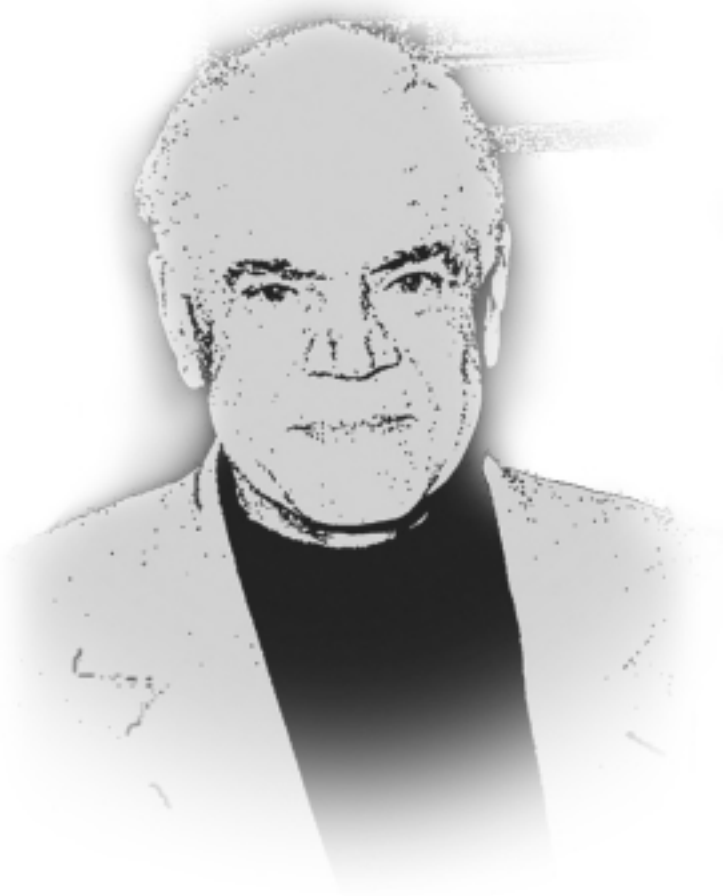
Ibrahim Abu-Lughod:
Resistance, Exile and Return



Conversations with
Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh
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To
Ibrahim Abu-Lughod,
My mentor, the man whose memory will live on

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This book could not have been accomplished without the help of several people.

First and foremost, this volume would have been impossible to put into shape without the willingness and preparedness of its narrator, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod. He was generous with his time and always hospitable in his home, preparing the way for interviews upon which this book is based. Even when he was ill and the roadblocks hampered efforts to meet, he was always prepared to accommodate changes and last minute arrangements. His spirit and cheerfulness created an enabling environment and a strong stimulus throughout. He made this experience enjoyable during the interviews as ever. Therefore, all the thanks and appreciation go to Ibrahim for granting us the opportunity to learn about his life and what it represents.

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Last but not least, thanks must also go to Professor Roger Heacock for his pivotal role in proposing this project and keeping up with it in its various stages.

Preface

The political memoirs of Ibrahim Abu-Lughod are the result of a number of oral interviews conducted with him at his home in Ramallah, Palestine, over a period of two years, from July 1999 to May 2001, the month of his death. In this book, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod speaks for himself, narrating the different eras of his educational, social, professional and political life. In essence, this narrative ends exactly where it began: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, born on February 15, 1929 in Jaffa, Palestine, was determined to be buried close to his ancestral home in Jaffa, in spite of all Israeli government objections.

In this book, the reader is certain to learn about the history, geography, lifestyle and politics of Palestine and other parts of the world during the period encompassed by Abu-Lughod‘s life. By exposing the story of his life, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod succeeds in condensing the details of several historical phases of the Palestinian struggle and manages to mirror the experience of many Palestinians around the world. This personalization of the Palestinian people‘s collective existence reveals the dynamics of the British Mandate over Palestine, the life of so many Palestinians in the United States and the soaring compulsion to exercise the Right of Return.

This book should have been published at least a year ago. Unfortunately, Abu-Lughod’s illness during the last few months of his life, in addition to the disruption caused by the repeated Israeli incursions into Palestinian cities and the omnipresent yet unpredictable checkpoints, delayed its completion.

We expect this work, based as it is on information from an invaluable firsthand source, to contribute to the scholarship and historiography surrounding Palestine; but mostly we hope that it will foment more research and analysis on the fascinating richness of Ibrahim Abu-Lughod’s life.

Introduction

As his unique and multi-faceted life indicates, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was a man of tremendous capabilities and contributions. From his earliest age, he devoted his existence to the bettering of the situation of the Palestinian people. To the Arab world, he stood out as a fiercely independent, original and multi-disciplinary intellectual. On a more global level, he will be remembered as an important scholar and activist devoted to higher knowledge and justice.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was not a typical teacher in the conventional sense of the term. Rather, he taught life in its various dimensions. Anyone who has come to know him (personally and/or through his plentiful writings) undoubtedly recognizes the resourcefulness and the richness of his thought.

It is quite difficult even to imagine the possibility of criss-crossing the spatial and temporal boundaries that Ibrahim Abu-Lughod navigated courageously with his youthful spirit and unrelenting devotion. During the very last moments of his life, he was concerned with the continuation of the Palestinian intifada, convinced of its inevitable success. On his deathbed, he continued his inquiry into possible paths for humanity‘s progress towards emancipation and justice.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was a teacher, a scholar, a planner, a strategist, a fighter and a philanthropist. His legacy remains as a role-model for all those who struggle tirelessly for the dignity of all. His ability to instill hope in our hearts and animation in our spirits, compelling us to look towards the future, does not dissipate. Yet words cannot begin to uncover the magic of his existence.

Are we to remember the little boy climbing to the top of the minaret of the mosque in Jaffa, in the lazy Imam’s place, to call the people to prayer so as to be the closest to Allah’s blessing in Heaven? The young Ibrahim irritating the British soldiers in Palestine, showering them with stones and trash in the alleys of the city? Or, Ibrahim as a student, organizing demonstrations in protest of the worsening conditions in Palestine, even before the Nakba of 1948? The portrait of the young fighter resisting steadfast with the last group of fighters before their eviction on the final boat of evacuees from Jaffa? The pains of the Diaspora in Beirut, Damascus and Amman during the first days of refuge following the Nakba? The picture of the young man, almost penniless, sailing overseas to a world unknown to him, the United States of America? The devoted student traumatized by the threat of being expelled from the US after a faulty TB diagnosis? Or, are we to envisage Professor Abu-Lughod defying a blizzard in Chicago by boarding a flight transporting only pilots and mechanics to fly to the first annual meeting of the AAUG in Washington DC?

When living with dignity became impossible, Ibrahim found himself again a refugee student in the United States where he intended to further his knowledge. It was no longer possible for him to realize his dream of becoming a preacher, which he

followed so often as a child by calling people to prayer from the top of the minaret. His ambition to study law in Cairo, following in the footsteps of Youssef Wahbeh whose performance in court had impressed him so, was similarly compromised.

As a Palestinian refugee student, far from his beloved land and people, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod assumed his academic existence with excellence, certainly, but also with painstaking efforts. He had been driven from Palestine empty-handed, and had parted from his impoverished family. He was clearly a man of fierce will and determination. He supported himself by executing odd jobs, working in a restaurant or in a laundromat, for example. He had to struggle with a new language, and lifestyle, while sustaining the pains of homesickness and suffering recurrent discrimination. Nothing, however, could weaken his feeling of belonging and commitment to Palestine, the Arab world, and humanity.

Through the distinction of his achievements in academia, in both research and teaching, Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod has earned the reputation and admiration he deserves. He was tirelessly preoccupied with the concerns of his people, and played an important role in raising awareness of the Palestinian and Arab question in the United States. The representation of the Arab in the West has long been tainted and demonized. It was particularly so during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. In an effort to resist such stereotying by breaking the silence and affirming the right of all to dignity, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod played a pivotal role in the foundation of the Arab American University Graduates (AAUG). This organization would become an important agent speaking on behalf of the Palestinian and Arab communities, at a time when other associations were paralyzed by the grief of shock and frustration.

Ibrahim‘s character was as unyielding and determined as his love was infinite and captivating. He covered his acquaintances and friends with love, and they all returned it passionately. “No one could escape Ibrahim‘s love”, as Mahmoud Darwish simply and beautifully put it. Selfless with his time, talents, effort and commitment, he gave everything without expecting anything in return.

It is difficult to describe what Ibrahim Abu-Lughod represents to us. We could not have become what we are were it not for his contribution. He was a role-model, a friend, a teacher, a caring brother and a source of hope.

He maintained an unshakable optimism in what we, the Palestinian people, would become.

As he was dying, the foremost question on his mind was still: “where do we go from here?”

Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh

Editor’s Note

This text is based on the transcription of oral interviews. We have limited the editing process to its barest form in an attempt to reflect as truthfully as possible the intonation, language, and spirit of the narrator. Speech is an essential dimension of one‘s identity, and we have attempted to minimize the interference between the narrator‘s voice and his public.

Chapter One

Early Childhood Days

There is a relationship between what you are as an adult and what you were as a child. Psychoanalysts emphasize childhood, because values are acquired during this stage, and your view of life is affected by the training you get at home. I will start at the beginning with the story of my father and mother, for that is where I can begin. I cannot go earlier than that.

My grandfather was a judge in the Ottoman system and continued under the British, but not as a judge. Most likely, he continued as a clerk of the court or something of that order, but he had high status in the community. He was educated in Istanbul. When we were young kids, especially in the winter, we would sit around the *manqal*, fireplace, telling stories and asking questions. We asked them how much my father paid in dowry. My mother said that he paid ten pounds or one *majidi*, a very small sum. My father courted my mother. He used to come to the balcony so that he could look at her. In the folklore of the household, when we used to ask questions about how they got married, my mother would tell us that the marriage was not thoroughly approved by my grandfather, my mother's father. This was not because he himself did not approve. This is of course my mother's story, because my father never talked about marriage. My mother would say that her stepmother (her mother died when she was young) dominated my grandfather. She did not want my father as the husband for the daughter that she actually liked, although she was not her real daughter. She preferred somebody who was wealthier and had better status. Then my mother would say that they did not need any money. You see, that's where we got our values. She thought that the question of money was wrong. After all he was also her cousin. "So, what's the money for?", my mother would say. Even what he gave her, a small sum, gold and bracelets, she gave back to make the capital so that he could build his foundry in 1929. Her father would not lend him the money because of the stepmother's influence. She didn't approve of the kind of establishment that he proposed to establish.

We learned two important values from that. First, that there is such a thing as a love match, even though it is between cousins and the marriage of cousins is a traditional match. Second, that dowry is not that important, and we ought not to be hung up on the dowry. That became very important in our family lore afterwards. There are no dowries in our family. I attribute that to the early discussion of the relationship between my father and mother.

Reading Sideways

There is a funny story about my mother. She was a serious person who wanted to learn. Her education consisted of *kuttab*, not school. Therefore, she could read and write, and she continued to do that, improving with age. She told me this story because the newspaper was part of our household. It still is by the way. We read newspapers until today. Now, my mother could not figure out the obsession of my father with the newspaper. One day, after he went to work, she read the newspaper for herself and she found nothing in it. How could he waste all this time reading it, and when he reads it, he pays no attention to anybody? When my father came home, she confronted him and asked him why he reads this nonsense: "I read the same newspaper but I get nothing out of it. It means nothing to me." According to my mother's story, my father put her next to him and said: "Okay, now you read to me." So, she started reading. Now, we know the newspaper is in columns and each column is separate. My mother did not understand the division of the newspaper into columns. So, she started at the beginning of the line and continued until the end of the paper. Of course, it did not make sense. My father was very nice and he did not laugh at her. He said: "No, this is how you read it. I want you to read it this way." He taught her how to read. Reading the newspaper is a convention in the sense that you learn how to do it, because reading columns is not conventional. The newspaper is a special publication, and nobody had taught her how to read it. She had to be taught, and ever since she has read the newspapers every day.

Developing Through Adversity

My father, who was very important in my formation in terms of direction of my life, comes from a family that is fundamentally a small family. It is not a large clan and certainly not a tribe. The family members, whom I remember from childhood, number maybe ten, fifteen or twenty people. My father had five brothers and sisters. His oldest brother, my uncle whose name is Muhii al-Din, is the person who raised him. My grandfather died when my father was young, and, therefore, my uncle was the person who became the patriarch of this nuclear family. They had three sisters. Two of the sisters were older than my father, and one of them was younger. This is the family that I really knew. I had a grandfather who is also an Abu-Lughod, because my father and my mother were first cousins. That's the traditional pattern, except that in the narrative of my mother, they were not only cousins but they also loved each other.

My father, according to my mother, was an orphan. I think he was six years old when my grandfather died. Therefore, he had just begun school. I do not believe that he finished more than three or four grades in an Islamic School. But, he definitely was literate, and he could read well. This was partly because he was a serious person,

and he devoted himself to reading. But, I do not believe that he went beyond the fourth grade. He read the Qur'an, things that were religious, and newspapers. He was religious about reading the newspapers before he went to work in the morning. He went to school early, but left school early, in order to go to work. Therefore, his status was that of a worker.

My father educated himself and he learned from other people. He used to attend religious sessions. He would go to the mosque and listen to the *wa'th*, religious lessons. He could add, subtract and do simple mathematical operations. How much of that he learned in school, or how much of it was because of his experience with the Germans, I don't know. He learned his skill in a German factory called Wagner. This was a foundry where you make molds out of steel. This German factory existed during the Ottoman times. This factory was where he learned everything. Wagner had Jewish employees and very few Arab employees. My father was one of the few. My father went on to work for a Jewish factory where he learned what we call *siknaji*, Ashkenazi language, which is Yiddish. My father knew it very well. We had an engineer who worked for the foundry who spoke only Yiddish, and we had some Jews who would bring equipment or would subcontract the foundry. My father was the one who spoke to them. He knew Yiddish well enough to carry on a prolonged conversation that was both professional and personal. Obviously, he was well exposed to the language. He knew rudiments of English, although not well enough. There is no question about the fact that his Arabic was impeccable.

A very distinct memory comes from my mother about how my father suffered, and how he built himself by developing through adversity. His brother took care of him, but his brother had other responsibilities. Therefore, he could not really give him all the time that he wanted. He was forced at a young age to go to work and was a conscientious worker. He earned enough through his work to be able to save money. He saved enough to get married, and acquired skills that enabled him to command a better price in the Arab market. By the testimony of everybody, he was a good man: loyal, hardworking, honest and modest. These are qualities that I remember, and I truly second my mother in her judgment, because my father was self-effacing, very modest and very loyal. He cared about people. He performed a number of good things in life. My father spoke quietly. He cared a lot about the family. He was concerned about public issues. His commitment to reading the newspapers was an expression of his interest in public affairs, and that was how he became interested in national politics.

Religious And National Orientation

My father was also a good Muslim. He was religious in belief and in the validity of the religious system. He performed all the rituals on time and in a nice way. He was not pretentious. He was modest in the performance of the rituals, but he did them

all. He prayed five times a day. In Ramadan, he fasted and he did the *tarawih*, the night prayer in Ramadan to exercise the body after a day of fasting. He did not necessarily go to the mosque except on Fridays. Otherwise, he prayed at home. We always saw him pray and he cared about our religious education. Because he was not well educated religiously, he sometimes relied on my uncle to give us *Hadith*, sayings of the prophet Mohammed, and *maw'itha*, sermon. My uncle was a semi-sheikh. He would copy Hadith and verses from the Qur'an, and share with us the wisdom he had found. He had a black book and would always take notes. When talking to us, he would look at this notebook.

My father was sufficiently broadminded: despite his religious orientation, he allowed us to go to the movies. We had one of the first movie houses established in Palestine, *al-Hamra*, which is still functioning today. It is now in the hands of the Jews. We used to see what we called "bukajons": Laurel and Hardy, *al-takhin wal-rafi'*, the thick and the thin. We saw Arabic movies with Ali Kassar and Najib al-Rihani. We also had plays. Najib al-Rihani in person came to Jaffa. Umm Kulthoum came to Jaffa. Abdul-Wahhab came to Jaffa. There was an artistic culture in Jaffa to which we were exposed. My father allowed us, and actually took us, to see these shows. He had an appreciation for these activities and wanted us to be educated. He did not see religion as a barrier to listening to Umm Kulthoum or Abdul-Wahhab, or to see a play.

Hunting For The Blessings Of Allah

Due to my father's interest and religious commitment, our first school experience was an Islamic private school. Government schools were available, but the rumor was that government schools, being run by the British Government, were undermining religion, i.e., they were undermining our culture. Government schools were emphasizing secular subjects. They did not teach enough religion: they did not teach enough Qur'an and *tajwid*, reciting. My father made sure that all of us, me and my brothers, went to the same Islamic school that was presided over by a principal, whose first name was Said. He was of the Kiali family. The school I attended, *al-madrasa al-ibtida'iyya al-islamiyya*, was an Islamic Primary School. I cannot remember now if it went to the seventh grade, which was what *al-ibtida'iyya* was in those days, but my father shifted us from that school in the third or fourth grade. I cannot answer why he did so. But, I think that the death of the principal had something to do with it. The principal at the school, this Kiali, was a friend of my father. The two of them were involved in politics, in what I call low-key politics. They were supporters of the Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husseini. I know that they would congregate periodically like the Masons. They met once a week at somebody's house, drank coffee, and discussed politics. The death of the principal was the result of a heart

attack, *sakta qalbiyya*. I suspect that my removal from the school had something to do with his death. The school would not be the same after this. In fact, the school closed in the end. He was a good principal. His reputation and his concern made the school function. The knowledge I carry from that school is the ability to recall a number of *suras* from the Qur'an.

I acquired a strong religious orientation at an early age. So, by the time I was probably eleven or twelve, I was quite religious. I recall in my early years of ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen, I used to go to the mosque of Hassan Beik, which is now still standing, as it has been repaired. I used to go for the prayer. The Imam who called for prayer was lazy. So, he would send me up the minaret. It was very interesting going up the minaret and receiving all the blessings of Allah. I would be guided correctly, and was rewarded by my family for being so pure and religious. By my teen years, I began to weaken.

The Little Sheikh Or The Little Lawyer?

My father had a fixation at that time: he wanted me to go to al-Azhar University to become a leading religious figure, *'alim*. He could see that I was of that type. He thought that I would be an excellent *'alim*, a modern *'alim*, and not a reactionary one like the others. The best place for that was *al-Azhar*, to study with the disciples of Sheikh Mohammed Abdo. Mohammed Abdo and his disciples were to be the model for my future. During my early teens, my father decided that I was no longer fit to study at *al-Azhar* when he discovered that I lied. He said: "We ought to send you to study law because lawyers are supposed to lie". By then, I had also developed an interest in law because of the influence of Youssef Wahbeh, the Egyptian movie star. I associated law with the dramatic performance of a lawyer and the wearing of these robes, because the British insisted on the appearance in court like judges.

I think, without emphasizing it, my father identified this shift in my behavior and in my interest. Therefore, he identified a possible profession for me. It is very important to see what he was thinking: I should be educated.

I went to an Islamic school and acquired Islamic values. Then, I went to the government school. My father must have realized that the government school had a different kind of orientation, and that the two would come together, manifested in some of my weak characteristics such as lying and my shift into law. He certainly had no doubt that I had it within me to obtain a career different from his, and that I should therefore study law. My father's perspectives were not confined to Jaffa. His horizon was not confined to Palestine. He believed we could acquire learning and education in Egypt or anywhere else. In that sense, I would say our perspective on the world was conditioned by what he thought, and he thought in both Islamic terms

and in Arab terms. I do not want to say that I remained committed to that kind of worldview, but it reoccurs in my writings. I have some phrases from tradition and from the Qur'an, which I can invoke in public speeches. By the time I got into the government school, the level of the Qur'an and religious training was lower than what we had in the primary school, only up to Surat Yassin. The sessions that are devoted to religion and the Qur'an were less.

I tend to speak about the way I was actually shaped by the family and what they intended, because I don't believe that the way we grew up was spontaneous. I think there was a direction to our growth. When I reflect on my early life, I think there were two important issues concerning the basis for my subsequent development. These were two important aspects of my development, which my family in a sense provided. One was my education and the fact that I went to both Islamic school and public school. The other important aspect of my childhood was what I learned from my father's and other people's arrests and imprisonments by the British.

Our home was religious in the sense of belief system. My mother and father were Muslims, practicing Muslims. They were broad-minded Muslims and they thought that Islam gives you a sense of values. They were concerned about transmitting that to us as children. I think one way they tried to realize that was by putting us in a school which was essentially Islamic. I don't recall ever going to a kuttab, for example. I went to what was known as the Islamic Primary School, a regular school that gave us "the three R's", in addition to the Qur'an. We had to memorize the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. By the title, the school gave itself away: it was an Islamic school. My parents, and principally my father, attended to our education. He put all of us as children into the same school. Therefore, he cared, and I think to his mind, the public school at the time would not provide as good a basis for Islamic education as the Islamic school. I interpret this to mean that he was really concerned about raising us in a society that is firmly grounded in the Islamic system. So, all my brothers and I went to that school, but only up to a point. That provided us with a basis for our later development, because I was attracted to those teachings of Islam, even after we moved to the public school.

My recollection is that I was probably there until third grade and then my father shifted us to the public school. By the third grade, I had enough grounding in the Islamic system. I used to pray, and clearly I did the fasting and all the rituals. I learned them and their explanations in the school. I think the influence of that period gave me an orientation towards a career in the future. You learn to speak, to give an oration, to quote from the Qur'an and the *Hadith*, and to intersperse your conversation with quotations. Clearly, and this is known to all my family, I became quite keen on a religious career, partly because of my constant attention to rituals and quotations. I used to go even at that young age to the mosque to pray.

I recall distinctly this one time where my religious orientation showed itself. We were in this area south of Jaffa called Nabi Rubin, Prophet Rubin. It's a place of hills and probably about 10-15 kilometers south of Jaffa. This was a summer resort for all the people, and in the months of July and August, practically the whole population of Jaffa would go there and set up tents. The men would go to work every day and come back in the evening. Everyone else, the women and children, remained in that place which came to life at night. You had cafes, *caracos*, plays and all sorts of activities. For the people of Jaffa, it was a seasonal activity. They would take their carriages, and they would go on camelback. The whole city migrated during the summer. There, I used to have a bird called Hudhud. At one point while we were there, the bird died. I think I must have been ten or eleven, and I wanted to bury Hudhud. I held a funeral and I performed the prayer. I did it exactly the way we do it for people. By then, they used to call me *sheikh*.

Because of my religious orientation, my father had debated that a combination between *al-Azhar* and Dar *Al-Ulum*, the house of the sciences, would be the best for my future education. Dar *Al-Ulum* was reputed to be a modern version of *al-Azhar*, where you also get a grounding in Arabic language and literature. The result could be a very important career. He was delighted with the idea that I would go to al-Azhar and become *'alim* and therefore, lead the people in prayer. As we know, in traditional Islamic society, the *ulama*, religious scientists, had a very important status in society. That status also conferred a higher status on the family where the *'alim* came from.

My father's expectation and hope for me moved from religion to law, which is secular activity. It is also an essential prerequisite for engagement in politics, because you learn oratory: you have to be a speaker, a communicator, argumentative and defend in theory whatever is just. There was, I think, a general impression that we felt that negotiation with the British required this kind of competence. At a young age, I wanted to do something in the summer. I was probably thirteen or fourteen and I interned with a lawyer. His name was Fayez Kanafani, the father of Ghassan Kanafani who was a renowned Palestinian writer and novelist. I knew that when my father was in difficulty or imprisoned, we used to go to him. His father would give us advice as to what we should do. I spent one summer working as an errand-boy for him. Because of my duties, I used to attend the court. I was very curious about what they do there. I had a very strong impression of the operation of the court, and I used to see British judges wearing their robes. This experience also reinforced the tendency that I developed for the study of law.

Another lawyer I came in contact with was Butrus Malak. I remember arguing with him when we began to organize our student union. Throughout this period, I attended courts. I even once went to Ramleh for Mr Kanafani to ask the judge to postpone a

trial. I was shaking as I appeared before the judge to make this simple request. The judge, an Arab judge, was slightly unkind to me. He asked why Kanafani wasn't able to come. I replied: "He says he is busy". I never became a lawyer, but I was always interested. When I later went to the States, I thought that American law schools would not prepare you for the kind of law that we need in Palestine. Therefore, I took the closest thing to it, and that was political science.

The Young Man And The Sea

I learned economic differentiation in terms of occupations. Jaffa had farms and orchards. The farms were huge and big and the orange orchards were inside the city. There are sections of the city now that have been built, but I remember when there were orange orchards just outside my school by 200 meters. Through the fishermen, I gained an appreciation for the sea as a source of food, but also as a source of pleasure and as a source of life. It is still ingrained in me. I always gravitate towards water and towards fish. Jaffa represents to me an ideal kind of life: to look at the sea and to always dream of what is at the other end of the horizon, to have the opportunity to dream, and to think of a much larger world outside. I continue to be drawn to the sea. My favorite activity is to walk by the sea and look at the other side and guess what is out there. What are they doing? Who are these people? Growing up by the sea, I was not confined to the city. I was not confined to my community. Rather, I was part of a world that was really large and I dreamt about going out to see it.

Occasionally, I would go out with the fishermen. I was fascinated by this expanse of water. I was in the middle of it, and thought it a miracle that I could be on the boat that moves by sails. Given a free choice, I would live by the seashore. One of my dreams is to have my own little boat and go out on the sea.

Family Relations

My father was a serious man who did not have a sense of humor, or not one that I remember. In our culture, you're supposed to frown. You're not supposed to smile the way the Americans smile. I always remember him as his picture shows him: as a serious man who frowns. He never smiled, at least not on his picture, and I cannot recall him ever smiling. However, he was terribly affectionate. He was also partial to some of us as kids, and he was a disciplinarian. Obviously, he beat us, as physical punishment was normal.

My oldest brother, Hassan, I think to some extent was a disappointment to my father because he didn't do well in school. My father removed him from school during the fourth grade. Hassan was sort of semi-ruffian. My memory of him is that of beatings

he received from my father for disobeying, for staying out in the evening longer than he should, and for getting into fights as a bully. My father wanted Hassan to be polite and deferential and show respect to him and others, but he was a growing teenager.

My second brother, Mahmoud, did not do well in school either. So, my father also removed him. He put the two of them to work in the same foundry. Hassan became a leith operator, which I discovered later was a very important skill in the States. Mahmoud resented being made to work in the foundry. Mahmoud, unfortunately, did not live long enough, although he too was skilled. The British killed him in 1947. Apparently, he was carrying weapons in his car, bringing them to Jaffa. The British police tried to stop him, but he wouldn't stop. So, they shot him and his passenger. He died instantly. He was 22.

The third brother, Ahmed, my older brother, was an angel and the favorite child in my family. He was very nice, very polite, very deferential, a *mujtahed*, hardworking, in school. He did very well in school, and certainly was the favorite of my mother because of his politeness. When my father would bring home a box of apples, my mother would save some apples for him alone, because we were ruffians and would fight and grab them. So, when we had finished all our shares, my brother would still be eating an apple. The second oldest brother and I would gang up on him to beat him, because he was the favorite of the family. But, this favored son was a nice guy, and being older than I, he was in a higher class. In student elections, he was elected and became a student leader in Jaffa. I was always competing with him, and resented that he was a favorite at home and in school. Sometimes, I would do things contrary so that I would be noticed. The sibling rivalry was strenuous, but I always lost because my family would support Ahmed. I don't think we got out of this sibling rivalry until both of us reached the age of 40.

Without question, and in a different way, my father and mother loved Said, my younger brother by two years. He was a cute child. I could see the affection flowing out of my parents. They respected Ahmed and thought he was doing well. He was serious and studious, but this young Said, was a little *az'ar*, devil. He had the ability to get out of trouble by charming my mother and father.

My mother was highly political. Through her ordeals, she formed strong political opinions. She was a supporter of *al-Hakim*, George Habash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). She was also cautious, she did not want any harm to come to us. She knew that her sons and nephews were politically active, and she was anxious that we would have the same struggles as my father, but she never told us not to get involved. My mother was the head of the family after my father died. She had a tremendous impact on her children's character, myself included. She didn't like to cook. She liked to be with the people, to gossip and visit her friends. She hated getting stuck in the kitchen, a trait I inherited.

My father died in 1944. He was very young, 43 or 44. If more were known about medicine in those days, he would probably still be alive because he had high blood pressure. The last memory that I have of my father is of him dying in bed. It was his last hour or two and we all came because he was going to die. Said was playing soccer. He was probably about nine or ten, and I could see the affection my father had for him. His eyes brightened when he saw him, and he put his hand on his hair, and said: "Be a good boy". Those were his last words. And so, we called Said the baby. He traded on being a baby. He loved it until he became old. Still, he plays the same game with my mother.

Said became the captain of the football team in Amman. His period of growth was in Amman, after we became refugees. He became the captain in school and then became the captain of Jordan, defeating all the other soccer teams. He got the silver cup, kass fidda, and we brought him to the States to study. He went to Oklahoma University and became an engineer in geology. He was self-made. We had no money since all of us were studying, so it took him seven years to get his BSc because he was working.

I was the stable member of the family at that time. I was married, so Said would come and stay with my family. My mother would always worry about him. In those days, we didn't call anybody: we would communicate through letters. I didn't speak to my family over the phone for eight years. I couldn't afford to. I wouldn't know how, and anyway, they wouldn't have a telephone. So, we would write letters, which took two or three weeks to be delivered. But, Said didn't write, so my mother worried: "Is he alive or is he dead? You are not telling me the truth. What's happening to him?" So, we assured her. When he was visiting, I made him sit at the desk and write ten letters, ten of those airmail letters. A letter to my mother would read: *"Keef halek? Ana mabsut. Al-madrassa kwayseh...keef sihtek inti? Keef al-awlad"*, "How are you? I am well. School is good. How is your health? How are the boys?" It was a conventional letter, a form letter. The second letter would read: "Thank you for your letter. I learned a great deal from your letter." Kullo kithib wahailameh, all of it was lying. At the beginning of each month, I would take one letter and put it in the post. My mother would say: "My darling Said, may God be with him. He is the best. He always writes to me". Occasionally, we would sit together all of us: my older brother, Said and myself. During one of these sittings, we confronted my mother and accused her of partiality. "You are not objective. You favor Ahmed because he seems quiet. He cheats you. This Said is a little devil. He never wrote a letter to you".

I look at myself now and see how I treat my children. I confront the fact that actually, as parents, we love our children and they love us, but each child has his own characteristics and responds differently. But, this we didn't know at the time. So, we

would beat up my older brother, or try to punish him for being the favorite. The younger one, we couldn't beat up: we just wanted him to do better in school because he was spoiled. You learn that at home.

Chapter Two

Memories Of Jaffa

We lived in the Manshiyya area, at the edge of the section of the city that is called the Rishaid. The Rishaid is a distinct *hara*, section, established in the 19th century, largely by remnants of the Egyptian army of Ibrahim Pasha. Rishaid is Rashid, the Egyptian town. Presumably, the original Egyptian settlers in that section of the city came from Rashid. So, they called it Rishaid. Some of the families I knew were descendants of Egyptians: both the Abu-Labans and the Abu al-Jibains originated in Egypt.

So, the thesis of this fraudulent woman, Joan Peters, is taken from reality. She exaggerated it, but the Palestinians never said that we are exclusive people. Historically, Palestine is a land of mixed people. The crusaders came and settled here, and they are here as Palestinians. So, we are not exclusive. But she misconstrued the reality of the Middle East. The Middle East is an area of open frontiers, and people move back and forth. There are Lebanese families in Palestine and Palestinian families in Lebanon. Palestine, in particular, has historically been open to Christians, Jews, Muslims, Pakistanis and Afghanis. It does not mean that they are not Palestinian. In that sense, Rashid is mentioned in 19th century books as a town with about 3000 people. They all admit that they are remnants of the Egyptian army that came with Ibrahim Pasha.

In Jaffa, there is a *sabil*, a spring, endowed by somebody named Abu-Naboud. Hence, it is called *sabil Abu-Naboud*. Abu-Naboud was one of the commanders of the Egyptian army who wanted to bestow this benefit on the people. This was functioning as *a sabil* certainly until we left in 1948. As I grew up, the foundry that my father established was across the street from the *sabil*. We would go there and wash and drink water, wonderful water. It is now dried up. I have no idea when it became dry, but when I first came back to Palestine in 1991, it was dry.

We lived in a house of the Zain family. We rented it, and that's the house from where I went to my first actual demonstration in Jaffa. I remember it as if it was yesterday. I took my brother Said, who was two years younger than me, on my shoulders and went to the huge demonstration in Jaffa, about two blocks away from where we were living. I heard them shouting, so I went to discover. It must have been with the strike or right after the strike, at the end of 1936. It was a huge demonstration and I saw, or at least recognized, for the first time, the British army and police mounted on horseback with big batons, beating the head of one of the demonstrators. I saw

blood streaming from the head-sore and I was telling my younger brother, who was just an "idiot" of four years old: *"Shayef hek!"* "Do you see this!" Of course, I was trying to reassure myself, but he was screaming: "Yeah! Yeah! I see! I see!"

It was what the British would call a riot. But "riot" was too weak. It was more of an uprising. I remember, of course, the chants of "Down with British imperialism!" "Down with the Balfour Declaration!" "Down with Zionism!" and down with this and that. We did not hear any "up". I am reminded of that today, because you have two contrasting views, completely diametrically opposed of what is taking place in Palestine. You have these young teenagers who go into the activity at the point of contact with the Israeli army. They are young people between 15 and 20 years old throwing stones and the Israelis shoot them. The impression outside of Palestine, in the West, and specifically in the US, is that we cannot keep our kids in school and that we send them there instead. It is the whole idea of mothers sacrificing their kids and pushing them to go there. I remember that in my case nobody pushed me to go to the demonstration. I knew exactly that it was anti-British and anti-Zionist. There was no doubt at the age of seven who were the enemies of the Palestinians. I knew this without asking many questions.

The interesting thing is that when I came back from the demonstration and the British had succeeded in overcoming the uprising, beating the hell out of our people and arresting and injuring our people, my mother opened the door for me and actually began to scold me. But, she was not scolding me because I went to the demonstration. She was scolding me because I took my younger brother with me: "How could you dare to take your younger brother?" She screamed at me. So, it was OK for me at the age of seven to go. I was old enough to understand.

