very tempting for the average Arab townsman with a bit of cash to choose the easy way out by moving to one of the culturally familiar Arab countries nearby, and thus out of the reach of the conflict.

6

University in Egypt and the Proclamation of the State of Israel

In September 1944 the war was again remote from us in Western Europe and Italy. The Axis threat to the Middle East was effectively removed in the sands of the Western Desert and the beaches of North Africa, as well as the river valley of Mesopotamia and the coastal plain of the Levant. I boarded the train from Haifa to Cairo via Rafa, Kantara East on the Suez Canal, Ismailiya and Zagazig in the Delta, on my way to university. I had a (complimentary) first-class ticket and felt in safe hands with a Greek engine driver (engineer), Michalis Rossidis, whose daughter, Eftychia, was my sole classmate in the first three years of Greek primary school.

In Kantara East, as we waited to cross the Suez Canal by ferry in order to board the train bound for Cairo (this was before the Firdan bridge crossing), I chatted with our old family doctor, Mbadda Burdkocz. Mbadda was, in my limited experience of those days, a rarity: an Arab of Polish origin (in fact, an arabized Pole), he had qualified at the AUB Medical School and first practised in Jaffa where he had met and married a Greek lady, Efthymia or 'Mimia' Gaitanopoulou, my mother's school friend from Jerusalem. Mbadda, it seems, joined the service of the Mandate government at about the same time that my father did, in 1919, 1920 or soon thereafter, as a government medical officer in Kantara East. His son and daughter were, for all practical purposes, members of our small Greek community there. Mbadda would meet me at Kantara East every time I travelled to or from Cairo over the next three years.

With me on that first journey was one of the Tamimi boys, whom

I remembered from school, on his way to study medicine at the medical school of the relatively new (1941) University of Alexandria. Belonging to one of the few Shiite families I came across in Palestine (the other was Beydoun), Tamimi's father, Zaki, was a magistrate in the Mandate judiciary.

College in Cairo was a confusing mixed environment: a babel of nationalities – Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Italians – and most of them chattering away in French. Cairo was still one huge allied military camp and recreation area. The foreign communities were weighty in numbers, economic power and influence, thanks to the lingering benefits of their earlier extra-territorial privileges under the Capitulations (abolished officially by the Montreux Convention of 1937).

The first Palestinian I came across at the university a few days before term began was the son of a leading Muslim divine in Jerusalem. He was rather large and ponderous, but a very decent chap. It struck me that he was apolitical, neat and well dressed; I went about those days in khaki shorts.

The second person I met in college, who became and remains to this day my closest friend, was a Cairo Sephardi Jew, who spoke French. In his home, very near the college, he spoke Ladino (new to me then as languages go), a corrupt form of Spanish, whereas in private conversation his parents also spoke Turkish. His parents both hailed from Turkey of families that had fled the Spanish Inquisition. Typically, his father was in the rag trade working for one of the oldest and largest department stores, Cicurel, burned down in the January 1952 Cairo riots.

Among the entering freshmen there were a dozen Greeks from Egypt, who could not believe I was Greek, coming as I did from Palestine: in their insular ignorance, they assumed Palestine was populated exclusively by Arabs and Jews. It was when I settled into my room on campus, however, that I discovered a large number of Palestinian and Jordanian Arabs, but hardly any Jews; most of the Palestinians were Christians. One memorable Muslim was a member of the Huseini family in Jerusalem. There were also plutocrats like the Shawwas, Tawils and Alamis from Gaza, the Abu Khadras and Ghuseins from Jerusalem, Jaffa and Lydda, and the Hariris, Shiblaqs, Shibls and Kanafanis from Haifa and Acre in northern Palestine. I remember visiting Kanafani's grandfather in a vast Ottoman-style home in Haifa and kissing his hand.

The following describes the atmosphere of the American University in Cairo as I recalled it in a personal memoir thirty years later (published in 1976), written at the request of Dr Cecil Byrd, the president of the university:

> I went to the American University in Cairo [AUC] in the autumn of 1944. The university was about 25 years old, the war had receded from the Middle East and North Africa to Italy and France in Europe. Although there was a noticeable decrease in the numbers of allied forces in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East, Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said and the Canal Zone were still bustling with military establishments, governments and heads of states in exile. The main cities were a veritable hotchpotch of Egyptians and Europeans. Although the allied operation 'Manna' for the liberation of Greece had been mounted from Italy that October, Egypt nonetheless remained the centre of intelligence operations, administrative and logistical support for that campaign. To this extent, it was a most fascinating time to be in Cairo. The atmosphere itself did affect AUCians; it brought American and British troop entertainment and performers to Ewart Memorial Hall (EMH), the odd 'teaching major', the occasional soldier-student. In general too the five or six years after the war could be considered as marking the 'last fling' of the foreign communities long resident in Eygpt, and the beginnings of the renewed Egyptian nationalist campaign against Britain, a campaign dominated by radicals of the Right, especially the Muslim Brethren, Young Egypt (by that time superficially transformed into the Socialist Party of Egypt) and a revived and reconstituted National Party. Political assassination and bombing campaigns by these groups were accompanied by the stirrings of more native groups on the Left. And soon the Palestine Question broke upon the whole region.
>
> By today's standards, the entering class in 1944 was a small one, consisting of 30 to 35 students, a dozen of whom were Greeks, two or three Italians, a few local Jews, some Palestinian Arabs and a sprinkling of Egyptians. Students came mainly from six kinds of school background. The Greeks from their community *gymnasia*, the local Jews from the *lycée*

français system, the Italians from one of their own Salesian schools in the country, myself, for instance, and most of the Palestinian Arabs from the private schools in Palestine, and the odd few from AUC's own Lincoln School. Some of the local females came from the English School, Heliopolis, or the English Mission College, Abbassia. Each year, there was an influx of girl undergraduates into the third year from the American Girls College, Sakakini, Cairo. The AUC undergraduate student body was a small (maximum 100–150 students), but polyglot and colourful community. One heard Greek, Italian and Armenian spoken on the very small campus. The most common language spoken on campus outside the classroom was French. Non-Arabic-speaking students were provided with special elementary classes in Arabic, largely taught in those days by a charming and professionally most competent, though ineffectual, Sheikh. Alas, most of these foreign students, either out of arrogance or plain lack of interest, never appreciated the opportunity offered to them. Instead, they treated these Arabic classes with disdain, considered them a chore and spent their time 'crucifying' the gentle Sheikh in class.

The basic structure of AUC was rather simple. There was a small core of permanent American staff, some of them with missionary connections or background (mainly Presbyterian). The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, subsequently at the Harvard Divinity Faculty, had been Secretary-General of the Congregationalist Churches of America. A qualified engineer, the President of the University was also a graduate of a theological seminary. The Dean of the College, one heard, sold 'temperances' from door to door in his younger days in America. The senior physics lecturer was also an amateur musician and geologist who manifested an avuncular, pragmatic religious belief and an unexceptionable, engaging and infectious faith in the destiny of man. There was also a permanent small European core of lecturers, prominent among whom were a Belgian gentleman and a Swedish lady. These two were long-time residents in Egypt and had become veritable 'institutions' in the College. The Egyptian and Arab contingent on the permanent teaching staff was led by a Syrian mathematician (himself an AUC

graduate), an Egyptian educational psychologist and an Egyptian sociologist. A practising physician and AUC alumnus of Syrian extraction lectured on biology.

As first-year undergraduates with disparate competence in English and varied backgrounds, we were taught English by two people: an Egyptian lady and a genuinely gifted American man of letters. One could clearly see he was bored teaching us English. His competent, though commercially not too successful, novel, *Cairo Concerto*, was published in 1947. He was a rather tragic figure, misunderstood by the severe elders of AUC, I believe, essentially because he was a gifted artist (and therefore somewhat peculiar or eccentric and unconventional) who also drank heavily. The story was that he had lost a wife and child in the German invasion of Greece in 1941.

There was an introductory course in the social sciences taught by the irrepressible wife of the Bursar. A New Englander, she was tenacious and persevering. There were those among us however who, in the arrogance of youth – and insularity of cultural background – considered her a well-meaning, somewhat eccentric Yank lady: harmless but useless.

A British subject, born in Tunis, I believe, and married to an American, taught philosophy. He, too, affected a certain religious dimension. Few of us thought he was temperamentally suited to teach philosophy beyond that discipline's concern with ethics. When it came to epistemology, ontology, even metaphysics, one felt he was somewhat rigid and inhibited. But he was an engaging (some thought deliberate) and complex man. Students respected him, and sought his advice and counsel.

The Belgian, who had been in Egypt, I believe, since 1920, was a worldly, autocratic, charming, contradictory though practically clever lecturer. He was experienced and sceptical –some thought cynical. He lectured on economics from a set of notes he must have prepared in 1925 and revised shortly after the Crash and the Depression, and possibly after Dumbarton Oaks and Bretton Woods. The jokes and asides he repeated every year to his classes were colourfully embalmed in the margins of his notes. Yet he taught us

something: he de-mystified to a great extent the mumbo-jumbo of the professional economists.

The Swedish lady, who was proud of her academic background (Uppsala University) and knew far more European political history than we gave her credit for, lectured on political science. Her kindness and genuine intellectual interests and curiosity were mistaken by some male undergraduates in particular for gullibility. A Palestinian, subsequently in the Saudi diplomatic service, I recall, used to carry her briefcase to and from class. He was already a diplomat, always immaculately dressed and soft-spoken. I met him again in Rabat in November 1970 where he was Minister-Counsellor of the Saudi Embassy.

A portly Egyptian, who used to arrive at the university in a chauffeur-driven car, taught us Arabic. I did not take the special Arabic class for foreigners, but rather that for native Arabic speakers. He was a most erudite Arabic scholar who, unfortunately due to poor eyesight, could not see very well what was going on in class, but nevertheless introduced us to the intricacies of Arabic prose and syntax.

The then President of AUC was of some interest. Foreign students observed him with some amusement, for he was a complex political being. He was most articulate and ambitious, somewhat glib and prone to oversimplification. He taught us philosophy in our final year. He had (in retrospect) the rather unattractive habit of interspersing his conversation with the little colloquial Arabic he knew. Those of us who were native in the language doubted that he could really carry on a serious prolonged conversation in it. There was in this mannerism, one fears, a mixture of condescending, patronizing contact with students, and a hammy exhibitionism. My own impression was that he took, on the whole (there were exceptions, no doubt), very little interest in students personally. President Kennedy appointed him US Ambassador to Cairo in 1961.

The college Dean, in contrast, was not as bright as the President. Nor did he possess the latter's sheer physical presence and forceful personality. But the Dean had immense charm. He was as sensitive as he was weak, as thoroughly kind and understanding as he was, on occasion, gullible. He

made no pretence of having learnt any Arabic in nearly a thirty-year sojourn in Egypt. But he imparted to students a taste for good literature and the theatre by his bubbling enthusiasm for drama, his competent stage direction, his very feeling for the English language. He read beautifully and wrote English extremely well – with no little style. He was a great gardener; the annual visit of undergraduates living on campus to his home in Meadi (a Cairo garden suburb) was a memorable event. He also had a commitment to public service, especially the wartime Music and the Arts Society in Egypt. He brought to Ewart Memorial Hall several artists, performers, orchestras and other groups. He organized the Annual Christmas Dinner for undergraduates living in college. It was normally held in the balcony foyer of Ewart Memorial Hall, dinner jackets and all. He read Dickens' *Christmas Story*, whereas the physics lecturer led the carol singing in his old-fashioned dinner jacket, which looked like something out of the early twenties Charleston era! After retirement and until his sudden death in 1972, the Dean kept in touch with innumerable AUCians.

The Syrian mathematics lecturer was a born teacher. He had been one of the AUC's first graduates who stayed on to teach till retirement. Ponderous and charming, he was universally loved and trusted – a man of few words but great discretion and judgement, he could be seen on occasion studying the 'Racing Form' at breakfast. At one time, he even coached AUC's basketball team.

One of the most interesting American staff members in the forties was a great enthusiast of Blake and the later Romantic (Lake) English poets. Until his hearing deteriorated, he used to play Franck's Violin Sonata for us rather well. He chain-smoked, was soft-spoken and gentle, and a genuine scholar. During one of the forties demonstrations [21 February 1946], when the demonstrators nearly stormed AUC, he was conducting a literature class, reading Wordsworth's 'The world is too much with us'. He never flapped.

The curriculum for undergraduates in those days was a set one. There were three degree sequences in the college: mathematics–science (mainly physics and chemistry), social sciences (economics, history, politics, philosophy) and

journalism (Arabic and English). The School of Education – mainly an evening adult education programme – provided, I suppose, a fourth sequence, under the direction of the Egyptian educational psychologist. The Division of Extension, under an American demographer-sociologist assisted by two Egyptians, was largely an external or extra-mural services programme. To the College undergraduates of my time, its presence was felt once a year, when for two weeks on end it screened the old Hollywood production *King of Kings* at Easter time. EMH was packed with the faithful, and we knew the show had ended when we'd hear the *zagharit* [ululations] of the women in the audience the moment the Resurrection scene was projected on the screen.

We sat exams at the end of each semester and there was a Dean's Honour List for the so-called academic achievers among us, all of whom did not necessarily represent the best intellects in the place. At the end of our Junior year, we all sat a three to five days Comprehensive Examination which, in effect, tested our general knowledge, reading, intellectual development and overall academic preparation. In our Senior year, we had to write a Senior Thesis or Dissertation, on which we were examined orally before an Examination Committee or Board in the Blue Room of the EMH wing. I still have in my files the 12 June 1948 issue of *Images* (weekly pictorial in French published by Dar al-Hilal, French counterpart of *al-Musawwar* in those days), in which appeared a pictorial story about these oral thesis examinations. Tullio Moriniello (now in Rome today) and I featured in it.

In retrospect, a subtle influence in our undergraduate experience was the student newspaper, *Campus Caravan*, published by journalism students in both English and Arabic. I believe it was weekly. Non-journalism students, however, often wrote for it. For a while, C. Wilton Wynn (until a few years ago *Time-Life* magazine correspondent in Egypt) was the Faculty Advisor to the *Caravan*. Some of us who were not journalism students supplied many of the 'leaders' or editorials. I did so, for example, for 1947–8.

With the exception of some Egyptian and Palestinian students, most of the AUC foreign students were not too well-off, it was a time of world war and its immediate

aftermath. To this extent, students were briskly purposeful, all other surface manifestations to the contrary notwithstanding. Many among them, like myself, already knew there was no future for us in that part of the world – we had to get out, or at least go back to where we originally hailed from. Fair enough. But there was also intense intellectual argument and exchange between clusters, cliques, whatever, of students, e.g., among the Greeks, Jews and Armenians, many of whom were already veering to the Left of the political spectrum. AUC for these was a temporary expedient on the way to somewhere else.

By 1945–6 the Palestinians began to constitute a distinct group on campus. Within a year or so, they became bitter at the turn of events in their country, and intensely political whether in the cafeteria, hostel, Astra Café next door, or Issaievitch, a very native café run by Serbs, across the square. All of them were financially well-off – all of them without exception 'experts' in political talk rather than action. None of them considered dropping out of AUC in 1947 or 1948 to return to defend their homes, not to mention their country. To some of us foreigners such behaviour seemed extraordinary, to say the least, and puzzling.

There were among some of our Jewish fellow-students members of one or another group of the Communist Party of Egypt. I recall at least two of them being arrested in class, during the Ismail Sidqi regime's swoop against the Left in 1946–7. One or two were members of the Zionist Youth movement working towards the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

Until 1947 the arrangements for the social life and recreation of undergraduates were rather limited and strict. Needless to say, foreign students, if they wished, had access to a fairly rich social life within the bounds of their respective communities in the city. On campus, however, sports facilities were limited. The record achievements of some of AUC's athletes and sportsmen was due in part, if not great measure, to the access they had to the vast sports facilities of their respective foreign communities, and the several sporting clubs of the city. Among the more interesting and possibly successful organized extracurricular activities were the

dramatic group, The Maskers, the Glee Club, the International Relations Club, the Arab Cultural Club and one or two others I cannot remember.

Relations among the sexes varied. The ratio of males to females was hopelessly unequal. Mores and conventions in these matters differed greatly between Egyptians or Arabs and foreigners. The Greeks, Italians and Jews enjoyed a rich social and cultural life within their own respective communities. Palestinians and Jordanians tended towards collective platonic love affairs, i.e., five, six or even ten of them would fancy the same lass. Gossip, fantasy and a fertile imagination among the members of a very small community would inevitably, albeit inaccurately, 'pair off' so to speak a particular male and female.

A favourite venue of freer relations between AUC men and women, away from the campus and the severe chaperoning of its staff, was the organized picnic, day or weekend trip to Meadi, Lake Qarun in the Fayyum, Lake Timsah and Ismailiya, Port Tewfiq, Port Said, the Pyramids at Giza and Sakkara, and Alexandria. Most of these were not officially organized by AUC, but by the students, often only a group of students.

Another, easier, cheaper venue was the Friday morning cinema for those who either had no classes scheduled or felt they could cut them. The films, mostly out of Hollywood (before the brilliant days of the New Italian Cinema School of Fellini, Antonioni, de Sica; or those of the British Cinema) were of very poor quality. But it was an outing, which usually ended with a stand-up lunch in the magnificent Excelsior bar and buffet (Metro) owned by the Tsakiris Brothers. It had the best lasagne verde in those days, not to speak of sandwiches and draft beer.

A source of entertainment and cultural relief was the ushering duty available to undergraduates in EMH. We would put our names down on Steven Cocovessis's list (he was in charge of buildings and grounds) for the Season. This way we were able to attend the performance of visiting artists or groups as well as get a free ticket for a guest. The seats for the ushers and their guests were in the two boxes on either side in the back of the stalls. Georges Themeli, Gina Bachauer,

Ella Goldstein, Pnina Salzman and other well-known pianists of the day, the violinists Vasa Prihoda, Bergman, Sacha Parnes and Leonard Fenyves, Solomon the French horn player, Gys Karten the clarinettist and many others gave concerts in EMH. So did Edith Piaf, Charles Trenet and other popular singers, the then Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra, the Yugoslav Red Army Choir, singers from La Scala of Milan, such as Tito Gobbi, Gino Becki, Maria Caniglia, Angelica Tuccari and others. It was in 1947 that the Palestine Philharmonic defied the world, so to speak, by playing the *Hatikva* at the end of their concert in EMH. The atmosphere was electric. Those of us ushering that evening thought all hell would break loose! Mercifully, nothing happened.

The majority of Egyptian girls who came mainly from the American Girls College were Copts, or shall we say Christians, because their parents or grandparents had, either under the influence of the CMS or the US Overseas Presbyterian Mission or Assiut College or AUC or the YMCA, abandoned the Coptic Eastern Orthodox (Monophysitic) Church for the Evangelical, Protestant Church. With that 'conversion' went certain new attitudes (not necessarily perceptions) toward education, work, achievement, material standards, etc. Yet, the perceptions, attitudes, values, mores and conventions regarding authority, relations between the sexes, etc., which are readily associated with an Egyptian rural background or a conservative social code, lingered on. They were by and large daughters of rich landowners, a few senior civil servants or administrators, executives of foreign companies, professional men (doctors, lawyers, engineers). The Muslims among the AUC girls were if anything of even richer backgrounds. In short, our AUC female contemporaries were, on the whole, from the upper bourgeois classes. At least one foreign language – usually French – was spoken in their rather lavishly (in some cases, garishly) appointed homes. Several, in fact many among them, aspired to a post-graduate education abroad. On the other hand, most of them were destined to marry within their own social group. Many among them had already decided, if possible, to combine a career with marriage.

Some of the senior permanent staff left their imprint on AUC in the 1940s: they were wholly dedicated to the institution and its well-being, albeit with the desire to make it over in their own image of a typical small American liberal arts college. One may argue or take issue with the vision, but the dedication and unstinting devotion of these men to the place cannot be gainsaid.

One of these I came to know quite well, especially in 1946–7, when I dated regularly his wife's niece, who had come to spend her Sophomore year at AUC and lived with her aunt in Meadi. She and I were in the Metro Cinema on 6 May 1947, when it was blown up. She had never heard a live gelignite charge go off before in her life. (In those days, the campaign of violence by the radicals of the Right – the Muslim Brethren, Young Egypt and National Party extremists – was at its height.) On that day, the anniversary of King Faruk's accession to the throne, several explosive charges went off in different parts of the city.*

The demographer-sociologist in charge of the Public Service or Extension division, for example, was a Toynbeean figure in his desire to help redeem or save the Egyptians. At times one thought he wished every day to be Christmas Day. He took us once or twice out to the tract of land on the Pyramids Road then owned by AUC. He held a prayer meeting even out there in the open fields. AUC once planned to build a university campus out there. Foreign students, incidentally, did not know him well. Many, I think, were uncomfortable with what they felt was his 'missionary zeal'.

There was never any undue tension between the 100 or so undergraduates in those days, arising from political, sectarian or social differences. There were of course some fierce exchanges, clashes of personality, personal likes and dislikes. Yet Egypt and AUC were in a period of transition; clouds of the storm that was to break out were rapidly gathering on the horizon. First there was the Anglo-Egyptian issue and the

* Thirty years later, in 1977, an Egyptian journalist came to visit me in my college room in London. He introduced himself as Saad Zaghlul Fuad. When a look of recognition showed in my face, he quickly added, 'Yes, the bomber of Cairo, sir.' In fact, he was tried and convicted in the so-called bombings case (*Qadiyyat al-qanabil*) along with Anwar Sadat. They were both sentenced to 30 months imprisonment, I believe.

internal violent struggle between new political forces and the *ancien régime*, or the status quo. In our days, for instance, Amin Osman, Prime Minister Ahmad Maher, Prime Minister Mahmoud Fahmi al-Nuqrashi and Sheikh Hassan el Banna, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, were assassinated. The big anti-British demonstrations beginning in 1946 and the bombing campaign were also part of our experience. If I remember correctly, though, there was only one serious attempt at a politically motivated strike by AUC students (led by the Palestinians) in November 1947 over Palestine. I recall the philosophy tutor went out, scouring Astra Café and other familiar haunts of AUC students to talk them out of it. Some tension in the city, involving a few incidents of assault or other violence between Egyptians and members of the Jewish and foreign communities, was noticeable in the period from November 1947 to May 1948. There was the odd abduction of British personnel, as part of the anti-British campaign in Egypt. We witnessed, all the same, the withdrawal in March 1947 of the British garrisons from the cities (Cairo and Alexandria) to the Canal Zone, and in 1949 the closing down of the mixed Tribunals, a provision of the Montreux Convention back in 1937 which formally ended the Capitulations. Coincidentally, in 1949 the Government closed down the Red Light District in Wujh el-Birka (Clot Bey) in Ezbekiya.

