

**THE STORY OF MY LIFE
IN
PALESTINE & KUWAIT
By/ Khairy Abul Jebain**

**THE STORY OF MY LIFE
IN
PALESTINE & KUWAIT**

KHAIRY ABUL JEBAIN

First edition in Arabic ٢٠٠٢

First edition in English ٢٠٠٦

All rights reserved for the Author

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means. Electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage retrieved system without the prior written permission of the Author.

Address of the Author:

Kuwait P.O. Box: 35188 AlShaab 36652

Tel: 965-9669146 + 2660718 Fax: 965-2660718

Mobile: 965-9660718

In Amman – Jordan Tel: 962-6-5680770

Fax: 962-6-5680771

Dubai Mobile: 965-9669146

www.kabuljebain.com

**THE STORY OF MY LIFE
IN
PALESTINE & KUWAIT**

Life in Palestine under the Mandate
Beginnings of Modern Life in Kuwait
Evolution of the Palestine Liberation
Organization (PLO)

KHAIRY ABUL JEBAIN

2006

٢٠٠٦

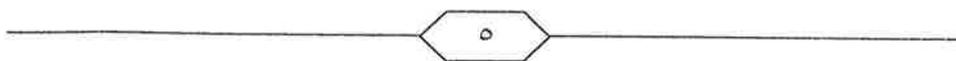
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT
RESEARCH REPORT

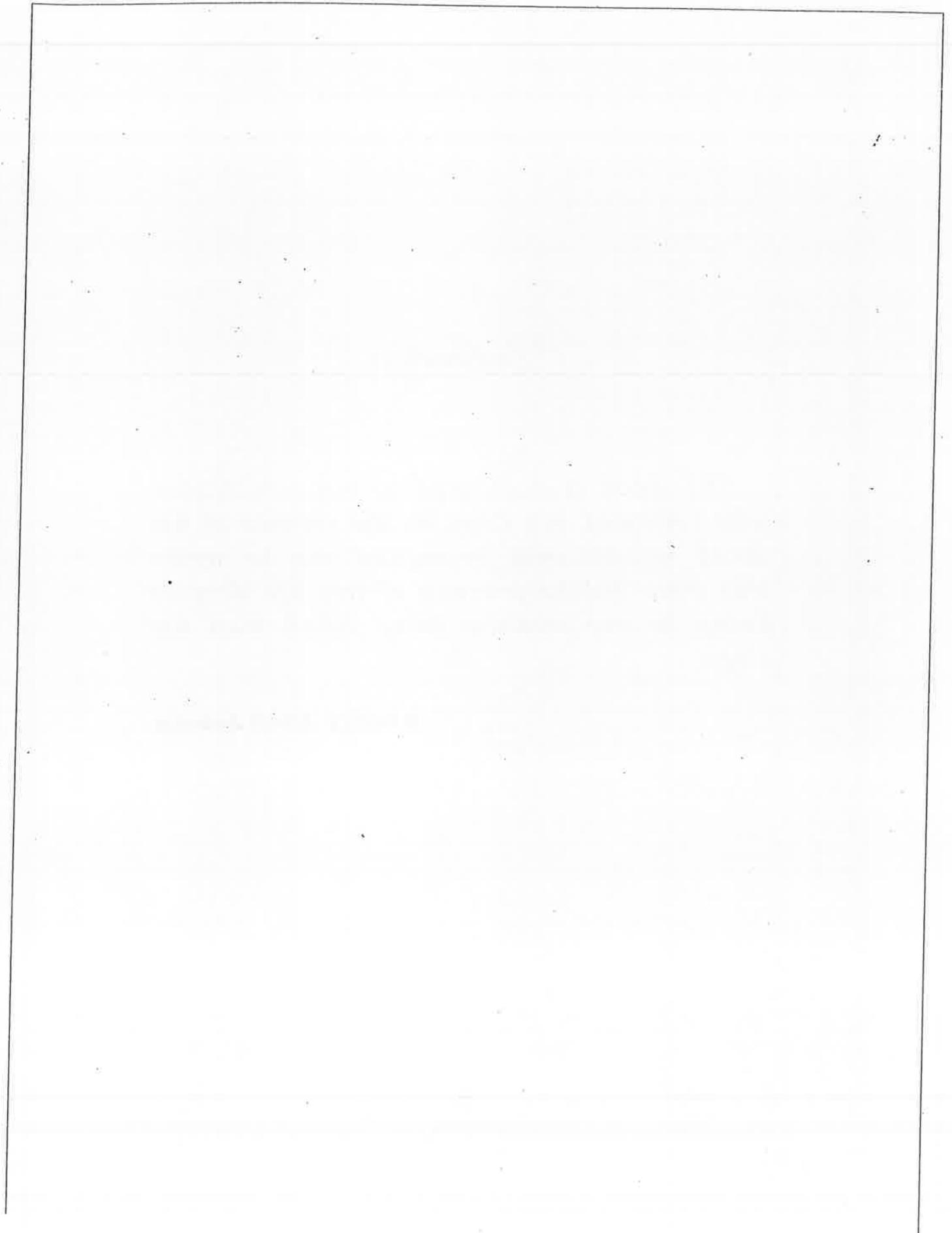
PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my son Nader who followed my steps in the service of his Arab nation and prompted me to write this book on the journey of my life despite being in my senility! May Allah lead his steps.

Khairy Abul Jebain





Contents

Dedication	o
Introduction	1o
PART I: My Life in Palestine	1V
Chapter I: My Childhood	19
- My Birth	19
- The Rise of Egyptian Families in JAffa	19
- Origins of the Abu Jebain's Family	2o
- Connection of Electricity to the City of Jaffa	22
- Palestinian Currency.....	22
- My Attraction to Public Service.....	23
- Moving out to a Separate Home.....	23
- Establishment of Al Nuzha neighborhood.....	24
Chapter II: My Study at Elementary School	2V
- My First School Year.....	2V
- The Teachers of My Brother and Sister.....	2V
- Scholastic Terms and Names of Teachers.....	2V
- My First Patriotic Lesson.....	29
Chapter III: Events of the Thirties.....	31
- Execution of Hejazi and His Comrades.....	31
- Abu Jildeh and Al Armeet.....	31
- Al Qassam's Uprising.....	32
- First Demonstration I Participated in.....	32
- First Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem.....	32
Chapter IV: Citrus Plantation and Business.....	3o
- Inspection of Oranges before Shipping.....	3o
- Picking and Packing of Oranges.....	36

- Contributors to the Citrus Process.....	٣٦
- Various Types of Oranges.....	٣٧
- Stages Prior to Export.....	٣٧
- Orange Merchants.....	٣٨
- Sailors.....	٣٩
- Orange Prices and Usage.....	٣٩
Chapter V: Popular Seasons in Palestine.....	٤١
- Prophet Saleh's Season.....	٤١
- Prophet Robin's Season.....	٤١
- Organizing the Inhabitants at Robin.....	٤٢
- Entertainment of Summer Vacationers at Robin.....	٤٣
- Information and Statistics on Robin.....	٤٣
Chapter VI: The Strike of ١٩٣٦.....	٤٥
- A Word on the Strike.....	٤٥
- How Information on the Strike Reached us.....	٤٦
- Annihilation of the Old City in Jaffa.....	٤٦
- Military Operations during the Revolution of ١٩٣٦.....	٤٧
- The Government's Attempt to Quell the Strike.....	٤٨
- End of the Strike.....	٤٨
- Erection of the Municipal Playground after the Strike..	٤٩
Chapter VII: Events of ١٩٣٨.....	٥١
- The Demise of my Mother.....	٥١
- Imposed Curfew.....	٥١
- Arms Inspections.....	٥٢
- Jaffa's Horsemen.....	٥٢
- Enhancement of my Political Culture.....	٥٣
- Ban of the Fiz (Tarboush).....	٥٣
- Arrests and Political Assassinations.....	٥٤
- My Participation in a Scouting Trip.....	٥٦
Chapter IIX: World War II.....	٥٧
- Some War Manifestations in Palestine.....	٥٧
- Establishment of the Arab Student Association.....	٥٩
- Establishment of the National Liberation League.....	٦٠

Chapter IX: Secondary Education in Palestine.....	٦٣
- Rashidiya College in Jerusalem.....	٦٣
- Educational System at Rashidiya.....	٦٥
- Palestine's Matriculation.....	٦٦
- Educational System at the Arab College.....	٦٧
- Teacher Qualifications in Palestine.....	٦٨
- The Mandate's Unjust Education Policy.....	٦٨
Chapter X: My Career in Teaching upon Graduation.....	٧١
- Looking for a Job.....	٧١
- My First Salary.....	٧١
- My Appointment as Official Teacher.....	٧٢
Chapter XI: My Participation in Public Activities.....	٧٥
- The Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa.....	٧٥
- Publishing the Supporters of Culture Magazine.....	٧٥
- Establishing other Smaller Clubs in Jaffa.....	٧٦
- Near East Broadcasting Station.....	٧٦
- Palestine Sports Federation.....	٧٨
- Establishment of Al Najjada Organization.....	٧٩
- Commencement of my Work in the Press.....	٧٩
Chapter XII: My Career in Press Censorship.....	٨٣
- Press Censorship in Palestine.....	٨٣
- My appointment at the Press Censorship Department..	٨٤
- Nature of Work within the Department.....	٨٥
- Suspension of my Work due to Unsettlements.....	٨٥
- Going Back to Teaching.....	٨٦
Chapter XIII: Jaffa Municipal Council.....	٨٩
- Municipality Council Elections of ١٩٣١.....	٨٩
- A Municipal Committee Instead of the Elected Council.....	٨٩
- A Word on Christian Denominations in Jaffa.....	٩٠
- The Last Municipal Council of Jaffa.....	٩٢
Chapter XIV: The Partition Resolution, the Fall of Jaffa and Immigration.....	٩٥
- Issuing of Palestine's Partition Resolution.....	٩٥

- The Reason Behind The Fall of Jaffa.....	٩٥
- Our Immigration from Jaffa.....	٩٦
- Our Admittance to Egypt as Refugees and Restriction of Movement.....	٩٨
PART II: My Life in Kuwait	١٠١
Chapter I: Life in Egypt upon Immigration from Palestine	١٠٣
- First Months in Cairo.....	١٠٣
- The Deteriorated Financial Situation of Refugees.....	١٠٣
- Al Qantara Camp.....	١٠٤
Chapter II: Immigration to Kuwait	١٠٥
- The Idea of Immigrating to Kuwait.....	١٠٥
- Entry Visa into Kuwait.....	١٠٦
- Establishment of the Passport Department.....	١٠٦
- Kuwaiti Travel Permits.....	١٠٧
- The Whole of Palestine Government Passport.....	١٠٨
- Leaving Cairo.....	١٠٨
- Passing by Beirut.....	١٠٩
- Travel Companions.....	١٠٩
- The Old Kuwait Airport.....	١١٠
- Palestinian Teachers in Kuwait.....	١١١
- Kuwait and the Palestinian Issue.....	١١١
- Beginning of My Life in Kuwait.....	١١٣
Chapter III: Our Simple Life in Kuwait in the Forties	١١٧
- Drinking Water Problem.....	١١٧
- Description of our Old House.....	١١٧
- The Birth of My First Son.....	١١٨
- Medical Staff in Kuwait.....	١١٨
Chapter IV: Education in Kuwait in the Forties and Early Fifties	١٢٣
- Historical Glimpse.....	١٢٣
- The Egyptian Education Mission in ١٩٤٨.....	١٢٤
- Kuwait Terminates the Work of the Egyptian Education Mission.....	١٢٥

- Appointment of Darweesh Al Miqdadi as Director of Education.....	127
- Failaka Ruins.....	128
- Abdul Aziz Hussein: The First Kuwaiti Director of Education.....	129
- Building of Shuwaikh Secondary School.....	131
Chapter V: Inception of the Sports Movement in Kuwait	133
- How Kuwait Came to Know Football.....	133
- Establishment of Al Ahli Club.....	133
- Establishment of The Kuwait Sports Union.....	134
- Establishment of the Olympic Committee.....	134
- Kuwait Joins the International Union.....	135
Chapter VI: Quitting My Career for an Administrative Job	139
- Establishment of the Public Electricity Department.....	139
- My Transfer to Work at the Department.....	139
Chapter VII: Personal Activities in the Seventies and Eighties	143
- Establishment of the Family Fund.....	143
- My Transfer from the Electricity to the Ministry of Education.....	144
- I'm Granted Kuwaiti Citizenship.....	145
- Establishment of the Welfare Association.....	145
Chapter IX: Palestinian Folklore	147
- Wedding of My Youngest Son Samer.....	147
- The Ceremony of "Jaffa Always in Mind".....	148
- Ramadan Hymns.....	151
PART III: The Beginnings of the PLO	153
Chapter I: Rising of the Palestinian Entity	155
- Palestinian Political Activity after the Disaster.....	155
- Palestinian Enthusiasm in Kuwait to Bring About the Entity and Hold Elections to Select their Representatives.....	159

- Election of the Committee Representing the Citizens of Palestine Kuwait and its Chairman.....	١٦٥
- Decision Summary of the Representatives of Palestinian Citizens in Kuwait.....	١٦٧
- Abul Jebain Presides over the ١st Conference of Palestinian Citizens in Kuwait to Bring About the Entity.....	١٦٨
- Proposals of Palestinian Citizens in Kuwait for Bringing About the Palestinian Entity.....	١٧٠
- ٢nd Conference of Palestinian Citizens in the Presence of Shuqairi.....	١٧٤
- The National Arab Movement Rejects Shuqairi's Project for Establishing a Palestinian Entity.....	١٧٧
Chapter II: Establishment of the PLO.....	١٧٩
- Al Shuqairi Rounds up his Tours for Establishing the Entity.....	١٧٩
- Selection of Members for the First Palestinian Conference.....	١٨٢
- Shuqairi's Speech at the Conference.....	١٨٤
- Adoption of the Palestinian National Charter, Declaration of Establishing the PLO and Electing Shuqairi as Chairman.....	١٨٥
Chapter III: PLO Proves Itself.....	١٨٩
- First National Assembly.....	١٨٩
- PLO's Ideology and Slogans.....	١٩٠
- First Executive Committee.....	١٩٢
- Appointment of Département and Office Directors.....	١٩٣
- Activities of the Executive Committee.....	١٩٦
Chapter IV: Establishment of the PLO's Office in Kuwait.....	٢٠١
- Selection of Khairy Abul Jebain as Director of the PLO's Office in Kuwait.....	٢٠١
- Political, Media and Financial Activities of the PLO's Office.....	٢٠٤

Chapter V: President Jamal Abdul Nasser Inaugurates the Second National Assembly	٢١٥
- Formation of the ٢nd National Assembly.....	٢١٥
- Inauguration of the ٢nd National Assembly.....	٢١٦
- Second Executive Committee.....	٢١٧
- Arms Training in Kuwait.....	٢١٩
- Sheikh Sabah Al Salem Ascends to the Emirate Following the Demise of Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem.....	٢٢٠
- Palestine's Day in Kuwait.....	٢٢١
- Academic Scholarships for Palestinian Students.....	٢٢٣
Chapter VI: Beginnings of the PLO's Military Activity ...	٢٢٥
- Holding of the Third National Assembly in Gaza.....	٢٢٥
- Shuqairi's Speech at the Assembly.....	٢٢٦
- Preparations for the Palestinians in Kuwait to Elect Members of the New National Assembly.....	٢٢٧
- Activities of the PLO's Office in Kuwait during ١٩٦٦..	٢٣٠
Chapter VII: The Disaster of ١٩٦٧ and Accompanying Events	٢٣٣
- Shuqairi Accompanies King Hussein to Amman Following the Disaster.....	٢٣٣
- PLO Activity after the Disaster.....	٢٣٤
- Arab Foreign Ministers Conference and Summit Conference after the Disaster.....	٢٣٦
- Establishment of PLO Schools in Kuwait.....	٢٣٨
- PLO Rejects Security Council Resolution No. ٢٤٢.....	٢٣٩
- Resignation of Ahmed Shuqairi from PLO Chairmanship.....	٢٤٠
Chapter VIII: Palestinian Groups Amend the National Charter	٢٤٣
- The New Executive Committee Takes Over Duties.....	٢٤٣
- Holding the ٤th National Assembly.....	٢٤٤
- Popular Follow up Committee for Unifying the Palestinian Work.....	٢٤٦
- Fath Movement Takes Over PLO Leadership.....	٢٤٨

Chapter IX: The New Form of the Palestinian National Fund.....	٢٥٥
- The Establishment of the Palestinian National Fund.....	٢٥٥
- Dr. Waleed Qamhawi Assumes Chairmanship of the Fund in ١٩٧٤.....	٢٥٧
- New Work Method at the Fund.....	٢٦١
- Failure of the Fund's Board of Directors in Reforming the Organization's Financial Situation.....	٢٦٣
Annex: Palestinian Contribution to the Arab Sport Movement after the Disaster.....	٢٦٩
The Author in brief.....	٢٧١

Introduction

We, the veterans, who were born and raised in Palestine during the British mandate and were forced to leave our country and live in other Arab countries and participate in the public life here and there; feel that each one of us has a life ordeal that worthy of recording.

I have now decided to publish a book comprising the story of my life in the Cities of Jaffa and Kuwait in which I took refuge after the disaster while concentrating on an important period of time that I lived through its events, namely the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in ١٩٦٤ and thereafter.

A number of friends who were familiar with my participation in different fields, particularly education, sports movement, press and politics have encouraged me to undertake this mission especially that I was one of the early Palestinians who migrated to the State of Kuwait and acquired, thereafter, its nationality in addition to being one of the founders of the Palestine Liberation Organization as I was the first Representative of the PLO and Director of its Office in the State of Kuwait. I was also elected member in the First Palestinian Conference which was held in Jerusalem in ١٩٦٤, then a member in the Palestinian National Assembly for many terms and occupied the position of Secretary of the Palestine National Fund for about fifteen years.

My aim behind publishing this book is to record down in history some of the activities of the Palestinians during the mandate period, show their attempts to maintain their own identity and their struggle to make their way abroad. I also aim at giving the upcoming generations an idea about the social and political life in Palestine prior to the Disaster and about the PLO upon its establishment. Added to that what I can remember on the establishment of the sports movement and modern education in the State of Kuwait.

I have conceded to my friends in writing about the different activities I've lived through and not confining myself to the political events in Palestine as many books were published on this topic whilst other activities in Palestine and Kuwait did not receive as much coverage.

In concluding, I hope that my biography would realize the aim after which it was published and may the reader find some benefit and enjoyment in it.

Khairy Abul Jebain

Kuwait on ٢٤/٣/٢٠٠٢



PART I .

MY LIFE IN PALESTINE





Old City and Port of Jaffa are built on a hill overlooking a significant part of the new city quarters. Its site was first selected by our Arab Canaanite ancestors who were the first to found it and live in it.

CHAPTER I

MY CHILDHOOD

My Birth

I was born in ١٩٢٤, in Jaffa the bride of Palestine. I was born in Abul Jebain Street, named after our family for being the first to reside there in the later part of ١٩th century. My paternal grandfather Haj Ameen Mohammad Abul Jebain as well as my maternal grandfather Haj Áhmad had built two large adjacent houses in this street after the family left its old house at Abu Sunnarah Street in downtown Jaffa. Abul Jebain Street in the ancient town of Jaffa was located at the beginning of road to the station at Al Rasheed (aka ARsheed) neighborhood. My Father, Saleh Abul Jebain, was the Mayor of that neighborhood. It is worth mentioning that my grandfather Ameen had three brothers Ahmad, Abdallah and Rasheed who are the heads of the four family sects in Jaffa City.

The Rise of Egyptian Families in Jaffa

It is worth mentioning that the Egyptians who joined Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mohammad Ali Pasha, in his campaign to Jaffa in ١٨٢٤ were those who established that neighborhood and named it "Rasheed" after the

Egyptian city and settled there after the departure of Ibrahim Pasha from Jaffa.

It is said that following the withdrawal of the Egyptian army from Jaffa, the city governor ordered the marriage of Ibrahim Pasha's soldiers, who preferred to stay in Jaffa, to some of Jaffa's widows and young girls, who were children and weren't killed with their fathers by Napoleon Bonaparte when he occupied Jaffa through trickery in March 1799 and killed all the five thousand soldiers of its garrison in the notorious Jaffa massacre at the hands of the French soldiers who used cold steel to in the massacre to save their ammunition under the orders of their murderous commander Napoleon.

This Napoleon had once described Jaffa as "an oasis that escaped from paradise". Following that slaughter, Jaffa City was void of men which caused the governor to arrange the marriage of the present Egyptian soldiers to the girls of Jaffa as aforesaid to increase the number of men so that Jaffa, the main gate to Palestine and the tourist's passageway to Holy Jerusalem can be rebuilt and protected.

Many of Jaffa's families originate from Egypt due to continuous reciprocal migrations between the Egyptians and the people of Jaffa throughout history.

Origins of the Abul Jebain's Family

It is noticed that in Jaffa city many quarters and markets are named after Egyptian places such as Al Ajami, Al Manshiya and Al Rasheed quarters as well as Al

Balabseh markets etc. On the other hand, the origin of our family as well may be from Egypt. However, our family tree which was kept in down town Safad city said that the grandfather of our family, Sheikh Ibrahim Al Matbouli was from Al Hijaz and that his father's ancestors descended from the Caliph Othman Ibn Affan, may God be pleased with him. The origin of our grandfather's mother however; was traced back to Zain Al Abideen Ibn Al Hassan Ibn Ali, may God be pleased with him, who was praised by the poet Al Farazdaq in the presence of the Umayyad Caliph in a poem which began with: "This is the person whose steps are known by the plains...and it is also known by the House, the Solvent and the Mosque".

Furthermore, the family tree indicated that the family's grandfather had migrated from Hijaz to Egypt and then to Palestine, where his four sons distributed themselves among four Palestinian cities and villages: Safad in the north, Zahiriya in the center near Hebron, Brair South near Gaza and in Jaffa city, where my grandfather was born, and where my father was also born in ١٨٨٨. My father was married to his cousin in Jaffa prior to WWI. My Mother "Zulfa" was proficient in the French Language which she learned at the Saint Joseph Nursing Missionary School in Jaffa. It was known that the French language was the second language for the cultured Palestinians in the Ottoman era before the English language which spread during the British mandate of Palestine.

Connection of Electricity to the City Jaffa

I remember when I was a child my father smoking Turkish cigarettes and chanting some Turkish songs in our house. Such songs came to my ear when I was passing "Al Inshirah Café" a well known place back then, which was near our street. My aunt told me once that on the day I was born the workers started connecting our house to electricity for the first time; an omen which made my family name me "Khair Edeen".

It is said that the Jewish company Rotenberg obtained from the Mandate government in 1922 a concession to produce and distribute electricity in Palestine. Many of the natives opposed the company while others called for support in its favor.

Palestinian Currency

I recall among the pleasant memories of my childhood buying sweets from a grocer called Al Akkad at the beginning of our street for one or two Egyptian Milleems. We continued using the Egyptian currency following the intrusion of the British forces to Palestine in WWI until 1927 when the mandate government minted the Palestinian currency after which we started using the Palestinian "Mills" in addition to other Palestinian currency coins which were the "Mill" and the Milleen which were made of copper. Then there were three other coins of tin gradually increasing in size and those were the five mils (Tarifeh), ten mills (Qirsh), and twenty mils (Qirshein). There were also two silver coins the fifty mils (shilling) and the one hundred mills (ten Qirsh) or

(Bareeza). Apart from these coins; there were also paper bills which consisted of the half pound note, the pound, five pounds, ten, and fifty pounds. The slang word for the pound was "lira" at the time. Each cash note included a picture for a Palestinian antiquity on each side, and I still remember that the colour of the one pound note was green, the colour of the five pounds red, the ten pounds blue, whereas the colour of the fifty pounds was dark orange. The Palestinian pound was equal to 1000 mils and it was also used in East Jordan. The pound was equal to a Sterling pound prior to the termination of the mandate in 1948. On the other hand; the value of the Palestinian pound before WWII equaled or exceeded a golden pound and almost equal to the Egyptian pound.

My Attraction to Public Service

In my childhood, I began noticing a number of public events due to the fact that the headquarters of the Islamic Sports Club was located on our street. On the same street was the headquarters of the Islamic Boys scouts. My attraction to the activities of these foundations had later on affected my personality which resulted in my attraction to public service.

Moving out to a Separate Home

In 1929 we left the family house I was born in and into a separate house located in Al Butmeh Street at the beginning of Al Ajami road south of the city due to the

increasing number of family members-something which was familiar in Jaffa.

During that time I studied in the Orthodox School which was near our new house. I also used to go in my childhood to the Italian Missionary School which was located near the station, and then to Al Barriyah Girls School which was near our home in Abul Jebain street.

Establishment of Al Nuzha neighborhood

After residing for a few months in Al Butmeh street, we moved to Al Nuzha neighborhood where we rented a 3-bedroom house for 22 Palestinian pounds a year. It was customary that leasing contracts in Jaffa were based on the lunar year which started from the month of Muharram to Muharram of next year.

At that time, Al Nuzha neighborhood was under construction and I noticed that a number of Syrian workers coming from Houran took part in the construction of houses in that neighborhood.



The Author at Al Nuzha neighborhood in Jaffa, 1934.

Part One

26

۲۶

CHAPTER II

MY STUDY AT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

My First School Year

At the beginning of the following scholastic year I entered the preschool class at Al Nuzha Elementary School which was then supervised by Headmaster Aref Al Budairi and was succeeded by Rafiq Al Tamimi.

We learnt to read from a book called "Ras Rous" (New First Edition), which was written by the dignified educator Khalil Al Sakakini. It is well known that most Palestinian students learnt how to read from this book until the last years of the mandate.

The Teachers of My Brother and Sister

My elder brother Anwar was sent to the The Friends School in Ramallah. The headmaster there was Khalil Toutah. As to my elder sister I'tidal, my mother sent her to Saint Joseph Nuns School; where she herself had studied in her youth.

Scholastic Terms and Names of Teachers

The scholastic year at Jaffa used to begin in mid September and the first term would extend until the end

of December. The second term used to last until April, whilst the third term would extend until mid July. There were three school holidays; one at the end of every scholastic term.

As to Al Nuzha Elementary School; I remember that it contained preschool up to sixth grade. However; in ١٩٣٤ preschool was named first grade and the sixth grade became the seventh grade. We were taught English from fourth grade (which earlier had been called third grade). Our teacher was Butros Mudawwar. A number of the respectful teachers have taught me at that school until fourth grade; among them were Saeed Al Dirhally for mathematics, Rashad Al Dabbagh, Jameel Al Qadoumi and Saeed Al Dajani for Arabic. Also, Dr. Mohammad Al Haj Meir taught me Arab History. Dr. Al Haj Meir used to implant the nationalistic spirit in us and I remember that he taught Middle and Modern History in third secondary grade at Al Rashidiyah School in Jerusalem where I studied in ١٩٤١ and ١٩٤٢. I was taught the Quran by Shaikh Mousa Jabr and Shaikh Abdul Badee Al Sharqawi.

In the higher elementary classes as well as in secondary classes; teacher Adeeb Al Khoury taught us Arabic, his method of teaching was so interesting. Our mathematics teacher was Rida Al Irani to whom I owe much for my excellent grades in mathematics all through my school years. Our teacher of history and geography was Abdul Hadi Jarrar who also used to instill patriotism in us, together with teachers Saeed Al Dajani and Yousef Al Hammouri from Hebron who opened a shop in Jaffa for training on shooting. Later on, I was taught English by

Jameel Al Saeed, Khaled Al Efranji, Shawkat Al Dajani and Ibrahim Matar, in that order.

My First Patriotic Lesson

This lesson was taught to me by the Headmaster of my School Rafiq Al Tamimi who was a prominent member in the Palestinian Arab Party. This happened when I went to him one day so I would get a leave permit from school that afternoon. When he asked me why, I told him that my mother was taking me to the Clinic of a Jewish Dentist called Levi for treatment. That clinic was located at Bestress or Iskander Awad street in Jaffa. The Jews kept working freely in Jaffa until the strike of ۱۹۳۶. When Al Tamimi heard this from me he was shaken in his seat and said: "Tell your parents not to deal with this Jewish doctor, and ask them to take you to the Arab doctor Dawoud Al Husaini.

Part One

30

۳.

CHAPTER III

EVENTS OF THE THIRTIES

Execution of Hijazi and His Comrades

Among the news we used to talk about during our childhood in Al Nuzha neighborhood in the early thirties was the execution of Hijazi, Al Zeer and Jamjourn, the rebels of ١٩٢٩ revolution, They were executed in the prison of Acre on the summer of ١٩٣٠. The execution day was a sad day for all Palestinians. We heard different stories about their heroism and how they reacted towards the execution and what they chanted in the eve of their execution:

O darkness of prison shed thy light

We are in love with darkness

After death comes only elevating glory

This chant was chanted all over Palestine all through the thirties.

Abu Jildeh and Al Armeet

While still children; we were very fond of the news of the guerilla leaders, Abu Jildeh and Al Armeet who caused a lot of irritation to the Mandate government in Jenin and

Tulkarm areas. We used to chant about them in our neighborhood:

Abu Jildeh and Al Armeet took off the hats and blocked all roads

I was reading about their works and how they were killed by the Police in the the Islamic League and Palestine newspapers. That was during my very early steps into reading, I also practiced my reading in the Difa' newspaper which was later published in ١٩٣٤. I used to read those three newspapers in the office of my uncles every Sunday which was weekend for schools and government in addition to Friday. My mother used to force me to go to my uncles' office on Sundays to prevent me from loitering in the streets So I used to spend all my time there reading all three newspaper and everything in them from news, anecdotes and advertisements.

Al Qassam's Uprising

I was also reading with utmost eagerness the news of the uprising of Ezziddin Al Qassam the Imam of Haifa Mosque and how he and his heroic comrades were martyred while struggling against the occupation forces in what became knows as the Qassam's Revolution and it motivated the Palestinian rebellions and sparked the Great Strike of ١٩٣٦.

First Demonstration I Participated in

I still remember that during my school years in the thirties, my colleagues and I joined a demonstration at the Martyrs Square near the Great Mosque in Jaffa in ١٩٣٣. In this demonstration the Palestinian leader Mousa Kazem Pasha Al Husseini later on died due to an injury he sustained at that demonstration.

First Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem

I remember when we were in fourth grade in ١٩٣٤; we were taken on a fieldtrip to visit the First Arab Industrial Exhibition which took place in Jerusalem. I remember that we paid ten piasters as fees for that trip and we ate there the popular Palestinian dessert dish of Kunafa from the "Abatha" shop. We also bought the Nabulsi soap called "Shak'a Soap" from there. In that very year, I joined the boy scouts team at school which was supervised by teacher Ibrahim Murad.

Part One

34

٣٤

CHAPTER IV

CITRUS PLANTATION AND BUSINESS

Inspection of Oranges before Shipping

My Uncle Zuhdi Abul Jebain, was one of the major citrus merchants in Palestine. He established, in the thirties a Jaffan-English Company to market the famous oranges of Jaffa in Britain.

Speaking of the exportation of Jaffa orange to British ports; I remember that my eldest brother in the thirties was appointed by the Director of Agriculture, Ali Afifi, who was a friend of our family, to inspect oranges prior to their export, since the oranges could not be exported except after being inspected at the Agriculture Department in central Jaffa, in its office located in the Batma neighborhood. The inspection was conducted through a sample from each vehicle loaded with oranges for export. During my childhood, I used to watch my brother Anwar while marking a box in each vehicle with a piece of chalk. Then, the employees of the Agriculture Department inspected the marked box. If the box was found free of damage and pests the whole loaded vehicle would be permitted to pass into Jaffa Port from where the oranges were exported to other countries.

Picking and Packing of Oranges

It is well known that the oranges boxes were stored at the port docks. From there they were transported by boats to ships anchored far away in the sea due to the nature of Jaffa Port.

I find it suitable to give the reader an idea about the process of picking and shipping of oranges. In the past, Jaffa was surrounded by orange groves which spread all over Palestine, except for the mountainous areas. The owner of each grove used to take care of it then rent it in summer to one of the orange merchants against a certain sum of money. That is, the merchant would send his workers, starting October, to harvest the orange grove, put them in wooden boxes and prepare them for export. Thus, you would see one worker picking oranges from the tree, another placing them oranges in baskets, and another moving the baskets to a sorting area where the oranges were sorted by size, the bad ones taken out then the oranges were wrapped with soft tissues and labeled a distinguishing brand. After that comes the role of the carpenter who first prepared boxes of standard sizes: 16cm, 17cm or 18cm according to the size of the orange for the purpose of protecting the box during export. The carpenter would then surround each box with a wooden frame of softwood, and then the box would be nailed shut then hauled onto a truck to be carried to the port for export.

Contributors to the Citrus Process

In addition to the major processes I just mentioned; there are other secondary processes and other specific workers

participating in the preparation of oranges for export. It is known that the majority of Jaffa's population was dependant in their living on this blessed golden fruit. Among these people were the owner of the grove, the harvesters, merchants, assessors, carpenters, timber businessmen, as well as the owners of trucks, drivers, mechanics, store keepers, sailors and other firms like the printing presses which printed the name or trademark of the merchant on the paper used in wrapping the oranges and on the wood of the orange boxes. My uncles; owners of Abul Jebain Bros. Co. had one of these printing presses. On my holidays, I used to frequently visit the press as well as the grove to watch the picking of oranges and their preparation for export. Some of the families in Jaffa, including our family, were known as orange merchants. It can be said that all of Jaffa's population were connected with oranges in one way or another.

Various Types of Oranges

In Jaffa; we used to enjoy eating different types of fresh citrus, namely the typical Jaffa orange, Shamouti, navel, valencia, and partridge blood orange in addition to citron, pummel, grapefruit, calamondins, mandolins, sweet and sour lemon, Khushkhas, the sweet oranges which we called Sukkari or French, or Moroccan oranges as it is sometimes called outside Jaffa.

Stages Prior to Export

Orange seasons usually start from October and extend until April of the next year when the Valencia oranges were exported. This type of orange is marked by its thick

rind, therefore the fruit remained edible until summer. I remember that orange trees would blossom in March or April, and the groves would emit a sweet smell. It is actually said text that Galioum, the German Chancellor in his autobiography that the happiest night he slept in his life was the night he slept in Jaffa in April when the breeze, that night, carried the sweet scent of oranges.