The mothers understand what their children are doing. They cannot restrain them or imprison them at home, because this is a national action for liberation: you are confronting the enemy and therefore you get the re-enforcement from figures of authority in your community. So, each time I hear this miserable Queen of Sweden making the stupid comment about us not supporting and protecting our children, I want to tell her: "We have got to liberate the country, and who is going to liberate the country if not we?" This is the issue.

Back to our house. Left of the house, there was a *furon*, a bakery. It was *Furon Khalaf*. They were the family of Abu-Lihyeh. Their *furon* was good and there were several bakeries like this. There was the Abu al-Afyeh *furon* that still exists today. Each time I go to Jaffa, I buy things from there. They serve the *za'tar* bread, eggs and cheese, baguettes, the French croissant and so forth. They do all the Arabic things too. They have changed clientele and they have adapted to modern times. In my childhood, my father brought treats home for us. There was new bread that came to Jaffa called *khubez fino*. It was thick with a hard crust. It would come fresh from

the bakery with yellow cheese and tea. That was a magnificent supper, a magnificent treat. At least once a week, my father would treat us to this bread. It was a tradition that was perpetuated by my oldest brother when he took over as guardian of the family. I tried to duplicate this in Ramallah, but I couldn't find *khubez fino*. In Paris, I could do it because the French have it.

That *furon* is still in existence today, and they have in addition to it a *Mata'am*, a restaurant, called *Mata'am Abu Al-Afyeh*. The *Abu Al-Afyeh* is an interesting family. One of the *Abu Al-Afyehs*, Khamis is his name, is the correspondent for the Egyptian TV, covering the news from Israel. He is an expert on Israel. He studied at the Hebrew University. He always finishes his reports by saying: *"Hatha Khamis Abu Al-Afyeh min Tel Aviv-Jaffa"*, "This is Khamis Abu al-Afyeh from Tel Aviv-Jaffa".

So, I have a sense of continuity in that I go to Jaffa and remember these areas. I give tours from my memory. I have taken the BBC and students from Birzeit. I also promise my graduate students to take them to Jaffa as a reward if they are good. I take them on a tour, and then we go swimming in the sea. When we had the Landscape Perspectives conference at Birzeit University, the volunteers who were used as ushers were taken on this tour. We took a bus to Jaffa and had a wonderful time.

I can pinpoint Abu al-Afyeh, this section of the city where we lived, and where the various houses were. All of these houses have been demolished, but I can pinpoint their exact location and remember all the families who lived in them. I remember childhood friends: Farouq Qaddoumi who lived behind us, and Shafiq al-Hut who lived on the side. I can pinpoint the location of demonstrations and the British police station where they used to arrest people and beat them. I learned of demonstrations and of the prostitution houses on the edge of the beach. I traversed the city to go to school.

There is a very important street that divides the city, which is called *Shari' Jamal Pasha*, Jamal Pasha Street. It is a boulevard, which is unique in Palestine. Jamal Pasha was a Turkish commander. I think he must have been the governor of Jaffa, like Hassan Beik. When Hassan Beik died, Jamal Pasha built a mosque and named it after him: *Jami' Hassan* Beik. It was built in 1914. *Shari' Jamal Pasha* was built before 1914. It was designed, without question, as a French boulevard: a long street that divides the city. There is an island dividing the two sides of the street with huge palm trees that extend for more than a kilometer. There is no street of this kind in Ramallah, in Jerusalem or in Tel Aviv. It gives Jaffa a special aura, a feeling of being in a different place.

As I grew, I began to notice a process of modernization of services. At one corner of the Jaffa-Tel Aviv Street, across from the policeman regulating the traffic in the middle of the island, there was this ice-cream shop. The person who scooped the

ice-cream was a woman, a European, probably Hungarian. My friends and I would love to go to this shop, to get ice-cream, but also to look at her because she was a sight for us. We were teenagers and had more interest in her than in the ice-cream. But, of course, to stand there and look at her, we had to buy the ice-cream. We had never seen women actually working. Our women were veiled, so we didn't see them. We would either see very young girls, or in the Christian section of the city, we would see women, but they were never working. We would look at her and say to each other: "She smiled at me".

The beginnings of modernization showed in the new housing. There is a house that I always take people to in Jaffa, which was very modern. It was built around 1946, and is what we call a villa, the first villa in the city. It was a modern villa, but with a great deal of the old style. Today, the French ambassador to Israel occupies it. You see these manifestations of modernity almost as you walk in the town. You have the French hospital, the factory, the industry and the ice-cream shops. You see them as you are growing and you are growing with them. So yes, we were backward. We went to an Islamic school, but we learned English, and played modern games like basketball, football and other sports.

Co-existence And Tensions

We lived in Jaffa, what we call *Aruss al-bahar*, the Bride of the Sea, an important Palestinian city. It was highly active nationally. It is a city of middle-class and lower middle-class people. We did not have feudal aristocracy. We did not have the prominent families of Jerusalem. Jaffa was a mixed city. It was predominantly Arab Muslim, but there were some Jews there. I grew up in neighborhoods where Jews were present, adjacent to Tel Aviv. The Christian area was to the south.

The Jewish community that was in Jaffa did not have its origin in Tel Aviv. It grew indigenous to the city of Jaffa. Early Jewish immigrants, who were pilgrims, came and actually lived in the city. Most of those Jews were what we would call today Oriental Jews. They were Yemenis, Iraqis and from North Africa, and I grew fully conscious of a Jewish community in Jaffa that spoke Arabic. They may have spoken either Yiddish or Hebrew: I cannot tell now, but they certainly spoke Arabic. Their Arabic was not perfect, but it was passable. As I grew older, I began to pick up the differences, and notice Hebrew.

In that early period, up to I would say 1936-37, I was not conscious that these are exogenous people. They were part of the neighborhood, but I became aware that they have different rituals from ours. My friends and I would look forward to Friday evening, the Sabbath, because they would give us a piastre to turn off the lights. So, we knew of the Jewish rituals and we looked forward to them as a source of income.

We knew some important differences, in practice, between Muslims and Jews, but we did not think of them in political terms at all. They were, as far as I was concerned, part of our community: we have Christians, we have Jews and we have Muslims. Jaffa was a tri-communal city. Growing up, I was aware of Christian festivals, such things as Easter eggs and Jewish traditions. My knowledge was superficial, of course. But, I was aware of distinctions in identities. Still, these communities were also living together. So, they had a common culture. The distinction arose after the 1936-37 revolt, after the great strike, when the Jews left my neighborhood and migrated to Tel Aviv or to the frontier of Tel Aviv. The border was still mixed, but the city was emptied of the Jewish population.

I also remember playing football on the streets. There was a field, but in the neighborhoods we would play on the street. On this street, the houses on the right side were all Arab, and some of the houses on the left side were Jewish. When we played, there was this young boy with freckles who wore shorts, very short shorts. He would stand, longingly looking at us as we played. He did not play with us, but he desperately wanted to. Sometimes, we would invite him and occasionally he would come, but his mother would come and pull him out. He was an Ashkenazi Jew, as was his mother. He began to speak Arabic, but his mother never spoke Arabic. He was one of the new immigrants from Eastern or Central Europe. As a kid, it made no difference that he was a Jew. We were playing and having fun, and if he knew how to play, we wanted him for the team. I did not know him that well, but I will never forget his face. If I had the ability to draw, I would draw his face, particularly his eyes which were full of longing to play with us, but forbidden by his mother.

At this time, the tension had developed. My friends and I learned that it was permissible to burn buildings where Jews live. We did not know how to burn a building, but we carried a can of gasoline, kerosene. We went to a house because we knew that it was a Jewish house, but, nobody was there. We poured the gas near the wall and lit a match. There was a fire and we ran for fear of arrest by the police. When we thought the coast was clear, we went back to look at the house, and saw that it was still there. So, we said to ourselves that we must do a better job next time. We told other people what we had done and the story went out. We received a warning from our families. The importance of the warning was that they did not tell us that this was a bad act, or a reprehensible act that would affect us negatively, but they said: “If the police had seen you, you could have been arrested and thrown into prison”. It was the punishment that was important, not the act of burning someone’s home. I suspect they would have approved it if we had burned the house. I suspect that, but I cannot confirm it.

I remember the emptiness of the city of Jews. The Jews were subsequently restricted after 1936-37 to very specific areas in the city. For example, in *Hai al-sharamit*, Prostitutes Street, they were all Jews. We also had *Suq al-yahud*, the Jewish market.

They were allowed in the *suq* on the border of the city, either the western border or the northern border. It was the frontier like the frontiers of Gibraltar or the border between the United States and Mexico, where both people learn a border language. They spoke Arabic and our people eventually learned Hebrew. That is my memory of the border areas of Jaffa. Both people learned the other's language. We could curse each other in the other's language, but we also traded, by selling vegetables, fruits, clothes and all the goods sold in the flea markets. One of these markets is still there. We call it the Carmel.

In the 1930s and 40s, I became aware of *Hai al-sharamit*. This area was the prostitutes' area. The women who worked in these prostitution houses were, invariably, Yemeni Jewish women. This was "legitimate" prostitution, i.e., the British approved of it. I saw a three- part documentary on Palestine and Israel, and the BBC interviewed one of the *shetreets*, one of the ministers of Israel. He spoke about the same prostitution on the streets: "We had good intelligence. British soldiers used to go to these prostitution houses and these prostitutes were actually our agents. We had full information on the city of Jaffa and on the movement of the British army and police." He was speaking of the 1940s, of *Hai al-sharamit*, which we knew. In rare cases, Palestinians from Jaffa who went to these prostitution houses would find a wife there. After their marriage, these women became totally affiliated with the Arab community.

Jaffa was a city with a mixed population. Except for periods of national crisis, everyone lived together more or less amicably. I began to project on Palestine a feeling of inter-communal harmony as embodied by this city: differences in faith did not produce the kind of conflict that we read about, unlike in some other Arab countries. I suspect that was true in all of the mixed cities of Palestine at that time. In the history books, you find that Palestine did have communities that co-existed. They may have co-existed separately in different places, but the major characteristic of the co-existence is one essentially of peace. I am never surprised by the positive attitudes that our people have when they confront the issue of communal existence in any place, not only in Palestine but also outside the region. Palestinians carry a value of inter-communal harmony. In the United States, Palestinians are living alongside Blacks, Hispanics and Jews. I believe this ability is part of our cultural heritage. I don't know where it comes from in the most fundamental sense of the term, but certainly the living experience of the people predisposes them to accept differences and to co-exist with each other.

This tradition of co-existence is also part of Islamic training. In our Islamic training, the communal co-existence is not necessarily equality, but certainly it is an accepted mode of life. Islam has always accepted both the Christians and Jews. Therefore, it provided for them by law: in all sorts of forms of existence, they were part of the community. Now, they may have been subordinate in those days, but certainly in

my days neither the Christians nor the Jews were subordinate in terms of social status in the community. Some Christians were superior because they had higher income status.

"May God Curse Them!"

The British imprisoned my father on several different occasions. So, I grew to be familiar with the prisons and where they put him. I knew *Sarafand* prison, which I visited because I went to see my father. I knew the *Maskubiyeh*, the Russian compound, in Jerusalem from those days. I also went to Atleet, to the prison in Bethlehem and to the Taggart building in Lydda. I knew all these prisons, and I knew that the function of lawyers was that they were supposed to plead for these prisoners.

Between 1936 and 1939, the Arab Revolt was at its height. My father was imprisoned in *Sarafand*. I was eight or nine years old, but I understood why he was in prison. I knew about the torture and the curfews. My family would visit my father in prison, and I would absorb the look of the prison, the height of the fence and the prison schedule. But, I was also aware of the differences among the prisoners: those who were there for national reasons, and the criminals who committed murder or who stole.

The British would come in the middle of the night to raid the house. We called this *kabsiyyeh*. Sometimes, we would be eating *bizir*, sunflower seeds, at the end of the evening, and suddenly both the police and the army would be hitting the door with the butts of their guns. Sometimes, our neighbors would alert us if they saw the soldiers coming, so we would open the door. The soldiers would run in screaming: "Raise your hands, raise your hands." They would go into the kitchen, into the storage, and poke their hands through the flour and the rice looking for weapons. I was just a kid. But, they would line us all up, including the visitors. We usually had visitors. We learned to say that any person who slept at our house, especially those who wore the *qumbaz*, traditional dress, were our cousins. These men would come to Jaffa for money or weapons, and our house was a "safe" house.

The soldiers usually had an Arab informant with them during these raids. There were good informants and bad informants. Not all of the informants completely collaborated: some men would cover for us. My father used to say: "This informant is a good man". They would protect my father or confirm that this man was our cousin. The *kabsiyyeh* would take about half an hour. On some occasions, they would take my father and refuse to answer any questions. We would wait until the morning to contact our attorney in order to find out where my father was taken.

In the absence of my father, my mother was the sole authority of the family. She was a veiled woman, but strong and knowledgeable. She knew which lawyer to contact and what questions to ask. One of our connections was Hamdi Qumbarji who worked

in the Authority. He was an impressive person, but my mother was very skeptical of him, although she liked his wife. In hindsight, I think he worked for the criminal investigations department of the Authority, i.e., he was a civilian in the army. He was not a lawyer but he had connections.

Until 1941, it was easy to find out where my father had been taken. When he was permanently transferred to the *mu'taqal*, prison, we knew through our connections. When he was being interrogated, we were not allowed to see him, but there was always a way to get information. The British guards were corrupt. I remember one guard in particular whose name was George. George, for the price of five to ten pounds, would have a system to meet and smuggle in items such as pillows and food. Occasionally, he could arrange a meeting where we could see my father in the distance in order to say hello.

The last time my father went to prison was in 1942, just before he died. I came back from school to find my mother depressed and sulking. We, my brothers and sisters, had been told on the street that my father had been taken. There were no secrets in Jaffa, but we had no idea how bad it was. We were told that the army had listening-machines piercing the walls, to see if there were sounds or transmitters. They were concerned that my father could be providing information for the Germans at the time. They went through the house very thoroughly, confiscating all the papers, including our homework. They were looking for something different, something out of the ordinary. In the past, they had been concerned about weapons, this time they were concerned about messages or transmitters. We understood nothing, of course. They took the pictures that were hanging on the walls to see if there was anything, if there was a vacuum there. Clearly, they were looking for a spy, not for the person who was manufacturing mines.

The soldiers who arrested my father were not from the police: they were from the British Middle East Command. It was the British Middle East Command that was in charge, not the British army in Palestine. This was not the same as before. I could see the fear on my mother's face. When we went to Kanafani, he said: "Well, I'll look into it". I have this very distinct impression that he came the next day in the evening. He said: "I cannot be of any help, but I will give you the names of two lawyers who can handle this case." At that point in time, we didn't even know where my father was. We usually knew, as he had a way of telling us, where he was. In this instance, we failed to find out where he was. The police would not tell us; the army would not tell us; and we made every effort to find out, so it was quite unusual. Kanafani came in the evening and told us: "I'm going to give you two names, and I will escort you to see either of them. They are both in Jerusalem."

One name was Henry Cattan, whom I subsequently met years later. He was probably Palestine's best known Palestinian lawyer. The other one was Joseph Shapiro, who

became Minister of Justice in Israel. He was actually the governor of Jerusalem in 1948 during the war and was part of the leadership of the Zionist movement, but apparently he was a very competent and able lawyer. Kanafani said: “These are the best lawyers who can deal with this case”. So, my mother, as the negotiator, went to see Henry Cattan. We said that we would take the Arab lawyer: we would not take the Jewish lawyer. Henry Cattan agreed to take the case, and said: “Okay, I’ll find out what has happened to your father.” He came back a day later and said: “There is nothing to be done. Don’t spend your money, as there is nothing to be done. If he is innocent, he will be out. If there is a case against him, then he can have a lawyer. But, as of now, there is nothing to be done. Just wait, and I will keep you informed.” The reason why Henry Cattan told us there was nothing to be done was the fact that it was the British Middle East Command that was in charge, and this meant that my father’s case was not subject to Palestinian jurisdiction.

My father was away for at least a month before we heard any news from him. One day, a car came to the foundry, a man got out and said: “I have seen Abu-Hassan. I was with him. He wants the following items...and this is how you get it to him.” My father was in the Taggert Building, built in 1936-37 by the British Army of Palestine. We went to this building with all his requests: a mattress, some food, and other things. We were given code words to gain entry, but my father was incommunicado. Instead, we were given a message to check with George to see if he had been there. My father knew that the British were going to move him from prison to prison. This time, he had been moved to the *Maskubiyeh* in Jerusalem.

The British had buildings like the Taggert all over Palestine. These buildings are named after the architect, and are located at strategic crossroads throughout the country. They were used to house the army, the police and the investigation departments. It is in these buildings that interrogations and torture take place. The British used these buildings. Then the Jordanians and Egyptians used them, followed by the Israelis. Now, they are used by the Palestinian Authority. To the credit of the PA in Ramallah, the building there is getting a face-lift, but it is still there.

My father had been accused of being a spy for the Axis Powers. The connection, I found this information doing research years later, was Hassan Salameh. Salameh was a follower of the Mufti who was brought to Jaffa by the Nazis. His mission was to arrange for an uprising, and one of the contacts he was given was my father. My father told us, subsequently, that Salameh had tried to meet with him, but my father had refused. He did not know who Salameh was at the time, so his refusal was a lucky accident.

We were finally able to see my father in Bethlehem. He told us not to spend any more of our money on bribes. He knew he was soon to be released, not right away but gradually. The British had been letting him go into town, escorted by police. The

police wanted him to be seen, because his case had been notorious. But, the British did not have a case against him. The eyewitness to my father's "spying" could not identify him. He described my father as short and bald, despite the fact that my father had a full head of hair. One day, with no fanfare, my father was released. He was put in a taxi and sent home.

I grew up in Palestine in an atmosphere of permanent tension. The British, who were viewed without question as the enemy, controlled the society. They were very different from our people. If they were not blonde, they were very close to being blonde. They spoke a different language, and they clearly had the power: they controlled and they had weapons. Everything about them tells you as a child that these people have power, and that they have power over you. In the discussions at home, you never speak about them except "may God curse them." I was imbued with antagonisms since every reference to them was derogatory. But, they also inspired fear, they could only do harm. They were the epitome of evil. We learned at home, and subsequently at school, that their job was to make it possible for the Jews to come to the land and to take our country. Therefore, the British were the principal enemy of the Palestinians.

The Jews were weak at the time. They were fewer in numbers, and we had the traditional Islamic contempt for the Jews as cowards. We thought that they are what the Qur'an says they are, i.e., that they cheat. At that time, we totally ignored the possibility that they could be powerful. We didn't view them as a threat. We could clearly see that their numbers were growing, but we attributed all that to the protection they received from the British. Therefore, any kind of rebellion or demonstration that took place, was anti-British. Then, it could also degenerate against the Jews. But, the enemy, the object of our anger and frustration, were the British. They were the ones who arrested our people, who imposed curfews and who killed our people. The British first did everything the Israelis do now. It is the same story repeating itself.

Their Aim: Our Dispossession

An occupation by definition is occupying a land against the will of its people, and controlling and enforcing its will by power. Through living under occupation, I became socialized into political activity. My father was involved in the national movement, through his support of the Mufti. Jaffa was a "Mufti town". Growing up, I would say: *"Saif Al-Din, Haj Amin"*, *"Haj Amin is the national leader"*. The national movement and the national command in Jaffa were supportive of the Mufti.

My father was a *majlisi*, part of the *majlisiyyin*, the supporters of Haj Amin. He was not politically prominent, but he was active. He was conscious of the fact that his political activities could lead to imprisonment. But he supplied a service in that he transformed his factory, the foundry, into a factory for mines. The British had intelligence that this activity was happening at the foundry, and shut it down.

I learned to differentiate between a national activity and an ordinary crime. An ordinary crime in pursuit of individual gain is very different from a national activity. The value attached to being arrested by the British in a national context, in defense of the land, was positive. What were we defending? We felt that our religion was in danger. The British were white and Christian, and were bringing Jews to Palestine. They were giving Muslim land to the Jews. We opposed them, not because they were British, but because they were occupiers.

The resentment towards the British was reinforced at school. I learned of the other arrests of the fathers of my classmates. I discovered a whole network of people who had suffered at the hands of the occupiers. Despite the Department of Education, which in turn was controlled by the British, we were exposed to teachers with nationalistic ideology. These teachers could articulate the basis for a national rebellion. They explained the Balfour Declaration and the objective of the Peel Commission. They knew why the British came in the middle of the night to arrest people, and they knew the purpose of the curfews.

We could see the growth of Tel Aviv, and the teachers would explain the meaning of Jewish immigration. The British role was to facilitate Palestinian dispossession by allowing Jews to immigrate freely, and imposing taxes on Palestinians, compelling them to sell their land. There were also land confiscations. This land transfer achieved the two prerequisites for the establishment of a Jewish state: land and people.

I began to demonstrate regularly as a part of school activity. It is interesting to reflect on the different reactions the teachers had regarding the demonstrations. The teachers would not severely punish the students who were caught demonstrating, but would react harshly to any non-national violation of school rules. We learned intellectually how to link behavior with the objectives. Our teachers served us quite well in that sense. I knew of no teacher who defended the British or the Jews. But they were aware of the limitations of the students. Some of the teachers were critical of the Mufti. We didn't understand these differences, but knew that there was considerable political discussion amongst them. However, the overwhelming sense was the mobilization of the Palestinian population against the British and against the Jews, the beneficiaries of British support. To the best of my knowledge, the hostility towards the Jews was not openly political. It was not that they were Jews. They were Europeans and we knew this. Their aim was our dispossession: to establish a Jewish state on our land.

Red Wax

The factory that my father founded in 1929, produced material necessary for the industrial development of Palestine. Thereby, it served as a counter to Jewish industry. It was an alternative economy. Otherwise, we would have been dependent upon the Jews who came from Europe, who knew industry, who had machinery and engineers. My father provided a very important service to our people with the establishment of this factory. It was an industrial factory, producing water pumps to be used in the orchards. It produced crushers and olive presses. The Palestinian peasantry was dependent on this kind of machinery, whether it was for oranges or olives. Our factory also provided installation and assembly services for our products. We produced manholes that were used throughout Palestine. To this day, in Jaffa, these manholes can be found with the inscription, "The Palestinian Iron and Brass Foundry Co. Ltd."

In the late 1930s, the foundry was closed by the British on more than one occasion. After the foundry was closed, my father did not work for a period, but suddenly he began to work again. Every evening he would drag my two brothers and two of my cousins to the factory. On the outskirts of the factory, there was an orange grove. They would sneak into the orange grove and break into the factory. They began to remove all the equipment, drag it through the orchard, and move it on donkeys to a new location. This operation held enormous risks. There were patrols, *dawriyyat*. At one point, the *dawriyyat* decided to look inside the factory, and found that all the machinery had disappeared. My father had established a new factory at a different location. The patrol was able to locate it easily, since a functioning factory isn't easily hidden. They could not prove that the new factory was working with the machinery of the old, but it was closed anyway, again with the red wax. The closure lasted eight months. Only through the dedication of my father was the factory able to continue.

Not only was my father dedicated to the factory, he was generous through its services. My father donated equipment to *Dar al-Aitam al-Islamiyyeh*, the Islamic Orphanage. He did this because he believed in Haj Amin, he was a majlisi. My father was religious, but he was also nationalistic. He was defending the nation and Islam by helping the orphans, the children of the martyrs.

My father was also generous with his supporters. My mother told a story about the establishment of the factory. My father's factory was one of the first real stock corporations in Palestine. I don't know where he got the idea from, probably from the Germans or the Jews. He had a partner who had some capital, and my mother sold her gold for my father's investment. His partner decided that this investment was not going to be profitable, so he sold his share to my father's cousin, in the amount of $10,000. This was a lot of money at the time. The rest of the stockholders were poor relatives, but everybody invested five to ten pounds. My father would

distribute profits four times a year, which was remarkable in its ingenuity, to give poor people four pounds each time. It was a source of income for them. By the time he died, he had doubled the capitalization of the company from the profits. He himself did not have a lot of stocks. He was the poorest of the big shareholders, but he took a salary from the factory and gave his talent in return.

My father's successor was not as sensitive to the needs of the stockholders. He was a smart guy, but selfish. He was trained in the market, so he had an entirely different mind than my father. This is not to say that my father did not have a sophisticated mind. But, the successor knew how to build capital. He could split the labor movement, and was not concerned about the quarterly distributions of the profits, the way my father was. He would explain to the poorer stockholders that they would make more money in the long run if they kept it with the company. He didn't understand that they considered their investment a source of income. But, he did have a strong sense of capitalism, and when the war came in 1948, the factory started making the *mussaffahat*, the armored personnel carriers. The steel body was made at the factory. I was working for the National Committee at this time, so I knew how much these carriers cost. Obviously, the factory was a promising industrial establishment. Then the war came, and the whole thing collapsed.

Dedicated And Active

In school, we were very fortunate to have a number of good teachers who guided us academically and ethically. They oriented us nationally and civilly, and they were concerned about our rights. They were also modern, having studied at the American University in Beirut or Cairo. They had an understanding of the power asymmetry between our status and society versus the Jews. Without a doubt, they knew we were no match for the Jewish strength, although they were smaller in number. The Jews were Europeans and advanced with better schools, better education, libraries, concerts and concert halls, all the things we didn't have. They had an industrial establishment.

My education benefited from my teachers' knowledge of the outside world. They were able to assess society and push us to act. They encouraged us to participate in demonstrations, through their silence and smiling eyes. I felt completely secure in this system. It complemented the education I was getting at home and in my neighborhood. The experience of growing up in Jaffa was a positive national experience and one leading to dedication to the community and to the nation.

During the high school days in Palestine, I participated in *all* the demonstrations with the student movement. The student movement was actually also active in the community in staging demonstrations and strikes. The director of the Department

of Education, Mr Harold Crow, who was an Irish from the north, ordered all schools where demonstrations took place closed until further notice. He also devised the policy of punishing the parents, because you cannot punish the kids since they are too young to be arrested. The government could arrest us, and actually did so sometimes, because we were invited to the strike or broke the curfew. But, *he* could not arrest us. So, he made the parents deposit the equivalent of 30 English pounds, which would be forfeited if their kid participated in a demonstration. He enforced that in some schools, but we refused it. We said that we will not pay anything and we went on strike ourselves. My brother was the leader of the student movement at the time. The senior class took over the running of the school. We were not fully a high school at the time and had Secondary two as the highest grade. We, the students, opened the door and ran the school. Some of our teachers colluded with us, i.e., they sympathized with us. They did not want to lose their jobs, but they assisted us. We did not do any damage to the property and we were actually much more disciplined than in ordinary days, in order to demonstrate that we are really excellent. In the end, we literally won that victory. Mr Crow himself came and had with him one of the inspectors of education called Mr Abd al-Latif Tibawi who actually later became a very well-known scholar. He came and explained to us that this school will not be opened unless you pledge that you will never go on strike. My brother Ahmed gave it back to him and said: "We are part of the people of Palestine and we feel the way they feel. If they go on strike, we go on strike with them!" He also told him: "This school will remain open under our supervision". Then Mr Crow went back to Jerusalem. He gave up. The school opened and we celebrated the victory. Because of this victory, we continued to participate in demonstrations. When I was in my senior year, I replaced my brother as the leader of the student movement. You can talk about a dynasty! Some students used to come to me in the States and say: "Professor, do you remember when you kicked us out of the grammar school to walk in the demonstration?!" We would go into these lower classes and shout: "*Yalla! Yalla! Itla'u! muthahara!*" "Come on! Come on! Get out! Demonstration!" We got them out in demonstrations like this. We had a specific path in these demonstrations where we started from the *Amiriyya* school where we were and went on to collect the students from the Greek Orthodox school and the other schools. It was a well-worn path, and the students would join the march that would end up down-town where we would give a speech and then we went away. So, our involvement in politics is historic. It is not involvement in politics as such, like getting into office. In the last year of Palestine, between 1947 and 1948, we organized the first National Palestinian Student Union, what we today call GUPS (General Union of Palestinian Students). It was established in the city of Jaffa. I remember personally having gone to different cities in the West Bank and also to Gaza to recruit high schools, because the two colleges we had were practically "controlled by imperialism". We were so primitive in our ideas that we did not know the difference between the executive

committee and the advisory committee. We had a legislative committee which we thought was the highest body. We demanded recognition collectively as a student union. The British, of course, refused this. That union became active in the period between November 1947 and April 1948. It participated in the national struggle in Jaffa and assisted the National Committee.

Chapter Three

It All Begins In Jaffa

On November 29, 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the Partition Resolution. Our leadership did not testify, but the Arab states did. Because the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was the last committee in a series of committees, we actually had very little faith in its impartiality.

On the one hand, we were surprised by the decision to partition, but on the other hand, we expected the worst from an assembly in the United Nations. We understood that the United States had preponderant influence in the United Nations, but we never believed that the British would leave and give up the Mandate. When the decision was passed, we were both shocked and unsurprised. We thought it was a re-enactment of the past, and with a few acts of resistance, the whole thing would be abated and the Zionist dream would disappear.

The actual war in Palestine started on this day. In my opinion, it started in Jaffa. When the Partition Resolution was passed, the Arab Higher Committee called for a general strike in Palestine: three days of demonstrations. It was during this time that the first shots of the war were fired from the Mosque of Hassan Beik in Jaffa. That was the signal, and the Zionists were ready and retaliated. The town split completely, and Jaffa never recovered. We thought it would be a repeat of 1936-37, when we were strong and organized. We had leadership then. We discovered that this individual act escalated beyond our control.

At that time we had the National Committees, *al-Lijan al-Qawmiyyeh*, inspired by the Arab Higher Committee. *Al-Lijan al-Qawmiyyeh* were local, city-based committees. When I look back upon the make-up of the committees, I realize they were powerless. The members' social and educational backgrounds were not sufficient to lead the community in a national struggle. They were clean people, they were nice people, but they didn't have the intellectual foundations for leadership. Amin Aqel, a local lawyer, was the Secretary of the committee. Haj Mustafa al-Taher was a grocery-store owner. Mohammed Khairi al-Bahlul was a school teacher. There were two Christian representatives: Rafiq al-Assfar, a labor organizer, and someone else whose name I cannot recall. The National Committee in Jaffa did not have a real appreciation of the opponent's strength. I remember one day, during my last year of high school, getting a ride with a committee member named Haj Mustafa al-Taher. It was around two months after the Partition plan and it was raining. I was walking with my sister, and this man offered us a ride. We started talking about the

fighting, and I said it must be difficult for our people to fight in this rain. He replied: "Oh, it's nothing. It is the others who really have the difficulty, because they are not accustomed to bad weather and cold. They are soft people."

This story captures the estimate of what the adversary had. He thought that the Palestinians were accustomed to hardship and able to fight under harsh circumstances compared to the soft life of the enemy. They were not accustomed to dealing with the hardships that we encounter in our lives. He did not know the enemy. He did not know that they came from both climates and were dedicated to achieving their aim.

The committee was trying to organize the community for defense. It called on volunteers, and was able to raise a fighting force composed of 1500 people. These were full-time fighters. This meant that 500 people were defending the city at any particular point of the day. The equipment, machine guns and rifles, had to be purchased. The equipment was old and it was not fit for battle.

Jaffa was surrounded by Jewish settlements: Tel Aviv to the north, Beit Yam to the south and Mikvah Israel to the east, where the road comes from Tel Aviv and joins the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. On this road, snipers could disrupt traffic. Mikvah Israel, which we called Natter after the director, whose real name was Netter, cut Jaffa off from the east. When the problems began, there was an exchange of mortars and shooting. In theory, we could affect Tel Aviv as they could affect Jaffa, but they were better equipped with modern weaponry and had actual fighters. The most important section of Jaffa became too dangerous to live in. We were separated by a "no man's land", 500-600 meters in length, between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, close to the mosque.

The first people who left were the people living in the border area. These were civilians who were not fighting. It is important to remember that the expulsion of Palestinians did not take place in May 1948, it began immediately after the outbreak of the civil war. Therefore, just as their people, our people began the process of relocation to separate areas. My family's first move was in the third week of December to my cousin's house. Jamal was my first cousin: his father and my father were brothers. He lived in Ajameh, in downtown Jaffa over *Suq al-thahab*, the gold market. We stayed with him for two weeks. It became evident that we were not going back soon, as the fighting had intensified. We had no idea that this war was going to be any different from the wars before it.

As students, my classmates and I volunteered to work with the National Committee. We wanted to fight even though we had no training. Mohammed Listwi, Shafiq al-Hut and I decided to volunteer. This first group of volunteers was to go and fight. I was put in the same area where I lived. We had a Yugoslav commander, a short Bosnian, whom we thought was a Turk. He was part of the Mufti's troops from World War II.

He was from the Muslim population, some of whom sided with the Axis during the War. When Tito took over Yugoslavia, we gained these fighters. There were three or four of these characters spread throughout Palestine. This commander did not speak Arabic, and not much English either, but he communicated well.

The first night I went out, they put me with a guy whom I knew from the street. He was a carriage driver who used to give rides to my friends and me. He had one eye. He could not believe it when he saw me. I was from a good family, an *ustaaz*, a teacher. He did not understand how I could be part of the fighting force. I explained to him my feelings of nationalism, but that was all a bunch of bullshit as far as he was concerned. The army was supposed to be made up of *zo'ran*, devilish people. Said no longer had his *carosa*, carriage, and was now employed as a full-time fighter. He was in it for the money.

We were sitting at our outpost and I was frightened to death. I had no training, and only a stungun, produced in my father's factory, which could shoot seven bullets. I looked to Said as the expert. He had been in this business longer than I had:

"Where is the enemy?" It was evening and I could not see.
"They are over there," he replied, pointing.
"But Said, I don't see anything."
"But, oh, they are cowards. You will not see them."
"What do you mean, I won't see them? What are we going to do if they attack us?"
"Oh, don't worry *Ustaaz*, they are cowards. If they show up, we will just wipe them."
"But we need to know where they are coming from."
"Well, okay, I will show you." Said pointed his gun in a direction and started shooting.

I could see nothing. It was pitch black. Then there was a lot of shooting coming at us. I was scared. I still could not see anything. When Said was done shooting, he looked at me and said: "Oh, they are cowards. They are really afraid now." I was afraid.