During those days only once did I find myself in a sticky, petrifying situation. My very good Sephardi Jewish friend in college had recently acquired a small convertible 1928 Fiat Topolino motor car. We rode around in it only rarely when we did not have to push it. One day he and I were caught in the midst of a huge demo in the vast 'Ataba'l Khadra Midan' [square] beyond the Opera. My friend still had some of his fair hair, looked very foreign (i.e. European) and could manage only a smattering of 'kitchen Arabic' with a pronounced foreign accent. The mob looked murderous, and I sweated profusely until we picked-crawled our way out of that mass of humanity and on to Opera Square.

Some of us paid our first visit to the new string of bookshops (in the Opera Square arcade by the old Continental Hotel) which had been opened by several

members of the Egyptian Marxist movement. A well-known one was Fajr el-Jadid of the Trotskyite Lutfullah Soliman (a Copt, whom I later met at the home of the Greek–American First Secretary of the US Embassy in Algiers in 1963. He was working in Ben Bella's Centre de Documentation along with the exiled chief of the Trotskyite wing of the Greek Communist Party, Michel Raptis, alias 'Pablo').

As a window to the outside world, AUC served its purpose admirably in those days – to the chagrin of the French! Perhaps it contributed more than it intended to the identity crisis and cultural ambivalence of the bright Egyptian student, as well as to the brain drain from Egypt. Those among them who aspired to do postgraduate work thought in terms of securing a place and a scholarship in a university in the USA. Many never returned to Egypt.

Attending university in Egypt meant no real Christmas and Easter vacs. An early break in the session, however, was Qurban Bairam, during which I ventured once to go home. I travelled on the night train from the Cairo main station, Bab el Hadid (Ramses today), via Kantara East and Lydda with Ali Othman, a fellow student from the village of Beit Safafa near Jerusalem. This village, by the way, was literally cut in half in 1948–9, when one half of it became part of the new state of Israel. Subsequently, Ali's youngest brother Khalil did an M.Sc. degree with me at SOAS, and I taught his middle brother, Ibrahim, on one of my visits to AUC in 1958–9. His daughter, Leila, has recently obtained an honours degree at SOAS, and is currently a research student there.

But I did go back home to Haifa during the long summer vacs in 1945, 1946 and 1947. Being impecunious I sought some kind of summer employment. By then my brother had moved to Greece and my older sister to Italy; the musicians in the family had scattered to southern Europe. The Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) had just introduced a programme of on-the-job training with a view to recruiting graduates. I made a beeline for that and landed my first summer vac job in the IPC headquarters building on Hagefen or Vine Street right across from our home. The hours were reasonable, 8 a.m.–2 p.m., and the pay from my perspective a treasure: all of 27–30 pounds a month. The hours left the afternoons free for reading, swimming and other recreation.

As the Arab–Jewish contest was starting up again, the Greeks, with a bit of unstructured market research, discovered that there was a market for their amateur musical and entertainment talents. They decided to go into the business of entertaining members of the Arab community by providing the music for their dances, as well as shows in restaurants and nightclubs. Patroclus Fehdi, a very good guitarist and arranger, set out to put together a music ensemble or band for the purpose. When I went to university in Cairo I had, for a variety of reasons, to abandon the cello. An opportunity to be musically active again, albeit in a different genre, I found challenging and a potential source of additional income, and I auditioned for Fehdi as a prospective vocalist. He hired me and we went straight into a series of rehearsals in order to establish a preliminary repertoire. My closest associate in the group was a gifted clarinettist. Fortunately, we had an adequate library of sheet music of Greek, Italian and American songs. Our first contract was with the roof garden of the Nassar Hotel off Kingsway, near Haifa harbour. The owners, the Nassar brothers, were Christian Arabs, and the more affluent Arab middle class frequented the place. So did many of the hotel guests. As a luxury hotel, its clientele consisted mainly of travelling businessmen and politicians from the Middle East and abroad. Its restaurant staff were mainly Sudanese. For us it was hard work, especially over weekends, and did not pay all that well. But it provided me at least with a good vantage point from which to observe the mainly Arab patrons. We became rather popular very quickly and engagements for private functions proliferated. This was followed by a contract with Boutagy to put on a limited number of weekend shows in the beer garden of his hotel in the German colony. By 1947 custom was bursting at the seams as the Arabs no longer ventured to Jewish places of entertainment. Between the desk job with the IPC and moonlighting as a musician-entertainer, I staved off destitution as an undergraduate for the next three years.

A senior official of the IPC must have thought it a good idea to acquaint me with other aspects of the firm's operations and took me along on some of his official tours of IPC installations in one of the comfortable large American cars from the company's motor pool fleet. It was while returning from one of these journeys along Kingsway that we saw the wrecked Police Headquarters of Northern Command. The Irgun or whoever had overcome the

mass of barbed wire outside the building's main entrance with a clever device: a lorry loaded with a drum of high explosives, fitted with pneumatic tyre collars, was placed on hydraulically movable pillars. The driver apparently stopped in front of the main entrance of the building just outside the barbed wire. From his cab he raised electrically the pillars at an angle over or above the wire and the drum of explosives rolled over with enough momentum to reach the main entrance and go off. Casualties, we were told, were high. Some British officers with a morbid sense of humour subsequently put the device on show at the Haifa West police station.

What struck me about my IPC mentor was his lack of concern or any apprehension for the future of his firm, especially with all that was happening around us. If he was worried, there was never a hint of it. British sang-froid?

It was inevitable that a horrendously massive act of sabotage like the Irgun's bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem would harm innocent bystanders, and claim innocent lives. Directed against the Mandate government, the July 1946 bombing of the hotel's wing housing offices of the Mandate government's Secretariat (the office of the Chief Secretary) claimed many non-British victims too. One of these was eighteen-year-old Chrysanthe Antippa, daughter of Angelos Antippa, MBE, Chief Clerk of the Secretariat. Angelos was born in Lixouri on the island of Cephalonia in 1885. He went in 1903 to visit an uncle in Egypt, secured a job with a British firm, married and settled down there. During the Great War he joined the British army as an interpreter in the Intelligence Corps, Kantara, and at the end of the war he secured a position with the OETA, the forerunner of the British Mandate Civil Administration in Jerusalem.

We knew two brothers in the Antippas family besides Angelos. Panos, together with the youngest brother, Dionysios, worked in customs and excise in Haifa. The brothers were intelligent, ambitious and hardworking, attributes shared by most Cephalonians and, some would argue, Corfiotes too. I always assumed their name, Antippa, was of Roman (Latin) origin or provenance. In any case, their generation comprised descendants of an Italianate family in Cephalonia. The brothers were actively involved in the affairs of the Greek community in Palestine. The eldest, Angelos, was also, I recall, a devout member of the Greek Orthodox Church, and a regular worshipper at the small chapel of

St Simeon in the forest at Katamon, next to his home. Panos was, some of us felt, the most dramatic (theatrical) of the brothers, quite emotional and petulant. The youngest, Dionysios, was the most enigmatic, reserved and possibly snobbish among them. They all had fairly large families, consisting of three to five children each.

Chrysanthe's tragic death in that awful incident stunned the Greek community in Palestine. It deeply shocked those of us who were her contemporaries, knew her or were her friends. She was a lovely cheerful girl, slightly tomboyish, who had just started work as a secretary-typist in the Secretariat office – in fact, in her father's office. A friend and I had been on a brief visit to Jerusalem that week, and on that particular day we were walking leisurely from the YMCA (directly opposite the King David) where we had been staying towards the lovely small railway station built by the Ottomans in 1898 on the occasion of the German Kaiser's visit to Palestine. We were on our way to catch an early afternoon train back to Haifa, when the King David Hotel blast went off a short distance behind us. But we did not learn of Chrysanthe's fate until later that evening when we were back in Haifa.

I recall the harrowing vigil by the phone at the home of Panos Antippa, waiting to hear if the military rescue teams working around the clock through the rubble of the King David had come across Chrysanthe. We knew she was missing, but not if she were dead or alive. Finally, we were told they had found part of her hand with a ring on one of the fingers which helped identify her. The funeral which followed from the Antippa residence in the Katamon was painfully sad. Mrs Antippa, the mother, also hailed from one of the Greek islands and arranged a funeral according to the customs of her native island. Transplanted to Palestine these made for an incongruous and harrowing event. For example, the funeral doubled up for the wedding that was never to be: a macabre occasion!

Chrysanthe was one of over ninety victims of the bombing, excluding those injured or maimed. The blowing up of the King David was the peak of the Jewish campaign of violence and terror against the British in Palestine. In many respects the Arabs were, in comparison, spectators in this deadly struggle between the Jews who were seeking to establish an independent state and the British who, they believed, stood in their way. Ironic really, when only

thirty years before that the Balfour Declaration provided the basis of the Zionist push for a Jewish state in Palestine.

Although not a member of the Greek community in Palestine, another Greek casualty of the Jewish terror in Palestine was a Wagons Lits steward on the Cairo–Haifa express train, which was blown up by the Irgun. A Cypriot by origin, the steward's home was in Cairo.

On my last visit home in the summer of 1947 I got a longer vac than expected: the cholera epidemic in Egypt banned travel back into the country till early November. During this period relations between Arabs and Jews deteriorated rapidly. Jewish extremists of the Irgun, Lehi and Stern organizations were engaged in a fierce struggle against British security forces: bombings, ambushes, jail breaks (for example, the famous one from Acre prison) and kidnappings.

After the blowing up of a British billet on Mount Carmel by the Irgun, members of the Special Branch were out seeking revenge. One early evening two of my Greek friends and I were sitting outside a bar in Bat Galim, right across from the swimming baths, having a beer and chatting. I was saying goodbye to my friends as I was returning to Cairo two days later. Suddenly, from inside the bar dashed out two or three armed British Special Branch officers in hot pursuit of a fleeing Jewish man, firing their hand guns at him. We were caught in the crossfire and could do nothing else but hit the ground under the low retaining wall which surrounded the beer garden. Another narrow escape from the warring factions in that unhappy land.

On another occasion, a fierce-looking British army sergeant alighted from a half-truck carrying a squad of troops and, pointing his weapon at us, demanded to see our ID cards. Since I only visited home during the long summer vacs, I never had an ID card; so I was carted off to the police station until my father could come down to vouch for me. Several young Arabs whom I had known from various neighbourhoods boasted in those days that they were now armed; I only hoped they knew how to use their weapons. In fact one of them, who carried a hand gun in his pocket, shot himself accidentally in the leg and the groin.

I returned to Cairo, and two or three weeks later the United Nations passed its resolution for the partition of Palestine. More Arab fury everywhere; and in Egypt this time led by the violent

Muslim Brotherhood. More demonstrations. The Palestinians and other Arabs in the university approached many foreigners to join in their protests. Again one was caught between Arab and Jew. Just before I left Palestine to return to college, my father had, on some days, to go to his office by a roundabout route in order to avoid the increased sniping between Arab and Jew. Often he was offered a lift by a British army armoured car on patrol. I also learned subsequently that, when my grandmother died in our home at the end of 1947 or early in 1948, it was very difficult to bury her because the roads to the cemetery were not safe. Finally, the Arab Legion came to the rescue and transported her remains and the accompanying clergy to the cemetery in one of their armoured cars.

My final year in college coincided with the final act in the drama between Arabs and Jews for the possession of Palestine. My family in that country was in some physical danger and their future was uncertain. The contest, moreover, was becoming regionalized so that Arabs everywhere were now exercised over the conflict in Palestine.

On 15 May 1948 the Jews proclaimed the state of Israel and the first Arab–Israeli war (also known as the Palestine War) was on. The more things went badly for the Arabs, the worst became the situation of the foreign bystander. More immediately real, of course, was the plight of the Palestinian refugees. A few from the hundreds of them who huddled together in camps of the Gaza Strip trickled into Egypt. But they were not all Arabs. I saw several Greeks from Jerusalem and Haifa who transited through Cairo on their way to other destinations: Greece, South Africa, Australia and North America (Canada and the USA). At this time, too, the destabilization of the regime in Egypt by radical elements, a destabilization associated with the British presence in the country, acquired momentum. Many of us realized then and there that we must leave that part of the world for good; there was no place for the outsider in such a cauldron of passionate and exclusive nationalist pursuits. We and our parents came to terms with the fact that the relative idyll of the inter-war period had come to an end.

I questioned my Greek acquaintances from Palestine who were travelling through Cairo very closely about why and how they were leaving the country. Those from Haifa said that they could

not stay on in a Jewish state, especially when they believed their jobs would go to Jews, and their purpose in migrating was to seek employment elsewhere. They did not believe that they were in any danger, but reported that some armed Jewish groups immediately before the Haganah's capture of Haifa in April 1948 had applied pressure by ambushes, sustained firing and sniping. Such reports are corroborated by the private correspondence of Espie Emery, headmistress of the English High School for Girls.* They all reported that the Arab inhabitants of the city simply wanted to flee and were doing so almost instinctively. A few among them believed they were only getting out of the way of the invading Arab armies. Miss Emery reports that Arabs, bidding farewell to the departing school staff, told them: 'Come back as soon as we have driven the Jews out of Haifa. But I felt sure that this was a vain hope, though we fully intended to return.' Of course, they never did. A letter from the Jerusalem (Old City) consulate found in Pollock's papers and dated 26 April 1949 is more realistic:

> More and more Palestinians are returning and crowding into the Old City, vainly hoping that gates will be opened and they will be allowed to return to their homes in the Baqaa and the German colony. Contrary to press reports, I can't see the Jews giving up one scrap of the territory they now hold and UN can't get them to accept the internationalization of Jerusalem.†'

The exodus of the Arabs was a result of a combination of pressures or factors: intimidation, fear, panic, disorganization, lack of guidance and leadership, and hopes for an early return to their homes soon after the Jews had been defeated by superior Arab military forces and power. I did nevertheless sense that among the Greeks I questioned there was an implied overtone of distaste that they might have to live under Jewish political masters. They agreed with my suggestion that it would have been better to have waited until they could depart the country in a more orderly

* Covering mainly her years in Palestine (1919–48), this correspondence is in the Private Papers Collection, Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford.

† The papers of A. H. Pollock are in the Private Papers Collection, The Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford.

fashion. I do believe, though, that the fact that most of the Greeks owned no property or businesses in Palestine but were mainly salaried employees of the Mandate government encouraged a more impulsive departure. They were not aware then of any atrocities on either side of the Arab–Jewish divide, but they did know of the force and intimidation of organized, concentrated and sustained Jewish (Haganah) fire power.

Palestinian fellow undergraduates were anxious about their families in Palestine and apprehensive about their own future in Egypt. Soon hundreds of Palestinian refugees were crowding into makeshift camps not too far away in Gaza. Better-off Palestinians trickled into Cairo on temporary visitors' permits. It was a novel, bizarre phenomenon and experience: watching the uprooting of a people from a country they had inhabited for at least 800 years and the disintegration, through dispersal and exile, of a community. The hasty and therefore ill-prepared involvement of the other Arab states in the conflict over Palestine compounded the difficulties.

I faced a difficult problem: should I join with Arab friends in the pro-Palestinian demonstrations that were now becoming more frequent against not just the Jews and Israel, but the rest of the world too for having allowed the Jews to acquire an independent state? Most of the young Palestinians involved in these early demonstrations were fellow students and friends. Many of them reminded me that my family too would soon have to move away from its home – and possessions. However, it was fairly easy, I confess, for a Greek in Cairo to resist the pressure to take part in these activities.

The proclamation of the state of Israel practically coincided with my coming down from university in 1948. Among my fellow graduates I had a close Jewish friend who was distinctly different from the average Jew in Egypt. An Ashkanazi (not a Sephardi as most Oriental Jews were), she had been in the ATS of the British Armed Forces during the latter part of the war, and an active member – in fact leader – of the local Zionist Youth Movement. Her father was promptly arrested and interned as an enemy by Egyptian State Security. My friend herself was under strict security surveillance and therefore extremely nervous in college where the overwhelming majority of our fellow students were Arabs, among them many Palestinians, Jordanians and Iraqis. Yet, except for loose talk and gossip about what she might be up to, Arab students

were not openly hostile towards her until the proclamation, when they turned nasty, boycotted her and the more uncouth among them took to spitting at her. Those of us who were relatively close to her risked some opprobrium by association. Yet I recall we acted normally and ignored whatever risks of wider censure there may have been. Privately, of course, she expressed her joy at the developments of May 1948, and some of us equally privately offered her our congratulations. Her commitment to her cause, incidentally, was total; that of our Palestinian fellow students to theirs was spasmodic and largely verbal.

But we could not wholly escape the fall-out from the internecine Arab squabbles either. When the monarchy and its political regime came under the increased pressure of seditious radical dissident groups and political factions, violence was one of their favourite forms of protest. Thus I narrowly escaped death inside the Metro cinema in Cairo when a gelignite explosive device went off in the balcony during a film show on 6 May 1947. There was actually a spate of terrorist acts against public places and public figures during that spring and summer and throughout 1948. Unaffiliated dissidents as well as members of several radical organizations – the old National Party, the Young Egypt Society, the Muslim Brotherhood – were involved, including the odd rebellious young army officer, such as Anwar Sadat.*

In reminiscing about these eventful days, my father reported to me the following episode. Some time in late 1947 or early 1948 two of his Palestinian acquaintances visited him at home. They were carrying small suitcases. They invited him to go along with them to neighbouring Lebanon until the unpleasant business in Palestine was over. They assured him it would be like a two-week holiday, during which time the armies of the Arab states would clear the country of Jews. It would be, they assured him, a mere excursion. My father demurred, however, reminding them that, as a civil servant, his duty was to remain at his post. If he had to go anywhere, he would go to his own country. The episode may suggest why the Jews won the contest over the possession of Palestine. These two gentlemen, according to my father, were not old men but relatively young, in their late thirties or early forties.

* I have discussed these radical organizations in my book, *Nasser and his Generation* (London, 1978).

I had no news of my family throughout 1948 and most of 1949. Without money it was difficult to leave Egypt. I accepted a year's appointment to the teaching staff of my college. Among the new crop of entering students for 1948–9, there were large contingents of Jordanians and Palestinians. Much of their talk was about the loss of Palestine to the Jews, but they were singularly lacking any ability to analyse or discuss dispassionately why the Arabs had failed to defend let alone retain that country. Soon many of these students drifted into the ranks of the newer 'radical' political movements and parties that came to litter the Arab world, such as the Baath, varieties of the communist movement and Arab nationalist organizations. For their part, young Greeks ventured for the first time to their mother country to settle, uncertain of the prospects for their long-established community in Egypt.

My Jewish friends in college quietly celebrated the establishment of the state of Israel after 2000 years of Diaspora, but with no little apprehension about its and their own future in the Middle East. The United States of America became the new 'Mecca' of all and sundry in our university, including and especially the Arab students. Looking through an alumni roster prepared and published by the university as recently as 1983, the list of graduates established and permanently settled in the USA is massive.

7

In the USA

In the early spring of 1949 my younger sister arrived unexpectedly in Cairo on her way to Greece. She sojourned for several weeks and left for Greece that summer, just before I departed for the United States. She reassured me about our parents, and described to me the capture of Haifa by the Haganah.

I had been granted a scholarship to do postgraduate work in America and prepared to leave for good the Middle East and the world of Arabs and Jews. But I could not afford better passage than a berth on an American freighter. Leaving from the main Cairo station, Bab el Hadid, for Port Said, I was seen off by three Jewish, five Arab, two Greek and two Anglo-Italian friends. In Port Said I was practically thrown by the launch boatmen on to the deck of the SS *Steel Apprentice* on its way from Vaizagabatham, India, to an Eastern Seaboard port in the USA, carrying iron ore for the steel mills there.

My cabin mate was an elderly Egyptian gentleman of Syrian origin who was going to visit a married daughter in America. He was a devout convert to Protestantism and prayed frequently. Among the complement of twelve passengers were two American lady teachers, returning home from their tour with the American Community School in Cairo. In my pocket was the princely sum of seven US dollars.

Two weeks later we docked in Baltimore harbour. But it was only July and the university term did not begin until mid-September. It would be October before I would receive any payment from my scholarship grant. The problem was how to survive in the

meantime. Off I went by Greyhound Bus via upstate New York, to Cleveland, Ohio where an American friend from AUC resided and helped me find digs in the home of a Hungarian lady very near the Western Reserve University. I found temporary employment in the wine and spirits cellar of the old Statler Hotel in town and supplemented my meagre income from this job by serving breakfast as a waiter on weekends in another large hotel where the tips amounted to three times the wages. The 'captain of waiters', or headwaiter, was, needless to say, another Greek. And the Greeks in the Diaspora, not unlike the Jews, are like a mutual assistance society.

For a few years, in the early 1950s, the Arab–Jewish and Arab–Israeli dialectic was not a problem for me in the USA. I thought surely one was now relatively free of that unpleasant feature of the Middle East.

While a research student, the more prominent items of news were the Korean War and the epochal change of administration in Washington, when the Republicans under Eisenhower finally wrested the White House from the Democrats, who had occupied it for twenty years. Equally important was the crucial role television played in a national election for the first time, which prompted the American journalist, Schneider, to write his brilliant novel, *The Golden Kazoo*. Thanks to television, Americans were also taken up for a few years by the monstrous performance of Senator Joe McCarthy and the security hearings of his notorious Senate subcommittee. While Americans all around me became obsessed with these goings on, I tended to believe that history would take care of McCarthy.

