

Controlling the Archive:

Captured Jordanian Security Files in the Israeli State Archives

Musa Budeiri

The acquisition by the Israeli National Library Archives at Givat Ram of a sizeable trove of primary material pertaining to the internal workings of the communist movement in Israel/Palestine covering the last eighty-five years took me recently to Jerusalem. The friendly and helpful reception afforded me brought to mind a rather different experience over thirty-five years ago.¹

My initial introduction to the world of Israeli archives was facilitated by an old university classmate who was in Jerusalem conducting research on senior Arab and Jewish Mandatory officials.² He introduced me both to the Israel State Archives (Ginzach Ha Medina) and to the Central Zionist Archives. The former, in the early 1970s, occupied the basement of the Israeli prime minister's office in an area which before the establishment of the state of Israel was known as Shaykh Badr; the latter were located in the Jewish Agency building on King George Street. The State Archives, despite the grandiose name, were in the early 1970s a shambolic and haphazard affair, unlike the Central Zionist archives, which were a more efficient and business-like enterprise. The sojourn in both establishments was uneventful.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Amnon Cohen, Moshe Ma'oz, Shaul Mishal, Moshe Shemesh, Uriel Dan, and Avi Plascov, among others, published a number of "scholarly" works. Most if not all of these authors combined their Orientalist research with service to the state, a state of affairs rather common in the field of Middle Eastern studies in Israel.³ The protagonists were for the most part "state scholars" who utilized their academic skills and "knowledge of the enemy" to promote Israel's case in the

world of academia and establish a dominant Israeli narrative.⁴ A majority of these works were anchored in archival research, and the source of the numerous documents cited, housed in the Israel State Archives, appeared to be official Jordanian security reports. In the early 1980s, I approached one of their number and asked about accessibility to the archives, having assumed that this was a privilege restricted to those in the “service of the state.” Amnon Cohen, who I later found out was instrumental in assembling a team of “future scholars” to go through the captured Jordanian documents,⁵ and who served three terms as the civilian coordinator for the military government established after the occupation of the West Bank in June 1967, assured me that contrary to my suspicions, the archives were open to all researchers.⁶ He advised that I should approach the director of the Israel State Archives in order to gain admission. I did this forthwith and contacted Avraham Alsberg, the “state archivist.”

Alsberg politely but curtly informed me that access to the documents could not be obtained, for the simple reason that he was not the person responsible for them, merely their keeper. He conceded that the documents were indeed housed in the State Archives, but maintained that they were the property of the Jordanian government and he did not possess the authority to release them. The responsible body was the Israeli army in its capacity as the successor authority in the occupied West Bank to the Jordanian government. Once a peace accord was concluded with Jordan, the material would revert to Jordanian authority. The State Archives were merely their temporary home. When I retorted that a number of Israeli academics had already used the archives and published books in Hebrew citing the documents and that some of these had already been translated into English, he responded that these individuals had abused a trust. They had access to the documents as part of their military duties.

I returned to Cohen and informed him of the gist of my encounter with Alsberg. He answered that this was not the case, the implication being that his work on political parties in the West Bank under Jordanian rule – the first to be published in English – was a legitimate scholarly endeavor. I thereupon sought out Alsberg again and informed him of my conversation with Cohen. His response was that I had been misinformed. Frustrated with the charade, I enquired where I should seek permission and he proceeded to supply me with the name and phone number of an officer: Colonel Shalom Harari, Arab Affairs Advisor for the Israeli Defense Ministry, based in the Central Headquarters in Beit El on the outskirts of Ramallah. Contacting Harari by phone, I put my request to him to gain entry to the archives. He feigned total ignorance and denied having anything to do with the matter. Returning again to Alsberg, I related my latest experience. In an angry response, he insisted that irrespective of what both Harari and Cohen had told me, the “captured Jordanian documents” came under the authority of the Israeli military. I remained insistent that I wanted to examine the documents and hinted gently that this was a blatant case of discrimination, adding that it was the job of the archive itself to resolve the issue of jurisdiction. His proposed solution was to refer the matter to the Israeli cabinet and ask them for guidance.⁷

I reasoned that waiting for the Israeli cabinet to make a decision on such an infinitesimally petty issue was going to take an inordinately long time. In the meantime,

I discovered that a university contemporary of mine had recently been appointed to an administrative position at the archive. I made my way to his office to complain about the stone wall I was facing and the fuss I intended to make. He denied that there could be any possibility of discrimination and promised to try and resolve the matter with the state archivist. To my amazement, it dawned on me that also in this part of “the Arab world” *wasta* was a necessary medium. I had already spent a couple of months toing and froing, obviously getting nowhere, and was on the verge of abandoning what had by now assumed the character of an failed attempt to “storm a fortified stronghold” when in late autumn 1983, during one of my increasingly infrequent visits to inquire about the status of my application, a compromise was offered. While the index of the Jordanian material would remain classified, I would be allowed to see any files that had already been seen and quoted by other researchers. This was blatantly ridiculous. It would not allow me to know what material the archives contained, and I would remain a hostage of other presumably “state sponsored” researchers. Nevertheless, I accepted the offer. My appetite had been whetted by what I had already read in the published literature, and I reasoned that this would at least allow me to “get a feel” for the world of the Jordanian security service and government bureaucracy.