Then we sat. Said got me a stool, because I was an *ustaaz* and should not be squatting on the ground. I tried to argue. I wanted to be a soldier and to be hard. Said was not interested in my arguments. He could not accept that we were now on the same level. He made tea. I was worried the enemy would see the light from the fire, but Said insisted. We both drank our tea like nothing was unusual. Nothing did happen that night. I was scared and worried, and I had no idea what to shoot. I was relieved to have the tea and to sit on the stool, watching the enemy from a distance. At twelve o'clock sharp, our Bosnian commander arrived to relieve us of our post.

The day finally arrived when we were put in the line of danger. The commander took us to a destroyed house. He told us to stay in this house and shoot anyone who approached. If we should abandon post, we would be shot. We were given a password,

to ensure that we did not shoot our relief. We were very scared, and there were shots being fired at us. As we were sitting behind a fortified wall, my friend Mohammed said: "Listen, this is nonsense. The commander is crazy. What does he think, that we are going to commit suicide? I suggest the following: we must have a plan for withdrawal, orderly withdrawal. Let's practise." His plan was to tell the commander that we had been overwhelmed, only leaving the post to call for reinforcements.

We did not have to implement Mohammed's plan that night, but his statement had significance. I was reminded of it when the Arab armies withdrew in 1967. The easiest thing for an Arab army to do is to withdraw rather than stay and fight. Our commander knew that. His training had been to dig in and fight. Mohammed Listwi was thinking in an Arab way. He was already planning for withdrawal. He had already accepted the idea. But all this was too much for us. We still had exams to take. The British had advanced the exam date to March.

The Fantastic Explosion

On January 4, 1948, we were sitting in *Nadi al-Shabibeh al-Islamiyyeh*, the Islamic youth club, 500 meters away from the palace, when we heard a fantastic explosion. I remember running and hiding in the bathroom of the club for protection. Within a few minutes, things calmed down and my friends and I emerged from the safety of the bathroom. We walked outside and saw what they had done. Sixty-nine people were killed: nine adults and sixty *ahdath*, juveniles, in the care of the Social Affairs Department. The Social Affairs Department was located in a section of Jaffa that had been evacuated. They moved the juveniles, who were juvenile delinquents, to the downtown area for safety. They ended up in the palace. One of the social workers that worked with these kids was the best football player in Jaffa. He played left wing.

Benny Morris writes about this incident. He believes that the Israelis were targeting the National Committee. That is his version. Another version of the story is that the real target was the Municipality where the National Committee meets. I believe it had nothing to do with the Municipality or the National Committee. These stories are based on some fact. In *Suq al-dair*, the market of the monastery, there was an office used by the National Committee, located two doors down from the Palace. The committee moved its offices two weeks before the bombing to the Greek Orthodox Club about a mile away, in a villa now used by the French Ambassador. Benny Morris and other Israeli writers still insist that this was the headquarters of the National Committee or Municipality. Knowing what they did at Deir Yassin and elsewhere, I believe the continued classification of the palace as a legitimate target was a deliberate attempt to misrepresent the facts. I don't have proof but this is what I believe.

The Battle Of Jaffa

The battle was prolonged and we decided that we could no longer stay at my cousin's house, located a mere 500 meters from where the Palace once stood. I was put in charge of finding a new place to live. I started knocking on doors, looking for an empty apartment. I was with *zo'ran* friends and eventually somebody told us that there was an empty apartment on the third floor of a building owned by a local agent. This man worked for the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC). He was their local agent. I met with this man and politely explained my situation. I told him that I was looking for an apartment and was willing to pay rent. I explained to him that my family and I are refugees from Manshiyyeh. The man denied having any empty apartments. It turned out that the empty apartment belonged to a couple that was honeymooning at the time. I wanted to take it, just until they returned. The landlord was stubborn, insisting that the couple had furniture and all their belongings in the apartment. I had to resort to a hint of violence. I had a gun, a Martini, and I alluded to that fact. People did the same thing in Beirut in the 1980s, using force to compel people. This man was not decent enough to help us out of a desperate situation, so I compelled him to do so. He agreed. I promised to move my family out as soon as the couple returned. It turns out that the landlord's story was true: the couple was indeed on honeymoon. They never came back.

It was a nice apartment. It was the first time I saw a modern toilet, a bathtub and a stove. Everything was modern. It was in the section of Nuzha and it is still there. Across the street was the headquarters of the Haganah, which is now a police station. When I go to Jaffa, I point it out.

After the January 4 incident, the National Committee had a meeting. As a precaution, they decided to set up checkpoints at the entry of the city. I was the student representative at this meeting. The committee wanted to use the students to man the checkpoints. They needed people who spoke English, believing we could tell the difference between the British and the Jews. I asked myself how I would know the difference between a Jew and a Brit. They all looked alike to me. My image of the European was the Jew. The students were assigned to the roadblocks. We were put in charge of stopping foreign cars. We did not read English, so we had no idea who these people were. We stopped them regardless, the way the Israelis now stop us. We were kids at the time, 17 years old, like the Israeli kids now.

At the end of March as the fighting continued, we took our exams. After the exams, I had more time. So Mohammed Listwi, Shafiq al-Hut and I began work for the National Committee. Like the move from Manshiyyeh to the inner city, a lot of people were leaving the inner city, heading towards the rural areas. The bombardments were able to reach downtown and were causing real damage. People were concerned

for their safety. Stores were closing. Life was disrupted. The Arabs were threatening to come with their big armies and liquidate this *saratan*, cancer. We believed these rumors and we were waiting. To stem the tide of emigration, the National Committee issued a communiqué urging people to stay, emphasizing that the city was safe, that reinforcements were on the way, and that the rumors that we heard were spread by the enemy in order to demoralize us. The exodus increased. The second communiqué was the equivalent of a regulation, levying an exit tax in order to discourage people from leaving. This tax was interpreted by some as an attempt by the National Committee to raise money. This was not true. I will testify to that.

As guards at the checkpoints, we were asked to collect this money as people left Jaffa. We would question the people and make sure everything was in order. The tax was based on the amount of goods that were being taken out of Jaffa. Therefore, we would have to calculate the price. One person was charged a twenty-five piastres tax, a family of five would pay one pound. Donkeys and pick-up trucks were figured into this estimate. Initially, people would pay. We were tough, but honest. We kept receipts and at the end of the day Mohammed Khairi al-Bahlul would pick up the money and the receipts to be taken to the committee. It was getting hard to charge these people. They would plead with us. We gave discounts to families with children. People were panicking. I began to sleep in the club. Bakeries began to close. We were unable to get necessities. Everything was conspiring to make us exit. The city was losing its population. Our defences were crumbling.

The Exodus

On April 25, 1948, my family decided to leave. The Jews had taken all of Manshiyyeh and over a third of the city. Shafiq Al-Hut had already left the country, going to Beirut by boat. Mohammed Listwi and my brother Hassan remained with me. We were still fighting. My brother was fighting at a different front. He was in the south and I was at the frontier. The streets were empty of people. Those who decided to stay hid in their homes. Bombs from Tel Aviv were hitting the city. Water pumps were hit. We had difficulty getting water and food. Every day it was getting worse. Two days later, we received an announcement that reinforcements were coming, led by Michel al-Issa. He never entered the city. He stood on the outskirts with his cannons, presumably to hit Tel Aviv, but they never did. The city was eventually defeated and it effectively surrendered before the formal surrender.

On May 3, an interesting event occurred. Don't ask me from whom, as there were not too many people left in the city. We heard that a Red Cross boat, the Princess Alexandra, was the last boat taking refugees out. If I wanted to leave, this was my last chance. Of course, this information was based on rumors. The British encouraged the evacuation

of Palestine. We had heard about Deir Yassin, Nater and Mikvah Israel. I was armed with a gun that did not shoot. Convoys left Jaffa escorted by the British. If you did not go with the convoy, you were likely to be intercepted by the Haganah. We were young males: if we were caught, we would be shot. So, Mohammed and I decided to leave by boat. At ten o'clock in the morning, we met to take the *jarrem*, small boat, to the Princess Alexandra. The *jarrem* was carrying 50-60 people, a boat that could safely carry 40. Everyone was in a panic, it was the last boat. We were embarrassed. We still wanted to fight, so we returned to Jaffa on the same *jarrem* that took us to the boat. By 11:30am, we were back at the club, our fortification. There was no one left defending the city. All the shooting was coming from the other side. Around 3pm, we saw smoke coming out of the smokestack of the boat. The boat was about to leave. Mohammed and I left our guns and ran to the last *jarrem*. Mohammed and I were the last to board the Princess Alexandra. We were sitting in the corridor and a Belgian sailor passed. He looked at us and asked: "Why did you leave your country?" I didn't have an answer.

The boat took us to Beirut where the Lebanese police and army did not warmly receive us. I had my Palestinian passport, issued by the Mandate. I decided to locate some relatives living in Beirut. My mother's grandmother was Turkish. I remember hearing childhood stories about a distant cousin in Beirut. I knew the family name from these stories, but I had no idea where the family was living. I looked around and enquired. I remembered the section of the city where they lived from letters my mother would send to them. I was shocked by what I found. I was a refugee, but I was better off than they were. The family was very poor. They were living in a slum of Beirut, which is the most *baladi*, poorest, section of the city. There must have been around twenty kids living in this house. It was a huge family: they obviously never practiced birth control. Poverty breeds poverty. But they were so excited to see me, to hear about my mother, my aunt, and my grandfather. They were welcoming. Because of their poverty, I was embarrassed by the imposition I was causing by staying there. I planned to go to Damascus. I told my hosts of my plans. They reacted in the way of the Arabs, insisting that I stay, not understanding why I would want to go to Damascus. Their poverty and generosity became very meaningful to me later.

Discovering The Arab World

The next day, Mohammed and I went to Damascus. The excitement of being in Damascus made us forget about Jaffa. We were staying at a hotel in the heart of the Arab world. I read about Damascus and was feeling Arab national sentiments. I was living with the excitement of discovering the Arab world.

From Damascus, we went to Amman. My family was in Nablus and the only route to Nablus was through Amman. So, we took the boat to Beirut, from Beirut to

Damascus, and then to Amman. When we came to the Jordanian frontier at Ramtha, I was offered a tourist visa costing one pound. I refused to pay. I did not have a pound and I was a refugee, not a tourist. They did not care. Our taxi driver from Damascus introduced me to the ways of the Arab world. He said to me: "Don't worry, you won't have to pay, I'll show you how to smuggle yourself in and I'll meet you at the other end." I was a little weary; maybe he was planning on handing us over to the police. But I did it. I went around the border guards and the taxi driver was there waiting for us.

Once in Amman, I had to find a *service* to take me to Nablus. Amman was a very primitive place at that time, compared to the elegance of Beirut and the history of civilization in Damascus. Even Jaffa was better than Amman. As I was walking, looking for a *service* taxi, I ran into someone I knew from Jaffa. Youssef was a relative of mine. He asked me if I had seen my family yet. I told him I was traveling to Nablus to see them. Youssef then told me that my family was not in Nablus, but in Amman. I was shocked. My family had been staying in Nablus until they were told that it was no longer safe. My cousin, whom they were staying with, left for Amman and they followed him. In Amman, they rented a house with three rooms for my family and my cousin's family. My mother and her children had one room, my cousin's family had another, and a third family had the other room. So, there were three families in three rooms.

It was now the end of May. My mother asked about my oldest brother. I had no idea. When I left Jaffa, I left him there. We wanted him with us in Amman, so I suggested we send my younger brother to Jaffa. I thought he would be safe because he was young and so, the Jews would not molest him. He left on the seventh or eighth of May, traveling first to Nablus via Jerusalem and from Nablus to Tulkarem. Once in Tulkarem, he had to look for a taxi to take him to Jaffa. By coincidence, there he met the brother he was supposed to find. They both returned to Amman.

Return To Nablus

The next big event came on May 15. There was a big announcement of the liquidation of the King's palace in Amman. On May 18, an Israeli Cessna plane bombarded the palace of King Abdullah, theoretically. We could see the plane and we could see shots being fired at the plane, but nothing happened. The plane bombed and then left. The radio announced the Palace of *Sayyedna*, our master the king, had been bombed. No injuries were reported.

The next morning, I went with my younger brother to the vegetable market. At the intersection of our street, on the mountain, there was a Jordanian police station. A policeman saw us as we were walking. He intercepted us. He didn't ask us any

questions, he just cursed us. He took us to the station. Inside the station, there were fifty to sixty other Palestinians. We were identified by our dress. We were showered with curses: "*Intu b'itu al-ard. Intu arsat...*" "You sold the land. You are awful..." They called us traitors, accused us of selling the land and wanting their land in exchange. They did nothing but curse us and bring in more Palestinians. After half an hour of being showered with curses, I decided to approach the police officer. I saw myself as educated and clean-looking. So, I approached the officer and asked politely if I could make a phone call. The officer looked at me with a strange look, I was afraid he might hit me. He repeated my request sarcastically. I told him that this was an important phone call. I wanted to call Mithqal Pasha. This was all bullshit. The officer asked how I knew Mithqal Pasha. I told him that my uncle had taught his children. This was the truth. That was it. He let my brother and me go.

The Mithqal Pasha is Mithqal Fayez, the son of Hakim. He is a well-known Arab sheikh. In the First World War, my uncle escaped from the Turkish army and went to Jordan. Mithqal Pasha was looking for someone to teach his children the Qur'an. Mithqal Pasha found my uncle who taught his children for three years. Mithqal Pasha was grateful to my uncle for these services. So, when my uncle became a refugee, Mithqal Pasha hosted him. I myself had no idea who Mithqal Pasha was.

After the incident at the police station, my family and I decided to move back to Nablus. We knew that Amman was not the place for us. I felt the antagonism and irrationality towards us as Palestinians. I had never been exposed to this feeling about Palestinian actions. It was an important lesson for me, which I have not forgotten since. Whenever Arabs get mad at us, I understand. Rosemary Sayegh writes about the same situation faced by Palestinians in Syria. They were viewed as people who sold the land, as traitors who collaborated with the Jews. The Jews also spread these stereotypes about the Palestinians. So, we moved to Nablus. We spent six months there and I spent most of my time in the coffee shops playing tric-trac and talking to the Iraqi army officers. I learned two things from the Iraqis, most of whom were communists. First, it was clear that they were not going to fight, that this was a joke and that there will be no war. They were sitting in the coffee shop because there was no work for them. They were officers, not soldiers. Every morning the Iraqis would line up in a tabur, queue, to go to the public bath: "Maku awamer lilqital. Aku awamer lilhammam", "There are no orders for fighting. There are orders for bathing". So, whether it was Kamal Nasser or some other Palestinian poet who made up that line, it was clear that they had no orders to fight.

The living conditions in Nablus were hard: we lived in another three-room house with two other families. My family was thirteen to a room. We were poor, and I had no work. I followed a routine: I woke up, had breakfast, and went into town, where I would sit in a coffee shop and engaged in gossip. If we had money, I bought *kenafa*, sweets. I went home, ate lunch, took a nap, and went back out, day in and day out. To

break the boredom of the routine, I would take a service to Ramallah. Ramallah was a beautiful town for a walk. I felt so besieged in Nablus: there were no cultural activities and the Iraqis were controlling everything through their military court. I was in limbo and could not think of a future. I was still mourning my life in Jaffa. Ramallah was an escape. It cost nothing, two piastres, to get to this beautiful city.

I was in Ramallah one day, on July 14. I had heard about the fall of the downrock area. Now in Ramallah, I saw the refugees coming in from Lydda. They came on foot. They had no transportation and they looked terrible. The refugees were put in schoolyards and mosques. I took a service back to Nablus. I did not want to see this anymore.

I heard talk about how the Jordanians had betrayed us. The Jordanian army was in control of Ramleh and Lydda. They received orders from Glubb Pasha not to counter the Israeli offensive. I cannot say if this was true or not, but we believed it. It was yet another item in the unfolding conspiracy, or what the Israeli author Avi Schlaim called *Collusion across the Jordan*, a collusion between King Abdullah and the Israelis for the takeover of our Palestine. We did not know of the collusion at that time, but we thought there was a conspiracy. If Glubb Pasha can order the hierarchy of the Jordanian Army under the command of an Englishman who is responsible for our catastrophe, clearly the expectation is that the collusion will continue. Ramleh and Lydda were the latest in line with the conspiracy of expulsion. There was no counter-evidence to this conspiracy. There was no explanation for the fall of Ramleh. This same July, I learned from the radio that I had passed my matriculation exam. The station had broadcast the results.

Distribution Of Leaflets

During December 1948, I participated in the distribution of leaflets in Nablus, which were issued by *Usbat al-Taharror al-Watani*, the National Liberation League. The National Liberation League belonged to the communist party. I remember what one of these leaflets said: “We demand the evacuation of the Arab occupation armies”. It was a shock to read it!

The message was for the Arab armies to withdraw from Palestine to enable the Palestinian State to come about. It was shocking to view the Arabs as occupiers. I knew the Israelis as occupiers, but to view the Arab states as occupying our land was novel and shocking.

I accepted it and we got a beating from the Iraqi army as a consequence of distributing them. They gave us a beating, but they were kind to us. They said: “Don’t you do it again!” They were communist and later we found out that they were actually

supportive of what the leaflets said. They were the ones who raised our consciousness about the aims of the war, i.e. that there will be no war and no liberation of Palestine. When I concluded that we are not going to return to Jaffa, it was on the basis of discussions with these Iraqi army officers. They told us that this is all a show and that there will be no actual fight and that you will not be able to return home.

Some of the officers who beat me would sit with me in the coffee shop. They were communists. Therefore, they gave me a light beating, just enough to avoid being punished by their commander. In retrospect, it was strange to consider such a man your friend. This is a man who suddenly becomes your enemy. He oppresses you because he is afraid of his commander. I continued distributing these leaflets and I didn't get caught. I learned how to avoid the authorities.

In December 1948, I recognized that what the Iraqi army officers in Nablus had said about us not being able to return to Jaffa was true. That is when we moved to Amman. I recognized that we were not going back to Jaffa. Still today, we are waiting to return to Jaffa. That time in my life was crucial in terms of my political philosophy. I remember telling the Iraqi students in Chicago about the officers I had met in Palestine. It was these officers who knew about what was really happening in Palestine at that time. The students were much more interested in other topics: the oppressive regimes ruling the Arab world, Fuad Nassar, the former Secretary-General of the Communist Party, who was caught by the Egyptians. It is to be noted here that a myth grew around Fuad Nassar. He would interrogate his interrogators. He would ask his interrogators about fighting the British at the Suez Canal instead of fighting him. This story was used as evidence of a conspiracy. There was Glubb Pasha's testimony before the British Parliament in which he said that the Arab armies came in not to attack Israel, but to take only up to the partition lines. The experience in Nablus was an experience of waiting, of frustration, and the beginning of hopelessness. I knew I was not going back to Jaffa. The Palestinians were not going to return to their homes. I also knew that the Arabs were not going to achieve what they said they would achieve. Through my discussions with the Iraqis and through reading these leaflets I was distributing, I became convinced that there was not going to be a war. There was nothing for my family in Nablus: no work and no money. Therefore, I told my family that we should go back to Amman. So, we moved again back to Amman where I would remain for another year and a half before leaving for the States.

Return To Amman

In December 1948, we went to Jordan from Nablus. We had nothing, and nothing to do. We sat in a cafe and played cards and games all day long. We thought we were educated, but there were no jobs for an *ustaaz*. One day we saw an advertisement:

"Recruitment for the Jordanian army". Reading this advertisement made me reflect on memories I had from 1946-47.

My friends and I would visit the Jewish kibbutz, schools, and establishments. We were curious about their society. I remember going to Herzlia where we saw a high school, a gymnasium, a library and laboratories. We wanted in our school what they had in their school. We learned from what they had, but we could not articulate that what we really wanted was development. We knew that all these facilities brought about advancement.

We would argue with the boys from the kibbutz about their right to be in Palestine. All their dreams were propaganda. The farm near the Dead Sea was propaganda, and it was not economical. They would argue back about pursuing their dreams. It was not about cost-benefits: it was about producing a tomato in an area that never produced a tomato, about "making the desert bloom". We did not understand the significance.

On one of our trips to the kibbutz, in 1947, we met a German Jew who spoke Arabic. He was older, in his late 40s. We talked about everything. He told us something I have never forgotten. He told us: "You are good kids, but there is going to be a war here and you are going to lose". He advised us, because we were good people, to leave this land before being expelled. He told us to go to Jordan and join the army. He said: "The future of this region will be in the army". He knew about the corrupt leadership throughout the Arab world. He knew that it had to be changed and that the agent of change was the army. He said: "I advise you because you are good people. You care about your land and your people. You go and join the army." We thought he was a nut.

However, my brother and I went and applied for that job in the army. One of Glubb Pasha's assistants was impressed enough with our applications to call us in for an interview. He asked us about our reasons for serving in the army. We told him that we wanted to work. We were not interested in the army. We were interested in a job. He rejected us because we were too educated to be in the army. So, he knew what our Jewish friend from the kibbutz knew: the army cannot take the educated. They recruited the Bedouins.

Eventually, I found work in the customs house and began to give private lessons in English. My English was awful, but it was better than the English of the kids I was teaching. My brother also found employment, but we were still on the margin of society. I worked twelve hours a day to make twelve to fourteen pounds a month.

In Amman, I was exposed to the Syrian National Socialist Party (SNSP) of Anton Sa'adeh. There were a number of people who were recruiting, advertising, and exposing this ideology. The Ba'ath party had just started in Jordan, and they had

emissaries from the Ba'ath party from Syria in Jordan and in the West Bank. I believe they established the first Ba'ath in Ramallah in late 1948 or early 1949. Then there were the Communists. These were the three groups that I was more or less familiar with. I gravitated towards the individuals who were more inclined to be active within the framework of the Communist Party, which was present in Palestine, but was outlawed.

All these political parties were active, but clandestinely because the Jordanian government did not accept them. There was a split in society between the whole establishment of Jordan led by King Abdullah and the modest opposition that was within this framework, versus the fringe groups of the SNSP, the Ba'ath, and the Communist Party. There was no distinction among these groups regarding their commitment to Palestine. The common denominator of all these groups was Palestine. I don't want to say that the Communists accepted the legitimacy of Israel, but they accepted the partition in the Communist Internationale. Many of the young people were more concerned with class struggle. It was clear that there was a division in society, and the communists were addressing themselves to that issue. The SNSP and the Ba'ath Party were not as committed to that kind of vision as the Communists were. On the issue of Palestine, both the Ba'ath Party and the SNSP were better than the Communists. They promoted the undoing of Israel and the return of the Palestinians to Palestine.

July 1949 was a harsh time for me, the hardest time of my life. We were living in Amman, in Jabal Taj, having moved from what became Hai Nazzal. We were poor. There was no future. I was working for twelve or thirteen pounds a month and living in crowded conditions. The family was in one room in a house that we shared with other relatives. I wasn't able to be there in the daytime. I had to get out. We would wake up in the middle of the night wet in the rain. The windows were uncovered. So, we had to stuff blankets in the windows to block the air. We were not prepared for that kind of winter.

I would leave the house early and return at eleven at night, having worked twelve hours. After work, I would go to the coffee shop, where I learned to drink and smoke. I drank Black Label whisky, or what my mother would call *kazoaz almani*, German coke. I first drank beer and then eventually I drank whisky. Because I worked with the customs house, I knew people who were able to steal bottles of whisky from customs.

I used to go to the desert with my cousin who was a guest of Mithqal Pasha. Mithqal Pasha had a house in the desert. The Bani Sakhr family and my cousin had access to that house. The feeling of being in the desert with the horses, among Bedouins was exciting, although I didn't ride. That was the only recreation I had. I would swim in a pool in Zarqa, go to Salt to meet with politically inclined people, and have picnics.

These were my only real outlets. But the poverty and the dim prospects for the future were weighing very heavily on me. My older brother Ahmed was in the States studying to become an engineer. He had left in 1947 with the plan to return and manage the foundry that my father had established. Then 1948 hit. Over the two-year period, we sent $4,000 to him, $2,000 each year, which was plenty. He paid $700 tuition for Syracuse University. So, he had about $1,300 to spend for room and board and travel. Ahmed suggested that I should come to the States because, “your letters were so depressing that I thought you would commit suicide if you stay there”.

I had this fantastic energy that I didn’t know what to do with. My dream for the future, when we were in Jaffa, was to become a lawyer. I wanted to become the kind of lawyer that Youssef Wahbeh was in the movies. I had friends who went to Egypt to study law. I didn’t want to go to the American University of Beirut, because they didn’t have a law school there. I wanted to be the kind of lawyer that Egypt produced. That dream died. I could not go. I could not study there, although it would cost very little to go to Egypt. The Egyptians did not charge tuition, but I needed money to live. By all accounts that we knew at the time, all that was needed to survive in Cairo as a student was fifteen Egyptian pounds a month. But, we didn’t have the fifteen pounds for each month. We didn’t even have five pounds that I could count on to study. We did not have enough money for me to travel to Cairo. Therefore, I was stuck in Amman, which was an awful city with a deep-seated prejudice towards Palestinians. Ironically, Amman was built with Palestinian money: first in 1948, then in 1967, then the civil war in Lebanon and then the Gulf War. Amman thrived on the catastrophes of the Arabs.

Chapter Four

Sailing To The US

I gave up the idea that I would study in Cairo. My brother provided this solution of applying to Syracuse because at least he knew Syracuse, and had connections there. The first thing that I had to have was a visa. The Americans did not have a consulate in Amman. I had to go to Damascus to get the visa application. They require the same things today as they did in 1948: completed application forms, photos and a medical exam consisting of a test for trachoma (an eye-disease), an x-ray for TB and a valid passport. I gave them my Palestinian passport, issued under the British Mandate. They refused it and said that this is not an acceptable passport. So I had a big fight with them: "I am a Palestinian. This is a valid passport, it has two more years to go!" To this they replied: "But Palestine doesn't exist". That was really such a shock. Palestine does not exist! I said: "Well, what am I supposed to do?" They told me that I could apply to get an Israeli passport or apply to get a Jordanian passport. I said: "But I am not Israeli and I am not Jordanian." To this they replied: "Well, we need a passport. This passport will not do." I was stuck. I decided to apply for a Jordanian passport, but not in Amman because I wasn't sure that I would get it. So, I went to Beirut. The Jordanians had no representation in Damascus, but they had an embassy in Beirut where I applied for a Jordanian passport. Within two days, a Jordanian passport was issued to me according to Article 10 of the Jordanian Nationality Law. Article 10 provided only *laissez-passer*: no civil or political rights in Jordan. It was changed subsequently, but my first Jordanian passport was issued to me in accordance with Article 10.

I still needed the medical exam for my visa. When I went to get my x-ray, the Syrian doctor noticed that there was something in my chest, but he said: "I'll say you are okay". Later, I discovered that there was fibrosis on my lungs, but thank God, the Syrian doctor did not think it was important enough to put in my report. Otherwise, the Embassy would not have given me a visa. I returned to the US Embassy with the medical exam and my passport. They said: "Now you have to have a guarantee of an amount of money in the bank, in your name, to the amount of $2,000. This is because you are going to study and you need it for expenses". At that time, it was $2,000: Now, they ask for $22,000. I said: "What do I do about that?" They said: "You go to the bank and have a bank account". I have a bank account? With $2,000! I almost gave up.

For every problem there is a solution. I am so grateful to Abu-Samih Khalaf from Jaffa. He was a captain, and then he invested in the eye-glass business. I knew he had

money. So, I went to Abu-Samih. He knew of my family, that we had money, although we didn't have money at that time. But he knew we were trustworthy people. We had our prestige. I was 19. I said to Abu Samih: "I need $2,000". He looked at me. There was not anything bad about it. I said: "I need to have $2,000 and a certificate for the American Consulate in order to get a visa. With this money under my name in the bank, I get my visa. What I plan to do when I get to the States is to post onshore instructions to transfer the money." I said: "As soon as I get there I will send you back your $2,000". He had absolutely no security, but he agreed: "Okay, I'll do it".

And it continued. As a student studying in the United States at that time, the Jordanian government was prepared to give $2,000 at the official rate of exchange. The official rate of exchange at that time was one dollar for five. I needed to take whatever the Jordanian pounds were, transfer them to $2,000 at the official rate of exchange. Then, I would send the $2,000 by check and he could sell them in the black market and make some profit. Money in hand, I went to the Foreign Currency Control Office. Farhan was the Foreign Currency Controller, but in his other job he was the Chief Censor in the Government of Jordan. He used to read my letters to my brother. While I was applying, I was called into his office. When he saw me, he said: "You are an evil boy! You write these things and curse our king. You should be ashamed of yourself. You know we can put you in prison". At first I denied it, but then I remembered that he was the Chief Censor. I pretended to repent because I needed this money. He accepted my change of heart, but warned me not to do this again. I said: "I'm not going to do this again. I am leaving the country". I learned later that he was an Arab Nationalist, disguising himself as an officer of the government. Otherwise, he could have put me in prison. In any case, he gave me the official rate of exchange.

By the end of September, I had the visa, the money and the ticket. I was ready. Then, I discovered that the police arrested some of my friends who were communists. I didn't know immediately, but as I was sitting in a coffee shop, one of these guys sent me word that they were now in prison. One friend told me that the authorities were pressuring him to name names and that I was in danger. He advised me to travel now. I left the next morning. That was two weeks before my ship was scheduled to leave. I went to Damascus for a few days, then on to Beirut to stay with my friend Shafiq al-Hut. Then it was time to board the ship. There were two ships, one to Piraeus in Greece, and then the *Nea Hellas*. The *Nea Hellas* was a huge ship that would sail from Piraeus to New York in three weeks. I was so sick. I didn't have money, only the $75 that I had saved. It was a terrible trip.

I discovered on the boat that there were two Iraqis, a Lebanese American and an Armenian priest. I used to see them in the States after the journey. There were a lot of Lebanese Americans on the boat. They danced, and we thought that they were Americans because of their impressive English.

Europe was in terrible shape in October 1949. I could see the effects of World War II in Italy, the first country our boat landed in. The boat landed first in Naples and then Genoa. The cities were completely devastated. Buildings were not repaired and I could see hardship.

Cigarettes were very expensive, especially American cigarettes. The most desired packet of cigarettes in Italy, and eventually in Portugal where we landed again, was Pall Mall. There was a difference in price: on the boat a carton cost two dollars and I would sell it on land for ten dollars. I was not supposed to sell them. So, I had the cartons underneath my pants with the pants wrapped around the cigarettes. The police were on the lookout, so I had to be surreptitious. So, I lived on that trip on the income generated by using the black market in cigarettes, otherwise I would have been poverty-stricken. By the time I got to New York, I had three dollars.

Learning About America

Fortunately, my brother was waiting for me. The very first thing we did was to go to the bank to send the money to our friend. My brother suggested we wait until we get to Syracuse. I insisted on doing it immediately. I had a promise to Abu-Samih to send the money as soon as I arrived. Years later, when I saw him in Amman, he was so pleased and proud. He would tell people that without him, I could not have studied. This is true, and I admit that. It is true, and I am eternally grateful to him, because without him I would not have been able to reach America.

The first night, my brother and I stayed at the YMCA. My brother had to return to Syracuse the next morning and I decided to stay and see New York. I planned to meet with the two Iraqis from the ship, but I lost my way and ended up staying in the bus station. The policemen kept kicking me out saying: “You are not supposed to sleep on a bench in the bus station”. So, I had to lie saying: “I am waiting for the bus here at 1.15”. At 1.15 I would say: “I’m taking the next bus”. I could not afford a hotel. I took the bus to Syracuse in the morning. I stayed in Syracuse for three weeks. My brother found me a job at Drumlains Country Club as a busboy. I had no idea what a busboy was, but they train you. America trains people. You got a meal for free because it was an evening shift. My brother found me a room where I could stay since I couldn’t stay with him. I paid two dollars a night for the room.

I met my brother’s friends and learned how to date. He introduced me to some young women. One of the young women that I went out with was Syrian-American. She studied at Cornell University working towards a PhD in Sociology. I had a big mustache at that time. She said that American girls don’t like mustaches, so, I advise you to shave it. I did not listen to her of course, because I am a man, an Arab man.

I spent my time in Syracuse driving around the city and learning about America. But my time at Syracuse was coming to an end. My brother decided: “You are going to go to Chicago. There, I have a friend who is our expert on America. He is more mature, he is older, and he will take care of you”. I am the younger brother, so I obeyed. He put me on a Greyhound bus from Syracuse, all the way to Chicago.

Intellectual Orientation

It was a long trip on a Greyhound from Syracuse to Chicago. I started in the early afternoon and arrived around five o’clock in the morning. From the station, I had to go to something called the International House. The International House is part of the University of Chicago, where this guardian lived. This house was on the south side of Chicago, which was dangerous. I had no idea, and I am sure my brother had no idea either. I arrived at the International House at 5am and knocked on the door. I never met this guy before, although I had met his family before I left. His name was Ali Uthman and he was from Beit Safafa. His family gave me presents for him. I wanted to tell him about his brother and his uncle, but he said: *“La’ la’ la’, naam halla, bukra!”* “No, no, no, sleep now, tomorrow!” I couldn’t understand how he could treat me this way. I was bringing him news of his family and he didn’t give a damn. I subsequently learned that you don’t give a damn in America, certainly not at five o’clock in the morning. I was so upset and disappointed, and there was no place to sleep. I had to sleep on the floor because he had his bed and that was it. When I woke up, he took one look at me and he said: “Let’s go”. We went to the public bathrooms and he said that I have an ugly mustache. Ali had a nice mustache. He viewed himself as a handsome man.

We had to find a place to live, a room with two beds. I was following him. I had no understanding. He found work for me as a peddler. I did not speak English well, but he found this job where I filled a suitcase and knocked on doors and tried to sell what I had. I was not very successful. I worked at that job for a couple of weeks, but it was awful. Talk about humiliation and exposure. If I didn’t sell, I didn’t eat! I was really desperate and I began to think: “What the hell am I doing here”. But Ali was a great mentor. He was a scholar, something I had not met before. I didn’t see it in my brother or his friends. He was a graduate student at the University of Chicago, working towards his PhD. He had books: John Stuart Mill, Locke and others. I may have heard about them, but I knew nothing about them. It was my first exposure to what I consider intellectual orientation. It remained with me subsequently.

Maybe three or four weeks later, Ali decided: “We have to find you a university, a state university”. I said fine. I was an abiding fellow. I just followed. He looked in the Yellow Pages to find a state university. He only knew the University of Chicago. He didn’t know anything else because he was a recent comer to Chicago himself.