I myself was during that early period in the USA keenly interested in learning about the American political system. Thus that first summer in Cleveland I attended many of Professor Carl Wittke's lectures on the post-Civil War period in American history at Western Reserve University. Subsequently, I studied American constitutional law as the quickest way of acquainting myself with the intricacies of the US political system, but I supplemented this with further study of American political ideas.

A few of us in university engaged in the study of the Middle East, which was a new feature in American university programmes. We were still very much led and influenced by older established colleagues and mentors who represented the more

traditional academic/intellectual approach of ancient and medieval Near Eastern studies, first developed in Britain and the rest of Europe. To this extent, we were left free to pursue our scholarly interests with a view to building up a relatively new area of study and research, that of the modern Middle East; but not before our training in the more classical and Islamic Near East was judged to be adequate by our peers and elders. The lobbyists for either side of the Arab–Israeli conflict were not upon us yet, and were therefore unable to introduce the polarization in these studies that occurred later. They became prominent with the Suez War and subsequent developments.

The greater the involvement of the superpowers in the Arab–Israeli conflict, the greater the proliferation of lobbyists, pundits and other peripheral actors in the field of Middle Eastern studies: executives of American oil companies operating in the oil-rich Arab countries, old missionaries, many of them now with departments of the US government, especially the State Department, Jewish businessmen and others. Soon there were far more promoters of Middle Eastern causes – Arab nationalism and Arab unity, the rights of Palestinians, the defence of Israel and so on. And this development affected those few working in universities. Thus it became gradually more difficult to write and publish uninhibited critical work on any aspect of that part of the world without eliciting the wrath or earning the opprobrium of facile pundits and lobbyists of causes. In the 1960s and 1970s this motley collection of cause-mongers was joined by the so-called New Left, culminating in the broadside by a Christian Palestinian Arab, an American citizen by birth with the typically Arab name of 'Edward' Said, against practically everyone who had contributed to the study of the Middle East till that time; he soon became the darling of the media and all those who found pleasure and satisfaction in scurrilous attacks on established scholars.

The further promotion of Middle Eastern studies was nurtured by generous private foundations and the US Federal Government, which was anxious to train a cadre of exotic language and foreign area 'experts' or specialists. Money was spent lavishly – in certain cases, mindlessly – but, as my grandmother used to say, 'He who has lots of pepper puts it on the lettuce too.' Vast numbers of young academics were brought into the field. However, since native Americans lacked exposure to foreign languages in their

schools, need prompted universities to appoint scores of young Middle Easterners resident in the USA to teach their native or mother tongue, even when many of them were not otherwise qualified or suited for university work.

The following is a personal recollection of the story of Middle Eastern studies as they developed in the United States, which an American research centre solicited from me in 1977, and published in the *Washington Review of Strategic and International Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, January 1978:

> There has been to my knowledge no critical survey of Middle Eastern studies as an academic undertaking in American universities that has been published in article or other form, which assesses the nature, quality, and fortunes of that undertaking, say in the last 20 to 25 years.* There is, nevertheless, much that can be gleaned from periodic bibliographical and research project compilations, the *Newsletter* of the Middle East Studies Association of North America Inc. (MESA), founded in 1964–5, the older (1947) *Middle East Journal* of the Middle East Institute of Washington, DC, and several other organizations and their publications. These, however, inform us about what is happening, that is, who is doing what, where, under whose auspices, and so on; a sort of diary of events and news about Middle East studies as an *activity* among academics, as well as other non-academic Americans who have an interest in the Middle East. They do not tell us whether what is happening is academically and/or intellectually encouraging or beneficial, discouraging or detrimental, and for what or whom and how. The scope of my essay is more limited, and the approach that of a 'memorandum' on Middle Eastern studies in America as I view them. The view, I must emphasize, is personal, and based on observation going back to 1953.
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> American universities began to acquire a serious and fairly extensive interest in the development of Middle Eastern studies in the middle to late 1950s, following the Suez War. Fortuitously, foundations such as Ford were, throughout the

* Some years ago an anonymous article appeared in *The New Middle East* (London, vol. 1, no. 5, 1968) which dealt mainly with Middle Eastern studies at Harvard.

fifties, engaged in a massive distribution of largesse to leading universities throughout the country. Major grants for area studies, foreign area training fellowships, and funding of long-term research projects, and other related programmes of financial assistance to academic institutions and individual academics constituted the main impetus for the creation of centres of Middle Eastern studies in a dozen universities. This effort by the private sector was soon followed, and almost matched by the provision of federal government funds for the promotion and support of the study of exotic languages and so-called non-Western societies. The prime examples of this kind of support were the language and area study fellowships in the 1960s under the National Defense Education Act. In addition to the new centres, the older programmes in Columbia, Princeton, and Chicago, for example, were, so to speak, modernized. Intensive language instruction in Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish was introduced in a number of university centres outside the already existing ones in the armed forces and one or another of the government agencies. Consortia, joint programmes between universities, American research centres abroad (e.g., Egypt, Iran, and Turkey), offering summer language and area programmes both in America and overseas, were organized. PL480, enabling American institutions to make use of US counterpart funds in certain Middle Eastern countries that had been recipients of American aid, provided the means for the purchase of books and other publications for centre libraries.

This momentum, lasting for some ten to fifteen years, meant a vast opening up of new appointments in discipline and language university departments, as well as the creation in some cases of separate departments of Middle Eastern studies, alongside programmes and centres. The idea of the centres, incidentally, was to bring together the various disciplines in a collaborative effort, serviced by the language programmes. At the same time the American penchant for free enterprise and competition led to a proliferation of programmes and centres in lesser-known universities and colleges, some of which managed to secure a share of foundation and federal government funds. The universities with a strong intellectual tradition and high academic

standing, however, proceeded to import established senior orientalists from Europe and the United Kingdom, or make use of already settled European emigrés. The two such leading figures in the decade 1956–65 who left their imprint on Middle Eastern studies in America were Sir Hamilton Gibb and Professor Gustave von Grunebaum, at Harvard and UCLA, respectively. There were and have been others, of course, among them Professors Hitti at Princeton, Schacht at Columbia, Goitein at Pennsylvania, Rosenthal at Yale, and Tietze at UCLA.

Arriving at Harvard from the Laudian Chair of Arabic at Oxford and as a knight of the realm, the late Gibb proceeded to put together a highly personalized centre in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Basically a scholar of Arabic and Arabic literature, he magisterially pronounced on all subjects dealing with and issues pertaining to the Middle East. The junior colleagues he gathered around him on Cambridge Street dutifully deferred to the master and aspired to produce work emulative enough to be worthy of his approval. Significantly, the various academic departments of the university were not very keen on recognizing Middle Eastern studies as a worthy field of academic study. So long as Gibb was about, his international reputation kept foundation and oil companies' funds flowing into the Centre, thus making it possible for his younger colleagues to carry on. So long, that is, as the Centre could more or less finance itself, the rest of the Harvard academic community were not particularly concerned about it. Only from time to time they allegedly reiterated their disapproval of the Centre in connection with more permanent appointments to its staff.

When ill health forced Gibb to retire from Harvard and return to Oxford, the Centre lost its prime mover and protector. As the Jowett Professor of Arabic in the university, he was able, by his stature and force of personality, to give the Centre a measure of respectability in the Harvard academy. In fact, during the first decade of its existence the Centre attracted both money and students. During that time, moreover, Gibb imprinted his persona on it, as well as on the rapidly expanding community of Middle Eastern studies in the United States. He quickly became the patron in the field

with a large clientele of aspiring young Middle Eastern specialists. His move back to Britain seemed to leave the Centre in limbo; many of the aspiring young scholars he had brought to it had to go elsewhere, due to the fact that the academic departments in the university were reluctant to take the Centre seriously. Soon the wider community of Middle Eastern studies concluded that the Centre had been Gibb, and that without him its future was uncertain.

To the extent that Gibb was unable to create a strong community of scholars that would carry on after him, he failed in his mission at Harvard. Those who knew him well have suggested that his strong, autocratic personality precluded this development, and it is said it was difficult for colleagues with differing views to contradict him. Whatever the case may have been, Gibb was a kind of Middle Eastern studies 'mogul', a veritable patron who dispensed much sought after patronage to his clients, on condition they were prepared to pay proper homage. As Demaratus would have put it, his was a 'court of *proskynites*, or worshippers'.

Gustave von Grunebaum left his chair at Chicago in 1957 to go to California, the so-called new frontier of higher education. Within a decade he managed to create a vibrant Near East Centre at UCLA. His Viennese charm, classical erudition, and plain hard work were crucial to the acceptance of Middle Eastern studies in the transient, pragmatic – perhaps, plastic – environment of southern California, which lacked the traditions of New England, and shared even less the values and perceptions of an eminent European orientalist. Unlike Gibb, von Grunebaum did not project a towering presence (the physical contrast was just as great) in the 'affairs' of Middle Eastern studies in the country. Nor did he appear interested in establishing a 'school' whether of fellow scholars or acolytes. His approach was quite different; he made it possible instead for individual scholars to pursue their own work without requiring or expecting any particular direction in it. He instituted a programme of visiting scholars to the Centre from all over the world, and capped his career with the foundation of the Levi della Vida Prize and Biennial Conference where, as a rule, serious scholarly papers on Islamic themes are presented. In the meantime, he built up

one of the best library collections where none existed before his arrival at UCLA.

Von Grunebaum was, incidentally, a more private person, an individualist who tolerated other individualists in the old tradition of European scholarship. He was not particularly anxious to imprint his persona on a group of followers. As a result of his different personality and approach he managed to leave behind a strong Centre. One hopes that his successors will strive to maintain its high standards.

There has also been a peripheral complex of Middle Eastern studies in the United States consisting of institutions and organizations of interested laymen, retired diplomats, ex-missionaries, oil company executives, bankers, and the like. Some of the better known institutions and organizations in this complex are the Middle East Institute, the American Friends of the Middle East,* the much older Near East Association, and many other bodies of more recent vintage, especially after the 1967 Six-Day War. On the whole, their approach is not strictly one of study, but more one of seeking solutions to Middle Eastern problems as these affect American interests and policy.

After 1960, university-based Middle Eastern studies gradually took over the role of the old 'Middle East hands' among the ex-missionaries, oil company advisers and consultants, and wartime government people. A new breed of social scientists working on the Middle East ventured forth from the rarefied, disinterested atmosphere of the ivory tower to the hustle and bustle of Middle Eastern 'expertise'. Through the generosity of the Social Science Research Council and its panoply of subject and area committees, the social sciences (anthropology, economics, politics and sociology) came to play a leading, though not necessarily salutary, role in Middle Eastern studies. All students of the Middle East turned into developers and modernizers, not to speak of redeemers and deliverers, of the Middle East. Nevertheless, for good or ill, scores of students were trained in the combination of a

* There is a strong allusion by Wilbur C. Eveland in his book, *Ropes of Sand: America's Failure in the Middle East* (New York, 1980) to this organization as a convenient cover for US intelligence agencies and operatives.

discipline and a Middle Eastern language, although it seems more in the discipline and less in the language.

For nearly a decade, the academic running in the field was made by these social scientists, interested as they were in 'development' and 'modernization'. They felt that old-style orientalism was inadequate for the study of contemporary Middle East societies, especially as they were keen to develop 'theories' about them. Instead of studying what happened in the past or was happening in the present, they preferred to essay abstract theoretical 'explanations' of the patterns of development. More practical concerns of policy studies also became fashionable among them. A brief debate between the social scientists on one side and language-oriented colleagues on the other raged, for a while, over the best way of studying the Middle East.

The work of the social scientists was encouraged and supported by research organizations like RAND in California and Brookings in Washington. The widespread use by government of academic consultants in matters relating to the formulation of American policy in the Middle East bred a group, or perhaps a circle of knowledgeable young Middle Eastern 'experts', equally at ease in the groves of academe and the corridors of power. The short-lived Kennedy era, in particular, encouraged this close collaboration and interchange between government and academia. What, in fact, brought the two closer together was the intractability of certain conflicts in which the United States was directly or indirectly involved. Such have been the Vietnam War and the Arab–Israeli conflict. Thus, the extensive use of academics in the preparation of policy and other studies regarding the Vietnam War was phenomenal and tragic. Despite the panoply of the latest electronic, computerized aids to social science, the war was simply lost. That terrible experience not only polarized the vast American public, but it also destroyed the credibility of social science in the prescriptive arrangement of the affairs of men or nations, or the resolution of intricate human conflict. As for the Arab–Israeli conflict, the resolution of which is nowhere in sight, it politicized and polarized Middle Eastern studies themselves in America.

Whether the current aspects of the Arab–Israeli conflict can

be considered to constitute a legitimate topic for academic study may be questioned by many. Nevertheless, it became a near obsession of Middle Eastern studies academics in the United States. A fusion between ideological position and study, between considerations of policy and study was soon effected. Cliques appeared here and there, within the centres of study, in organizations active in the public affairs aspect of Middle Eastern studies. Their view was fairly simple. For the pro-Israel cliques even the most critical studies of Israel were acceptable so long as they did not question the right of the state to exist. For the pro-Arab ones any critical studies of Arab behaviour, or the state of Arab economics, politics, governments, administrations, and institutions, even when these were completely unrelated to the conflict with Israel, were considered anti-Arab, racist, imperialist, and reactionary. Soon much of the influx of students into Middle Eastern studies came via other causes: the New Left, revolutionary groups, liberation movements, and so on. The study of the Middle East itself was now concerned either with the resolution of the Arab–Israeli conflict, or with the liberation of Middle Eastern societies from foreign exploitation, neo-colonialism, and the subversion of the CIA – never the KGB. The description or depiction of Middle Eastern societies as they are insofar as the available evidence will permit was relegated to oblivion and considered an unworthy task for academics. After all, the argument went, these societies are what they are because of all these satanic extraneous and relentless world forces; it has nothing to do with them.

This creeping politicization prevented Middle Eastern studies in America from producing from its ranks, say, a great historian of the region, a great critic of one or another of the Middle Eastern literary traditions, or a great lexicographer-grammarian of one or another of the languages of the Middle East.

More recently, much of the energy and proliferating activity in Middle Eastern studies has been organized in a professional body, MESA. Today, twelve years after its foundation MESA has over 1,500 members. Americans, it has been said, find it difficult to remain isolated in their scholarly pursuits; there is always the urge or need to organize

themselves into collective bodies, a reflection possibly of the national passion for community. There seem to be, in addition, several assumptions behind the creation of the association. One of these is the notion that studying the Middle East is a professional pursuit, separate and distinct from the professional identity and vocation of the university teacher and researcher. Another is the belief that modern Middle Eastern studies have very little in common with traditional orientalism or the study of the older Near East, especially its languages, religions, civilizations, or cultures. A third is the conviction that a professional organization can claim a share of the national resources for higher education, and better meet the educational needs of the American public as these relate to the Middle East.

Ever since de Tocqueville published his astute observations about America, it has been a truism to state that everything that is done on that continent seems to be, in contrast to other Western communities, on a massive scale. Of the over 1,500 members of MESA, some 640 are Fellows, that is, recognized scholars of and 'experts' on the Middle East. Over 400 are students. This is a great number indeed, perhaps greater than the total number of scholars of the Middle East in the rest of the world. The remaining 400 to 500 members include businessmen, bankers, industrialists, and public affairs organizations, as well as interested laymen.

In addition to a journal which, interestingly enough, is not designated as the 'American Journal of Middle Eastern Studies', but as the 'International Journal of Middle East Studies', MESA's *Newsletter* is a most revealing guide to the association's activities, even its academic priorities. It is a gold mine of directories regarding undergraduate and post-graduate programmes of institutions in America, of appointments vacant, the availability of grants, travel opportunities in the Middle East, and so on. But it is also indicative of current preoccupations, not so much with study, as with the 'morality' of study. The association, for instance, appears to be very anxious about the images Americans have of Middle Eastern peoples. Two years ago, the president of the association, in his address to members, intoned, 'We must depict the Middle East in its own authentic terms.' This way, the

association believes, it can overcome ethnocentrism in its study of the Middle East and avoid parochialism. But this reflects perhaps the latest assumption among those engaged in Middle Eastern studies in America, namely, that there is a Middle Eastern way of studying the Middle East. What constitutes the Middle East's 'own authentic terms' must be, for many, a mystery. Is it something above and beyond what Middle Easterners say, do, and write; how they behave towards each other and towards outsiders; how they organize and conduct their public affairs? Or is the invocation of 'authenticity' in this context an attempt to keep up with the latest American quest for certitude; the burning desire to discover the 'true self' and the 'true other' by what are referred to as more intimate means? Or is it an invitation to move from studying the Middle East by the standards of critical scholarship in order to understand it, to empathizing with the region intuitively and emotionally in order to love it?

Equally fashionable under the auspices, or at least inspiration, of this new massive organization is the trendy study of the social history of the Middle East which applies current Marxist and other sociological concepts. Economic history is a clearly demarcated field of study. Social history, however, is another matter. There is some uncertainty regarding its nature and scope. Nevertheless, it has enabled students of the Middle East to avoid examining the seamy and less pleasant aspects of the Middle Eastern reality and instead to indulge in the more grandiose, albeit unreal, study of Middle Eastern 'socialism' and 'revolution'. It has also led them into irrelevant Marxist analyses of Islamic and more recent Middle Eastern history. Inaccurate propositions about political power and class struggle in the Middle East are repeatedly formulated only to be monotonously belied and exploded by the grim realities of events in the region.

MESA also provides its customers with 'research and training committees' and promises them the application of the latest electronic wonders in the supply of instant information and knowledge, ranging from automated bibliographical materials and biographical data banks to teaching and research materials packages. Knowledge about the Middle

East will one day be instantly dispensed from a handy container with little pain or effort.

The American emphasis on doing is reflected in the information that is regularly disseminated about MESA's activities. Middle Eastern studies have become a message to be preached to as vast an audience as can be reached. An annual conference brings together hundreds of practitioners of the 'art' or 'science' of Middle Eastern studies in order to discuss their work. Occasionally resolutions are debated and passed on matters not, strictly speaking, academic, but intended to express the association's corporate view and position on Middle Eastern issues.

The economic recession in the industrial countries caused by the energy crisis after 1971 naturally affected the universities too. Since in some universities Middle Eastern studies had not been quite accepted as a permanent financial responsibility or commitment of those institutions, centres and programmes have had to seek funds from new sources. These appeared readily enough in the form of oil-rich states in the Middle East, and American universities have not been reticent in tapping them. Grants from Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and Libya have been sought and received by some centres of Middle Eastern studies. It is, of course, difficult to know exactly under what conditions these funds are accepted by these institutions. At least one recently founded centre, the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University, clearly states in its prospectus that it will seek funds from Arab sources. Referring to its 'Funding Strategy and Prospects', the Center organizers inform us, 'All Arab governments have been formally approached to support the Center.' A recent prospectus of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington records a similar approach. The implications of this development for Middle Eastern studies in America cannot be, at this moment, precisely determined or foreseen. The trend, however, suggests that American universities cannot, or are not prepared to because they are not wholly committed to them, support Middle Eastern studies in the normal way, thus retaining academic control over them. In the meantime, the financing of programmes and centres by

foreign government jeopardizes, to say the least, the independence of Middle Eastern studies in America.

There is no doubt that the generosity of foundations and federal government in the last twenty years enabled hundreds of American university teachers and students to study the Middle East. But it also encouraged the unnecessary proliferation of programmes and dissipation of effort and resources. Moreover, in view of America's global military and political role, the controversial nature of conflicts in the Middle East, and the resultant politicization of certain subjects of study, there occurred some confusion between study and policy, between lobbying for causes and research. A distortion of what actually takes place within Middle Eastern studies is condoned in the name of wider, universal theoretical considerations and political or ideological predilections. Double standards of judgment in the study of the Middle East are justified by relevance and excused by relativism to the point of absurd reductionism. Thousands of dollars are spent, for example, on studying 'socialist' regimes in the Middle East that are so far removed from socialism as to render the term meaningless in our political vocabulary. Studies of how political power derives from landownership are conducted when the history of the region generally indicates that the opposite has been the case, that power often leads to landownership. Despots are presented as great 'transformers' of societies and national liberators. Their state-decreed agencies of political organization - and repression – are seriously analyzed as political parties. Corporatist arrangements of autocrats are portrayed as serious representative institutions. Instead of recording the past as history, it is condemned as a sin that must be expiated.

A current fad is the concerted attack upon older orientalists – dead or alive – by all and sundry, many of them not known for their oriental scholarship. The orientalists are fair game on the grounds of the simple charge that they were either imperialists (that is, they were nationals of imperial powers) or misguided souls who never understood the Middle East. Their detractors do not tell us how they themselves understand the Middle East or how it ought to be studied, because in fact they have as yet produced no work of their own beyond

these polemical tracts. The justification for their denigrating writing is no more than the cause they openly espouse or purport to support. The danger, however, for Middle Eastern studies in America is that they may end up being hospitable not so much to scholarship, genuine debate, and controversy, but to naked and crass cause-mongering. The day may well come when only those with a cause or an ideological position may be allowed to practise the 'art' of Middle Eastern studies in America.

It is not really levitous to suggest that Middle Eastern studies in America over the last quarter of a century did not so much focus on a particular subject of study or inquiry as they sought ways of testing certain methodological schemes and theoretical hypotheses. In the process, the theories somehow acquired divine attributes and status, and young practitioners came to worship at their various altars at different stages or periods. Since then there have been several gods of Middle Eastern studies in America that failed. First to fail was the god of anti-British colonialism in the Middle East and more generally decolonization. Next in the shattered pantheon of broken idols was Arab nationalism with its promise of a new dawn that never broke and a better tomorrow that never materalized. Genteel Western perceptions of development and modernization founderd in the face of brutal autocrats in the Middle East ruling ill-fed, ill-clad, and unlettered populations. More recently, radical revolutionary and liberation movements seemed for a brief moment to emerge as the most promising and fashionable gods of Middle Eastern studies. These too, however, have suffered some decline rather quickly and may be the latest gods that will fail, because they are already in disrepute among Middle Easterners themselves, if not among the more affluent and self-indulgent practitioners of Middle Eastern studies in the United States.