I also remember that the King of Sweden when he was crown prince visited and loved Jaffa. I met him personally in ١٩٣٤ where he was a guest at the palace of my uncle Zuhdi Abul Jebain in Jaffa.

Following April of each year, farmers would begin attending to the grove soil; irrigate the trees in addition to pruning the branches, etc. until the fruit ripens. The orange Businessman would usually own one grove or more, and sometimes rent other groves to export their fruit for his own account or through commission brokers who would lend the grove owner some money until the oranges were sold in England through the ports of London, Liverpool or Hull. Grapefruits however; were usually exported to Germany. At that time Germany used to send to the merchant in Jaffa a cargo truck against every ٥٠٠ boxes of grapefruit.

Orange Merchants

Among the well-known orange merchants I heard of in Jaffa were:

Adeeb Hamdan, Abdul Muhsen Hijazi, Hamdan Morsi, Zaki Barakat and his brothers, Sheik Mohammad Shaban,

Abu Ameen Hout, Ahmad Husni, Haj Hassan Qattan, Hajji Ibrahim Banna, Mohammad Albdul Raheem, Hajji Khaled Sunjuq, Al Qudsi, Ibrahim Younis, Zuhdi Hajjaj and his brother Sayyed, Saeed Baidas and his brother Yousef, Khalid Sakijha and Zuhdi Abul Jebain. Hashem Abu Khadra ranked in the early thirties among the most well-known orange merchant in Jaffa. Zuhdi Abul Jebain and Saeed Baidas were members of the Citrus Control Council. The orange merchants in Jaffa used to gather at Dawoud Cafe and the National Cafe at Al Salaahi Market.

Among the merchants of paper, wood, nails, and frames required for the orange boxes were Azar, Abul Jebain Bros. and Abdul Nour. Among the owners of printing presses dealing with orange papers and wood was Jaffa printing Press Co. which was owned by Al Malek family and Abul Jebain Bros. Co.

It was also known that Haj Nimer Al Nabulsi from Nablus, owned the largest orange grove in Palestine of an area of 1,000,000 Donums (one million square meters).

Sailors

From the Sailors shipping oranges from the docks of Jaffa Port to the ships in the sea, the ones I knew were: Al Madhoun, Jaheer, Al Yaseer, Al Kashef, Abu Shlah, Al Mansi, Al Jarbi and others. I also read that Heikal and Abu Lughud were among the old sailors in Jaffa as well.

Orange Prices and Usage

Regarding the price of an orange box; I still remember that the box of oranges was sold, in the thirties, in Britain

according to the rule of supply and demand between 12 and 20 shillings (one Sterling pound) or more.

The highest number of boxes Palestine exported to Britain during the Mandate was 22 million a year. It is known that oranges were used for several purposes, such as eating, cooking, extraction of different types of juices as well as in the preparation of desserts and dried fruit etc. The rind was used for such purposes as preparation of perfumes. Additional uses of oranges involved the use of the pulp especially if it was thick as in citron. On the other hand, marvelous perfumes used to be extracted from the orange flower.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR SEASONS IN PALESTINE

Prophet Saleh's Season

I recall from that period of my life that my father took me in the spring of ١٩٣٣ or ١٩٣٤ to the city of Ramleh to watch Prophet Saleh's Season which was held in April of each year. There we enjoyed the parade which used to begin in Jaffa and end in Ramleh. We also saw the hoisted banners and listened to the nationalistic chants near the white minaret of Ramleh. In the evening, we returned home by train, supplied with the white and dry sweet of Prophet Saleh. It is worth mentioning that Saladin was the one who created Prophet Saleh's Season in Ramleh, Prophet Moses Season in Jerusalem as well as Prophet Robin's Season in Jaffa and Wadi Al Naml Season in Majdal Askelon, for the purpose of mobilizing Islamic troops in these seasons against those of the crusaders during the war then taking place on the soil of Palestine.

Prophet Robin's Season

I remember that this season used to take place in summer where we used to put up tents to camp on the land of Robin ١٠ km south of Jaffa city, and known for its fine

white sand dunes. The people of Jaffa, Ramleh and Lydd used to spend a part of the summer season in that beautiful resort between Robin's River and the sea. The season started officially by the "Zaffa of the Dress" on the first day of the lunar month corresponding with September of every year. That season was an occasion for the thronging of all sorts of people: scholars, banner holders, religious men and notables. The procession would start from Jaffa to Robin where the banners were kept at the shrine of Prophet Robin.

Organizing the Inhabitants at Robin's

This season lasts for at least a month. The Municipality of Jaffa used to supervise the cleanliness and markets at Robin, whilst the Department of Health would take care of healthcare and the police station would look after security. I remember that my Uncle Eissa Abul Jebain was the Mayor of Robin Municipality in the thirties and forties and our family as well as many other families from Jaffa used to compete on how to arrange their tents. Going to Robin in summer was almost a kind of obligation to the Jaffan families. The housewife would insist on going so she wouldn't be left out by her lady neighbors, they even threaten to leave their husbands by saying, "Either you take me to Robin or divorce me".

Robin's Season came to a halt in the summer of 1936 by reason of the Great Strike in Palestine. We resumed going to Robin in 1937 and halted again during the 1938 revolt and WWII. Thereafter, we celebrated the season for one or two last times before the partitioning Resolution and

end of the mandate. Club teams and boy scouts from Jaffa, Ramleh and Lydd used to take part in this season's celebrations as well.

Entertainment of Summer Vacationers at Robin

In Robin, there were a number of movies and theaters which that invited a number of Egyptian singers and actors. Moreover; there were markets, cafes, clinics, bakeries, restaurants and all amenities of a comfortable life in that resort which was mostly frequented by Jaffan vacationers who stop working on picking and exporting oranges during the months of winter

Information and Statistics on Robin

Before ending my memories on Robin's Season, I would like to mention specific data on Robin's lands which I quote from the Jaffan Palestinian historian Mustafa Murad Dabbagh and those are:

- The area of Robin's lands is ٣١,٠٠٠ Donums (٣١ million square meters).
- The plains and sands of Robin extend ٤,٠ kilometers from the inside for a length of ١٣ kilometers.
- River Robin extends from Tel Sultan to the sea, and its permanent stream is no longer than ٢ miles.
- The Jews erected a nuclear reactor near the mouth of river Robin between ١٩٥٩ and ١٩٦٠ in cooperation with USA.

Eziddin Qumbarji of Jaffa said about Robin in The Boat Magazine then issued by Jaffa Social Development Society in Amman the following:

- River Robin is located to the south of Jaffa city, at a distance of ٢٠ kilometers.
- The right bank of River Robin is fertile whereas the left bank is covered with yellowish white sand dunes, a part of which was covered with large quinine trees. Both those pieces of land in addition to the river itself were named Robin after Prophet Robin whose shrine is said to be within the borders of the big Mosque which was surrounded in Robin's Season by camps and markets.

CHAPTER VI

The STRIKE OF 1936

A Word on the Strike

When we were residing at Al Nuzha neighborhood, and during my study at elementary school; the 1936 Strike broke out in protest over the British policy as well as the Jewish immigration into Palestine. That was the longest strike ever known all over the world, it lasted 7 months. The Strike began in Jaffa on 19/4/1936 then spread to the other Palestinian cities and villages. The strike was comprehensive in that it included the halt of all trading activities as well as schools, markets, shops, and factories and almost everything else. An armed uprising of the Palestinian people accompanied the strike, particularly in the cities and villages of the so-called Triangle, i.e. Nablus, Tulkarm, Jenin and Qalqilya, where the rebels used to ambush passing British and Jewish vehicles there, and then exchange fire with them.

As a result of the strike, the Jews established Tel Aviv Port because the port of Jaffa stopped working. It is known that Tel Aviv, the largest of the enemy cities, was established around the just prior to WWI. Back in the twenties it was one of the small suburbs of Jaffa.

How Information about the Strike Reached us

The Press Department during the strike period used to spread its vans to show films and different pictures calling for peace. We used to watch these films and pictures and laugh with sarcasm!

My patriotic tendencies began to mature during the strike and I found myself more and more listening to the news of battles taking place between the rebels and the British police on the radio at our home. The station of Jerusalem used to usually end its bulletin about the news of fighting by saying "No casualties were inflicted and no damages occurred" We used to laugh at that expression. Moreover; I used to listen to the news while sitting with my colleagues at Al Sha'rawi grocery, which was close to our home. At this cafe, the men of our neighborhood would gather to talk about Ezeddin Al Qassam's movement as well as about the fighting and the valorous feats of the rebels.

During the strike, I became more attached to reading the newspapers to know what was going on. I used to read all the newspapers which my father and brother brought home everyday and those were Palestine and Al Difaa' newspapers which were published in Jaffa, in addition to the Egyptian magazines that regularly arrived to Jaffa. This was how I increased my cultural and political awareness.

Annihilation of the Old City in Jaffa

I still remember, among the other important events during the strike, that the Mandate government blew up the old city in Jaffa on ١٨/٦/١٩٣٦ in retaliation to the people's

cooperation with the rebels, and in an attempt to prevent them from hiding in the narrow streets of Jaffa. I also remember that we ourselves watched the destruction process while standing on the pavement of the Great Mosque facing the old town. In his book "Palestine: Our Homeland", the historian Mustafa Al Dabbagh wrote that the Judge at the British Supreme Court denounced the Mandate government for blowing up the homes in the old town of Jaffa unjustifiably during a case brought by a citizen for compensation of his destroyed home. The said government then paid very meager compensations for people with destroyed homes.

Military Operations during the Revolution of ۱۹۳۶ .

It is known that during the ۱۹۳۶ Revolt, and thereafter, a considerable number of Arab Militants, especially from Syria, participated in the battles over Palestinian soil. Those militants were well-trained and they were actively involved in the fighting against the British forces, mostly in the Triangle zone: Nablus, Jenin and Tulkarm.

It is worth mentioning that Fawzi Al Qawokji, an officer of Lebanese origin, took part in this revolt, and had a wide reputation among the Palestinian public. We listened to many chants in praise of Al Qawokji such as: "Hey Zionists! Take care! The valorous rebels are attacking and with them Fawzi Al Qawokji the fearless lion".

I remember that Al Qawokji returned to Palestine, following the Partition Resolution to take part in fighting, and based his headquarters near Jenin.

The Government's Attempt to Quell the Strike

The British government sent General Dell to quell the revolt, and we used to hear, in this context, the Palestinian popular poet Noah Ibrahim chanting in one of his records:

“Oh Mr. Dell. Work it out. May be you can solve it”.

That poet used to call for national solidarity in his poems and we liked very much to listen to him saying in one of his records: “Religion is for God, but the country is for all!”

End of the Strike

After the elapse of six months into the strike, the Arab Kings and Presidents asked the Supreme Arab Commission to end it to give a chance to “friendly” Britain to solve the Palestine issue. The strike stopped and activity returned to Jaffa and other cities and villages of Palestine, yet the seeds of revolt remained latent.

As to the study at schools during that period; I remember that our school closed its doors from April. I was then in the sixth elementary grade. The school resumed its activities in October following the strike. Then, we sat for the exams after which we were promoted to seventh grade. It is worth mentioning that the rebels, at the beginning of the strike, set fire in the new building of our school “Al Amiriyah” as well as the building of the neighboring girls school “Al Zahra”. Thereafter, these buildings were repaired, and we moved to the new

building at the beginning of the academic year ١٩٣٨-١٩٣٩.

Erection of the Municipal Playground after the Strike

In ١٩٣٧, the Awqaf Department in Jaffa retrieved the land of Al Barreya playground neighboring our street which I used to frequent to watch the football matches of the Islamic Club. The Awqaf Department later converted that playground as well as the adjacent lands to a large marketplace in the middle of the city and called it Al Is'aaf Market.

The club was then forced to find another place for a playground, and so took a permit from Jaffa Municipality to reclaim "the land of Bassa" East of Jaffa to establish a new playground. The members of the club exerted exhaustive efforts to level the playground and plant it with grass. This required a large sum of money which was gathered from the fund of the club as well as by donations of some of Jaffa's wealthy people in addition to sums borrowed by the club from the Arab Bank to complete the project against the guarantee of some of the club supporters. Thus, the Bassa playground (or Municipal playground as it came to be known later on) was established late in ١٩٣٨. That playground had standard dimensions and was surrounded with a huge stadium made of concrete cement. Since the early ١٩٣٩ until the end of the mandate, all sports and popular activities in Jaffa were held there.

Part One

50

o.

CHAPTER VII

EVENTS OF ١٩٣٨

The Demise of my Mother

In May of ١٩٣٨, my mother passed away following a surgical operation at the French Hospital in Jaffa by a French Surgeon named Peru. He and his colleague Dr. Corni were the most prominent Physicians in Jaffa city, next to Dr. Fuad Al Dajani. The French Hospital was the largest in Jaffa followed by Dr Fuad Al Dajani's Hospital in Al Nuzha neighborhood. Dr. Al Dajani's Hospital was considered the first Arab private-owned hospital in Palestine. Following the death of my mother we left Al Nuzha and moved again to Abul Jebain Street; to the houses of the big family.

When we moved there, the ١٩٣٨ revolt was at its peak, and the British authorities used to impose curfews every now and then for the purpose of quelling the revolt.

Imposed Curfews

The sirens would blow from time to time as an alert to imposing curfews on the city. The curfew used to last all through the night hours and most of the day. In other words, it was lifted for two or three hours to enable people to purchase their needs of food and bread. The

curfews in that year lasted for days and even weeks at a time.

During the curfew periods, the British soldiers would gather the men of the neighborhood and keep them under the blazing heat of the sun, with their hands up.

Arms Inspections

Meanwhile; soldiers used to storm houses in search of arms causing a lot of mischief. I remember that some soldiers once entered our street in the summer of ۱۹۳۸ and started an inspection. Our house was then in the middle of the street. My uncle Misbah Abul Jebain, was one of Jaffa's well-known horsemen who owned a very beautiful grey mare. He built for his mare a grand stable of reinforced concrete in the vicinity. While the soldiers were busy stroking the mare lovingly, my uncle seized the opportunity and smuggled out the piece of arm he kept in his room.

Jaffa's Horsemen

In this context I remember that during the thirties and early forties there were a number of people in Jaffa who became interested in breeding and riding horses, notably Misbah Abul Jebain, Haseeb Dirhallelh and Deeb Barakeh who used to ride their horses on the seashore in most afternoons. The people of Jaffa still remember that my uncle Misbah's mare did actually shed tears while clad in black during his funeral.

Enhancement of My Political Culture

Due to the fact that our street was more of an alley rarely trodden by the police to inspect the enforcement of curfews; the men of our neighborhood found an opportunity to gather at the house of one of them in the evenings to talk about the news of the rebels and the cruelty of the British police in fighting them. During these evenings, I began to hear about the names of the rebel leaders of the different areas of Palestine, who were almost acting on their own despite being politically attached to Al Mufti. These leaders had vast powers in their territories to the extent that they were sometimes holding court hearings for those collaborating with authorities. Among the most prominent leaders in the Jenin-Tulkarm area were Abdul Raheem Al Haj Mohammad and Aref Abdul Razzak. During that period, I read some pages from Adolf Hitler's book "My Struggle" which was the first political book I have ever read.

Banning of the Fiz (Tarboush)

Alongside all the aforementioned there emerged another phenomenon during 1938. That was the banning of wearing the fiz (Taraboush). The rebels prohibited the people of Palestinian cities from wearing it and made everybody instead either wear a head scarf (hatta and 'uqal) or stay bare headed. The reason behind this was because British police arrested anyone wearing a head scarf on accusation of being one of the rebels. So by making everybody wear those scarves they confused the

police who weren't able to distinguish the rebels from civilians!

It is known that the fiz was then the formal head dress for men in Palestinian cities as well as in a number of Arab countries particularly Egypt, where as villagers in Palestine used to wear the Hatta and 'uqal. The Fiz originally came from Turkey. It was made from thick and dark red velvet with different sizes according to head sizes. There were a number of shops in Jaffa specialized in selling and making of the fiz. The elder people continued to wear the fiz later on. I remember that my father continued wearing the fiz until his death in Cairo in 1971.

Arrests and Political Assassinations

Among the other consequences of the revolution of 1948 were political arrests, where a considerable number of Palestine's notables were arrested and taken to concentration camps such as Sarafand near Jaffa and Acre in the north. We heard a lot of tales about the harsh life of those arrested in those detention camps and their secret gatherings there. A number of them described the details of their lives at those camps in their political memoirs.

Also among the negative aspects of this revolution were the political assassinations which were denounced by the Palestinians because such acts split the Palestinians and weakened their revolt. I heard when I was young that the men of Al Mufti resorted to the assassination to suppress their opponents. I also heard that the Palestinian intellectual Hasan Sudqi Al Dajani was assassinated in Jerusalem for being in opposition and so was Fakhri Al

Nashashibi who was assassinated in Baghdad in ۱۹۴۱. Other people were assassinated in Lydd, such as Sa'eed Al Hunaidi, Abdul Latif Al Hunaidi and Omar Karazon.

I also heard that Anwar Al Shukairi was assassinated in Acre. Sami Taha; the Labor Party leader was assassinated in Haifa. Taha Ghannam and Saleem Omar were assassinated in Jaffa, along with many others. Some said that many of those assassinated were mistakenly or unjustly killed or killed for revenge or for personal reasons. I also noticed when I was a child that opposition leaders in Jaffa were intensifying security around their houses, offices and meeting places. Among those I knew in Jaffa were some of Al Difaa' Party members such as Omar and Abdul Raouf Al Bitar, Masoud Al Dirhally, Ali Al Mustaqeem, Saleem Al Sa'eed and others. On the other hand, I remember among the men of the Arab Party in Jaffa or "Al Mufti Party", then under the leadership of Jamal Al Husaini each of Mohammad Abdul Raheem, Khaled Al Farkh, Ali Al Dabbagh, Kamil Al Dajani and others.

We used to hear that the Toukan, Al Shakaa and Al Masri families in Nablus were among the opposition, and such were Al Hunaidi and Karazon families in Lydd. It was also said that Rushdi Al Shawwa from Gaza was opposition while Haj Mousa Al Sourani was among the men of Al Mufti.

Rivalry was at its peak in Palestine between the men of "Al Husaini" and the men of "Al Nashashibi" (the opposition), and this was very clear during the municipal elections in Jerusalem and Jaffa held in ۱۹۴۶.

My Participation in a Scouting Trip

In that year, I was in our school's boys scout's team and we went on a field trip during which we visited the cities of northern Palestine then headed to Al Hemma area where we put up our tents on the banks of the Yarmouk River, where the battle of Yarmouk took place and the Muslims under the leadership of Abu Obaida Ibn Al Jarrah and Khalid Bin Al Waleed triumphed. This was my first boy scouting trip.

CHAPTER VIII

World War II

Some War Manifestations in Palestine

During my study in the first and second secondary grades in Jaffa; WWII broke out. Among the manifestations of this war that were noticeable in Jaffa were such things as the spread of allied soldier troops in the city who used to frequent the entertainment places so very obviously. Also, the city was put under state of emergency. A number of youth volunteered to work with the allied troops. The British army camps at Sarafand and other places were full of activity. The government created new departments called War Departments. The staff of these departments received higher salaries than their colleagues in other departments. Among such departments were The Heavy and Light Industries Departments, the Supplies Department, the Press Department where I worked as censor of Arab and other newspapers. The emergency law did not allow employees to resign their jobs easily. Also I noticed that consumer prices soared. Moreover; rationing included such items as the sale of gasoline which restricted the use of vehicles to war or medical purposes, as well as the selling of meat which was sold only twice or thrice. Due to scarcity; we began replacing rice with crushed wheat and sugar cane with red beet sugar. We

also began using Soy beans. Moreover, the government began distributing unified clothes "utilities" for civilians, whereas tailored clothes prices began to soar, resulting in the boom of the second hand clothes markets. Also due to the war the government imposed many restrictions on supplies so they were dispensed by ration cards for families. The price index was measured monthly by points. The government paid its staff cost of living allowances according to that index. Another result of the war was the discontinuation of the export of oranges, which caused distress to the citizens who relied on the export of oranges to sustain a living for their families.

Bags of oranges were piled in the groves and sold at very cheap prices. Farmers found difficulty in picking the oranges (a process necessary for the health of the orange tree). The Mandate government helped the farmers and grove owners irrigate and plough their lands via loans through the Citrus Control Council located at Jaffa city.

Among the results of the war was the increased smuggling of goods, particularly tires, from Trans Jordan into Palestine.

I also noticed that the government became economic in its spending, for instance, the Post Office and some other departments reused envelopes several times. Also, people began using newspapers instead of toilet papers. I also noticed during that period that business dealings between the Arabs and Jews resumed after having ended in the revolution of ١٩٣٦.

Towards the end of the war, the Zionist organizations escalated their terrorist actions against the British police

and Mandate government officials. During WWII the British Government established the "Near East" broadcasting station in Arabic to promote allies propaganda.

This station was first located in Jenin then was moved to Jaffa. Due to this station we began seeing great Arab artists and writers coming to the city to participate in the station's shows. During that era, the young Jaffan singer Mohammad Al Rashidi came to be known along with the young monologist Mazen Shafiq Al Ansari. The Near East broad casting welcomed them as it welcomed others to display their artistic talents.

It is worth saying that during the war the citizens of Jaffa as well as of the other cities; discontinued celebrating popular and national seasons such as Prophet Saleh's season and Prophet Robin season.

In Jaffa and other cities, lights were turned off at night, and windows were darkened by being covered with blue paper as a precaution against enemy air raids.

Establishment of the Arab Student Association

In ١٩٣٩ during my study at the second secondary grade, I joined Jaffa's branch of the Arab Students Association which was newly established. I used to frequently visit the Association located in the Islamic library which occupied the rear part of the upper floor of Jaffa's central mosque. That Library overlooked the old city and the public fountain of Mahmoudiya. At the Association, we were supervised by a student from the AUB named

Wajeeh Farouq. We used to practice a number of activities there and I further learned how to participate in different meetings, engage in discussions, submit proposals to general meetings and conduct voting etc. This enabled me to conduct meetings efficiently in my career later on. Due to my interest in those issues it was inevitable for me to read a book called "Robert Rules".

My participation in the Association in Jaffa was considered the first political activity I've ever done. The Association used to issue a gazette called Tomorrow, edited by Elias Bandak from Bethlehem. This newspaper adopted a leftist attitude. Among the writers of that gazette was Mousa Roshdi Al Dajani from Jaffa. I took part in that gazette and benefited a lot from reading it.

Establishment of the National Liberation League

I remember becoming acquainted later on with Roshdi Shaheen, a leader of the Palestinian Communist Party who was a colleague of mine in teaching at the Cultural College in Jaffa following my graduation from Rasheediya College in Jerusalem.

I used to spend many evenings with him and my friend Husain Najm. This was prior to the Disaster. With the help of Roshdi Shaheen; I became familiar and started reading about social and communist activities. We discussed the political events of Palestine and other countries. Shaheen and other colleagues joined the National Liberation League which was established in Palestine in the later part of the WWII. The league reflected leftist and communist attitudes to some extent.

The mandate government permitted the activities of that league in Palestine, allowed it to spread its ideas in the Union newspaper, then issued in Haifa and allowed them to distribute their pamphlets in public squares. This co-operation on the part of the mandate government stemmed from the alliance then existing between Britain and the USSR the leader of the Communist Bloc during WWII which ended with the victory of the allies' troops over Germany and its allies, following the atomic attack by the USA over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Part One

62

TY

CHAPTER IX

**SECONDARY EDUCATION
IN PALESTINE.**

Rashidiya College in Jerusalem

After returning to the family house at Abul Jebain Street in spring of ١٩٣٨, I realized that our neighbor Ragheb Al Khaldi, son of Dr. Hasan Shukri Al Khaldi was sent on a scholarship from Jaffa to the Arab College in Jerusalem, to which only very few were sent every year from all Palestinian cities.

I liked the idea of studying in Jerusalem although the thought had not occurred to before, because the students of Jaffa's secondary schools usually joined the commercial division upon completion of the second secondary class. The commercial division was founded in ١٩٣٥ where students would study for two years to obtain the commercial secondary certificate. The founder of that division was Hafiz Al Dajani who was also the first to teach there, followed by Khalid Himmo. There was also in Haifa an industrial school of the same level and in Tulkarm there was an agricultural school. In all of Palestine and until the early forties, there were no complete secondary schools except for the Arab College and Rashidiya College in Jerusalem which were public

schools, in addition to the missionary schools whose students used to sit for London's Matriculation examination. Also, some students of the Female Teachers public college in Jerusalem began to sit for the Matriculation examination at the end of the ۱۹۴۲-۱۹۴۳ academic year.

After passing the second secondary grade with honors, I was selected together with another colleague by the Department of Education to continue our study in Jerusalem. My colleague Fuad Abbas was sent to the Arab College and I was sent to Rashidiya College in October of ۱۹۴۰.

In Jerusalem, I lived as a boarding student in the Ibrahimiya college dormitory along with many other students of Rashidiya College due to the fact that Rashidiya's own dormitories were full. These two dormitories were at Al Sahira Gate neighborhood. I lived at Ibrahimiya dormitory for two years, ۱۹۴۰-۱۹۴۲. During these two years I had the opportunity to get acquainted with our beloved capital Jerusalem and its historical and religious landmarks. During my study at Rashidiya College, I made friends with the college's best students who later on assumed the highest positions in Palestine. The boarding life was then harsh back then because we suffered the consequences of WWII where supplies were limited and living conditions were hard. I was surprised to find that the students of Rashidiya College were very perseverant and used to spend long hours preparing their lessons, unlike the students in Jaffa.

At that time, I was taught by a number of dignified teachers, such as Doctors Nicola Ziyadeh, Mohammed Al Haj Meer, Abdul Hafiz Kamal, Ahmad Suwaidan, Abdul Salam Al Barghouthi, Wasfi Hijab, Mousa Khouri and others. Those were among the prominent teachers in Palestine.

Some of them were also teaching in the Arab College. The top graduates of those two colleges were sent abroad on scholarships. Due to the lack of efficient teaching staff, some of these teachers began teaching at private schools which started completing their secondary classes, and their students could sit for the Palestinian Matriculation examination.

Educational System at Rashidiya

The students who joined Rashidiya came from all over Palestine but were those who ranked first or second in their classes. We were divided into classes according to our preferences. We were fifty students in third secondary sections A and B. It is worth mentioning that students from Jerusalem had priority, meaning the top ten of the second secondary class from Jerusalem were advanced to the third secondary class, whereas in other Palestinian cities only one or two from each city were advanced to the third secondary class. We were divided into two streams according to our preferences: Literary and Science. I chose the scientific stream. I was chosen together with other students, following an IQ test, to study advanced mathematics while we shared other subjects with the rest of our colleagues. Among my

colleagues in the mathematics major, I remember Husain Najm from Usdud who came from Gaza, Jamil Maraqa from Jerusalem, Rashid Husni from Tulkarm, Mohammed Gousheh from Jerusalem, Ahmad Sadeq from Safad, Abdul Raheem Jalal Tamimi from Hebron, and Salah Ali Redha (or Salah Sharkas as we used to call him) from Amman. Jordan used to send one or two students to study in Jerusalem.

Palestine's Matriculation

As to Palestine Matriculation; the students had to sit for four compulsory subjects: Arabic, English, Elementary Mathematics and History. In English, students could choose to sit for English A or English B. English A concentrated on literature, whereas English B concentrated on Grammar. So, there were two papers in English A Matriculation: one is Essay + Pressy, and the second is in literature. Whereas in English B, the first paper was Essay + Pressy and paper two was in Grammar + Translation. I passed both English A and English B. Only very few students, namely those of the Arab College, Rashidiya College and missionary schools were able to pass both tests.

The students were allowed to sit for eight or nine subjects but had to pass only two in addition to the four compulsory subjects to earn the Matriculation degree. I myself sat for seven subjects (the compulsory ϵ and ζ optional subjects: chemistry, physics and advanced mathematics).

Four to five students from the literary stream were chosen to study Latin while the rest of the students studied without specializing. The four compulsory subjects in the literary stream were: mathematics, history, Arabic and English in addition to geography, physics and history. The specialized students also sat for Latin as an extra subject. It is well known that holders of the Matriculation degree were the best in Palestine. I remember they were not more than 1000 both Arabs and Jews since the Mandate and until 1942. The serial number of my degree that year was 933.

Educational System at the Arab College

In this context, I would like to indicate that the education system at the Arab College in Jerusalem was until the fourth secondary class identical to Rashidiya College, but the difference is that all the students in the scientific stream studied advanced mathematics, while all the students in the literary stream studied Latin, which was introduced to Palestine by Mr. Ferrel the Director of Education until the early forties.

I sat along with other students from the Arab College and Rashidiya College for the advanced mathematics examination held in Terra Sancta School in July of 1942. We were 10 Arab students and some Jewish students. With the exception of the Law School; the Arab College was the best in all of Palestine, since it had two other grades after the fourth secondary class: the fifth and sixth secondary (intermediate) grades.

Teacher Qualifications in Palestine

The intermediate grade graduate could teach at high schools in Palestine. High school teachers were university degree holders or those who have passed the Teacher's Higher examination which was a one-subject examination conducted by the Department of Education, and was equivalent to a university degree. The Department also conducted the Teacher's Lower examination for the non-holders of Matriculation or Intermediate certificates. The teachers at Palestine's elementary schools were either holders of the Teacher's Lower examination certificate, the Teacher's class certificate, Matriculation or high school certificate. Those were required, for the purpose of promotion, to pass the theoretical section of the Teacher's Lower examination, that is; in Teaching course and its practical section as well.

The Mandate's Unjust Education Policy

I remember that the Matriculation holders in Palestine were distinguished because only few could pass it, for instance; in Jaffa –the largest of Palestinian cities– only two to three students passed that examination annually. Moreover, the holder of Matriculation with English A was accepted by the American University of Beirut AUB to study as a sophomore. Thus it was clear that the Mandate Government was putting obstacles before the education of Arabs, among the proofs of this is the fact that the acceptance year for studying in the first elementary grade was \vee in cities and \wedge in villages, which was at least a year later than in other countries. Moreover;

studying in the first secondary grade was only allowed to the younger students among those passing the seventh elementary grade which meant that more than half of the students were forced to discontinue their study at the end of the seventh elementary grade. Also, as mentioned earlier, only one or two students were allowed to be sent to Jerusalem from the other Palestinian cities to continue their education at the Arab College or the Rashidiya College which were the only two public schools whose students qualified allowed for Palestine's Matriculation examination up to the early forties. After that students from the few other Arab schools were allowed to qualify for the Matriculation. However; the passing rate of those students was low. Students who passed the four compulsory subjects but failed in any two of the other optional subjects were granted the Secondary School certificate, known as "sub-matric", while those who failed in one or more compulsory subjects would fail the whole examination and should repeat the examination the following year because there were no make-up exams in Palestine. The examination was held once a year in July.

Part One

70

Y.

CHAPTER X

My Career in Teaching upon Graduation

Looking for a Job

I remember that we sat for the exam in July ١٩٤٢ (the date recorded on my Matriculation certificate is ٢٣/٧/١٩٤٢). On the announcement day of the results - early September- I anxiously telephoned the Jaffan newspaper Al Difaa' and was very pleased when the clerk there informed me that my name was among the passing student list to be published in the newspaper the next day. That was an unforgettable day for me as one of the elite gentlemen of Jaffa. The next day, I began looking for a job. Employment opportunities in the public as well as the private sector were very limited; so I headed towards teaching like many other matriculation holders. I had the opportunity to join the Department of Education and be appointed in a nearby or distant village like my colleagues did. I preferred staying in Jaffa Instead.

My First Salary

Therefore; I had no choice but to work at the Culture College directed and owned by Shafiq Al Ansari who was then working on completing the elementary classes and started the first and second secondary classes and was

looking for qualified teachers. So he began looking for me when he heard I passed the Matriculation examination. He was very happy when he found me and offered me a job in his school, which I accepted. My first salary was six pounds a month, whereas the teacher's salary in public schools was six pounds and sixty six piasters and the teacher's salary in the Palestinian villages was six pounds. This is how I started my career in teaching. I was an active teacher so the headmaster Ahmad Yusuf who was a graduate of Egypt's Dar Al Uloum burdened me with teaching math, physics and history to the first secondary class.

It is worth mentioning that most of the students of the first secondary class at the Culture College were those who passed seventh elementary grade from the city and neighboring villages who were not allowed, for being over aged, to join the first secondary grade at Al Amiriya School of Jaffa.

My Appointment as Official Teacher

I remained in my post as a teacher at the Culture College for three or four months only, because I was looking forward to working in Jaffa's public schools, noting that most of my colleagues were appointed to villages. I dodged being appointed to a village through working at one of the Municipality schools associated with the Department of Education.

After exerting great efforts, I was appointed at Hassan Arafa School, one of Jaffa's Municipality schools under the technical supervision of the Department of Education.

That school was donated by Hassan Arafa in 1940, who was one of the prominent merchants of Jaffa. I also remember that my uncle Zuhdi Abul Jebain established at his own expense Al Rajaa' shelter on the Jaffa-Jerusalem road near Beit Dajan village to harbor the children of Palestinian Martyrs. The shelter later on became the command center of Hasan Salameh. What is important here is that Al Rajaa' Shelter and Hassan Arafa school set an example for public donations to rich Palestinians.

I began teaching at Hassan Arafa School in mid February of 1943. My salary was 8 pounds and 66 piasters a month which used to be the salary of teachers in Jaffa. I was envied by my other colleagues because I was appointed in Jaffa while they were appointed in distant villages. Of course, working in the city gives way to better opportunities.

Hasan Arafa School was a full elementary school which also had a first secondary grade. It was located in the center of Al Ajami neighborhood to the south of the city. Near it, was Al Ajami Shrine. The school building overlooked the sea. The headmaster then was Abdul Latif Al Habbal who was then replaced by Bashir Al Dabbagh. Among my fellow teachers were Ahmad Abu Amarah, Saleem Al Taher and Mustafa Zaki Al Dajani who was my colleague in first elementary grade at Al Nuzha school in 1930.