He found the University of Illinois at Navy Pier. The University of Illinois, which is now Circle, started as a junior college at Navy Pier. Ali took me to the Office of the Registrar and explained to them that I wanted to apply. The girl who was handling my application smiled. I told Ali that I think this woman likes me. I didn't know Americans were allowed to smile. So, this young lady smiled, and she was nice, the way Americans are.

I went through the application form and that is where I learned of the flexibility of America. I had no certificate or transcript from my school. I had nothing, and we had become refugees. I had nothing to show that I actually went to high school, or graduated from high school, or took a national exam and passed. I gave them the application with two pictures, but they needed a high school certificate. I gave them the names and the years and explained to them that the radio had announced that I passed. I was asked to write to the Israelis to get a certificate. They had no idea that we were in conflict with Israel. I write to them, my God! They asked me for my I-20, and I showed them. So, they accepted the I-20 as evidence. They would not have given me a visa if I did not have admission from Syracuse, and Syracuse would not have admitted me unless they were persuaded that I had finished high school. So they simply admitted me, and they said that as soon as you can, you get us your transcript or your certificate showing us that you completed high school. But, they admitted me.

Well, I did it. I wrote to Menahim Mansour who was the highest Mandate officer in West Jerusalem. He did the follow-up with the Department of Education of the Mandate. I wrote him a letter saying that on such and such a date in July, Israeli radio announced the results of the Palestine matriculation. The announcer mentioned my name as one of those who had passed the matriculation. I told him that I would appreciate it if you could send me a copy of it because I need it to attend a university. Of course my friend Ali coached me in writing a letter, because I couldn't write letters. Lo and behold! Within three weeks, I got it. Ever since, I recognize the flexibility and the reasonableness of one system, and the utter hopelessness of the other.

Working And Studying

I joined the University of Illinois. I was so proud of myself, but also apprehensive. For one thing, my English was not strong. I could understand a great deal, but I could not speak with the kind of skill that was required. I certainly could not take notes in English. In any case, I registered for fifteen credit hours, which included physical education. I also had to find a job so that I could eat. My first semester, which was the second semester of the school year, was in winter. Chicago was very cold. I experienced this cold for the first time in my life. But I had Ali and we

roomed together. With his support, I became too embarrassed to complain about the difficulties, because he was in difficulties too, although he was older and more mature. Ali guided my course selection. The first year, I did not have too many choices, but I was fortunate to have some very helpful teachers.

The teacher of English, Ms Kirsten, was a specialist in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This was not a well-known field at the time. She later became an expert in the composition of books for foreign students. She took excellent care in the freshman class. She taught all the students: her course was not only required of foreign students but of Americans who were having problems with English grammar. I began to repair my English. She encouraged me to speak, and to speak competently in class so that I could overcome my inhibitions.

I also had a good professor in history, Professor Richard Nicholson. I met him again after I became a full professor and he was proud of me. He was an outstanding lecturer. I think I have acquired some of his mannerisms in lecturing. Teachers influence you and you take them as models, and he was a model for me. His lectures were fascinating. He taught us European history: the European Renaissance, and modern history. We had an outstanding textbook in European history. This book was my first exposure to the study of European history, using a European textbook. I already knew a great deal of the information. Now, I learned it in English. As Professor Nicholson was lecturing, it occurred to me that I was able to argue and I had command of the content. I went to him after class and said: “Professor Nicholson, I think I know all this stuff. I mean, you are a very good teacher. But I think I should move to a more advanced class”. He said: “Well, there is a way of discovering that. We can give you a test, and if you pass the test, we will move you to the more advanced class, and you can get credit for it”. I was able to pass the test in both history and geography, and get the credit hours towards my degree. This shows the high standard of education that we had in Palestine during the Mandate. Graduates from high school in Palestine automatically went as sophomores at the American University of Beirut. So, I did the equivalent of the freshman year of college in high school. I spent three and a half years to get my BA: if I had been stronger in science and mathematics, I could have earned my BA in the equivalent of three years. I learned a great deal in the year from Professor Nicholson. He was always well-prepared and was even-handed in his interpretation of history. For example, he was a Protestant and was able to lecture about the Reformation without being too hard on the Catholic Church. He emphasized the importance of being objective. This is a value that remains with me.

I also took geography and physiology. I was not very good in physics or chemistry, but I had to take eight hours in the natural sciences and mathematics. I simply was not very good in the sciences. But I discovered sociology and anthropology. So, I took these courses. I did reasonably well in the first semester, but not exceptionally

well. I passed and could see my progress in the study of English and in the learning of English. By the third part of the semester, I began to take my class notes in English. At the beginning of the semester, all my notes were in Arabic. My writing from right to left was a curiosity: it made it possible for me to get to know my classmates.

In my second semester, I knew I was going to have difficulty paying tuition. I had no money and no income. I lived on what I earned from work and that could not support me. I paid seven or eight dollars a week for the room, out of my pay of $20 a week. Ali and I would supplement our income by returning all of our beer bottles. We would return the bottles at 6am in order to have the money to get to university. I had to pay transportation, and I also had to eat. I had no money. I remember eating a candy bar and milk for lunch.

As a foreign student, I had to apply for permission to work in the States. The first time I applied, I was rejected on the basis of the $2,000 I was "receiving" from my family. I reapplied arguing that I needed a supplement to cover the cost of living in Chicago. I was denied permission to work during the school year, but my application would be considered for the summer months. This was not going to be enough. So, I got a job as a shipping clerk at a drug company called JB Rolling Company. I was packing vitamins and shipping them out. During the summer, I was able to work in a factory on a full-time basis. I continued with this job after the summer, working the midnight shift from four until twelve. I would go to the university in the morning, finish at one and then prepare myself to go to work.

The factory I worked in was Frederick Products Inc. The Immigration Department used to raid factories to catch illegal workers. One day, there was a sweep and I was caught. The agents came into Fredericks and were checking ID's. I tried to get out of it, telling them I was a student with permission to work. I used arguments from my political science course: "Habeas Corpus, you can't arrest me". The agents were not amused. I was arrested and put in a paddy wagon. Much to my surprise, most of the other riders in the paddy wagon were Palestinians. I looked down upon them a bit: I was a student and these were common laborers. We were all taken to a lock-up in the same immigration office where my work application had been rejected. As they were processing us, one of the agents singled me out: "You speak this damn language, don't you? How would you like to work for us as a translator?" I had just been arrested for working illegally. Now, the very people who were enforcing this law were offering me a job! I asked how much. They offered $1.50 per hour. This was better than the factory. I accepted. I went home and told Ali of my luck. He was impressed. I worked after school for three or four hours a day. It was an easy job.

I was able to save some money, but not much. By the end of the first semester, I knew that I would have difficulty paying tuition, which was raised from $250 to $300. I went to the Dean and explained my financial situation. I asked for his advice

and he suggested that I apply for a scholarship. I had no idea what a scholarship was, but he gave me an application. I took this application to Ali who helped me fill it in. Much to my surprise, they gave me a scholarship. I was the first foreign student in the institution to get a scholarship. Not only that, but I also got the scholarship for four years. I never paid tuition after that, and the four years were enough for me to get a Bachelors and a Masters. I was the first Arab student in the university, and I earned a scholarship. It meant a great deal to me. During the second semester, I had my first experience with American prejudice. The first semester was an experience with American support, flexibility, friendliness and understanding. The second semester was when I discovered prejudice. Obviously, I didn't know the word or what it meant, until it was explained to me. Then I understood.

It was relatively easy to get to know a few people in my classes. They were more or less nice to me. They were friendly in the way that Americans are very friendly, and they knew that I was an Arab and that I came from Palestine. Because Palestine used to be mixed up with Pakistan, occasionally I would say I came from Jordan. They would then automatically think of me as being antagonistic to the Jews. We did not have too many Jewish students at the time at the University of Illinois: there are a lot more now.

I was enrolled in two courses. One course was an advanced history course with Professor Nicholson. This was a large class with 400 or 500 students. So, they split us into sections. He gave one lecture and then for the discussion section, we had two additional lectures. My discussion leader in history was Mrs Jaffe, a German Jew. She had migrated first from Germany to Palestine with her family, and then from Palestine to the States in 1946. I had an interest in history. Up to this time, I was an A-student. I talked to Mrs Jaffe. She was interested in my background and my educational history. She could not believe that I went to an Arab school in Jaffa. By the time I left, she still did not believe it. Her stereotype was that the Arabs have no schools, or that the only schools there were missionary schools, Jewish schools, or private religious schools and that they all teach in English. Now, by then, my English had improved, but it was not perfect. So here I was: I claimed to have studied in Jaffa, in an Arab school that was supported by the government. She did not understand that the government had Arab schools. She could not believe that I could not study with Jewish students. Throughout the semester she could not get through her head that I actually went to an Arab school. I suspected by the end that she was prejudiced. She could just not accept the fact that I could perform so well, coming from the kind of background that I claimed to be coming from.

I had formed some friends in my section. One of my friends, Bob Ulseth, came to me and he said: "Abe, you know I'm applying to medical school and I'm a B student, and I need to get straight A's in all my courses to be admitted". I said: "Okay". He said: "You know in history, I'm not very good. You are very good. I get C's". He

continued: “All I want is to sit in the seat behind you, and all I want you to do is just to write, but to keep your hands down”. He wanted to cheat, but I didn’t have to do anything. So I said okay.

I was shocked when I got my “B”. I got a “B” and Bob Ulseth got an “A”. I went to Mrs Jaffe to complain, but she insisted that she had corrected fairly. I could not tell her that Bob had copied from me. Instead, I said that I couldn’t have done that poorly. It became apparent that she could not admit that I could be a good student, being an Arab and a Palestinian. I continued to complain, but there was nothing to be done. A “B” is not a bad grade: for a foreign student, getting a “B” is really marvelous. I never took another course from Mrs Jaffe after this incident. We never said hello in the hall when we passed each other. She knew I thought she was a bitch.

Stanley Gabis was a teacher of political science. He provided another experience in American prejudice. Stanley Gabis taught my first course in political science. I sat in class next to a black student named Sterling Stuckey. He was light black and tall. By luck, we began talking with each other. I had no understanding of racism in America at this time. I was raised in the tradition of the Arab world, where it is very difficult to say who is black. We are brown and we are white. Sterling and I were friendly and we talked. Our professor, Stanley Gabis, was hostile and aggressive towards us. During class, he would wait until we were not paying attention, and then spring a question upon us. He would not wait for us to answer. If we did, he would interrupt us. He was simply out to get us. Obviously, both Sterling and I noticed his hostility. I asked Sterling what was the matter with this guy. Sterling asked if I knew that Gabis was Jewish. I had no idea. Sterling said: “You know, Gabis is a Jew and you are an Arab”. I discovered later that Gabis was also a Zionist. I still did not understand why Gabis was hostile towards Sterling. Sterling said: “Because I am a nigger”. In 1950, “nigger” was an acceptable term. Sterling went on to tell me that Gabis was such a racist, that he would walk into a riot to lynch a nigger.

The Trauma Of Dismissal

One day, during Gabis’ class, I was called to the Registrar’s office. Gabis assumed I had done something wrong, because the note had said I was wanted urgently. He said that I could stay to the end of class, his class being of the utmost importance. But I wanted to go to the Registrar’s office to see what this note was about. At the Registrar’s office, a concerned woman asked me how I was feeling. She wanted to know if I had been coughing. I didn’t understand what she was getting at. While she could not pronounce my name, she told me: “Mr Abu-Lughod, you are very sick. Your x-ray shows that you have an advanced case of tuberculosis, a highly contagious and dangerous disease. Therefore, we are unable to keep you in school. You are hereby expelled from the university for medical reasons”.

I was in complete shock. Now, I was feeling sick. I came from Amman, by hook and crook, and now I am being expelled and deported. The Registrar made an appointment for me to see the Immigration Department that afternoon. The Immigration Department official met with me at 2pm. He told me that I was not allowed to stay in the community because of the nature of my disease. I was beginning to feel like I was infecting him at that point. He suggested that I return home and recover there. The alternative was to go to a sanatorium. The official started looking through my file, and said: "You receive $2,000 a year from your family?" I obfuscated. My whole lie had been exposed. I told him that my family had fallen on hard times, and that I no longer had that money. Much to my relief, he continued: "We feel a sense of responsibility because when you came to this country, you were healthy. We will send you to a sanatorium at our expense". This would be a long process, around two years. But, at least I did not have to go back to Amman. In the meantime, I had to go to the Naval Hospital for a full physical examination. I was given the name of the doctor, and instructions not to eat between midnight and my examination, which was scheduled at 8am the next morning. When I left the Immigration Office, the official wouldn't shake my hand. I knew this was serious. I went home and found my friend Ali. I was in a panic. Ali soothed me. He told me to ignore these people, and he said that they are stupid. But Ali was not a doctor.

For four days, I went to the Naval Hospital. Every day I had the same tests: A pipe was put in my throat and I was told to swallow it like it was spaghetti. I had never had spaghetti, but I swallowed the pipe, and the doctors got their cultures. The doctors were professional and reassuring. They took care of me. On the fourth day, a doctor came out to meet me and said: "Young man, you are healthy. There is nothing wrong with you. Take this report and go back to school". I wanted to kiss him, but instead I went straight to the Registrar with the report and back to school.

For the next three years, I had to be tested every three months by the TB Monitoring Health Service. Whenever they took an x-ray, they found TB. Later on, I learned that what they were seeing was fibrosis. I also learned that if I took the skin test rather than the x-ray, it would come back negative. I returned to class and I received a "B" for that semester.

I went on to take American Politics from Gabis. He was the only professor available. As it turned out, Gabis and I were living in the same neighborhood on the South Side. Occasionally, our paths would cross. I used to see him walking with a woman, and this unnerved me a bit. Gabis had a woman? I didn't understand. One day, we saw each other in the neighborhood. He asked me to join him and his woman friend for a cup of coffee. We talked about politics and about Palestine. He was interested in my relationship with Sterling. He asked me if I see Sterling outside of class. He warned me to be careful, to watch myself around Negroes. He was inciting me. By the end of the semester, Gabis' hostility towards me had mitigated a bit. He gave me an "A".

Stanley Gabis eventually got his PhD, and was teaching at the University of Missouri. I would occasionally see reviews by him in journals. Racists have some form of stupidity that blocks their ability to see clearly. I decided that I was a much better political scientist than he was, and I ended up a better professor at a better university.

By the end of the year, Sterling had dropped out of the University. I had no idea where he went. Years later, in 1968, I was a Professor at Northwestern University and living on the North Shore of Chicago. An American colleague invited my wife and me to dinner. Her husband was the French Consul in Chicago. The members of the dinner party were distinguished and wealthy people who were interested in progressive politics. One of the guests was a black man. This man and I kept looking at each other. In our conversation, we identified with a different kind of politics, a more revolutionary kind. We were more radical than the rest of the company. After we had finished dinner, we retired to have some coffee. We sat next to each other. He turned to look at me and remarked that I looked very familiar. I thought that this might be because I had been appearing on television. We started speaking about our professions and education, and suddenly it dawned on me that this was Sterling. Sterling had left the University of Illinois and had become a teacher. He was then writing his dissertation on Paul Robeson at Northwestern. Sterling was looking for funding to complete his field research in Nigeria. Coincidentally, at that time, I was Director of the Program of African Studies. I told Sterling to come by my office the next day to look into fellowships. The next day he came. We arranged to have Sterling re-register with the University and receive support.

These events were all occurring during the time of the Black Revolution. Campuses were desperately looking for black faculty. Sterling was appointed as an Associate Professor to the Department of History before he finished his dissertation. A question arose when Sterling completed his dissertation: who would review it? The members of the Department were his colleagues. I ended up being the chairman of his committee. One of the members of the committee was a historian, Ivor Wilkes, and the other was an expert on South Africa. Judging Sterling's dissertation was going to be a tricky business. We were worried about how to handle Sterling. He was arrogant, and his dissertation was not that impressive. We decided to invite him to my office and have some German *kazoaz*. We all became a bit woozy from the drink, and held a nice seminar. Sterling passed through his jury and earned his PhD. Later on, he improved his dissertation and had it published as a nice book. That evening, I had invited Nabil Sha'th to my house for dinner. Nabil was in Chicago, lobbying for Fateh and the PLO. I invited Sterling to join us to celebrate his success. We had an excellent political discussion about black issues and black support for Palestine. We also talked about Stanley Gabis, racism and anti-Arab hostility among Jews and non-Jews.

In the United States, people were prejudiced against others for no reason. There was a generalized anti-Arab and anti-Muslim attitude. I experienced this racism, and it

affected me deeply. I saw a complex phenomenon in America: people were helpful, flexible, generous, supportive and encouraging to foreign students, while at the same time, they can be racist and prejudiced against individuals.

Debating Palestine

My public involvement in the question of Palestine started in 1950-51. One of my classmates in a political science course was a German Jew named Conrad Meier, who grew up in Haifa. Conrad and I had closeness due to our status as outsiders and foreigners. During our conversations, we discovered that we were both ignorant about the other. He knew nothing about the Arabs. I knew a little about the Jews in Tel Aviv, but nothing about their formation or structure. I had no idea about the different political movements within Zionism. I knew of the Haganah, but nothing about the Palmach. Conrad was amazed.

Our English teacher noticed our discussions, and suggested that we give a joint presentation on the Palestine Question. We both identified ourselves as Palestinians: a Palestinian Arab and a Palestinian Jew. I wrote my presentation with Ali's help. It was my first public performance in English. My speech was a violent one, advocating the destruction of Israel. Conrad's speech, on the other hand, outlined all the good deeds the Jews had done for the Arabs. He talked about how friendly they are towards the Arabs, providing teachers and doctors. I argued back saying that no one goes to Hadassah Hospital except the corrupt kings that we have. I learned a valuable lesson that day: to do my research, so I could back up my statements with numbers. I discovered from a textbook how many Arabs had been treated at Hadassah. The total number was 15 over many years. His argument was ridiculous. I remember the sense of the debate: countering the other side and then going out together for coffee. We had the debate, we shed blood, and then we went out and had a cup of coffee.

I have another story involving Conrad and a textbook called *American Government and Politics*, by Ogg and Ray. Conrad wanted to borrow this book after I had completed my American Politics course. He promised to return it once the semester was over. I did not want to loan out this book. It was precious to me, even to the extent that I carried it with me all the way to Palestine when I made my return. But reluctantly, I agreed to lend it to him. When he had finished the semester and he had not returned the book, I approached him, enraged. I told him: "You took Palestine, and you are not also going to take my book". Eventually, Conrad returned the book. After we graduated, we went our separate ways. I have not heard from him since.

To continue with the journey of this book: I moved to the University of Illinois, Champain, and the book moved with me. There, I met an African student named Babatuund Williams. Babatuund was taking a course in American Politics, and asked

if he could borrow my book. I made him promise to return it. I had to harass Babatuund for two years until it was returned. So, this is the fate of my book with Israel and Africa: both of them returned the book, but only after harassment. Incidentally, Babatuund went on to become quite famous as a journalist. I saw him in 1977, at a conference in Nigeria.

I became much more politically active at the University of Illinois, Champain. One of my first political encounters was a debate with an Israeli woman. That debate taught me a great deal about the politics of debates. The University had organized a major conference on the Middle East. The conference was held in honor of Ralph Bunche who had replaced Bernadotte after he was assassinated. Bunche was a top United Nations official and was black. The organizers asked me if I would take part in a civilized debate on the Arab-Israeli conflict, with an Israeli sociology student named Betty Manheim. By 1953, these debates had the potential to degenerate into cursing and shouting matches, but Betty and I met with each other and agreed upon our presentations. When the time came for our presentations, I went first and gave my talk as agreed. Her presentation came as a complete shock. It had nothing to do with what we had discussed. I confronted her after the conference, but she denied ever having an agreement with me. I learned several lessons from my debate with Betty Manheim. No matter what the agreement was: be careful, make them speak first and reserve the right to answer. The second lesson I learned was to tailor my arguments to the audience. My argument had been historically based, going into much detail about Arab civilization. My American friends suggested that I keep it brief, cut to the chase: simply, briefly and sharply.

An interesting incident took place during this conference. In this proud, conservative, bible town, the burning civil rights issue at the time was the integration of barbershops. Students were carrying placards reading: “Would you cut the hair of Ralph Bunche, Nobel Prize winner?” One barber responded that he would cut the hair of an African because they are not negroes, even though they are black.

Chapter Five

Issues Of Identity

Issues of identity had come up earlier, while I was working as a translator with the Immigration Department. I was not experienced and did not know how to deal with the politics of translation. I didn't know what to do when, for instance, I was told that a guy's name was Ahmed, when I knew it was Hamid. I was told to translate literally: translate exactly what the person is saying. The men being processed were asked their name, residence and nationality. One problem occurred that haunts me to this day: asking Palestinians their nationality. I would ask Palestinians what was their nationality, and some would inevitably reply "Jordanian". After the interview I would talk to them and say: "But you are Palestinian". They would reply: "Yes, but we are Jordanian".

One day, on the campus of the University of Chicago, I met a Palestinian-Lebanese graduate student called George Sfair. George was working as a translator at the Immigration Department. He told me that there were problems with my translations. I asked him what was the problem: "In the interrogation, you say they are Palestinian, but they are actually Jordanian." My job was to translate. If a person identified himself as a Palestinian, that is how I translated it. This would become an important political issue in Palestinian discourse: whether to identify yourself as a Palestinian or a Jordanian. At that time, we did not know the amount of conflict that would arise over this issue. I did not keep in contact with George, but years later I read a letter to the editor in The New York Times from him. He identified himself as a consultant to the US Government. This led me to believe he might have worked for one of the US intelligence agencies.

My friend Ali was widely respected and had a broad network of people who were interested in politics. One man who stands out is a Christian called Shafiq Mansur. Shafiq worked for the YMCA in Jerusalem. He was attending a training course in the US in 1948, and was unable to return to his home in Jerusalem. His home is situated in what is now considered West Jerusalem, as is also the beautiful building of the old YMCA. Shafiq's job was to travel around the States, lecturing on the Holy Land. Every Tuesday, he spent a night in Chicago. We would go to the local drugstore and have a cup of coffee and a pie. Shafiq would treat. In return for the coffee and pie, Ali and I had to perform. Shafiq would recount his speeches to the Rotary Club in Wisconsin, and how he argued down a Jewish opponent or Christian Fundamentalist. We had to react with awe and admiration to all of Shafiq's victories.

We would applaud him and compliment him on his fantastic logic. Once a month, in return for this show of appreciation, he would buy us a scoop of ice-cream for our apple pie. He was a nice man, but he had no idea how Ali and I conspired to get that ice-cream. Years later, when I had become a good friend of Edward Said, I found out that Shafiq was a relative of Edward Said's mother, and that she was quite fond of him. After I found out this information, I was much more careful about what I said about him.

Ali and I lived together for almost a year before we split. This was a split that was not completely voluntary. We were living in one room. Ali used to read the newspapers: The Chicago Tribune and The New York Times. These newspapers would accumulate in our room. Eventually, when our room became a pig-sty, we would move to a new clean room in another boarding house. We would do this every time our room would become unlivable. While looking for our last room together, we ran into problems for reasons I did not understand. We would be turned down for no apparent reason. Ali understood what was happening. He suggested that I look at one house on my own, but tell them that I have a roommate. I went to this house, a very nice house, and saw two rooms for fourteen dollars. It was more than we wanted to pay, but the rooms were wonderful. I told the woman who was showing me the rooms that I had a roommate. I went to get Ali. He was reluctant to come. Ali was dark and he understood the racism against blacks. Many people thought he was black, although he is nowhere near black. But, he had a mustache and was odd-looking, although he was handsome.

Mrs Gustafson agreed to give us the rooms, although she did not like Ali. First, she thought that Ali had too much control over me. Ali thought that she was jealous. Mrs Gustafson definitely liked me. She would bake pies and cakes for me. She was very partial, she never offered any baked goods to Ali. She confided in me that Ali's behavior was corrupting, such as his interest in women. Her other complaint over Ali's smell was legitimate: Ali had a permanent sinus condition coupled with a bad habit of putting dirty socks back into the drawer. This smell permeated his room. Mrs Gustafson asked me to talk to Ali about this, to which he replied: *"Yil'an abuha"*, "God damn her father". Her meanness ended up driving Ali out of the house. I stayed there. I was clearly spoiled. I learned a great deal from her. She would sit with me while I was studying, and when it appeared that I was getting tired, she would bring me a cup of coffee. She gave me a tremendous amount of moral support. She would hug me when I came in at the end of the day, leaving her husband in the kitchen. Ali had a suspicious mind. He suspected that she had a crush on me, although he did not use those exact words. She was an important figure in my life. She contributed to saving me. Eventually, I had to move out. I wanted to date girls and that was not allowed in this house.

The Scientist By Circumstance

This same summer, I started working in a steel mill, Republic Steel Co., in a labor gang. I learned a lot about the hierarchy of race in this job. The labor gang consisted of the Catholics, Blacks, Yugoslavs and me. I did not fit into their categories. The management knew that I was a college kid from a strange place. The labor gang was given the worst possible jobs in the mill: digging holes and spreading concrete. The gang had a hierarchy of its own. The Blacks were called to do the dirtiest jobs, and the foulest language was used to address them: “Hey, you son of a bitch. Come and do this...”

I worked at this job for about a week and was ready to quit. I could not keep up with it physically. As I was about to quit, I was called by the big boss who said: “Hey Abe, you are in college, aren’t you? You are in the sciences?” I had no idea what he was looking for. So, I just answered yes. I was taking political science. The big boss told me: “I am going to send you to Wyatt”. Wyatt was a metallurgist who was doing a revolutionary experiment on the consistency of steel at certain temperatures. Wyatt was trying to perfect a device like a thermometer that could measure the temperature. The steel was poured into molds at a certain temperature. There was no device that measured the heat of the steel in the furnace. I was familiar with steel furnaces through my exposure to my father’s foundry. But these furnaces were about three times the size of what we had in Jaffa. They used a procedure called an “open heart”, turning scrap metal into low-quality steel, which commanded a lesser price. Wyatt explained the experiment to me. The instrument we were using was called a thermocouple. Therefore, I was a thermocouple maker. A thermocouple is a post with wires tipped with a ball of glass. This is put in the furnace and registers the temperature on a meter. The meter was located fifty meters away from the furnace. Wyatt went on and on with his explanation. It was the most boring lecture that I had ever heard, but I wanted the job as it was a fifty-cent an hour raise.

Wyatt told me what I was supposed to do: “When the furnace is ready, the guy manning the furnace will tell you. Sometimes he is right, sometimes he is wrong. It will take six to eight hours. We want to perfect the system. We will take the temperature with this instrument, and put the information in a database: listing the furnace, the time, the duration, what temperature and the quality of the steel. But Abe, these guys are difficult”. We would work in three shifts, eight hours a shift, and I could not miss one. There were eight furnaces, manned by experienced laborers, who had been working for over twenty years. Now these guys had to take instructions from a kid with no experience. I saw first-hand the difficulty of change, and why people oppose innovation: it is more work.

I introduced myself as Abe, honest Abe. The furnace would take hours to warm up, so I got to know the men. We would go to lunch, talk about women, the old country

and eat. Most of the time was spent sitting around, but sometimes six or more furnaces were ready to be measured at the same time, and I could not miss one. The men were nice to me. If I was loafing, some guy would yell: “Hey Abe, we are ready, where are you?” I had to run, because if you miss, you miss. I learned to cheat, but I did not cheat much. I understood how to compute the time. So, instead of seven hours, it is seven hours and twenty minutes, and the temperature of the steel is such and such. I would move it by hand to have my record complete.

I finished my job when the summer was over. I could not work there during the year because of my schedule. Wyatt wanted me to stay, but he settled on replacing me with a friend of mine who was doing his PhD thesis in geography. He was able to write his dissertation on the job. Years later, there was an article in Time Magazine under the heading of notable experiments, where a picture of the thermocouple was included. Eight or nine years after I had left the mill, the experiment was rated a success and became part of the apparatus of steel mills throughout the United States. For me, however, the importance of this job was in what I learned about society. I wrote a paper on class stratification in America for a sociology class. The basis of this paper was the ethnic classifications and the hierarchy of the races, which I observed at the mill. I learned about other cultures there. I received a real education at the mill.

My second job in the sciences was after my junior year in college. I was working on an experiment in atomic physics for a German professor. The experiment was described as taking the pulse of the atom. My job was to read films and transcribe them by hand. I understood nothing from this experiment. I lost my eyesight reading these films: this is why I wear glasses. The professor was very concerned for his workers. He asked me how much I was being paid. When he heard my answer, he screamed in his heavy German accent: “This is slave wages! Slave wages! This is unacceptable. You must give him a raise!” I did get a raise: ten cents more an hour. But, what I remember most is the professor’s reaction. Later on, I guessed he was referring to the slaves the Nazis used during the war. It was a good job, and I was on my own.

After I finished with my work in atomic physics, I worked in a laundry as a cleaner. The pay was terrible, but it was convenient, as it was just around the corner from my classes. One of my chores was to mop the floor. I mopped the Arab way, which is different from the American way. I threw soap and water on the floor, wiped up the water with a sharp plastic mop, and then dried the floor. The American way uses little water and a cloth mop. One day the owner’s son came in and saw how I was mopping the floor. He was a little surprised, but I was so proud of how clean the floor was. He did not want to upset me, although he did not approve of my methods.

His father was extremely kind to me. He used to say to me: “Abe, I had three people who did this work here: one is a lawyer, the other is a doctor and the third is a

professor. They worked hard and I was pleased that I had been a help to them. They are good people, and you look like you are one of those. If you stay here, I will support you and help you. I will make it easy for you". The old man offered: "Once the tenants who live upstairs move out, you can move in". He was very nice and I appreciated his sentiments. While reading the newspaper one day, I saw his picture identifying him as the new Secretary of the Anti-Defamation League. I had no idea my employers were Jewish. They knew I was Palestinian, but we had very little overlap since I worked at night. When I next saw the old man, I told him that I saw his picture in the newspaper. He asked me what I thought about it, and if I knew anything about the Anti-Defamation League. I told him: "No, but I would like to learn". Then I thought: "I need to get out of here". And, I did within two weeks. I did appreciate what the old man had said to me.

Son Of The Sheikh

I was writing my Masters thesis in the Department of political science. It was my second semester there, and I was almost finished. I was married with one child, and was wondering what I was doing sitting in this town. There were no opportunities in Champain. I thought I should go to Chicago. I needed a full-time job that pays. I could write my thesis at night.

I started my search for a job at the employment agencies. The first agency had nothing for me. I had a Bachelors in Political Science and I was working on my Masters, but what skills did I have? I thought of myself as being educated. I was an ustaaz. I went to another employment agency and got the same response. The third agency was a two-bit agency. I met with a man named Larry. He was Jewish and was interested in me. I filled out the form listing my skills and employment history. Larry looked over this form and looked at me: "You want a professional job and you want to be paid well. The only job that I have that fits you is the following: an anthropologist wants a research assistant to go to Kenya. He is studying the Mau Mau Rebellion". I had no idea who this anthropologist was or what I was expected to do. But, I still had to finish my thesis. Larry looked over my application and proceeded to give me an interesting piece of advice. My job experiences had been at JB Rowlings Company, Republic Steel Co. and Frederick Products Inc. I was proud that I had supported myself, but Larry had another opinion: "That's a shitty record of employment. If you say you are a shipping clerk at Marshal Fields or Lord and Taylor, that is different. You were a shipping clerk at JB Rowling Company? Who would work there except a nigger?" He gave me a name of another employment agency, and told me to say nothing of my other employment. I was to go to them as a wealthy Arab, a son of a rich man, an oil sheikh. I was looking for a job out of an interest in communicating with people.

I took my act to this new employment agency. Their offices were opulent with thick carpets and expensive furniture. I did as Larry told me: I filled out the application, leaving the work experience off the form. I was shown into a large office and introduced to an older man sitting behind a fancy desk. He looked at my application and said: "I think social work. White collar, working with the people and wanting to do the good". I was interested, very interested. I was sent out on an interview the next day. I interviewed with a woman and was hired on the spot. I knew nothing of social work. The job would pay $350 a month. I would be working with a poor Spanish-speaking community in Cook County. I knew no Spanish. The woman who interviewed me explained the job's financial limitations: "You will reach $600 a month, but then you can't move higher unless you move into the administration. Then different opportunities are available". I was making $100 a month at that time. But, I was unable to take the job. I had to write my thesis and I realized this job was going to take up all of my time. So, Larry taught me an important lesson: employers look at your background. Employers look differently at candidates who worked at Harvard, than those who did the same job at South Dakota. There is a clear class distinction. So, my education was not just at school. I was educated because I was poor and had to work. I learned about the class struggle and the different subcultures in America.

Culture Clash

From the university environment, I learned about the variety of beliefs and commitments in America. After leaving Chicago, a great city, I found myself in Champain-Urbana, located in an area of Illinois called downstate. It was totally different from Chicago. In political terms, Cook County would usually support the Democratic candidates, whereas downstate would support the Republican candidates. But it was more polarized than that. The Democratic candidates were very liberal and the Republican candidates were very conservative. It was a clear-cut political division between the urban community with the unions, intellectuals, universities and different ethnic groups, and the rural community categorized as the Bible Belt.

I was always more liberal. In Chicago, I would support peace appeals sponsored by the Communists, although I did not know that at the time. This was in the 1950s. The Soviet Union had just experimented with atomic weapons. With my liberal political views, I was accused of being a red in Champain: we foreigners came with weird ideas.

I remember the 1952 Whistle Stop campaigns of Dwight Eisenhower (Republican) and Adlai Stevenson (Democrat). In the Whistle Stop campaigns, the candidates would travel the country in a train and stop at each station to give a speech to the assembled citizens. It was called "Whistle Stop", because the train would whistle and the people would assemble. When Adlai Stevenson came, I do not think more

than 300 people showed up to hear him speak. However, when Eisenhower came, the whole town including the university, closed down.

When the President of the University went to plead with the state legislature for more funds, we went to support him. The legislature was against spending money on “foreigners” and communists. For them, New York Jews were foreigners, never mind the Chinese and Indian students. My wife and I experienced the culture clash.

The School of Music at the university was very good, an oasis in the desert. The School had a chamber orchestra that was excellent, but they had trouble getting an audience for it. Only the foreigners, including the students from New York and Chicago, attended these concerts. We were living in a split apartment. We would listen to classical music. Our neighbor complained that we were having wild parties. Meanwhile, he was listening to hillbilly music. We had a big fight, in which he remarked that I should go back where I came from.