The Suez War (1956) further propelled Middle Eastern studies to the fore in universities and more widely on to the media. I recall my very first irritation with this development. Exasperated by the pestering of the media, I exploded, in an unguarded moment of real fatigue, with a reckless or at least injudicious statement, suggesting that it would be to everyone's advantage if that part of

the world were turned into one vast international amusement park. Only moments later the resident rabbi in charge of the Hillel foundation on the campus was protesting to me over the phone. Arab, and especially Iraqi, students denounced me as an imperialist agent, whatever that meant in 1956. After a very brief local TV appearance, the man from whom I bought my shoes asked me what candle of the Menorah I was on – he assumed I was Jewish. He was very disappointed to discover that, although born in Jerusalem, I was not a Jew. The discovery seemed for a moment to shatter him. Over thirty years later, after chairing a session of the International Conference on the History of Syria in the University of Jordan in Amman and conducting the proceedings in Arabic, several of the participants were rather shocked to learn that the small Greek community in Palestine during the Mandate always considered itself alien and separate from the Arabs and the Jews.

Generally speaking, though, inasmuch as I was tucked away from 1953 to 1965 in a huge Midwestern state university as a staff member of a 45-strong department of politics, I escaped the worst aspects or manifestations of the polarization in Middle Eastern studies. Conducting a seminar on Thucydides for undergraduates in the honours programme of the university, and lecturing on the introduction to political study kept me out of the limelight and away from the attention of the new lobbyists and pundits. I was noticed once briefly in the 1950s when my study, *The Fatimid Theory of the State* was published in 1957, and then primarily by the traditional orientalists because the study dealt with an Islamic revolution of the tenth century. But in 1957 I contributed a paper on 'Recent trends in Islam' at a Johns Hopkins University Conference on the Middle East, highlighting the Islamic factor long before it became fashionable twenty years later.*

At that conference I met and befriended Bernard Lewis, from whom I learned much about Islamic and Middle Eastern history in the next thirty years. During this time Lewis and I have had one long and as yet unfinished dialogue. And yet because Lewis happens to be Jewish, this relationship landed me back again 'among Arabs and Jews'. The Arabs and the British so-called

* The proceedings of this conference, including my paper, were published in a volume that received wide notice: Philip W. Thayer (ed.), *Tensions in the Middle East* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958).

Arabists assumed, without any real foundation, that this relationship was permeated by a pro-Israel posture. What they did not realize – Bernard Lewis did – is that *Zorba* is not simply the title of a novel by Kazantzakis. Every Greek is a Zorba, and never anybody's willing puppet. Here the apocryphal story about St Paul's first preaching to the Greeks somewhere on the Acropolis compound applies: so long as he talked about 'our lord and master' up there somewhere, the Greeks were ready to lynch him, for they preferred an interlocutor who was prepared to be at or closer to their more mundane level.

The polarization got to me much later, in the sense of being caught between Arabs and Jews, especially in the 1970s. Once when I went up to give a talk at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Harvard, a number of Arab and pro-Arab students buttonholed me before the talk, trying to glean in advance the thrust of my intended remarks. But that centre was particularly polarized. The year I spent in Princeton as Senior Fellow of the Council on the Humanities and Visiting Professor was a further massive experience in this polarization. One was accepted or rejected on the basis of which side one was sympathetic to. Even the year I spent on secondment in Greece at the invitation of the Greek government to help them establish a Centre for Arab/Islamic and Mediterranean Studies, involving postgraduate training for Greek students, was not free of this feature.

One of my first tasks at this time was to organize a huge international conference in Rhodes with which the Greeks would launch their new venture. My view of such a conference as a gathering of sensible academics in the field was wholly different from that of the Greeks, who viewed the conference as a massive publicity affair to which they invited Arab ambassadors and other worthies. Among the academic participants were one or two from the UK and the USA who happened to be Jewish. Sure enough the Arab ambassadors, with an eye to the political gallery at home, created a terrible incident by raising a public objection to one of our Jewish (not Israeli) colleagues. If till then I only suspected the opposition of mainland Greeks to Jews, I got substantive proof of this predilection. The Greeks, I soon discovered, were not interested in learning or getting to know the Arabs. Their approach to them was strictly a business one. By the same token they assumed facilely that they must oppose Israel and all things Jewish

if they were to solicit the Arabs. More silly and infantile was their assumption that by soliciting the Arabs they were acquiring an ally against the Turks.

In the mid-1970s the Greeks believed they had close and friendly relations with Libya's Colonel Gaddafi. Greek skilled labour and entrepreneurs were involved in contract work in booming oil-rich Libya. The Greek approach of closer relations with the Arab states on the one hand and cool, correct minimal relations with Israel on the other was justified as part of Greece's overall strategy regarding Turkey and the Cyprus problem. When at an Arab–Islamic summit in Tripoli in 1977 Colonel Gaddafi told his gathered Arab guests that they must consider helping their fellow Muslims, or co-religionists, the Turks, the Greeks reacted with bitter fury and surprise. What did not register was the erroneous premise of a pro-Arab, anti-Israel *démarche* in the 1970s as the way of countering Turkey over Cyprus.

What I observed was that the Greeks were as exclusive as the Jews, and always in competition with them. In the late spring of 1956 I had visited an aged aunt (in her late eighties) at Lindos on the island of Rhodes. She asked me if I was married and I replied in the affirmative. When she asked me if my wife spoke Greek and I replied that she did not, my aunt looked up sternly and said with certitude and finality, 'So she is not a Christian, my boy.' Of course, I am referring here to an octogenarian from a small village on the island of Rhodes. And yet I cannot conceive of a more chauvinistic utterance.

I was at a dinner in October 1973 at the home of the late Morroe Berger, then professor of sociology and a Jew, in Princeton. Two Christian Arab Lebanese from the AUB were present, together with a Muslim North African (Tunisian) sociologist from the University of California, who was spending the year at the Institute of Advanced Study, and his Jewish American wife. The sociologist monopolized the conversation at the dinner table. His favourite topic was my writing about the Arabs over the years. It transpired that he had read practically everything I had published since 1957. As a New Left sociologue in the grandiose French tradition, he objected to my lack of 'empathy' (vocabulary of a new myth among social scientists). I thought, here we go again . . . He subsumed me with the generation of writers including Anouar Abdel Malek (the Egyptian exile in Paris) and others who had

grown up in the Middle East. Yet, he conceded that our role as critics of Arab societies had been most salutary and creative, without explaining what he meant by this. Basically, as it turned out, he was piqued by a piece I had published a decade earlier on tradition and political leadership in Algeria (*Middle Eastern Studies*, London, 1965). He could not understand how anyone who was not a 'professional social scientist' (read in the French mould) could pen so devastating an essay about the viscera of a society's political perceptions; as if to say, 'If you understand them so well, why can't you love them?'

On another occasion I was caught not so much among Arabs and Jews as between promoters of Arab causes, mostly British. Controversy raged around me with a review in the *Times Literary Supplement* of my book, *Conflict in the Middle East* (London, 1971). The reviewer did not really discuss the book beyond trying to identify me as a member of an underprivileged minority in the Middle East, whose criticism of his Arab 'heroes' was dictated by his status. He further objected to my association with such members of other underprivileged minorities as Elie Kedourie of the London School of Economics. Professor Kedourie, of course, also happens to be Jewish, and what is more a member of a very prominent Baghdad Jewish family, from which came the Chief Rabbi of Iraq for several generations. It transpired that the reviewer belonged to the 'mafia of Middle East hands', whose knowledge of the area was quite superficial but who reviewed for the *TLS*. They were burdened with commitments, and the 'wasps' among them were guilt-ridden, a feeling which I, as a Mediterranean, simply could not share. I was looking at the Arabs as someone who had grown up with them, or at least alongside them, not as one who was promoting foreign interests through and among them. Significantly, a large number of colleagues wrote to the *TLS* editor protesting that kind of scurrilous review, scandalously based on relative ignorance, and added that it was becoming a common occurrence in the *TLS*, if not a permanent feature. None of these letters was published. Elie Kedourie's block-busting communication was published, however, to which the reviewer's reply was evasive and hypocritical if not outright dishonest. For my part, I replied to the review in a captious letter consisting of one short paragraph. In any case the editor was soon replaced in the editorial chair, and signed reviewing was restored to the *TLS*.

When the book first appeared in the autumn of 1971, it displeased the British Arabist establishment: that is, those among them associated with the Foreign Office's approach to the Middle East and its particular perception of the Arabs since the Great War; or those who were weaned on the Hogarth–Storrs–Lawrence–Philby legacy. Essentially, this legacy and the 'school' of Arabists to which it gave rise had a peculiarly 'salvationist and liberationist' approach to the region and its inhabitants from the outside and from the perspective of a then awesome Western imperial power. They were not therefore prepared for, or willing to consider, a more indigenous approach to and interpretation of the Arab Middle East by someone basing his analysis on observations made largely from inside the Middle East: that is, looking at it from the inside, not the outside; at how Arabs actually behave, what they say and what they write. And I dare say this shocked them. That anyone would question the political efficacy and practical cogency of Arab nationalism, a doctrine this establishment had invested so much time, effort and money to nurture, seemed to them tantamount to an audacious challenge to their hallowed view and comfortable consensus about the Arabs and the Middle East. I also fear that some of them may have felt insulted. They forget, perhaps, that in a moment of poor judgement, their own Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, had already undermined their comfortable position with his promise to the Jews of a national home in Palestine, which enabled the Jews, the Zionists among them in particular, to step on their Middle Eastern cake!

For the Establishment Arabists, anyone who comes forth with an interpretation of the modern history and politics of the Middle East in general and the Arabs in particular with which they disagree is a Zionist. In their eyes, my case was one of guilt by association. Several years later when I asked Edward Said why he had attacked me in his book *Orientalism* having only read my short introduction to a co-authored volume, *Revolution in the Middle East* (London, 1972), he replied: 'Because of your known close association with Bernard Lewis.' That was the level to which discourse on the Middle East had sunk. On further reflection, it was clear to me that Edward Said had become the establishment Arabists' hero because, as their erstwhile victim (he was from a Christian family in Palestine that had been converted to evangelical Protestantism by the overseas missions in Palestine), Said was now turning what

they had taught him against them, his former mentors. I, on the other hand, had spurned their ministrations in the same environment, for I had a country and did not suffer from problems of identity.

But, unawares perhaps, Said introduced McCarthyism into Middle Eastern studies – at least in the United States. In interviewing for academic appointments in some American universities in the very recent past, candidates were asked where they stood on the 'Said–Lewis' debate on Orientalism!

The book also elicited attacks from the chic left in the UK and the USA. It was apparently sinful to examine the Arabs critically on the basis of their political behaviour, conduct, transmitted cultural values and experience – and not according to some proclaimed or preconceived ideological construct, preference or pretension.

One of my research students back in 1973, a Greek Orthodox woman from Lebanon, brought me a cutting from the Beirut weekly, *al-Hawadith*. The magazine was subvented in the more distant past by Nasser of Egypt. Now it had become a client of the Kuwaitis. An exiled Egyptian conservative journalist, closely associated with the Muslim Brotherhood, wrote for it. He had published a virulent attack on me as an 'agent of British imperialism', whatever that is. His name rang a bell, for several months earlier he had applied to my department for a place as a research student, and we had turned him down on academic grounds.

My year (1973–4) in Princeton was no less trying when it came to the Arab–Israeli dialectic. One of two successors to one of the oldest Oriental studies departments in the USA, the department of Near Eastern studies, was also polarized; this time not between Arab and Jew, but between the sentimental pro-Arabs of the new breed on the one hand, and the Turks and Persians on the other, and this did not affect me. Nevertheless I felt that I was being constantly monitored on my 'leanings'.

Whereas the highlight of the season of the Indiana University Music School are the performances of the New York Metropolitan Opera, the highlight of its academic calendar are the Patten Foundation Lectures. When I delivered these lectures on 'Islam and the Nation-State' in March–April 1982, Muslim students (Arabs, Iranians and Pakistanis) demonstrated their protest,

contending that no non-Muslim should speak about Islam.* It transpired that several militant Muslim organizations had established the centre of their activities nearby in the American Middle West. The university authorities were concerned enough to arrange a meeting between the representatives of these students and myself. Also present at that meeting were the dean of the university faculty, one or two other senior members of the faculty and, as I recall, George Steiner, who was visiting the university at the time. When the protesters realized that my lectures did not deal exclusively or primarily with Islam as the faith or religious creed, but more with the historical-existential experience of the Muslims, they conceded the inappropriateness of their protests. Still, the episode was, in my view, indicative of the militant Muslims' approach to dialogue and public debate about the Muslim experience.

* An expanded version of these lectures was published subsequently under the title *Islam and the State* by Routledge in 1987, and reprinted in paperback edition in 1991.

8

With the University of London: the School of Oriental and African Studies

During the academic year 1962–3, Professor Bernard Lewis came to Indiana University to deliver the Patten Foundation lectures for that year. These were subsequently published as *The Middle East and the West* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1964), a widely read book in the last twenty-five years. I was then Professor of Government at Indiana University, where I had been since 1953 after coming down from the Johns Hopkins University. Bernard Lewis asked me if I would consider going to the SOAS to help establish a Political Studies programme.

His approach presented me with a hard choice and difficult decision. But it also presented me with an attractive challenge. However, the American university system was the one I was familiar with, and at that time the academic and material prospects of a university career in America were far brighter than in Britain. In fact university teachers were already leaving Britain for America, and I was being asked to consider doing the opposite. Our children were small, my wife's family was in England, and she was not opposed to returning there. Still, I decided to be careful and test the place first. I was superficially acquainted with the SOAS when, as a Guggenheim Fellow, I had spent a few months in London in 1961–2. When the School invited me to join its Department of Economic & Political Studies, I accepted, but spent my first year there on leave of absence, at the end of which I returned to Indiana University. In January 1965 I was appointed Professor in the University of London; I resigned from Indiana University and accepted the new appointment, especially as I

found working alongside several members of the SOAS the year before congenial, and the prospect of creating a political studies programme an absorbing worthwhile challenge.

Sometime in the summer of 1968, an official of the Jordanian Government Information Office in Amman who was also an amateur historian came to visit me. After telling me he was in London to work in the Public Record Office for a book he was writing on *The Arab Revolt of 1916*, he produced a sheet of paper with detailed comments on my book, *Politics and the Military in Jordan* (London, 1967). His remarks did not refer to any points of substance or interpretation; he simply questioned one or two dates and names of persons I refer to in the book. More interesting, however, was his 'confession': he had not seen my book in Amman and he had only read it because an American had lent him a copy. Then apologetically he told me he had written to a well-known lady author in England, asking about the book. Her response was elliptical: 'The publisher of the book is a Jew', she wrote to him. (the publisher, Frank Cass, happens to be Jewish). 'You can imagine its content.' My visitor was not certain that she had read the book herself. He seemed to think she had not. Then he proceeded to say how pleasantly surprised he was to find that the book had little if anything to do with the usual polemics surrounding the Arab–Israeli conflict. Why should it, when the book was mainly about the Arab Legion? I could not resist telling him that he had succumbed to Arab mythology; and that publishers in free societies, regardless of their religion, do not and cannot censor authors. They can only advise them, through lawyers, against making libellous statements.

This incident reminded me of all the pundits and promoters of Middle Eastern causes on the periphery of academia, government and public affairs whom I met in embassy receptions in London and in Chatham House meetings: the kind of 'expert' who makes a living by soliciting embassy offices and City concerns, selling them potted information for a set subscription rate. Many of these both in broadcasts and in the press performed miracles during and after the June 1967 Arab–Israeli war, trying to salvage the reputation of their hard-pressed 'hero', Nasser, not as ruler of Egypt, but as leader of their favourite movement, Arab nationalism, in which they had invested so much money and effort in the past. This whitewashing campaign went hand in hand with a marked

antipathy towards Israel. Yet none of these attempts seemed to be motivated by a genuine liking of the Arabs, or a belief in the capacities of Arab societies. One could only infer that they were motivated by a dislike for the other side – Israel – and perhaps for the Jews as a whole. At no time did any of these advocates of the Arab cause offer proof that they understood the problems of Arab society which lay at the root of their weakness and failure.

It is interesting, for instance, that in her private correspondence reporting events in Palestine in 1947–8, Espie Emery, headmistress of the English High School for Girls, Haifa, tried to be impartial, yet in the end is clearly pro-Arab because Christian Arabs were the constituency of the English Church missions. In a letter to Ruth Plumsted, dated 31 October 1937, about school places, she remarked that they had to hand out rejections because they 'were in danger of going above one-third non-Christians': an interesting self-imposed quota. When she describes her own recruitment to the teaching staff of the Jerusalem School back in 1919, she reports that she had to be a communicant of the Church of England. The school in Haifa closed down at the end of the spring term, 1948. 'Shortly after we left', wrote Emery, 'the Jews stormed Haifa by three routes [referring to the 22–3 April Haganah operation], driving the population down on to the beaches, where many were picked up by boats and taken to Beirut. During this savage attack . . .', she goes on, but adds that she did not witness it herself. Note nevertheless, the anti-Jewish tone of her remarks because, after all, the Arabs were the clients of Emery's mission in Palestine.

On Tuesday, 7 August 1973 I went to the School of Oriental and African Studies to see an Israeli research student, Avi Plascov, who had made an appointmnt to discuss his research. At 11 a.m., half an hour after Plascov and I sat down for a chat in my room, an Egyptian walked in. I noticed that he was wearing a plastic neck and spine surgical stay. He explained that Mustafa el-Fiki of the Egyptian Embassy (also by then a part-time research student whom I supervised) had arranged an appointment for him with me through the departmental secretary. He said his name was Saad Zaghloul Fuad. I remembered the name from two sources: the Cairo press back in 1944–8, when I was an undergraduate, and more recently, the Political Police (Parquet) files in the Judicial Archives in Cairo. He was a member – at one time leader – of the

'bomber squad' in the 1940s and member of one of the so-called students–workers resistance organizations engaged in sabotage against the British Canal Base subsequently in 1950–2. He had also been a journalist. He claimed he remembered me from when he was very briefly a student at the American University in Cairo. I had no such recollection of him.

Having later checked my papers and notes, I concluded that the man had also been a member of Misr al-Fatat (Young Egypt) at least since 1942–3. Before that, like many nationalistic students, he was a Wafdist or Wafd Party supporter. What was most interesting about him was his close association with Anwar Sadat (in 1973, President of Egypt). They had both been tried together over their alleged involvement in bombings and assassinations, convicted and sentenced to prison terms. Saad Zaghloul Fuad in fact published his own story about all this, shortly after Sadat became President, in *al-usbu'al-arabi* magazine in Beirut. Moreover, he had been brought into the immediate periphery of the Revolutionary Command Council in its early days in 1952–3 as a prominent ex-student leader and rebel. Later, however, Nasser slammed him in jail and had him tortured. He was freed in 1964.

In the 1940s campaign against the Palace, the British and the politicians, members of the Young Egypt Society and their organizations had concluded that there was no means other than the use of violence to attain certain political ends. Groups were organized for that purpose. Two of these were Saad Zaghloul Fuad's 'bomber squad', assisted by the army officer Anwar Sadat, and an 'assassination squad' whose military adviser was another officer, Ahmad Izzat, also a Young Egypt member. Both groups were supervised by the notorious anti-British General Aziz Ali al-Masri. 'The first time I ever saw a revolver', Saad Zaghloul Fuad told me that morning, 'was when General Masri gave me one.' Given the fact that General Aziz Ali al-Masri was honorary President of Young Egypt, the latter organization was in overall control of these groups and their activites.

Saad Zaghloul Fuad told me he was assigned the task of assassinating Amin Osman Pasha. 'Tawfiq Husein jumped the gun on me,' he told me. 'And that was because he was a King's man, and the King wanted to muck up our operations.' Here one must recall the lenient treatment of Tawfiq Husein during his imprisonment and trial, and his later relatively easy escape to Syria

and Saudi Arabia, most probably with the connivance of the Palace in Cairo.

In 1951–2, Saad Zaghloul Fuad claims, the 'guerrilla' operations against the British in the Canal were becoming effective. 'The burning of Cairo on Saturday, 26 January 1952', he asserted, 'was aimed at undermining our efforts in the Canal Zone, for it did stop our operations there . . . Ahmad Hussein, leader of Young Egypt,' he went on to say, 'had nothing to do with that. As a matter of fact, considering the resulting political chaos, he went on to urge Ali Maher Pasha to assume the reins of government. And Ali Maher was perhaps one of the architects of the conspiracy . . . It is we who in fact toppled King Faruq and the *ancien régime*. The Free Officers only walked in to finish the job. But they also stopped the revolution.' All very engaging stuff, I thought, with echoes of the post-1952 arguments put forward by Egyptian communists, such as those expressed in the early writings of the Paris-based Anouar Abdel Malek.

The 6 May 1947 bombing of the Metro cinema, Fuad claimed, was the work neither of the Muslim Brotherhood nor of his own bomber squad. His group had planned extensive sabotage against the elaborate celebrations by the King on that day, the anniversary of his accession to the throne. Those, however, were to take the form of shooting out the strings of decorative lights along the river corniche and in the main city squares, disrupting in this way all popular festivities. 'Two of our members, however', Fuad went on, 'due to personal grievances, proceeded to bomb the Metro cinema.' He mentioned their names, but I did not catch them. When he was accused of the bombing himself and brought to trial, Fuad confessed to all the other bombing incidents in the city, but insisted that the Metro cinema was not one of them.

Fuad also claimed that he had been tortured by Nasser's security guards. A few years ago he published a book criticizing the Palestinian Resistance Movement, and he claimed to me that, as an act of revenge, the Palestinians abducted and tortured him. He told me that it was the worst, most brutal torture he had experienced (Fuad was also at one time on the receiving end of General Oufkir of Morocco's torture squad). The operation to repair the damage to his neck, Fuad told me that morning, was performed by a Mr Andrews at the Middlesex Hospital on 22 May 1973.