A photo of the football team at the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa. Holder of the armor Fawzi Al Shanti, sitting in front of him is goalkeeper Abdul Ghani Al Habbab, to Fawzi's right: Ibraheem Al Sharqawi, Ismail Al Najjar, Fakhri Qaranouh. To his left: Ahmad Samarah, Kamal Qumbarji, Abdul Rahman Al Habbab (Secretary to the Club) wearing jacket and shorts. Those sitting are from the right: Zaki Al Dirhally, Salah Al Haj Meer, Hamoudeh Al Qabouq and Mustafa Al Da'da'.

CHAPTER XI

My Participation in Public Activities

The Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa

My activity extended to participate in public affairs, and I started going frequently to the Islamic Sport Club. I traveled with the club's football team to Haifa, Acre, Gaza, and other Palestinian cities to play against teams there. While being at the club, I became acquainted with some young men and, as mentioned earlier, visited different cities. Thus, I became an active member of the Islamic Sport Club. Besides that; I was considering establishing another cultural club.

Publishing the Supporters of Culture Magazine

We established the Arab Cultural Club. It comprised a group of youths, and I was elected as Secretary. We published a magazine called "Supporters of Culture Magazine", under the supervision of the administrative body, then comprised of Khairy Abul Jebain, Jameel Husni, Ibrahim Sakijha, Ahmad Arafat Abu Amara and Hussein Nijm. The expenses of that Magazine came from our own pockets. It was distributed over all other clubs in Palestine. We used to publish articles for prominent Palestinian writers, because there were no other literary

magazines. Our ex-teachers as well as others approached us to publish their articles in our Magazine, namely Dr. Nicola Ziyada and Mohammad Al Adnani, who published his poem in our Magazine.

Moreover; poets Mustafa Darwish Al Dabbagh and Ahmad Yusuf also approached us to publish their poems.

Establishing other Smaller Clubs in Jaffa

Besides the two well known clubs – the Islamic Sports Club (established in ۱۹۲۷) and the Orthodox Club (Established in ۱۹۲۴) other smaller clubs were established in Jaffa following the WWII, namely: The Islamic Youth Club (a social club), the Arab Cultural Club, the Islamic Association Club, the Antonic Club, the Brotherhood Club, and other clubs. Following the establishment of these clubs an idea for their unification emerged. I myself was chosen as the representative on the part of the Cultural Club. Then, with the support of the Islamic Sports Club; I was elected as Secretary of the group as well as of the Sports Committee in the Islamic Sports Club. We continued our activities until the Palestinian Sports Club was established in ۱۹۴۴ due to an Arab need because the Palestinian Football Federation which was established in ۱۹۲۳ was overtaken by Jews who barred Palestinians from participating in any international event or tournament (see Appendix).

Near East Broadcasting Station

Since the early days of the mandate; Jaffa was the center of attraction to many Arab singers and actors owing to its

prominent economic and social stata. I remember that the Yusuf Wahbi band and Ali Al Kassar band staged a number of concerts in Jaffa during the thirties and forties. Moreover; a number of prominent female singers, such as Um Kulthum, Fathia Ahmad, Sabah and others sang for the Near East Broadcasting Station in Jaffa.

It is known that following WWII, Palestine witnessed notable social and cultural activities. In those years a number of cultural clubs in Jaffa increased their activities and called upon some men of literature to deliver lectures and conduct forums in the city. Most of those invited originally came by invitation from the Near East Broadcasting Station (Arabic Section) to deliver lectures or literary speeches which was part of the British Ministry of Information. I remember that during the years of the war and thereafter the people of Jaffa enjoyed listening to the Syrian poet Omar Abu Resheh as well as to the Iraqi poets Al Safi Al Najafi and Mohammad Mahdi Al Jawahiri who was fascinated by Jaffa and described it in his poem "The beautiful Jaffa".

Also, the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa held a literature festival during that period under the supervision of Hasan Abu Al Wafa Al Dajani a well known Jaffan writer. A number of well known poets and writers from Palestine and Trans-Jordan participated in that festival. Also, the clubs of Jaffa were trying to outdo each other in holding political and social festivals on different occasions inviting one or more of the Arab Consuls in Palestine, namely the consuls of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. I also remember that a number of prominent Arab writers, such as Al Akkad, Al Mazini and

Taha Hussein were invited to Jaffa by the Near East Broadcasting Station. Due to me being a member of the Islamic Sports Club and the Arab Cultural Club; I effectively took part in the organization of some of the said festivals and forums to which we invited some of our teachers at Rasheediya College in Jerusalem, such as Dr. Ahmad Suwaidan who delivered an interesting lecture at the Islamic Club in ١٩٤٣ and Ahmad Al Shuqairi the well known Palestinian leader delivered a political lecture in the Orthodox Club in Jaffa.

Palestine Sports Federation

In the autumn of ١٩٤٤, the Palestine Sport Federation was established upon the request of the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa. This federation comprised all the sport clubs of Palestine, and the headquarters of the Islamic Sports Club became the headquarters of the federation and its Central Committee whose secretary was Abdul Rahman Al Habbab and Spiro Qiddis from Jaffa as Treasurer.

The Federation supervised all amateur sports in Palestine through its general committees where each sport had its own general committee to administer its affairs. The headquarters of the Football General Committee was in Jerusalem, and it had Ibrahim Saleem Nuseiba as Secretary, whereas Fahad Abdul Al Fattah was the Secretary of the basketball and volleyball general committees with headquarters in Haifa. Rork Farraj from the Orthodox Club in Jerusalem was the secretary of the general committee of tennis and table tennis headquartered in Jerusalem. In each of the six Palestinian

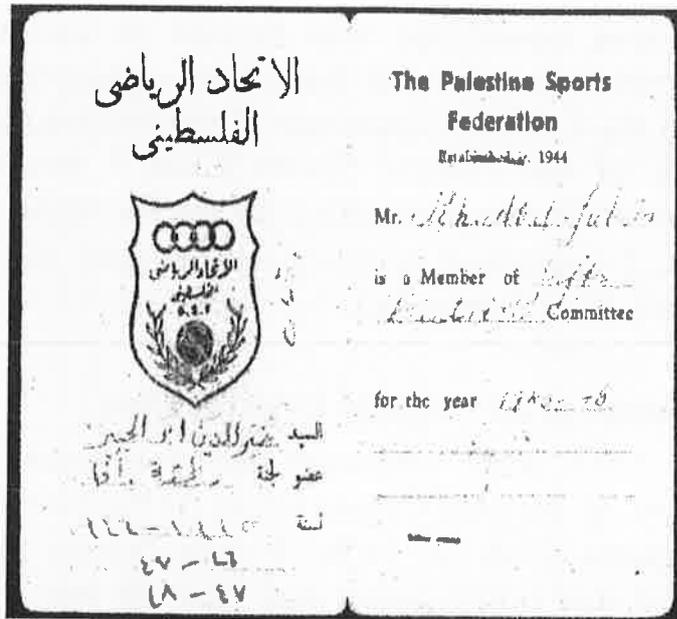
areas, an area committee was formed to conduct the sports activities therein, and these area committees were attached to the Central Committee of the Federation. By a nomination of the Islamic Sports Club, I became the Secretary of Jaffa area committee for the Palestine Sports Federation. I continued in this position until the end of the Mandate. (See Appendix).

Establishment of Al Najjada Organization

The year ۱۹۴۴ also witnessed the formation of the paramilitary Al Najjada Organization of Palestine by the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa. I was among the first members of that organization and was the introducer of the ceremony of its formal inauguration which took place in Al Bassa playground in Jaffa in the spring of ۱۹۴۵. Later on, however; I had to resign that position to work as a fulltime secretary for Jaffa's area committee for the Palestine Sports Federation. It is regretful that the said organization was dissolved before passing the Palestine partition resolution after it had been merged with the "Youth Organization", its rival in the "Arab Youth Organization" which survived only for a few months (See Appendix).

Commencement of my Work in the Press

Since I was Secretary of the Sports Committee of the Islamic Sports Club in Jaffa and the Secretary of Palestine Sports Federation in the Jaffa area and then an Information Officer of Al Najjada Organization; I had to spend most of my leisure time at the club headquarters,



A photo of the Author's ID being the Secretary to the Jaffa area for the Palestine Sports Federation 1944-1948.

particularly after the discontinuation of publication of the Supporters of Culture Magazine for financial reasons. All these positions qualified me to become the sports corner editor in the Jaffa daily Al Diffaa', which was the most widely spread newspaper in Palestine. Thus, I began working as an amateur editor in the press besides my work as a teacher at Hasan Arafa School until ١٩٤٦.



A photo showing five of Al Najjada youths in their formal uniforms.



A photo showing Ahmad Al Shukairi delivering a speech at the inauguration ceremony of "Al Najjada Organization" in Jaffa. Standing besides him is Khairi Abul Jebain the ceremony introducer, Jaffa, 1960.

CHAPTER XII

My Career in Press Censorship

Press Censorship in Palestine

The Press Censorship Department at Jaffa was considered one of the War Departments. The headquarters of the department were in Jerusalem, but its Jaffa branch was more important because Jaffa was the center of the Palestinian press where a number of dailies were issued, namely: Palestine, Al Diffa, Al Sha'ab and Al Siraat Al Mustakim, whereas in Jerusalem there was only one newspaper in ١٩٤٦ under the name of "Al Wihda", which was owned by the Palestine Arab Party. The Department in Jaffa was also responsible for the censorship of all Jewish newspapers issued in Tel Aviv. Therefore, it was located on the Jaffa-Tel Aviv road in order to be close to the newspapers in the two adjacent cities. The director of that department was a British man called Mr. Hookadi. He then had two assistants, one for the censorship of the Arab newspapers (Mr. Najeeb Khouri), and the other for the censorship of the Jewish newspapers (Mr. Zeif), who is currently one of the most important Jewish journalists.

The staff of that department was considered among the senior employees with salaries as much as double that of their colleagues in other departments. They also had other

privileges, same as all the other employees of the War Departments.

My Appointment at the Press Censorship Department

Due to my journalistic tendencies; I tried to work in that department, and finally succeeded. So, I resigned my job at Hasan Arafa School, and was appointed at the Press Censorship Department as of ٨/٣/١٩٤٦. I began working in that department from ١٠ am to ١ pm, then from ٧ pm to ١٠ pm in consistence with the working hours of the Arab dailies. During the morning shift we used to do administrative work, write reports, and oversee Al Siraat Al Mustakeem daily newspaper issued in the evening, in addition to some weekly journals, such as Al Itihad Journal, issued by the National Liberation League. During the evening, however; we used to oversee the remaining three Arabic newspapers in Jaffa.

Since the first month of my work, I noticed the influence of the Jewish assistant director, and how the British director was very lenient with him. After that the Jewish assistant plotted against the Arab assistant Mr. Khouri, followed by another plot against the British director himself, making that Jewish the predominant figure in that department.

Due to the fact that other resignations were submitted from the Arabic Section of that department; I became the highest ranking Arab employee there and was promoted to Chief Censer of Arabic Newspapers in Palestine which I occupied until the termination of the mandate.

Nature of Work within the Department

Instructions were given to the Department staff to ban publishing of any instigating articles that would stir disturbance in the country or constitute an opposition to the Mandate's policies in Palestine.

I remember during my work as a censor we were instructed to ban all provocative news. Even mentioning the name of Haj Amin Al Husseini the Mufti of Palestine was prohibited. The newspapers would go around this by referring to the Mufti as the "Higher Arab Commission", and we accepted such trickery.

I also remember that, after the official working hours, I used to translate to the General Director in Jerusalem on the phone most of the news and articles presented to me. On the other hand, the editors used to contact me during the night in order to permit them to publish the late news. In later months I stopped referring to my boss in Jerusalem, and instead managed censorship by myself, sympathizing with those newspapers especially that situations worsened to a point where censorship became unfeasible and pointless altogether.

Suspension of Work Due to Unsettlements

I moved my office to the center of the city because continuing work at the headquarters on Jaffa-Tel Aviv road became difficult as the security situation deteriorated. Curfews were imposed almost every night on the city that I had to be given a permit to go to the offices and printing presses to conduct censorship.

However; that permit did not offer me security, in fact, I was threatened a number of times because British soldiers used to fire at anyone passing in the street indiscriminately! In mid April of ١٩٤٨, I quit this job for good, even the newspapers stopped publishing.

Going Back to Teaching

Before concluding the recount on my career during these two years (١٩٤٦-١٩٤٨), I remember that I returned to part-time teaching at the Culture College which became full high school qualifying their students to sit for the Matriculation Examination. During that year, Jaffa had three schools giving the Matriculation Examination or considered full high schools. These schools were: The French Freres School, Orthodox College and the Culture College. I taught two periods in the morning (٨-٩,٣٠) then went to my regular work, and in the afternoon, I taught two periods (٢-٣,٣٠). That is, I taught ٢٠ periods a week because this conformed with the working hours of my regular work. During my leisure time I worked at the club to practice my other activities.

In ١٩٤٧, I got engaged to one of my relatives; Miss Siham Zaki Ayyad. She recently graduated from the English High School where Arab and Jewish female students studied together. In Jaffa at that time were two other girls high schools; the French Saint Joseph Nuns School and the English CMS School. Students of the girls public school "Al Zahraa" continued their study at one of those two schools, particularly at the "English High School" because the highest grade at "Al Zahraa" was the second secondary.



A Photo of the Author's Press Card issued by Al Difaa' Newspaper in Jaffa, 1/2/1948.

Part One

88

ΛΛ

CHAPTER XIII

Jaffa Municipal Council

Municipal Council Elections of ۱۹۳۱

The elections of ۱۹۳۱ were the last held in Jaffa before to the government dismembered the elected municipal councils by the government. I remember in my childhood and during these elections I used to cheer in support of some of Al Rasheed neighborhood candidates. Among them was my uncle Sheikh Issa Abul Jebain who then won membership to the municipal council which was under the chairmanship of Asem Al Saeed. When the next elections day came, the revolution of ۱۹۳۶-۱۹۳۸ was at its peak and so the elections were never held and the current councils were renewed. However; the government soon afterwards dissolved these councils and began appointing committees to administer municipalities.

A Municipal Committee Instead of the Elected Council

I also remember that the "Jaffa Municipal Committee" during the early forties, was under the Chairmanship of Abdul Raouf Al Bitar who succeeded, following his death, by his brother Omar Al Bitar who was Mayor during the Ottoman rule. In addition to the Mayor among

the members were Ali Mustakeem, Masoud Al Dirhally, Zuhdi Abul Jebian, Hasan Arafa and Alfred Rock. There was also Mayer Emzaleq who represented Jews living in Jewish neighborhoods bordering Al Manshiya neighborhood to the north of the city.

A word on Christian Denominations in Jaffa

As to Alfred Rock, I remember that he was one of the prominent figures of the national movement in Palestine since the Ottoman rule and until the British mandate. He was a Roman Catholic. The two main denominations in Jaffa and Palestine besides the Armenians and Protestants; were the Orthodox which was the largest denomination, and the Roman Catholics to which Alfred and his brother Edmund Rock, who were among Jaffa's dignitaries, belonged. The Mandate government used to constantly drive the wedge of discrimination between Muslims and Christians in Palestine by appointing a larger number of Christians in state departments. To be honest, our Christian brethren proved their patriotism and love to Palestine and Arab nationalism, revoked discrimination and supported their Muslim compatriots in all Palestinian revolution since the beginning of the mandate and before. Muslim and Christian associations were established before the "Higher Arab Commission" was established. The Christians participated in all the national associations in Jaffa; they had one or more representatives in each of these associations. Among the prominent Christians in Jaffa was Alfred Rock a member in Jaffa's Municipal Committee, and his brother Edmund

then the Chairman of the Al Ittihad Club. Bishara Azar, Al Beirut and Al Issa were also among the Christian political leaders who were as patriotic as their Muslim counterparts: Ali Al Dabbagh, Mohammad Abdul Al Raheem, Mohammad Saleem Abu Laban, Kamel Al Dajani, Sheikh Ragheb Al Dajani and others.

I remember among the Christian ladies who took part in the Palestinian feminist movement Odette Azar, who was fighting and leading demonstrations in Jaffa with her Muslim colleagues such as Um Ghaleb Al Dajani, Um Kamal Abu Laban, and later on Salwa Al Sa'eed and Samia Abul Jebain.

In Jerusalem, there were many Christian leaders such as Jacob Farraj, Emile Al Ghouri secretary of the Arab Party, and Fawti Freij who was chosen as minister in the government of Whole Palestine in 1948. They shared national efforts with their Muslim colleagues such as Jamal Al Hussein, Ragheb Al Nashashibi and Hussein Fakhri Al Khaldi.

On this occasion, I would like to say that I attended a seminar last summer held at the Orthodox Club in Amman under the title "Christians and Muslims in support of the Intifada". At the seminar, Dr. Hanna Atallah who is a Christian from Jerusalem spoke side by side with a dignified Muslim Sheikh. Dr. Atallah was as enthusiastic over the Arabic identity of Palestine as the Muslim Sheikh, if not more!

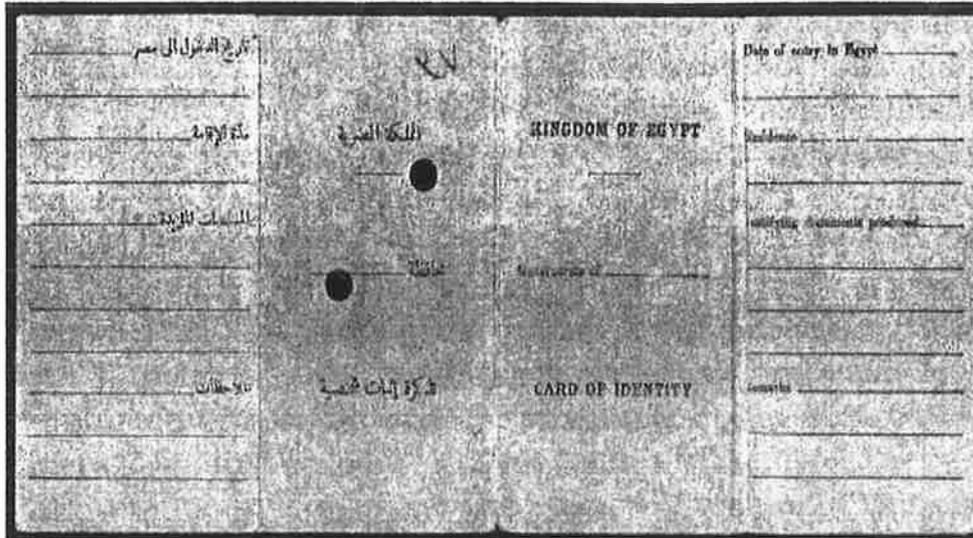
The Last Municipal Council of Jaffa

At the beginning of ١٩٤٦, following a relative stability in Palestine after WWII, the Mandate government decided to hold elections for all the municipalities in Palestine. Therefore; preparations were made to elect a municipal council in Jaffa to succeed the Municipal Committee whose last chairman was Dr. Yusuf Haikal who was previously a senior official at the Islamic Awqaf Department. Dr. Haikal descended from one of Jaffa's well known families, and was a Sorbonne graduate. He nominated himself for the chairmanship of the Municipal Council against Saleem Al Saeed son of Asem Al Saeed, who was the mayor of the last elected Municipal Council in Jaffa.

The elections battle was fierce where a number of Palestinian individuals and parties took part. Eventually, Dr. Yusuf Haikal and his group won the elections. That council continued to work for two years until the end of the mandate. Among the members of that council were: Rabaah Abu Khadra, Rashed Kanaan, Adel Al Hammami, Bishara Azar, and Al Beiruti. The vying list included such names as: Saleem Saeed, Ahmad Al Hout, my uncle Issa and others. I was a representative of my uncle Issa in the elections control committee and counting of votes. I remember that voting and counting of votes took place at the building occupied by the Social Affairs Department at the Clock Square. That building was the headquarters of the government during the Ottoman rule. It is worth mentioning that Zionist gangs blew up that building in January of ١٩٤٨ during the disturbances that followed the Partition Resolution. A lot of young men

died in the blast four of which were friends of mine: Ghaleb Al Dajani (member of the Arab Club), Miss Suad Zain and members of the Islamic Sport Club Saeed Shanneer and Zaki Al Dirhally of the Palestine national football team.

Part One



A picture of a document showing the author as a Palestinian refugee in Cairo, April 1948.

CHAPTER XIV

**The Partition Resolution,
The Fall of Jaffa and Immigration**

Issuing of Palestine's Partition Resolution

On the evening of 29/11/1947, the Palestine Partition Resolution was passed. At that night, I was following up the news of the UN Assembly as well as the voting process on radio. I knew that the USA, Britain, and the USSR voted against us. I also heard that Kameel Sham'oun, then representative of Lebanon, refused to shake hands with the representative of the USSR. I even heard that the USA administration, by an order from President Truman, followed the carrot and stick policy with some countries to pass and approve the partition draft in the UN. Following the Partition Resolution disturbances broke out in the city.

The Reason Behind the Fall of Jaffa

Jaffa was surrounded by Jews from all sides. From the east there was a concentration of Jews. To the north was the city of Tel Aviv as well as Jewish settlements. To the south was the Jewish settlement of Beit Yam; which meant that Jaffa was surrounded by the enemy from all

sides except from the sea. In other words, Jaffa was destined to fall. The Jews were well prepared and equipped more than us. The British were in obvious collaboration with the Jews, in that they were giving the Jews arms in different ways whereas, during the past revolts, the Palestinian who was caught with a knife was jailed and with a bullet was executed. So, on April ۲۸th of ۱۹۴۸ Jaffa eventually fell despite all the defensive efforts and military actions against the Jews. During those days, a national committee for the city was formed, among its members Ahmad Abdul Raheem, Mustafa Al Taher, Abdul Rahman Al Habbab, Mohammad Khair Al Bahloul, Bishara Azar and Ahmad Abu Laban. It is worth mentioning that Ahmad Abdul Raheem was one of the members of the emergency committee which later on handed over the city of Jaffa to the gangs of Hagana!

During the last days, prior to the fall of Jaffa, the National Committee tried to stop people from immigration. But, when the Zionist attacks increased on Jaffa with mortar shells starting ۲۰/۴/۱۹۴۸; most people headed towards the sea to escape. After a few days; the Hagana gangs broke into the city inflicting death and destruction in every corner of the city. The remaining survivors no more than three thousand in number were gathered and put in a ghetto in Al Ajami neighborhood under severe restrictions.

Our Immigration from Jaffa

On April ۲۰th of ۱۹۴۸, the Zionist gangs shelled the city of Jaffa by mortars after occupying most of its northern

and eastern suburbs and neighborhood, and young militants and Arab volunteers could no longer protect the city due to poor weaponry and military provisions. So, most of Jaffa population decided to leave the city to save their souls, particularly so with the knowledge that Arab armies were coming to save Jaffa following the termination of the Mandate on May 10th of 1948!

My family and I had in fact left our home at Al Manshiya north of the city in mid April and lived in the house of my uncle Jamal Abul Al Jebain at Al Aqbat building in the Latin monastery in Al Ajami neighborhood south of the city. We stayed there for several days after which we decided to leave the city following some consultations with the rest of the men in the family, particularly after I got hit by bomb shrapnel while walking on Iskandar Awad street on 20/4/1948. So the next day, we hired a lorry, we were a group of thirty people including my fiance and her family, my married sister Lamia and her family, my elder sister and younger brothers who were living with me, in addition to some relatives and neighbors. As to my father, his wife and my younger sister Nabeela; they headed towards the seaport in search of a boat or ship to save their lives like many other thousands of people. The sea on that day was very rough and heavy rains were falling although it was late April. People were stampeding to board any boat causing several to fall in the sea. The boats were overcrowded to the extent they took some members and left others of the same families. Other boats were forced to return to port after sailing due to strong winds and high tides. I remember that two of my aunts were about to drown

because their boat stayed in the sea for two or three days before returning to port. My father had scarcely found himself a place on a boat which sailed with his family to the shore of Gaza where they headed with the other refugees to the camp of Al Qantara East within the Egyptian borders where my father and hundreds of refugees coming from Jaffa and other places in Palestine were detained.

On the other hand, our group took the lorry, and first passed by the "Nitre" settlement east of the city, where the Jews were shooting at all those leaving Jaffa. But luckily, the car of the British Deputy Governor was passing next to our vehicle which impelled the Jews to hold fire, and that is how we survived. We continued our journey to Gaza city, then headed to Al Arish where we slept in a place similar to an animals barn. On the next day, we headed towards the Egyptian border where we were admitted in as refugees. By the way, I remember that while stopping on the road, some Egyptians gathered around us by way of curiosity, and one of them was generous enough to offer us a quarter of a Pound to help us and we were thankful!

Our Admittance to Egypt as Refugees and Restriction of Movement

After entering the Egyptian borders, we headed towards Cairo to seek the help of some family members who reached Cairo a month or two ahead of us. A few kilometers before Cairo, we were surprised by an Egyptian police force stopping us and ordering us to head

to Al Abbasiya Camp “for the purpose of counting”! There we realized that they meant to detain us in that camp, where tents, originally for British troops, were pitched for us.

The next morning, after the children were taken out from that camp; the only family members remaining were me, my sister, my fiance, her sister and their father since everyone else who traveled with us preferred to stay in Gaza. I became so distressed for being in that camp. I complained about this to some journalists who came to make a press report with me. I also elaborated about the reasons of fleeing to Egypt and the risks I faced along the way, as well as about the fierce attacks of the Zionists against the Palestinians who lacked weapons, causing them to immigrate, waiting for the Arab armies to liberate Palestine. At the end, I questioned the moral of detaining us in that camp, threatening that I would escape from it. When the camp guards heard that, they surrounded my tent and intensified security on me. I could not escape that night.

On the next day, two of my friends came to visit me. These were Jameel Husni and Basheer Al Ghunaimi who were then students at Cairo University. When they left the camp, I left with them and the guards did not notice. So, I began to wander freely around Cairo and lived in Al Abbasiya neighborhood with the rest of the family members who reached there earlier.

After that, I began my endeavors to get my other relatives out of that camp because of what they were suffering. So, I submitted a number of pleas to the officials, paid many

bribes and sought the mediation of some Egyptians until I succeeded. Thereafter; I endeavored on getting my father and other family members out of Al Qantara Camp. A number of those members too managed to escape from the camp and join the family in Cairo.

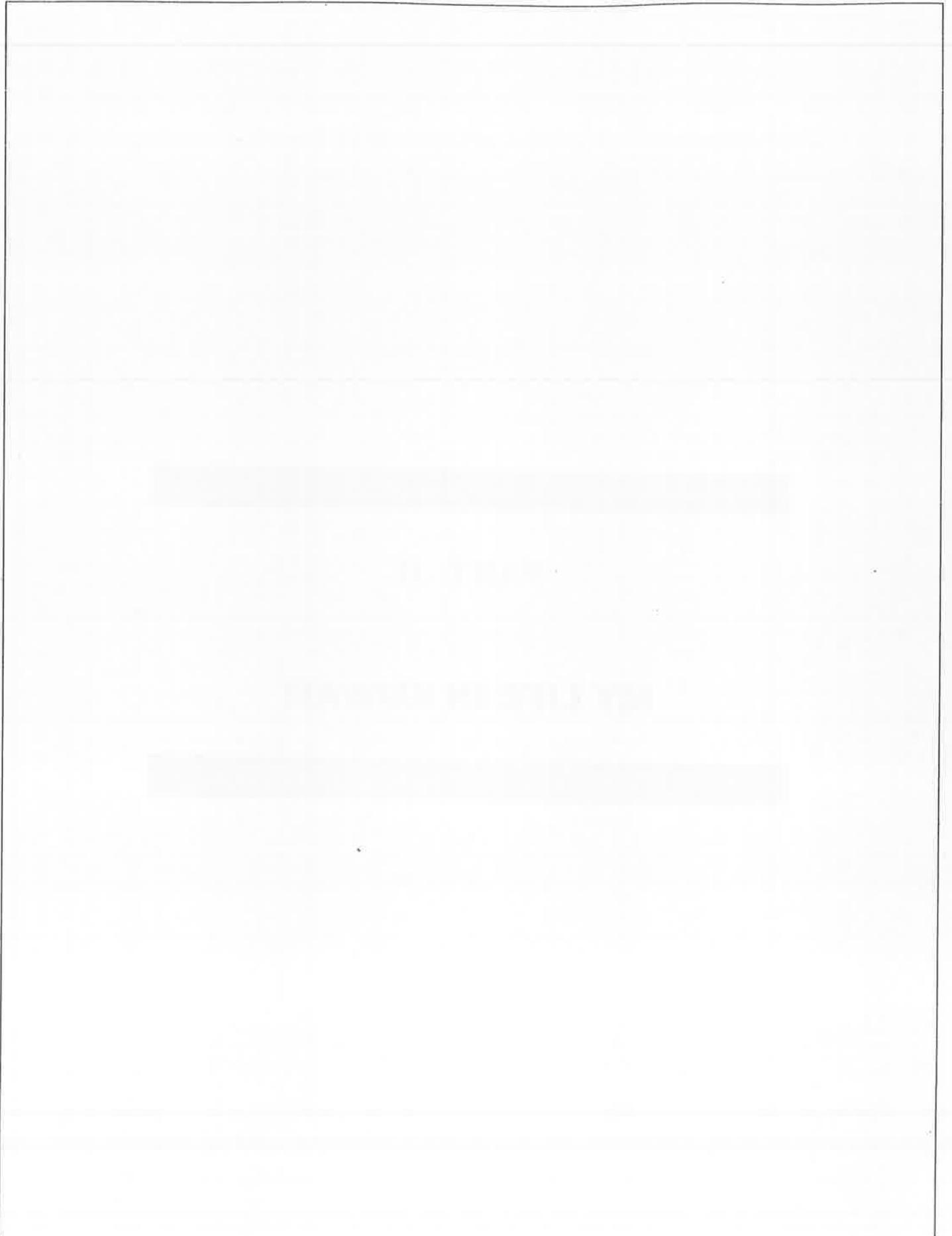
Thus, Egypt became a shelter for many of our family members and other Palestinians who continued living there as refugees. Their IDs had the words: "Prohibited to work with or without pay" printed on them. Several years later, some of them managed to find jobs in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and traveled there through Egyptian travel documents which, sadly, did not allow the bearer to return to Egypt despite it being the country which issued those documents.



PART II

MY LIFE IN KUWAIT





[Faint, illegible text block]

[Faint, illegible text block]

[Faint, illegible text block]

[Faint, illegible text block]

CHAPTER I

**Life in Egypt Upon Immigration
from Palestine**

First Months in Cairo

We spent the first months in Cairo spending out of the money we had with us awaiting a “breakthrough” to return home. But, in course of time, we began to realize that returning seemed so distant, particularly after the defeat of the Arab armies in that war of ١٩٤٨, where we began hearing about the Arabs defeat as well as about the truce and fall of Ramleh and Lydd as well as many other Palestinian towns.

We also began hearing about the influx of more refugees into Gaza, the West Bank cities and neighboring Arab cities, and the bad conditions they were experiencing. We heard as well about the siege of Falluja and the “Black Hyena” -hero of Falluja- and the failure of the rescue army.

The Deteriorated Financial Situation of Refugees

Such bad news was an ill omen of the bad days ahead, and that it was time to economize. In the course of time, most refugees became in bad need of help. I personally

lived in this environment with my little family which consisted of me, my sister I'tidal and my younger brother Farouq, noting that the financial aid sent to us by our uncle from Beirut slightly eased the situation, in addition to the limited compensation I received from my last job as Press Censer in Palestine. This compensation was paid to me through a mission sent to Egypt by the mandate government. It is well known that a number of teachers and other veteran employees who were working under the mandate government are still paid pension salaries till this day for their services in Palestine from funds provided thereto.

Due to such bad financial situations a number of Palestinian students studying in Egypt resorted to the Arab League which provided meager support.

Al Qantara Camp

A few months after our arrival to Cairo; I began to look for a job in Egypt, but that was very difficult, if not impossible to us. My father was still detained in Al Qantara Camp due to a delay in his release procedure. In that camp with my father there were a number of my friends from Jaffa, namely: Ahmad Abu Amara, Fawzi Al Kayyali, Mohammad Najm from Asdoud village. I remember that he used to visit us at that school and talk about Kuwait which was unknown to us. He once delivered a lecture about Kuwait and its people and diving for pearls there, as well as about his work as a teacher in that Arab country in ١٩٣٨.

CHAPTER II

IMMIGRATION TO KUWAIT

The Idea of Immigrating to Kuwait

Mohammed Najim who was detained with my father in Al Qantara, took my address in Cairo and sent me a letter asking me to go to the "House of Kuwait" and ask its director to grant him a letter saying he got appointed in Kuwait as a teacher. So I went there and got him the letter then I spent some time visiting the British embassy and the immigration department, and finally managed to obtain a visa for Mohammed Najim and a release permit for him to leave Al Qantara camp.

Similar arrangements were made to Ahmad Abu Amara and Fawzi Al Kayyali who traveled after Mohammed Najm to work in Kuwait. Before he traveled, Mohammad Najm asked me: "why don't you come to Kuwait, Khairy?" I said to him: "Send me a visa, and I will think it over". I received a telegram after that from the Education Department in Kuwait saying: "we appointed you, your sister I'tidal and your wife". After that, I headed to the Kuwait House in the last week of November of ١٩٤٨. From there, I took travel tickets for myself, my sister and younger brother who was in elementary student.

Entry Visa into Kuwait

I also got from the British Embassy in Cairo entry visas to Kuwait. By the way, I would like to say that the British Commissioner in Kuwait was the one to issue visas or "No Objection Certificates".

I remember that after my arrival in Kuwait, I began asking for visas for a number of my relatives and friends and got them easily. I submitted those applications to the Education Director, and the Education Department in turn would ask the British Commissioner to issue the visas for the concerned persons and the British Commissioner used to respond favorably. So, many of my relatives and friends began to arrive in Kuwait, but work was then available for teachers and few categories only. The Kuwaiti society was then simple so many of those coming to Kuwait in 1948, 1949 and the early fifties returned home without finding a job.

Establishment of the Passport Department

As to entry visas, I remember that the Passports Department was established in Kuwait under the directorship of Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak, Head of Public Security, in the late 1948. This was after the arrival of my friend Hani Al Qadoumi to Kuwait and his appointment as a senior officer there. Since then, visas were issued from that Department and signed by Sheikh Abdullah Al Mubarak in person or by his deputy Sheikh Abdullah Al Ahmad. This continued until Kuwait allowed bearers of Jordanian passports to enter Kuwait without visas. So, thousands of Jordanians and Palestinians from the West

Bank moved to Kuwait, particularly those whose lives became very difficult after signing the truce with Israel.