The University of Illinois was excellent in many fields. It had one of the best libraries in the United States, a strong school of music, a good school of agriculture and excellent science departments. The University was obligated by state law to accept every student who had graduated from an Illinois high school. There were probably 60,000 students at Champagne-Urbana. Many of these students were not interested in learning. Their disinterest worked in my favor: I was able to attract the attention of the teachers because I wanted to learn. I was welcomed into their offices and they were interested in me: where I came from, and what I thought of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The university gradually rooted out the students who were not able to keep up, by sending them to vocational school or some other activity. Many of these students did not come from an intellectual background. In my sociology class, for example, we talked about Karl Marx. One of the kids raised his hand, and I am sure he was asking a question the others wanted to ask: “How do you spell Marx, and who is he?” The teaching assistant did not know whether this student was making fun of him or not. The poor assistant had to explain the communist ideology, including its atheism, to kids who grew up in the Bible Belt.

There was a clear division, ideologically and educationally, in terms of outlook and knowledge, which gave me a view of how complex America is. Every foreign student will tell you that Americans do this and Americans do that, as if America is one. I learned that there are many different types of groups in America. Even though every stereotype may have some truth, no generalizations can be made. This knowledge was tremendously beneficial when I became active in American politics. America is not one voice, not one vote, not one idea. There is a tremendous variety and a clash in politics, ideology and in social behavior. This clash appears between those who are classified as liberal, educated, urban dwellers, and those who are from the rural

communities, from the Bible Belt. A great deal of the real America is located in the Midwest, the heartland of America. The rural areas cannot be ignored. I understood how strong the people of the heartland were, both on a political and personal level.

As a Palestinian, I found it harder to live in the Bible Belt than to live in Chicago. In Chicago, I saw the urban prejudice directed against foreigners and blacks. In the Bible Belt, I encountered difficulties because of the fundamentalist Christians. It was hard for me to convince these people that I was a Palestinian, a living Palestinian from Palestine. Sometimes, Palestine would be confused with Pakistan or with the town of Palestine, Ohio. For these people, Palestine is a concept of the past, a concept for the Bible. They could not imagine that Palestinians actually live in a country called Palestine. Palestine would be linked with the Israel of the past, but not modern Israel. Knowing the associations made in people's mind between ancient Israel and ancient Palestine was useful to my understanding of these people. There was a general ignorance of the Palestinians and their struggle and of what Israel has done to the Palestinians. There was a connection between Judaism and Christianity, which is much more fundamental than the relationship between Christianity and Islam. This relationship translated into a tremendous amount of political support for Israel from the West. Many of the teachers, especially the Catholics, thought it was a Jewish conflict, a religious conflict. They therefore looked upon the Jews with disfavor. But the fundamentalist Christians made a connection with Israel that they never made with the Palestinians.

I would say that at that time, in the 1950s, and my memory is clear on this, the people were not so concerned with the Holocaust. Israel, over the past few years, have utilized the Holocaust to gain political support. The Nazis did something nasty, but the Holocaust was not as salient in discussions as a justification for the State of Israel, as it is now. Today, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be discussed without some reference to the Holocaust. This was not true in the 1950s: the teachers and the students were more willing to listen to me. They did not dismiss me or justify their support of Israel on the basis of the Holocaust.

I learned a great deal by living both in Chicago and in the Midwest. I saw the social structure of community, racial prejudice, ethnic prejudice and the tremendous difference in the educational and cultural attainments that characterize America. It helped me politically later on when I became much more active in promoting the Palestinian cause and in defending the Arabs.

The largest group of Arabs at the university was Egyptian. The Egyptian and Iraqi governments used to send students to the United States on full scholarships. I gained my first experience in organization through the Organization of Arab Students. I dealt with different varieties of Arabs: Iraqis, Egyptians, Syrians and a few Palestinians.

A few professors stood out in my university experience. Professor George Manner was an Austrian who taught international relations. He moved to the United States after the Anschluss. He spoke with a slight German accent. He was an outstanding teacher and an outstanding scholar. His teaching style was methodical and dry: he was not a showman, but I learned a lot from him. He taught jurisprudence and international relations. Because of his methodical tendencies, he was fair and I understood him. So, I always got an "A". But I had the feeling, and so did my fellow students, that he was not treated fairly within the Department because of his style. I remember reading his articles and he referred material to me. I was interested in his subject and I showed my interest. He expected that I would do well.

Professor Jobst taught International Law. He was a very articulate man and also intriguing. I remember that he would always go away for one month in the winter and have substitutes replace him. This was a curiosity. Apparently, he would go to Florida for one month during the winter. The rumor was that he was very rich. To go to Florida and spend money for one month, he had to be rich. He was an excellent teacher. I learned a great deal about international law from him.

There was Jack Palpason, a young man who received his doctorate from Princeton University. He went on to become the Chancellor of the University of California. At Illinois, he taught Constitutional Law. I was noticed because I was a good student, not because I flattered my professors. The flattery was in doing good work.

Frances Wilson taught political theory, the history of political theory, with the Sabin book. I took another course with Wilson on American Political Theory. Wilson was conservative and Catholic, and, I thought, very educated. He impressed me by quoting authorities from memory. I thought to myself that I wanted to be like that when I grow up. As a professor, I learned this trick.

I took classes from Oston Ranny, who became President of the American Political Science Association (APSA). He was an excellent teacher. I took two sociology classes with Donald Alcaff: sociology and the sociology of conflict. He was a pioneer in the field of conflict resolution that is now in vogue. I worked with him before there was even a name for this field.

My educational career was marked by a long historical interest in America. In my political science major, I took courses in American politics, governmental politics, constitutional law and the Supreme Court, American history, and American diplomacy. I took at least three semesters of American diplomacy from a professor who would become quite prominent, Richard M. Karrand. I did not know he was Jewish while I was taking his classes. He was a Sephardic Jew and a critic of American policy. He was what we call now a revisionist historian. There were two students in his class that he was interested in, a Jewish girl and myself. We sat next to each

other and would argue with him. He nominated both of us to attend a student conference, covering the whole of the Midwest.

This conference was held at a Liberal Arts college, Principia College, a fundamentalist college, which forbids smoking, drinking and mingling between the sexes. The students at this college were like Muslims. The town of Adasy was the same. When my Muslim friends would visit, I would tell them that this is a Muslim place because there was no alcohol allowed. There are important traditions in America that are called religious sanctions, and this was one of them. Another woman attended the conference with us, a Latin American specialist nominated by Richard Scott. Richard Scott served as the chaperone at this conference, and because we were both males, we shared a room. He told me not to make any noise while he was sleeping, because he would wake up. He had been trained in military intelligence, and would become mobilized at the slightest motion. He explained that if I woke up with him choking me, it was an instinctive reaction. We talked at night about the jobs of intelligence officers. He was fascinating.

This was the first conference I had attended. It was 1953. One of the speakers there was Fred Hanania, a professor from the American University of Beirut. His talk was on "American Policy and the Middle East". Fred Hanania taught two courses at the American University: the "Making of Russia" and something having to do with Europe. He was not an expert on the Arab world, but he gave an excellent presentation at this conference. I was asked about him later by some of his students. These students said that Hanania was considered right-wing.

There were big fights at the conference. I remember a Japanese student who was the most outstanding of the group. He was older and more mature than the rest of the participants. He came to the defense of the Arabs and the Palestinians, but we were divided.

Experiencing The Bible Belt

The University of Illinois was a wonderful place for me. It had an excellent library and I had excellent teachers who were interested in me. In turn, I was interested in them. So, despite the poverty of the environment of the Bible Belt and the deep-seated prejudice, the university was an oasis where I was formed. It became very easy for me afterwards to move in a scholarly direction. I remember it very fondly, although I hated the environment there. Those few teachers made a great difference in my life. In that sense, I am very grateful.

That is where I learnt, I don't want to say about mass hysteria, but about both stereotype and hysteria, when somebody desecrated a synagogue in town. The incident was widely reported at the time, and all of the attention of the community focused on Arabs. They were looking for a scapegoat and the Arabs were used as scapegoats.

The Dean of students called a number of Arab students and asked for their help. The Arab students decided to meet the Dean and make a statement concerning the synagogue. These students were not political students: they were engineers. They had no understanding of the political environment. I tried to explain to these students why people thought we were responsible. If it is against the Jews, it is the Arabs. They were sincere in their ignorance, but I blasted them. It was my first act of rebellion. I was not going to accept the stereotype of an anti-Semite. We have a political conflict but we have nothing to do with anti-Semitic activities. I told this to the Dean, who listened and accepted my statement, but he still wanted us to sign a statement saying that we are innocent of this crime, which I thought was nasty.

The Politics Of Protest

After this incident, we became politicized and participated in many demonstrations. This was at the end of the Korean War and the beginning of Vietnam. We demonstrated in support of the Vietnamese and against American intervention to save the French. We were really demonstrating against the French in Algeria. I began to be much more active in the politics of protest at this time.

There were important principles I was trying to defend: the end of the Korean War, the support for the Vietnamese, support for civil rights, opposition to McCarthyism and in favor of the left and communism. I remember that we held a mock UN assembly, and a number of Arab students sat in Moroccan and Tunisian chairs to protest their lack of independence. In those demonstrations, I discovered the alliances with the rest of the Third World. The Indian students supported us, as did the Chinese and Latin Americans. It was an interesting political experience. I also discovered how reactionary Americans could be.

The United States is against all revolutions, although it was born in a revolution. It is a fantastic contradiction in American culture. After World War II, the US was acting in what I regard as a reckless manner. They were assuming the leadership of what was called the “free world”. There are two important events that remain with me until today. One of these events is the US intervention in the Korean War. I was on the side of North Korea at the time, not because I supported North Korea, but because I supported the unification of Korea. I believed that unity of the two parts of Korea was an important objective to be determined by the Korean people. I thought that the US intervention on the side of the South to prevent unification was contrary to American principles, principles that were defended in a civil war.

The unity of the American people, which was threatened by the secession of the South, was maintained by force. The South was coerced into remaining a part of the United States. Americans put a high value on the unity of their country. Therefore,

to adopt a policy contrary to this principle, on the basis of some political ideology, was hypocrisy.

I supported the Chinese intervention when the North Koreans were defeated by the US troops. My relationship with the oppressed people of the United States, the blacks and the Communists, made me much more sensitive to the idea that North Korea might be justified in its approach to South Korea.

I supported a policy of non-intervention in all conflict areas overseas. I signed hundreds of petitions on outlawing the atom bomb. When the Rosenbergs were tried for passing secrets to the Soviet Union, I supported their cause. The atom bomb must be the possession of everybody, not just the monopoly of the United States. I was firm on these positions and support them to this day.

The second important event was the US intervention in Indochina to rescue France. The French were besieged in Dien Bien Phu at the same time as the Algerian revolution began, in 1954. I was against France and believed that France must be evicted from these countries. When the US began to consider the rescue of French troops, I spoke out against it publicly. I made these speeches in a very conservative town: Champain, Illinois. People looked at me suspiciously, and wanted to know why a foreigner was speaking out against the US. I would argue with these people, explaining that America is supposed to oppose colonialism, yet this same country is supporting colonialist regimes in Tunisia and Algeria. They usually did not accept my argument because Americans generally support their government.

The issue of unification was important to me because I was applying it to the Arab world. I knew if the US succeeded in frustrating the unity of the Korean peninsula and Vietnam, they would also intervene in the Middle East. At that time, oil was not as important to policy as it is now. I thought that if the Arabs could gain their independence, we could achieve some degree of unity. The question is: “How do you achieve unity?” At that time, both Iraq and Egypt presented themselves as alternative hegemonic powers to lead the Arab world.

I was much more international in my approach than provincial. I did not focus exclusively on Arab nationalism. I believed that there needed to be a transformation in the Arab world and that this transformation would bring new leadership. I am on the side of the leftist movements whether they are communists or nationalists. To me, “the left” is anything opposed to feudal control and collaboration with colonial powers. The regimes of King Farouq in Egypt and King Faisal in Iraq were lackey regimes, beholden to imperialism. I supported Musaddaq in Iran. He was a pioneer in the struggle against imperialism. The nationalization of the oil industry was a revolt against the imperialism of the British.

The formation of a Third World identity came about in the United States during

the 1950s. I met Indians and supported their efforts as they supported mine. I was attracted to the figures of Nehru and Ghandi, but mostly Nehru: he had a magnetic effect on me. I met with Chinese, Africans and Iranians to talk about strategies to liberate people from colonialism. We saw American support for colonialism as white power, because, except for Japan, all the global powers were white. We also saw this imperialism as a mixture of antagonism towards Islam and colored peoples.

In the politics of this era, we were Arabs. There was no discussion of Palestine as a separate entity: our task was to liberate the Arab world. The Organization of Arab Students was established in 1954, and was the first national association of Arab students. The organization was dominated by the Ba'athists and the Nasserists. There were Ba'athists and Nasserists supporting the Algerians, Tunisians, Moroccans and Yemenis. I thought that there was a common enmity towards Israel, and as a by-product of the fight against imperialism Palestine had to be liberated. As a Palestinian, the easiest way of classifying me was as an Arab. I felt very comfortable with that classification. The negative impact of this classification is the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel was able to portray itself as fighting this fantastically united Arab world, and the issue of Palestine was submerged. Nobody in the public arena in the US thought that the Palestinians had anything to do with the problems. Egypt was perceived as anxious to destroy Israel; Jordan was thought to be aggressive and Syria was eager to conquer Israeli territory. There was no analysis of the Palestinian problem. It was not until the 1970s that a separate Palestinian issue emerged.

After the University of Illinois, I moved to Princeton University, a dull place. I had a fellowship, but it was not enough to live comfortably. My wife worked in Philadelphia to help support our two daughters, Mariam and Laila. The summers were very hot in Princeton, but we could not afford an air-conditioner. I remember that I applied for a small grant to take a course in Persian and was able to buy an air-conditioner with that money.

I was at Princeton when the 1956 War took place between Egypt, on the one hand, and Israel, Britain and France, on the other. I was shocked by the arrogant behavior of the Secretary of State, Dulles. Dulles declared publicly that Egypt was an economic disaster, unworthy of aid and used this as a pretext to withdraw the offer to construct the Aswan High Dam. The real reason was the arms deal Egypt had made with the Soviet Union. Nasser supported liberation movements throughout the Third World. He therefore became an anathema to imperialism and the United States.

The Golden Period

After my time at Princeton, I was lucky enough, because I had no experience whatsoever, to get a position as a researcher at UNESCO. The other applicants were certainly more qualified than I was. My competitors were a professor from a Syrian

University and one from Ain Shams University in Egypt. The hiring committee asked a colleague, Dr. Abdul-Aziz al-Qusi, to look over the three CVs and give the committee feedback. He confirmed to the committee that I was indeed the least qualified of the three candidates, but I was also the one he recommended to hire. He chose me because I was unqualified. I had no agenda and no experience and therefore, I would be flexible. He was right, and I began my work in Egypt using the framework provided by the center.

My time in Egypt is what I call a "golden period". This was the time in my life when I became a professional. I still feel nostalgic about this period. Whenever I have the opportunity, I go back and visit the center where I worked: it is still there, even though their work has changed since I was there. The center where I worked used to bring together civil servants from practically all the Arab states for in-service training. This included Palestinians, who were then either Jordanians or UNRWA employees. This put us in touch with a very important group of young people: most of them were in their late twenties or early thirties, and were civil servants in ministries of health, education, agriculture and community development. Community development was at the time seen as an effort to develop the countryside. Therefore, these trainees came for multi-disciplinary training, essentially in the social sciences and also in literacy.

My special task in the center was to train the students in the social science division in research methodology. The main objective was to teach them how to find the attitudes of the people towards change, through surveys and other methods of research. In 1960, it was widely believed in the Western world that Nasser was a dictator who rigged elections. It was also assumed that villagers were conservative people, people who resist change.

My class and I decided to test this theory using interviews to predict the outcome of elections in rural areas. We went to six villages, a sample of 200, and asked the villagers to rank the candidates from one to ten, the order in which they thought they would be elected. The assumption was that the government appointees would win the elections. This assumption was disproved by the outcome of our study. Out of the ten candidates, nine were correctly predicted by our study, and none of these nine were the government appointees. This proved two things: one, that the villagers had good judgment. Secondly, that they were politically astute. There is a prejudice against villagers: that they are ignorant people, *fallah*, peasants. These stereotypes might have been true in the past, but certainly not when I tested them.

I did two additional studies, one of which I published. The study was about the flow of information. How does a person acquire knowledge in a village? How does he/she hear it? What does he/she know? To find this information, I would read the newspapers and listen to the radio and go around the village to give the news to the people. I would ask the villagers: "What did you hear recently and who was

responsible?" For one particular story, they knew that an African leader had been killed, with the name of Lumumba. These were two pieces of information. The third piece of information that they shared was that the CIA had killed this leader. Surprisingly, after many years and the passing of the Freedom of Information Act in the United States, their third piece of information turned out to be correct.

For the second study, I used the death of King Mohammed the Fifth of Morocco. I asked the villagers three questions: Who is he? What do you know about him? What are the circumstances of his death? There was a high degree of consciousness of who King Mohammed was. He was identified as a nationalist because the French exiled him. He was welcomed into Egypt and given asylum. They had learned the news of his death the same night. The ability of the media to report this news in such a timely fashion was a major achievement for Nasser. He was able to use this to mobilize the people and politicize the population.

The Arab world at the time was eager to change, to be modernized, and there was no defensiveness against modernization. The effort that Abdul-Nasser led was one to modernize the Arab world. It was an effort to make it more rational, to industrialize it, to open schools, to provide health-care and to make it possible for the lower classes to move on. Basically, it was an effort to provide all these things that the old regimes had not provided the population with. These old regimes had been subservient to colonialism and therefore, the new regimes in the region, epitomized by Abdul-Nasser, were all committed to overcome the "backwardness" that the old regimes had produced. Community development was the answer invented by the United Nations. It was implemented through, amongst other things, our center, which was a collaboration between the WHO and the ILO, under the leadership of UNESCO.

The task of the center was to equip these trainees from the Arab states with the knowledge that would make them understand the underlying factors in society. We also aimed to teach the trainees the skills to transmit ideas to people, and to have the skills with which to evaluate what they do. The main objective was to transform the rural areas of the Arab world because it was assumed that it was these rural areas that were "backward".

The center had excellent people amongst its staff. It was a multi-disciplinary staff of social scientists, physicians, educators, audiovisual specialists, and artists. The art division was important because a large part of the population was illiterate, and to convey ideas to them, we had to use illustrations. We made newspapers with lots of illustrations and things like that. My colleagues were eminent people in the Arab world, and later would become even more eminent.

All of us working in that center developed pan-Arab ideas. We had a holistic view of the Arab world, assuming that we are one people and one world. We felt that our

job was to contribute to the process of unification. Our contribution was partly through our training of 200 people annually, but also through bringing them together. Thereby, this created a certain understanding between the Libyans, the Moroccans, the Egyptians, the Yemenis etc. We were all so motivated by understanding each other and by the desire to learn what ails society everywhere. To our dismay, we discovered how backward all of us were, irrespective of whether we had been under the rule of a French colonial power, an English colonial power or an Islamic power.

Abdul-Nasser's presence in power at the time gave us a tremendous push and the hope that we were actually participating in the process of transforming the *Arab* world. We thought of ourselves as an Arab community first of all: our national identities came second. We sought to strengthen the foundations of the Arab world: to advance educationally, to improve the economy and to strengthen the social system. Nasser gave us this vision of the Arab world and a strong feeling that we were participating in the making of a future. This was an extremely important driving force for me at the personal and intellectual level. Out of the work at the center came my first textbook on the subject of research: *al-Bahth al-Ijtima'i*, Social Research, which I wrote with one of my colleagues. The book came out of the research I conducted with my students and at the time it was really a pioneering effort. Later, I met people all over the Arab world who knew me because of that book.

The period of working in Egypt gave me foundations for much of my later work, both the writing and the teaching. I became confident in talking about the Arab world and could draw a lot of source material for my later teaching from my time in Egypt. It was a very important educational period for me, which made it possible for me to deal social-scientifically and historically with the Arab world.

This was a fantastic period of time for me. I was totally absorbed by my professional achievements, by training, and by visiting as many Arab countries as I could. I went to Libya, Yemen, Sudan, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. I became much more qualified as an expert on the Arab world than I was after I had just graduated with a PhD. I was able to meet with ministers and also had many students who became ministers. I understood the political structures, but, I myself, was not active politically.

When I talked about Palestine during this period, it had nothing to do with action. Beginning in 1958-59, I began to think about a university in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was then Jordanian. I thought that an important contribution to Palestine was institution building. I remember walking down the street one day and running into a friend. I did not know that he was in Cairo. We were both in a hurry but promised to meet again at a later date. He told me that it was very important that I speak to him. He wanted to speak to me about Fateh. This was Farouq Qaddoumi, head of the PLO political department today. I did not know Fateh from a hole in a wall. I had

never heard of it. When I saw his brother in Nablus, I found out that this man was an important founding member of Fateh. I did not see him again until 1968. By then, he was responsible for the mobilization of the PLO. I did not take him seriously at the time because he was still an undergraduate at the American University in Cairo and I already had my PhD. I don't know if I really regretted not meeting with him, but I think I could have done better politically if I had.

During 1957-1961, my years at UNESCO, I would visit the West Bank at least twice a year. We had a routine: my family and I would go to Amman and stay with my mother. We would go on to Jerusalem and then on to Nablus and Tulkarem. In Tulkarem, I would make my children stand in a spot where they could see the sea and Jaffa. Then, we would go to Ramallah to eat dinner and have an *argileh*, waterpipe. Ramallah was like being in Lebanon. The best part of the trip was Jerusalem. A walk in the Old City gave us all a feeling of peace.

Chapter Six

Back To The Us

After UNESCO, I returned to the United States to finish my book: *The Arab Discovery of Europe*. This book was a thesis that I did about Arab rediscovery: the rediscovery of ideas. It is about ideology, and the origins of Egyptian transmission of ideas from the West, much like the work of Bernard Lewis. I was living in Princeton, New Jersey. It was 1962 and I was looking for work.

Elie Salem, who eventually became the Dean of the American University of Beirut, told me that there was a position open at Smith College. I had never heard of this college before, and I did not know that it was a women's college. Salem, without having met me, called Smith and recommended me for the position. I was invited to Smith for an interview, but before I went I had to check in the card catalogue to see who teaches in the Department of Government.

My first meeting at Smith was with the chairman of the department who was a young man. He was a political theorist, a Straussian. He spoke to me about my upcoming interview that was to be held over lunch at their faculty club. I was told that I was to be seated next to Gwendolyn Carter, the only name I recognized from the card catalogue. I was to be asked questions, and after a while, a junior faculty member would escort me outside, and the rest of the faculty would vote. The chairman then told me an interesting thing: he said that the only vote that matters is Dr Carter's. So, she was the one I had to impress.

We went to the faculty club where I met this woman. I could see how she would dominate the department. She was smart, charming and powerful. The rest of the department members were kids, and I was a kid too. Before the interview, I had an opportunity to read one of her articles on South Africa. We discussed the situation there. I felt very comfortable with her. After the interview, I was escorted out of the room. As we were standing outside, the junior faculty member told me that I was lucky. Usually, before being hired at Smith, candidates would have to give a lecture in front of a class. After the class, the students vote, and if the candidate does not pass the vote, he is not hired, regardless of his standing as a scholar. In any case, the chairman came out of the room and announced that the vote had taken place. I was invited to be a member of their faculty.

Before I accepted, I had to discuss money. I had three children and a fourth on the way. I was offered $7,500, but I needed $8,000 to survive. I was told to take up this

issue with the President of the university, whose name was Mendenhall. Mendenhall was a naval historian. I had to interview with him before I was formally hired. I went to Mendenhall's office. He was not a clean-desk man. He had a huge desk and a huge table, all covered with papers. We sat down and discussed East and West. He was familiar with the Far East. I learned throughout my career that university presidents are familiar with many subjects, but only on a superficial level. I think there must be a sort of *Reader's Digest* for university presidents. After our talk, the President asked if I had any questions. I took the opportunity to ask for $8,000. He agreed. So, I moved from Princeton to Northampton.

Blushing At Smith

One time, right after we got to Smith, I went to a restaurant across the street from the campus. I sat down and ordered my hamburger. Then, suddenly, I looked around me and saw that the place was full of women! I blushed! I thought to myself: "Maybe, I am in the wrong place? Maybe it is only for women?" Of course, it wasn't. This was just how the population was there. I was so embarrassed to be there! Six months later, I didn't think about it twice. The demographic ratio of women to men was such that it was like being in the middle of a women's college all the time. It was a funny place. It was not normal. The girls dominated the town, and it was easy to tell when the school was not in session, because they would "migrate" and go back home then. At those times, it would be more balanced in town.

Our son was one year old when we moved, and we became integrated in society. My experience at Smith College was a very positive one. The students were above average in intelligence and they worked hard. They were systematic and responsive to demands, and they always did the reading before coming to class. Most importantly, Smith was where I learned to become a good teacher. Their emphasis was on teaching, and you got rewarded for good teaching. The students evaluate each course each year, and they are fair in their evaluation. Of course, I say this because they evaluated me highly. In fact, though, they were able to spot good teachers from poor ones.

The college paid attention to scholarship. However, there was not a policy of "publish or perish". They told you that you could take your time, but that they wanted "evidence of activity". They wanted to see that you were active. This could be by attending conferences, participating in seminars, presenting papers and so on. This way you learn about the difference between a teaching institution and a research institution.

I learned how to teach there since I had not actually taught in that sense before. Training civil servants is different from teaching students. I taught international law, comparative politics, nationalism and political theory. I learned to be "on the stage", in the sense that I learned about mannerisms and cultural differences in the way of

behaving. We, in the Arab world, in addition to Italians, Greeks, and probably Jews, are given to gesturing a lot. Anglo-Saxons do not do that, and all of us "ethnics" ended up taking over mannerisms of the "WASPs". I started holding my hands down at the podium, not raising my voice, and controlling myself more. I reflected upon this and thought to myself: "My God! How one gets influenced!" At Smith, there was me and one other Arab, a couple of Hispanics, one Greek, and one or two African-Americans. We were a distinct minority in the midst of this "WASPish" culture. As "ethnics", it was common knowledge that the way to promotion lay in publication. This was also evident in the President's "End of year report", where you could see the number of publications by the "ethnics". I was a good publisher and I was promoted to associate professor within three years. This was a record in the college.

I was a very good teacher. According to the evaluation of the students, I was probably one of the best. I directed the Honors program, and the students responded well to me. Two of them even wrote theses that were published. Both of the papers were good, but the one written by Catherine Dougherty, on the diversion of the Jordan River, was great. It was the best thing that I had read on the subject, and I am an expert. I was so impressed with it that I sent it out to *International Conciliation* to be published. The editor called me back immediately. She wanted to know who the author was, and was shocked to find out it was my student. They were willing to publish the paper, but with some edits. Catherine was flown down to Washington DC to meet with the editors. Immediately, they began pressuring her to change her paper. It was obvious that Israel was diverting this water and causing salinization to the land, but the editors did not want to publish an article critical of Israel. Catherine was upset, but I told her to minimize the changes they wanted and get it published, which she did.

You learned from Smith that if you want to make an elite, there are ways of making that elite. They may not be the smartest people in the world, although they also have to be smart, but the most important thing is that they need to have skills, energy, discipline and interest. Then, you just nurture their learning process. You learn the skill of conveying complex ideas. As a teacher, you learned to respect the audience because you know that they are smart. The teaching load was low. So, teachers were able to correct and make comments on student papers. It was not an educational process. It was a learning process. It was really a fantastic experience. I stayed there for three years, between 1962 and 1965, and got promoted as mentioned before, after those three years.

The Move To McGill

In 1965, I received an offer to be a visiting professor at McGill University's Institute of Islamic Studies in Montreal, Canada. They invited me for a year and offered me a salary of $10,000, which was not enough for me. By then, we had four children, and I just could not live on it. I accepted their offer anyway, and it was an exciting time.

Montreal was a totally different environment than Smith. My experience in Montreal was a formative experience, and it was a place to learn more about politics. My daughter used to go to vigils every Sunday outside the town hall to protest the Vietnam War. She asked me to go with her and I said: "No, no, that is too peaceful for me. I need to throw some stones!" To me, it was silly to stand there and hold some poster, but she took it very seriously and did it every week, even though I don't think she was more than 12 years old. It was an important place in terms of sensitizing the children to politics. At McGill, I was transformed politically. It was the place where I discovered Frantz Fanon, through the French-Canadians. Fanon had a very decisive influence on me, especially after I read his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*.

At McGill, I also learned about the whole connection between academia and the CIA. I learned about the relationship between the CIA and foundations. From before, I was paranoid about Palestine but not about anything else. Therefore, I was shocked to learn about this connection. I learned about academics that worked with the War Department or the National Security Agency, and the intimate relationship between social science research and the security establishment. All of this was new to me.

It was a very formative year, and I gave lots of lectures in Canada. In 1966, I was invited to join a panel discussion done by the Canadian Association of the United Nations. Those who were responsible for organizing it were mainly Canadian women of the elite, and they had a panel on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is the first major panel I participated in as a professor, and I was a bit nervous. Also on the panel were an Egyptian called Ibrahim Shukrallah, who was the director of the Arab Information Center in Ottawa, and a professor from the Hebrew University. The chair of the panel was my director at McGill, Charles C. Adams. Now, the audience was an elite group of Canadians. All were very polite and civilized. The panel discussion lasted two hours, and the level of debate and hostility shocked them. I recognized for the first time how qualified the whole atmosphere is, and how to confront an Israeli who is unprepared.

The chairman was impressed. He thought that I did very well. I knew that if I said the same thing in the United States, I would not get away with it. At least at that time, Canada was much gentler and less hostile to us. I thought about it, and figured out that if I had said the same things in the US, they would probably have fired me from the university. Here, on the contrary, the chairman was pleased with his faculty member who did such a brilliant job. For me, this was a very positive experience, which prepared me for what was to come later.

The PLO had begun to acquire recognition, negative of course, but people began to see the enormity of the issue. It was obvious that peace was not just around the corner; the issues are too complex and too difficult. At this time, the dispute had become embroiled in the Cold War.

I gave lots of lectures in Canada, mostly on Arab nationalism and on Egypt. I lectured on Nasserism and so on, but nothing on Palestine as such. The question of Palestine was subsumed within the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this time, I learned a good deal about the Jewish community of Montreal, both professionally and politically, and also through the newspapers in Canada, which have the same bias as you find in the New York Times. I also learned about French-Canadian nationalism, about the Canadian political system.

At the time, McGill offered me a permanent position, and since this had been such a productive year for me, I was interested in accepting it. I had published two or three articles, participated in seminars, and it had been a magnificent year. The thing was that the kids did not want to stay there. They wanted to go back to Northampton. So, we went back after one year in Canada.

Up In Arms

Montreal also had a large Arab community. During my time there, I became involved with one of the local associations. An Arab called me at McGill. I cannot remember whether he was Lebanese or Palestinian. He asked me: “Did you hear the broadcaster on this radio talk show?” He mentioned his name, which I cannot really remember anymore. What this man had said had been so awful that the Syrian-Lebanese community was very upset. I did not hear this program myself, but was told that it was terribly racist against Arabs. He attacked the Arabs viciously. He said that the Arabs are stupid, and he expressed racist remarks about them. The community was really up in arms about this. Whoever called me about this asked me to join them in a protest, because I was at McGill and had my status, while they were businessmen. They wanted to make a protest and asked me if I could simply accompany them, without having to say anything. Ibrahim Shukrallah, the Arab League representative in Ottawa, was also going with them. I told him that I had not heard the program, and asked him what they wanted me to do. He said that it was nice if I could just meet them at 3 o’clock, and go with them to their appointment. I agreed, and went to meet the group at the entrance of the broadcasting station.

I did not know any of them, apart from Ibrahim Shukrallah. We went up to the office of the head of the radio station. Fortunately, someone in the group had taped his broadcast and also transcribed the text. They were all up in arms and were protesting to the manager of the station, saying that this kind of talk is unacceptable. As I listened to them, I became outraged. I waited for the others to finish, but they did not really have a plan in mind. They just wanted to protest. The station manager told them: “Sorry that you are offended, but there was no offense intended”. They were not sophisticated enough to know what to do, although their instincts were right. I took over for them, and I was being extremely polite and asked my questions calmly,

as I was under the influence of the Anglo-Saxons. I told him: “You are ignorant! You are making these statements on the basis of nothing. If you are going to talk about Arab culture and Arab civilization, you should be well-informed!” I went at him until I almost killed him. I think I noticed that he got defensive. I continued by saying: “You are ignorant. You are making statements and offending a whole culture without knowing anything about it”. I could say this because I asked him if he had visited, and he said no. I said to him: “You didn’t visit. You didn’t read! You didn’t go to school! You didn’t pick up any information in any legitimate place! Then, how can you make such statements on radio as if you are an authority on this culture, and support Israel?!” He defended himself by saying: “Well, you know, we read newspapers and we get information”. “Who gave you that information?” I said. He became slightly defensive and I took advantage of his defensiveness. I had no idea why he became defensive, because usually when you would engage in combat with these men, they would be much more offensive.

So, he was retreating and I noticed that the station manager was also becoming defensive, and was trying to calm me down by saying that maybe there was a mistake. All this suggested to me that they were talking from a position of weakness, but I had no idea why. So, I made an empty threat. I told the station manager that we were not going to allow this to go, and that we will take appropriate measures! I had no idea what we would do, but this statement scared him. The host of the radio show looked at me and said that he thought we could settle it. I asked him: “How do you want to settle it? You are racist, you made offensive statements, and you have offended a whole national community. How do you want to settle that?” He said that he was willing to invite me to appear on his radio show. That was not enough for me, and I told him so. I now really understood that we had put him on the defensive, but I still had no idea why. In the States, something like this would not have happened. We finally reached a settlement. I said to him that the only way we could settle the issue was if he went on the air and said that the statements he had made were not based on knowledge, that they were not based on any reading material, and that they were not based on personal acquaintance with the region. Then he would say that he therefore apologized for having misled the public, and for having offended a culture. He said that he could not do this, and I told him again that this was the only way to settle the issue. He repeated his invitation to me, but I said that I would be there and that we could proceed after he had made his apologies. He finally agreed, even on the date when we should do it! I came back a week later with the statement that I had written that I wanted him to make, and I said: “There is no way out!” I still had no idea why he was so accommodating, and I only found this out later. We went on the air, and he was extremely deferential and very polite. He apologized for the offensive statements and so forth. Then he said: “We now have an authority on the subject, and we are going to ask him some questions”. Later, I learned from the group that Canadian law is very stiff concerning racist remarks in the media, and that they could have

revoked his license for making those statements. Because we threatened him, and my friends were always referring to Ottawa as if they would go to the Communications Authority, he was actually afraid of losing his licence.