Saad Zaghloul Fuad paid me another visit at SOAS on

Thursday, 14 August. It lasted for an hour and three-quarters. He showed me his book, *Ninety Days with the Fedayeen*, published by *al-Maktaba al-'asriyya* of Beirut in 1969, in which he claims he was tortured by the Palestinians. I recall having seen an earlier book by him, *Ma'rakat al'Qanal* (*The Battle of the Suez Canal*), published in Cairo, which is copiously quoted or cited by Tariq al-Bishri, in his *Tarikh al-haraka al-siyasiyya fi Misr 1944–1952* (*History of the Political Movement in Egypt*, Cairo, 1971).

Fuad also told me how Wadie Haddad of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) apprised him in advance of the Zurich airport attack on an El Al aircraft in February 1970, so that he could cover it for the Cairo weekly magazine *al-Masawwar*. When Fuad left to go to Zurich, the Palestinian who was to lead the operation met him at the airport only to inform him that he was opting out of it, because the same crew of the first El Al airplane hijacked to Algeria were in the restaurant and could identify him. But he gave Fuad the name of the hotel in Zurich where the other members of the squad were staying. Fuad proceeded there to meet him and enquire about the timing of the operation. He discovered that the second-in-command who was taking over as leader (a taxi driver, married with several children) was in love with the female member of the squad and reluctant to risk his life.

The group had their arms and ammunition packed in a suitcase. Out of the blue they demanded that Fuad drive them to the airport. He did and was ready to cover the photo-reportage story for his magazine. Suddenly the Palestinians insisted that he leave the car behind for their use. But the car was leased in his name, and he feared they would implicate him in the attack. They upbraided him for being unwilling to contribute a car to the 'cause' when they were risking their lives. He finally left them the VW motor. His Palestinian interlocutor of that encounter was incidentally shot dead by the Israeli security man on the El Al aircraft. Next day, the Egyptian Ambassador in Switzerland helped Fuad out of the country, but he was soon identified as the man who had rented the car used by the Palestinians in their operation.

Among other things, Saad Zaghloul Fuad claimed that George Habash, leader of the PFLP, received a £10,000 monthly stipend from the state of Iraq, and asserted to me that the several Palestinian so-called guerrilla organizations are more like business enterprises and commercial companies.

Regarding President Sadat, Saad Zaghloul Fuad alleged that after their joint activities in the 1940s, Sadat abandoned his old or erstwhile mates. This was particularly true, he said, of the rebel air force officer Hasan Izzat who, together with Baghdadi and Suudi (subsequently killed) had organized the General Aziz Ali al-Masri-inspired activities against the British during the war. After 1952 the Free Officer Revolutionary Command Council made Hasan Izzat director of a new state owned company set up to import machinery from abroad. But they refused him a ministerial post. Fuad claimed that this embittered Izzat, who saw lesser ex-officers than himself fixed up under Nasser. One day he was given £50,000 and sent to Europe to buy machinery. He never returned. Instead he set up his own export-import business in Hamburg. The regime in Cairo, Fuad told me, considered the £50,000 with which Izzat absconded a small price to pay for getting rid of him.

In this connection, Saad Zaghloul Fuad claimed that the real Free Officer organization consisted of officers like A. L. Baghdadi, Anwar Sadat, Hasan Izzat and a few others who had been politically active and close to General Aziz Ali al-Masri and the Young Egypt Organization during the Second World War. When they formed an Executive Committee in 1949 or 1950, they made Nasser its chairman because he was conveniently located in Cairo as an instructor in the Staff College.* He also told me that he and the others were so incensed by Sadat's perfidy (treachery?) that one day they went to his home in order to assassinate him, but Sadat talked them out of it. When subsequently Sadat did not support Fuad and his companions in the new Free Officer regime, he offered by way of explanation/justification his own adage, 'al-hayat tamthil' ('Life is a process of play-acting').

Over the years I also had visits from a variety of Arabs and Jews or Israelis for the most bizarre reasons. After the Baath Party coup of al-Bakr in Baghdad in July 1968, Abd-al-Rahman al-Bazzaz came to see me. An ex-Prime Minister of Iraq and one-time Iraqi Ambassador in London, Bazzaz wished for his son to be considered for a place in our new MA Area Studies course. That way, he informed me, he could get the lad out of Iraq – as he eventually did. Bazzaz himself was 'cooling his heels' in London and was rather vague about how long he would remain in England, but he

* See my *Nasser and his Generation*.

intimated that he would be returning to Baghdad. Yet everyone knew that when he was Prime Minister he had made life very difficult for al-Bakr and his friends. The latter therefore would not be too pleased to see Bazzaz back in Baghdad.

Bazzaz had had an interesting, chequered political career. From a Muslim 'nationalist' – someone, that is, who argued the complete compatibility between Islam and Arab nationalism – in the early 1950s, Bazzaz became a Nasserite Arab socialist in the early 1960s. After that he reverted to being a local Iraqi nationalist. His title, 'doctor', many of us suspected to be phoney. We could not locate or identify any university that had conferred it upon him. No matter, it sounded good in the Arab world.

At about this time a very articulate and smooth Palestinian working for the Arab League office in London applied to do a research degree under my supervision. He wished to write on the Palestine Question. His main referee was an old acquaintance, Professor Walid Khalidi, then at the American University of Beirut (AUB). A member of a very old and prominent Jerusalem family, Walid became news in the UK and the Arab world when he resigned his post at Oxford in 1956 in protest over Suez. I had seen him in May when I went to the AUB to lecture. There Walid was preoccupied mainly with a Palestine Institute, which he was directing with Burhan Dajani. For some reason he seemed to think that we, the School, and our colleagues at Oxford ought to accept any students he recommended, especially if they intended to do research on the Palestine Question.

Several weeks later Malcolm Kerr wrote to me about the applicant from the Arab League office. He said that the applicant had been his student at the AUB in 1961. He too had found him smooth and articulate, but considered that although he was intelligent, he never showed a capacity to think anything other than the most conventional thoughts; he lacked originality and independence of mind, and was no more than an organization man. Malcolm added that he shuddered to think what this applicant would produce as a doctoral thesis on the Palestine Question. On the same day, I asked the Registrar to send the applicant a polite letter of rejection.

An old acquaintance, a Palestinian from the history department in the AUB, visited me in early autumn 1968. His remarks about the situation in the AUB indicated that the institution was plagued

by a division between the Arab nationalists on the staff and their American colleagues. One thing he said in particular about the PFLP, some of whose members had hijacked an El Al airliner the previous summer. The day before the hijacking happened, a spokesman of the Palestinian liberation movement told my acquaintance that the PFLP had a bank balance of just over 9,000 Lebanese pounds, and sought help and suggestions in the matter of raising funds. My friend, who hails from a village in Palestine, still adhered to the rural values and mores of his home. He described to me how some of his Arab acquaintances dropped thousands of pounds at the gambling tables of the Casino in Beirut and the Playboy Club on London's Park Lane. When he approached a few of them to contribute to the refugees fund they turned him down flat.

An old school friend arrived to spend the year on research leave from the AUB at the St John's Hospital for Skin Diseases. Among other things he recounted his interesting experience with the Prime Minister of Syria, who had asked my friend to go to Damascus to examine him for some dermatological complaint or other. My friend was then head of dermatology at the AUB Medical School and Hospital. He took a couple of his younger colleagues and drove up from Beirut to Damascus on a Sunday. Having examined the man, they all sat down to lunch as the Prime Minister's guests. In the course of a general conversation my friend asked his host why all those fantastic defensive fortifications in the Golan had collapsed so quickly in the 1967 war. The Prime Minister responded by saying that land can be lost and regained, but armies cannot be easily rebuilt or reconstituted; hence the withdrawal of the Syrian army in that particular battle. Then my friend put it to the Prime Minister that the regime in Syria was really an Alawite clique. The Prime Minister, it seems, stumbled a bit on this one, before he asserted vehemently that the regime was an ideological one. He hastened to add that his mother was an Alawite, but that this made no difference.

Around this time, I attended a meeting on 'The Middle East in 1970' at Ditchley which left me cold and indifferent. I thought then, and I still think today, that it is difficult and awkward to mix academics with pundits, journalists, publicists and men of affairs. The latter bandy about terms with a view to oversimplify issues. They prefer prescription to analysis. One thing is clear: the British,

on the whole, continued to be sentimental about that part of the world, and divided more on the basis of prejudices, predilections and preferences, and less on the basis of cold or sober analysis.

A lady from the London Bureau of *Time-Life* came to interview me in November in connection with a cover story that *Time* was planning on the Palestinian Liberation Movement. It struck me that most journalists in their questions about Fatah, for instance, were then more intersted in whether King Hussein would survive in Jordan, and less in whether the Palestinians could ever attain their publicly proclaimed goals regarding Israel.

One of my Palestinian research students came to see me in January 1969 before going to Beirut to visit his ailing father. As a member of the Palestine National Council (at one time he also sat on the PLO Executive as representative of the Iraqi Baath Party), he complained about the PLO's financial dependence on Arab states. He also worried about the fact that little was being done to build up political support and a political base on the West Bank, and feared that West Bankers would soon feel distant and separate from the PLO movement. I half-seriously suggested that the PLO impose a levy on all Palestinians to mitigate its massive financial dependence on others. Sure enough, my student made exactly such a proposal to the National Council meeting in Beirut.

In November 1969 I was a guest of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. I found it a somewhat strange place which had a great deal of money and several good students, but a relatively small number of teaching staff. The Arab–Israeli conflict plagued relations between staff and students alike. These were divided between pro-Arab and pro-Israeli camps, each canvassing and lobbying guest lecturers. I fear I satisfied neither camp with my afternoon lecture and my after-dinner evening talk. I felt the staff at that time were living in an unreal world, for the influx of academics into Washington since Kennedy's presidency had placed many of them in a twilight world. They were attracted by the prospect of higher incomes and the genuine desire to have practical experience in government, or at least in proximity to great power. But this made them ambivalent towards their primary function and role as teachers and scholars. There were those among them who seriously believed they could influence American policy. Slowly but relentlessly, their new relation to government inhibited their otherwise more stimulating – even controversial – work as scholars.

During this time I declined several invitations from local Zionist organizations in Britain to talk to their members on the Middle East: I was rather wary of the Arab–Israeli conflict. General Y. Harkabi, one-time chief of Israeli military intelligence, sent me a copy of his new monograph on the Palestinians and Israel, the last section of which contained a very interesting annotation of the Charter or Covenant of the PLO. Harkabi had just embarked on an academic career specializing on the Palestine Question and the Palestinians.

I received reports from two of my research students in Beirut. One, who had just successfully completed his Ph.D. and was temporarily teaching at the AUB, reported that the Palestinians there were furiously soliciting Gulf sheikhs and other rich Arab rulers to secure funds for new institutes and journals. The other, with Iraqi financial backing, had founded his own publishing company, while continuing to serve on the Palestine National Council (PNC) and the PLO Executive. He suddenly showed up in London and generously gave me lunch at the Hilton, where he occupied an expensive suite.

About the same time, a fellow undergraduate at the American University in Cairo back in the 1940s and now Saudi Minister in Rabat, shed interesting light on the relationship between the Saudis and the Palestinians, especially Fatah, as well as between King Faisal and Nasser in the famous Khartoum Summit of August–September 1967. The thrust of his remarks over a period of ten days was, first, that King Faisal had brought Nasser to his knees in the inter-Arab political arena and, second, that the Saudis not only paid out a great deal of money to the Palestinians, but also, because of that, often made a point of 'calling the tune'. I found it interesting to hear these remarks from my friend, a close relative of the Mufti, yet a member of the Saudi diplomatic corps since 1949.

A Palestinian from Beirut, a philosophy graduate of the Arab university there, who claimed he had published several 'revolutionary tracts' for the Talia publishing house in Beirut, wished to do 'serious' research about the 'Arab and Palestine revolutions'. It transpired, after seventy minutes of a monologue, that he doubted the motives, understanding and sincerity of the leaders and articulators of these so-called revolutions. He called himself a 'pure Leninist', whatever that is. I became interested in his own motives

when he suddenly asked me what I thought were the psychological complexes and other problems of people like Wadie Haddad and George Habash of the PFLP, as well as those of the PLO-associated intellectuals Walid Khalidi and Hisham Sharabi. When I volunteered no comment, especially as three of these four named persons were old friends, he came forward with bizarre theories of his own about them.

Don Peretz of the State University of New York, Binghampton, who had worked for many years in the Middle East with relief agencies related to the Palestine problem, came to discuss a new peace project that he was co-ordinating, and to ask if I could suggest names of Arab scholars who would be willing to contribute to his project. Peretz was, in the view of many Arabs, a 'tame' Jew – in crude religious terms, a 'Quaker' or 'Unitarian' Jew.

Walid Khalidi succeeded in launching a new journal, *Palestine Studies*, with Kuwaiti financing. The journal was initially edited by Hisham Sharabi. When we lunched together at the Reform, Walid was at that particular moment fairly disillusioned with the Palestine resistance movement. He was prepared to consider a kind of Palestinian rehabilitation, or an autonomous, though Hashemite-linked, Palestinian entity on the West Bank, and for that he also favoured a direct dialogue with the Israelis. He wanted me to suggest Israelis who would write for his new journal!

During spring and autumn of 1971 I was overwhelmed by a string of Arab and Jewish visitors. I was paid a visit by Joe Abileah and his wife from Haifa. I had not seen Abileah since 1944. Abileah's father ran a private music conservatory and a music shop near the Armon cinema on the boundary between Arab Haifa and Jewish Hadar HaCarmel. His younger brother Rudi had tried to teach me the cello. Since that time the relationship between Joe Abileah and my family in Athens had developed through my brother Yanni, the chief principal violist of the Athens State Orchestra and the Radio Orchestra. Yanni was also professor of violin/viola at the Hellenic Conservatory, Athens, and co-founder with Tatsis Apostolidis in 1953–5 of the first chamber music ensemble in Greece, the Hellenic Quartet. Later, in the 1960s he had also founded a Greek chamber trio.

Anyway, Joe Abileah apparently visited Athens frequently. What he wanted to see me about was his 'Confederation Scheme'. As an Israeli pacifist, supported by the Quakers and other

organizations in the West, he wanted to form a 'Middle Eastern Confederation' between Israel, the Palestinians and Jordan – and possibly Lebanon. He was secretary of the Confederation Peace Movement. A biography by Anthony G. Bing, *Israeli Pacifist: The Life of Joseph Abileah*, was published last year (Syracuse, 1990).

A few days later I had a strange visitor. He turned up without an appointment or advance notice. When he announced his name, Nathan Yallin-Mor, there must have been the hint of recognition in my brief hesitation. When he quickly asked if we had met before, I replied, insensitively perhaps, that the name Nathan Yallin was vaguely familiar. He put me at ease by reminding me that it was plastered on all police notice boards in the Palestine of the mid-1940s. Yallin had been a Stern Gang gunman. The Mor was a later suffix to his name. However, once he sank his massive frame in an easy chair, he proceeded to describe to me the peace movement in which he was actively involved, and to solicit my views about it.

Immediately after Abileah's and Nathan Yallin's visits, the Egyptian writer Yusef Idris showed up. Perhaps the most gifted short-story writer of his generation, Yusef, a medical doctor by training (he qualified from Cairo University in 1950 or 1951), amused me with his comment about Nasser's momentary resignation in June 1967. 'I did not know whether to laugh or cry when the man returned to the presidency,' he told me. 'On the one hand,' he went on, 'I admired the average Egyptian's intuition [*saliqa*] who wanted to punish Nasser, the man who took our money, played the "horses" and lost.' With him came the writer on Egyptian folklore and editor of the magazine *al-Katib*, Abbas Rushdi Saleh.

In the same week Tahseen Bashir, official spokesman of the Egyptian government and an 'Egypt first' diplomat, got in touch to discuss his activities. Tahseen comes from a bourgeois family in Alexandria, and is Alexandria and Princeton educated. He is now a retired Egyptian ambassador.

Most interesting was Mustafa Fiqi, a young Egyptian diplomat just assigned to the Embassy in London. He came to apply for a place to do a research degree, but was rather late in the year. He was badly advised in Cairo about applying: they told him he need not apply until he arrived in London in September. 'Go and see Vatikiotis,' they told him. 'He will help you.' His referees were old

colleagues and friends in Cairo, Dr Abdel Malek Auda and Professor Boutros Boutros Ghali of Cairo University. Dr El Fiqi is now Secretary for Information to President Mubarak.

One of the most pleasant and instructive episodes of my fated situation among Arabs and Jews occurred in February 1972, when I arranged a meeting between Yusef Idris and the best-selling Israeli (Jewish) novelist Benyamin Tammuz. The latter was then Cultural Attaché of the Israeli Embassy in London. Yusef, whom I had known for nearly twenty years, had always intimated to me that he would like to speak face to face with an Israeli. I was naturally happy to agree to arrange such a meeting; my problem was to decide what kind of Israeli and under what circumstances. After all, this was some time before the October War (1973) and at least five years before Camp David. I was certain all the same that the opportunity would present itself in the future.

I had met Tammuz for the first time at a publisher's reception before Christmas 1971. In the course of our conversation, he told me that the literary magazine which he edited in Israel (published by the newspaper, *Haaretz*) had published excerpts in Hebrew translation from works by Egyptian fiction writers as well as critical studies about them, and that these included Yusef Idris. In fact he added, with immense charm, 'We owe him some royalties.' I felt this was the excuse and opportunity I had been looking for to fulfil my promise to Yusef. Tammuz welcomed my suggestion of a meeting between him and Idris – indeed, he pounced on it. We agreed that I would make the arrangements as soon as I returned from a short visit to the Middle East.

Early in February 1972 Comay, the Israeli Ambassador in London, held a 'working tea' at his residence on Avenue Road NW8, which was attended by most of his embassy's senior staff and several academics. At the close of that meeting and as we were leaving, Tammuz reminded me of our previous discussion. The following week I went up with Yusef to St Antony's College, Oxford, where he addressed a seminar on the Egyptian theatre. A few minutes after the 13.15 train had pulled out of Paddington, Yusef himself brought up the matter of a meeting with an Israeli. There and then we fixed it.

Yusef did not wish to meet Tammuz in my room in SOAS. I, in turn, did not tell him how and where the meeting was to occur; I only asked him to come to my room in SOAS at 6 p.m. Very unlike

Yusef, he was punctual, and showed no signs of unease or apprehension. As we walked out towards the underground station, he bought me a drink at the Marlborough in Bloomsbury. Then I got him on the underground to Swiss Cottage, and from there we walked to Tammuz's flat. Suddenly Yusef asked, 'Why his home?' 'Because it is more private,' I replied, and my answer satisfied him. From the moment he entered Tammuz's home and they shook hands, Yusef was a marvel. The two of them hit it off right away and argued with each other long and hard. Yusef's Sharqiyya pride was tempered with intelligence, humanity and good manners. After drinks and a magnificent dinner, prepared and served by Mrs Tammuz, we departed.

I was riveted by their exchange, and two things were soon clear to me. First, the Israelis may know or think they know about the Arabs of the Fertile Crescent, or the Levant, but they do not know about the Egyptians. The Egyptians, in their turn, know very little that is first hand about the Israelis. Consequently, both sides were motivated by inordinate fear and deep distrust. Second, there is absolutely no alternative to or substitute for face-to-face talks and negotiations between the two sides, if one is to hope for peace in that corner of the world.

Incidentally, Yusef knew I had been to Israel to take part in a conference on the Soviet Union and the Middle East, and questioned me searchingly and eagerly about the place whenever we met. But so did most Arabs learn of my participation in that conference and what I said in my paper. On 3 February 1972 the Beirut daily, *an-Nahar*, published a long piece about all this.

While on a visit to Egypt in 1973 in connection with the book I was writing (*Nasser and his Generation*, London, 1978), I visited almost daily the doyen of Egyptian letters, the late Maître Tawfiq al-Hakim in his office in the Ahram building in Cairo, where several other leading figures from the world of Eygptian literature, culture and the arts – Louis Awad, Naguib Mahfuz, Salah Taher, Yusef Idris and others – would congregate for mid-morning coffee.

I had caught my first glimpse of Tawfiq al-Hakim and heard him hold forth at the famous Café Riche on Soliman Pasha (now Talaat Harb) Street in the centre of Cairo when I was a first-year undergraduate back in 1944. Having subsequently, as an exercise for my own education and entertainment, translated his old three-act play, *Ahl al-Kahf* (*The Cave Dwellers*, 1933), and then published it

with an introduction and notes in 1955, I made the effort to get to know him in 1961–2 when I spent some time in Egypt as a Guggenheim Fellow.

By then I had become one of al-Hakim's admirers, especially of his earlier work, *Yawmiyyāt nā'ib fi'l-ariāf* (translated by Aubrey S. Eban as *The Maze of Justice*, London, 1947), a devastating satire on the application of the Napoleonic Code to rural Egypt in the form of the diary of a country prosecutor, as well as his epic encomium to the Egyptian national movement of 1919 in his novel *'Awdat al-rūh* (1933). Thus in our meetings I discovered how committed the old man was to an Egyptian territorial identity, different from the Arab one that was being promoted at that time by the regime of the Free Officers. He was equally committed to the advantages of a close link with Western civilization, culture and art, and always posed what was really a rhetorical question: 'We have been involved in Arab affairs for the last thirty years, and what have we really gained from this involvement?'

Ideologically enthusiastic but otherwise not very thoughtful younger supplicants who aspired to some recognition in the world of literature would be cut down to size by the old man with a plea that they ponder their Egyptian roots and do more reading and reflection. As Egypt was one of the oldest states and was relatively exposed to the cosmopolitanism of Europe and the Mediterranean, al-Hakim believed his country would one day play a reconciling role between the Arabs and Israel, provided it first ensured its own security and territorial integrity, and developed its own personality. The fact that Egypt was also the centre of Arabic publishing and Islamic studies, al-Hakim argued, strengthened his particular view.