This lasted for a few years, after which the Kuwaiti government began imposing visas, and so entry into Kuwait became difficult again. During that period many tried to enter into Kuwait illegally. The late Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani described these attempts in his book "Men under the Sun" and in other books, saying that many Palestinians perished during their attempts to enter Kuwait by hiding in tankers.

Kuwaiti Travel Permits

As to the Passports Department in the Public Security, I remember that among the old Kuwaiti senior staff there were Yousif Al Sayyed, Hashem Rifai and Sulaiman Al Mish'an in addition to a number of Palestinians such as Hani Al Qadoumi, Ziyad Zueiter, Mohammad Al Hunaidi and Zakariya Al Kurdi. All of them were granted Kuwaiti passports and considered later as Kuwaitis. That Department also issued Kuwaiti travel documents to those who did not hold passports or to those with expired passports.

I remember that I was among those holding that document which was internationally acknowledged, and I used it to travel to a number of European countries in 1957. I was forced to keep that document because after my Palestinian passport with which I entered Kuwait expired; I had no passport or ID. We even used to split the passport pages in order to make as much use of the passport as we can. I remember that all the Palestinians

who lived in the West Bank in ۱۹۴۹ received Jordanian passports when the union between the east and west banks was announced. The Palestinians who migrated to neighboring Arab countries such as Syria and Lebanon were given refugee travel documents, but those who immigrated to Egypt, like us, did not have such document, whereas when I entered Kuwait I used my Palestinian passport.

The Whole of Palestine Government Passport

The whole of Palestine Government was officially established in Gaza on October of ۱۹۴۸ under the chairmanship of Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, and had its office in Cairo. At the beginning, the Egyptian government recognized that office which facilitated the works of Palestinian refugees to Egypt. This office was under the chairmanship of Rafiq Al Lababidi, Secretary to the Whole of Palestine Government and Tahseen Khairy was the Director of Passports in that office, which issued "The Whole of Palestine Government Passport". The issuance fee of that passport was one Egyptian Pound, and it was first recognized by Egypt and some Arab countries including Kuwait, but Kuwait later on withdrew that recognition.

Leaving Cairo

Anyway, I would like to say that after receiving the appointment telegram from the Kuwait Education Department, I began preparing myself together with my

sister and younger brother. As to my fiance, she did not travel with me because her father preferred that I first travel to the "unknown" Kuwait to manage our life there, so that afterwards she would follow me. Seeing off my relatives and friends was very hard, particularly I was traveling to an unknown country. I even recall that my aunt shouted angry words at the Jews because they caused all the miseries of Palestinians.

Around us in Al Sakakini neighborhood, Jewish families of Egyptian origin were there before leaving to Israel for good in the early fifties. On the next morning, we traveled to Beirut on an MEA plane, because there was no direct flight to Kuwait from Cairo.

Passing by Beirut

In Beirut, we waited a few days before our plane to Baghdad arrived. I remember that in Beirut, we lived in the house of my uncle Zuhdi Abul Jebain. There, we met the well known Lebanese writer Julia Tu'ma, who encouraged us to travel to Kuwait as pioneers. And my uncle said to me: "It is good to travel to Kuwait because returning to our Palestine seems quite difficult with Britain helping the Jews with arms and everything...so, build a new life there".

Travel Companions

On our way to Beirut Airport, we met Hani Al Qadoumi, a friend of mine in Jaffa who was on his way to travel to Kuwait for work. He told me that he sent a telegram from

Nablus to the Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber asking for work, and that the telegram reached the Prince while the Inspector of Kuwait Education, Abdul Latif Al Habbal who was a Lebanese working in Palestine before the disaster and knew Hani Al Qadoumi through frequenting the Passports Department in Jaffa. So, Al Habbal advised the Prince to hire Hani because he was a good young man and familiar with passports. So, the Kuwaiti government sent a telegram to Hani approving his appointment in the Passports Department. Hani stayed with us on the plane to Baghdad, then on the train to Basra. There, we asked about the way to Kuwait and we were told that it was a very difficult road because it was unpaved and sand covered. The only means of road travel were the ٤٧ model "Ford" cars which could ride through the sands of that road. But under some advice, we took a small plane holding ٧ passengers with ٣ teachers to Kuwait where we reached there on ٢٨/١١/١٩٤٨. The fare was three Dinars each.

The Old Kuwait Airport

When we reached the airport, then located in Al Nuzha area, we only found a tent. We were received there by the Financial and Administrative Director Abdullah Al Zaid. We rested in the "Orient Hotel", and then I headed to the Education Department in Al Jahra which later became known as Fahad Al Salem Street. I met there the Technical Education Director, Mr. Taha Al Swaifi from Egypt who headed the "Egyptian Education Mission" in Kuwait.

Palestinian Teacher in Kuwait

The Kuwaitis sympathized with the Palestinians in their disaster. So the Education Council sent its active member Nisf Al Yusuf to Damascus to bring back Palestinian teachers who the Kuwaitis knew to be dedicated workers since Palestinians had worked in Kuwait since ١٩٣٦. It is well known that the Mufti of Palestine sent to Kuwait in ١٩٣٦, upon the request of Sheikh Abdullah Al Jaber the head of Kuwait's Education Department, the first educational mission which consisted of four teachers: Ahmad Shihab Eddin, Mohammed Al Moghrabi, Jaber Hadeed and Khamis Najm. That mission arrived in Kuwait at the beginning of the ٣٦-٣٧ academic years, and they undertook modern education at Al Mubarakiya School.

Kuwait and the Palestinian Issue

The relation between Kuwait and Palestine can be traced back to ١٩٢٣, as mentioned in the Palestinian Encyclopedia of ١٩٨١. The Encyclopedia adds that the Mufti of Jerusalem and the Chairman of the Higher Islamic Council in Palestine Haj Ameen Al Husaini visited Kuwait in ١٩٢٣ heading a Palestinian delegation consisting of Ameen Al Tamimi and Rashid Al Haj Ibraheem to call for the Islamic brotherhood and Arab unity as well as to gather donations to restore the Al Aqsa Mosque.

The delegation was hosted by the late Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber. The visit was successful and the Kuwaiti people donated ١٣٦٢ Egyptian Pounds and ٥٢٠

mills. When the Education Council wanted to introduce modern education to Kuwait, it contacted the Mufti of Palestine who sent the first educational mission in ۱۹۳۶-۱۹۳۷.

After that, other educational missions were sent to Kuwait, and they helped increasing interaction between Kuwait and the Palestine issue. For instance, during the great revolution of Palestine (۱۹۳۶-۱۹۳۸) symposiums and meetings were held to talk about the struggle of the Palestinians against the Jews. Also, donation campaigns were conducted, and Kuwaiti women even donated their jewelry.

A List of the Names of Some Palestinian Teachers Who Worked in Kuwait since ۱۹۳۶ until the Disaster

- (a) Members of the first Palestinian mission of ۱۹۳۶: Ahmad Shehab Eddin, Mohammad Al Moghrabi, Khamees Najim, Jaber Hadeed.
- (b) First Palestinian female teachers: Rabeeha Oudeh, Waseefa Oudeh Sukayna Oudeh who were accompanied by their brother Eisa Oudeh, who was appointed as a physical education teacher.
- (c) Other Palestinian teachers appointed in Kuwait prior to the disaster: Sulaiman Abu Goush, Ibraheem Eid, Faisal Al Taher, Abd Al Latif Al Saleh, Mohammad Najim, Zaki Al Dirhalli, Omar Al Dajani, Subhi Al Dahleh, Mohammad Ghafour and Yousef Al Hammouri.

Beginning my Life in Kuwait

When we arrived in Kuwait, we found a number of Palestinian teachers, including those brought from Damascus. Sulaiman Abu Ghoush was the only one veteran teacher from the old Palestinian education missions. He first left Kuwait and returned to Palestine but he kept going back and forth to Kuwait. During the disaster, Abu Ghoush was the first Palestinian to go to Kuwait. Then, he began bringing other Palestinians, such as Ashraf Lutfi who was appointed as an officer in the office of Abdullah Al Mulla then Secretary to the Kuwaiti government. Ashraf, in turn, sent for my cousin Yusuf who he knew from Jaffa to come to Kuwait to work in the office of Abdullah Al Mulla. Yusuf, in turn, brought his brothers to Kuwait. So, a Palestinian community began to form in Kuwait after the disaster. This is clearly outlined in detail in Shafiq Nazem Al Ghabra's book entitled "Palestinians in Kuwait" published in the eighties. The book contains a study of social relations of three Palestinian families that settled in Kuwait: The Qamar Christian family from Jerusalem, Sammour family from Dair Yasin and our family, Abul Jebain, from Jaffa.

On the next day of my arrival in Kuwait I began my work as a teacher in the Qibliya Elementary School, and was given a furnished house near that school. The house was located in Al Salhiya near the Department of Education. The British Bank was then the only bank in Kuwait and consisted of two small rooms in a building in the marketplace. This was before the foundation of the National Bank of Kuwait in 1902. At that time, the



A picture of a Kuwaiti kid hoisting the old Kuwaiti flag.

Egyption Pound was equivalent to ١٣,٨ Indian Rupees.

A list of male and female Palestinian teachers working in Kuwait in the academic year of ١٩٤٨-١٩٤٩

Male Teachers: Mohammad Najim, Hussein Najim, Khair Eddin Abul Jebain, Abdul Latif Al Saleh, Shafiq Qasrawi, Tayseer` Suleiman, Mohammad Basheer, Abdullah Al Kelani, Khalil Dahmash, Hashem Dahmash, Shawkat Al Dajani, Sa'di Badran, Mohammad Za'balawi, Suleiman Abu Ghoush, Ribhi Al Aref, Ahmad Ezzat Abu Amara, Hasan Subuh, Ibrahim Murad, Fawzi Al Kayyali, Akram Al Kayyali, Zaki Abdul Hamid, Mohammad Al Hunaidi, Sheikh As'ad Al Imam and Suhail Jabr.

Female Teachers: Zainab Seif Eddin Al Aref, Lutfiyeh Al Zabalawi Bakeer, I'tidal Abul Jebain and Wedad Al Shehabi.

A list of female Palestinian teachers working in Kuwait in the academic year of 1949-1950.

Salma Nusaiba, Suad Wafa, Wesal Abu Dabbeh, Seham Ayyad Abul Jebain, Bushra Abu Dabbeh Abu Amara, Alia Amara, Su'ad Khorshid Al Hinnawi, Ateka Badran and Wesal Arafah Qusantini. In addition to the above female teachers, one male teacher was appointed in that year who was Wajeeh Abdou.

A list of most Palestinians who came into Kuwait in 1949 and before, but did not work in teaching

Haidar Al Shehabi, Yousef Abul Jebain, Yacoub Abul Jebain, Suad Abul Jebain, Abdul Wahed Abul Jebain, Farouq Abul Jebain, Ashraf Lutfi, Sadi Abu Duhair, Abdul Karim Shibeab, Goerge Sawabini, Labeeb Owaidah, Yoused Abu Dabbeh, Ahmad Arafat Abu Amara, Abdul Karim Al Shawwa, Akram Beebi, Mohammad Al Hinnawi, Mohammad Nusaibah, Adel Nusaibah, Abdul Karim Al Sha'rawi, Asa'ad Bakir, Mohammad Saleem Farwanah, Jabra Shuhaibar, Khalil Shuhaibar, Jamil Wafa, Ibrahim Wafa, Hasan Wafa, Abdul Razzak Badran, Asaad Al Dajani, Sa'ad Allah Hijazi, Hofa Hofamian, Saleh Abu Rizk, Hani Al Qadoumi, Jawad Al Qadoumi, Anwar Al Huaidi, Ziyad Zu'aiter, Zakariya Al Kurdi, Fawzi Al Khadra,

Part Two

Mohammad Al Za'tari, Ali Sabah, Jamil Jabr, Aref Jabr, Ghaleb Jabr, Ahmad Al Kelani, Fawzi Hana, Khaled Eid, Ibrahim Eid, Mohammad Ma'rouf, Sami Bishara, Adel Baidas, Mohammad Kayed.

CHAPTER III

**OUR SIMPLE LIFE IN KUWAIT
IN THE FORTIES**

Drinking Water Problem

This was a very big problem because when we arrived in Kuwait fresh water was provided only through one mean: Carrying drinking water from Shat Al Arab (near Basra) to Kuwait on boats. Near the seaport there were tanks to hold the fresh water from these boats. Therefore, water was neither clean nor sterilized. Then it was carried to houses by leather bags; so it needed boiling and purifying before being used.

Also, in every old house in Kuwait there was a well of brackish water used for domestic purposes except for drinking and cooking. For example, it was used for spraying the floors to reduce the blazing heat and to help the dust settle, particularly that the floors of the outer yards were not paved nor tiled.

Description of our Old House

Upon arriving to Kuwait, we resided in Al Muawwad house in Salhiya near the Education Department. The house consisted of three small rooms with a sandy "yard" in the middle. The door was large and wooden, within

which was a small door to allow our entrance to the yard. There was also a water closet to which brackish water was moved for use. In addition to that there was a simple kitchen. There was no oven in that kitchen, so my cousin Yousef made us a simple one from an empty gasoline tin which we used to roast meat. We had to eat any purchased meat all in one meal so that leftovers will not rotten because we did not have a refrigerator then. Sometimes, my wife hung the remaining meat on the wash line to be eaten next morning. For lighting, we used a small "Aladdin lamp".

The Birth of my First Son

On ١٧/١٠/١٩٥٠, my first son "Nader" was born in Amiri Hospital. He was among the first babies born there since it was inaugurated by the Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Ahmad Al Jaber in the summer of ١٩٤٩. The doctor who supervised the birth of my son was an Englishman working there, and a Lebanese nurse called Rojina delivered the baby. It is known that during that era women gave birth at their homes with the help of Kuwaiti midwives who appealed only when necessary to the American Hospital which was established in Al Qibla neighborhood by the American missionary during the twenties of the past century.

Medical Staff in Kuwait

In ١٩٤٨ and ١٩٤٩ there were very few Arab doctors, such as Adel Nuseiba and Sami Bishara who came from Palestine after the disaster. On the other hand, Ahmad Al

Khatib was the first Kuwaiti doctor who graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB) in 1902.

Among the Lebanese doctors who worked in Kuwait during that era were Nayef Hasan to whom I was grateful for the treatment of my son Nader who was in a bad condition since birth. Nader's mother was trying to give him suitable good food notwithstanding the fact that most kinds of food were not available. During my frequent visits to the vegetables market near Mubarkiya School I could usually find yellow pumpkins and some tomatoes. Therefore, Dr. Nayef, out of sympathy, provided us with some processed baby food which he used to have as samples.

It is worth mentioning that my son Nader was born after I was married to my relative "Seham Zaki Ayyad" in Cairo on 24/3/1949. And I returned to Kuwait with my bride on April 1st of that year. In Kuwait, my friends celebrated our wedding and gave us presents they bought from the Indian store "Jashenmal" which was the only store selling gifts in Kuwait.

Our house at Salhiya was crowded every afternoon with Kuwaiti ladies and Arab female teachers for the purpose of congratulating the bride who was wearing her white dress and offering candies we brought from Damascus. The habit of offering candies on wedding occasions was not known in Kuwait and ceremonies were very simple. I feel happy now when I see my Nader reaching fifty years of age. And I remember that he was the first Palestinian baby born for Palestinian parents who married after the Disaster. What makes me happier is that he is following my steps.

Besides his work as an engineer at San Diego Municipality, California, my son Nader together with his

colleagues in America defended the issues of the Arab nation through delivering lectures, holding political symposiums, writing in the press and calling for the good nurturing of the coming Arab generations in America. Last year he also published his book "Palestine in Postage Stamps" displaying all stamps issued in Palestine or relating to the issue thereof.

As to my other sons, Wael and Samer, they are businessmen, whereas my daughters Zulfa and Lubna live with their families in California after they have gotten the American citizenship. It is worth mentioning that all my sons and their families had to leave Kuwait after the second Gulf War because they were not given the nationality of that country in which they were born, loved and spent all their lives.



A picture showing the writer with his elder son Nader Abul Jebain in their home yard at Qibla Neighborhood (Barahet Abbas). Kuwait
1952.



**A picture showing the writer with his children from right to left:
Zulfa, Nader, Samer, Wael and Lubna. California, 19/10/2000.**

Part Two

122

122

CHAPTER IV

**EDUCATION IN KUWAIT
IN THE FORTIES AND EARLY FIFTIES**

Historical Glimpse

Modern education in Kuwait began in ١٩٣٦-١٩٣٧ with the arrival of the first Palestinian educational mission there. The teachers of that mission taught at Al Mubarakiya School established in ١٩١٢ by a donation from Kuwaiti merchants.

It was the first regular school in Kuwait, and even in all the Gulf States. That school taught Arabic, arithmetic, Holy Quran and religion. In addition to Al Mubarakiya School, there were a number of "Katateeb" at which "Al Mulla" (teacher) taught the boys while female teachers taught the girls.

Modern teaching in Kuwait included the teaching of modern science, history, geography, and English as well as physical education, art, and music.

When we came to Kuwait in November ١٩٤٨, there were also five elementary boys' schools: Ahmadiya, Sharkiya, Qibliya, Mirqab and a boy's kindergarten. There were also four elementary girls' schools: Qibliya, Zahra, Orient, and Middle Schools. At these schools, there were very few Kuwaiti female teachers in addition to a number

of Arab female teachers. When I arrived in Kuwait, I worked in Qibliya School under the supervision of an Egyptian headmaster.

The Egyptian Education Mission in ١٩٤٨

In academic year of ١٩٤٨-١٩٤٩; education in Kuwait was under the supervision of an Egyptian education mission which included around ٢٠ male and female teachers.

In addition to the Egyptian teachers at the Al Mubarakiya School, there were also a large number of Palestinian teachers brought into Kuwait following the Palestine Disaster and the immigration of more than half of the Palestinians into neighboring Arab countries as of April ١٩٤٨.

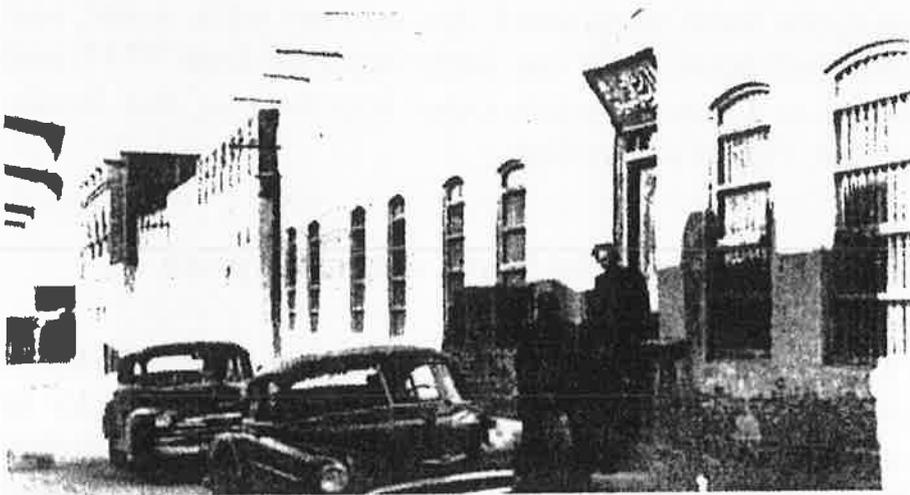
After my arrival in Kuwait with my sister Itidal; she was appointed in Zahra School. It is known that the Egyptian education mission started coming to Kuwait since mid forties. Before that, there were Syrian, Lebanese and other teachers besides the Kuwaiti teachers following the expiry of the Palestinian education mission term, and the return of the Palestinian teachers to their home during the early years of WWII. The education in Kuwait was incumbent with Sheikh Abdullah Al Jaber. In fear of mounting sympathy with the Palestinians on part of the Kuwaitis; Taha Sweifi the Egyptian Director of Education submitted a report to the Education Council, recommending the job termination of more than half the Palestinian teachers at the end of the academic year of ١٩٨٤-١٩٤٩.

The Education Council responded to that recommendation; thus, I and my sister were among those whose jobs were terminated. So, me, my wife, sister, and brother left Kuwait in the early days of June ١٩٤٩ and returned to Cairo to rejoin other members of the family who took Egypt as a refuge.

Kuwait Terminates the Work of the Egyptian Education Mission

As I said earlier, I left Kuwait to Egypt where I stayed there for six months trying to find a job. I was lucky to have the opportunity to work either in the press in Jordan, or in education in Muscat or in the Arabic division of the Pakistani broadcasting station. Nevertheless, I and my family were yearning to return to Kuwait, which we lived in for a year and loved. So, I requested Abdul Aziz Hussein, Director of the Kuwait House, who was already acquainted with me, to mediate for my return for work there, which he did. The result was that I received a telegram from the Education Department telling me that I was appointed and that I should travel to Kuwait "at my own expense". This was in December ١٩٤٩. So, I travelled with my family from Alexandria Port to Beirut, then to Damascus (the desert road of Syria- Iraq was then unpaved).

The vehicles of the British company "Nairn" were the only ones equipped to travel across the desert. We arrived in Baghdad, then to Basra by the Express Train, then to Kuwait by a ١٩٤٧ model Ford. Upon my arrival in Kuwait, I was appointed Secretary to the Administration



A picture showing the writer standing in front of Qibliya Elementary Boys School. Kuwait, 1948.



A picture showing Miss Itidal Abul Jebain with her students in a tailoring class at Qibliya Girls School. Kuwait, 1949.

and Finance Director at the Education Department at the monthly salary I had been previously paid i.e. ۰۰۰ Rupees. Moreover, my wife was appointed at Zahra School and my sister at Qibliya School. Each of them was paid a monthly salary of ۳۰۰ Indian Rupees.

At the end of that school year ۱۹۴۹-۱۹۵۰, The Education Council decided to terminate the work of the Egyptian Education Mission as well as the work of its director, and to appoint, instead, a Palestinian person as the director of Kuwait's Education Department. The Council decided to select, from other nominees, Mr. Darwish Al Miqdadi for his efficiency and good political reputation, let alone his sincerity when he was a teacher at the Teacher's Institute in Baghdad.

Appointment of Darweesh Al Miqdadi as Director of Education

Al Miqdadi brought a number of efficient Palestinian teachers to teach at Al Mubarakiya Secondary School. Later on, most of those teachers taught at universities and assumed high academic positions.

Furthermore, Al Miqdadi appointed specialized teachers for modern commercial education. For the purpose of enabling students of that division to join Arab and foreign universities; the mathematics subject was added to the commercial division curricula. I and my colleague Hussein Najm began to teach mathematics for the ۱st and ۲nd secondary classes (commercial division) which equaled the ۳rd and ۴th secondary classes. I was transferred to Al Mubarakiya School since the beginning of the ۱۹۵۰-۱۹۵۱ acadmic year and taught mathematics there.

During the directorship of Al Miqdabi, the students had to replace the Kuwaiti "dishdasha" with school uniforms consisting of shirt and trousers, and the Education Department started the distribution of fabric or ready made clothes among male and female students, and replaced the Arabic timing (then valid) with the usual calendar timing.

Al Miqdadi supported technical inspection of male and female teachers, and interest was taken in rural schools as well as Al Failaka Island School, and a class for the graduation of Kuwaiti teachers was formed in Al Mubarakiya School to satisfy the increasing need for Kuwait teachers.

Failaka Ruins

Talking about Failaka Island, I would like to mention this real anecdote which was told to me by a friend in Amman two years ago. He said that while his son, who held a foreign nationality, was walking with his Danish girlfriend on the seashore, she told him, in a moment of intimacy, that she felt guilt and when he asked her why, she told him that she was in Failaka some years ago in an excavation exhibition of its ruins, and that the head of that mission, a Danish Jew asked them to find any trace of Jewish archeologys there. She added that they tried but failed and found nothing. So, he asked them for a bizarre request and that was to draw the "Jewish candlestick" on a piece of wood and throw it in a deep well, then cover it with sand which they did. The Danish Jew aimed at making other people believe that the Jews had trodden Failaka one day which is of course untrue. In this context,

I would say that my friend Dr. Izz Eddin Gharbiya wrote a book called "Palestine Ruins Tell its History". This book refutes the false claims of the Jews based on the Old Testament over the history of Palestine.

Abdul Aziz Hussein: First Kuwaiti Director of Education

At the end of the 1901-1902 academic year; a new Education Council was elected. The Teachers Society cooperated with the new Education Council to "Kuwaitize" the education administration. As a result, the new Education Council appointed Mr. Abdul Aziz Hussein Director for the Kuwait Education Department from the beginning of the 1902-1903 academic year.

Mr. Hussein began his work with the appointment of Darwish Al Miqdadi as his assistant. Mr. Darwish said on this occasion that he accepted the new post for the belief that he would, by so doing, serve Kuwait which he loved dearly. Under a new arrangement, the Egyptian Education Mission returned to Kuwait, subject to the appointment of the head thereof as Headmaster for a secondary school but not as an Education Director which he was earlier. Due to the increasing demand for teachers, the Kuwaiti teachers were very few, Abdul Aziz Hussein used to travel every year, with Al Miqdadi accompanying him, to set contracts with Palestinian teachers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to work in Kuwait. After some years of that date, the education of Kuwait began to contracting with Egyptian and other teachers to work in intermediate and secondary schools.



A picture showing some of the students and teachers of Al Mubarakiya Secondary School in Kuwait in 1951. Right: Teachers Mahmoud Abu Ghazala, Khaled Al Ifranji, Dr. Mahmoud Zayed, Fawzi Kayyali, Dr. Abdul Qader Yousef, Dr. Mahmoud Samra, Khairy Abul Jebain, Abdullah Qaraman and Abdul Razzak Badran. (Kuwait 1951)

During the directorship of Abdul Aziz Hussein, education flourished noticeably, and a number of Egyptian inspectors were brought to Kuwait to supervise the developing educational process. Also, during that era, a number of educational institutions, Shuwaikh Secondary School, Industrial College, Siddiq School, Shamiya School, Saladin School as well as the Central Kitchen which were all established in the most modern fashion by the five British companies in charge of all construction works in Kuwait for a number of years since 1952. Also,

that era witnessed the establishment of a number of kindergartens for Kuwaiti children aged 4 years.

Building of Shuwaikh Secondary School

During the late era of Al Miqdadi, the Education Council decided to establish a full secondary school at Shuwaikh area, to be equipped with all facilities and playgrounds, in addition to the provision of the school with an auditorium for students, and accommodation for teachers in nearby houses. Studying at that school began at early in the academic year of 1953-1954.

When I was transferred to that school, one of those houses was provided to me with my colleague Dr.Mahmoud Al Samra, where my eldest daughter Zulfa, who was named after her paternal grandmother, was born in 1956. The houses of the Shuwaikh School were luxuriously built with slated floors, in contrast to other houses, which made my friends come to see our house.

The "Complex of the Secondary School" was fantastic with different facilities, playgrounds as well as theatres and a teachers club. The dormitory of the students at that Secondary School gave chance to the Arab students of different nationalities to meet. For example, Kuwait hosted in the fifties missions from the students of Arab countries of North Africa, I myself taught mathematics for Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan students in the third secondary class.

The theatre at that school was the largest of its type in Kuwait, and it was used, among other things, for

conducting public lectures as well as annual cultural seasons.

Besides, the playground of that school was the first to be lit by spotlights, and has witnessed many sport events as well and national festivals. During the early years, the teachers at Shuwaikh Secondary School were mostly Egyptians and Palestinians with no Kuwaiti teachers. But after a few years, a number of Kuwaiti teachers, who graduated from universities, began teaching at that school. I continued working and living at the Shuwaikh Secondary School until ١٩٥٨ when I was transferred to work at the Ministry of Electricity.

CHAPTER V

**INCEPTION OF THE SPORTS
MOVEMENT IN KUWAIT**

How Kuwait Came to Know Football

Kuwait knew sports with the arrival of the first Palestinian Education Mission in ١٩٣٦. Following the discovery of oil in ١٩٣٨, the British staff of the then newly established Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) began to play football in Ahmadi City (headquarters of the company). Since then, football began to be popular in Kuwait.

Establishment of Al Ahli Club

In ١٩٥٠, the first sports club Al Ahli Club was established in Kuwait, and took its headquarters at Al Matabba neighborhood in Qibliya side of the city, near the Kuwait Wall. During the ١٩٥٠-١٩٥١ academic year, a football team was formed from some of the students of Al Mubarakiya Secondary School and the Palestinian teachers. In the ١٩٥١-١٩٥٢ academic year, other Kuwaiti clubs were established besides Al Ahli Club. So, the team of the Education Department and the teams of other clubs

used to compete against each other in football matches. Thus, the Kuwait Sport Union was established.

Establishment of the Kuwait Sports Union

In the ۱۹۵۲-۱۹۵۳ academic year, while being a teacher at Al Mubarakiya School, I was nominated by some Palestinian teachers, being once a secretary to the Palestinian Sport Union in Jaffa, for the Kuwait Sports Union. I accepted the nomination to satisfy my hobby and to serve a dear part of our larger Arab nation namely Kuwait in the field of sports. Elections were held and I was elected as secretary for that union. The Kuwait Sports Union supervised sports games other than football through sub-committees.

Among the sports problems that surfaced during those years was the increasing number of non-Kuwaiti players in different Kuwaiti teams. After long discussions between the Union and those clubs for the enhancement of Kuwaiti players, it was determined that the number of non-Kuwaiti players should not exceed ۴ in each team and in each match.

Establishment of the Olympic Committee

In ۱۹۵۷, the sports movement flourished in Kuwait. Therefore, a number of meetings were held to re-organize the movement, and it was agreed that the Kuwait Sport Union was not sufficient by itself to supervise the whole sports movement. So, it was decided to establish the Kuwaiti Olympic Committee as well as the Kuwait Football Union. According to the new organization, the

Kuwait Football Union was established and I was elected as Secretary for seven years. The first chairman of that union was Jasem Al Qatami. The union continued its activities until it was dissolved in 1969 by the government together with other sports clubs and unions for political reasons. The government allowed sports activities to be resumed after one year or so. At the beginning, three new clubs, Kuwait Club, Arab Club and Qadisiya Club, were formed, followed by more clubs.



A picture showing Sheikh Abdullah Mubarak, Head of the Public Security, handing a cup to the Kuwait Football Champion. In the picture also appears Khairy Abul Jebain, Secretary to the Union. Kuwait, 1964.

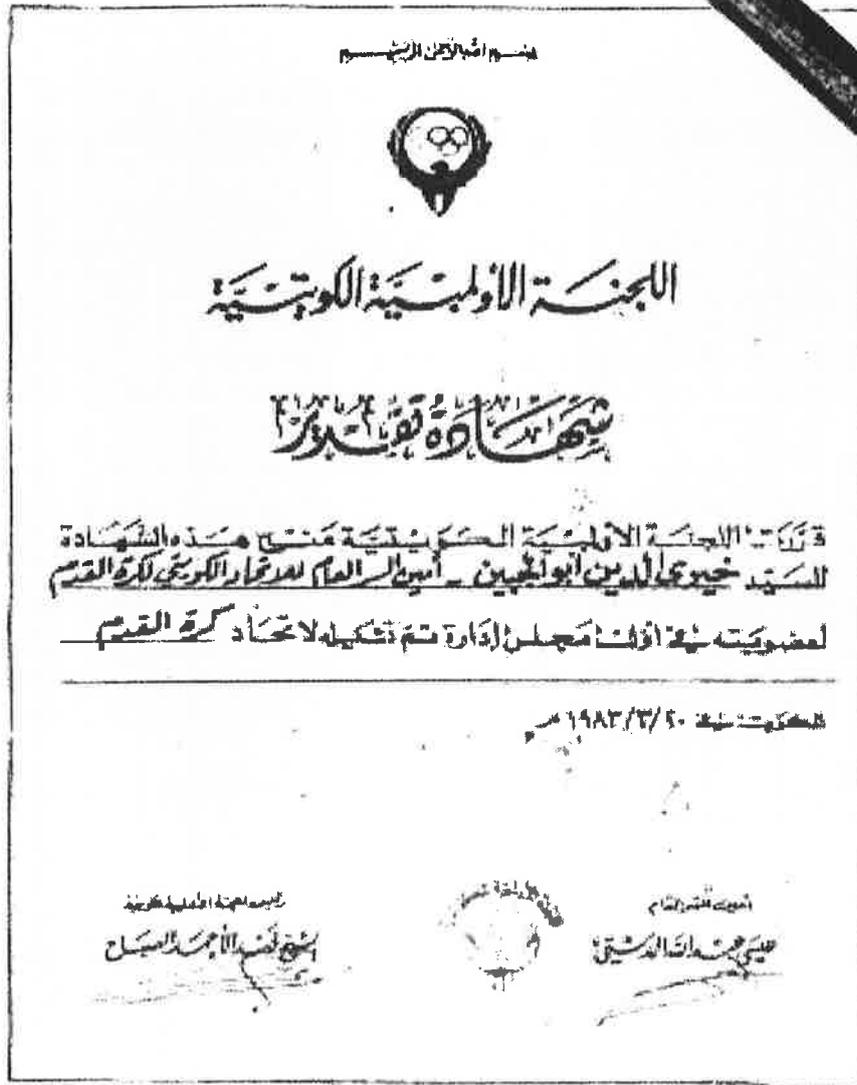
Kuwait Joins the International Union

Among our activities then, was our joining of the Football International Federation as well as the Asian Union. And we appointed Brushesh, a Yugoslav Coach. The first

international match we played after joining the Union was between the teams of Kuwait and Tunis in March ١٩٦٣.

After that, we participated in the Arab Cup Tournament in Lebanon and the Kuwait Football Union was among its founders in ١٩٦٢ and I represented Kuwait in the respective meeting. Before that, we participated in the Arab Sports Tournament held in Morocco.

After being elected as a representative for Palestine and advocate for the PLO office in Kuwait in ١٩٦٤, I resigned my membership from the Kuwait Football Union in early ١٩٦٥. The Board of the Union accepted it and sent me a letter of gratitude, which I am very proud of. Further, His Highness the Heir Apparent, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem, handed me a certificate of appreciation granted to me by the Kuwait Olympic Committee in my capacity as the first Secretary of the Kuwaiti Football Union on the celebration of the Olympic Day on ٢٠/٣/١٩٨٣.