For my role in the incident, I was honored with an award from the Lebanese-Syrian club. This was the first time that I received an award. There was a big banquet in my honor. I gave a speech, and I got the opportunity to get well acquainted with the first organized Syrian-Lebanese community in North America. I learned to appreciate these people. They were all descendants of immigrants, but they were closely-knit, mostly revolving around the church, *tabouleh and dabkeh*. They maintained some aspects of the culture and they had a few words that they would throw around, some traditional phrases and so on. They were reasonably successful business people, neither very rich nor very poor, a kind of middle class. They were assimilated into Canadian life.

For me, this incident was the discovery that Canada is different from the US, in the sense that it has certain aspects of control over the dissemination of racist "information". I learned that they can actually revoke the licence of broadcasters based on the general "prescription" that the Communications Authority has. I also discovered that Canadians were less hostile to Arabs and Muslims than the Americans were. I am speaking now of 1965-66. They were much more gentle in dealing with other cultures, although they were tough on the Eskimos. It was a much better community for people like us who are "immigrants", than what the US was. On the Arab-Israeli issue, the Canadians were generally more ignorant than the Americans. But, equally, they were less racist and less hostile in their expression towards us as Arabs. Palestine was at that time not an issue, neither in Canada nor in the US. This was at the time when the PLO had just been organized. "Palestine" and "Palestinians" still did not mean much to people, but "Arabs" did. I learned first about the Syrians and the Lebanese, and saw that they were sympathetic to officials at home. They come with problems from their old countries, but they were successful in Canada. They kept some degree of loyalty and attachment to their home countries. They accepted me completely as Palestinian, and when they had events, they showed that they understood that we are all part of the Arab world.

The confrontation with the radio station was my first confrontation with the media. I had confronted the media in 1957 in Philadelphia, but that was an isolated event. This became a much more common feature of my activity in Canada and the US later, because I began to appear on radio and television. I essentially learned my first lessons from fighting this guy in Canada. Years later, the same guy had moved from Montreal to Vancouver. He had invited Hassan Abdul-Rahman, PLO representative in Washington DC. He was abusive and offensive to him. Hassan came to complain, and he said "Don't ever go to this guy. He is so vicious!" But, with me in 1965, he did not dare to be vicious. Later, they told me that he had actually had his licence revoked in Montreal, but that he was still active in Vancouver.

I am always grateful for that year that I spent in Canada. Firstly, I am grateful for learning about Canada itself, which was a wonderful experience. Secondly, I am grateful for learning about McGill as an "Anglo-Saxon island" in the middle of French culture. I discovered the French-Canadian liberation movements, and the racial structures in Canada. It was a wonderful experience, and I appreciated the opportunity to appear in public in a less hostile environment. So, when 1967 came about, I actually had some training in how to confront the media in the US.

The Academic And The Politician

I really enjoyed Montreal, but my time there was over. I had promised Smith that I would return after my leave of absence. Smith College knew that I wasn't going to stay, however. This was not for any reason in particular that had to do with the college. It was simply because it was too small and somewhat isolated. I wanted to be close to a big city. At Smith, the woman who had been decisive in hiring me, Professor Gwendolyn Carter, had accepted the position as Director of the Program of African studies at Northwestern University in Chicago. So, the year I was at McGill, she was already at Northwestern. While I was at McGill, she invited me to give a public lecture, and I think she was "preparing the ground". She was testing me in a bigger environment. I went there in the winter and I gave a lecture on the Islamic factor in African politics. I had a full house, including the Dean of the college. So, they were looking me over. I had no idea that they were looking me over, since they paid an honorarium of $150 in addition to my expenses. I went with my now ex-wife and we had a good time. I didn't go for an interview. Gwendolyn Carter had a dinner in our honor, and the Dean was there. We talked and they asked me about McGill and about my plans. I was stupid enough to not realize that they were checking me out. But at that time, I had no experience in this either. At the end of this day, which I had enjoyed enormously, she asked what my plan was. I told her that I was going back to Smith. She said: "Maybe we can interest you here?" I said: "Maybe, but I am going back to Smith".

So, this had essentially been a very informal interview. While I was at Smith, she invited me once more to give a lecture. She also told me that there was a possibility of recruitment, i.e. to make me number two after her: Associate Director of the Program of African studies, and to teach in the department of political science. I was later interviewed when I came back to do another lecture. The Dean offered me a job, and I said that I would consider it. Before this interview, Smith had offered to promote me to full professor. They would increase my salary from $10,000 to $12,000, which is quite high because you have housing subsidized. The only problem with Smith was that I felt that it was too small.

By the time the offer came in writing from Northwestern, I had another feeler from the university of Pennsylvania. They were looking for a director for the Middle East

Studies Center. We were two competing for the job and they were more or less settled on the other guy, but they wanted me to come to the Department of Political Science. They told me they could not give me a full professorship, but that they would promote me as soon as possible. When I came back, I was offered a full professorship at Smith. So, I decided not to accept the offer from Pennsylvania. Also by the time I had decided to accept Northwestern, the University of Wisconsin called me to come up for a discussion. They were just establishing a Middle East Studies Center. It is a good university, but a little out of the way. I wanted to be able to get out and travel in no time, both to give lectures and to go to the Middle East. I accepted the offer from Northwestern and they gave me $17,000. It was a very good move for me. Chicago is a great city and it is a good university.

I started in September 1967. By the time I started at Northwestern, before I left Smith, I got a phone call from a man at Northwestern. He said: "We are organizing a conference on the Middle East and we want to ask you about helping us with names and so forth". I gave them good names. They were totally unaware of what "political signatures" these people had. One in particular was amusing. His name was John Marx. And because Marx is a Jewish name, they thought he was Jewish. When he began to speak, they were surprised! He's a Christian theologian. I think his ancestors were Jewish. By the time I got there, they had already lined up all the speakers, and King Hussein came to give a major address before the conference started. It was at that time that King Hussein said that he would sign a peace treaty with Israel if they got out of the territories occupied in the 1967. Nasser authorized him to sign a peace treaty with Israel if they got out of the West Bank. They never accepted the offer that King Hussein gave them. He made the appeal at Northwestern before he held the same speech at the UN General Assembly.

My contribution to the Program of African Studies at Northwestern was to make the states north of the Sahara and Africa south of the Sahara one. The accepted knowledge at that time was that there were two Africas: North Africa, which is Arab-Islamic and interacting with Egypt, and Africa south of the Sahara, which deals with Europe. My task was to demonstrate that this division was an invention by the Europeans. Historically, North Africa and Africa south of the Sahara were connected by trade routes, by common ideas, and by migration of peoples. This explains why the people of North Africa are highly mixed in color. These people have interacted with each other across the centuries. The Sahara as a barrier was in fact the Sahara as a barrier to European colonialism, not to the Africans themselves.

So, that was my intellectual contribution to the program. I also became an administrator who dealt with all the deans, the President and so forth. I discovered that I am a very good administrator. We carved up two administrative areas: one for Gwendolyn Carter and one for me. I took care of the students and the faculty.

Northwestern was where I really practiced politics. Although it was on a small scale in the university, it was a highly political period: the civil rights, the blacks, the leftists, the war in Vietnam, all the issues. I tried to make connections for the students with the Middle East by saying that Israel, South Africa and Vietnam are all connected. So, the platform of that university was extremely important to me as a platform of expression, to show connections within imperialism, between liberation movements.

At the university, I became well-known as a person who was very sympathetic to the blacks. Therefore, they could always come to my office. I taught the course on nationalism, which was a very popular course, and my students in that course were the ones who seized the administration building of the university. I went to greet them and said: "You know, we teach you this theoretically. You shouldn't practice it!" They laughed!

In the program, we also had something known as *The Monday Night Lecture Series*. Every Monday, there was a public lecture sponsored by the Program of African Studies. Before I came, it was usually established scholars who gave these lectures. This meant that they were mostly white, Anglo-Saxon, and in established institutions.

When I came, I began to shift the emphasis. I began to get younger scholars and also to look for Africans to give lectures. At the end of the year, I asked the students to make an analysis of the people who came by color, age etc. They discovered, lo and behold, that it was dominated by blacks. I didn't make an issue of this: I was simply more active than Gwen Carter in seeking alternative speakers and she knew that. She didn't object: she moved with the trend and knew what was coming. She let me do it. Therefore, it was one of the few programs in the country that was not seized by the black students. We made a shift and I aligned the Program of African Studies with the liberation movements throughout the world, including, of course, the African National Congress. At this university, I invited Oliver Tambo, and he gave a lecture on October 22 or 23, 1973. He also spoke at the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG) Conference. Every representative of African national liberation movements came to give lectures at Northwestern. In addition to *The Monday Night Lecture Series* for the more established scholars, we also had *The Tuesday Night Lecture Series*, which was exclusively for liberation movements. We had enough of them! That's when I met the representatives from Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and so on. I used to pay them for their lectures. They were so poor. We put them in the hotel and also arranged a number of other lectures in town for them. I became quite familiar with national liberation movements, with their principles, strategies. Clearly, I was making connections for them with the Arab movements. I am proud of the fact that at every AAUG conference, when we started arranging those, there would always be a representative of some national liberation movement. There were also some black scholars who gave papers.

Chapter Seven

War Breaks Out Again

In November 1966, I was out in public giving lectures on Arab nationalism, Egypt and Nasserism. I gave no lectures on Palestine as such: it was under the Arab-Israeli conflict. During this period, I learned a great deal about the Jewish community in Montreal. This is an important knowledge, both professionally and politically. I had already been sensitized to the fact that the American opinion, certainly the American-Jewish opinion, was that there would be a war and that it would be Egypt attacking Israel. This opinion was strengthened after the May crisis of 1967, when Nasser asked the UN troops to leave.

On June 5, 1967, we had graduation ceremonies at Smith. Straight after they were finished, I went to my office and started writing a letter to the editor of the New York Times. In the letter, I said that everything was false: there would be no war and Egypt would certainly not attack Israel. I wanted to end the letter by saying that maybe Israel is preparing for war. As I was about to finish, one of my colleagues came in and asked me if I had heard the news. I said: "What news?" He answered: "Egypt has attacked Israel. They sent out their air force". Of course, he got it all wrong. I went home and listened to the radio where I heard that we were demolished. I could not believe it. I was tied to the radio for about three days. We were completely demolished! I did not talk to anybody. I could not even talk to my friends. I was really devastated. The situation was hard on all levels, and the hysteria created in the US was incredible and unbelievable.

My daughter Laila, who was thirteen years old, had two Jewish friends who beat her up. They were her best friends. My second daughter also had difficulties, but in the form of verbal assaults. So, I told them both to stay home from school. There were attacks on anything that was Arab. I have never experienced that kind of racism, neither before nor after. It made me understand how America can be racist: what they did to the Germans and what they do to the blacks. We, as Arabs, did not feel that until 1967. It was a massive assault on us as a people, on our identity.

The glee of the mass media was incredible. They did not spare us anything and they showed no humanity towards us. We saw the TV pictures of Egyptian soldiers who were burnt by napalm in the Sinai. They were showing the Egyptians walking with their bare feet in the desert and then being shot. It was an incredible experience. This experience was the basis for the AAUG, the Organization of Arab-American University Graduates. We felt so thoroughly isolated, no matter what our occupation was. No

matter where we were, we had the same feeling of isolation and such injustice. Israel was beating the hell out of the Arabs, killing them en masse and getting applauded for it! One congressman even said in Congress that: "We ought to get Moshe Dayan to teach us how to beat the Vietnamese". In fact, Moshe Dayan did go to Vietnam, where he toured and gave the Americans advice on how to "handle the Vietnamese".

This whole period was a fantastic assault on us. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I had already accepted to start teaching at Northwestern. I spent the summer of 1967 as the director of an institute of high school teachers at Smith College. It was on Comparative Politics, the Middle East, America and European history. I remember I was so embarrassed because I had to lecture on the Middle East, but the teachers there were gentle and understanding.

The Theater For Ideas

A month later, in July 1967, a friend of mine, Tahsin Basheer, called me. At that time, he was with the Arab Information Office, and I had known him since 1955. He is a very important friend to me, and despite his change in politics, we have remained good friends. He called me and said: "There is a woman who represents something called *The New York Theater for Ideas*". He told me that this is a place where they assemble intellectuals to debate "hot issues". She wanted to arrange something on the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This is now in July 1967, before Khartoum. Basheer said to me: "None of us can speak". He himself was a member of the Arab Information Office. He said: "There is no Arab voice here!" He said to me: "You are independent. Speak and say what you want to say, but the Arabs must be represented!" I agreed, and the woman called me and told me that they wanted me to participate in this panel. She said that nobody would be allowed to enter without an invitation, since the place was also small. I told her that I did not care if I had to speak in front of a theater, since I did that every day as a lecturer.

I actually knew from before what *The Theater for Ideas* was, because that was where they debated "Black Power" and other controversial issues. It was a New York establishment, principally Jewish. The media of New York would be at the debate I was invited to participate in, in addition to the audience of intellectuals, of maybe about 100 people. The woman from *The Theater* explained to me that there would be a panel consisting of three people: Professor Majid Khadouri, Ben Halpern and myself. Halpern is the author of *The Idea of the Jewish State*. He is also a member of the Jewish Agency. I knew his book. So, I knew who he was. Professor Khadouri, I also knew. I asked them who was going to be the moderator, because I wanted someone neutral. After a while, they found Roger Fischer. He had written a wonderful letter to

the editor of the New York Times. I did not know him, but because of that letter, I mentioned his name to them. He was an international lawyer and a quaker. So, he had lots of credentials. We agreed that he would be the moderator and he was accepted by all of us.

This debate was my first encounter with "the Jewish intellectuals". I remember it went well as far as I was concerned. I thought Ben Halpern still had not reaped the harvest of the victory. He was caught in the past, and was still talking about the Holocaust. I said to him: "You just beat the hell out of us for Christ's sake! Can't you see that? You killed us!" But, he was still being the victim. Now, I understand this more, as I see that they are always "the victims". I remember two things from that event besides the fact that Professor Khadouri was so moderate that you could not identify him as an Arab, and that Ben Halpern talked about the past, while I tried to defend Nasser. The first thing I remember is that one guy addressed me as "rabbi". He was nervous and we laughed about it, and he said: "You know, it is not such a big mistake, because rabbi means teacher too". He was just so nervous and so upset with my part of the discussion!

The other thing I remember is that Marisa Kent, a very prominent Zionist, asked me a very interesting question. She said: "Professor, what does it take for the Arab states to go to the negotiating table to settle the conflict between Israel and the Arab states?" This was probably the most interesting question of the whole evening. I answered her by saying: "If Eshkol, (the Prime Minister of Israel at the time) stands tonight in the Knesset and makes the following declaration, I will guarantee that tomorrow there will be delegations from Egypt, Syria and Jordan to settle the issue. The declaration would have to be as follows: 'I, Eshkol, Prime Minister of Israel, knowing that no force in this region can get me out of the areas I have just occupied, am prepared to withdraw all these forces as a consequence of a final settlement with all these states." Then I said to her: "Madam, he will never make it". She listened to me and pointed out that I did not mention the Palestinians. I answered that it is a different issue. I said: "Eshkol is not going to make that declaration, and you will not negotiate with the Palestinians. So, how are you going to settle it?" They changed though, and in the settlement with Sadat and Egypt, they made it possible for them to reach an arrangement, whereby they withdrew their troops. They did not give it back in its entirety, but they withdrew in return for certain guarantees. They are now doing that with the Palestinians, although it took them a very long time. They tried to bypass the Palestinians all these years, and my answer to her that time was correct.

Building The AAUG

This is also the period when we established the AAUG, the Organization of Arab-American University Graduates. The AAUG came about after the war in 1967. It was a result of the war itself, and the racism and dejection we felt. We tried to

believe in the United States and in its fairness and all that. But, we were the scum! The way the media presented us was so offensive! We discovered how isolated we were, as scholars, careerists, lawyers. Whoever we were, everyone felt alone. The AAUG was a forum where I could talk about the racism that I felt, and the feeling of dejection after the war. We were isolated as scholars and as a people. For example, I was in Northampton, Massachusetts, and the only Arabs around were Ibrahim Uthman, Hatem Husseini and Naseer Arouri. We would commiserate with each other because we were in the same boat. People began meeting to discuss some form of organized expression. I went to meetings in New York, but I was unsatisfied.

Finally, I got something in the mail while I was at Northwestern: a letter signed by Rashed Bashour. He was a sociologist of health at the University of Michigan, but I knew him from before because I had tried to recruit him to replace me with UNESCO in Egypt. He was a product of the American University of Beirut and he was Syrian. I got his name from somebody at the American University, and in addition to his name, I got the name of Baha Abu-Laban who was a classmate of mine. The man who gave me their names characterized them as follows: "Baha is steady, very steady. He is also productive and predictable. Rashed is capable of unusual things. He is not steady, but he is imaginative and sometimes, he will give you something that is really significant". So, that time I submitted both names, as it was not my decision. Rashed was nominated and cleared by UNESCO, but as it was at the time and as it is still today, you must have clearance from the host government, in this case Egypt, and the Egyptians refused him. At the time, in 1960-61, it was the United Arab Republic of Egypt and Syria (UAR). Rashed was supposed to have been a member of the Syrian National Social Party. So, they didn't give him clearance. I didn't understand why they didn't give him this clearance. I thought he was a scholar like me.

So, he ended up in Michigan teaching, and he remained there. In October or November 1967, I got this letter from him saying: "A number of us met in Michigan on the occasion of the convening of the American Oriental Society. There were about ten people and they decided to invite Arab scholars to form a scholarly community: a scholarly association working to improve the image of the Arabs, etc." They said they wanted to invite me to give them my ideas and so forth. They also said: "We have no money. So, we would appreciate it if you could send some contribution for postage". I sent them $10-15 and told them to keep me informed. In the meantime, there was a meeting in Detroit that led to the establishment of ANERA, the American Near East Relief Agency. I decided to go to the meeting in Detroit at my own expense.

Only twenty people attended the ANERA conference. I had a fight with one of the organizers, because I thought that the whole enterprise was elitist. The meeting consisted of State Department types, not Arab-Americans, but Americans who wanted Arab support. Their proposal was to help alleviate the suffering of the people in the

Middle East. Their phrasing was an attempt to incorporate Israel into the framework of the Middle East. At this meeting, there was a young attorney, Abdeen Jbara, who made an announcement about organizing a caucus to discuss another form of organization, an activist one. He used all the vocabulary that was important to me. So, I attended. He spoke of a major meeting that was to be held in Chicago. And from this meeting came the AAUG. The important people who convened the meeting (Rashed Bashur, Husni Haddad, Adnan and Barbara Aswad, Abdeen Jbara, Fawzi Najjar and Muhsin Mahdi) were all members of the American Oriental Society. At that time, there was no MESA or other alternative Middle East organizations. The other established organizations, like the Association for Middle East Studies, served as Israeli fronts.

The meeting took place at the University of Chicago in the month of December 1967. There were over sixty people present. Muhsin Mahdi was the chair of the meeting, and Rashed was the secretary. Rashed made it clear in his presentation that this organization was not to be a political organization, but an academic organization where we could use our skills to advance the understanding of the Arabs to the American people. The first order of business was to establish an executive committee. We had to establish by-laws, and most importantly, we had to raise money. Obviously, they had no money. So, they said that everybody who paid $100 would get their name on the stationery as a founding member. Of the 66 people, 22 paid and became the founding members of the AAUG. I was one of these 22, and I said to the committee: “Whatever you want from me, I will be happy to do it”. Since I was an administrator at the university, and had access to free use of the phone, stationery and postage etc., I began to connect with people. Around two years later, when the FBI began to chase us, I discovered by looking at my phonebills that clearly I was mixing business with my private life. After that, I began to be careful.

Fawzi Najjar was elected president of the organization and Rashed was vice-president. Adnan Aswad was treasurer and Husni Haddad was secretary of the first executive committee of the AAUG. This committee organized elections for the first board of directors. I had 58 votes, which was the maximum that anyone got. I had become active in lecturing and I was a scholar. So, I had all the credentials and was elected to the board in 1968. I, Hisham Sharabi, Elaine Hagopian, in addition to the members of the executive committee, became the first board of directors.

We were only 22 people, and we decided to have an annual convention. They asked me to organize this convention, since I was already an organizer at Northwestern and I had access to the phone, which was very important. My boss did not care about me using it as long as I would not get in trouble. I agreed to do the convention, whose theme was to be “Arab-Americans: The Challenge Ahead”. I got material from any person who had ever written anything on Arab-Americans. With the help

of Husni Haddad's wife, Sophie, Elaine Hagopian and a few others, we had a conference planned. The organization became known, and our work was out. We were the only news around. We were ethnic and willing to combat: yet, we were related to America. The first conference was decided to be held in Washington DC, and I was managing the logistics from Chicago. We planned the conference for December 27, 1968, one year after the establishment of the AAUG.

I was in charge of the program and I did a good job. It so happened that we had one of the worst blizzards in the history of the US on the day before the conference. I was at the O'Hare airport trying to get a plane, but no planes were flying! The President of the association, Fawzi, was at another terminal. We were both trying to get out, but there were no planes. Around five in the evening, *one* plane was allowed to leave, and I was on it. The weather was incredible. You couldn't see a thing! I got to Washington, where there was no blizzard and I got to the hotel. The people who were in the East were able to come by car. So, they had no serious problem. Rashed Bashour had driven. So he was there. We sat around the table in the hotel at nine o'clock in the evening, the night before the conference, and there were only seven of us. We were surrounded by FBI and CIA people. There were more of them than there were of us, and they were all listening to us! I had sent the program out ahead of time, but I seem to remember that it did not get there. The person in charge of local arrangements was Walid Khadouri. He was studying International Studies at John Hopkins, preparing for his PhD. We could not locate him that night. The keynote speaker at our banquet was supposed to be Fayez Sayegh because he was a good speaker, and his name pulls people. The next morning I, as the organizer, was a nervous wreck, and there was absolutely nothing prepared. Walid finally arrived; he was sick with the flu and did not have the program. I had one copy, so we literally had to go and xerox it. We began to organize, and fortunately or unfortunately, the attendance was really poor. People who could not drive could simply not get to Washington DC.

By the first count in the morning, we were not even twenty people. Our keynote speaker in the morning was Mr Kharroub from Detroit, a member of the state-legislature in Michigan. For us at the time, he was the highest-ranking Arab-American. He is, I believe, born in the States. So, he fitted the theme "Arab-Americans". He came, and it was an experience, even if we were only twenty people. The opening was the Presidential Address. The problem was that the President was not there: he could not make it. Rashed, the Vice-President, improvised and he gave the state of the association. He rose to the occasion. He also mentioned the difficulties when people do not co-operate: When they show enthusiasm in the beginning and then later just drop out. Abdeen Jbara was there, in addition to me, Elaine, Naseer, Kamal Abu-Jaber, Michael Suleiman and a few people from Washington.

Our keynote speaker, Mr Kharroub, was not there, but he showed up later and gave a nice speech. He said: “To be frank, I was invited, but I have no idea what kind of group this is. You are a different group from the ones I have spoken to, and what I was planning to say, I will not say anyway. Instead, I will tell you what happened to me on June 5, 1967". He was a partner in a law firm. His other partners were Jewish. During the war, one of the partners walked into his office and asked: “Why don’t you get up off your ass and do something for your people?” This man knew that Kharroub was an Arab. Kharroub told us that he was paralyzed. He was not acting, because he was afraid of the reaction of his colleagues and his community. He said he was scared and did not do anything, until this guy told him to “get off his ass”. He said: “So, I am here. I got off my ass. I went to the community and tried in my own way to help. I think you are doing the right thing. If you can organize, publish material and do all these things you say that you want to do, I think this will be very important. Whatever I can do to help, I will do”. It was a nice presentation. Afterwards, people gave their presentations, the usual academic stuff.

In the evening, we had a banquet and Fayez Sayegh was the speaker. We had committed ourselves to pay for 60 people to the restaurant that night. After we had given free tickets to students in the Washington area, we were able to muster 45 people. We gave away tickets because we did not want our speaker to be insulted with so few people. Even with his name, and with us inviting at least 15 people for free, we were only 45 people. It was such a huge loss for us. Fayez Sayegh gave a good speech. As he was speaking, around ten o’clock, I saw the hat of Baha Abu-Laban. He was stuck for 24 hours at Toronto Airport, but he came. That was dedication! At the banquet, I announced the speakers of the next day’s session, including Baha who had now come. That night, one of my friends, Hussein Hamdan, came down from Princeton after I told him to come. He came, and we shared one room for $65, as we were too poor to have a room each. As we were falling asleep, I said: “Hussein, do you think this is going to die?” He said: “Ibrahim, you don’t know that you are dead already?!” I said: “No, Hussein, I will show you. You are wrong”. I did not listen to him...

The next day, we reconvened a morning panel for the people who came late, and it was better attended. We even recruited some new members. That day was also an Election Day for the AAUG. Michael Suleiman organized the elections. According to the preliminary by-laws, it said that this was a temporary committee. So, we needed to elect a new executive committee. We were members of the board, and the members of the board were to serve for two years. Michael and Kamal came to me and told me they wanted to nominate me as president. I said no, and told them to find somebody else, but finally I accepted. Then they asked me who I wanted to have with me. I talked to Naseer Arouri, Elaine Hagopian and Hussein Hamdan. Hussein was supposed to be my vice-president. Nobody knew him. So, he was like Al Gore.

I was elected AAUG President with Hussein as the vice-president, Elaine Hagopian as the secretary and Nasseer Arouri serving as treasurer. We were elected unanimously because no one wanted the job. The AAUG did not die and we were able to accomplish two important things. Our first accomplishment was to go out and speak publicly. Abdeen, Nasseer, Elaine and I were all speaking publicly. We were using our speeches as a form of recruiting other Arab professionals, and we wrote letters to every person we knew. In addition to this, the papers of the first conference were published and became a book on Arab-Americans. It was called *Arab-Americans*: *Studies in Assimilation*. It was probably the first book on Arab-Americans. The book came out in the next annual conference in 1969.

By the time the next annual conference came about, we had already recruited people and the atmosphere was highly political. We had a theme that you cannot compete with: "The Palestine Revolution". We had assembled a wonderful group of people. We had a lovely and beautiful woman, who presumably had lived the Holocaust. I think she was a Trotskyist. We had listed Shafiq Al-Hut, Kamal Nasser, Abdul-Latif Tibawi and some bona fide scholars. The best of all of them was a Pakistani that I had invited on the recommendation of a Pakistani friend of mine. His name was Tareq Ali, and was a Trotskyist. On the evening of the conference, Tareq Ali called us and said that the Americans would not give him a visa. I was stuck. So, I said to my friend Eqbal Ahmad, who had recommended Tareq Ali to us, that he had to save us. He happened to be on his way from Canada when his wife called to say that the FBI had come to search their apartment. His brother was imprisoned by the Canadians. So, he was really in a very unusual psychological situation. He was so angry when he arrived! We had also invited the editor of *Afrique-Asie*, Ania Marcos, a radical and terrific woman. We had Michael Hudson and Yassin Ajoudi. It was a whole group that I assembled to a fantastically organized, radical conference. I had all those names, and people were so eager to come that they were writing to ask how they could get there, how they should pay, etc. I think we had committed ourselves to 100 people, and we had 300 people, a crushing attendance from all over the United States. It was politically, obviously, conducive to attend the conference.

This was the time when Secretary of State Rogers made his first initiative in the Middle East, but we did not know about the initiative because it had not been announced. The opening speech, my presidential speech, was recorded without me knowing it. So, I appeared on national television. Rogers was announcing his plan for peace in the Middle East, and the producers used a flash from our conference in Detroit to provide a backdrop to the story. So, we were used to provide publicity for the Secretary of State who was going to make peace. Hisham Sharabi came and told me: "We have taken off!" I said: "Yes, I hope we don't crash!" It was a fantastic conference!

We were saved from blasting by Eqbal when he came and spoke at the banquet. We also shifted Tibawi from the morning session to the banquet, where I as President

was the MC. Eqbal delivered one of his finest speeches at that banquet. He said: "I was not invited by Ibrahim here. I am a substitute, a substitute for Tareq Ali!" He started attacking me for not inviting him, and he won the audience, who of course, ate it all. He continued: "Tareq Ali is a Pakistani, and he is in London. The United States will not give him a visa. And do you know why?!" The audience shouted back: "No, we don't know why!" Then, he said, in an over-dramatic voice: "Because they accuse him of burning the American flag! But that is a lie! He did not burn the American flag: he cremated the American flag!" It was such an incendiary speech. It was incredible! Fortunately for us, the first speaker was Tibawi. He spoke about the Balfour Declaration, and about whether it was signed on November 14 or on November 14 and a half. He went to the archives and everybody was falling asleep! He took a whole hour and it was a fine piece of academic work, but people fell asleep and the media left. So, when Eqbal spoke, there fortunately was no media, otherwise we would have been killed! I am therefore very grateful to Tibawi for his presentation. After Eqbal had finished, I got lots of messages from people, especially the conservatives, to disassociate the organization from Eqbal's speech. I made a very ambiguous statement that was neither satisfactory to the conservatives nor to the radicals. The radicals wanted to kill the others, who were standing up screaming: "Take them away!" It was really one of Eqbal's finest performances. It was such a beautifully crafted speech. After that, he became the most important public speaker for the Arabs, especially for the young generation, the students.

It was at this time that the AAUG was truly established. It was clearly a very successful conference. We had this TV appearance and a book, called *The Palestine Revolution*, came out of it.

After my term as president, I insisted that we, as a slate, should resign. I nominated Sharif Basyouni, an Egyptian, for president. We had a large Egyptian contingent in the AAUG at the time, in addition to Syrians, Iraqis and Palestinians. The Palestinians were not the dominant element at that time. Basyouni was opposed by many of my friends because he was conservative. But, he was elected, without getting all the votes, and he assumed leadership of the AAUG. He was successful in recruiting a huge number of new members. I think that in the time after that conference, we had close to 500 members, which is an enormous increase if you think that we were already "dead" in Washington. Very important, I think, was the work of Elaine and myself. We were the key people who had appealed to the members, and to various people associated with scholarships. We, as professors, had our own prestige, and the organization was politically active. There is no question about the fact that it became a dominant institution among Arab-Americans.

The organization was specialized in publishing. As Fawzi Najjar said: "This is an organization where we can write. If you want a demonstration, there are other organizations to go to. This is not an organization which will go into a demonstration".

So, the whole system of publishing books and information papers was very important. By the time I ceased my activity completely, which was not until the 1990s, we already had more than twenty information papers written by excellent people. We filled an important gap in the information system in the US.

The Nixon Declaration

The activity that brought us probably the widest number of people and financial support, was an ad that we issued *in The New York Times*. It was a brilliant ad and I claim the credit for it, because I wrote it. It was a one-page ad, and it ran in *The New York Times* on Sunday, November 2, 1969, the anniversary of the Balfour Declaration. One full-page ad cost $12,000. Today, the same ad would cost $30,000. The ad read like this:

"NEEDED: A NIXON DECLARATION FOR FIVE MILLION JEWISH, CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM PALESTINIANS.

Mr President, in your Inaugural Address, you expressed the hope of being known to posterity as a peace-maker. You can earn this title by bringing peace to the tormented land of Palestine. You have permitted the continuation of the one-sided policies of the previous administration, which will lead to certain disaster in Palestine.

We urge you, Mr President, to reverse these policies, adopt even-handed ones that will lead to a Palestinian peace with honor and dignity for Palestine's 5 million Jewish, Christian and Muslim citizens. Mr President, the Balfour Declaration issued by the British government in 1917, 'viewed with favour' the dismemberment of Palestine, its mutilation from a land sacred to and inhabited by Muslims, Christians and Jews, to a land which was the exclusive domain of a few. Further, it viewed with favor the transformation of a land in which historically men lived on a footing of equality and justice, into an exclusivist, religiously-based state, which through no fault of its people was, and is, prevented from accommodating the different and the universal.

Now, you have an opportunity to arrest and reverse the process initiated by the Balfour Declaration through a Nixon Declaration which will commit the government of the United States to the cause of lasting peace in Palestine, to a free and democratic Palestine, in which men will live again on a footing of equality and justice guaranteed by public international law in which the principle of one man, one vote, regardless of race, national origin, language or creed, will be the dominant principle.

We, therefore, urge you to issue the following declaration: 'The Government of the United States views with favor the reconstruction of the Palestinian community in the land of Palestine, and its transformation into an independent, free and democratic

state in which men and women regardless of race, national origin, language or creed, will live constructively and peacefully with each other.

To that end, the United States government will adopt and seek to implement the necessary policies in concert with all concerned states of the world. It is the earnest hope of the United States government that the present five million Palestinians, wherever they may be, transcend their bitter emotions and collaborate with the United States government in its attempt to bring about lasting peace in Palestine and the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State for its five million Jewish, Christian and Muslim citizens.

As an important preliminary measure, the United States government calls on all states to adhere to the resolutions duly passed by the United Nations regarding Palestine, to implement them and to use utmost pressure on the parties directly concerned to abide by these resolutions. Furthermore, the United States government, believing that de-escalation of the present conflict is essential and imperative, will use all that is within its powers to bring about such de-escalation. It therefore will cease all shipments of arms to all parties in the conflict, and calls upon other states to do likewise.

Finally, the United States government calls upon all the states in the world to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to live with dignity, justice and security in the land of Palestine, and to render all possible assistance to secure this recognition and its implementation.'

Mr President, the foregoing opens a path to peace for five million Jewish, Christian and Muslim Palestinians. This is the time to forge ahead. Your opportunity to become a peacemaker has arrived. Seize it before disaster overtakes the world".

Essentially, with the ad, we were calling for a democratic, secular state. This was before the charter that was adopted by the PLO, and I got word to withdraw the ad because they did not think it was good. They didn't want a secular state. I did not listen to them, and we got $10-12,000 to publish the ad from the Arab Information Office. I had nothing for writing it, of course. We also had donations from people that exceeded $12,000. We had one donation of $5,000 from a guy in Washington, whom we thought was from the CIA. We looked at the donors carefully, because we were afraid that it could be CIA-money. We got some money, which helped us with our expenses. So, that ad got us a lot of membership. This was because people now believed that we were serious about politics and our political beliefs. I think the words we used were reasonable words and in a positive direction. We were not speaking out against the Jews. I think people felt much better about us after this, and they joined us.