Believing that I straddled the Arab–Israeli and Arab–Western divides in those days, and having seen my work on Egypt over the years, al-Hakim would comment freely on a great variety of matters. In fact, during an earlier period when the Nasser regime had isolated Egyptian writers and intellectuals from the West, al-Hakim – at the suggestion of Louis Awad – would refer to me as *'hamzat al-wasl'*, a connecting diacritical mark in Arabic orthography meaning, I presumed at the time, a kind of bridge between two worlds. (Quite recently, at a lunch in Cairo with some Egyptian writers, Yusef Idris urged me to write something about the two cultures.) When al-Hakim completed his famous tract about the

Nasser regime, *The Return of Consciousness*, he handed me a copy of the typescript before the book was first published in 1974. On the whole, I felt at the time that Tawfiq al-Hakim believed Egypt's relations with the Arabs – that is, the regional Arab dimension of Egyptian state policy – were as much of a problem as its relations with Israel.

On New Year's Day 1973, I was a guest for lunch at the home of the well-known Egyptian leftist writer and journalist, Dr Lutfi al-Kholi in Cairo. Other guests included several old friends from the Egyptian intelligentsia. Another of the guests was the late Kamāl Nāsir, a leading figure at that time of the PLO in Beirut. I knew of him as a member of a prominent Christian family from the Ramallah area near Jerusalem, a leading member of the earliest Baath Party in Jordan around 1953, an amateur poet and man of letters. After lunch, over coffee he invited me to sit by him and asked me what I thought of the Palestinian revolution. I must have mumbled an answer to the effect that I was not too impressed so far. Since he thought my response unenthusiastic Nasir took on an earnest tone, saying, 'Oh, no, this will not do; we must enlighten you, and put you straight about it,' and proceeded to harangue me with the usual 'text'. I asked him why he had joined the Baath Party in the first place, and he replied, 'for the sake of the Palestine cause'. The poor man was gunned down by Israeli agents in his Beirut flat four months later, I believe in April 1973. I felt badly about this exchange for a long time, especially in view of the subsequent assassination of my interlocutor, because I thought I may have, in our brief encounter, given Kamāl Nāsir the impression I did not take him or his movement seriously, which was not the case. I was, however, anxious not to allow myself to be led to defend or attack one position or another, Palestinian (Arab) or Israeli.

In 1980, I was a guest of the Egyptian armed forces at the first conference organized by their new Centre for Historical Research. During one of the coffee breaks I found myself surrounded by several senior officers asking me to autograph an old book of mine. The book in question, *The Egyptian Army in Politics* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1961) had been banned by the censor in Egypt when it was first published. Limited access to the book was allowed for senior army officers and senior government officials. As it later became an assigned text for the course in the Nasser (War) Academy, the

book, or a pirated version of it, received wider circulation. It was also translated into Arabic. So much for the effectiveness of the censor. Needless to say, in the circumstances, my publishers lost some money and I my royalties.

Nearly twenty years before that I had published an article in Arabic, 'The Arab intellectual and modern society' in the Beirut monthly journal, *Hiwar* (May 1963), which was edited by the Cambridge-educated Palestinian poet and critic the late Tawfiq Sayegh. The journal was sponsored by the US-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom, which also sponsored *Encounter* in England, *Der Monat* in Germany and other parallel publications elsewhere. In any event *Hiwar* was dubbed in those days 'the Arabic *Encounter*'. I had agreed to do the piece for two good reasons: first, I considered the prospect of writing a concise essay on such a subject in Arabic a real challenge; second, Tawfiq was a friend whose company I very much enjoyed and whose poetry I very much appreciated. Along with the late Salah Abdel Sabur in Egypt, Tawfiq was a pioneer of modern Arabic poetry.

What was also impressive about him was his sustained detachment from the more vociferous and active involvement of his several brothers, the economist Yusef, the philosopher, pamphleteer and publicist Fayez, and the PLO publicist Anis in the Arab nationalist Palestinian cause. Actually, the Sayegh family is truly remarkable among the educated Arab Palestinian élite, and had been active or in the forefront of the Arab nationalist and Palestinian cause since the 1940s. A convert to Protestantism, their father, the Revd Abdullah Sayegh, was an evangelical church minister in Tiberias, and all the children received an Anglo-American education.

One of the brothers, the philosopher Fayez Sayegh, first came under the influence of the eccentric Charles Malik (one-time Lebanese diplomat: Ambassador to Washington and to the UN, and Foreign Minister) at the AUB. Himself of Greek Orthodox sectarian provenance from northern Lebanon (al-Kura), Charles Malik did his postgraduate studies in philosophy at Harvard University under Professor Whitehead in the early 1930s, after which he returned to the AUB to teach. After coming down with a first degree in philosophy from the AUB, Fayez Sayegh went to the Jesuit-run Georgetown University in Washington, DC for his postgraduate course and research degree. For a few years he had

been prominent as one of the leading ideologues of the notorious Partie Populaire Syrienne (PPS) in Lebanon, founded in 1932–3 by the Greek Orthodox Antoun Saadeh. (Subsequently renamed the National Social Syrian Party, this was a quasi-fascist organization promoting the secular idea of Syrian nationalism. Antoun Saadeh was executed by the Lebanese authorities in 1949, and in retaliation his followers assassinated the Lebanese Prime Minister, Riad el-Solh, in Amman in 1950.) After 1952 Fayez achieved a certain notoriety – and popularity – as a spokesman of the Arab nationalist movement on behalf of the Arab League and, at times, of President Nasser of Egypt.

Egypt under Nasser aspired to the leadership of the Arab world, and my article dealt primarily with Egyptian intellectuals and writers, for they were widely read among Arabs. The writers reacted to my piece with animation and, to some extent, hostility. Two of the leading national dailies, *al-Ahram* and the government's own *al-Gumhuriyya*, commented on the article in their respective cultural pages. One of them published a summary of the article by Anis Mansur and invited wider comment.* One such comment came from the writer Yusef Idris. Idris had achieved fame with his play *al-Farafir*, a subtle, imaginative and effective satire of state power and the relation between ruler and ruled, as well as a devastating attack on the curtailment of individual freedom by political organization. I had commented at some length on these aspects of the play, and was rather upset that Idris should lead a public attack on me in the Cairo press.

I learned subsequently that Yusef feared that my explicit interpretation of the thrust of his play would get him into trouble with the authorities. Until then his earlier collaboration with Anwar Sadat in the National Union and Islamic Congress had spared him a fate similar to that of so many Egyptian writers and intellectuals, who had been arrested and imprisoned in spring 1959. Moreover, he now had an added material interest in keeping on the good side of the regime: it was reported that he was being considered for some state literary prize.

Soon thereafter it was alleged that the Congress for Cultural Freedom was a front organization of the CIA, and was funded by that agency. There was a massive campaign against *Hiwar* and its

* See Appendix II below.

editor in the Arabic press, led again by the Egyptians. Tawfiq Sayegh, who I was sure had no idea about a connection between the journal he edited and the CIA, resigned, and *Hiwar* was no more. I have always considered this a sad episode, but also not untypical of that environment. Tawfiq had worked extremely hard to produce a publication of uncompromisingly high standards to serve as a public forum for the critical discussion of cultural, literary and social problems and trends in the Arab world. Even a cursory examination of the score or so issues of the journal that appeared will reveal this quality. After the commotion and furore and his resignation from *Hiwar*, Tawfiq accepted an academic position at the University of California, Berkeley. A very short while later, he died suddenly and prematurely of a heart attack.

Writing about the Arabs or Arab matters, even if one refrained from ever writing about their adversaries, was not a straightforward or happy experience. The possibility that there could be another view worthy of scrutiny and critical discussion was not as yet entertained even by one's friends among the Arabs. At least the unleashing of pejorative epithets, such as 'conniving Orientalist', or 'Orientalist in the service of imperialism and Eurocentric arrogance', was still a few years away. Edward Said, one suspects, was still an aspiring student then. I was told that the late President Nasser himself had exclaimed, 'Why can't the Greek confine himself to publishing in English as he pleases, but refrain from writing and publishing in Arabic?' I doubt if Nasser ever expressed such a view, for he did not concern himself with what inconsequential foreign academics wrote and published. I suspect, though, that such apocryphal or alleged statements constituted good conversation pieces among my friends and critics out there.

In June 1985 I went up to Oxford to attend the George Antonius lecture by Oleg Grabar of Harvard on Islamic Art and Architecture: 'The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem'. There was sherry after the lecture, followed by supper. During dessert an Arab woman came to meet me. We talked about Jerusalem, the Greek Orthodox community and other things. At the end of our little chat, she remarked, 'I have been reading you for many years, but on Palestine you are not our friend.' 'As an academic,' I replied, 'I have no obligation to be a friend or foe. That I may disagree with the PLO does not mean I am no friend of the Palestinians.' This parting exchange rather puzzled me because I

was not aware that I had published anything on Palestine. Still the meeting and the woman's parting aggression were interesting. I was intrigued at her wish to meet someone whom she obviously considered an ogre, and at her introducing the Palestinians when they were quite irrelevant to what she had read of my work.

Many years after my Palestine days in travelling to Israel I found myself caught up in a difficult situation. In response to terrorism in the 1970s, Israeli security measures in airports around the world and at their own Ben-Gurion airport became the strictest, most thorough and most effective. Going through El Al security at Heathrow in 1980, the Israeli security people held up my passport against the light, examining each page. Here was I, born in Jerusalem, travelling on a US passport issued in Athens. In their highly suspicious minds the passport was a forgery and I must be working for their enemies. Fortunately, the wife of one of the security guards had been a student in my college and he remembered the name. It was worse when I was leaving Israel. Security at Ben-Gurion wanted to know why, if I was born in Jerusalem, I first of all did not carry an Israeli passport and secondly was not a Jew. While going through every item in my suitcase and hand luggage, the security girl wanted to know whom I saw in Israel, where I went and so on. Perhaps such extraordinary security measures are necessary, but I do not now accept invitations to academic meetings in Israel unless the sponsors or organizers are prepared on my departure to hand me a letter stating that I have been in the country for the purpose of attending their meeting.

Many of these security people are very young – in their twenties. They believe that where they are has always been Israel, not realizing or wanting to accept that the country they now inhabit had a different name – Palestine – and that those of us born there before 1948 were not born in Israel! This is a delicate point when it comes to filling in disembarkation cards: place of birth or country of birth cannot be put down as Israel because the place did not exist; nor can I fill in Palestine as it might excite the security people even more. Over the years I have simply taken to stating 'Jerusalem'. As a result of my experience at the hands of the security guards a rather unpleasant thought crossed my mind: Israel is basically a successor state, that is why everyone is so anxious to forget what was there before 1948.

On the other hand, on one of my very recent visits, an old Israeli

friend and colleague in the passport control queue ahead of me told the female officer in the control cubicle that I was behind him and did not wish my passport stamped as I travelled widely in the Arab countries. He did so giving my name. The young lady stood up, saying, 'Really, in the flesh?', left the cubicle and came round to greet me. We shook hands. She had just sat some examinations in the university, for which she had had to read one or two of my books. In a sense the episode, or rather the young female officer, illustrates and reflects the vitality of that society and its determination to persist, if not prevail.

When I arrived from Tel Aviv one June morning and checked in at the Shulamit Hotel in Ahuza on Mount Carmel (Haifa), the young lady behind the desk turned out to be another university student who had had to suffer through my books for her exam. She shook hands and looked up at my travelling companion, old friend and prominent scholar from Princeton University, John Waterbury. He anticipated any comment by the young lady with a devastatingly witty expression: 'I am only carrying the bags.'

I was caught between Arabs and Jews as recently as June 1986. Two colleagues and I were trying to draft a 'Mediterranean Manifesto' to which participants in a conference on the Mediterranean could adhere. The conference was sponsored by the Aspen Institute Italia, and participants had come from European Mediterranean countries, Turkey and several Arab (North African and Middle East) countries in the Mediterranean basin. The Italians, led by ENI, the state hydrocarbon (energy) monopoly, were anxious to exploit the meeting to advance their own commercial and political interests, especially with the Arabs in the Mediterranean. In order to promote their objectives they were also anxious to keep the Americans away from the Mediterranean. The two corollaries of this policy were an anti-American and an anti-Israeli posture. In fact the latter came easier to the Italians, as I discovered in working with the two Italians on the Manifesto, in the form of anti-Semitism. They had their orders from the head of ENI to keep it sweet with the Arabs by blackening the Americans and keeping up the hostility towards the Israelis. Gianni De Michelis, president of Aspen Institute Italia, was anxious to promote his own vision of the Mediterranean. The Arabs in the conference, with the exception of the odd oil lobby, were not particularly pressing or difficult. But I still felt that, in drafting a document of that kind, we had to

steer a careful course between the two sides even when these were not formally represented; their presence hovers on the sidelines of all such situations.

Even as recently as 1987 I have had to consider the balance between Arab and Jew. I received an invitation to participate in a fairly large conference in Jerusalem as part of the celebrations to mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel. The conference and those who could take part in it were perfectly respectable – in fact, eminent in a scholarly and in every other sense. I had participated in many other academic conferences in Israel, yet to accept this particular invitation could have been easily misinterpreted by the Arabs as a provocative political act. Consequently, I declined. The same dilemma could have arisen the year before when I was invited to present a paper to the international conference on the thirtieth anniversary of the Suez War in Ben-Gurion University in the Negev. In any case, I could not attend that because of other commitments.

In 1985 an Israeli rang me from Paris to ask whether we could meet over lunch in London. He spoke English with an American accent, and he sounded rather forceful and very keen that we should meet. We arranged a time and went to lunch at the Great Russell Hotel very near the SOAS. He went into a recapitulation of the Middle East situation, highlighting the impact of the Iran–Iraq (Gulf) War, and the growing Islamic fundamentalist movement. He then proceeded to ask my views about the attitude and position of some of the Arab states and actors on the Middle Eastern political stage, with a marked interest in Iraq, which I found arrestingly novel.

I was duly impressed by his intimate knowledge of the area, and by his intelligence. He was very articulate and, from the way he phrased some of his remarks, seemed close to authoritative sources and/or state institutions in Israel. Although very diplomatic and tactful in his approach, he was far more knowledgeable and sophisticated on Arab matters than the average diplomat. Anyway, I was intrigued by the man and he set me wondering after this first meeting as to who he really was, and more so, who and what he represented.

Within a month he rang me again suggesting we meet again for lunch to pursue our discussion further. He was ringing from Paris again and said he would shortly be on his way to Dublin. As I could

not make lunch on that day, he stopped by my room in SOAS in the morning. The kinds of question he raised this time oriented me more closely to who he may have been. First, he asked me point-blank: 'Which do you think is more dangerous for Israel, an Islamic nuclear device or Islamic fundamentalism on the march?' After a brief exchange over this question, he posed another one: 'Do you think Israel should proceed on a diplomatic *démarche* for an opening to Iraq, even if it means offering it some economic inducement to assist it with the war against Iran?' In connection with the latter question he – perhaps inadvertently – referred to a group in the Israeli Prime Minister's office (I assumed members of his staff) who were in favour of an opening towards Iraq.

I found his first question quite natural in the circumstances, but I must confess that his second question about Iraq alerted me to the possibility of policy planning options being mooted for a long-term strategy at the highest levels of government in Israel, and the kind of kite that only intelligence agencies or services usually fly. I became convinced of this when my interlocutor asked me if I could put him in touch with Iraqis who might be interested in such a diplomatic initiative. Needless to say, I disappointed him: even if I had such close contacts or friends among Iraqis, I would still have demurred.

I ascertained subsequently that my interlocutor was a senior official of Israeli intelligence in Western Europe; hence the telephone calls from the Israeli Embassy in Paris. But for a so-called crypto-diplomat, he was most impressive. I also found out later that his name was known by all my Israeli academic colleagues.

In 1988 I was invited by one of the Washington think-tanks to prepare a discussion paper on Arab politics and security as part of a wider political–strategic assessment of the Middle East after the Reagan–Gorbachev INF agreement, which many considered as marking the first step towards the ending of the Cold War. I was subsequently invited to visit Israel and Egypt, along with other contributors to the assessment, in order to meet with members of the government, the armed forces, academics and journalists, and discuss the assessment in a series of briefings.

At around the same time my publisher, George Weidenfeld, asked me to help him organize and co-ordinate an international conference on 'Regional co-operation and development in the Middle East under conditions of peace'. The idea was to bring

together Arab (including Palestinian), Israeli, European, American and Soviet participants to discuss the prospects for regional co-operation and development in the Middle East. The task was not as easy as one might imagine, but more about this later.

Arriving during the last week in June at Ben-Gurion airport, I felt sorry for the young immigration officer who consulted furiously with her colleagues, finally asking her superior officer to sort me out. It felt rather strange staying at the King David Hotel because, despite my numerous visits to Israel over the previous twenty-five years, this was the first time I had stayed at the hotel since the 1940s. My last memory of that establishment was its famous lobby and bar crowded with people in military uniform – mainly British officers. Only once before, in June 1967, immediately after the Six Day War, had I ventured inside the hotel building to the bar. The barman, I remember, had been mourning the loss of his son in the battle for the capture of the Old City of Jerusalem by the IDF.

I was also haunted by the memory of the bombing of the hotel in July 1946 in which my acquaintance Chrysanthe Antippa had perished. From the balcony of my suite I could look across the street to the all too familiar YMCA buildings and the tennis courts adjoining them. Directly below that balcony was the car park that had once been the wing of the building destroyed by the Irgun explosion.

Now I walked down the derelict deserted old Mamilla Road, which was once one of the busiest streets in the city, lined with patisseries, ice-cream parlours, fruit stands and small local restaurants. At one end of that road I passed by the sad-looking Ottoman-style house that once housed the Dajani private clinic, and at the other end stood the same Jaffa Gate through which I entered the precincts of the Old City. As I turned left into the Christian quarter I remembered my chance meeting in July 1967 with one of the Greek bishops sitting outside Vangeli Solomonides' tourist shop on the corner. The Solomonidis family had settled in Jerusalem from Cyprus in 1830. I had greeted the bishop and introduced myself, and he had immediately told me that he knew my father. When I asked him what he thought of the turn of events of the previous weeks (the Six Day War), he had replied: 'It is written in the Prophecy, no?'

A two-hour meeting with the Under-Secretary of the Israeli Foreign Ministry and his staff was not too demanding. Most of

those present around the table were desk officers, research and policy planning people: reasonable and moderate in their approach to the conflict. The three-hour meeting with the staff of the Prime Minister's office, however, was wearing and in parts acrimonious. The then young Secretary of the Cabinet, a brilliant lawyer but a conservative orthodox Jew, was, I thought, rather aggressive and adamant about Israel's special relationship with the United States, and about the need for Israel to press on with the so-called Jordanian option. I questioned the wisdom of total dependence on any so-called special relationship between a client state and its superpower patron, and denied the existence of a so-called Jordanian option then or at any time in the past. Uncompromising and hardlining too was the director of the office of the Prime Minister who, I was told, hailed from Port Said in Egypt.

I also spent the better part of a day with military intelligence in Tel Aviv, where I found senior staff most realistic among Israeli officials about the Arab–Israeli conflict. These were clearly influenced in their perceptions and assessments of the situation by a consideration of wider regional and global factors.

During a press conference for the national, local and international press I was questioned for two hours on my assessment of the situation. This was followed by a radio interview, during which I did not hesitate to suggest that the next move in breaking the impasse on the West Bank must come from the Israeli side, and that Israel was now faced with making very difficult choices.

I then went off on a tour of Jerusalem and its environs. From the various hills or high vantage points one could readily see the strategic sense in the Israelis' determination to get control of some of these, for they commanded in a clear field of fire all the approaches from Jordan and especially the south-east to the city, as well as communications with the surrounding Jewish settlements. These positions having been secured, one can perhaps appreciate how difficult it is for Israel to relinquish them.

On the only Sabbath when I was in Jerusalem, my old friend and colleague, Professor Gaby Warburg (SOAS, Ph.D. in Middle Eastern history, Professor of Middle Eastern history at Haifa University and one of its former rectors, editor of the journal *Asian and African Studies* and former director of the Israel Academic Centre in Cairo) came with his wife Rahel to see me. Born in Germany, Gaby had gone with his parents to Palestine in the

1930s. His wife Rahel was born in Argentina and had emigrated to Palestine around the same time. She grew up on Mount Carmel, and Gaby in Hadar HaCarmel. Rahel attended the famous Reali School, and Gaby the Shemen Agricultural School east of Hadera. As a young teenager, Rahel had one brush with the British Mandate police when she was arrested in the mid-1940s for sticking posters with the slogan, 'British out of Palestine'.

They both joined the Hashomer Hatzair movement and were co-founders of *kibbutz* Yehayam, east of Nahariya, where in 1948 a few score of them, all members of that *kibbutz*, were besieged for several months by Palestinian irregulars and Syrian forces commanded by Colonel Adib Shishakli of later notoriety in Syria. They were confined to an old derelict Mameluke–Turkish fort where they all contracted cave fever. Gaby organized and was in charge of defence; Rahel looked after the carrier pigeons, their only means of communication with the Jewish leadership during the War of Independence.

It is interesting that Gaby retained his original German family name, and that he remains moderately left of centre on the Israeli political spectrum. As a successful 'founder', he need not prove his patriotic credentials. Moreover, as a scholar of the Arab world who also knows Arabic fairly well, he has a more sophisticated view of the conflict with the Arabs. The fact that he is a Haifiote also helps, in the sense that he grew up in the most cosmopolitan urban centre of the country, where an evenly balanced population (half Arab, half Jewish) was administered by one of the best local governments in Palestine. Unlike Jerusalem, which looked inland towards a desolate wilderness in the surrounding Judean hills and the desert farther out – where individuals have for centuries heard voices, or thought they did, speaking to them – Haifa was on the sea, looking out over the Mediterranean towards Europe.