A picture of the certificate of Appreciation handed to the Author by H.H. the Heir Apparent, in his capacity as the first Secretary to the Board of the Kuwait Football Union. Kuwait, 1983.

Part Two

138

۱۳۸

CHAPTER VI

**QUITTING MY CAREER IN TEACHING
FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE JOB**

**The Establishment of the Public Electricity
Department**

With the emergence of modern renaissance and the establishment of government departments in Kuwait, the Public Electricity Department was established in late 1901 under the chairmanship of Sheikh Jaber Al Ali. The "National Electricity Co.", owned by Abdullah Al Mullah was established in Kuwait in the mid-forties, and owned a diesel operated generator. That company supplied electric current to a limited number of city houses. The company with its staff and equipment were attached to the Electricity Department following its establishment.

My Transfer to Work at the Department

In March 1908, my friend Abdul Mohsen Al Qattan suggested that I be transferred from my work at the Education Department to work with him at the Public Electricity Department.

Sheikh Jaber Al Ali contracted Al Qattan in 1902 to work at that Department after hearing of his efficiency and

entrusted to him the re-organization of that Department to satisfy the country's increasing need for electricity.

I accepted the offer and was transferred to the new Department as of April 1st 1908. I was appointed with a grade-four position whereas I had a grade five back when I was appointed in the Education Department. I occupied the post of "Administrative Controller" whereas Al Qattan was entrusted with a wide range of power and nominated as the General Controller, and devoted his time to establish the Electricity Station "C".

Among the most important works I performed at the Electricity Department was the establishment of collection offices where consumers payed their electricity bills instead of sending the Department Collector to the consumers to charge for electricity cost.

Other jobs of mine at the department were to review all outgoing letters and the control the staff attendance as well as visit the outside offices in different villages to ensure the proper performance of work. I also supervised the appointment of personnel and the preparation of the first chapter of the annual budget in addition to other administrative activities. My work was painstaking and had actually once caused my transfer to the hospital!

I continued working at the Electricity and Water Ministry until late 1964 when I assumed the position of Director of the PLO in Kuwait until 1969, where after that I returned to my work at the Ministry. After returning to the Ministry, I was entrusted with the post of "Controller of Public Relations and Inspection". One of my most important achievements after returning to the Ministry

was the establishment of a cooperative financial security system for non-Kuwaiti staff of that Ministry in line with the social securities system of the Kuwaitis.

That project proved totally successful to the extent that most Kuwaiti ministries applied it to their non-Kuwaiti employees. In addition to my interest in the cooperative fund at the Ministry, I conducted the public relations issues briskly, and accompanied the minister in his trips to the water and electricity projects.

Speaking about water projects, I remember that the Ministry of Electricity and Water, in the sixties, was sending technicians and water excavation equipment to some Arab Emirates in the Gulf, through the Arabian Gulf Committee at the Kuwait Foreign Ministry, prior to the unification of the six Emirates in one State under the name of United Arab Emirates in 1971.



A picture of Abdullah Al Sumeet Minister of Electricity and Water 3rd from the right. In front of him Chief Engineer of Water, Abdullah Al Sharhan, and some of the Ministry engineers on an inspection trip to a comprehensive water project. Also appears Khairy Abul Jebain Public Relations Controller at the Ministry. Kuwait, 1974.

CHAPTER VIII

**PERSONAL ACTIVITIES
IN THE SEVENTIES & EIGHTIES**

Establishment of the Family Fund

Among my personal interests in the seventies, was the establishment of a cooperative fund for Abul Jebain family which succeeded to a great extent and could meet the urgent needs of family members and we invested the accumulated sums. Other Palestinian families in Kuwait followed our steps.

I would like to mention in this section that we sent our sons to study in America because I could not (or I did not use my influence to) get seats for them in one of the Arab Universities as some did. My son Nader was accepted in San Marcus University in Texas after having his secondary certificate in Kuwait in 1968. The university installments during those years were low and my wife and I could afford to teach our children in America. At the end of that year, Nader got his brother an acceptance from the university, and Wael joined his brother in America on the 1st of September 1970. In the following year, Nader and Wael transferred themselves from that small University to the University of El Passo in Texas. In early 1970, we got invitation cards to attend the

graduation ceremony of my sons Nader and Wael in Texas University where they studied civil engineering.

Despite our financial difficulties, we decided to attend that ceremony, which was held on ٢١/٥/٧٥. After we celebrated the graduation ceremony, we accompanied our sons to Kuwait to find them jobs there, due to the increasing demand for efficient staff as a result of the increase in oil prices following the ١٩٧٣ war. So, my sons Nader and Wael were appointed as engineers to work in the project of establishing the new Kuwait International Airport.

My Transfer from the Ministry of Electricity to the Ministry of Education

In late ١٩٧٥, the Ministers of Electricity and Education agreed on my transfer to the Ministry of Education (the Minister was then Jassem Al- Marzouk who was one of my friends and students). I remember that the position of non-Kuwaiti administrators like me began to weaken (at the last period of my work in the Electricity Ministry), with the increasing number of Kuwaiti graduates and engineers coming to the Ministry. In the Ministry of Education, I was appointed as Training Controller. I remember that I tried to train the Kuwaiti females to work as secretaries, and that I could not impose penalties upon those who skipped training sessions, because the general atmosphere of the Ministry did not allow such punishment.

I'm Granted Kuwaiti Citizenship

In late December ١٩٨٤, the State of Kuwait granted the Kuwaiti nationality to ٨٠ people who were some of those who rendered good services to Kuwait and I was among those people.

My wife was also granted that nationality whereas my children were not because they were over age. Moreover, they were not granted that nationality under the law issued in ١٩٩٨.

When looking at the statement which includes the names of the Palestinians granted the Kuwaiti nationality with their families since the establishment of Kuwait, we find that their number ranges between ١٠٠ and ١٦٠ only. This number is small in comparison to the large number of Palestinians in Kuwait. Take, for instance, the Palestinian in Saudi Arabia or Bahrain and you will find that the number of Palestinians granted the nationality of these countries were much higher.

Establishment of the Welfare Association

In ١٩٨٠, I was appointed as Secretary to the first Board of the Welfare Association. That Association was established by a number of Palestinian businessmen to preserve the Palestinian heritage by all means, and was financed from the profits of a Trust established for that purpose. That Association was registered in Switzerland in ١٩٨١ and took a location thereto in Geneva. It offers now aids to a number of foundations and municipalities within and outside Palestine through certain projects. The Association began its activities by establishing the museum of Palestinian Memory. I cooperated, in my

capacity as Head of Jaffa Welfare Fund in Kuwait with the Welfare Association in establishing a house for the family and child within the city of Jaffa, as well as in supporting the Arabic language in Jaffa by establishing an Arabic printing press there.

CHAPTER IX

PALESTINIAN FOLKLORE

Wedding of My Youngest Son Samer

In December ١٩٨٨, my youngest son Samer was married. The marriage contract was concluded by a specialized employee from the religious Court in Kuwait, and this took place in our home at Salwa area in Kuwait, in the presence of members of our family and our friends in accordance with the customs of Palestine.

Samer had completed his study in America and worked for three years in Kuwait, whereas his bride Rola Dajani from Jerusalem holds a British nationality like her father Dr. Ibrahim Faeq Dajani. Because we were among the first to come to Kuwait after the disaster of Palestine, and due to our extensive social relations with the Kuwaiti and Arab families as well as the Palestinian families residing in Kuwait, and due to the large number of members of our family in Kuwait, we were very embarrassed because we could not find a big hall in Kuwait that would accommodate the large number of people invited. But, the bride insisted on having a Jaffan wedding which required that those invited be seated not standing. After some discussions, we agreed to her request. So, the two main halls in Hyatt Regency Hotel were crowded with ١,٣٠٠ who were invited to the wedding. I think Samer's

wedding was one of the largest weddings in modern Kuwait and was celebrated according to Jaffan traditions.

During the wedding, the bride Rola wore the thimbles holding the candles and began to walk dancingly. The melting wax meant that the bride is ready to “melt” in the service of her husband, whereas putting the lit candles on the five fingers was to prevent envy.

The wedding cake was shaped like the clock of the Martyrs Square in Jaffa city. Mohammad Al Asfar helped us in the wedding procession of the bridegroom. Also, Mohammad Abul Jebain participated in celebrating the wedding process of his cousin Samer according to Jaffan traditions. I myself participated with this celebration by chanting some folkloric songs. Three other persons participated in such songs with different words. On the next day, some of the Kuwaiti newspapers criticized me for making such luxurious wedding because I am a Palestinian leader. In retort to this, Dr. Sobhi Ghoushi wrote in an article: “Shouldn’t a Palestinian be happy?”

The Ceremony of “Jaffa Always in Mind”

Following in the footsteps of other Palestinian towns and cities who established welfares and funds in support of the first uprising (Intifada) of the heroic Palestinian people; The Jaffa Welfare Fund was established in Kuwait under my chairmanship. In March ١٩٨٩, I called for a meeting at my house, which was attended by many elderly Jaffans. In that meeting, we talked about our lovely memories in Jaffa, and the attendees agreed upon holding a ceremony which would exhibit the Palestinian



A picture showing the bride Rola Dajani strutting dacingly for her bridegroom Samer Abul Jebain at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Kuwait, ٦/٧/١٩٨٩.

folklore in Jaffa. The other aim of that ceremony was to provide its revenues for the support of the Intifada. Following is some of what I wrote in the "Biography of Khairy Abul Jebain" published in Kuwait in ١٩٩٩: "As to the ceremony of Jaffa Always in Mind", we asked permission from the Ministries of Information and Foreign Affairs to conduct that ceremony for the purpose of exhibiting the Palestinian heritage, and the permission was granted to the Palestinian Woman Association in Kuwait.

The first ceremony was conducted on ٢/٣/٩٠, whereas the second was conducted at the end of that month under the request of the audience. The ticket fee was KD ١٠. Some

people came to my house saying, "We will sleep at your house until you give us tickets".

There were three committees for this purpose: Artistic, Cultural and Financial and Administrative as well as a Heritage Group which was fully responsible for coordination and cooperation among all committees. Our singer and composer at that ceremony was the Jaffan Gazi Al Sharqawi. I delivered a word on Jaffa. The writer and director of that ceremony was Mohammad Al Asfar. There were also Paintings portraying Palestine and Jaffa made by Ismail Shammout, Ezz Eddin Gharbiya and Tamam Shammout. The operetta was written by Ishak Adel Hammami, and the narrator was Mohammad Abu Lughud, whereas Lamis and Mohammad Abul Jebain and Bint Saqr presented a play in Jaffan dialect. The ceremony also included various sketches and chants from the Jaffan folklore. There were also paid advertisements in the ceremony booklets. The total collection of the ceremony approximated \$ 100,000, mostly paid for the establishment of a house for family and child care in Jaffa. Sharif Al Alami was the introducer of the first ceremony, whereas Kamel Qustandi was the introducer of the second.

My wife Um Nader (Seham Ayyad Abul Jebain) appeared in the second ceremony and talked about the Jaffan wedding and "Zaffa". She also taught the girls and the brides Jaffan songs, since the bride in Jaffan weddings wore seven different gowns and each one had its song. She also clarified to the bride how to walk dancingly during the chanting of songs accompanying each gown.

Um Nader herself gave the Jaffan singer “Ghazi Al Sharqawi” the words and tunes of these songs, and he, in turn, recorded them to be sung with the participating girls.

Ramadan Hymns

That chant was sung by children in Jaffa during the eve of the fasting month of Ramadan when gathering in the neighborhood after breakfast, particularly in mid Ramadan, like “Qirqe’an” in Kuwait and the Gulf. Children used to head to each house in the neighborhood one by one.

The children chanted folkloric songs asking for some sweets or the like from families. If the man or lady of the house gave them things like sweets, crisps, chocolate, dried figs dates or money, they would leave chanting praising songs for him or her. But if they did not get anything, they would chant some rebuffing words at the family of that house.

152

102



PART III

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE PLO



[Redacted]

III

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

[Redacted]

CHAPTER I

RISING OF THE PALESTINIAN ENTITY

Palestinian Political Activity after the Disaster

After the disaster of Palestine and the termination of the British Mandate in May 1948, more than half of the Palestinians were displaced and took refuge in neighboring countries. Soon after the Arab armies suffered a heavy defeat in the Palestine war and truce agreements were signed with the Zionist enemy. Following the disaster, the Palestinian leadership fell, the members thereof scattered in different countries, and the prominent figures of that leadership, Haj Amin Al Husseini was exiled to Egypt. In October of that year, The Whole of Palestine Government was established and lasted for a few months only due to the protests against it from the Kingdom of Jordan. After that, "Jericho Conference" declared the annexation of the West Bank to the East Bank in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The Palestinian activity was restricted thereafter to the participation of a delegate from the High Arab Commission, under the Chairmanship of Eissa Nakhleh, in the meetings of the UN General Assembly upon the presentation of the Palestine issue before the Political Committee every year. The Arab countries managed to

obtain Resolution 194 from the UN General Assembly which stipulated the return of Palestinian refugees to their homes and compensating them. Speaking of the said 194 UN Resolution I would like to say that I have recently watched an interview conducted on Al Jazeera Channel with the Palestinian intellectual Dr. Salman Abu Sitta over the right of return, and it was a great interview.

In this interview (telecast on 21/2/2002, i.e. 58 years after the passing of that resolution), Dr. Abu Sitta indicated with figures, maps and statistical tables that the return right is indispensable, legal and possible.

Dr. Salman is of Palestinian origin, from Beersheba, and is currently the Chairman of the Palestinian Land Commission (founded in London some years ago) which endeavors hard to prove the possibility of the refugees' return to their homes from which they were eradicated in 1948. Dr. Salman delivered a number of lectures in a number of Arab and foreign countries. I remember that a journalist from Beirut phoned me last summer, in my capacity as a representative of exiled Palestinians, and asked my opinion over the issue of compensating the Palestinians instead of giving them the right to return to their home Palestine. I made it clear to him that the UN Resolution No. 194 stipulates both the return and compensation and not either of them. I added that compensation, in my point of view, meant the compensation of every Palestinian refugee for the sufferings experienced including troubles, damages and anxiety, over the past fifty years. In 1949, a Palestinian delegation traveled to Geneva for consultation with the International Reconciliation Committee but it failed in its

endeavors. After that, a number of attempts were exerted to establish a Palestinian entity, but they proved futile and the Palestinian issue kept evolving in a vicious circle. During the fifties and the early sixties, with the fading of the Palestinian leadership, many youths intended to serve the cause through joining national and other parties of those established between ١٩٤٨ and ١٩٦٤. I myself did not join any of those parties, despite the fact that many of my friends were members in some, such as the Ba'th (Resurrection) Party or the Arab National Movement. My activity during these years was restricted to the sports movement whereas I was Secretary for the Kuwait Sports Club and then to Kuwait's Football Union.

On the other hand, my sports activities enabled me to approach public activities. Owing to my prominent post in the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW), I used to meet delegates coming to the Ministry in preparation to meet the Minister Sheikh Jaber Al Ali.

I also used to meet delegates of students and youths as well as Palestinians seeking financial aids. All this made me closer to the leaders of Palestinian movement, but as I said earlier; I was not an official member in any of these movements (Fath, Palestine Youths, Revenge, Arab National and Al Ba'th).

I remember, for instance, that a Palestinian delegate came to Kuwait in the early ١٩٦٠ (coming from Germany) consisting of Ali Salameh and his sister Jihad as well as Said Kamal and Hayel Abdul Hamid. I was able, being a senior officer in the MEW, to collect a good sum of

money and facilitate things for them. They sent me, after leaving Kuwait, a letter of gratitude which I still keep.

When Ahmad Shuqairi was elected to succeed Ahmad Hilmi Pasha in representing Palestine in the Arab League, who sent Shuqairi to talk about the Palestinian cause in the Political Committee instead of the High Arab Commission delegate; Shuqairi found it suitable to bring along him some of the exiled Palestinians to the UN, and one of them was to be from Kuwait, namely Abdul Mohsen Qattan, who took permission from H.H. Prince Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem. The Prince gave him permission, saying that "It is the cause of all of us".

Al Qattan, to discuss the matter; invited a group of individuals, including myself, Abdul Aziz Saqr and Khaled Hassan. At that meeting, a suggestion emerged that work should be done through a committee or the like. I remember that, after the said meeting, Khaled Hassan invited me to join Fath Movement but I declined for one reason or another. From that day on, my feelings towards political activity for the Palestinian cause began to blossom. I began to be invited to every work or meeting in Kuwait relating to Palestine's cause owing to my prominent post in MEW, let alone that I was among the well-known Jaffan people in Kuwait. Besides that, I used to have good relations with Kuwaiti notables and youths, as a result of my teaching career at the secondary school and my sports activity in Kuwaiti clubs.

I admit that this work had taken up all my time, consequently keeping me away from participating in

Palestinian activities, although it endowed me with popularity.

Palestinians Enthusiasm in Kuwait to Bring About the Entity and Hold Elections to Select their Representatives

I began to emerge as a prominent politician since early ١٩٦٤ when, in January of that year, President Jama Abdul Nasser of Egypt called for the first Arab summit conference in Cairo. That conference entrusted Ahmad Shuqairi with contacting the Palestinian people as well as the Arab countries for the purpose of establishing and materializing such a dream and he prepared a project represented in the "National Charter" as well as in the Articles of Association. Furthermore, he made a tour of the Arab countries to meet with the leaders thereof as well as with Kuwait which was a main gathering place for exiled Palestinians. A Palestinian entity was the talk of the country for the first three months of ١٩٦٤.

The Kuwaiti government, under directions of H.H. Prince Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem, was very responsive in this area. Therefore, the Palestinian people were given the opportunity to express their opinions over such a crucial issue, through holding meetings and the other possible media.

Palestinian teachers and government employees were more qualified than others to express their views over the Palestinian entity. Following is more description of that period, as written in the Biography of Khairy Abul Jebain, which was published two years ago: "When

Shuqairi was commissioned with that task, the youths began pondering over ways of bringing about a Palestinian leadership before the establishment of the PLO, as well as over the preconditions and financing processes, in addition to the relationship with other Arab countries. For this purpose, meetings were held everywhere in Kuwait.

Newspapers also began publishing the news of Shuqairi and the commissioning thereof with the realization of a Palestinian entity. Youths in Kuwait hoped that the Palestinian entity would be a national leadership, and a number of committees were convened before noon and afternoon. This was before March 1968 when my actual contribution began let alone that a large number of Palestinians were working at the MEW. And because I was among the senior officers at MEW, talks were oozing over my nomination for a key role in establishing or forming a committee from the Ministry to contribute with the other committees in materializing that leadership. I remember I once went on behalf of the Ministry with some colleagues to the government farm which was under the supervision of Yahya Ghannam, who was a senior officer at the Ministry of Public Works. A meeting was held there in the presence of representatives of the Ministry of Information (all of them Arab Nationals), Ministry of Education (all of them teachers), Ministry of Electricity, Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Health. Zainab Sakallah, delegate of the Ministry of Education, headed the meeting. And I myself played a prominent role owing to my previous administrative and organizational experiences. At that meeting, I suggested

the formation of a "Coordination Committee" on the basis of selecting one representative from each ministry for that committee which could supervise the running of elections at those ministries, and that the committee members make recommendations to be submitted to Ahmad Shuqairi on his visit to Kuwait. The attendees seconded my proposal and elected me Chairman for the coordination committee. The conference was later called "The first conference for Palestinians of Kuwait". In March 1964, there were no official statistics as to the number of Palestinian labor force at each ministry or their total number. The last official census was conducted in 1961 (and the next one in 1960).

Following a statistical survey at the concerned ministries and entities, the number of Palestinian labor force in Kuwait turned to be 31,000. It was decided that the representation at the conference be 1:50 at each Ministry, as follows:

- (a) Ministry of Education: 5,000 employees represented by 100 representatives.
- (b) Each of the Municipality, Ministry of Public Works and Ministry of Electricity: 3,000 employees: represented by 60 representatives.
- (c) Ministry of Health: 10,000 employees represented by 200 representatives.
- (d) Each of the Ministry of Post, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Interior and Defense: 5,000 employees represented by 100 representatives for each.

- (e) Each of the other eight Ministries: an average of ٢٥٠ employees represented by ٥ representatives for each.
- (f) Number of senior students at the secondary school ٥٠٠ represented by ١٠ representatives.
- (g) Number of employees at KOC ١٠٠٠ represented by ٢٠ representatives.
- (h) Number of employees in the private sector: ١٠٠٠٠ represented by ٢٠٠ representatives.

The coordination committee decided that elections of the different ministries be run under the supervision of neutral committees, where employees and workers of each ministry would elect their representatives as indicated in above figures and those elected would to attend the public conference of Palestinian citizens in Kuwait.

The Committee further decided that ١٠٪ of the winning delegates be sent to a second meeting for the purpose of electing a higher committee.

The Coordination Committee prepared ٦٢٠ invitation cards stamped with the seal of the Coordination Committee and signed by its Chairman. We began, at MEW, our preparations for running those elections under my personal supervision in my capacity as Chairman of the Coordination Committee and representative of the Ministry at that committee. We allocated three days for nominations. At the beginning, I did not nominate myself. But, on the last day, even in the last hour, I consulted with my colleague Dr. Zaki Abu Eid, Chief Engineer, and decided to nominate both ourselves for these elections.

The neutral committee chose the Drawing Hall at the Ministry headquarters for the elections. The voting process took a whole day, according to the schedule determined by the committee. The voting rate among Palestinian employees reached more than 90%. After sorting out the votes (by means of blackboard and chalk), which continued for three consecutive days, the results of the first fifteen winners were as follows:

Eng. Ahmad Al Khateeb 156 votes (Engineer, main workshops)

Mr. Mousa Himmo 109 votes (Senior Accountant, Water & Gas Projects) Mr. Hikmat Husaini 142 votes (Secretary, Water and Gas Administration)

Mr. Khairy Abul Jebain 121 votes (Administration Controller)

Eng. Zaki Abu Eid 92 votes (Chief Engineer)

Mr. Nihad Haikal 92 votes (Contracts Accountant)

Eng. Hasan Shihabi 90 votes (Engineer, Water & Gas)

Eng. Hashem Dahmash 80 votes (Head of Gas Section)

Eng. Husam Al Afghani 86 votes (Head of Electricity Distribution)

Mr. Salah Al Nammari 88 votes (Financial Controller)

Mr. Zaki Dahmash 81 votes (Secretary, Power and Water Distillation)

Mr. Anwar Al Hout 81 votes (Head of Labor Section)

Mr. Mohammad Fadel 80 votes (Assistant Storekeeper)

Mr. Mohammad Samara ٣٨١ votes (Head of Lathe Section)

Mr. Hasan Abu Lughud ٣٧٠ votes (Foreman at Rawdatain Camp Project).

Besides the above names there were another ٤٠ winners so that the total number of representatives at the ministry was ٦٠.

The results of the elections run at the MEW were an example for the elections run at other Ministries in Kuwait. The following remarks were noted:

The first winner got ٣٠% of the ٣٠٠٠ total votes. This indicated that the workers and employees of MEW were not well acquainted with each other, and that, in general, they were not affiliated with any Palestinian party.

From the result, we can see that the first three winners were officers in the sections of a large number of workers, such as public workshops as well as water and gas. The winners were of different professions and divisions (i.e. engineers, workers, and employees). It is also to be noted that the post seniority did not count. That is to say the first winner was not the chief engineer, but was an ordinary engineer within the staff of the chief engineer. In general, we can say that the Palestinians in Kuwait in the early ١٩٦٠'s were not involved in politics. For instance, the last winner in the ministry elections (Mr. Yusuf Raji Barqawi, who got ١٦٨ votes only) was affiliated with Fath Movement.

It was also noticed that the private sector did not run any elections despite the large number of its labor force, except for some very limited number of establishments, namely Al Ghanem Garage, Al Mulla Garage and Ford Garage, and the winners there were given invitation cards to attend the conference at the rate of 1:00. Further, the oil sector did not run elections for different reasons. Therefore, our committee deemed it proper to give three cards for three activists in that sector, namely Dr. Faheem Nasser, Yusef Nashef and Subhi Dahlah. The total number of the conference attendees turned to be 400 and not 300 for the reasons mentioned above.

Election of the Committee Representing the Citizens of Palestine in Kuwait and its Chairman

Following the declaration of the election results at all ministries, the coordination committee asked each of those ministries to select 10% of the winning representatives to attend a meeting prior to the conference to elect a "Higher Committee" for such a Palestinian gathering. Our Ministry MEW selected 7 representatives of which I was one. A meeting of the ministries' representatives was held at one of Shuwaikh Secondary School buildings, and was attended by 40 persons, who elected the higher committee, which was composed of 22 persons as follows:

- (a) Khairy Abul Jebain, Dr Zaki Abu Eid, Mohammad Samara, Nihad Haikal, Ahmad Khatib (from the Ministry of Electricity).

- (b) Mohammad Hasan Sa'di, Ali Hasan, Yahia Ghannam, Said Abu Eitah, Ibrahim Hammad (from the Ministry of Public Works).
- (c) Miss Zainab Sakallah, Ibrahim Sa'eedi, and Hasan Sarsour (from the Ministry of Education).
- (d) Khalil Sha'er (from the Municipality).
- (e) Anwar Al Barqawi (from the Ministry of Information).
- (f) Abdul Fattah Jibreel (from the Loan and Savings Bank).

Moreover, Fathi Mansour, Ali Quba'a, Khalil Awadh, Shawqi Abu Hamdeh, Khaled Zu'rub and Ibrahim Aladdin (mostly from the Arabs National Movement) were also elected.

At the first meeting of that committee, I was elected Chairman for the Higher Committee as well as Chairman for the next conference of Palestinian citizens. I remember that I was nominated by Nihad Haikal, a member of the committee and a colleague of mine at the Ministry of Electricity and a favored person by the Arab National Movement. I think I was elected for chairmanship because of my prominent activity in the coordination committee, and because I was not affiliated with any Palestinian party or movement, let alone that Fath Movement and the Arab National Movement were rivals. Thereafter, the Higher Committee decided to hold the first conference for the Palestinian citizens in Kuwait on the afternoon of Friday, March 12th 1974 to submit the

Palestinian proposals for bringing about the Palestinian Entity to Shuqairi. This was to take place at the theatre of Shuwaikh Secondary School. The committee issued invitations to the holders of cards issued by the Coordination Committee, and discussed the proposals of the different ministries for bringing about a Palestinian entity prior to the commencement of the conference at a session held for this purpose on ۱۱/۳/۶۴.

Decision Summary of the Representatives of Palestinian Citizens in Kuwait

Following is a summary of the decisions of the representatives committee of Palestinian citizens in Kuwait to bring about a Palestine entity on March ۱۲th ۱۹۶۴.

In that session, it was decided to add five members to the committee to represent the ministries that did not participate in the last meeting in which the committee was formed. These persons were already elected by their ministries, namely: Wasfi Jayousi from the Ministry of Interior and Dr. Abdul Qader Staitiya and Dr. Faiq Abdul Hai Husseini (from the Ministry of Health). It was further decided that the students' representative at the committee be Zaki Shehab Eddin. And that the flag of Palestine be hoisted above the conference hall together with other Arab flags.

Mr. Abdul Fattah Jebril and Sa'eed Abu Eitah were appointed Secretaries to the committee subject to the cooperation thereof with the Chairman Khairy Eddin Abul Jebain in conducting the conference's first session as

well as other sessions. The Coordination Committee elected from among the members a reception committee to check the entry cards of the people eligible in the conference hall.

As to the election of the National Council Members, it was agreed that the Chairman was to submit the committee's decision in this respect to Mr. Shuqairi, and it was as follows: "In case the conference cannot be held by way of elections, it should be transitory and arrangements should be made to run the elections within six months to form a permanent National Council. For this purpose, preparatory committees consisting of well reputed persons should be formed to see that the Palestinian citizens in different Arab countries are represented, and then these representatives shall elect the next Palestinian Council on the same basis". The proposals put forth by the representatives of the Ministry of Education were then discussed, and some amendments were effected. It was decided to present these proposals to the next conference within the statement of the Palestine citizens in Kuwait in relation to the establishment of a Palestinian entity.

Abul Jebain presides over the 1st Conference of Palestine Citizens in Kuwait to Bring about the Entity

On the afternoon of Friday, March 12th 1964, and as scheduled by the Higher Committee; the first conference of Palestine Citizens in Kuwait was held in the grand hall at Shuwaikh Secondary School. The attendees (400 in

total) included representatives of Palestinians at the different ministries and bodies.

The Committee appointed thereto checked the conference invitation cards issued by the Coordination Committee, and the flag of Palestine was amidst the flags of Arab countries in the hall. The conference was also attended by a number of journalists and prominent information officials, and the Minister of Interior placed under my disposal a number of policemen to maintain security, since we had information that the High Arab Commission of Palestine would attempt to blow up the conference, and that it has sent for that matter two persons from Beirut.

I presided over the conference under the decision of the elected Higher Committee to which I was Chairman. The atmosphere of the conference was so boisterous, and deep differences emerged upon discussion of the proposal submitted by the committee over the demands of the Palestinian citizens in Kuwait to bring about a Palestinian entity.

Attempts were made to bring the conference to failure. When the differences reached a high extent, some proposed that I should adjourn the session, but I refused. However, I was able, thank God, to lead the conference to the shores of safety after approving the project proposed by the Higher Committee, with some amendments effected. I remember that the conference agreed to send a telegram to Algeria for harboring the previously established Palestine Bureau there. This was suggested by a member of Fath Movement.

On the other hand, the secretaries Abdul Fattah Jibreel and Sa'eed Abu Eitah helped me in answering queries from the members over bringing about the Palestine entity issue. Further, the activity of Ali Hasan and Yahya Ghannam was noticeable. By the way, Yahya Ghannam, then head of Agriculture Section at the Ministry of Public Works, was my right hand since the very beginning, and I shall never forget the efforts he exerted in gathering and organizing the Palestinians in Kuwait with the intention of bringing about the Palestinian entity.

Proposals of Palestinian Citizens in Kuwait for Bringing about the Palestinian Entity

The Palestinian citizens in Kuwait, out of faith in returning home, and of their pioneering role in the decisive battle; wanted the proposed Palestinian entity to be a positive step on the way to return. While hailed and cheered the Arab summit conference for giving them this opportunity which they longed for; they saw it fit to submit some recommendations to Mr. Shuqairi in relation to the:

- (a) Political Aspect, (b) Military Aspect,**
- (c) Financial Aspect, (d) Publicity and Information,**
- (e) General Recommendations.**

(a) Political Aspect:

- 1- The Palestinian cause should be considered a matter of destiny, and partial solutions (internationalization, partition, settlement, etc.) are rejected.

- ٢- The Palestinian entity should have a revolutionary nature, and should include all Palestinians.
- ٣- The Palestinian entity should be brought out through free and impartial elections which would bring out a national council representing the Palestinian citizens in the real sense, and be the supreme authority.
- ٤- The entity should be a starting point for the revolution, not a substitute thereto.
- ٥- The Palestinian entity should not meddle with the domestic affairs of the Arab countries.
- ٦- The entity is not tied to any international or regional arrangements relating to the Palestine issue which are not in harmony with the full entitlement of the Palestinians to their home.
- ٧- Jerusalem shall be the headquarters of the organization, and it might be transferred to any other Palestinian land, if it is necessary to do so.
- ٨- The Organization should establish branch offices thereof in the Arab countries to implement its plans and look after the Palestinian affairs.
- ٩- The Arab countries guarantee to the Palestinian citizens the right to move and work for the Palestinian cause.
- ١٠- The Palestinian Organization shall take the measures which would prevent migrating outside Arab countries.
- ١١- The Organization should take a clear stand as to the countries supporting Israel, and should endeavor to have the Arab countries take the same stand.

- ١٢- The Organization should work towards the establishment of a national unity, freezing party activities and mobilize all efforts to the battle of return.
- ١٣- Those required to dedicate their full time to the implementation of the Organization plans should do so.

(b) Military Aspect:

- ١- Establishment of regular Palestinian army under a Palestinian leadership, and take measures for immediate training of commandos.
- ٢- Applying the compulsory military training to eligible Palestinians and establish training camps for this purpose.
- ٣- Enroll adequate number of Palestinians in the Arab military colleges and institutes of different kinds.
- ٤- Providing the Palestinian army with the Arab military and technical expertise.
- ٥- Dissemination of the system of youth and popular resistance as well as civil defense among Palestinians.
- ٦- Accept volunteers in the Palestinian army from Arab and friendly countries.
- ٧- Consider the Palestinian militants in the Arab armies as the core of the Palestinian liberation Army.
- ٨- Hasten the entry of the united Arab armies to the West Bank.

(c) Financial Aspect:

- ١- Form a financial committee which would supervise the resources of Palestinian funds and regulate the expenditure.
- ٢- Establish a Palestinian fund, which will have the following resources:
 - (a) The escalated tax imposed on any Palestinian with an income.
 - (b) Donations from Arab and friendly countries (governments and people).
 - (c) Unconditional loans and aids whatsoever.
 - (d) The celebration of Palestine week in the Arab countries.
 - (e) The taxes imposed in the interest of the Palestinian cause.
 - (f) The potential sums collected from the Zakat.
 - (g) Issuance of Palestinian loan bonds.
 - (h) Any other resources approved by the National Council.

(d) Publicity and Information:

- ١- Demanding that the Arab information offices at the foreign countries be increased and allocating sections for the Palestinian publicity under the Palestinian Organization supervision.
- ٢- Establishment of effective information media attached to the entity.

- ٣- Distribution of the national charter prescribed by the conference amongst the Palestinians for consideration.
- ٤- Make use of all information media in the Arab and foreign countries.
- ٥- Teach the history and geography of Palestine together with the development of the Palestinian cause at the different schooling stages in Arab countries.

(e) General Recommendations:

- ١- Endeavor to establish professional unions for the Palestinians.
- ٢- Expand the General Palestinian Students Union, wherever it may be.
- ٣- Take care financially of those harmed as a result of working for the Palestinian Cause.
- ٤- Entrust the organization with the supervision of the works of the Relief Agency.
- ٥- Create work opportunities for the Palestinians in Arab countries.