Subsidizing The AAUG

We were "clean" in the AAUG, in the sense that we did not take money. People would not give us money. The Arab states would give their money to somebody else. To the credit of the Arab League, it should be said that they always gave us some money. It was small amounts, but they always gave us *some* money and largely through personal connections. We received no money from any government and we certainly did not receive any money from the PLO. All the attacks on us from the Zionists said that we were working with the PLO, but that was simply false. We literally never had money from the PLO.

Our publications were what generated money. This is what we sold: books. Sometimes, the Iraqis would buy books from us and therefore pay for the publications. I don't remember if the Libyans bought books, but that's how we did it. We also made mailing lists and sent books to these mailing lists. This was how we supported ourselves. I was able to publish a book: *The Arab-Israeli Confrontation of 1967: An Arab Perspective*. It is a collection of essays written especially for this book. Edward Said's first entry into the world of Middle East politics was the essay he wrote for my book. At first, this collection was not intended to be a book. The Arab Information Center in New York used to publish a magazine called *The Arab World*. My friend, Tahsin Bashir, requested that we submit essays for a special issue of the magazine. I took this request seriously, and my colleagues were excited to write about the origins of the 1967 War from the Arab perspective. It was the first publication about the war from this perspective.

Here, it is worth noting that when I was at Northwestern, I was appointed to the Board of Directors of Northwestern University Press. The Director of the press was a colleague of mine in African Studies named Bart Armstrong. He and his deputy were both friendly to me. Of course, I supported them on the board, since the board is about politics, and I had an important position in the university. I had access to the President, to the deans and so forth. We published a series with them on Africa, which I was responsible for.

I gave him a copy of the special edition of *The Arab World*, because we talked about the war, which was a hot issue. He was impressed with our work and he said: "Ibrahim, this is a very interesting issue. Why don't you publish it as a book?" I told him I had not thought about it. He said that if I could change somewhere between 15 and 20% of it, it would not be copyrighted and it would be considered a new publication. He explained to me the important aspects of the publication process: "This is a scholarly book with a very limited audience, and most publishers will not publish it because they won't make much money from it. Also, it is anti-Israel. So, it is damned. But, if King Hussein writes a book, even if it is anti-Israel, they will publish it because they

will make money out of it, since his name will sell. They are interested in money." I found that interesting, because we published really good books, but we did not sell them, because we did not know *how* to sell them. He coached me in changing the issue, adding a paragraph here and there. In the end, we got about 15-20% changed, and it was now a new publication. He re-typed it at the press, and submitted it to external referees who approved it and then he published it. He went through two printings of the book, which sold more than he had expected. He did a very nice job in printing it, and the royalties from that book were about $10-12,000, which we gave to the AAUG. I got all the contributors to sign contracts that the honoraria and royalties would go to the AAUG. This was an important subsidy to the organization.

The second important subsidy to the AAUG was *The Transformation of Palestine*. I got a grant of $4,000 for this book from Abdul-Muhsen Qattan. This was the only amount of money that I had, but we were cheap at that time, and I paid each writer a $300 honorarium. Then, with the remaining money, I paid someone to do the index of the book, and I spent $4,000 exactly. All the royalties from the book were turned over to the AAUG, as all the authors had agreed. Northwestern did not want to publish the book in paperback. They fired the director at that time. They fired him and humiliated him, and his successor was Jewish. We did not touch the book until twenty years later, when the successor to this successor, who was also Jewish, published it in paperback. By then, it was not a threat and it was nice of him. It is just too bad they did not publish the paperback at the time, when we could have sold thousands of copies. That was the second subsidy in 1970-71 that went to the AAUG. That was my contribution: my skills, my energy, Northwestern money, and these two books.

That was how we built the AAUG. I remained with Elaine, Abdeen, Nasseer and a number of other select people. They were mostly lawyers and graduate students who became professors. It became the most important intellectual organization in the United States, and I think it did extremely valuable work. There is nothing that has replaced it. Today, when that type of intellectual ferment vis-à-vis Arabs and Americans is greatly needed, there is no such institution in the US.

Rabin Visits Northwestern

We now had the conferences, the public speeches, appearances on television and radio and lectures in various universities. Wherever we went, we thought about the AAUG, and we would recruit the young professors or advanced students. I think we served an important function eventually, when we became actual advisors to students who were writing their dissertations. Usually, they were in departments that had nothing to do with the Middle East, but they wrote on the Middle East. They became an important resource for attending the conventions. They would come in order to

talk to me, to Edward Said, and so forth. So, the AAUG served that very important function of publishing information papers and books, in the form of the proceedings of our conferences. The conferences were held in a different city every year. So, we were able to attract people from every region. The annual convention of the AAUG was probably one of the most important events, politically speaking.

In 1970, we had the annual AAUG Conference in Evanston, Illinois. It turned out to be an interesting conference, because Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli Ambassador to the United States at the time, had scheduled a lecture at the same time as our conference. We planned for the conference ahead of time. We selected Northwestern, and I negotiated with the President to have the halls of the University at our disposal at no cost. I invited the President to be a guest at our banquet and all of our sessions. He thanked me for the gracious invitation, but said that he was going to attend a football game in Ohio with the Northwestern team. Right before the AAUG conference, I was in Boston presenting a paper to the African Studies Association. At eight o'clock in the morning as I was waking up, I received a phone call: "Professor Abu-Lughod, the President wants to speak to you." He got on the phone: "Ibrahim, there is a new development at Northwestern that requires my presence there. My trip to High Rise, Michigan has been cancelled. Can I accept your invitation?" I said: "Of course". He continued: "I think I should explain to you that in the meantime, I have been prevailed upon to honor Ambassador Rabin at a lunch. I felt that since I accepted this invitation and changed my schedule, I owe it to you to accept your invitation." I said: "Whatever the reason, you are more than welcome to our conference. We are pleased to have you."

Of course, I was a nervous wreck. Who the hell invited Ambassador Rabin? I called one of my assistants, who was an excellent spy and who went on to become a member of the CIA. I woke him up and I said: "Wan, the Ambassador of Israel is coming to Northwestern on such and such a day. I want you to tell me who invited him and what he is going to do. I want an answer in one hour." He came back with the answer! He told me that Rabin was going to give a public lecture on such and such a day, at such and such an hour and that he is sponsored by so and so... He even told me where he was going to have lunch!

I packed my suitcase and took a plane directly to Evanston to hold a war-council. Our keynote speaker was Krishna Menon, the former Indian Foreign Minister and one of the brightest men I have met. When he was at the United Nations, he would dominate the sessions with anti-American and anti-British tirades. The conference was entitled: "The Arabs and the World: Perspectives on a Troubled Relationship." The presence of Rabin on campus was a disruption. My family and I made a huge placard, 30-40 feet tall, saying "Free Palestine". We investigated how we could demonstrate against Rabin without being arrested. So, we called the chief of police.

He told us: “You should be thirty feet away from the building. You can carry a placard, but you cannot disrupt passage into the lecture hall”. The AAUG had its first demonstration. All the members came, even the old professors who never walked in a protest in their whole lives, plus the young men and the Fateh members from Chicago. It was a big demonstration, and a visual demonstration with our placard. Some African students slipped into the lecture hall to harass Rabin. We then went back to our AAUG business and held our general assembly.

At the banquet, the President of the university spoke. He told us: “I learned from my father that there is no such thing as a no-no. The only no-no there is, is to prevent or violate the freedom of speech. Therefore, this university is open to all views that can be aired, discussed and debated.” Meanwhile, outside the banquet hall, there was a big fight. The American Jews were picketing us for the Israelis. Hatem Husseini, who at that time was a hothead, got into an altercation with the picketers. The purpose of the picketing was to disrupt our banquet by provoking a fight. I called the chief of police, and said: “There are some people outside the hall who are disrupting our banquet.” I asked him: “Just make a show of it.” Well, the police car did come and the Israelis and Jews left immediately.

At the banquet, we had a guest speaker who was none other than Brother Louis Farakhan from the Nation of Islam. He was viewed in a different manner in that era: he was the successor to Malcolm X. He gave one of those fantastically violent, incendiary speeches that was also racist. It was all about the white devil. People approached me after the banquet to ask me where I found this crazy man. I was pleased with him. He disrupted the whole banquet. He was making this speech and the President of the university was sitting right there. He was the mad mayor.

Chapter Eight

Becoming Palestinian

In the 1950s, my existence in the United States was precarious. I had no money and I had no home. I had a Jordanian passport, but I lived in Jordan as a refugee. The Arab world that we considered our world was becoming increasingly unwelcoming. The territorial Arab state made it clear that we didn't belong there. Even so, I had a strong attachment to Egypt. I visited Egypt almost every summer. Cairo was an inspiring city and I loved it. During my visit, I would meet with Mohammed Hassanain Haikal to talk about politics. On one of these visits in August 1970, Mohammed asked me to stay for lunch. I asked him where we were going to eat. He said: "Upstairs there is a cafeteria. Just give me half an hour. There are some people who I think you will appreciate. You probably know them." I had no idea with whom we were going to meet.

I met him back at his office and we went upstairs to the restaurant. We stood in the restaurant for a few minutes, when suddenly a whole pack of people came in, and Arafat was there. He was with Ibrahim Baker, Abu-Iyad and Farouq Qaddoumi. The only person from the entourage whom I knew was Farouq Qaddoumi who was a classmate of mine from Jaffa. More people came in for this lunch: Tahsin Bashir, Clovis Maqsoud and Ahmed Baha al-Deen. We engaged in small talk. I was a bit shy: this was our leadership! But I wanted to ask a question. I looked straight at Arafat who was wearing dark glasses and his *kuffiyeh*. He was not speaking much. I asked him: "Mr Arafat, what role do you see for people like me who are living outside? We are intellectuals, working with ideas at institutions. What role do you see for us in the revolution?" He looked at me quizzically, and then somebody else answered: he didn't answer. The first to answer was Clovis, who gave a speech. Then Abu-Iyad took over by saying: "The Chinese say you need all your people." It was bullshit. Baha al-Deen said something sensible about national organization. Almost everybody made some contribution.

After everyone had made his or her contribution, Arafat spoke. He said: "Doctor, when we began our revolution, we were Palestinians sitting in Kuwait or Qatar, thinking 'What can we do for Palestine?' We decided to make a revolution. That is our role. That is what we can do. Therefore, we organized ourselves and here we are. We are waging a revolution." He continued: "Now, for you and your friends, think of what you can do. If you need help from us to do what you want to do, let us know. But it is for you to decide how you can contribute to this revolution, which is yours. How do you contribute to the liberation of Palestine?" It could not have been a better answer. I thanked him. I understood exactly what he meant.

Lunch was over and we all stood up. Arafat came over and hugged me and said: "Doctor, you must come to the Palestine National Council meeting." The National Council was convening in Amman three days later. I read about the meeting in the newspaper, but it never occurred to me that I could attend. I decided to accept Arafat's invitation and leave Cairo to go to Amman.

I arrived in Amman and met with my friends Abdul Muhsen Qattan and Abdul Wahab al-Kayyali, both members of the Council. We had lunch at the Qattans' house. After lunch, we decided to walk to the place in Amman where the Council was meeting. As we approached the meeting, we saw the Jordanian Army with its armored personnel carriers facing the *fida'iyyeen*, freedom fighters. It was a precursor to the September War. The Jordanians were protecting the Council and the *fida'iyyeen* were protecting the Council from the Jordanians. In order to get into the meeting, we had to cross that line. The group that I was with were all members of the Council. I was not. So, somebody had to help me get into the building. As we were standing in the hall, I saw Hanna Mikhail, an old friend of mine and a professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. He left his position and became a militant in Fateh. We were talking and he said to me: "You know, what you will see is nothing." He was explaining that, politically, this was a false show. I said: "What do you mean? This is the Council..." He said: "This is not where power is." We didn't have a chance to pursue the conversation.

At this point, Arafat saw me across the conference room and crossed the hall to hug me. I was deeply touched by him. He has a way of manipulating people. He held my hand like I was a little boy: he was exhibiting me to the others. He introduced me to Nayef Hawatmeh as if I was his old friend. I was very pleased to meet Nayef. This was the leadership. Arafat flattered me no end. I remember the Council session very well because Yasir Amer from the Department of Education read the report of the Committee. I thought that it was a very militant report. The issue at hand was the Rogers Initiative.

The second day of the Council, I felt very apprehensive about the political situation in Jordan. The war erupted in September 1970, when I was on my way to Chicago. My loyalty was with the revolution. It was a decisive moment for me. Nasser had died, and I shifted my attachment to Arafat. I became a Palestinian.

Under Siege

It was when I arrived in Beirut that I actually became Palestinian. Before 1971, I was Palestinian by identity, but I was more of an Arab nationalist. The whole atmosphere of Beirut brought me back, in a political sense, to Palestine. I would go to Beirut every three months in order to recharge myself, to sit with the different

leaders and keep abreast of the situation. I would engage in political discussions, assemble literature and assess the situation. When I would return to the United States, I would give lectures on what I had seen and heard.

One day, I went to the south of Lebanon and talked to Norwegian personnel in the Rashidiyyeh Camp. They impressed me. They had built a clinic. This was the only clinic within a 15km radius, and they were living with the Palestinians in a modest home. They suffered what the Palestinian suffered. When I went back to the US, I began to talk about the possibility of medical personnel going to Lebanon to show the other face of America. There is an America that supports Israel, but there is another America that supports humanitarian concerns.

My friend Suhail Mi'ari's wife, Elizabeth, came to talk to me about this project of bringing American medical personnel to Lebanon. We decided that the first step was to organize a group of nurses and doctors to go on an exploratory trip. We were able to assemble a group of fifteen, consisting of three doctors and a group of nurses and lab technicians. They arrived in Lebanon on June 3 or 4, 1982. The first air raid that started the Israeli invasion occurred when the group was touring the country. The group wanted to stay in Lebanon, despite the danger, but I advised them to leave with the evacuation of foreigners.

My friend Suhail was going to leave with them, but was afraid because of his Palestinian nationality. So, from that time on, Suhail stayed with me. He made himself extremely useful, working with the Red Crescent as a "fixer". He was someone who could solve problems. I too could have left with the foreigners, but I didn't want to leave. My wife tried to get the State Department to evacuate me, but I didn't want to be evicted. In the end, my decision to stay probably contributed to the destruction of my marriage, but I refused to leave.

Beirut was a surrogate for Palestine. I could not go to Palestine, so I would go to Beirut. It was where my people were, where my leadership was. I knew Lebanon was not Palestine, but it was very Palestinian in the discussions, the concerns and the internal politics. All that changed with the siege of Beirut and with the indiscriminate bombing of everything Palestinian. Israel bombarded hospitals, houses, settlements and refugee camps. In that sense, it was discriminate: they wanted to isolate and destroy the Palestinians.

In all my analysis of the Zionist movement, I viewed it as a racist and exclusive movement. What I didn't realize until after the siege was that Israel was much worse than any description that I ever used against it. Israel is a state that is willing to use every weapon against us in order to annihilate us. They were able to generate such fear. I would see young children standing in line to get water, starting at three o'clock in the morning. I could see the fear in their faces. Everybody was afraid. Somebody

told me once that if I died in an air raid, I would not even merit a statistic, because I would be buried so deep underground. No one would know that I had existed. I have a tape that captured the sound of an air raid. A journalist from the *Journal of Palestine Studies* was interviewing me when an Israeli air raid occurred. The interview was being recorded and the recorder stayed on during the bombardment. It was frightening, both the noise of the bombardment and the prayers we were both reciting.

One question that the journalist asked me was how I would compare the eviction from Beirut to my eviction from Jaffa. The one main difference between Beirut and Jaffa was that in Beirut, the leadership was organized. In 1948, there was no effective leadership. So, our departure was chaotic and disorganized. In Beirut, we were waiting for an order from the PLO to tell us to leave. In Jaffa, there was no food and no bread. In Beirut, the PLO was able to supply the people with water and food. This is a very important difference. In Beirut, the Israelis were encouraging the people to rebel against the Palestinians, but the PLO was able to maintain popular support because they could guarantee a supply of food and water. Another important difference is that in 1948, we didn't know that we were weak. We thought that we had the support of the other Arab armies. In Beirut, we knew that we were the weaker party and that no one was going to save us. But Beirut was not our city. Lebanon is not Palestine.

I left Beirut on August 24, 1982. I had ceased to work for the Open University, but I didn't want to be evicted from Beirut the same way I had been evicted from Palestine. When the leadership decided to leave Beirut, I decided that I would leave with them. Anybody who was in the PLO had to wear a military uniform when they left the city. The military uniform was a condition from the Israelis who considered the PLO a military organization. I refused to wear a uniform. So, I had to leave Beirut and Lebanon by taxi. Suhail and I arranged a convoy to leave Beirut. I escorted Edward Said's sister, Grace, and two Greek-Palestinian girls who were daughters of a professor at the American University of Beirut. I also received a request from a friend of mine who was in the PLO, to help his two friends leave Beirut. He assured me that these two men, a Yemeni and a Bahraini, were legitimate. They looked quite dignified, dressed up in suits. I was given a Damascus phone number to call in case there were any problems on the way.

We left Beirut the day after the elections. I told Suhail, who is a packrat, that we were going to cross Israeli lines, and that he therefore should not pack anything that was remotely political: no *kuffiyeh*, nothing. I had an American passport, and if you held a foreign passport, even a Jordanian passport, the Israelis would not touch you. We were much more afraid of the Phalangists than of the Israelis. We figured that the Phalangists would be celebrating the victory of Gemayel and not bother with us. We hired two taxi drivers who knew their way around Beirut. The drivers collected our passports and instructed us not to say a word at any of the checkpoints. As we

were driving out of the city, past the airport, one of the taxis blew a tire, right in front of the Israelis. We were so frightened. I have never seen a man change a tire so fast. I think it took him two minutes. The Israelis did not even pay attention to us.

We arrived at the first Lebanese-Phalangist checkpoint. The guard looked into the taxi and said: "Foreigners." He looked us over and said: "Welcome to Lebanon." He didn't know English that well. We didn't say a word. There were thirteen checkpoints on the road to Damascus. At one of the last checkpoints, we were stopped and checked to see if there were any traces of Kalashnikovs. What the Phalangist manning the checkpoint did was touch each man on the shoulder to see if there was an indent. If you hold a Kalashnikov for a while it leaves its mark. The Yemeni had an indent in his shoulder and was taken out of the taxi. The Bahraini was political: he didn't have marks on his shoulder. We came to the last Lebanese checkpoint, a sort of customs. I passed with no problems. I had an American passport and a valid visa. Suhail encountered a lot of problems. He was not an American citizen: he only held a re-entry permit plus a Lebanese visa valid forty-eight hours. It was well expired. The official looked at Suhail: "You have overstayed your visa. You are in violation of the law." We were in shock. We were coming from Beirut. There was no law. There was a siege. Finally, we realized that he was waiting for a bribe. He asked for one hundred and twenty five liras. It was that blunt. We were able to bargain him down to seventy five.

Finally, we arrived at the Syrian border. The Syrians wanted to open and search all of our suitcases. They went through Suhail's suitcase and found empty shells. I was furious. I had told Suhail not to pack anything incriminating, and now the Syrians were suspicious. They searched all of us thoroughly, and ended up confiscating my radio. I was told that I could collect it as I exit the country. In the end I gave it to them, because they told me I had to pay customs, even though it was an old radio. We moved on to passport control. I used my Jordanian passport because Syria does not require a visa for Jordanian citizens. Suhail's re-entry permit was questioned again, and another bribe had to be paid. After the cost of going through Arab borders, Suhail decided to travel by air to the United States. So, he went to the US and I went on to Amman.

Lessons From Lebanon

We were imagining what the Arab world should have done to assist us when we were under siege in Beirut. Even before we got to Damascus, along the Syrian frontiers, we felt that no one actually gave a damn about the fact that we had just come from some 88 days under siege. Instead of treating us at least with some courtesy or some sympathetic support, they were actually looking upon us as if we were ordinary tourists just visiting Syria. They charged the fee for the visa; they searched our

suitcases; and they even levied customs on my old radio. There was no feeling that they were in fact fully aware of the tribulations the people in Beirut had gone through. There was no indication that they comprehended what was happening in Beirut. At the concrete level of behavior and response, I was really amazed. In Damascus itself, I was shocked by how ordinary life was. Of course, there is no reason why it should not be ordinary: after all Syria was not at war. But, I had thought that there would be a much greater awareness of the fantastic attack that Israel had launched on Lebanon and also on the Syrian army. In that sense, I could not believe the normalcy of life in Damascus: in the markets, in dealing with the hotels and so on.

In some way, it was a good "decompression chamber" where we began to relax a bit, because we could not even convey the tremendous anguish that was built within us as a result of being under siege. We felt so much anguish from the lack of water and electricity, from the air raids, from the bombing, from the artillery. There was so much fear that gripped us all as a result of this, especially from the eventual conquest of Beirut by the Israeli army. It was now as if we were entering a totally non-Arab place, except for the fact that they were Arabs! We felt that they should have been aware of our travails, our anguish and so on, and that this should have been reflected in their behavior, and in terms of their manner of greetings, or their acknowledgment of our presence there. Actually, these things didn't exist.

Then we arrived to the Jordanian frontier. There, they had a system which I had not seen before, simply because I had never traveled that route. First, you are seen by an intelligence officer before you are processed to the passport office. The distance between them is maybe about 20 feet, and there they search the car, if you are coming by car. We came by taxi, and the taxi was known to them. When I entered Jordan, I had a Jordanian passport as well as an American one. I had used the American passport to enter Lebanon, and I had a visa. When I left Lebanon, I used my Jordanian passport in Syria, because the Syrians do not require visas from Jordanians because of "Arab Unity". When we left, the Syrians stamped it with an exit stamp, and then we came to Jordan.

The intelligence officer saw the others and sent them all to the passport control. He wanted to talk to me because I was holding a Jordanian passport. We were in one car, since we abandoned Suhail and three others in Damascus, because they wanted to go by air from there. I was with the two Greek girls and Grace. So, there were three girls and I. He sent the three girls with foreign passports to the passport control, and then he started talking to me. He asked me where I was coming from, and I told him that I came from Syria and before that from Lebanon. He asked me what I was doing there. So, I said that I was a professor on leave of absence. He asked me if I was teaching at the American University of Beirut, I told him no, and said that I was doing research on education. He kept asking questions and after a while he said: "Are you sure you're not with the PLO?" I had no idea why he thought about the PLO, and I said that, of course, I was not with them, I had nothing to do with them.

I was thinking to myself that the PLO has become a curse, not only to the Israelis but to this Jordanian officer too. I mean, I was a professor at an American university and he knew this, but still asked me: "Are you sure you are not volunteering with the PLO?" He asked me to show him how much money I had. So, I showed him that I had some Lebanese, some Syrian and some Jordanian money, all within reasonable amounts. Then I figured out that he might think that I am an emissary for the PLO, and that I am smuggling money. He continued to hold the passport, and clearly something was bothering him about it. He asked more questions, because he was bothered. Something was not correct. In the end, he gave up. He stood in front of that office, looking at me as I entered the passport section. Something was not adding up, but he didn't know what it was.

I figured out what was bothering him when I handed my passport to the passport officer: he didn't see a stamp from Lebanon in the passport. How then did I enter Lebanon? I had told him I was coming from there. This is why he thought that I must have been smuggled into Lebanon from Syria. He didn't see a stamp to enter Syria. He probably thought I was one of the cadres of the PLO, that I had smuggled myself both into Syria and Lebanon. He could not figure out the missing element! When I understood this, I was just hoping that the passport people would not delay me too much, because then he would get back to me and ask more questions. Not that there was anything wrong with what I was doing, but at that time it was illegal for Jordanians to hold American passports.

I managed to reach Amman, and noticed that Amman was also normal. So, my image of what the Arab world should have looked like, faced with this crisis, was totally wiped out. I could not figure out why life was so normal. Here we are, coming from this traumatic experience, and I could not share my feelings with anybody in Amman. They would ask how it was there and say: "What did you do when these bastards, the Israelis, entered?" But I didn't notice that there was any kind of empathy with what we had gone through. I stayed for about three days before I finally caught a plane and went back to the US. The Air France people accepted the validity of my ticket, which had obviously lapsed. I demonstrated to them that I was actually under siege, and therefore, I could not fly because the airport was closed. They facilitated my trip to Paris, where I changed my tickets and went to Chicago.

In Chicago, I had to re-negotiate my contract with the university: I was on leave of absence for a year and a half and I took only a quarter of it. They had already hired replacements. The Dean was, in spite of the fact that he was Jewish, co-operative, and I got my job back.

The question is: "What did I do with this experience? What did I learn from it?" I summed it up and helped in assembling a special issue of a periodical in England called *Race & Class*. We did a special edition on Lebanon, where I wrote about my

feelings and called it “The Siege of Beirut”. Tibawi was the co-editor with me, and it was a complete and good issue. What are the lessons of Beirut? Firstly, it was the clarity of the issues and the clarity of the aims. The antagonism between the Israelis and us was amazing to all the sectors of the population. One of the things I learned in Beirut was that Palestinians do well under siege, despite the fact that we were defeated. There was a huge asymmetry in power between the Palestinians and the Israelis. It was man against machine, and the machine won. If you possess the machines that the Israelis did, you can inflict incredible damage. I have never seen such manifestations of ability and solidarity as I saw in Beirut at that time.

The second lesson, and this should really be acknowledged as openly and as clearly as possible, had to do with the solidarity of the Lebanese population in Beirut with us. The Israelis gave tremendous amounts of misinformation about how well they were received by the Lebanese. They said that the Lebanese showered them with rice and welcomed them as liberators of the Lebanese from the Palestinians, the PLO and so-called “Palestinian hegemony”. Whatever manifestations existed to support those statements, it should be stressed that without the support of the Lebanese population of Beirut, our defense would have collapsed within less than a week. It is important to remember that Beirut is a Lebanese city and not a Palestinian city, and that the Palestinians were a minority.

The Israelis gave every incentive to the Lebanese population to actually rebel against the PLO. They dropped leaflets from the air urging the Lebanese population to leave the city because they were going to destroy it. They said that their objective was not to destroy the city as such, but that they wanted to ferret out the PLO, these “terrorists who are terrorizing the population of Beirut”. I think the Lebanese dug their heels in, because these were their homes: Beirut is their city and they were not going to take orders from the Israelis. It is not that they were supporting us particularly, but the fact that they did not take the Israelis’ statements seriously, and essentially disobeyed them, helped us. The fact that they did not harass the Palestinians or ask the Palestinians to leave is a form of support.

It is interesting to note that *when* the Lebanese in fact asked the PLO to leave, that was the time the PLO decided to leave. Mao Tse Tung’s dictum was “the fish and the sea”. There is no question about the fact that we were the fish and the Lebanese were the sea. I do not want to say that the Lebanese loved us or liked us. That has nothing to do with it. I think it was a situation where the Lebanese people understood that Israel is an aggressor, and that Israel is attacking their country, even though theoretically, the target was the Palestinians. The damage and the killings and the casualties were, for the most part, Lebanese. I think they understood that clearly, and it paid off in the end.

By August, the Lebanese had had enough. I remember the leadership of the Lebanese well, they were our allies. We called them *Al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al- Mushtaraka*,

The Joint National Palestinian-Lebanese Movement. They told Abu-Ammar: "We have taken enough! We ourselves will fight, face to face with the Israelis, but we think it is important for the Palestinians to leave." That is when the Palestinians accepted the dictates of Philip Habib, and the treaty he imposed on the PLO. He was able to impose it, in part because the PLO felt that they could no longer stay in Lebanon. The Lebanese movement itself and the internal Lebanese situation did not permit the Palestinians to remain fighting at the expense of Lebanon. I think that we should remember the fact that the Lebanese solidarity with us made it possible for us to survive the siege. That is one conclusion.

The other conclusion I came to, which I hope was as clear in the article I wrote about the siege of Beirut, is that the question of Palestine cannot be answered through violence. The damage that the military solution does to both peoples is such that you cannot achieve actual liberation. The military can cause damage, but it cannot produce the surrender of the Palestinian people. The opposite is true, too. No matter how much power the Palestinians acquire, it cannot produce the surrender of the Israelis. They cannot impose their will and we cannot impose ours. Therefore, we have to figure out a way to reach a solution that both peoples can live with.

The second issue that I really came out with, and I still remember it, is the incredible amount of damage that the Israelis caused both to the Palestinians and the Lebanese. They had weapons of incredible power: bombs, cluster bombs and all sorts of weapons of destruction. They talk about weapons of mass destruction, and they sure have them! I experienced the ability of a population which is essentially defenseless to withstand this kind of punishment. I also experienced the damage that it causes to children, to adults, to everybody who is not engaged in the fighting. I saw the fright in the eyes of children and the long lines of children carrying buckets to fill with water when water was extremely rare. I saw the filth that is caused by the air raids, and left there because there was no institution to clear up the debris. The enormous amount of casualties that I saw as a result, made me rethink many issues, including the meaning of armed struggle. Who carries the burden of armed struggle? I never came to a conclusion, in fact, about that issue.

After I came back, I went around the country and spoke about my experience. I had slides that showed the damage. I remember I had a press conference in Detroit, Michigan. It was Jessica Mitchell who arranged it. She was with the University of Michigan. She was in charge of the local council of Arab-American organizations in Detroit, Michigan. They arranged for me to give a speech, a press conference and to be interviewed by the free press in Detroit. I remember that one of the correspondents asked me: "How do you sum up your experience in Beirut? What advice do you give?" I said the following: "I am not so sure if I can say it this way, but the kind of war that the Israelis have conducted against the Palestinians, the damage that they have caused and the fear they have generated, I do not want to do

it to them. It is so awful at the level of our experience that I would not want to wish it on my enemy." Therefore, the question that I raised to myself was whether in trying to reach our goals we have to resort to the measures that the Israelis have resorted to. I do not have an answer at the moment, but that was the lesson of Beirut.

Therefore, I am reluctant to urge people, although certainly I can do it openly and frankly, to solve the question of Palestine by military conflict. I think it is impossible. It cannot be resolved militarily. The damage that the military encounter does to both peoples is such that you cannot achieve actual liberation. It was this which led me eventually to formulate the idea that there is no military solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel is too powerful, and yet, it cannot produce the surrender of the Palestinians. And the opposite is true. No matter how much power the Palestinians acquire, irrespective of whether they want to use that power or not, they cannot produce the surrender of the Israelis through such a program. Just as they cannot impose their will, eventually, we cannot impose our will. Therefore, we have to figure out a way of reaching a solution with which we both can live.

That is the challenge. I later said that in my presentations, in Idaho and in South Dakota. Firstly, I said that there is no military solution to the conflict between the Arabs and Israel. Secondly, I called for the complete disarmament of the Middle East and urged the US and the Soviet Union to stop all shipment of arms to all parties in the Middle East. This was rejected by Philip Habib at the same conference. I suggested that the US go to the United Nations with a request to impose an arms embargo on all countries of the Middle East, in an attempt to reduce the level of conflict. I said that the Arab states and Israel could not fight wars without access to weapons that are supplied either by the US or the Soviet Union. Therefore, I urged this embargo at that conference. Philip Habib opposed that. He said that there are legitimate security interests for certain countries to which the US was committed "and therefore we have the obligation to provide them with the means to maintain their security". Of course, he meant Israel, in addition to some of the Arab countries, which relied on the US, in exchange for their petroleum.

This is what I learned from the siege of Beirut. In discussing Israel's objectives in conducting that war, there are many ideas that were formulated. One idea was that the war was meant to destroy Palestinian nationalism. Another idea is that it intended to isolate the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, so that Israel could be free. According to this idea, the destruction of the PLO in Lebanon was to enable Israel to actually subdue the West Bank and Gaza. There are many formulations. Especially, I thought there was a very compelling objective for that war. That objective is to tell the Palestinians that they have no hope of ever achieving independence in Palestine. The damage that they were trying to inflict on the Palestinians as a result of the war, the enormous barbarity of their conduct, and the punishment that they had inflicted on the Palestinians was essentially meant to take the hope of independence, sovereignty

and liberation out of the Palestinians. I said this publicly in the National Council in Algiers: “The purpose of the war and, therefore, the expulsion of the PLO from Beirut and the destruction of its infrastructure, the punishment they inflicted on the Palestinians, all were intended to make us lose any possible hope of ever retrieving our national rights”. I think that later on it became evident by their behavior as they tried to subdue the Intifada. By the damage they did, they were trying to tell us that we have no hope of ever achieving independence and statehood. I think they are still at it. Despite all the agreements, whether it is Madrid or Oslo, the overall purpose of Israel is still to prevent us from achieving independence, I think.

Revolution Through Education

I discovered my interest in the Palestinian curriculum when I was in Beirut in the 1970s. It was a way to assist the revolution. Nowhere were the Palestinians able to influence the process of their education, because they had been occupied by one country or another and had no political power. Therefore, we could not influence the curriculum in those countries.

My colleagues and I developed a system of reclaiming teachers through training. We were given a boarding school for the training. We had a faculty of about thirty teachers who gave lectures. The training sessions lasted about two days. It was a unique experience for everyone involved. Teachers were given access to material on Palestine that was significant, not propaganda. They learned about the refugee problem, the struggle, Palestinian cities, culture and economy. We also trained the teachers on how to access more material and how to reproduce it.

The idea for an Open University was born in one of these training sessions in 1975-76. We wanted to establish a Palestinian university. UNESCO liked the idea and wanted a feasibility study on the subject. I worked with a number of good people on this study, and we were able to produce 1500 pages. We submitted the study to the General Conference of UNESCO, which was held in Belgrade. The conference approved the study. It urged the member states to support the establishment of a Palestinian Open University which will cater to the educational needs of all Palestinians. Even the United States and Israel voted for the proposal with the stipulation that no money would be channeled through the PLO.

In November 1981, I went back to Northwestern to apply for a leave of absence to establish the Open University. The PLO had asked me to come to Beirut, the headquarters of the university. We thought that every university is protected by its state, and since we didn’t have a state, our institution had to be protected by the Palestinian National Authority. So, I returned to Beirut at the end of 1981. It took a while, as the PLO, like any other bureaucracy, acts slowly. I had to take another

leave of absence for two years in order to establish the Open University. All the councils of the PLO approved it, and I was appointed the President.