We had agreed that we would tour the Greek Patriarchate and Holy Sepulchre monastery in the Old City with me acting as guide. We drove down to the Old City around mid-morning, parked the car and started walking. Most shops were shut as there was a strike on related to the *intifada*, the Palestinian uprising on the West Bank and Gaza which began in December 1987. Walking down what we used to call 'Greek Alley', I noticed that Costa's restaurant –kitchen is perhaps more accurate – was open. An old man now, Costa forty years earlier had been the delivery boy of the famous high-class

Zaferiadis grocery on the Mamilla Road. When old man Zaferiadis died Costa inherited, so to speak, one of the establishments (cafés, taverns, restaurants) that the former owned in the Greek Patriarchate quarter of the Old City. Costa did his own cooking and offered us magnificent stuffed baby pigeons (*picciuni*), a meal I must say far superior to the East European Jewish fare served up at the King David Hotel.

On our way earlier that morning to visit Gaby's brother-in-law, professor of painting at the famous Bezalel School of Art, who lived in a restored beautiful old Ottoman house literally on the boundary with the Muslim quarter of the Old City, we came upon an Arab bakery. As the Jews were not allowed to bake on the Sabbath, the Arab bakery was doing a roaring business. We bought freshly baked *ka'k* (soft, round ring bread with sesame seeds). I could not believe that I was circulating in the Old City of Jerusalem the way many of us used to in the 1940s and before – and what a contrast this reality was to the nightly British media reporting of the West Bank.

With Lord Weidenfeld's brief in mind, I was trying to put together a list of conference participants. I identified several West Bank Palestinians and proceeded to get in touch with them by telephone. One or two whom I did not know and had not met before, asked if I was from the PLO. That, I thought to myself, reflected the degree of apprehension among West Bankers in that tense atmosphere. One of them accepted my invitation to tea on the terrace of the King David one afternoon.

The terrace provided a panoramic vista of the Old City on the left and the Kidron valley towards the Garden of Gethsemane on the right, with the Mount of Olives beyond. My guest was a philosophy lecturer at Bir Zeit University. I knew his late father when he was Jordan's Ambassador in London and had met his older brother many years ago in Abu Dhabi, where he was and still is press counsellor to the ruler, Sheikh Zayed. I also became acquainted with his younger brother, a postgraduate student in London and one of my son's friends, who had married one of my Arab students.

His family is one of the oldest Arab families in Jerusalem, and prominent in the local galaxy of notables. The guardianship of the entrance to the holiest Christian shrine, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and Resurrection, has been entrusted to the family by

the otherwise feuding Christian sects and the secular authorities – Ottoman and British Mandate – for generations. My guest, with his two brothers out of the country, was maintaining the family tradition in Jerusalem. Shy, reticent and very academic looking, my guest set out for me, without undue emotion or hint of impatience, the position on the West Bank as he saw it, together with his views on the situation. Generally speaking, he was very realistic in his assessment of the West Bank–Israeli relationship. He impressed me as a potential leader of any Palestinian settlement, arrangement or entity that may emerge on the West Bank and Gaza from the recent crucible of distressing events.

The rest of the summer, autumn and following winter were taken up by the preparations for the conference in March 1989. Some of the Arabs whom I invited to take part readily accepted and offered to contribute papers. There were those, however, who made a condition of their acceptance the guarantee of mainline PLO participation in the Conference. Thus, despite the dramatic turn of events in November–December 1988 in the Arab–Israeli conflict, one was still caught between Arabs and Israelis (Jews). Participation by mainline PLO representatives or officials would prevent or at least inhibit Israelis, especially Likud members, from attending since there was an Israeli government ban on meetings between Israelis and PLO members or officials. (Despite the ban, several Israelis, among them prominent politicians and former government ministers, had been meeting with PLO representatives in international conferences all over the world.) The same condition was tried by those from the Soviet Union who agreed to take part in the conference.

Telexes and faxes went back and forth until I finally insisted that they either accept or decline the invitation to take part in the conference; that I was ignoring their conditions. In the end, those who stayed away did so because of the coincidence of the very first election in the Soviet Union on Sunday, 29 March 1989. The problem with the Arab side was resolved when it proved difficult to communicate with mainline PLO people and get them to respond in time.

My own difficulty arose over the position of an Egyptian writer-journalist, who was a very dear old friend. He objected strenuously to any meeting of this kind without mainline PLO participants, and wrote to me straightaway to say that unless this

condition were met he himself would not take part in the conference. While on a short visit to London he came to see me in my college room and was very direct in explaining his position. A leading member of the left opposition Tagummu' in Egypt, he advised me as a friend – and I knew he was completely honest and sincere in his approach – to do my utmost to secure mainline PLO participation. I had no objection to this; what was at risk, however, was the loss of Likud participation. Nor had I any reason to doubt my friend's desire to 'protect' me, for I have always respected his intellectual and personal integrity, any ideological or political differences between us to the contrary notwithstanding. In fact, I was largely instrumental some years before in getting his well-known book, *After the Guns Fall Silent*, published (London, 1976). I therefore went back and argued the case for PLO participation with Lord Weidenfeld, and proceeded to try and locate one of the mainline PLO people in order to extend an invitation to him. Locating that particular gentleman proved very difficult, and by the time my invitation was received it was too late for a reply and for the necessary travel arrangements to be made. In the circumstances, two of the West Bank Palestinians who took part in the conference were known to be either PLO people themselves or close to the organization.

In any case, the conference began well: the papers provided a good basis for the discussion of the relation between regional economic co-operation and development and peace in the Middle East. Inevitably, the proceedings moved on to the matter of how peace can be achieved. This brought out a huge reserve of animus between the two sides. It also became very clear that some of the Arab participants – but not the Palestinians among them – found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to envisage a time when peace between them and Israel would prevail. They – a prominent Ahram columnist and editor, and a leading writer – argued that they could never contemplate peace with Israel because they were convinced that Israel could never be an integral part of the Middle East, their region. Some of the Egyptian and one or two other Arab participants played to the wider Arab political gallery by accusing the Israelis of wanting to discuss regional co-operation and economic development for peace as a way of maintaining their hegemony over the whole area. In short, they viewed any development that would help to build bridges between the two

parties in the conflict and facilitate the attainment of peace between them as no more than Israeli ploys for regional domination.*

Fortunately, though, the Palestinian participants from the West Bank, who had most to lose but also most to gain on the basis of their immediate experience of Israeli rule, negated or at least eroded the wider Arab participants' intransigence by holding up the prospect of an Israeli–Palestinian 'partnership' as a catalyst for peace in the area. They even suggested that moving directly from occupation to independence on the West Bank was not a reasonable expectation; a transitional phase, in their view, was imperative.

Interestingly enough, not a single participant absented himself from any session of the conference. This I found encouraging, especially when in such international conferences participants tend, after the opening sessions, to drift away. Especially significant was the realization by everyone towards the close of the conference that there was some merit in approaching the problem of peace in the Middle East from a regional co-operative and developmental perspective. Stunning, too, was the admission by those initially most hostile and reluctant to take part in such a conference that they were glad they had not stayed away; indeed, all participants expressed their keen wish to have a follow-up conference in order to carry their discussions further.

Personally, I felt some satisfaction in having successfully prompted Arab and Israeli participants to consider together in the same meeting room a Middle East at peace, and what could be done in terms of regional co-operation and development to achieve that condition, as well as what could be accomplished once peace had broken out. Needless to say, I had the generous support and highly experienced assistance of several participants, three of whom I should like to name here: Ambassador Philip Habib of the United States, Ambassador Tahseen Bashir of Egypt, and the former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Sir Brian Urquhart.†

The Jordanians, by the way, had made it clear to me at the very outset that they did not meet with Israelis, especially face to face in the same room. Consequently, no Jordanian took part in the

* See Appendix III below.

† See Appendix IV below.

conference. Needless to say, the Jordanian monarch, over the years, had met with Israeli government ministers and representatives in different parts of the world: a further illustration, perhaps, of the peculiar behaviour of everyone concerned in this conflict; or of the peculiar nature of the conflict, as a religious–cultural dispute that does not lend itself to normal debate and negotiation.

After twenty years at the School of Oriental and African Studies I was told that there was disquiet among some outside the School regarding my appointment back in 1964–5. I suspect this was based on apprehension regarding which side I would take in the divide plaguing Middle Eastern studies. Since my case involved the appointment of an imported 'alien' to a senior new post in the School for the establishment of a political studies programme, there were those who gave it perhaps undue importance. Their fears were based more on assumption than on actual evidence, and the fact that my appointment was supported by people like Bernard Lewis was further grist to the objectors' mill.

I rejected their polarization of Middle Eastern studies into the pro-Arab and pro-Israeli camps as irrelevant to university work. In addition I was a Mediterranean, born and raised in the Middle East, but coming to London via the USA. I had already dared to tread on hallowed Orientalist ground when my book *The Fatimid Theory of the State* was published in 1957: I had gone from political philosophy into the study of an Islamic movement of the tenth century. Moreover, I then moved from the tenth to the twentieth century by what some thought was an audacious treatment of the Free Officers in Egypt in *The Egyptian Army in Politics* (1961). This discomfited those who seemed to think that everyone working in Middle Eastern studies in the UK must somehow highlight his sympathies with the Arabs, whoever they are and whatever they do.* To them I appeared to ignore this prerequisite; in fact, I reject it.

* In a private note he left me a year before he died, my father-in-law, Richard Mumford (1894–1960), recalled his experiences as a 25-year-old veteran of the Great War out on his first assignment with the Civil Service in Philby's and Abdullah's Transjordan. He comments on the pro-Arab bias of Gertrude Bell, Philby and others of the small British contingent in the Levant: 'Gertrude Bell was a fanatical pro-Arab, and the first thing she asked me was: "What do you think of the Arab race?" I took the line of tact and replied as she wanted . . . Gertrude Bell was a Victorian "blue-stocking", no make-up, clothes apparently bought off the peg, and thrown on. She had pince-nez glasses and was entirely devoid of sex appeal.'

Above all, I could not share with my Anglo-Saxon colleagues their sense of guilt about the Arabs. They were a people and a society I grew up in and with. I did not belong to a country or people that tried to rule or proselytize them in any way or at any time. My graver sin was to have remained sceptical about the Palestine liberation movement; strangely and perversely enough, even when it waned to a shadow of its earlier self, its promoters and supporters in the UK never waver in their enthusiasm for it. Unlike my detractors, my assessment of this movement was based to a significant extent on having known several of its members and a few of its leaders all my life.

Since I knew nothing of any of this at the time, I proceeded to fulfil the terms of my appointment without undue concern. With the assistance of colleagues in the School and the blessings of its then director, I managed to establish postgraduate degree courses, and ten years later undergraduate degree courses. In that time the Politics programme came to be one of the most heavily subscribed in the School. From a staff complement of three when I started there were soon ten to a dozen; several of them, I am glad to record, trained by the programme.

Upon becoming the founding chairman of the new Centre for Middle Eastern Studies in 1966 I proceeded, in the face of some opposition from more traditional and conservative colleagues, to launch an MA Area Studies degree course in modern Middle Eastern studies which twenty-five years on is one of the more popular MA courses in the School. We also managed to hold several international seminars and conferences which resulted in published volumes of research in the School's Modern Asia and Africa Series.* One thing I was careful about: I tried to keep at arm's length from our work and activities those 'pundits' and commentators on the Middle East who litter the periphery of academia, especially in the London area. They would have certainly introduced the 'polarization virus' into our work.

During the last ten years of my membership of the School, Conservative government policy which led to drastic financial cuts in universities changed the whole character of the institution.

* For example *Egypt Since the Revolution* (London, 1968), *The Arabian Peninsula*, edited by Derek Hopwood (London, 1972), *Revolution in the Middle East* (London, 1972) and *War, Science and Technology in Islam* edited by V. Parry and M. Yapp (Oxford, 1975).

Beginning with ad hoc rationalization policies, as new funding schemes for higher education were being brought in, we suddenly lost most of our star quality colleagues, either through early or premature retirement, resignation, or relocation across the Atlantic. Their departure impoverished the academic, scholarly standard of the institution as well as its intellectual quality, although the School continued to enjoy a standing in Oriental and African studies largely based on the past academic achievements and scholarly accomplishments of its departed stars with their enormous reputation in the UK, the United States, Asia and Africa.

The financial cuts also made it difficult – and soon impossible – to recruit and train a new cadre of UK students and younger academics in Oriental and African studies. The recruitment of a new generation of staff at a time of fiscal stringency brought in a group of academics whose work became mainly 'job-related' in an overmanaged and bureaucratized environment. The breadth, imagination and plain willingness (audacity?) to produce bold and arresting work were not part of their ethos and professional ethic. Scrambling or hustling for scant financial resources meant devising market-oriented 'academic packages', diploma and certificate short courses, and day conferences, activities that tended to displace the original mission of a university institution of training the minds of students and providing them with an intellectual basis for the study of Asia and Africa, as well as for a reasoned assessment and interpretation of Asian and African states and societies. Instead the study of Asia and Africa now tended to be approached as a 'happening' of the times, not as a long-term, evolving scholarly commitment. Activity replaced creativity. Forced into quick income-generating exercises of 'servicing' business and industry, many of this new generation are pushed into areas that are alien to their habits of thought, knowledge and competence. A large number among them who are not comfortable or proficient in the exotic language(s) of their regional speciality are unable to develop and enjoy a more catholic – 'renaissance' – familiarity with the vernacular literature, history and culture of the particular region (or society), all of which tends to impoverish their individual intellectual experience as university teachers, and their quality as interpreters of Asian and African societies and cultures.

The introduction of the business ethic (cost-effectiveness and

profit) into academia has been disastrous. A university is not a national or multinational business firm: recent experience in the USA and here suggests very strongly that it cannot be run along those lines, however keen politicians may be on this, without eroding its academic standards, because a university is essentially a community of scholars (teachers and researchers) and students. One of the most unfortunate consequences of state policy regarding university funding is the transformation of university teachers into overpaid schoolmasters and 'academic butlers'.

The situation prevails now where university staff in their forties and fifties, dedicated to the study of an aspect of Oriental and African societies, have yet to risk a public (i.e. published) statement (whether in monograph or more general book form) about them; so that the bibliography of courses intended to introduce students to the study of these exotic continents (their history, society and culture) is still overwhelmingly dominated by the general books and more specialized writings – the published work – of earlier, including star quality, scholars in the field.

One must also deplore the loss of British leadership in Oriental and African studies. The wealth of American universities may be irresistible, but money is not the only reason for the loss of leadership. It is rather the 'Woolworth's' mentality and approach, of relating 'sales' (i.e. students) in cleverly packaged courses to income, the expansion of so-called part-time enrolment for diploma and certificate short courses, alongside honours degree courses in the mainstream academic programme of an institution which effectively undermine sustained quality academic work. Thus if there was a time when polytechnics aspired to become more like universities, now universities are hustling to become more like polytechnics.

Epilogue

If someone asked me how I feel after fifty years of this experience among Arabs and Jews I would have to answer, 'perhaps enhanced as a person, but somewhat bruised'. I am, I dare say, fortunate to have had long-standing friends from both communities, and can say that I have been fond of many of them. Members of my extended Greek family intermarried with both communities without undue difficulty and, as it turned out, quite happily. I must confess, however, that I have always felt most at home and at ease with my Arab acquaintances and friends; and this perhaps may be due to my longer, closer familiarity with them and to my being a native speaker of their language. It is amazing how not being fluent in a language puts such a distance between people. I have yet to become proficient in Hebrew; but what probably brought me closer to the Jews was the experience of living in a Jewish home, as I did occasionally at my Ladino friend's home in Cairo. Such intimacy naturally erodes ridiculous myths, stereotyped images and other prejudices about people and places.

What I never found easy to accept was the proposition that liking an Arab, Jew or whatever, or having Arab, Jewish or other friends, dictated an automatic approval and espousal of their political views, behaviour and aims. For some time to come there will be in the world concern and interest about the Middle East, about the Arab-Israeli conflict. So will the promoters of causes and the advocates of one or the other side of the conflict still be with us. But I never thought that as an academic student of the modern history and politics of the Middle East this was or should be my role.

I have nevertheless sought reconciliation between Arabs and Jews, at least those of my immediate milieu; and yet, despite my theoretically natural qualification as a 'bridge' between them, I must confess that so far it has been a futile search. So much for the obduracy and perversity of politics.* I have come to the conclusion that the differences between Arabs and Jews – some of these arising from their conflicting claim to the same territory – are irreconcilable and the gulf between them unbridgeable; that the best that can happen is for each community or nation to go its own separate way and to have as little to do with one another as possible. The Arabs, for one, cling to the cultural exclusiveness of the Middle Eastern region as constituting the abode of Islam; they reject Israel, for they cannot countenance its becoming an integral part of the region. And since the Jews tend to be culturally exclusive too, I am led to the conclusion that there is a mutual cultural rejection in the Arab–Israeli relationship. Such value-laden notions as culture are not so amenable to diplomatic or political negotiation and compromise as differences of concrete interests and related mundane political and economic objectives. Cultural differences, let alone rejections, are not easily negotiable.

* But some of my Israeli academic colleagues at least do not think my meagre efforts in this direction have been or are in vain as the letter from one of them, reproduced in Appendix V below, seems to suggest.

APPENDIX I

Letter from Father Tom Murphy

St Joan of Arc Church
4217 Central Avenue
Indianapolis

24 August 1990

Dear P.J.,

I caught this piece in the *Indianapolis Star*.* But what really caught my attention was your name. You see I believe we shared the rigor of basic training together at Leonard Wood in 1954. I was out of Notre Dame, became a lawyer and practiced 19 years then went to Rome for theology and was ordained a priest 5 years ago.

Should you be in the area I would welcome your visit to share some war stories, and company.

Peace and best wishes,
Tom Murphy

* An article by Cal Thomas in the *Indianapolis Star* about the Gulf Crisis, which quoted from my book *Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East*.

APPENDIX II

Egyptian Reaction to the Hiwar *Article*

The following is a verbatim translation from the 13 and 19 June 1963 editions of the Cairo newspaper *Al Gumhuriyya*:

Professor P. J. Vatikiotis, Chairman of Near Eastern Studies at Indiana University, USA, published a lengthy study entitled, 'The Arab Intellectual and Modern Society,' in which he discussed a number of cultural trends which have appeared in the wake of recent Arab efforts to evolve a modern society.

Professor Vatikiotis' study requires us to initiate a serious debate, for it treats a problem previously dealt with by some writers and authors, namely, the attitude of the intellectuals towards modern thought, civilization, and style of life. This page deems it significant to present an adequate resumé of Vatikiotis' study. Moreover, we consider that all response to the study – whether in agreement or in opposition to its point of view – will certainly raise essential points on the subject under discussion.

The cultural page of this newspaper therefore will welcome the publication of any comments that will reach it on the article summarized below.

An American writer discusses the crisis of the Arab Intellectual.

If Arab revolutions are directed towards the attainment of industrial civilization, what is the role of the intellectuals in the allocation of the values of industrial civilization in their societies?

Galal Sirhan writes: about two years ago there raged in Cairo a discussion about what was called a crisis of the intellectuals and, despite

all that was said and written on the subject at that time, these discussions never arrived at any clear definitions of the meaning of this crisis, its indications and characteristics, and its extent. Suddenly this wave of argument was struck by what resembled a heart attack which stopped its activity.

Today voices have risen in Beirut in an effort to submit this question once more to argument with the hope of achieving a clear understanding of the nature of this crisis and its connection or relation to the political, social, and civilizational factors in Arab society.

The submission of this question for discussion in Beirut began with the publication of two articles in one of the cultural journals. One of them by an Arab professor, Dr Magdi Wahba and the other by an American, named P. J. Vatikiotis, Chairman of Near Eastern Studies at Indiana University.

The American professor in his article speaks of the role of the intellectual today in the United Arab Republic and his attitudes or position via-à-vis the basic problems faced by a developing society in which many changes are occurring rapidly – as for example the question of the relationship between man and man, the relationship of the individual to society, of the individual to authority, government, and the ruler.

He begins his discussion with an important remark when he says:

> 'The Free Officers' Revolution in the United Arab Republic is over ten years old now and we have not seen so far a systematic treatment of the characteristics of this revolution or change. All we have are certain superficial treatments hastily done which we find in the newspapers as well as in the writings of pamphlet and popular booklet authors. What is more surprising in this connection is that the first principles presumably for the content of this revolution were not expressed or clarified until May 1962. Moreover this broad and general presentation came from President Nasser when he presented his National Charter for discussion and debate to the preparatory Congress for Popular Forces; it did not come as a result of the efforts of intellectuals or the people of the pen.'

The American writer tries on the basis of this remark to establish the lag of the Arab intellectuals in catching up with the revolutionary change that has occurred in Egypt after 23 July 1952 and their negative attitude in evolving and articulating the intellectual and ideological bases for these changes.

This lag of the intellectuals in assuming such a role is the natural result of the crisis which they now face. What is the axis of this crisis and what is its nature? Professor V. answers this question by saying: The UAR has

announced that it has two principal goals for whose attainment she will work: 1. the building of a modern industrial society; 2. the creation and establishment of free democratic principles and institutions. In order to achieve the first goal quickly the steps towards it must be revolutionary and the style socialist. As for the second goal, it is too complex and faces a variety of difficulties in analysis and explanation. We cannot therefore discuss it adequately in this brief article.

The American writer asserts that in its aspiration to enter the modern industrial age, Egypt admits the weakness and general debilitation of old values and their inability to direct the process of change and development, or the transition from one age to another. Egypt also believes that the kind of social change in this transitional, but significant, phase is revolutionary, not evolutionary, and furthermore that the enemy of Egyptian and Arab nationalism is reaction.

V. also argues that the transformation of a society such as the Egyptian one with inherited traditions of long standing to an evolving modern society via revolutionary politics and by way of industrialization and socialism faces many problems. So that in the UAR as much as in the other Arab countries, there is a heavy political heritage which must be first removed. One of the difficult dimensions of this heritage is the problem of human relations in society, the relation of the individual to the group, and especially the relation between the ruler and the subject. Moreover, this heritage raises the question of the concept of justice, and the basis of political representation.

V. makes a comparison between the Egyptian society in its revolutionary phase and the European societies which preceded Egypt in their entering the industrial age. He says in this connection:

> 'The truth is that modern industrial society developed and advanced in Western Europe during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The development of this kind of society was not based on the invention of the machine alone, but on a body of thought, values and philosophies which challenged the traditions of preceding European society while designing and establishing modern human relations as well as social and political values and attitudes. All of this made it possible for the industrial and technological complex to serve this new society. The most important thing that occurred in the European societies was the discovery of a new mode and basis of thought such as belief in evolution and creativeness. Thus the industrial age has characteristics and values peculiar to it.'