**Palestinian Citizens Representatives
Committee in Kuwait.**

Kuwait on ١٣/٣/١٩٦٤

**٢nd Conference of Palestinian Citizens in the Presence
of Shuqairi**

Following the success of the ١st conference, we consulted with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over the arrival of

Shuqairi to Kuwait and it was agreed that his arrival would be on Wednesday, 17 March. So, we called for the next conference of Palestine Citizens on Thursday March 18th in Kuwait. Actually, Shuqairi arrived at Kuwait Airport on Wednesday and we received him there together with a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Shuqairi was lodged at the Guest House. I visited him on that day and briefed him on the steps taken towards bringing out the Palestinian entity, and that the next conference was to be held on the next day, followed by a meeting with the crowds on Friday, March 19. This is what has taken place.

Our 2nd Conference was held on Thursday afternoon, March 18, at Shuwaikh Secondary School theatre, in the presence of the previous attendees (about 200 of the ministries representatives). The Reception Committee checked the invitation cards of the conference, and then received Mr. Shuqairi when he entered the meeting hall. The conference began by the recitation of some verses of the Holy Quran by the Palestinian Sheikh Ibrahim Rummanah. Then, I delivered the inauguration speech which included the steps taken for bringing out the Palestinian entity, and I submitted to Shuqairi the statement approved by our previous conference and briefed him on the decision of our Higher Committee in relation to the election of the members of the next Palestinian Conference. Shuqairi started his speech by talking about his tours in the Arab countries, and outlined the many obstacles before the establishment of the Palestinian entity. He added that he would resume his tours in Arab countries, particularly in Jordan to

overcome such obstacles prior to the holding of the 3rd conference in next May. After that, he answered the queries put forth by some members, and then I announced the conclusion of the Conference till the next day on Friday at Shuwaikh Secondary School playground.

That Friday witnessed the thronging of crowds at the designated location in wait of Ahmad Shuqairi. There were at the playground more Kuwaitis than Palestinians. All were eager to know what steps had been taken to bring out the Palestinian entity. The playground was crowded with microphones as well as with policemen.

The Higher Committee took every precaution to make the conference succeed. When Shuqairi arrived at the place, cheers of joy filled the place. I, in my capacity as chairman of the Conference of Palestine Citizens in Kuwait, introduced Shuqairi to the thronging crowds, pointing to his long strife and great efforts for the realization of the independence of the Arab North African countries, and welcomed him as a national hero who endeavored to establish a Palestinian entity longed for by every Palestinian as well as every Arab. He began his speech by saying, "This Abul Jebain, who introduced me to you this day, had previously introduced me in Jaffa the bride of Palestine".

He explained about his tours in the Arab World to bring out a Palestinian entity, and explained how the coming battle would be. Then, Shuqairi praised Kuwait for the help it extended to the Palestinians in bringing out their entity. He further thanked H.H. the Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem as well as the Kuwaiti people

for backing the Palestinian cause, and his speech was met with applause.

The National Arab Movement Rejects Shuqairi's Project for Establishing a Palestinian Entity

I remember that after the conclusion of the second conference in Kuwait to bring establish a Palestinian entity, Dr. Faiq Abdul Hai Al Husseini (a representative of the Ministry of Health) asked me to call for the holding of a 3rd conference. Further, they refused to have Palestinian regiments and insisted on having a "Liberation Army". They always said "No meeting with Shuqairi except in the ditch". Shuqairi was aware of the obstacles in the Arab countries which threatened the prospective entity so he ignored the national Arabs demands in the proposed Charter draft, and fierce discussions took place over this matter between the Arab Nationals and Shuqairi and they refused to take part in the next Palestinian conference unless some amendments on the entity draft were made. And, as I said, Dr. Husseini wanted me to call for a third conference, in my capacity as Chairman of the previous two conferences, he even went to Sheikh Saad Al Abdulla, then a Minister of Interior, and asked him to assign me of such task which His Excellency talked to me about. I apologized and made it clear that the first two conferences included the demands of the Palestinian people over the establishment of a Palestinian entity. So, the third conference was not held.

Part Three

178

178

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLO

Al Shuqairi Rounds up his Tours for Establishing the Entity

After leaving Kuwait, Shuqairi resumed his tours in the Arab countries to bring out the Palestinian entity, and was faced with two major problems:

- (a) The rejection of Palestine Mufti Haj Amin Husseini to cooperate with him although he was offered the honorary presidency of the next Palestinian conference and,
- (b) The hesitation to accept the coming entity on part of King Hussein of Jordan.

It is worth mentioning that the High Arab Commission magazine, issued in Beirut, kept on attacking the entity as well as Shuqairi and accused him of being reactionary, and the Mufti kept on saying, "No body will represent Palestine except the High Arab Commission".

Mr. Jameel Barakat, favored by the Mufti, told me that he was sent by Shuqairi to convince the Mufti to establish the Palestinian entity, which the latter refused.

During his meeting with King Hussein, Shuqairi outlined that the Palestinian entity would not separate the West

Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and that the entity would involve the Palestinians outside Jordan, and that there would not be a "Liberation Army" but "Palestinian battalions".

It is worth mentioning that Shuqairi was almost despaired of convincing the King of sponsoring the conference. But in the last meeting between the two men at Aqaba city, the King changed his mind and agreed to attend the conference opening.

Thereafter, Shuqairi made a number of trips to the cities and villages of the West and East Banks talking about the entity. The crowds were cheering him claiming for weapons. On these trips, it was agreed that Preparatory Committees be formed at every village and every city to select representatives for the next Palestinian Conference.

Wherever Shuqairi went, he was met with welcoming cheers from the Palestinians at the different Arab countries, such as the Arab North African countries as well as the Eastern Arab countries (excluding Saudi Arabia) which refused to cooperate with him. The Palestinian gatherings in Kuwait and Egypt ran elections to select representatives, whereas in Gaza strip elections were run to elect 90 persons for the "National Union" who were all nominated for the next Jerusalem conference. In the Countries which did not run elections, as Jordan, Preparatory Committees were formed. After Shuqairi rounded up his tours in the Arab countries, the main Preparatory Committee was formed in Jordan to select the representatives of Jordan for the next conference, which was agreed to be held in Jerusalem on

٢٨/٥/١٩٦٤, at the Intercontinental Hotel and that Jerusalem Custodian, Rawhi Al Khateeb, be master of ceremony. It was also agreed that each Palestinian who was a member in the Jordanian Upper or Lower House of Parliament as well as of the municipalities, ministers, and heads of the professional unions, as well as the personalities nominated by the Preparatory Committees, are to attend the conference.

In Syria and Lebanon, the nominees of the Preparatory Committees were approved. Shuqairi negotiated with Fath movement and agreed to be represented in the conference by seven persons from the members of Fath in the Gulf States, namely: Kamal Udwan and Rafiq Natsheh from Qatar, Yasser Arafat, Khaled Hassan and Nassouh Saadi from Kuwait.

As to the other persons selected from Kuwait, I remember that Shuqairi sent their names to Hani Qaddoumi, Secretary to H.H. Prince Abdullah Al Salem, namely: Hani Qaddoumi, Khaled Hasan, Yasser Arafat, Nassouh Saadi, Fayez Faddah, Khairy Abul Jebain, Yahya Ghannam, Abdul Mohsen Qattan, Zaki Abu Eid, Abdul Kareem Shawwa, Saeed Breik, Khaled Shaer, Essam Ashour, Ibrahim Hammad, Mousa Hamdan, Mahmoud Al Samrah, Othman Abu Hashiya and Zainab Saqallah. Shuqairi, later on, sent another telegram over the selection of Dr. Ibrahim Zaqout, Nawaf Abu Kihk, Abdul Fattah Jebreel, and Mahmoud Abdul Fattah Hassan.

It might be said that Shuqairi selected seven persons from the High Commission of the Palestinian citizens selected in Kuwait (١٢٢ in total), namely: Khairy Abul Jebain,

Yahya Ghannam, Zaki Abu Eid, Zainab Sakallah, Ibrahim Hammad, Khalil Al Sha'er and Abdul Fattah Jibreel. The other members were not elected, but selected by Shuqairi for several reasons. For example, Yasser Arafat, Khaled Hasan and Nasouh Saadi were selected as representatives of Fath Movement, whereas the elected ones were Ali Hasan and Mohammad Hasan Saadi, and these did not join the National Conference. Further; Shuqairi selected some academic and notable persons in Kuwait, namely: Abdul Mohsen Qattan, Saeed Brake, Hani Qaddoumi, Mahmoud Samra and Abdul Karim Shawwa. Dr. Ibrahim Zakout was selected as representative of a small Palestinian organization. Nawwaf Abu Kishk was selected to represent the Arabs of Abu Kishk, and Othman Abu Hasheya was selected being a patriot from the brave village of Salama, or rather because he was a member of the "Saa'iq" Organization whereas Mahmoud Abdul Fattah Hasan was selected as representative of the "One Arab movement".

In my opinion, Shuqairi should not have invited non-elected persons to the conference; otherwise, what are the elections for?

By the way, I would say that Sharif Al Jaabari as well as Rafiq Al Natsheh were selected members in the Conference because they won the Palestinians election in Qatar.

Selection of Members for the First Palestinian Conference

As to us, the selected members from Kuwait, I remember that after Hani Qaddoumi received Shuqairi's telegram,

he invited us to his house for consultation. On that day, I met with Yasser Arafat (Abu Ammar) for the first time, and I cannot decide now whether or not he attended the Palestinian Conference because I did not meet him there. I also noticed that Mousa Hamdan and Issam Ashour were not among the attendees although they were invited.

On ٢٦th of May, I headed towards Jerusalem via Qalandia Airport, together with members Ibrahim Zaqout and Khalil Al Sha'er. At the airport, we were surprised by the tough security measures and we were interrogated before being permitted to head to our rooms at the Intercontinental Hotel.

We spent the next day in Jerusalem to be acquainted with the atmosphere of the Conference as well as to meet the members coming from the different Arab countries. I also met there my friend Dr. Waleed Qamhawi and Bahjat Abu Gharbiyeh who hesitated to attend the meeting. Qamhawi was invited in his capacity as speaker of the Physicians Association, whereas Abu Gharbiya was invited as representative of Jerusalem. The two friends asked about Shuqairi, with whom I became close, and advised them to participate in the conference in order to bring out the Palestinian entity. Qamhawi was convinced and attended the conference, but Abu Gharbiya did not although the Jordanian newspapers confirmed otherwise. Abu Gharbiya told me that he and other youths from Jerusalem had suspicions over Shuqairi's mission and were afraid that he would liquidate the case. On May ٢٨th of May the anniversary day of the PLO, we headed early towards the meeting hall, Custodian of Jerusalem, Rawhi Khateeb, was at the head of the reception committee.

After we had our seats in the hall, H.M. King Hussein and the Secretary to the Arab League, Abdul Khaliq Hassounah, as well as Shuqairi and the representatives of the Arab Kings and Presidents, namely Hasan Sabri Khouli representative of President Jamal Abdul Nasser, Khaled Sulaiman Adasani representative of Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem and others, including ambassadors of Arab countries in Jordan.

The Introducer, Rawhi Al Khateeb, began by giving a word in which he welcomed the attendees. Then H.M. the King gave a suitable speech, followed by the Secretary General of the Arab League.

Thereafter, Ahmad Shuqairi's turn came, and his enthusiastic speech was met with a storm of applause.

Shuqairi's Speech at the Conference

"Your Majesty King Hussein, Your Excellencies representatives of Arab Kings and Presidents, my Brothers and Sisters: On this historic day in the immortal city of Jerusalem, the Palestinian meet together after the Disaster, so blessed be this meeting. Jerusalem has witnessed glorious days since trodden by Omar Ibn Al Khattab on his camel, and today it is witnessing a historic event which would change the course of Arab history. When Israel dispelled us from our homeland, it reckoned that the Palestinians will never meet again, but here we are now. We represent the Palestinians wherever they are. Our meeting today comprises strugglers of different ages. And this meeting reflects the will of the Arabs from the Ocean to the Gulf, to liberate Palestine. During my visits

to the different Arab countries, I heard the people of those countries shouting cheers for the liberation of Palestine”.

Then Shuqairi talked about the Palestinian entity saying that this was a strange expression to the international and Arab communities. He added that all the colonized people stayed in their countries whereas the Palestinians were eradicated from their homeland. And he indicated that the Palestinian entity did not aim at separating the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan but it aimed at the liberation of the occupied parts. Thereafter, he claimed the support of Jordan, saying that it is vital to bring out the Palestinian entity. At the end of his speech, Shuqairi presented the National Charter and the Articles of Association to be studied by the conference.

Adoption of the Palestinian National Charter, Declaration of Establishing the PLO and electing Shuqairi as Chairman

Following Shuqairi’s speech, the introducer announced the conclusion of the first session. On the second session, the name of the Palestine National Conference was changed to be the Palestine National Council and elected Shuqairi as its Chairman.

The Chairman of the Council called the members for the formation of committees. So, such committees as the “Charter Committee”, the “Military Committee”, the “Financial Committee” and other Committees were formed. I myself was chosen to be a member in the “Charter Committee” due to its importance, and it included a number of Jordanian ministers of Palestinian

origin, namely Ihsan Hashem and Hashem Jayousi. The committee thereafter discussed the Charter and the discussions were very ferment, particularly between the representatives of Jordan on the one part, and the representatives of Syria, Kuwait and Qatar on the other. Shuqairi: exerted exhaustive efforts to make King Hussein adopt the Charter.

Through the discussions, I noticed how patriot Shuqairi was, and that he was the one to call the Charter the "National Palestinian Charter". Besides; he insisted on the observance of the Islamic aspect of the Palestinian Cause.

Following the ferment discussions among the members, the Charter was adopted, and it stipulated the establishment of "Palestinian Battalions" due to the sensitivity of the issue. It is worth mentioning that the third National Council held in Gaza on May 1977, replaced that expression by the "Palestinian Liberation Army". The Charter Committee deemed it necessary that Palestinian actions be carried out through an Organization to be called the "Palestine Liberation Organization", and for this reason, the Charter Committee formed a sub-committee consisting of four persons: Raji Sahyoun residing in Jordan, Fayez Abu Rahmeh residing in Gaza Strip and Sharif Al Jaabari residing in Qatar and Khairy Abul Jebain residing in Kuwait.

We, members of that sub-committee, formulated the declaration for the establishment of the PLO and presented it to the Charter Committee members who adopted it, and was read by Ahmad Shuqairi before the

conference to declare the establishment of the "PLO", and from that day, the Palestine National Conference was replaced by the "Palestine National Council" and it elected Ahmad Shuqairi as chairman. In the last session of the National Council, i.e. on the 7th day, the Council adopted the Palestinian National Charter as well as the Articles of Association of the "PLO", and Shuqairi was as well elected as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the "PLO". The Council elected Abdul Majid Shuman as Chairman for the Palestinian National Fund, and, consequently, as member in the Executive Committee of the "PLO". Following is the said declaration read by Shuqairi announcing the establishment of the "PLO".

In the Name of God Most Gracious Most Merciful

In belief of the right of the Arab Palestinians to their homeland Palestine, and in confirmation to liberate its occupied lands, and in full harmony of the Arab nation's decision represented in the decisions of the Arab League and the first Arab Summit Conference, I have declared, in the name of the first Palestinian National Conference held in Jerusalem on this day the 16th of Muharram 1384 AH, corresponding to the 28th of May 1964, the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization to lead the Palestinian people towards their battle of liberation on the path of victory".

CHAPTER III

PLO PROVES ITSELF

First National Assembly

The meetings of the first Palestinian National Conference ended by the declaration of the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the adoption of the Palestinian National Charter and the Articles of Association of the PLO, and the Conference began to be called the first Palestinian National Assembly. As to the formation of this Assembly, I say that it represented, to a large extent, the different walks of the Palestinian people. And, besides, many representatives were elected including those in Gaza, Kuwait, Qatar and in other countries. Also, some representatives were already elected, such as the members of the Lower House and the Mayors of Municipalities of Palestinian origin. In fact, the first Palestinian Assembly may be ranked among the best assemblies as to the aspect of representation, since ۱۹۶۴ until now.

Under the Articles of Association of the "PLO" which was adopted in the first assembly, Ahmad Shuqairi was entrusted with the formation of the first "PLO" Executive Committee, and so he did.

The work of that committee was to be reviewed by the members of the National Assembly, which was to be held

every year. It is to be noted that after the fourth Assembly, the Palestinian Charter began to be called the Palestinian National Charter, and Articles of Association was amended so that the National Assembly began to elect all members of the Executive Committee. But, this procedure was a kind of formality in the successive assemblies that followed the fourth Assembly. Where the names of the members of that committee were agreed upon outside the Assembly and thereafter presented to the National Assembly for approval. I think that the previous procedures were better, subject to real supervision.

PLO's Ideology and Slogans

When Ahmad Shuqairi laid out the proposed Palestinian National Charter, which was adopted by the first National Conference after minor amendments; he was looking for thoughts to be included in the Charter, among which were thoughts proposed by the Palestinians in Kuwait, as aforesaid.

When the PLO was established in 1964, the national tide was at its peak, under the leadership of Jamal Abdul Nasser, and there were a number of national organizations and parties in the Ba'th party, and other organizations.

Therefore; the PLO Charter was called the "Palestinian National Charter". It is regrettable that after the Oslo Convention in 1993, all indications to national or patriotic aspects were cancelled, in conformity with the new peace trends.

In the first assembly, Shuqairi drew links between the idea of liberation and the idea of Arab unity, saying that the two were not detachable. As to the early slogans of the PLO, they were something like "National Unity", "National Mobilization" and "Liberation". Dr. Waleed Qamhawi, member of the PLO executive committee, talked about those objectives and principles in an over crowded meeting held in Qatar in 1965, and he mentioned that the PLO's thought stemmed from the National Charter and Articles of Association as well as the speeches of its chairman and declaration of its Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee considered the liberation of Palestine its main objective. The organization declared its obligation to maintain the Palestinian cause, and the Executive Committee stated that the liberation of Palestine could not be fulfilled except with armed struggle, and that the organization should be the tool of the people, and that its duty was to prepare the people for a long and hard battle, adopting well-studied planning in all its actions. Further, the organization believed in the unity of the Arab fate and that the battle of Palestine's liberation was the battle of the whole Arab nation against Zionism and imperialism. The Executive Committee stated that Palestinians in any Arab country should not interfere with the internal affairs of that country. It further confirmed that the organization was for all Palestinians, and that the unity of the Palestinian people was the most effective weapon in the liberation of Palestine.

First Executive Committee

Following the meetings of the first Palestinian National Conference which was held in Jerusalem and after the establishment of the PLO on ٢٨/٥/١٩٦٤, also after the first Palestinian National Assembly was formed to succeed the first Palestinian National Conference; the elected chairman, Ahmad Shuqairi, made his consultations and, under the organization's Articles of Association, formed the first Executive Committee of the Organization as follows:

- ١- Ahmad Shuqairi Chairman of the Executive Committee.
- ٢- Abdul Rahman Siksik Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee. (from Jordan)
- ٣- Falah Madi Secretary to the Executive Committee (from Jordan)
- ٤- Dr. Waleed Qamhawi (from Jordan)
- ٥- Bahjat Abu Gharbiya (from Jordan)
- ٦- Abdul Khaliq Yaghmur (from Jordan)
- ٧- Qassem Rimawi Head of the Political Department. (from Jordan)
- ٨- Khaled Fahoum (from Syria)
- ٩- Dr. Nicola Al Dur (from Lebanon)
- ١٠- Haidar Abdul Shafi (from Gaza)
- ١١- Hamed Abu Sitta (from Gaza)
- ١٢- Farouq Husseini (from Gaza)
- ١٣- Qusai AL Abadleh (from Gaza)

- ١٤- General Wajeeh Madani Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army. (from Kuwait)
- ١٥- Abdul Majeed Shuman Chairman of the Palestine National Fund. (from Jordan)

It is worth mentioning that Dr. Waleed Qamhawi resigned his membership on the Executive Committee after a few months in protest over the way in which Shuqairi was tackling things. After some years, Qamhawi said to me: "I feel I was unfair to Shuqairi in what I did. In fact, I think Shuqairi was a brilliant leader, and no one could do what he did in such difficult circumstances".

Today, Waleed Qamhawi is a member on Committee of Commemoration of the Memory of Ahmad Shuqairi.

Appointment of Department and Office Directors

Later on, the Executive Committee decided that the Palestinian activities should be carried out through the PLO offices, which were to be linked with the Executive Committee by means of the Political Department in the organization. At the headquarters of the organization in Jerusalem, five main departments were formed as follows:

- ١- Political Department.
- ٢- Palestine National Fund Department.
- ٣- Military Department.
- ٤- Popular Organization Department.
- ٥- Information Department.

Each department had a director attached to the relevant member in the Executive Committee, except for the Military Department which was incumbent with a committee formed by General Wajeeh Al Madani Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army while Bahjat Abu Gharbiya. Further, Dr. Waleed Qamhawi, Hamed Abu Sitta and Abdul Khaliq Yaghmur were entrusted with the Popular Organization Committee.

Following the formation of the Executive Committee; it began carrying out its activities through its offices in Jerusalem. Furthermore; Nimr Al Masri was appointed to the Arab affairs in the Political Department, Dr. Salah Dabbagh for foreign affairs in the Political Department and Raji Sahyoun for information (he became, later on, in charge of the Palestine Broadcasting Station in Cairo), Also, Ahmad Sudqi Al Dajani was appointed as Director of the Popular Organization Department and Dr. Yousef Abdul Raheem was appointed as director of the National Fund and was succeeded by Dr. Munther Anabtawi.

Among the most important decisions taken by the Executive Committee in its early activities, was the formation of the Palestinian Research Center in Beirut, and Dr. Anees Sayegh was appointed as its Director. Shuqairi started his work from the headquarters of the organization at the building of the Ambassador Hotel in Jerusalem as well as from his office at Dokki neighborhood in Cairo. Thereafter; he made visits to different Arab countries to orientate the organization and convince these countries' governments to impose the liberation tax on Palestinians, and also to select from among those Palestinians suitable people to occupy the

post of directors of the organization offices in the countries they were working in. The names of persons who were selected to occupy the said posts and obtained the approval of the Executive Committee for that purpose:

- ١- In Egypt Basel Aqel
- ٢- In Syria Mustafa Sahtut
- ٣- In Lebanon Shafiq Hout
- ٤- In Iraq Dawoud Oudeh
- ٥- In Qatar Abdullah Abu Sitta
- ٦- In Algeria Dr. Rifat Oudeh
- ٧- In Morocco Dr. Fuad Hamzeh who was replaced by Hashem Arafat due to certain circumstances.
- ٨- In Geneva Dr Saadi Bseiso (in addition to his ex-officio).
- ٩- In UN Dr. Izzat Tannous (in addition to his ex-officio)
- ١٠- In Jerusalem Abdul Kareem Bargouthi
- ١١- In Sudan Zuhair Shibl (but he did not join his work)
- ١٢- In Libya Fawzi Kayyali (for a short period)
- ١٣- In Gaza Majdi Abu Ramadan
- ١٤- In Kuwait Khairy Eddin Abul Jebain
- ١٥- In the People's Republic of China: Rasheed Jarbou (who was appointed there on March ١٩٦٥ following the successful visit of Shuqairi to China)

Activities of the Executive Committee

After the PLO Executive Committee's formation of its administrative, technical and financial staff, it turned to the information aspect and therefore established the Palestinian Research Centre in Beirut as aforesaid. It also established the Voice of Palestine Broadcasting from Cairo, in agreement with the Egyptian government against the payment of ١٠٠٠٠٠٠ egyptian Pounds a year. Raji Sahyoun undertook its responsibility. I remember that I was entrusted with the task of negotiating with two Palestinian technicians in Kuwait's Broadcasting Station to work in Palestine Broadcasting, and one of these men was the announcer "Abu Shanab".

In September ١٩٦٤, the Second Arab Summit Conference was held in Alexandria, and the PLO attended it for the first time as representative of Palestine. Shuqairi headed the Palestinian delegation at the conference, and among the members of the delegate was Dr. Waleed Qamhawi (member of the Executive Committee) who told me later on that the atmosphere of that conference was "not so clear regarding the Palestinian agenda". For example, Dr. Qamhawi said, "While we were having dinner during the conference, the Syrian President Ameen Hafiz passed by us and said that we had better return home because the conferees want to liquidate our cause". Moreover, Qamhawi told me that prior to holding the conference, Zakariya Muhyi Eddin, Nasser's deputy, was asked in an official interview about the role which Egypt expects from the PLO, and he answered that it should take interest in information and political aspects. When the interviewer said, "Our people want to establish a

Palestinian army” Muhyi told him: "this matter is left up to you".

However, the conference agreed at the end of its sessions that the Palestinian Liberation Army be established. Shuqairi told the Second Summit Conference that the Palestinian entity was actually brought up, briefed the attendees about the developments of the first Palestinian Conference (held on ۲۸/۵/۱۹۶۴ in Jerusalem), emergence of the PLO; that the first Palestinian National Assembly adopted the Palestinian National Charter, approved the PLO Articles of Association, that the said Assembly had elected him as Chairman of the National Assembly and the PLO Executive Committee, and that he formed that committee. Then he presented the names of members of the first Executive Committee. It is to be mentioned that the ۲nd summit conference allocated the sum of one million Sterling Pounds a year to support the PLO, and that the Arab countries were to pay that sum proportionately with their shares in the Arab League. I remember that such allocations were paid almost in full once only, and after that most Arab countries declined to pay their financial obligations.

Other activities in the first year of the PLO were imposing the Liberation Tax on Palestinian employees in Arab countries, and carrying out military training in Gaza Strip. Shuqairi visited Gaza Strip several times and each time his speeches were met by the people's cheers and applause. As to the liberation tax, he convinced Kuwait, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Iraq, Libya and Algeria to impose such taxes on Palestinian labor force working there, and kept trying to impose it in other Arab countries. Another

activity was that the PLO Executive Committee called for an expanded meeting to be held in Cairo on March ١٩٦٥ and was to be presided by Ahmad Shuqairi. I myself attended that meeting together with most of the Directors of the PLO Offices in the Arab and foreign countries. It was also attended by all members of the Executive Committee. That meeting provided a good opportunity for all PLO officials to be acquainted with each other and to exchange views. I felt, after reading a report about Fath Movement and its leaders, that there were doubts over that movement. I remember it was charged of being the creation of the SANTO pact. In fact, a member of the Arab National Movement told me quoting his friend George Habash Secretary General of that movement that President Nasser told him that he thinks Fath Movement has a relation with the SANTO pact and thus he refuses to meet with the representatives of the movement.

That was Nasser's stand before being convinced by Mohammad Hasanin Haikal after the ١٩٦٧ War to meet the leaders of Fath Movement.

On March ٨th, we all headed to Gaza to participate in its celebrations of the "Victory Day", commemorating the withdrawal of the Zionist troops from Gaza in ٥٧ following the defeat of the tripartite aggression. In Gaza, we felt how much the people were enthusiastic about the establishment of the PLO. It is worth saying that Egyptian intelligence elements were pursuing me all through my stay there, and the reason for that, as I knew later on, was because during my first visit to Gaza in ١٩٤٨ I was met at the hotel by my old friends in Palestine, Mueen Bseiso, Fareed Abu Wardah and Fakhri Maki, who, it seemed,

were leftists and considered opposition against the Egyptian regime ruling in Gaza. This trailing by Egyptian intelligence continued until I took the train from Gaza to Cairo.

Part Three

200

200

CHAPTER IV

**ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE PLO'S OFFICE IN KUWAIT**

**Selection of Khairy Abul Jebain as Director of the
PLO's Office in Kuwait**

Following is the story of my selection to the post of Director of the PLO Office in Kuwait as mentioned in "The Biography of Khairy Abul Jebain", to which I referred previously: "Shuqairi visited Kuwait accompanied by Waleed Qamhawi and Hamed Abu Sitta in December 1964 in order to contact the Kuwaiti government and convince the Prince to deduct 0% from the salaries of Palestinian employees in favor of the Palestinian National Fund. But, the main aim of the visit was to select a Director for the PLO Office.

Shuqairi was hosted at the Foreign Ministry's Guest House and Palestinian delegates came each evening to welcome Shuqairi, presenting their nominees for the said post. Among the prominent nominees were myself, Yahya Ghannam who was then a popular figure and Head of the Agriculture Division in the Public Works Department, Khaled Hasan nominee from the Fath Movement, but he was not very popular in Kuwait, and even failed in the elections and was not among the

representatives of the Palestinians working in the Kuwait Municipality who all won memberships of the first conference of the Palestinian citizens working in Kuwait to bring about a Palestinian entity.

It is worth mentioning that Yahya Ghannam had sent some demonstrators to the Foreign Ministry's Guest House cheering his name to suggest to Shuqairi that the Palestinians in Kuwait wanted him to occupy the post of Director to the PLO Office. Shuqairi made consultations with different Palestinian gatherings and Dr. Waleed Qamhawi and Hamed Abu Sitta, then members of the Executive Committee, tried to persuade me to accept the post, after feeling that Shuqairi became inclined to appoint me as such for knowing me on one hand and because I was Chairman of the Palestinian Conference on the other hand, as well as being neutral, he also did not want to appoint the Director from either Fath Movement or the Arab National Movement. Finally, and after shedding tears for the heavy burden of responsibility, I accepted the post, and my name was notified to the Kuwaiti government through Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad.

Later on, Shuqairi told the journalists that he chose me for that post because the Palestinians in Kuwait chose me. The Kuwait Broadcasting Station broadcasted my appointment as Director of the PLO Office in Kuwait in its main news. Shortly afterm Adel Jarrah arranged an appointment for me to meet with Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Adel Jarrah was an ex-secretary to Sheikh Sabah Al Salem who was succeeded by Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad. There was an ambiguity first over whether the PLO offices would be

attached to the Minister of Interior or Foreign Affairs, but eventually was attached to the latter. Then I met Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad for the first time in this regard, and arrangements were made for me to be seconded with full salary from the PLO. I took the month of December of ۱۹۶۴ as a vacation and at the end of that month; the decision of my appointment was passed, and I took over my post as of January ۱st ۱۹۶۵.

After that, Shuqairi left Kuwait for Cairo telling me at Kuwait Airport, "You know Kuwait more than me and you are popular there". I remember that before Shuqairi left Kuwait, he asked me to appoint Ali Hasan Salama as an employee in the PLO office saying, "This is the son of a patriot. I hope you will let him work with you. Any how, the matter is left to you". After Shuqairi's departure to Cairo, I began searching for a location for the PLO office. First, I thought of the location of the Kuwait Football Association where my office was as Secretary to that Association.

I was in good terms with the directors and briefed Issa Al Hamad, a very prominent director, of my thoughts, telling him that the location would be temporary until the Housing Department allocates a permanent location for the PLO Office, and he agreed to that request. In fact, all Kuwaiti officials showed their support for the PLO upon its early establishment. On this occasion, I remember that I needed certain school theatres and halls to deliver speeches of orientation for the PLO, and that I went one day to Faisal Al Saleh, Undersecretary of Ministry of Education, requesting from him to use the hall of a certain school for this purpose, and that he agreed. When

I went to him again to use another school hall, he said, "From now on, you go to any school and tell its headmaster that you have my permission to use its hall theatre".

After that, I announced that the temporary location of the PLO Office was at the Kuwait Football Association located at North Shuwaikh. Palestinian crowds began to come to the location to extend congratulations, offering their services; I found that the best way was to open the door of registration for enrolling in the "Liberation Battalions", which were established by the Palestinian National Assembly.

Political, Media and Financial Activities of the PLO's Office

My next job was to head to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and after some talks there, I was granted diplomatic immunity, and began to hoist the flag of Palestine on my private car as well as on the PLO location but not on my home, because it was not in a separate building. I remember that a volunteer guard was taking care of my personal safety because there were fears of Jews and Iranians during the Shah regime. Thereafter, I began appointing the necessary staff. I first appointed Ali Salama, as recommended by Shuqairi, and then Azzam Jasser, Jameel Khalaf and Ibrahim Saleh. I also appointed Ahmad Zayyat and Tawfiq Zayed as typists to work in the evening shift, who were working with me at the Ministry of Electricity. Moreover, I appointed "Abu Jamal" as office guard. Thereafter, I

appointed Ahmad Aqel, a member of Fath, as an accountant. By the way Fath Movement and the Arab National Movement were not cooperative with the PLO from the very beginning, and the Kuwaiti newspaper "Al Talee'a", which supports the Arab National Movement, was attacking me continuously and calling me the "Chairman of the party of no-party persons".

When we started military training which at first had the capacity of no more than 100 people in each course; "Al Talee'a" newspaper wrote that the PLO Office in Kuwait would need more than a 100 years to train the Palestinian youths in Kuwait, if things kept on that way.

It is worth mentioning that ten members of Fath Movement who were also members in the first assembly contacted me after being appointed as PLO Director and asked me to resign my office, saying that I was a "patriot" and should not work with the PLO the "daughter of the Arab League". Further; the Movement, also, published on the day of Eid in 1960 a statement in the Kuwaiti magazine "Al Hadaf" calling the Palestinians not to pay the liberation tax or the 0% deductions from their salaries to the Palestinian National Fund. Other movements in Kuwait supported that demand. Apart from the said movements, other parties in Kuwait appreciated and admired the newly born PLO. Therefore, I was keen on highlighting the name of Palestine on every occasion. For this reason, I was a frequent attendee of the diplomatic and official ceremonies and receptions, where it was the tradition of the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry to call all the Ambassadors to receive any visiting King or President to Kuwait, as well as to any ceremony held in Kuwait. But,

this tradition was changed later on where only the dean of the diplomatic corps was to be invited.

I remember that among the prominent personalities who visited Kuwait, during my work as PLO Director in the sixties, were King Hussein of Jordan, President Charles Helou of Lebanon, the King of Malaysia, the Sheikhs of the Gulf Emirates and Anwar Sadaat, whom I met at Kuwait Airport, when he visited in his capacity as Secretary to the Islamic Conference. I remember that the name of the PLO, as well as my name and my wife's name, were listed in the formal diplomats list issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I remember the names of the PLO and Imamate of Oman came at the end of the list, and I was always happy to sit next to the representative of the Imamate of Oman, Abdullah Al Ghazali, who I became personally close friends with.