Our first task was to look for a campus, and then to staff the institution. In the feasibility study, there was an implementation plan. So, I knew exactly what had to be done. For the campus, I was directed to the village of Shimlan just outside of Beirut. Shimlan is a nice village in the Druze area. The building that we were directed to was known as the "School of the Spies". It was established by the British to serve as a training center for foreign and intelligence officers in Arabic and Arab culture. These officers were destined to work as spies in the Arab world. All the instructors were either British or Arab agents, and they did an excellent job of training. Richard Murphy was trained there.

By the time we had gotten there, the school had already moved out. The landlord was willing to sell the building and the land. I was assured that as a result of negotiations between Walid Jumblatt and Arafat, we would be allowed to buy the land. We had to get this permission from Jumblatt first, in order to abide by the unwritten rule that no Palestinian can buy land on that mountain without the explicit approval of Jumblatt. Unfortunately, within a couple of months, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon took place, so we never moved to the mountain.

The invasion effectively ended the project. The last time that I worked on it was on June 25, 1982. I worked out of my apartment, because the UNESCO building had artillery for the Popular Front on both sides, and it was a target for Israeli raids. The day that I stopped working was the day of the first lethal bombardment. A missile, a Jericho missile, hit us. I could see it coming over the sea. I could see it shining.

After Beirut, I continued to work on the subject of an Open University. I went to Tunis in December 1982, but decided not to continue with the project. The project had moved to Jordan. King Hussein had told Arafat that he welcomed the Open University to Amman. Arafat wanted to confirm King Hussein's invitation. He sent Hanna Nasser and me to meet with Crown Prince Hassan. It was clear that Hassan did not support the vision of the Open University. He didn't object to providing educational material to West Bank institutions, but we could not implement an open learning system in Jordan. He was of the view that the Open University was to address Palestinians in Palestine itself. I disapproved of the idea of limiting the university. I went to Mr Arafat and tendered my resignation.

Since 1948, Palestinians didn't have a national authority as we were not on our own land. We were subject to the educational curriculum of the states where we lived. Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank used the curriculum of the Jordanians. In Gaza, they used the Egyptian curriculum. Nowhere, in fact, were Palestinians able to educate their children by means of a national curriculum of their own. As a result

of that, UNESCO organized a seminar on a primary education curriculum for Palestinians in Jerusalem in 1993. At the seminar were education experts from Japan, Australia, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and a whole contingent of Palestinian teachers and experts. The seminar came out with two resolutions. One was that there should be a center for education curriculum in Palestine. The second resolution was that there should be a major workshop for secondary education.

The center was to be built somewhere other than Palestine, because Palestine was still under occupation. It so happened that simultaneously, the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships were working towards what would become known as the Oslo Accords. Oslo enabled the Palestinians to implement the plans determined at the UNESCO seminar, with the difference that the PLO would have the responsibility for education in Palestine. UNESCO undertook the task of assisting the PLO in establishing a curriculum center that would plan the future Palestinian curriculum. It was agreed that I would assume the leadership of the new center. I was teaching at Birzeit University at the time, and was finishing my term as vice-president of the university. I agreed, albeit reluctantly, to head the new center. I had to physically establish the center. I rented an office and recruited the staff. The budget came from a grant given by the Italian government to UNESCO in the amount of $300,000. The mandate was to develop a comprehensive plan for a national curriculum for Palestinian general education, from grade one through twelve. We developed a plan, and I think it was a terrific plan. Much of it has been implemented. It was not our responsibility to develop educational materials, such as textbooks. That task was left to the Ministry of Education.

It is very important for me to mention that my concern with education is two-fold. We are in a period of state building. We need to develop the institutions from the bottom up. This was the aim of the new graduate school program at Birzeit University: to provide high-level skills to Palestinians and to develop the institutional basis for the state. Education is important in the development of a cohesive system of values, skills and outlooks to reintegrate our dispersed people. Education is one of the most important means of achieving our national identity.

Chapter Nine

Returning To The Homeland

Returning to Palestine was an unexpected decision on my part. I had lived my life in exile, but had always prepared for my return. I insisted upon the Right of Return. Return has always meant to me the return to Palestine, and not necessarily the return to Jaffa.

In reality, there was nothing concrete that I could do to facilitate my return to Palestine. I fully understood that I was living in exile. Although I had raised a family, had been successful in my profession and needed nothing materially, there was always something missing from my life. It is a very personal thing, but it is also political, in the sense that the whole question of Palestine is the question of dispossession: forcing you out against your will and preventing you from exercising your will. The exercise of your will means that you cannot *choose* to live in exile.

I did not choose to live in exile. It was forced upon me. I didn't mind living in exile. I was happy and I did reasonably well. I functioned, was active and had friends everywhere I went. My life has been a complex one in terms of the places of exile. Sometimes, I would feel that I was in exile and other times I would not feel that way. This feeling was related to the places that were foreign to me, in the sense of culture and language: the United States, Canada and France. There, I felt that I was an outsider, a complete outsider. Obviously, however, I was able to exist, function and accomplish. These were places of work and places of family. All of this is true, but I *always* felt that I was an outsider. I did not mind being an outsider, but it was not something that I had chosen willingly and freely.

When I first went to the States, after I became a refugee, I was there because I had no other opportunity or choice in order to study. It was a clear-cut mission. I went there and I stayed approximately 8 years before I came back to the Arab world. I had all intentions of coming back when I went there, and as soon as I completed my studies, I did come back. During the eight years of studying, I never came back at all, both because of the circumstances, the financial situation, and because I did not see the need to come back. Although I was partly nostalgic, I was lucky after I finished my studies to get the job with UNESCO that brought me to Egypt.

Coming back to Egypt, coming to work there, was something of a coming home for me, in the sense that I viewed myself as an Arab, I grew up in this culture, and Egypt is part of my world. Therefore, coming to Egypt was in a way also coming home. I

had never lived in Egypt, I had only visited it in the past for about two weeks. So, it was neither in the physical sense, nor in the legal and political sense, my country. But, I felt that this culture was also mine. I discovered, of course, later the differences between Arab countries, but at that time, I felt excited to be home.

I worked in Egypt for four years, and felt that I was building an Arab national homeland, that is, I was building *our* world. But I was aware and conscious that it was not my state. Politically and legally, you are made conscious that you are not of this state and that you are not part of *this* country despite the fact that you felt at ease there. I felt at home. I participated in cultural activities as if I was an Egyptian. The same thing was true when I was in Beirut, where I worked for a year and a half. I felt that it was home for me. I dealt with people as though they were my people. We may have spoken different dialects and we had different religions, but it was also my culture and my place. I also did not go to Beirut by choice but for work.

I felt as an outsider both in the States and in Canada. When you feel that you are living on the margin of society, you are not complete there. I often worried about what people thought of me as I used body language when I was speaking. Sometimes as a professor, I would get nasty statements from students telling me that if I was so smart, why didn't I go home and do something good for my people? Some comments occasionally would remind me that I am an outsider. I never thought, in the final analysis, that I could have a home. I deal with my home that has been occupied by Israel. The Israelis are the ones who expelled me. As long as they were entrenched and powerful, obviously, I could not come and live under their control, even if they would allow me to do so. It is an alien culture. It is a dominant culture, and therefore, it is an oppressive one. Even if I were permitted to return under their conditions, I would not want to live under their control. I lived in exile for more than forty years, and in that time, I never thought of ever coming back to Palestine under Israeli control.

I should differentiate between pre-1967 and after 1967. I used to visit the West Bank every year before 1967. I would stay for a week, visiting Jerusalem, Hebron, and Nablus, where I would see some friends and relatives. The West Bank was part of Jordan and I didn't have a good view of the political system that was in control. I didn't go to Gaza, as that was obviously out of the question. But, I kept in touch with the West Bank until 1967. After 1967, it never occurred to me to come back even for a visit. I was severed completely, not only from the '48 areas, but also from the '67 areas. That was during the period in the States when we formed our association and began to campaign politically for the liberation of Palestine. In this way, we became active in the context of the national struggle. Clearly, the task before us was one of national liberation. I convinced myself that we were on the right path and that at some point in time we would succeed in the liberation of Palestine. Then, I would be able to exercise my own choice of whether I wanted to live in Palestine or somewhere else.

I recall a debate that I had with the former Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office when Golda Meir was Prime Minister of Israel. His name was Jacob Herzog, he was a rabbi and a lawyer. He was on a tour in the States in the fall of 1968, I believe. I appeared on television with him on something called "The Kopzinets show", hosted by Irving Kopzinets. He had a syndicated show, which was probably the most popular show in Chicago. It was called "The Art of Unrehearsed Conversation". Kopzinets was Jewish and quite smart. Of course, he had a lot of research behind what he called "unrehearsed". In addition, he would also be slipped papers. In this program, he placed two people to discuss a controversial idea where they take sides and then they meet each other on television. That was my first exposure to a sort of national debate, and my opponent was the one responsible in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office. He was actually much more controlled by his position than I was, since I was a professor. I represented nobody, except the views that I uphold. I was not controlled by an organization, a university or a government. So, I felt completely free to say what I wanted. Therefore, I was able to defeat him. I remember that Jacob Herzog and I had a terrific debate. I think I can say that I beat him, as one sociologist said: "Hands down." No question about it! Somebody else told me: "Tension was oozing out of my hair!" I criticized the system and made it very clear that they had expelled us and that we would continue to fight until we return. In the course of this conversation, he denied that what I said about the Palestinians in Israel was true. I said that they are classified as second-class citizens; that the Palestinian-Israelis have lived under military control; that they are subordinate and equivalent to the blacks of the United States; and that the Israelis were involved in a military occupation in Palestine. He said that I clearly don't know the situation in Palestine. Therefore, he extended an invitation to me to come and see for myself that what I am saying about their rule of the Palestinians is wrong. I reported to him on television: "I don't need an invitation from you to visit my country. Palestine is my country and I will come back not with your permission but against your permission in the process of liberation". So, I was stuck with that statement, and it was not the first time that I made that statement.

I made the same statement once more in the context of a conference, a world conference organized by the United Nations in Vancouver, Canada in the summer of 1976. It was called "Habitat" and was a conference on human habitat. There, I was part of the delegation that represented the PLO. In the tail end, it was a fantastic effort. We spent one session presenting our views to an audience that we actually had access to on a world level. We were a good delegation. We participated in all the debates. In these debates, we placed Israel and its supporters, including the US and the Canadian delegations, who in fact were opposed to the conference, on the defensive. We did this by forming an alliance with the South Africans and some of the African states. In the course of that conference, we succeeded in passing a resolution calling on the Secretary-General of the UN to send a fact-finding committee

to investigate the situation of the Palestinians under occupation, in terms of housing and urban settlement, i.e. the living conditions of the Palestinians. The chief of the Israeli delegation, Rabbi Joseph Burg, father of a subsequent Speaker of the Knesset Avraham Burg, stood up and said: "First, my government will not admit the members of this committee if the Secretary-General ever appoints it, and second, we will not cooperate with the Secretary-General in implementing that resolution".

So, we reported to him, and I made the statement where I said: "We don't need your permission to enter there. We can assist the Secretary-General in sending that delegation and we have our ways and means of doing so. This is *our* country, and therefore, we have the capacity to do that".

This was, of course, a political statement. But, it also reminded me that actually there is a country that we call ours to which we have no access, and that what we have access to is under occupation. In that sense, coming home never crossed my mind. So, I had made a statement saying that I would come when Palestine was liberated. I had worked in Egypt, in Lebanon, and I had been to all the Arab states. I felt at home in all of them, but I still felt that I was in exile. Therefore, the task was to liberate the land, so as to return.

Fearing Death In Exile

In 1990, something traumatic happened. I had an operation on my lung. During that operation, I lost consciousness and almost died. When I woke up, it occurred to me that we are all mortals and that I may die before the liberation of Palestine. I might die without seeing Palestine again. At that point, I said to myself: "My God! At least I should see Palestine before I die! I don't want to die without seeing it." I was talking to myself like this when I was actually still in the hospital, and I still felt weak at that point. Then, in January/February of 1990, I got out of the hospital and those thoughts sank into my mind and my consciousness. The idea of returning took root and began to grow.

I recall a second incident when I began to think about the return more seriously. At a dinner held by Rashid Khalidi in the spring of 1990, I met a woman from South Africa. She was a beautiful woman who was both Indian and Lebanese, as her grandmother was Lebanese. Her name was Fairouz and she was a scientist. She was at the University of Chicago on a full doctoral fellowship. She normally lived in England, but was from South Africa, and therefore, in exile like we were. Her father was probably about my age. She told us that she had received a phone call from her father, who was a physician, telling her that he had just returned from South Africa, from his first visit after being in exile for 25 years. She said that he had been ecstatic and had spoken with such excitement and happiness about his visit. He had decided to close his medical clinic in London and return to his country. She also told us that a

number of his colleagues, other doctors from South Africa, had now decided to return to their country. She said that the whole South African community was now thinking about the return to their country. I looked at her while she was telling this story and could see the excitement on her face. Even if she could hardly remember South Africa (she was very young when they left), she conveyed the happiness of her father.

This encounter had a dramatic effect on me and I internalized those feelings. For the first time in my life, I began to think seriously about my return and how I should do it. Firstly, I had made certain statements. Secondly, I had been an active person. And thirdly, I had been a member of the Palestine National Council (PNC). I therefore did not know what they would do with me. So, I started out by making practical plans. The first thing I did, when I had the occasion, was to resign from the PNC. I did this because I could not submit myself to the jurisdiction of Israel while I was still a member of the Council. I felt that doing so would be an insult to the PNC as an institution.

After that, it was an orderly procedure. I decided to take a short visit before deciding whether to come home or not. I would go on a visit, see the place, and see whether they would let me in. In December 1991, I decided to take a trip to Palestine around Christmas that same year. Christmas is an occasion when a lot of people visit Palestine. I had a vacation from the university and it was therefore an appropriate time to go. I did not tell anyone that I was coming to Palestine. It so happened that the United Holy Land Fund was convening a conference at the same time and, for the first time, it was to be held in Jerusalem. They invited me to the conference and I replied that I would be there and might attend a session, but that I would not speak.

I did not know what to expect from going to Palestine. I had no idea what would happen, no information apart from hearing that they sometimes harass people and make it difficult for them to get in.

Escaping The Usual Hassles

My first encounter with the Israeli system took place at the airport in Amsterdam. I took a KLM flight from Chicago, and I changed planes in Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, we discovered that all the passengers going to Israel are assigned a special gate at the end of the terminal, where they are interrogated by Israeli agents. I suspect that these agents were from the Mossad. In the airport in Amsterdam, there is a special hall in the basement of the terminal where the passengers are questioned. It was a shock. What was most shocking to me was the type of questions they asked. Now I have become accustomed to the stupid questions like whether you have weapons; who packed your suitcase; why are you carrying this and that; where are you going and why; what is the purpose of your visit; who are you going to see; what are you going to do. All these silly questions were making it seem like they are about to intercept some criminal.

I was expecting the worst at Ben-Gurion Airport because I had heard all those stories about the harassment people encounter there. I was surprised when I got off the plane and went straight through passport control where they stamped my passport. However, after the passport control, they came to take me to a room to ask me questions. I said to them that I thought I had passed already. I didn't realize that when they stamp your passport, you also get a special colored paper that identifies you as an Arab; and therefore you are subjected to an interrogation by the people from security.

I was walking with the Israeli security officer to a room where they interrogate people when I heard someone shouting my name. I looked around, and it turned out to be Mohammed Mi'ari, a Palestinian member of the Israeli Knesset. He was the only person to know that I was coming. The officer turned to Mohammed and asked him: "Who are you?" Mohammed spoke to him in Hebrew and told him who he was, and they had a conversation in Hebrew. Then, the officer asked me to wait and the supervisor was called in to deal with the situation. Mohammed explained to them who he was and that he came to the airport to pick me up and take me to Haifa. So, I was able to get through the airport without being treated to the usual hassles. I told Mohammed after this that Israel was now becoming a lot like an Arab state, where the wasta [intercession] works! It is turning into a country where you can get out of a lot of trouble by having good wasta. We laughed at this.

Running Like A Teenager

I went with Mohammed to Haifa where I spent the night. Mohammed had invited a number of people over to his home for a reception. One of the guests was a former Latin teacher of mine from Jaffa who was originally from Shafa Amer in the north, and who taught at my school for two years. We had not seen each other since 1948. It was an incredible experience. The meeting reminded me that this is my home, and that I have connections with this place. Here is a teacher of mine. He looked exactly the same, apart from being a little older and a little fatter. He was now the principal of a school in Shafa Amer and was about to retire.

We spent a wonderful evening of discussion, despite the fact that I was tired. It was such an exciting moment in my life. Here I was, in a Palestinian home, among friends who are Palestinian, speaking the same language. It was an incredible gathering, so warm. I was at home.

The next day, we took a tour of the Galilee. I remember being impressed by the Galilee, and overwhelmed by how incredibly beautiful it was. Despite the fact that the Jews were probably the majority in the area, I felt the cultural dominance of the Arabs. This was so apparent, despite the many years of Israeli control. As we traveled in the villages and between the cities, I felt as if I was in an Arab country. This is

Palestine. Jews were present in Palestine in 1948 when I was there. Therefore, I didn't feel like I was in an alien country.

In the North, I began to think about 1948. This was the area where the majority of the Palestinians who succeeded in frustrating the expulsion orders in Nazareth and Shafa Amer and stayed in Israel, remained. They were thrown out of their villages. The Israelis attempted to drive them into Syria, but they resisted and they stayed out in the open air. Some families stayed in the open air for about a year. I began to think what I would have done if we had not left Jaffa or Haifa. Politically, this was an important moment in revisiting 1948. Why did we leave and what were the consequences of the expulsion, departure and panic?

I spent two days in the North, but was too shy to tell Mohammed that I really was anxious to see Jaffa. I wanted to go home, and home in the small sense is my hometown, Jaffa. I was embarrassed to say this because he was so kind and I enjoyed my stay with them. But, on the third day, Mohammed drove me to Jaffa. On the way, we stopped in a Palestinian village called Seedna Ali. Seedna Ali is now incorporated into Herzlia, one of the older settlements of the Zionist movement. In the old days, Seedna Ali would supply the rest of Palestine with watermelon and shimmam, yellow melon. There is also a maqam, sacred place, there. It is also called Seedna Ali. People would make a pilgrimage to it to ask favors and forgiveness, or gain fertility. I used to visit the place as a child with my family. It had the most beautiful beach in Palestine, an incredible beach with a fantastic breeze. As children, we used to love it. There, we were free to roam around among the palms and we could go around to the villages. If you were young, you could walk there from Tel Aviv, and, even if it was a quite long walk, we used to do that. It was important for me to see this place, especially the mosque where I prayed for the last time before 1946.

From there, we moved on to Sheikh Muanness, which was a village where the University of Tel Aviv is now. The university was built literally on the sands of Sheikh Muanness. The tomb of Sheikh Muanness is there. We also used to go there as children because it was adjacent to where we lived, and there was a river called Nahr Jrisheh, which the Jews call the Yarkon. My memory of that river is of picnics we used to have there as children and teenagers. We would swim in the river, because it was not as polluted as it is now. My fondest memory is that we used to cross the river carrying our clothes with one hand above the water and swimming like dogs do with the other.

Finally, we approached Jaffa and Mohammed asked me: "Where is your home?" I said: "Well, this is Tel Aviv, not Jaffa", to which Mohammed replied: "No, this is Jaffa". I then asked: "Where is the Hassan Beik Mosque?" Mohammed told me that it is just a block away, and at that point we could actually see the minaret. I told him that my house used to be about 100 meters from the mosque. This mosque had

become an important landmark to gauge where my earlier life was, because Israel has demolished the whole area. The only thing they had kept at that point in time was the mosque, which they were planning to destroy. The local Palestinian community found out about the plan, protested and raised enough money to save and restore the mosque. I used to pray at this mosque and attend the Sufi sessions. One of my fondest memories is when I would be allowed by the Imam of the mosque to perform the call to prayer instead of him, because he was too lazy to do it. He would let me up to the minaret, and I would call to prayer. I thought that I was getting all the blessing of God for doing such a wonderful duty as calling the people to prayer. I did this on and off for a couple of years in this mosque, because the person in charge was too lazy to walk up all these steps himself. As a boy, I thought that he was initiating me into religious activity, which I really valued.

I have fond memories of that mosque for that reason, but also for another. The 1948 war started, in my opinion, partly from that mosque. The mosque is at the edge of Tel Aviv and of Jaffa, and the distance between the mosque and the first Jewish section of Tel Aviv is just 100 meters or less. From the roof of the mosque, you were able to see your enemy. I remember that in November 1947, after the UN partition resolution, two men went up to the roof and began to shoot at the residents of Tel Aviv and the residents shot back. After this incident, the border was closed, and both the Arab and the Jewish residents relocated. It became a no-man's-land. The Palestinian front of Jaffa was on the street adjacent to that mosque. Throughout the period, the mosque was immune to attacks. It was, in addition, not in use by the population. I believe that the 1948 War between the Arab and Jewish Palestinians started there. Certainly that it is where it started between Jaffa and Tel Aviv. It did not stop until the Jewish groups, the Irgun and the Haganah, defeated Jaffa and emptied it of its population.

I told Mohammed where our house once stood. It had been demolished. My two brothers had come for a visit in 1970 when the house was still standing. The last time my younger brother was visiting, he went to our house and met the Jewish-Lebanese family that was living there. They informed my brother that they had been given notice that they would be relocated, and that the house would be demolished. In 1971, the Israelis demolished the whole section of the town called Manshiyyeh. The political question is, of course, why they didn't demolish Manshiyyeh before? Why did they demolish it at the time when they eventually did?

I was thrilled to be in my old neighborhood. I began to examine where the other families' houses once were, the Qaddoumi house, the Lumbarji, and that of Shafiq al-Hut. I simply wanted to identify the area. I was disoriented in the car, because they had demolished the whole section. I could not recognize the streets. We then went to the big mosque, Al Jami' Al'kabir, which is the one where the Friday prayer takes place. Mohammed parked the car downtown where the clock tower is. He

afterwards described me running like a teenager. I was so excited by the site and so anxious to see it, because all my history is there. I felt so good when I entered the mosque, as I remembered both the Friday prayer and the biggest demonstrations against the British in Jaffa that used to start from there. After the prayer, when the Imam would give a speech that would stimulate us, or, as you would say in modern terminology, incite us, we would go out to denounce British imperialism, the Balfour Declaration and shout slogans.

Connecting With History

I was also excited to see all the shops where we would buy ice-cream, kinafah and other sweets. And the clock tower! Two permanent buildings were still standing. One was the police station. It used to be a police station during the Turkish period, the British period. And now, in the Israeli period, it is still a police station. This is where they used to take people for the first interrogation after they were arrested and before they sent them to different prisons. Across the street from this police station is the building we used to call the saraya, the palace. It is a very distinguished building that was built during the Ottoman period and housed the official offices of the government. It also served as the court, which is the reason why it was called the saraya, which means "the palace of justice". It also functioned as a court during the British period, and my grandfather used to perform his duties as a judge there. Sometime after 1937, the function of the building began to change.

In January 1948, I was sitting in a social club about 300 meters from the house, when we heard a fantastic explosion that really shook the building where we were sitting. We had no idea what this could be. When we left, we found to our dismay that what we called "the Jewish gangs" had left a booby-trapped car that had exploded. This explosion killed between 67 and 69 people, of which only 9 of were adults, the rest were teenagers. The building was used at that time as a place where the social welfare department put what we called the teenage delinquents. The official story of the Jewish Agency and the Haganah was that the building served both as the municipality and as the headquarters of the National Committee. The National Committee used to have an office about two doors down from the building, but it had been closed about two months before the attack.

I think that the intention of the bombing had been to terrorize the population. It had an effect on the population, as the building was in the middle of downtown Jaffa. The fact that they were able to get that far and place such a large bomb there showed the population of Jaffa how defenseless it was.

I remember Golda Meir's statement that the Palestinian problem doesn't exist and that there are no Palestinians. This was their attempt to obliterate us, to destroy us

and to deny our existence. Our culture, however, is confirmed by our living testimonies, by my memories and by concrete buildings. I can see my school where I studied, the Amiriyyeh School. The building is still there. Now, it is a Jewish school, called the Weizmann School.

Mohammed and I approached the school and saw that there were two soldiers manning the gate to the school. One was Ethiopian and the other was a dark Sephardic. I spoke to them in English and told them that I have come from New York to see my old school. I pleaded with them to let me in, even though it was closed. I saw a light on in one of the buildings, a building which we used for arts and crafts as children. They allowed me to go into that section of the building, which serves the exact same function today. The same activities are done here by children of the same age, except that it is now Jewish children. I returned to the gate and thanked the soldiers for letting me enter. One of the soldiers asked me why I didn't speak Hebrew: "You studied at this school. Didn't you?" He couldn't understand that this was a Palestinian school before 1948. It was my school, but I did not want to give a lecture on Palestinian history. I wanted to connect myself with my old history. I cannot explain how thrilled I was to see it. This is my history, the place where I grew up, was educated and socialized.

After this, we went to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablus, Gaza and back to the Galilee. I held some lectures and met lots of friends and acquaintances.

I felt such excitement in the three weeks that I spent in Palestine. I was so euphoric to see that Palestine is still here. No matter how much they have changed it, our culture is here. My history and my continuity are here, and they cannot take that away from me. To me, this was 1948 all over again.

This was in 1991, and unlike other people who were sad when they returned, I was on the contrary so excited to talk to people. I was keen to witness the harshness of the occupation, which was evident in the fact that there was a curfew in Ramallah. Thus, I could not visit the town without the presence of somebody who had a permit. It was also evident in the miserable conditions of Gaza, which I simply could not believe! I was struck by the warm reception we got in Hebron, and the militant political discussions that we had. It was such a complex life! I had not really imagined the kind of Palestine that I found here.

I went to the Dheisheh Camp in Bethlehem, and it reminded me of a concentration camp. There was only one gate for people to enter or leave. When it rains, mud lines the unpaved streets. The Israelis can shoot anyone coming in or out from their observation post. They have total control over Dheisheh. I asked myself if we should continue to live in refugee camps. Should we open these camps up? In the past, these camps were an issue of national identity, a visible symbol of the expulsion.

But the consequence is total control by the Israelis. The people were living in an enclosed ghetto, segregated from the rest of the society. These are complex questions, and it took me a while to think them through. I decided that maybe I was being too romantic, because I had been deprived of the sight of Palestine for so long.

Divorcing The US

I returned to Chicago and continued to teach, giving lectures on my visit. It so happened that I received an invitation to attend a seminar that was organized by the Tamer Institute for Community Development, at the end of March 1992. I accepted the invitation, because I wanted to test my feelings for Palestine. I was euphoric after my last visit and wanted to test my true feelings.

This time, I decided to enter through the Allenby Bridge. This is the border where the people are treated most miserably. When I arrived at the border, there were no people there. The Israelis took my passport and told me to sit down. So I sat down. After about half an hour, I asked the immigration officer what was happening. She told me that everything was being processed and that I should just sit down.

After a period of time, I heard the name Captain Avi. I thought that it had something to do with me. Sure enough, two men were walking towards me. One was a military officer, Captain Avi. The other was a civilian who asked me if I spoke Hebrew. This man was to act as the interpreter. I was asked the usual questions: “Why are you coming here?” I told them of the seminar that I would be attending. They returned to their office and then came back and continued the questioning. I was told that I could have a three-month tourist visa on two conditions. The first was that I could not accept employment in Israel. I did not understand why he said this, but I just said that it was fine, since I was not coming for employment. Later, I found out that Captain Avi knew about my first visit, when I went to Al-Najah University. Al-Najah later conveyed the impression that I had been asked to become the president of the university, and that I was ready to accept this offer. Although it was not true, the announcement had been a public one, and Captain Avi must have had that announcement as a reference.

The second condition was that I would not speak with the public. I asked him what he meant, said that I am a professor, and do speak. He told me that it meant that I was not to give public lectures and not to “incite the public”. Evidently, he was referring to a lecture that I had given three months previously at Bethlehem University. My host, Khader Musleh, was interrogated by the military government in Bethlehem for inviting me to speak without asking for permission. So, in order to get a visa, I promised Captain Avi that I would be dull and put the audience to sleep while speaking.

There was another delay of about an hour and a half. I was just sitting there. I was alone, except for a female immigration officer. I had no newspaper and no other reading material. I made eye contact with this officer. We looked at each other and there was human recognition. I stood up and walked over to her. I wanted to know what the delay was about. She said: "Obviously, you are important. That's why". We began to talk. She asked me where I was born and I told her. I asked her about her family. She was from Tunis and had family in Chicago. She had come to Palestine at the age of nine. I thought that in some way, we are both refugees. She is here as the result of a particular ideology, while I am here as a visitor, a tourist. It was the first human contact that I had with an Israeli that was not "official", and I must admit that the conversation was nice.

It was during this visit that I decided that my feelings were sincere, and that I should return home. But first I went to Amman to see Hanna Nasser, President of Birzeit University and an old friend, who had been asking me to teach at Birzeit University since the 70s. I wanted to confirm that the offer was still standing. It was. I made the decision. I went back to Chicago and took a leave of absence from the university for one year. I spent that year, 1992-93, teaching at Birzeit. While I was at Birzeit, I made another important decision. I decided that I would not go back to the States, but that I would remain in Palestine. I have never regretted that decision. It was probably the best decision that I had made in a very long time: to come back to build our state and our people.

In my negotiations with Hanna, I expressed the desire to teach an advanced seminar for seniors to be open to students from other institutions of higher learning. I also proposed to establish a graduate school on a national level to be supported by all the Palestinian universities. Although Birzeit would initiate the project, my goal was to establish an institution that was national. At the time, I didn't understand the relationship between the universities and had no idea of the objective conditions in the country.

In his letter of invitation, Hanna also asked me about the possibilities of assuming an administrative position in the university, which I did not really want. Hanna was very generous both in accommodating my desires and ideas, and in giving me the salary that I asked for.

I started teaching at a very exciting period. The Israelis were still in Ramallah. Every few days, there was a curfew and I could see the tanks and the jeeps. It was an occupied country, no question about it. I saw people being arrested and beaten by the army almost on a daily basis. Ramallah would close around two o'clock. Since I hadn't lived under occupation, I was one of the few 'fools' who would go out to visit friends, and often I would be the only person in the streets apart from the Israeli soldiers.

Because of this environment, it was impossible for the university to function as other universities do. Birzeit could be closed at a moment's notice after being surrounded by the army. The syllabus becomes useless. There were political strikes, both against the army and against the university. I could not expect the students to come to class, because the army would intercept them and close the roads. It was a very difficult time.

My plan for a national university turned out to be a pipe dream. It simply doesn't work here, despite the small size of the country. So I abandoned that idea. My second dream, organizing a graduate school for Palestine, was also unfeasible, but for other reasons. The first reason is the incredible competition and jealousy among Palestinian universities. It would be impossible to get an agreement on the location of the school, or to get departments to agree to lend their faculty for this enterprise. So I gave up on these dreams.

In place of these dreams, Birzeit decided to establish its own graduate school. We began by appointing a committee to explore what was required to build a school. We identified the people who would be on the committee: Abdul-Salam Abdul-Ghani, the Dean of Sciences, Nabil Qassis, a negotiator in Washington, Henry Giacaman, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Abdul-Latif Barghouthi. The committee worked together for nine months, holding meetings once a week to discuss books, facilities, standards, courses, rules for acceptance, students and faculty. It turned out to be much more difficult than I had thought to create an institution, more difficult than to work with an established institution.

After a year and a half, in September of 1993, we had prepared a plan for the school and submitted it to the board of trustees. We were able to identify the fields that we thought should be given priority in terms of their importance for Palestinian development. These were education and international studies. The International Studies program was to be an inter-disciplinary field combining political science, history, law and economics. We were able to relate graduate education to the requirements of society and to create a graduate school on the basis of what was available locally. For our International Studies department, we assembled a good faculty: Ali Jarbawi, Ziyad Abu-Amr, Hisham Ahmed and Roger Heacock. The first batch of students that we selected were exceptional students, hardworking and smart. All graduated with high marks.

After I quit my administrative position at Birzeit, as the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, I continued to teach at the university while assuming the responsibility for establishing the Center for Curriculum Development. Upon completion of the Curriculum Development project, I was involved with the Abdul-Muhsin Qattan Foundation for educational development.

Conclusion

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod is a role model in the process of Palestinian state-building and social development. Not surprisingly, the epicenter of his thought always continued to be Palestine - the land and the people. However, his contributions cannot be, and they are not, limited to Palestinian society. He has acquired his knowledge from and transmitted it to other peoples and cultures.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod had a diverse background and developed expertise on various lines. He combined eminent roles, in academia, politics and society.

I first met Ibrahim at his home in Chicago in November 1983 for a lunch he held following the convening of the Human Rights Campaign conference on Palestine. That meeting culminated in captivating discussion and delicious food he prepared, and has remained with me ever since. At that time, Abu-Lughod was a member of the Palestine National Council (PNC). For a young man who had recently left occupied Palestine like myself, his views and vision were invaluable.

From that day, our contact could not be severed. I read his works and maintained contact with him. My lust for his knowledge reached its climax when he agreed to be on my doctoral dissertation committee in 1988.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod was the first Palestinian intellectual to exercise the Right of Return from the United States. Leaving his prominent teaching position at Northwestern University in Chicago, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod set out to begin the journey of return to Palestine in late 1991, well before the Oslo Accords would facilitate this process somewhat.

Upon my return to Palestine from the United States in 1993, my friendship, or rather, partnership, with Abu-Lughod continued unabated. His home was the first I visited other than family. He was brimming with warmth, hospitality and reassurance. After my 10-year absence from Palestine, he served as a cultural, social and intellectual guide.

His accomplishments after his return to Palestine are plentiful. The last decade of his life was the most rewarding, as he himself very often put it. “It is here that I feel at home”. In Palestine, we closely collaborated as friends and colleagues at the Graduate Institute of International Studies at Birzeit University, which he launched and which now bears his name.

Even dead, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod continued as a role model. In fulfillment of his will and against all odds, his funeral was conducted in Jaffa and his body buried there. In this way, his birth was connected with his death in a most ceremonial way. An unprecedented event in Jaffa since 1948, Palestinian flags covered both his coffin and the streets of his beloved city in an inspiring act of Return.

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod’s death was a fulfillment of Palestinianism, as his life had always been.