And the essential question for education and the intellectuals in a developing revolutionary country like the UAR is: does the movement of this country and its inclination towards the industrial age and modern

society necessarily mean the adoption of the values and attitudes of industrial civilization also, or does it mean the mere borrowing of machines and mechanical inventions which this civilization produced as a means for its creation only? If an Afro-Asian society such as the one in Egypt desires or wishes simply to borrow machines and technology but does not wish to accept the accompanying values which brought about these mechanical and technological means because they are foreign to its environment and alien to its nature and character, how can this society develop new purely local values deriving from its existential situation and reality. Do these values come about by decrees and political acts alone or do they evolve gradually via the intellectual advancement of such a society and especially those leaders of thought in it? This is the essence of the crisis of culture and the intellectuals in the UAR as this American writer sees it. The crisis in his view is fundamental and crucial, and he means by it, in the first place, the relationship of thought and education to the meaning of the revolution and its goals, including those values needed for a modern industrial society.

The seriousness of the role required to be played by the Egyptian intellectuals after the revolution derives from the conditions which accompanied the rise of this revolution. Whereas the French Revolution in the 19th century, the Russian Revolution in the 20th, as well as other revolutions in Europe and Asia, were preceded by intellectual and philosophical rumblings and theories which purported the substitution of a total set of old beliefs and principles and values with a new one for a desired society, this process did not quite occur in Egypt before the revolution, and has not yet occurred after the revolution. On the basis of this argument the writer considers the UAR to be still awaiting the intellectual elite which will lead it beyond the beginning stages of revolution. He also feels that the UAR is in need of articulated principles and values for a new life based on a systematic study of the fundamental questions and problems facing a developing society, especially if the UAR wishes that its revolution be an organized vehicle for development and fundamental change – change that is permanent and not transitory.

The writer also says:

> 'It often appears to me that the present confusion and anxiety among the intellectuals in the UAR stems from the force of the revolution which was effected by a military group, namely the Free Officers. Thus the intellectuals confined their work until now to the explanation and popularization of this revolution to the masses as well as its support without first treating the meaning of the changes that this revolution has brought, or may bring about.'

But the writer also observes at the end of his article that there has begun

in Egypt a serious trend of questioning among its intellectuals who dare to criticize the old in religion, in literature, and in life. Thus in the literary field there is an avant garde movement, in the fields of the short story, poetry, and the theater. There is also a debate that is raging about language. The debate and argument, indeed the controversy about the meaning of the Arab-Islamic heritage continues to rage between the various intellectual groups in the country. What was begun thirteen years ago by Sheikh Khalid Muhammad Khalid in the way of argument against the traditional teachers, and against the heavy weight of the past is connected with what had come before, whether this was in the work of Imam Muhammad Abduh or in the daring of Sheikh Ali Abd al-Raziq. Moreover the flame of this debate has been fanned recently in the discussion that is going on between Dr Louis Awad on one side and Professor Rushdi Salih on the other (and between them stands Dr Muhammad Mandur) about the meaning of the Arab-Islamic heritage; whether this heritage was one of stagnation and weakness in relation to the work of man and his ability to organize his life, or if this heritage was a source of strength which combined reason with manual labor for continuous advancement? Among the examples of this debate is the book by Rushdi Salih *Rajul fi al-Qahira* (*A Man in Cairo*), in which the story of the coming of the historian Ibn Khaldun from the Maghreb to Cairo, is used as a literary technique to express the belief the author has that the most important inhabitant of the universe is man, as much as he is also the strongest by virtue of his reason which he can use to conduct his affairs, and by virtue of his working hands which he can use to build his life and destiny.

The adoption of reason as the basis of living human action is not a new idea, if we recalled the writings of Dr Shibli Shumayyil, Salama Musa, Lutfi al-Sayyid, as well as those of Admad Amin, and Tewfiq al-Hakim. What is new in the present venture is that it sanctifies reason and human labor and places both on the same level. This is apparent in the writings of Mustafa Mahmūd which attempt to depict vividly the misery of the *fellah*. We also find in the writings of Yusuf Idris and Abd al-Rahman al-Sharqawi as well as those of Naguib Mahfuz the deliberate effort to arouse the conscience of the Egyptian with regard to the life of his fellow citizens.

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Presented by Rushdi Salih

Marginal Notes about the Intellectual Debate between Arab and European Culture

The Beirut journal *Hiwar* published in its last issue two important articles, one by Dr Magdi Wahba, a member of the teaching staff at Cairo University, and the other by Professor Vatikiotis, Chairman of Near Eastern Studies, Indiana University. The subject discussed by both writers is: 'The status of the Arab intellectual today.'

From Lutfi al-Sayyed to al-Hakim

Both articles contain numerous ideas and examples of the views of many of our writers and intellectuals, suffice it to mention among them Lutfi al-Sayyed, Muhammad Abduh, Taha Husain, al-Aqqad, Tawfiq al-Hakim, Salama Musa, Muhammad Mandour, al-Sharqawi, Louis Awad, Khalid Muhammad Khalid, Mustafa Mahmud, Yusuf Idris, and the present writer.

A brief glance at the names listed above suggests that both articles are concerned with that stage which we refer to as the period of transition in our intellectual history.

The Point of Disagreement

The starting point in both articles is the same one we discussed previously in another page [of this newspaper], namely, what is the position and attitude of the Arab intellectuals towards modern society?

Some of the Beirut newspapers had suggested earlier that modernity means one thing: the adoption of European or international conduct. This should predicate a total position based on the acceptance of this kind of thinking. Once again this idea lurks behind these articles published by *Hiwar*. The big question that these articles pose is:

Should the Arab intellectual adopt a European or Western philosophical system, or should he accept the results of world civilization first and then proceed to seek for himself philosophical possibilities in his Arab heritage? In other words, should we accept the style of life and thought provided by Europe and the West, from A to Z, or should we select those aspects of it which can be adapted to our traditions and the conditions of our society? This is the major theme of these Beirut articles.

Profound Study

Perhaps the article of the American scholar is wider in scope and therefore more liable to discussion, for it is a calm study based on a detailed and rigorous following of the trends in contemporary thought.

We do, however, have certain objections to his analysis and to some of

the conclusions he arrives at. Our disagreement in this respect is a fundamental one for the article measures the trends of contemporary Arab thought on the basis of a purely European understanding. We, however, evaluate these trends on the basis of a national dimension first, and secondly on the basis of the general modern civilizational trend today. The point of departure in the understanding of modernity for us is the attitude of the intellectuals towards the emergence of nationalism, and its development. Thus we study the efforts of modern Egyptian thinkers and their relation to the movement of modernization and national liberation which has engulfed the whole of the Arab world and has extended to all its parts during our modern history. So that if those efforts called for an Islamic national idea in the 19th century, and later called for a local nationalist idea in this century, this kind of evolution in itself is the framework which we should seriously consider.

Previous Ideas

It is obvious that previous ideas imposed from the outside nullify the process of analogy. Thus, those who embrace both the classical and modern European civilization in an emulative way can analyze Arab thought only from the outside and from a distant point – distant, that is, from the nature of contemporary Arab thought. These emulators of European thought first, and general European civilization second, have suffered from the contradiction between the previous thinking on the one hand, and the existential forces which systematic, scientific, and neutral investigation bring forth on the other. Thus a great Arab thinker like Ibn Khaldun could not have achieved recognition as a result of his having followed or emulated the European heritage. We do not say this because of any blind fanaticism but on the basis of this man's writings and his cultural environment as well as the condition of Arab civilization in his time in contrast to the existing European life then. If we move through the centuries to a more modern Arab thinker like Rifaa Rafi al-Tahtawi who had been influenced by French culture and education, we would not, despite that, find that the measure of his efforts is simply a European one but we would find in what he wrote and did, and what he left in terms of a legacy, that he represents this debate which has covered our modern history, namely between national thought and world thought. From Tahtawi until today this debate goes on and the greatest intellectual battles derive from it.

The Mission of the Arab Intellectual

The fact that the Arab intellectual has a mission motivated by his love of his country and the belief in his heritage and the hope he has in his future, he is urged to investigate the world around him, understand what others have produced, and select from their experiences what is appropriate and

adaptive to his traditions and condition; he rejects what contradicts the style of his life and its goals. The real concern is not that of the intellectual crisis as these articles in *Hiwar* contend, but the solution of the crisis.

Two Sources of Thought

In the phase of the building of our new Arab life the Arab intellectual has two basic sources available to him for this work: first, the source of Arab life which has been lived generation after generation. This is the source and the base. The other, a selection and choice from the offerings of modern human life in general. It is not fair or true to say that the intellectual movement is in a crisis for the varied activity in terms of writing and translation in the sciences and the arts and the various cultural projects in the expanding scientific and cultural services all point to the eventual transformation of Arab society from an agricultural to an industrial one. When, moreover, one investigates these numerous phases of intellectual activity seriously and rigorously one cannot fail but see the liveliness of the national spirit which motivates this activity and renders it to multiply in kind and to rise in level.

Finally, we should not compare the situation of the Arab nation with that of the European nations, or the present condition of the Arab nation with the past of the Arab nations. We must rather look into the present condition of the Arab nation in contrast to its history on the one hand, and in comparison to its situation vis-à-vis human civilization in general, on the other. This is the point of difference between us and those who would like to embrace the style of European life first and its types of development second.

Despite all this, contemporary Arab thought has managed on many occasions to arouse the concern and interest of scholars in Europe and America. The most recent example of this is this article which is based on a rigorous following of our contemporary intellectual and social ideas and which was written by the American scholar, V., and published by the Beirut journal *Hiwar*. We must therefore end this commentary by an appreciation of the style which the American scholar has used not only because it is based on serious study and understanding but because it reflects the precision, accuracy, and breadth of understanding as well as the non-belittling of the importance of contemporary intellectual trends.

APPENDIX III

An Egyptian View of the Prospects of Peace with Israel

Reproduced below is a summary translation of a feature article which appeared in the *Ahram* newspaper, Cairo, on 5 April 1989 by Muhammad Sid Ahmed, occasioned by his participation in the Middle East Development Conference in Lausanne on 23–26 March 1989.

Despite its hostile criticism this article is a reflection of the writer's appreciation of the uniqueness and importance of the Lausanne Conference. In fact, he is concerned enough about the initiative to look into the relevance of regional co-operation to a peace settlement and to remind the Arabs of their basic convictions about the unattainability of a peaceful settlement between them and Israel, or at least one that is comprehensive and permanent. In this connection the writer's emphasis on the continuing Arab perception of Israel as an alien intruder that can never really belong to or become an integral part of the region is revealing, albeit alarming.

> It is not common among us Arabs to speak about 'what after the settlement', or even to think that far ahead about it, let alone plan for it. And that because most of us do not believe there is any possibility to begin with to arrive at a settlement which is comprehensive. Moreover, there is a strong belief that such a settlement will not realize any of our expectations of retrieving or recovering our land and our rights (or justice).
>
> But we cannot ignore what goes on outside the Arab world and what is being projected about the Middle East after a settlement with Israel. Such efforts are now widespread especially after the two superpowers have shown their clear intention to settle regional conflicts, including the Arab–Israeli one.
>
> We cannot ignore the activity in this area especially because it

affects us directly and because it may have consequences to our disadvantage (or not in our interest) if we do not have a say in these deliberations, or a presence in the projections of the future in the Middle East.

It is in this context that I accepted the invitation to take part in a scientific Conference in Lausanne which comprised of participants from several countries interested in the Arab–Israeli conflict, and which specifically dealt with a projection of future regional co-operation, and the nature of such co-operation in conditions of peace. There were participants from the USA, the Soviet Union and Europe in addition to those representing the adversaries in the Arab–Israeli conflict, that is, Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians and Egyptians.

[The next three paragraphs deal with his insistence that the Conference invite mainline PLO members, although in the end the only Palestinian participants were from the West Bank – Husseini and Seniora. He also mentions his insistence upon the mechanisms, or steps, that would bring about a settlement that is truly comprehensive. He observes that the Israeli participants, most of whom he characterizes as belonging to the Right wing of the Maarakh, insisted on the existential factors or actual conditions which militate against the perpetuation of the conflict. He refers to the discussion about water in the region and remarks that what Israel means by regional co-operation is the mobilization of the needs of others to her needs, just as 'peace' and 'security' mean that all other parties concede the requirements of Israeli security. As for the conditions of peace, these refer to the conditions for Israeli hegemony over the Middle East and for Israel to become the sole determinant of the region's destiny.]

It was therefore imperative to shift the discussion from one about the prospects of regional co-operation after a settlement to a discussion of the requirements/conditions of post-settlement which is not possible so long as Israel insists on establishing its future in the region on the basis of the predomination of its interests alone . . . but hegemony by force can guarantee for Israel only a temporary place, whatever its duration, but not its permanence in the region.

We have already said that the Arabs do not believe there is a permanent place for Israel in the region, just as there was no presence for the Jews in two thousand years of history; and the Arabs continue to believe that Israel is, like the Crusader expeditions, a transient phenomenon, coming from outside the region. And so long as Israel insists on mobilizing and subordinat-

ing the interests of the region to its own interests, it reiterates its transience as an extra-regional phenomenon, which does not belong to the region as other entities do, having evolved as they did through the region's history. Israel, that is, is not integral to the region.

Unlike the relations between France and Germany, China and Japan, which are based on a long historical co-existence, the Arab–Israel conflict is different and it is incumbent upon Israel to prove its willingness and ability to belong and become an integral part of the region, without having to base this presence on the force of arms alone, especially when there is no guarantee that armed force can secure Israeli superiority always.

If Israel is genuinely interested in regional co-operation and co-existence, we suggested that one of the conditions upon which Israel can indicate its good intentions to this end is for it to relinquish its 'special relationship' with one or more of the Western powers and to adopt the stance of non-alignment; to relinquish its nuclear arsenal as the test of its regional hegemony, and to accept, along with other states in the region, the principle of on-the-spot mutual inspection of all mass destruction weapons. We are not suggesting that Israel sever its relations with the advanced (developed) world, only that it exploit its relations with that world for the benefit of the whole region, not only for its own benefit at the expense of the rest of the peoples of the region. We consider Israel's agreement to do this as the only opening which can guarantee the scope for regional co-operation after a peace settlement, and the only basis upon which one can discuss the matter.

APPENDIX IV

A Report on the 1989 Lausanne Conference in October *magazine*

Dr Abdel Azim Ramadan member of Egypt's *Maglis al-Shura* (Consultative Assembly of the State), historian of modern Egypt and feature writer for the *October* weekly magazine, and who participated in the Lausanne Middle East Development Conference, 23–26 March 1989, published a long piece about and 'around' the Conference in the *October* edition of 4 June 1989.

In his article Dr Ramadam makes several observations about the significance – and centrality – of international conferences like the one held in Lausanne in the discussion of difficult, complex international political issues and conflicts. He suggests that some of these are so complex as to elude – if not defeat – the ability of politicians alone to deal with them, let alone resolve them. The work of scholars, academics and writers on public and international affairs, including that done in international conferences, helps in an important way towards the better understanding of difficult political problems and contributes towards their resolution or settlement. Such work and activity is now a prominent feature of our age. Dr Ramadan goes on to say that the Middle East question or conflict is one which lends itself particularly to this approach, that is, the collaboration between academics, scholars, journalists on one side and politicians and statesmen on the other.

In the past, Palestinians refused to take part in such conferences, fearing they would be forced to adopt positions detrimental to their cause. Gradually, they came to recognize the importance of these conferences as *fora* for the defence and promotion of their cause, and at the same time denying their adversaries, the Israelis, the virtual monopoly of these *fora*.

In Egypt the Leftists and Nasserites for long viewed these conferences and symposia with great suspicion demanding the punishment of those

–among the Arabs in general and the Egyptians in particular – who took part in them. And Dr Ramadan goes on to describe the attacks upon himself when he was one of the first Egyptians to attend one of the earliest Arab–Israeli Conferences after Camp David in Washington DC. Dr Ramadan believed ignorance, bigotry and fanaticism as well as a kind of 'mercenary verbal revolutionism' described those who viewed such international conferences as part of 'Israeli cultural infiltration'. These critics or detractors maintained such a hostile attitude and persisted in their abuse of anyone who took part in meetings (usually under academic auspices) dealing with the Middle East conflict where Israelis were also present, accusing them of betraying the Arab cause, even of treason.

This situation persisted until the dramatic shift last year in the position of the Palestinian leadership itself, imposed on it by the *Intifada* on the West Bank. The Palestinian leadership was suddenly liberated from the tyranny of the empty slogans of those who manipulated the sufferings of the Palestinian people, and recognized the important role of international scientific-academic/political Arab–Israeli conferences in putting forward the Palestinian case. Palestinian attendance and participation in these conferences was actively encouraged and became quite common and regular. The 'mercenaries of verbal revolution' in Egypt thus lost the one pretext – that of the Palestinians – upon which they used to attack Egyptian scholars and writers who attended such conferences. And this was precisely the case with the last conference on Middle East peace held at the Beau Rivage Palace Hotel in Ouchy, Lausanne, on 23–26 March 1989. Muhammad Sid Ahmad, prominent member of the Tagammu' (opposition party) and former editor of the *Ahali* opposition newspaper, took part in this conference and was able to put forward his own views on peace and development in the Middle East to the conference participants from many parts of the world.

This particular Lausanne Conference is considered to have been the biggest to date on the question of peace and development in the Middle East in terms of wide, international participation, the prominence of the participants and the extensiveness of the topics discussed. Among the Palestinians there were Faysal Huseini and Hanna Seniora; among the Israelis Abba Eban, Aluf Hareven of the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, Yael Dayan and a number of Israeli scholars from the universities and the Weizmann Institute; from Egypt there was Ambassador Tahseen Bashir, Dr Yusef Idris, Muhammad Sid Ahmad, Mona Makram Ebeid and this writer; from the USA Ambassador Philip Habib, the President's Special Envoy to the Middle East; Professor Alexsei Vasiliyev, Deputy Director, Institute of International Affairs, Moscow Academy of Sciences; and others from France, Britain, Italy, Denmark and Germany.

The co-ordinator of the Conference was Professor Vatikiotis of the

SOAS, University of London, and author of important studies in the history of Egypt and of the July (1952) Revolution. His many friendships extend throughout the Arab world. By virtue of his objectivity and the topicality of his writings he has been subjected in the past to the attacks of those in Egypt who expect every author to write from their perspective and viewpoint, not from his own. However, he commands the respect of academic circles overseas; I spent the academic year 1980–1 with him in the University of London where he has, over the years, supervised many doctoral theses on topics dealing with the history and politics of modern Egypt.

The importance of the Lausanne Conference is that it was organized on the basis of the optimistic premise or belief that peace in the Middle East can be achieved if there is peace between Israel and its neighbours. Most of the papers presented to the Conference dealt with the regional discussion of peace and the role of regional co-operation and development in achieving it.

APPENDIX V

Letter from Professor Dan Segré to Gianni De Michelis

On. Gianni De Michelis
Ministro del Lavoro
Ministero del Lavoro
Via Mario Pagano 3
Roma

University of Haifa
Mount Carmel
Haifa

15 Settembre 1986

Signor Ministro,

al momento della felice conclusione del negoziato su Taba e del viaggio del Primo Ministro Shimon Peres ad Alessandria, il Prof. Emanuel Sivan ed io desideriamo darle atto del contributo che Aspen-Italia ha dato agli sforzi di riavvicinamento arabo israeliano. Le riunioni di Venezia e di Istambul sono state infatti occasione di scambi di informazione, di prese di contatto personali, di esame preliminare di formule di compromesso, di chiarificazione di posizioni ufficiali, tutte cose queste che in seguito si sono rivelate utili al processo del negotiato.

In particolare ci sembra giusto ricordare – per la piccola e forse un giorno per la grande storia – la devota intelligente cura con cui il Prof. P. J. Vatikiotis ha favorito questi incontri attraverso la partecipazione di personaggi attivi e autorevoli come il Dott. Osama El Baz e il Prof. Abbas Kelidar, e l'atmosfera di fiduciosa discrezione che il Direttore di Aspen Italia, Frederick Vreeland e i suoi collaboratori hanno saputo creare nel corso dei due seminari.

Il Prof. Sivan ed io vorremmo con questa nostra privata testimonianza esprimerle la nostra riconoscenza. I risultati di questi incontri di cui Lei e' stato promotore e animatore, confermano una volta di piu' il ruolo che seminari del genere possono assumere in

situazioni nelle quali la mancanza di ambienti appropriati per incontri personali e per un libero confronti di idee, pregiudizi e interessi si rivela essere uno dei principali ostacoli alla elaborazione di intese.

Mi creda, signor Ministro, con rispetto e gratitudine,
Dan V. Segré

INDEX

P. J. Vatikiotis is Emeritus Professor of Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. He has taught at several North American universities and has lectured and travelled widely in the Middle East. His books include *The Fatimid Theory of the State*, *The Egyptian Army in Politics*, *Politics and the Military in Jordan*, *Conflict in the Middle East*, *Nasser and His Generation*, *The History of Modern Egypt*, *Arab and Regional Politics in the Middle East* and *Islam and the State*, and he has edited *Egypt since the Revolution* and *Revolution in the Middle East*.

Weidenfeld and Nicolson
91 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7TA

"There were many of us who by 1945 realized that the world we knew in the Middle East was soon coming to an end. For the Greeks, it meant that between two and four generations in Egypt and Palestine would have to relocate themselves elsewhere. But whereas my grandfather could venture from the island of Ydra to Genoa, Corsica and Marseilles before stopping in Acre, his descendants had fewer options: a return to their country of origin or immigration to the Americas; a move from a relatively open, cosmopolitan environment, which was now becoming more nationalistic, particularistic and closed, to a powerfully dominant and digestive or assimilating one in the industrial Anglo-Saxon world..."

ISBN 0-297-82076-1