From the first day of my work as Director of the PLO Office in Kuwait, I began an orientation campaign to promote the PLO, the National Charter and the Articles of Association by means of the press, broadcasting, political lectures and symposiums in mostly-Palestinian neighborhoods like Farwaniya, Fahaheel, Hawalli and Salmiya in the presence of many attendees. I remember that my colleague Qusai Abadleh member of the Executive Committee and member of the Military of Committee once attended a forum at Hawalli School wearing the PLO military uniform, and that he was met with cheers and the audience carried him on shoulders, because he reminded them of the Liberation of Palestine.

To organize work at the office; four committees consisting of efficient people were formed. Those people may be considered the early cadre of the PLO in Kuwait. Such political orientation lasted from December ۱۹۶۴ until May ۱۹۶۵, and it included setting up of the grand festival held by the PLO office at Shuwaikh Secondary School, and was attended by the Spokesman of the Kuwait National Assembly and Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber, Minister of Foreign Affairs. I delivered the word of the PLO at that festival, which was attended by a number of personalities, such as Abdul Aziz Hamad Al Saqr, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and the Spokesman of the first Kuwait National Assembly. I remember that some of the Arab National Movement members tried to spoil that festival. Among the other activities of the PLO office was the issuance of a biweekly bulletin called the "PLO News", edited by myself. That bulletin included all the news and activities of the PLO in addition to the texts from the Charter, the Articles of Association and the decisions of the Executive Committee. That bulletin was printed on stencil and was distributed freely among all schools and ministries. I remember that some employees contributed in the distribution of that bulletin, namely Fakhri Jibreel at the Ministry of Electricity and Nizam Yunus at the Ministry of Education. that bulletin continued for five years.

In addition to that, we relied on support from the local press and Kuwait Broadcasting with its "Palestine Corner" supervised by my friend announcer Mousa Al Dajani. Another public media channel was the local Kuwait Broadcasting, which transmitted in the afternoon

all our bulletins especially the invitations. I remember that the person in charge was then Mohammad Tawfiq Al Ghusain.

Still other information media were "Palestine News" newspaper of Gaza edited by Zuhair Al Rayyes and "Voice of Palestine" broadcasting from Cairo, which also transmitted all the activities of our office.

The final aspect of the PLO office was represented in collecting the liberation tax and launching donation campaigns, in addition to the collection of money from the private sector. As to the imposition of the liberation tax which was stipulated in the Articles of Association, it was among the first priorities of the PLO Executive Committee, noting that the first Executive Committee Chairman, Ahmad Shuqairi, made visits to the Arab countries and succeeded in imposing that tax on the Palestinians residing in some of these countries, such as Kuwait in which he met H.H. the Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem and convinced him to impose that tax, at the rate of 5% of the basic salary. In fact, there was almost a full response from Palestinian employees and workers except in very few cases.

On our part at the PLO Office, we were pursuing the tax collection and their transfer to the Palestine National Fund. I can say that the annual sum of that tax from Kuwait was within two million Dollars at least during the five years of my work as Director of PLO office.

We can say that the liberation tax collected from Palestinians in Kuwait and the Gulf States was a main contribution to the PLO budget in its early years,



A picture showing the author sitting besides Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Also appears Khaled Saleh Al Ghunaim speaker of the Kuwaiti National Assembly, at a celebration on the Palestine Disaster Day, held by the PLO Office. Kuwait, May 1970.



A Picture showing the author delivering a speech at the PLO office in Kuwait on the Balfour Declaration Day, Kuwait, November 1970.

especially when some of the Arab countries ceased to pay their shares. It is regretful to say that the PLO office could not succeed in imposing the liberation tax on the private sector for two reasons: (١) Lack of cooperation on the part of the Kuwaiti government under the pretext of difficulty in collecting such a tax (٢) the existence of a number of different Palestinian movements which were trying to compete with the PLO in collecting funds, a matter that weakened the PLO's demand in imposing the liberation tax.

I remember that we appointed three collectors for the private sector (Abu Jubara, Abu Habes and Khalifah), and that I had to dismiss one of them because of confirmed fraud and manipulation on his part, and refused to reinstate him because the public Palestinian fund should never be abused.

At first, we formed committees from professionals in the private sector to assess the tax to be paid. As to large companies, which were cooperative with us first, but after that began paying the collected tax to other Palestinian groups. As to the donation campaigns, we launched them on different occasions, such as the Field Hospital Campaign (Prior to the ١٩٦٦ defeat).

Following the stability of work at the PLO office and appointment of its staff, we intended to make use of the Palestinian citizens who were flocking to the PLO office regularly. As I said earlier, the number of four committees formed by the office were, in addition to some members of the National Assembly in Kuwait, the only persons frequenting the PLO office and might be

relied on, since the PLO had no appointed cadre according to its Articles of Association, and it was not a party or a movement and, consequently, had no members to defend it. These thoughts came to me while trying to find supporters from others apart from the staff of office and the four committees, in collecting the liberation tax from the private sector. For this purpose, I recognized the need for organizing the Palestinian people in Kuwait in unions, associations or committees according to their different professions such as teachers, engineers, etc. Therefore, we began running elections for these professions for the purpose of representation.

We also conducted a campaign for the elections of Palestinian teachers in Kuwait who exceeded ٦٠٠٠. The Ministry of Education extended to us all the necessary facilities and allowed us to run elections at all schools. For these elections, we formed a neutral committee consisting of Hashem Dahmash and Ghazi Hashem who were old colleagues of mine at the Ministry of Electricity. The only ballot centre was the PLO office at Shuwaikh, and it lasted all day until ٩ p.m. on the day of elections. Thereafter, sorting out the votes took three days under the supervision of the nominees or their representatives.

We announced the results of forming a teachers union, committee or council for the Palestinian teachers in Kuwait. Among the winners were Ibrahim Al Saeedi, Hasan Sarsour and Zainab Saqallah. By the way, some of those won the elections of the Palestinians in the Ministry of Education for the purpose of bringing out the Palestinian entity in the past year.



A Picture showing some veteran Palestinian teachers in Kuwait in a celebration held in their honor by the Palestinian Teachers General Union. From the right appears: Hussein Najm, Khairy Abul Jebain, Nayef Dalloul, Salah Khalaf (Abu Eyad), Sa'di Badran, Saleem Zanoun (Abu Adeeb), and Ibraheem Saeedi. Also appears three Palestinian female teachers among which is Muyasar Shaheen, an ex-chairman of the Palestinian Women's Organization in Kuwait.

Before teachers, we organized the elections of engineers and formed a neutral committee to supervise the election process, and opened four centers for balloting on a certain day at the Ministries of Electricity and Public Works as well as the Municipality and Post and Telegraph. I remember that the winners were Dr. Zaki Abu Eid, Mohammad Fakhouri and Bakr Tabba'.

Thereafter, we organized votings for Palestinian women for the election of Palestinian representatives to participate in the Palestinian Women's General Union held in late March under the chairmanship of Ahmad

Shuqairi, Chairman of the PLO. The elections of the Palestinian women were carried out successfully. I remember we sent three of the winners to participate in the first conference of the Palestinian Women's General Union. These were: Salma Khadra' Jayyousi, Fawziya Khorma and Ghada Hijjawi. The female organization was thus formed, and it conducted a campaign for collecting new and secondhand clothes in Kuwait. I sent these clothes to Gaza to be distributed among refugees. Later on, we organized elections at the office for representatives of the Palestinian labor in Kuwait to participate in the general conference of Palestine Union, held later on in Cairo and inaugurated also by the PLO Chairman. After that, the said conference became a key base to the PLO. I remember that all the winners in the Palestinian labor elections were from the Arab National Movement in addition to an independent winner, Fayez Faddah.

Some academic students tried to convince me to run elections for Palestine Union students in Kuwait, but I refused since there were no universities in Kuwait and, consequently, no academic students, noting that Kuwait University was established in 1966. Further, elections were conducted for doctors. Also, we conducted meetings for workers of other professions in order to organize them and elect committees from among them to decide on the amount of the liberation tax to be collected from each of them.

I was assisted in the realization of this purpose by Mr. Mahmoud Hashem Al Bournou. The local Kuwait Broadcasting was also the best helper towards this

purpose as it called the workers of different professions, i.e. carpenters, blacksmiths, barbers, vegetable merchants, etc. for the purpose of organizing themselves through committees and public unions. I always believed that the aims of the said committees were:

- ١- Each union should be a base for the PLO.
- ٢- Each union should be entrusted with the collection of the liberation tax from the nongovernmental sector.
- ٣- Each union should act as a professional syndicate for each profession.

Following the completion of those elections, those committees or unions became the popular bases of the PLO in Kuwait and their members became its cadre. I would indicate, in this context, that the Arab National Movement, represented in the Kuwaiti newspaper by "Al Talee'a", attacked me severely for what I did, accusing me of splitting the Palestinian people into different groups. But I was convinced that there was no other way for organizing the Palestinian people.

Moreover, the Palestinian Labor Union also contested my style saying that teachers, engineers and doctors were all laborers and that they should be within the Palestinian Labor Union. Severe campaigns against me continued in "Al Talee'a" and some other Kuwaiti newspapers until the holding of the second Palestinian National Assembly in Cairo which approved my style in the organization of the Palestinian people through the establishment of a Public Professional Union, as I shall illustrate in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER V

**PRESIDENT JAMAL ABDUL NASER
INAUGURATES THE SECOND ASSEMBLY**

Formation of the 2nd National Assembly

A few days before the end of May 1960, the members of the Palestinian National Assembly began flocking to Cairo including those attending the first National Assembly held in Jerusalem, to attend the meetings of the 2nd National Assembly at the headquarters of the Arab League. In Cairo, the Scarabeih Hotel as well as the Umayya Hotel on Fuad Street were allocated for accomodate the Assembly delegates.

It is worth mentioning that Fath Movement had issued in its first year its first statement covering its military operations within the occupied territories under the name of "the storm" which was the military wing of Fath Movement. It was noticed that the atmosphere of the assembly was, from the very beginning, loaded with support for the new military attitude of Fath Movement, which addressed the assembly through a statement distributed among the members, and it contained its demands in this respect. I remember that Fath was represented in the National Assembly on a large scale.

The second Assembly same as the first one, elected Shuqairi as Chairman, and the deputies thereof were Mahmoud Yusuf Nijm from Gaza strip and Hikmat Masri from Nablus (West Bank). Next to Shuqairi sat the Secretary to the Arab League Abdul Khaliq Hassounah.

Inauguration of the 2nd National Assembly

I remember on that day the inauguration of the Assembly was delayed awaiting the attendance of President Jamal Abdul Nasser. Whispers began to spread among the members of the Assembly. Some were saying that Nasser would not come due to some misunderstanding with Shuqairi and the PLO because Shuqairi did not brief him on an arms deal with China to be sent to the PLO via Alexandria Port.

My friend Jameel Barakat told me the story of the arms shipment being a member of the delegate of Shuqairi to that visit which took place on March 1970. He added that the visit was successful in all aspects because China recognized the PLO, which opened an office in Beijing, under the directorship of Rasheed Jarbou, and agreed to send a shipment of weapons to the PLO via Alexandria Port, and it seemed that Shuqairi forgot to brief Nasser of that issue.

But, a few minutes later, Nasser came and opened the assembly. In his speech, he said he did not have a plan for the liberation of Palestine. Then Shuqairi delivered a word beginning by welcoming President Nasser for opening the National Assembly, saying that Allah inspired Nasser to come and open the assembly. Further,

he said in answer to those accusing him of being a puppet to Nasser that he and the PLO were no puppets of any body, and that the PLO was for the Palestinian people. His word was met with the cheers and applause of all the attendees and I noticed that Nasser himself met that word with approval.

After the Reception Committee bade President Nasser and Mr. Hassounah farewell; the assembly began discussing the issues on the agenda, and I noticed that some members demanded that Shuqairi should not be chairman of the assembly and the Executive Committee at the same time. Notwithstanding that the proposal was reasonable; it was not approved by most of the assembly members and, consequently, failed. So, Shuqairi as well as his two deputies were re-elected. Then, the assembly members were distributed among a number of committees. I myself chose the Popular Organization Committee, and I could, after hard discussions, convince the members of the committee of my experience in Kuwait in this respect. In other committees of the assembly, it was confirmed that the armed struggle should be supported according to the proposal of the Fath Movement.

Before the National Assembly concluded its sessions, it re-elected Shuqairi as chairman for the 3rd Executive Committee.

Second Executive Committee

Shuqairi made consultations to form the 3rd Executive Committee, and it included some of the members of the

first committee, such as Wajeeh Madani, who became the Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army and Abdul Majeed Shuman, who was re-elected as Chairman of the Fund. The Committee further included: Jamal Sourani, Abdul Hameed Yaseen, Dr. Fayez Sayegh, Said Ezzeh, Dawoud Husseini, Ibraheem Abu Sittah and Dr. Ahmad Srouri.

Following the functions of the second National Assembly, we returned to Kuwait. The first task for me was to find a permanent location for the PLO office instead of our temporary location.

The Kuwaiti Housing Department allocated for us a spacious house belonging to state property at the east side of the city, near Al Amiri hospital. The new residence contained enough number of rooms, halls and yards. After being transferred to the new location, we had plenty of space to conduct forums and lectures in the outer yards as well as in the inner halls which were all crowded with attendees on the different political occasions, such as the Balfour Declaration, the commemoration of the partition resolution, Victory Day (in Gaza), Deir Yaseen Massacre Day, the Disaster Day on 10th of May. Further; the office continued issuing the PLO bulletin, and following up of the collection of the liberation tax from the public and private sectors.

Further; I continued my activity in attending the different diplomatic parties and reception of the Arab Kings and Presidents upon their arrival to Kuwait. I remember that on May 1960, the Tunisian President Al Habeeb Bourqeibah visited Kuwait after visiting some Arab

countries, and that he was in favor of an understanding between the Arabs and Israel. He was also blamed in Kuwait, and I was not there when he came because I went to attend the meetings of the 7th National Assembly meetings in Cairo. My wife was invited with the other diplomatic ladies for a dinner party at Al Salam Palace in honor of Mrs. Waseelah, spouse of President Bourqeibah.

Arms Training in Kuwait

In that year Shuqairi arrived in Kuwait and met H.H. Prince Abdullah Al Salem, and convinced him, due to his status in Kuwait as a supporter of the Arab North African countries, to approve the training of Palestinians on arms under the supervision of Kuwaiti officers which was considered a unique event in an Arab Gulf State. Following the approval of the Prince, we, in the PLO office, made the necessary arrangements to train the Palestinian youths on arms and, therefore, we brought a Palestinian officer from the Palestine Liberation Army (Shukri Abu Gharbiya) to be a military attaché in the PLO Office and became in charge of that training. Hundreds of youths willing to receive training registered their names with us. The Kuwaiti army, for this purpose, provided us with a suitable yard at Doha, orth of the country and near the shore. I remember that Sheikh Abdullah Al Jaber then Minister of Education and Courts used to attend the training and encourage the trainees. Also, Shuqairi himself once visited the trainees of a certain course and gave a speech. However; these courses, held once every three months, ceased, after the 1967 defeat.

Sheikh Sabah Al Salem Ascends to the Emirate Following the Demise of Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem

I was keen on attending the opening sessions of the Kuwaiti National Assembly. I remember that the Amiri speech was never void of indications of the Palestinian cause and a readiness of the Kuwaiti government to



A picture showing the author handing out a graduation certificate to one of the trainees of the 4th course. Also appears Shukri Abu Gharbiya, officer in the Palestine Liberation Army. Kuwait, 1966

support the PLO. I always included such facts in regular reports to the Executive committee.

I remember that I attended the opening of the new session of the Kuwait National Assembly on October 1960 and listened to the Amiri speech. I noticed on that day that

H.H. the Amir was ill and, as a result, was hospitalized. Soon afterwards the Amir passed away, may God bless his soul. I attended his funeral and he was buried in Sulaibikhat cemetery.

After the demise of the late Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al Salem ascended to the Emirate, and Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad became the Prime Minister.

With the expansion of PLO activities, I nominated two of my colleagues, Husam Sweid to work as PLO Assistant director for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Othman Abu Hashyeh to work as Assistant Director for Popular Organization and Collection.

The PLO Executive Committee adopted this nomination and they were actually appointed. Othman Abu Hashyeh was seconded to the PLO office without a salary, subject to be paid by the PLO. Later on, Husam Sweid declined working at the PLO office for urgent private reasons. Thus, colleague Othman Abu Hashyeh was the only assistant and he was my deputy for a month while I was at the hospital owing to exhaustion and fatigue.

Palestine's Day in Kuwait

The PLO's internal system provided for the organization of "Palestine Day" at different public squares for the purpose of financial support.

At first, we purported to set that day in November ۱۹۶۰, but the demise of H.H. the Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem in that month made us postpone it until next March. We cooperated with the Kuwaiti Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in forming the Palestine Supporting Committee under the chairmanship of Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Minister of the Foreign Affairs, assisted by Haj Yusuf Al Fleij, who exerted appreciable efforts to urge the Kuwaiti merchants to donate to Palestine. Furthermore; there were popular donations in the form of token fees on cinema tickets, bakeries, fuel stations, and the like, in addition to the donations collected at different schools and ministries.

We formed a committee at the PLO office for this purpose, and the PLO office Assistant Director in Beirut Abdul Qader Al Daher spent sometime with us to achieve success to that campaign.

Further, The PLO Chairman, Ahmad Shuqairi, came to Kuwait to give success to Palestine Day, and delivered a speech at the opening of the Arts Exhibition which we set up at Al Mubarikya School library on the occasion of that week. Also, the football team of Palestine played with that of Kuwait.

It is worth mentioning that the National Cinema Company added small fees on each ticket for the interest of Palestine. This lasted for a long time until the Kuwaiti Popular Committee took charge of collecting all donations. That committee was headed by Abdul Aziz Hamad Al Saqr and his assistant Haj Yusuf El Fleij. However; "Palestine Day" in Kuwait did not succeed as desired, since collections on that day reached only KD ١٠٠٠٠٠ which we transferred to the Palestine National Fund. In my opinion, the reasons for that were due to the differences between Fath Movement and the Arab

National Movement, let alone that the economic situation was not so prosperous.

Academic Scholarships for Palestinian Students

During the meeting of diplomats with the ambassador of the USSR, I knew that the USSR had offered Kuwait ١٠ scholarships for Kuwaiti students to study at Soviet universities, and that the Kuwaiti government did not make use of those scholarships, so I convinced the Soviet Ambassador to transfer these scholarships to the PLO office in Kuwait. After he consulted with his government, he agreed to give us five scholarships. We announced this at the PLO office and selected the best applicants, who traveled to Moscow at the expense of the USSR at the beginning of the ١٩٦٥-١٩٦٦ academic year, and four of them had graduated: ٢ in medicine and ٢ in electronic engineering. That process lasted for one or two years, after which the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education began sending Kuwaiti students to study in the USSR. Among those students, I remember Aziz Abu Amarah, son of my friend Ahmad Ezzat Abu Amarah.

It is worth mentioning that after the establishment of Kuwait University at the beginning of the ١٩٦٧ academic year, Kuwait offered us ten scholarships. We formed a committee to distribute these scholarships among the best applicants. This process continued for the next years, and later on the number of scholarships allocated to Palestinian students at Kuwait University increased.

CHAPTER VI

**BEGINNINGS OF THE PLO'S
MILITARY ACTIVITY**

Holding of the Third National Assembly in Gaza

After holding a public meeting at the PLO office in Kuwait on the occasion of the Disaster in ۱۹۶۶, we prepared the suitable reports over the office activities and sent them to the Executive Committee to be included in the general report for presentation to the ۳rd National Assembly which was decided to be held in Gaza in the month of May, as usual. I headed with my colleagues, who lived in Kuwait, to Cairo, and then to Gaza by car. I remember that I was accompanied on my journey by Dr. Wadee' Haddad, a leader of the Arab National Movement, and discussed several things in relation to the stance of their movement towards the PLO. It seemed that the Arab National Movement changed its stand from the PLO and began to participate in PLO activities, and had prominent representatives at different popular unions which became bases for the PLO. By the way, the Palestinian Labor General Union as well as the Palestine Students General Union announced in their conferences which were held in Cairo in ۱۹۶۵ under the patronage of Ahmad Shuqairi that they were bases of the PLO. The same was

announced by the Palestinian Women's General Union then held in Jerusalem and opened by Shuqairi, as well.

In Gaza, we found the people very enthusiastic and supportive of the PLO. I also noticed that many delegates came from different Arab countries to attend the sessions of the National Assembly. I also noticed that the Jordanian delegates comprised a large number of representatives, among who was poet Saif Eddin Al Kilani, despite tensions in relations at that time between Jordan and the PLO. I remember that some of the attendees were not members of the last two National Assemblies, thus knew that Shuqairi invited many persons to attend the National Assembly as "observers", most of who were from Egypt and Gaza.

The Assembly was inaugurated by the Governor General of Gaza Strip on behalf of President Jamal Abdul Nasser at Palestine School which was overcrowded with attendees who came to listen to Shuqairi's speech. I remember that the first session witnessed a very hot discussion over whether Shuqairi should chair the Executive Committee as well as the National Assembly. But, the discussion ended as it ended in the year before and Shuqairi was reinstated as chairman to both the Assembly and the Executive Committee.

Shuqairi's Speech at the Assembly

Shuqairi began his speech by talking about the achievements of the PLO, and pinpointed the regular activities of the National Fund and the Research Centre, as well as the regular activities of PLO offices in the

different countries, and to what was called the bases of PLO.

Then Shuqairi talked about the trip of the PLO delegation to China (noting that he did not touch on this issue during the 3rd National Assembly as an act of courtesy to President Nasser), and indicated that the trip was successful in all aspects e.g. China recognized the PLO, promised full support to it, and agreed that the PLO would open an office in Beijing. Moreover; China sent a large shipment of arms to the PLO, which aroused the difference between PLO and Egypt.

After that, Shuqairi surprised the assembly members by asking them to approve the replacement of the "Palestinian Battalions" referred to as such in the Charter by the "Palestine Liberation Army". The attendees greatly applauded the proposal in approval. Then Shuqairi talked about the elections and announced that the members of the next National Assembly would be elected by the Palestinian people, and said, "To avoid embarrassment, I will be the only candidate for our occupied land".

After the first session, I headed with the assembly members to a place where hundreds of Palestinian youths were undergoing military training as members of the Palestine Liberation Army (established on 10/9/1964) following the 3rd Arab Summit held in Alexandria.

Preparations for the Palestinians in Kuwait to Elect Members of the New National Assembly

Following the completion of the 3rd National Assembly



A Photo showing Ahmad Shuqairi, PLO Chairman, delivering a speech in Gaza. Also appearing to his right General Wajeeh Madani, General Commander of Palestine Liberation Army. Gaza, 1966

activities in Gaza in late May 1966, I returned with my fellow members to Kuwait via Cairo, and resumed my activity in the PLO office as usual. After the summer vacation, I prepared to run public elections for the Palestinians in Kuwait, in fulfillment of the resolution of the 3rd National Assembly whereby members of the upcoming 4th Assembly, to be held in 1967, would all be elected.

I formulated a projection for the election process on the basis of the available statistics relating to the number of Palestinians following the official statistics conducted in Kuwait in mid 1960. In this respect, I made use of my

past experience in the elections of ١٩٦٤. I was keen on conducting the elections prior to the holding of the next National Assembly.

Kuwaiti newspapers began to write on the elections scheme which was still under preparation. Some articles, as those appeared in "Al Rai Al 'Aam" launched protests against the scheme saying that we behave "as if Kuwait were part of Palestine", because the scheme necessitated that Kuwait be divided into several Palestinian electoral districts.

Following the completion of the scheme survey; I headed towards the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs to obtain approval prior to the preparation and printing of electoral register and cards. There, a clash occurred between me and the Undersecretary Abdul Rahman Ateeqi for many reasons, most important of which was the fear from Palestinian activity in Kuwait. A sharp discussion took place over the scheme, and I remember that a young man called Al Humoud, a Palestinian who was working as Secretary for Al Ateeqi was calming me down.

After exerting great efforts on my part, Mr. Al Ateeqi approved the scheme. I was about to go ahead with the electoral procedures, but again we had to stop such procedures due to the political crisis which emerged in Arab circles prior to the ١٩٦٧ defeat. I do not recall whether or not the PLO offices in the other Arab countries made similar arrangements. But, I tend to think that a number of sensitive factors precluded the conducting of elections for the Palestinians of Jordan, and that, therefore, a strong difference took place between

Jordan and the PLO, which did not end except after the defeat of ۱۹۶۷ war when Nasser made a conciliation between the chairman of PLO and H.M. King Hussein in Cairo, as I shall indicate later on.

Activities of the PLO's Office in Kuwait during ۱۹۶۶

I remember that in the summer of ۱۹۶۶ I traveled with my family to London for medical treatment. I learned there that a number of Arab National Movement activists were deported from Kuwait. It is known that Dr. George Habash, Secretary to the Arab National Movement, established in the following year, the Public Front for Palestine Liberation from amongst Palestinian activists in the said movement.

Some of the members of the said movement criticized withdrawing Palestinian elements from that movement because that weakened it. Also, they criticized Habash for not cooperating with Shuqairi upon bringing out the Palestinian entity and establishment of the PLO alleging that the Arab National Movement would have been most prominent in the PLO, had he cooperated.

Furthermore; I remember that the Iraqi government granted the PLO office in ۱۹۶۶ ten scholarships to the Military College in Baghdad. I made such arrangements during my meeting with Iraqi Ambassador, then Haj Nu'man.

For the selection of ten Palestinians, we formed a committee at the PLO office including Shukri Abu Gharbiya, officer in the PLO army. We ran a test for the

applicants and noticed during checking their resumes that a number of them had suspicious relations with foreign embassies in Kuwait. So, I did not nominate any of them for the scholarship. It is regretful to say that some of the rejected ones became later on members in Fath movement which, in my opinion, is unsuitable.

In ۱۹۶۶, the ۳rd Arab Summit Conference was held in Casablanca. The difference was at its peak between the PLO and Jordan. I remember that Shuqairi left the conference with pessimistic expressions on his face due to the frustrating atmosphere prevailed in that conference over the Palestinian cause and the PLO affairs.

CHAPTER VII

**THE DISASTER OF ۱۹۶۷ AND
ACCOMPANYING EVENTS**

**Shuqairi Accompanies King Hussein to Amman
Following the Disaster**

Before the disaster, differences between Jordan and the PLO were at their peak. After Jordan and Egypt signed the Joint Defense Agreement in Cairo on ۳۰/۵/۱۹۶۷, King Hussein accompanied Shuqairi on his plane to Jordan after entering into a conciliation arranged by President Nasser in Cairo.

From Amman, Shuqairi headed to Jerusalem where he spent ۳ days on a tour to front sites in the West Bank. In the morning of June ۵th, Shuqairi left Jerusalem, not knowing that he left it for good.

In May, and due to the tension surrounding the atmosphere, Shuqairi agreed to add other members to the Executive Committee, namely: Yahya Hammoudeh, Abdul Khaleq Yaghmur and Bahjat Abu Gharbiya, in place of the three members who resigned in difference with Shuqairi, namely: Dr. Ahmad Sudqi Al Dajani, Shafiq Al Hout and Ahmad Sa'di. Thus, the third Executive Committee was formed of: Ahmad Shuqairi (as Chairman), Abdul Majeed Shuman (Chairman of the

National Fund), General Wajeeh Madani (Commander of the Palestine Liberation Army), Jamal Sourani, Dr. Osama Naqeeb, Nimr Masri, Khaled Fahoum, Hamed Abu Sittah, Yahya Hammoudeh, Abdul Khaleq Yaghmur, Bahjat Abu Gharbiya, Yousef Abdul Raheem, Said Ezza and Majdi Abu Ramadan.

PLO Activity in Kuwait after the Disaster

The activities of the PLO office in Kuwait went on as usual, but the heralds of war were clear to us since the early months of ١٩٦٧.

In May of that year, we cancelled our usual celebration of May ١٥th Day. The atmosphere of war was shedding heavy shadows on Egypt, Gaza Strip and every where, especially after President Nasser declared the closure of the straits of Sinai in response to the aggressive intentions of the enemy. In Kuwait, we began conducting a big donation campaign called "Field Hospital" under the supervision of Dr. Mohammad Eissa and Dr. Ibrahim Zaqout. The campaign was successful to a great extent, and I remember that thousands of Kuwaitis and other Arabs flocked to give donations. By June ٤th ١٩٦٧, the yard of the PLO office was overcrowded with volunteers who came to take part in fighting. The passions were ferment. I remember that Kuwait was so responsive with the PLO office to the extent that the Minister of Defense then Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Salem agreed to my request to provide the volunteers with arms, provided that they receive arms after they depart from Kuwait.

I also remember that the Iraqi Ambassador Haj Nu'man promised to give arms to the volunteers upon their arrival to Baghdad, but the last groups arrived and received no arms, so they returned to Kuwait with disappointment particularly with the West Bank falling in the hands of the enemy.

When President Nasser announced his resignation, hundreds of people crowded in the PLO office yard headed towards the Egyptian Embassy to meet with thousands of other Kuwaiti and Arab demonstrators who claimed that Nasser should withdraw his resignation. I went from the PLO office at Al Sharq with the staff of the office to lead the demonstrations. I remember that in early June of ١٩٦٧ a number of physicians and nurses gathered in the PLO office in Kuwait to go to the West and East Banks. They were ١٢ Palestinian doctors and ١٨ nurses. The Ministry of Health permitted them to travel for that task. The then Minister of Health, Abdul Aziz Hamad Al Saqr, ordered that the gates of Kuwaiti drug stores be opened where we took the required supplies.

Dr. Zaqout told me that they reached Ramadi on their way to Jordan, and that meanwhile Nasser was declaring his resignation. They reached Amman, but could not go further because Jerusalem had already fallen.

Upon the request of the Syrian military attaché at the Syrian Embassy, the medical mission went to Syria to work in the Military Hospital in Damascus. The mission worked hard and offered great help after the battles which took place there. After that, the medical team split into two: one half remained in Syria and the other half headed

to Amman to help treat thousands of displaced Palestinians coming to Jordan from the West Bank. Dr. Ibrahim told me that they worked for one month there after which they returned to Kuwait to resume their usual works.

I remember that after the Disaster we, at the PLO office, formed a "Hold up Support Committee" which consisted of: Dr. Faheem Nasser, Subhi Dahleh, Khalil Oweidah, Dr. Mustafa Abdul Shafi, Yusuf Nashef and Abdul Haq Abdul Shafi. The committee was also collecting donations to help our people in the occupied lands.

Arab Foreign Ministers Conference and Summit Conference after the Disaster

After the Disaster of June, Kuwait called for a meeting of the Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs to consult over current affairs. That conference was presided over by Ahmad Toukan Prime Minister of Jordan in August at the Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait. I attended with Shuqairi as representatives of Palestine. The atmosphere of that conference was imbued with despair and defeat. I noticed that Egypt's representative was very humble for the first time, due to the defeat of his country in the war. Nothing was decided in that conference except that the conference would go to the UN. In that conference, I noticed that the Arab League took its decisions according to the minimum and not maximum limit of the suggested proposals.

It is worth noting to indicate that prior to holding of the said conference, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad invited me to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and told me about the

conference, and that he thought of not inviting the PLO because the West Bank and Gaza Strip had fallen and that Shuqairi's whereabouts were unknown after leaving the West Bank. I considered that very serious because I was afraid that this would be the beginning of omission of PLO's role in the Arab circles. When I imparted my concerns to Sheikh Sabah, he was convinced and told me to find Shuqairi to hand over the invitation.

That was the case, where after I contacted my colleague Shafiq Al Hout, Director of the PLO office in Beirut, and cooperated with him to hand over the invitation to Shuqairi.

Before the Disaster Shuqairi was in Amman and after that he headed to Jerusalem and prayed the Friday prayers on ۲ June ۱۹۶۷, then was called to Amman to attend the meeting of the Unified Arab Command in the morning of the Disaster. In the meanwhile, the West Bank fell after the eradication of the Egyptian fighter jets. He remained in the operation room with Generals Abdul Mun'em Riyad and Ali Ali Amer. After three days he wanted to fly to his home in Cairo, but he could not due to prevailing conditions. So, he went by car to Beirut amid extreme risks to which he indicated in his two books "Forty Years in the Arab and International Life" and "The Great Defeat". From Beirut, he took a plane to Malta, then to Tripoli and Cairo.

After the said conference of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Nasser who withdrew his resignation under the people's will called for a summit conference to be held in Khartoum on ۲۹/۸/۱۹۶۷ to ۱/۹/۱۹۶۷.

The PLO, represented by its Chairman Ahmad Shuqairi, attended that conference. The attendees also included a Saudi oil expert. Shuqairi could convince the Arab leaders at that conference not to reconcile with Israel and was able to obtain approval of the Arab leaders on three famous "no's" of Khartoum: "No negotiations, no reconciliation and no recognition of Israel". But soon Shuqairi had a conflict of opinion with the "defeated" Arab Leaders and withdrew from the conference, where he held a press conference outside it.

Establishment of PLO Schools in Kuwait

After the Disaster, ^... students flocked to Kuwait from the West Bank to join their parents. First, Kuwait's government rejected to teach those students on the pretext that "there were no seats" for them.

Therefore, we had to teach those students through the PLO office. And with much difficulty, we could convince the official Kuwaitis to use some of the state schools in the afternoon period. After that, we formed two committees. The first was for conducting the project and it consisted of Palestinian educators working at the Ministry of Education (I was one of them being the Director of the PLO office and an ex-teacher), and appointed in the second year an education officer, Khalil Oweida and in the third year Husam Sweid. As for financial matters, they remained the responsibility of the PLO office director in addition to the foreign contacts relating to those schools. The second committee included a number of the ex-educators who negotiated the Ministry

of Education over the periods and curricula. It was agreed that the curricula be the same of those of Ministry of Education which, in turn, should recognize our certificates, and that those schools were to be attended by Palestinian students only. After we announced the opening of our schools, some ten thousand students flocked to the PLO office. We appointed teachers with meager salaries and imposed token fees on the students in conformity with the income of their parents. Some Palestinian businessmen donated the fees of the poor students.

The Ministry of Education mentioned in a previous report to the Council of Ministers that the cost of teaching those students would be ٢ million Dinars, but we fulfilled the project at the cost of less than ١٠٠٠٠٠٠ Dinars in the first year, paid from the installments and donations collected for the Field Hospital, after the consent of the Executive Committee.

Four periods a day were taught in our schools which covered all the areas crowded with Palestinians. In the first year, we transported students by buses against small fees, in agreement with the Transport Company. The teachers were paid meager salaries for the schooling months only. That schooling experience was a pioneer and continued for nine years until ١٩٧٥/١٩٧٦.

PLO Rejects Security Council Resolution No. ٢٤٢

On ٢٢/١١/١٩٦٧, the Security Council passed its resolution No. ٢٤٢, which was accepted with reservation by President Nasser but rejected by the PLO because it

represented recognition of Israel without offering anything to the Palestinians except considering settling the refugees' problem without even defining who those refugees were.

When the PLO wanted to declare its rejection for that resolution from the Voice of Palestine Broadcasting Station in Cairo, Egypt refused. I was then in Cairo for the recruitment of some teachers to work in the PLO schools in Kuwait. So, Shuqairi gave me the PLO decision of rejecting the Security Council decision, and I gave that decision, upon reaching Beirut, to the PLO office Director Shafiq Al Hout, who published it in Lebanese newspapers and handed it to the press agencies and was broadcasted on ٢٣/١١/١٩٦٧.

Resignation of Ahmad Shuqairi from PLO Chairmanship

After the Khartoum Summit Conference in which Shuqairi was in big differences with the "defeated" Arab leaders, and after the outbreak of commando activities under Fath Movement, also after the rejection of the Security Council's resolution by the PLO and its acceptance by Nasser; the differences deepened between the two men and the Egyptian newspapers began attacking the "haughty" stands of Shuqairi and praising the activities of Fath and the other Palestinian organizations in the occupied territories. Amidst such perplexing atmosphere, seven members of the PLO's Executive Committee demanded the resignation of Shuqairi to give way to another leadership which would

cope with the current developments. That demand was submitted to Shuqairi on ١٤/١٢/١٩٦٧, and following that, the Egyptian newspapers began putting pressure on Shuqairi to resign. It was then clear that President Nasser had abandoned Shuqairi. It was then said that Abdul Majeed Shuman, Chairman of the National Fund, rejected to cooperate with Shuqairi or to sign cheques issued by him, but Shuman denied this in a recent statement to Jordanian newspapers. Therefore, there was no alternative to Shuqairi except to resign on ٢٤/١٢/١٩٦٧. He announced that resignation from the Voice of Palestine Broadcasting Station saying that such resignation was to uphold the PLO. After the resignation, the Executive Committee met and Yahya Hammoudah was elected as temporary chairman thereto until the election of a new Executive Committee and a new chairman.

Commenting on this resignation, I say that it caused a shock to me and to some other PLO officers because we had great appreciation for Shuqairi, the founder of the PLO.

Frankly speaking, I know four names only of the members who demanded the resignation of Shuqairi namely: Yahya Hammoudah, Abdul Khaleq Yaghmur, Bahjat Abu Gharbiya and Nimr Masri, who told me prior to his death that he regretted signing the letter demanding Shuqairi's resignation, in view of the weakness in the Palestinian arena he is witnessing now.

Part Three

242

٢٤٢

CHAPTER VIII

**PALESTINIAN GROUPS AMEND
THE NATIONAL CHARTER**

The New Executive Committee Takes Over Duties

So, the year ١٩٦٨ began under a new leadership of the PLO. It is known that Yahya Hamoudah, acting Chairman of the PLO, was a patriot and he had leftist tendencies and attended a number of conferences in the USSR. It is also noted that a large number of the ٣rd Executive Committee had worked with Shuqairi in the ١st Executive Committee.

The new committee started its work by trying to include the groups in the PLO and the Executive Committee. In that year, the commandos activity was intensifying, and President Nasser agreed to meet a delegate from Fath Movement following consultations and mediation from his political and journal advisor, Mohammad Hasanin Haikal. The reason was that Nasser wanted to set at least one group which would harass the enemy until he got ready to the revenge battle.

Among the commando organizations were then: Fath, Storm, and Public Front which was recently established and began its operations. At first, the said organizations agreed not to launch operations unless well-prepared, but

Fath violated that agreement and the other organizations followed suit.

For exchange of views, the Executive Committee called for a meeting to be held in Amman in February ١٩٦٨, and was attended by members of the Executive Committee in addition to the Directors of PLO offices and the other Palestinian Organizations. From Fath Movement, Khaled Hasan, with whom I had differences in Kuwait, attended that conference, coming from Kuwait (he is a Kuwaiti national and one of the prominent figures of Fath movement).

I remember that Shuqairi's differences with Fath Movement were over timing, where Fath wanted to involve Egypt in a premature battle by beginning its commando operations. Shuqairi was saying that Palestine would be at the head of the Arab front in the war of liberation.

In that conference, I was also in disagreement with Khaled Hasan because he said in his word that the PLO was just a Palestinian Organization like Fath and other organizations, whereas I said that the PLO was the mother organization and that it comprised the other Palestinian organizations.

Holding the ٤th National Assembly

The Executive Committee agreed with the commando organizations to hold the Fourth National Assembly (which was not held as set before in May ١٩٦٧ due to the prevailing events then) in Cairo between ١٠ and ١٧ July

١٩٦٨. I did not attend that assembly, but I am quoting some of what my colleague Dr. Mohammad Abu Sukhaila wrote about that assembly:

a- That assembly was formed following discussions and debates among the PLO Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Yahya Hammoudah and members of the permanent office of the eight organizations. The assembly was formed of ١٠٠ members.

b- The commando organizations were represented by ٣٨ members of the Permanent Office.

c- The staff of the office was elected directly, and Abdul Mohsen Qattan, who was independent, was elected as chairman.

d- The assembly changed the national (Qawmi) charter to the national (Watani) charter, under the pretext that "Watani" applies to the Palestinian people, where as "Qawmi" applies to the Arab people.

e- The assembly's term was to be two years, provided that it was to be followed by an elected assembly, and if that was impossible, the term of the first assembly would be extended to other periods.

f- The assembly decided to retain the Palestinian personality as represented by the PLO.

g- The Articles of Association was amended so that it included ١١ members instead of ١٥, and the National Assembly was significantly amended to bring about a Palestinian personality.

h- It was agreed upon on the formation of an Executive Committee which was elected without opposition by

recommendation, and included three independent members, two of the previous Executive Committee and a member from each of the other six organizations. But after that, Fath threatened to withdraw. Out of care for the Palestinian national solidarity, the members tried to bring down the committee, but the results of voting did not succeed. Then the old committee was reinstated. Fath agreed to that in order to take over power quietly, in agreement with the other members.

Regretfully, the assembly failed to hold its fifth session in ۱۹۶۹ as members of the Executive Committee had given up their powers to Fath Movement and thus Fath became the sole dominant player instead of the Palestinian people.

Commenting on the decision of the fourth Palestinian National Assembly concerning the change of the "Qawmi" charter to "Watani" charter, I say that the decision of the said assembly, which was not elected, did not reflect the wish of the Palestinian people who always wanted to be in one ditch with their Arab brothers. I think that Shuqairi, who was well-versed in Arabic, meant that the "Qawmi" Charter be a Palestinian Charter.

Popular Follow up Committee for Unifying the Palestinian Work

Thus Fath was able to change the name of the charter in the fourth assembly meeting, whereas some independent members considered this a deviation from the national line, and noticed that it was necessary to unify all Palestinian groups within the PLO and into "Qawmi"

charter and not "Watani" charter. Therefore; in the late 1966 and early 1969, the Popular Follow up Committee emerged to consolidate the Palestinian activity to implement the decisions of the Palestinian National Assembly, and it took up a base in Cairo. The advocates of this committee and its objectives established branches thereto in Cairo, Baghdad and Kuwait. Following are some of the names of committee members of Cairo, Baghdad and Kuwait:

First: Cairo Committee: It included: Farouq Husseini, Dr. Oudeh Butros Oudeh, Ahmad Sudqi Al Dajani, Mahmoud Na'na'ah and Dr. Fadel Zaidan.

Second: Baghdad Committee: It Included: Ahmad Hemou, Ali Sabah and Mahmoud Nana'ah and Al Assaf.

Third: Kuwait Committee: It Included: Khairy Abul Jebain, Abdul Haq Abdul Shafi, Dr. Zaki Abu Eid, Hasan Sarsour, Zuhdi Al Khateeb and Khalil Salem.

The committees held a number of preparatory meetings to unify the thought and joint work. Therefore; it has been decided to invite a number of people to hold a general meeting to elect a committee or a sponsoring body and formulate the appropriate decisions provided that such a meeting be attended by members of committees which were previously formed in the above countries. The names of invitees are:

Dr. Waleed Khaldi, Abdul Mohsen Qattan, Elias Sahab, Abdullah Hourani, Awni Hajeb, Dr. Dawoud Husaini, Dr. Ali Mishal, Dr. Jameel Maraqa, Mohammad Mousa

Kiswani, Shaikh Sulaiman Abdul Qader Abu Hamam, Rafiq Zaid Kailani, Abdul Fattah Jibreel, Mohammad Abdul Hadi, Jameel Hasounah, Khalil Azhari, Ahmad Khalil Abu Osba' Othman Saqqa, Basel Aqel, Abdul Razzaq Hamed Abu Laban, Khamis Asfour, Qusai Abadleh, Said Saqqa, and Saleem Sayyed Ahmad.

Meanwhile, the PLO sent invitations for holding a popular conference to be held in Cairo. I was among the invitees, but I apologized for being a member in the Popular Follow up Committee.

The endeavors relating to holding the next meeting of the Popular Follow up Committee came to a halt, after the September Massacre with all its painful events and the transfer of armed resistance to the Lebanese arena.

Fath Movement Takes over PLO Leadership

Following the convention of the fourth National Assembly, which ended by amending the National Charter, changing the method of work within the Palestinian arena, increasing of influence of the commando organizations in general and Fath Movement in particular; the Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Yahya Hammoudeh continued in its attempt to persuade Fath Movement to join the PLO and take over its leadership. Several meetings were held in Damascus for this purpose lead by Nimr Al Masri, Member of PLO's Executive Committee. Finally, Fath agreed to join the PLO following the convention of the 6th National Assembly in Amman at the beginning of February 1969. Yasser Arafat became chairman of the

Executive Committee in addition to his chairmanship of Fath Movement. By the way, Salah Khalaf (Abu Iyad) wrote in his autobiography "Palestinian Without Identity" that he was the one who announced the selection of Yasser Arafat as chairman for Fath Movement for political reasons without consulting with him in advance on this matter. Abu Ammar later accepted the assignment. Accordingly, the fourth Executive Committee was formed (with majority from Fath Movement) under the chairmanship of Yasser Arafat. Khaled Al Hasan was Head of the Political Department and it also included members of some other groups and independents.

The Executive Committee began exercising its activities with the help of the independent directors of offices and appointed a committee in every office to assist the director. Of the important events in these months were the victory of commandos in Al Karamah battle which took place in the month of March and witnessed Palestinian heroism and heroism of the Jordanian army which participated in the battle.

In the latter part of the month of March ١٩٦٩, we held the "Commando Work Day" under the sponsorship of Sheikh Sa'd Al Abdullah Al Salem, Minister of Interior & Defense. In my speech in the said celebration, I have commended our victories in the battle of Al Karamah and of the heroism of the Jordanian army there. My word was the straw that broke the camel's back and led to the aggravation of my difference with Khaled Al Hasan and consequently to the termination of my services as director of the PLO's Office in Kuwait.

The story behind this was that Khaled Al Hasan arrived to Kuwait a week before the scheduled date of celebrating the Commando Work Day and began contacting official and popular parties alone without taking me to such consultations being the Director of the PLO Office as the diplomatic norms require. Also, I was surprised of the presence of Al Hasan in Kuwait at that time as he had not advised the PLO Office of his arrival.

On the Commando Work Day, I have prepared myself to deliver the word of the PLO but was surprised that Khaled Al Hasan wants to deliver the PLO's word. As I did not know of such intention on his part in advance, I declined his request. He proceeded to the sponsor of the ceremony Sheikh Sa'd who said to him, "We in Kuwait do not know except Khairy Abul Jebain". When Al Hasan made him understand that he has become the Head of the Political Department of the PLO, Sheikh Sa'd told him, "We do not know except the Director of the PLO's Office and he will deliver the word". Thereafter, Khaled Al Hasan came to me and said, "I am your boss and I will deliver the word". I said, "The new Executive Committee is like a "front" comprising all groups and you represent Fath Movement on the Committee, and being the director of the PLO Office, I represent you all because I am independent in addition to the fact that you did not inform me in advance of your wish to deliver the PLO's word in the conference". After the conference, I sent a letter to the new Executive Committee in which I stated what happened on the Commando Work Day in Kuwait. I indicated in it that Al Hasan did not tell me of his arrival to Kuwait nor of his contacts. I also explained in my letter

that Khaled Al Hasan contacted employee Ali Salamah and employee Fathi Al Ragheb without my knowledge, giving them instructions, permits them to absent themselves from work without my knowledge ... a matter which is not permissible.

However, our prospective committee whose majority members are from Fath Movement and its advocates replied to my letter by a letter advising me of the termination of my services as Director of the PLO Office in Kuwait and thanked me for the efforts I have exerted during my work as a Director of the Office. Accordingly, I left work in PLO Office in Kuwait and returned to my work in the Ministry of Electricity as of ١٩/٤/١٩٦٩. The position of Director of PLO Office in Kuwait was occupied by Ali Naser Yaseen after being occupied for a short period by my Assistant Othman Abu Hashyeh.

The truth is that Ali Yaseen has proved to function free from being from Fath Movement. He had the confidence of every one and remained in office until ١٩٧٨ when he was assassinated in his house.

It was said at the time that he was assassinated due to differences between Fath wings whilst the news published on the assassination then said that the Iraqi Intelligence was behind the assassination of the Director of PLO's Office in Kuwait due to differences between Iraq and PLO in that year. Awni Battash took over the management of PLO's Office following the demise of the late Ali Naser Yaseen and Saleem Al Zanoun (Abu Al Adeeb) became the Fath Representative in the Gulf.

It is worth mentioning that since Fath Movement started with its commando operations in the occupied territories and also after becoming the leader of the Palestinian work as of ١٩٦٨; the Kuwaiti media supported this movement and the Kuwaiti dailies published articles in commendation of Fath and the Palestinian commando activity. The government of Kuwait, many of the Kuwaiti people and residents supported Fath Movement.

A number of Fath leaders had worked in Kuwait during the sixties of the past century including Yasser Arafat, Salah Khalaf, Khaled Al Hasan, Saleem Za'noun and Farouq Qaddoumi.

To give the reader an idea of the support of Kuwaiti dailies to Fath Movement and in order to lighten up the atmosphere of these memoirs; I am quoting hereunder a text of an article published by the Kuwaiti Risalah magazine on ٦/٤/١٩٦٩ as a commentary on my differences with Khaled Al Hasan on the "Commando Work Day" noting also that Al Ray Al 'am Daily has also attacked me. The text of Al Risalah Magazine article was as follows:

Wonderment in Rajab

Khairy Eddin "Al-Shuqairi"

In the previous issue, we missed to report the odd event which occurred during the Commando Work Week celebration whose star was Mr. Khairy Eddin Abul Jebain, pardon me...Khairy Eddin Al Shuqairi!

His Excellency the discontented, haughty, jerky, swelled, cocky, turkey-ish (My pardons to Language Academies...derivation from peacock and turkey), puffed foam and spume, his eyebrow turned rosy and became intensely furious and said, "I am the master of speakers and speeches..... with me no games can be played" What a wonder! How this cub Khairy emanated from that lion Al Shuqairi.

The story in Arab slang is that Mr. Khairy Eddin insisted on delivering the speech of Palestine and threatened to throw the pebble if anyone other than himself came on the platform...

Who else that one would be other than Mr. Khaled Al Hasan, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization? The origin and source of Mr. Khairy's pebble (as it is known) is from the quarry of Ahmad Al Shuqairi... Its extent is prestige and its woof is greed for ascending the platforms and pause like the prominent class as if liberation, for our arrogant friend, is saloons and trips.

Hence, the speaker was left to his discretion in order to save the celebration from his anger and spite... Thus the platform was vacated for him. He stood up, walked with a swinging gait and swaggered as if he were a lion, ape or hero who stood to break his gloominess and release his worry.

Al Risalah Newspaper

April 7th 1979

Issue No. 379

CHAPTER IX

**THE NEW FORM OF THE PALESTINIAN
NATIONAL FUND**

The Establishment of the Palestinian National Fund

Since the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964; care over the funds which form the nerve of every work was evident. Therefore; the organization's Articles of Association dictated that the person in charge of the organization's funds should be elected from the National Assembly and not appointed so that he may have immunity that enables him to audit the disbursement of funds for the various activities of the organization. Thus, the Palestine National Fund was established as a support to the Executive Committee of the PLO.

The Articles of Association has provided for the election of the chairman of the fund who will become after his election a member of the Executive Committee for the PLO in order to ensure cooperation between the fund and the committee to the best interest of the Palestinian cause.

Following the first National Assembly's election of Ahmad Al Shuqairi to the chairmanship of the Executive Committee, Abdul Majeed Shoman was elected to preside over the Palestine National Fund. It is known that Abdul

Majeed Shoman is one of the big economic drivers in Jordan and Palestine and presides over the board of directors of the Arab Bank which is one of the major banks in the Middle East area.



Dr. Waleed Qamhawi, Chairman of Palestine National Fund (1974-1980) and first governor of Palestine in the Arab Development Fund.

The Author is shown in the Photo in his capacity as a Deputy Governor.

Shoman continued as chairman of the Palestine National Fund for five years until Fath took over the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization when it selected a chairman of the fund from amongst its members. This

position was occupied after Shuman by Zuhair Al Alami, Khaled Yashruti and others.

In ١٩٧٤, the PLO leadership deemed it more befitting to have a chairman for the Palestine National Fund from amongst the independent individuals in order to enjoy the respect and support of all classes of the Palestinian people, thereby ensuring the development and maintenance of the Palestinian funds.

Dr. Waleed Qamhawi Assumes Chairmanship of the Fund in ١٩٧٤

Thus, in ١٩٧٤, Dr. Waleed Qamhawi was selected to preside over the Board of Directors of the Palestine National Fund. He is a national personality from the town of Nablus. He is Gynecologist, was president of the Physicians Association of Jordan, a member in the National Assembly and first Executive Committee. Subsequent to the occupation of the West Bank, the Zionist Authorities expelled Qamhawi from Nablus in September ١٩٧٠ together with a group which included Dr. Haidar Abdul Shafi, Muneer Al Rayes and others. Then the Israeli authorities permitted them after two months to return. In the latter part of ١٩٧٣, the occupation authorities re-expelled Qamhawi again. Accordingly, when the Palestinian National Assembly was held in April ١٩٧٤, Dr. Qamhawi was nominated and received the confidence of the Palestine National Assembly which convened in ١٩٧٤ and so he was elected as chairman to the Palestine National Fund. Qamhawi wanted the new board to be strong and comprising of national

personalities who are known of their competency and glorious political record. So, he began contacting his old time colleagues who participated in the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization since ١٩٦٤ whether they were members in one of the executive committees of the PLO or director of one of its departments or offices. Thus, I had the honor of being one of the persons who were requested by Qamhawi to support the board of the fund.

Qamhawi told me over a telephone conversation in ١٩٧٤, that the new members of the board are “your old-time colleagues in the Palestinian activity” in an attempt on his part to persuade me, as I was hesitant in accepting the post after being away from the PLO for five years. After a while of hesitation, I advised Qamhawi of my acceptance to become a member on the new board of directors.

Subsequent to the Executive Committee’s approval of the formation of the board of directors and its members, we were invited to hold the first meeting of the board of directors which was convened in Beirut in the summer of ١٩٧٤. I attended that meeting which was chaired by Dr. Waleed Qamhawi and was attended by members of the board of directors, namely: Abdul Muhsin Al Qattan, Basel Aqel, Dr. Ahmad Sudki Al Dajani, Dr. Salah Dabbagh, Khairy Abul Jebain, Adnan Dirbas, Qusai Abadleh, Shafiq Najm, Farouq Al Husseini, Ramzi Dalloul, Dr. Waleed Khaldi, Isam Al Qadi, Dr. Wadee’ Haddad, Rif’at Al Nimr, Isaac Durdar, Saleh Barghouthi, Dr. Yousef Sayegh, Khaled Al Fahoum, Dr. Taher Kan’an, Dr. Mohammad Rabeei’, Mustafa Sahtout and Hani Qaddoumi.

The main rules for the progress of work in the fund were set out at that meeting and I was elected as secretary to the board of directors and remained in that position for the next fifteen years. Darweesh Al Abyad was the director of the fund and his predecessors in this position were Dr. Munther Anabtawi and Yousef Abdul Raheem.

It is to be noted that due to the resignation of some members of the board in subsequent years including Ramzi Dalloul, Omar Al Aqqad, Dr. Walid Khaldi, Dr. Wadee' Haddad, Isam Al Qadi, Basel Aqel and Dr. Mohammad Rabee'; new members were added to the board of directors of whom I recall Abdul Lateef Othman, Hikmat Nashashibi, Yaser Amro and Dr. Abdul Aziz Haj Ahmad.

Thereafter, Adnan Dirbas was elected as deputy chairman of the board. The predecessor in this position was Rifa't Al Nimr. Jameel Barakat was elected to this position, but Adnan Dirbas, did not exercise his position because Mr. Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Executive Committee refused to sign the decision of appointing Adnan Dirbas as deputy chairman of the board, hence Dirbas had to resign this post.

Following the resignation of Dr. Waleed Qamhawi in December 1980, Dr. Salah Dabbagh was elected as chairman of the board, followed by Dr. Hanna Nasser and finally by Jaweed Al Ghusain.

During these years, Muneeb Al Masri, Abdul Rahim Ma'roof, Abdul Kareem Shawwa, Said Khouri, Adli Dajani, Zuhair Khateeb, Mahmoud Abbas, Ahmad Qurai', Saleh Barghouthi and Abdul Lateef Othman have

become deputies to the chairman of the board during the term of office of chairman Jaweed Al Ghusain.

According to the Articles of Association, the Executive Committee renewed the term of the board of directors or added new members in place of those who resign after every session of the Palestine National Council or every three years.

The headquarters of the National Fund was continuously in the country where the bases or offices of the Palestinian Revolution are situated. At the beginning, the headquarters was in Jerusalem, and then it was moved to Amman. Subsequent to the events Black September, the Palestinian Revolution and departments moved to Lebanon and we began holding meetings of the new board of directors in Beirut.

When Beirut was besieged in ١٩٨٢, we began holding our meetings in Damascus. Damascus was always the center of the director of the National Fund's administration. During the eighties, Abu Ammar accused Darweesh Al Abyad director of the fund of stealing because he held the National Fund's money for disbursement among Palestinian activities in Syria when Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization were at dispute. However, the board of directors of the fund did not go along with Abu Ammar's opinion with regards to Darweesh Al Abyad.

Therefore, the board refused to appoint candidate Nizar Abu Ghazaleh as director of the National Fund and deemed it sufficient to appoint him as an acting director of the fund provided that Darweesh Al Abyad will

maintain his position as director of the National Fund and undertake disbursement on the activities of some of PLO's departments in Syria including Martyr Families Institution, Palestine Liberation Army, members of the Planning Board and others, whilst the main operations of the National Fund began to be run from Amman where the office of Nizar Abu Ghazaleh was located. It is to be noted that following the demise of Darweesh Al Abyad two years ago, the offices of the Palestinian activities in Syria elected Dr. Mustata Al Abyad, son of Darweesh Al Abyad to be director of the National Fund in order to sign on the payment of PLO's funds which were registered in Syrian banks in a personal account of Darweesh Al Abyad. In my opinion, depositing PLO funds over the accepted level in his personal account is considered illegal.

New Work Method at the Fund

The chairmanship of the board of directors of the Palestine National Fund under Dr. Waleed Qamhawi is considered a qualitative step since upon his chairmanship life flowed through the board of directors and management of the National Fund, whereby the board began to convene once in no more than three months whereas in the past years it used to convene only to approve the budget. Also, the minutes of meetings of the board of directors were formulated by the secretary and signed by both the secretary and the chairman whereas in the past it used to be prepared by director of the fund and signed severally by the chairman. These minutes began to

be published in the various means of media and circulated to members of the board of directors, members of the Executive Committee, and directors of departments and offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The era of Qamhawi was characterized by the beginning of contacts between the PLO and Arab and international economic funds. In 1970, the Palestine Liberation Organization participated in the Arab Economic & Social Development Fund, the Public Institution for Investment Guarantee whose headquarters was in Kuwait, the Arab Monetary Fund whose headquarters were in Abu Dhabi and the Arab-Afro Bank whose headquarters were in Khartoum which grants appropriate loans to African countries in an attempt to keep them away from Israel. Palestine was represented in these funds by members of the fund's board of directors namely Waleed Qamhawi then Abdul Muhsin Al Qattan in the Arab Development Fund, Said Khoury in the Arab Monetary Fund, Rif'at Al Nimer in the Arab-Afro Bank and Khairy Abul Jebain in the Public Institution for Investment Guarantee.

Also, I represented Palestine in the Arab Planning Institute which is based in Kuwait. The funds used to alternate the holding of their annual meetings in the capitals of member countries. I remember Dr. Waleed Qamhawi contacted the International Monetary Fund which attended some of the meetings of that bank. Also Dr. Qamhawi contacted the UNESCO which helped in the establishment of Jerusalem Open University for Remote Education and Dr. Waleed Qamhawi was the first chancellor of that university.

The board of directors of the fund used to alternate the holding of its meeting in Arab capitals at least once a year, whilst it held its other meetings at the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization which were in Beirut, Damascus and Amman respectively.

The board's object behind holding its meetings in different Arab countries was to orientate the public in these countries with the Palestine National Fund and its object for supporting it and also to meet with officials of these countries to solve any outstanding issues between these countries and the National Fund. The most important of these issues was the default of most of the countries from paying their established obligations towards the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine Liberation Army pursuant to the resolutions of the second Summit Meeting and Baghdad Summit Meeting and the like.

Failure of the Fund's Board of Directors in Reforming the Organization's Financial Situation

The following phrases, which are excerpted from Khairy Abul Jebain's aforesaid memoirs, have depicted some of the efforts we exerted for tightening financial control over Palestinian activities. Such efforts regrettably did not succeed; a matter which forced us to acknowledge our failure!

"The fund's board of directors, tried to reform and we submitted reports to the National Assembly about the financial violations but with very little benefit because

Chairman Abu Ammar and Fath controlled the National Assembly.

In one of the years, we submitted a report to the National Assembly in which we said, quote "there are seven million Dollars which did not go into the National Fund's account but rather another account as Abu Ammar took the money and entered it into another account under his supervision, or the supervision of Fath or the Military Department. However, due to Abu Ammar's objection, they crossed out this paragraph from the report in the second session. The truth is that we were trying but



Chairman Abu Ammar presiding over the meeting of the board of directors of the National Fund which was held in Casablanca on April 1986. Seen in the Photo are: Jaweed Al Ghusain, chairman of the fund, Sheikh Abdul Hameed Al Sayeh, speaker of the National Assembly and Khairy Abul Jebain, secretary to the Palestine National Fund. Casablanca, April 1986.

frankly speaking we failed to do all what we wanted because Abu Ammar had absolute authority and was supported by Fath. Even the other group had no main role because they were taking allocations after the Baghdad Summit meeting and hence they kept silent”.

For the sake of history, I say the Arab countries did not fulfill their obligations in full towards the National Fund. The decided allocations to the PLO after the summit meeting were one million Dinars per year and the Arab countries paid only one half of these allocations. The same situation prevailed with respect to the allocations decided on at the Baghdad Summit in 1979.

As to the National Fund, I say that most of the independent members and myself have accepted to remain on the board of directors of the fund in the hope of slowing down Abu Ammar although he was an absolute ruler and supported by Fath. Even when we criticized some of the acts, Abu Ammar used to resort to the National Assembly who would support the point of view of Abu Ammar. We thought of resigning from the National Fund but we would back up and say maybe matters will change to the better. This situation continued as members of the board of directors kept on attempting to reform. The minutes of meeting in my possession confirm this matter. Frankly, I would say we could not slow down Abu Ammar because we were supervising only 22% of PLO's funds and we have no control over the remaining 78%. 40% of the PLO's budget was for the Military Department which was controlled by Abu Ammar personally, about 20% of the budget was allocated to the Martyrs Families and 10% to Palestine

Red Crescent. The National Fund did not have control over the budgets of the Military Department, Red Crescent and Martyr Families Foundation. When the fund's board of directors pressed and demanded to audit the accounts of these institutions by the National Fund's auditors, its request was turned down for matters of "Secrecy" and other reasons. Abu Ammar agreed thereafter on auditing of Military Department accounts but not in the form purported by the Fund's board of directors which did not enjoy executive power! The board was always trying to control "disbursements" and saving.

For the purpose of saving, Jaweed Al Ghusain, chairman of the board of directors, in his opening speech in the meeting which was held in Morocco in April 1986, suggested the dissolution of the Palestine Liberation Army "for lack of need" and to maintain nominal forces to assist in the Palestinian commando activity, provided that suitable indemnities are paid to the members of the army whose salaries exhaust about one fifth of PLO's budget.

However, Abu Ammar, who attended that meeting, and rejected the proposal of chairman Al Ghusain. In my capacity as secretary to the Board, I included the chairman's opening speech in the said minutes of meeting. It happened that Abu Ammar attended the following meeting of the fund's board of directors and was surprised upon reading the minutes of the previous meeting to find the text of that proposal included. Abu Ammar became angry and because I was absent from the meeting, Abu Ammar requested the formation of a committee for the re-writing of the minutes.



Representatives of Palestine during the Arab Economic Fund meetings. From right: Abdul Muhsin Al Qattan, Khairy Abul Jebain, Said Khoury and Rifat Al Nimer. In the bottom back row: Dr. Nabeel Qaddoumi and Saleh Al Jallad, assistants of Al Qattan and Khoury. Casablanca, April ۲۰۰۰

Further to the foregoing, I feel it is my duty to indicate here that most of the contribution campaigns received from Arab and Palestinian citizens on various national occasions were mostly paid into the account of Fath Organization and not into the Palestine National Fund because the directors of the PLO offices in the various Arab countries were from Fath movement. The protests of the fund's board of directors on these acts were received deaf ears as the board did not have executive powers since directors of offices received orders from the head of the Political Department and Chairman of the Executive Committee and both are from Fath Movement.



[Faint, illegible text, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]

Palestinian Contribution to the Arab Sport Movement after the Disaster

First: Names of Palestinian Players, Administrators and Referees who Contributed to Kuwait Sport Activities

١- Football Players in the early fifties:

Mousa Hamdan, Ahmad Abu Taha, Munir Daqqaq, Abdul Muttalib Al Bitar, Yousuf Nashef, Nayef Dalloul, Jabra Zarka, Michel Taweel, Mohammad Samara, Ibrahim Samara, Ali Fadl Abdul Rahim, Nimr Saleh, Khaled Eker, Shahin Zarka, Tayseer Tarteer, Sa'eed Dajani, Mohammad Huneidi.

٢- Administrators:

Khairy Eddin Abul Jebain, Zuhair Karmi, Jamil Saleh, Subhi Nassar, Adib Dasouki, Fathi Khairy, Mousa Hamdan (Inspector of P.E. in the Education Department in ١٩٥٠).

٣- Referees:

Jamil Saleh, Zuhair Karmi, Fathi Khairy, Walid Burno, Hashem Hasanin, Mahmoud Khawaja, Ishak Barakat, Salim Abu Abdou, Dr. Mukhtar Sharif, Subhi Zaher, Ahmad Abu Taha, Abdul Karim

Rushdi Shawwa, Rashad Arafah, Munir Daqqqq,
Abdul Karim Abdul Muti.

**Second: Names of Some Palestinians who Contributed
to Sports Activities in Other Arab Countries (in
football)**

- ١- In **Jordan**: Abdul Rahman Habbab, Jamil Taher
(Journalist), Adnan Abu Jaafar.
- ٢- In **Syria**: Ismail Najjar, Michel Taweel, Jabra
Zarka, KamalQumbarji.
- ٣- In **Egypt**: Mustafa Daada, Fuad Abu Ghaida,
Marwan Kanafani, Al Moghrabi.
- ٤- In **Qatar** : Madhat Ja'ouni.
- ٥- In **Lebanon**: Senharib Saliba (Boxing Champion).

The Author in Brief

- Author Khairy Abul Jebain was born in Jaffa, Palestine in ١٩٢٤.
- Began his studies in Jaffa and completed them at Rasheediyeh College in Jerusalem, from which he graduated.
- Served in teaching at Jaffa then in the press censorship.
- Was a sports editor in Jaffa's Difaa' Newspaper (١٩٤٥-١٩٤٨). Was member in the editorial staff of Ansaar Al Thaqafa magazine which was published by the Arab Cultural Club of Jaffa in the forties of the past century.
- Was secretary to the Arab Cultural Club, Secretary to the Islamic Sports Club, Secretary to the Jaffa District Committee of the Palestine Sports Union and Information Officer at Palestine's Najjada Organization (١٩٤٣-١٩٤٨).
- Settled with his family in the State of Kuwait since ١٩٤٨ and acquired its citizenship in ١٩٨٥.
- Worked in teaching in Kuwait and then at the Ministries of Electricity and Education.
- Was a Secretary to the Kuwait Sports Association and a Secretary to the Kuwait Football Association since their establishment over a twelve year period.
- Was elected a member in the Palestine National Assembly for successive terms then selected as a member on the Board of Directors of the Palestine



National fund in ١٩٧٤. He was a Secretary to the Board for fifteen years.

- Was the first Director and Representative of the PLO's Office in the State of Kuwait since establishment of the PLO in ١٩٦٤ until ١٩٦٩. He was the Founder of the PLO's schools in Kuwait in ١٩٦٧.
- Was Chairman of Jaffa's Charity Fund in Kuwait which promoted the Palestinian folklore of Jaffa
- Was an Associate Researcher in the publication of the Palestinian Encyclopedia in ١٩٨٤ and published his biography in ١٩٩٩.
- Published his second book titled: The Story of My Life in Palestine and Jaffa in ٢٠٠٢ followed by his last book titled: Abul Jebain's Family in Jaffa with its ancestry and descent, in ٢٠٠٣.