On my very first day at the archives, I put in a request to make copies of a number of documents; the archive staff informed me that it was not permissible to photocopy material from the files but that I was free to transcribe anything I wanted by long hand. Ridiculous as this sounded, I acquiesced. Having already achieved a small “victory,” I thought it best not to press my luck. For the next couple of months, I summarized information from the files and went through the slow and laborious process of writing things by hand. Then one day, after coming across a file brimming with printed leaflets of various political organizations, I asked for these to be photocopied, pointing out that these were not official documents but printed material which had already been distributed publicly and had been collected by the security services and filed. This proved acceptable and from that date on I was able to photocopy whatever material I wanted. Whether this was on instructions from above or whether the staff did this on their own private initiative I did not ask and I did not care. But it was not going to be smooth sailing. I was often informed that the file numbers I submitted proved to be “non-existent,” or that files had been “misplaced” and could not be found, or that the files were “lost,” or that they were “closed.” Even when I produced the texts from which I had culled the file numbers, this proved of little value. Additionally, numerous file numbers I had collected turned out to relate to matters that were of little interest to my research, such as municipal affairs, street lighting, garbage disposal, or dealings with *mukhtars*.

Eventually, and this was bound to happen, the numbers ran out. The only logical thing to do in the circumstances was to proceed by inventing file numbers based on proximity to numbers which I already had access to. The drawback, I soon discovered, was that there seemed to be little logic in the numbering system. The team that had been entrusted with combing through the files had not retained the original Jordanian identification numbers and had given the files new numbers. These did not appear to be based on any recognizable system, like groupings according to region or topic, but – as far as I was able

من: الرجل الخليل
 رقم: ١٨٤/٢٥١/٤٢
 التاريخ: ٢٥/١١/٢٥١٧
 في: مقاطعة الخليل
 من: شركة بلدية
 موضوع: تفويض وشحن
 ٢٠

الموضوع: تفويض وشحن
 من: شركة بلدية
 في: مقاطعة الخليل
 رقم: ٢١٦٥
 التاريخ: ٢٥/١١/٢٥١٧
 في: مقاطعة الخليل
 من: شركة بلدية
 موضوع: تفويض وشحن
 ٢٠

الرئيس الأول /
 قائد مقاطعة رام الله
 مهران منصور

DS 114 /
 1274-20

Yasser Arafat in Jordanian Security Documents, ISA, Jerusalem.

ق: ((مضمون))
 بطاقة قائد منطقة القدس
 الموضوع: كرم حنا خلف من رام الله طالب في جامعة القاهرة
 الرجاء اعلامكم بان المذكور اعلاه كان قد اتهم بالاشتراك في الظاهره
 التي حصلت في مدينة البيرة بتاريخ ١٨/١٠/١٥٤ وجرى سياره الترمط ودراجة رقيب الميسر
 وورش رجال الشرطه بالحجارة واقتحام مدرسة الفرند زبولم الله واتلاف اثانها الا ان محكمة صلح
 رام الله قررت بتاريخ ١٧/١/١٥٥ براءته . وقد عاد قتل مدة وجيزه من القاهره بمناسبة العطلة
 للعام مدة شهرين اهله وقد فهمنا بانهم قد احضر معه نثاره ايضا ليه مصرية المولد يريد الزواج
 طيبا . وبما انه كان من جماعة البعثيين فقد وضعناه تحت المراقبة . ارجو التفعل بالعلم
 وتزويدنا برقم قبه سبب .

الرئيس الأول /
 قائد مقاطعة رام الله
 مهران منصور

نسخة / لتقييم المباحث لمتابعة مراقبته واعلامه من
 مفاد رة البلاد الى القاهره .

الأمن العام
 قيادة منطقة القدس (المباحث)
 الرقم: ١٠١١٤
 التاريخ:

Kareem Khalaf in Jordanian Security Documents, ISA, Jerusalem.

to ascertain –according to proximity to the people doing the numbering. While one file would contain documents relating to communication with army headquarters in Amman concerning suspicious persons and requesting that they be placed under surveillance, the successive number would talk about accessibility to water in a remote village in the vicinity of Hebron.

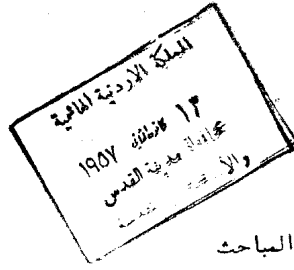
Getting increasingly frustrated by this method, as many of the requested files kept turning out to be either “lost” or “non-existent,” I one day confided in a member of the staff that I had been inventing numbers. He seemed surprised at this information. I had assumed, wrongly it now appeared, that he was privy to my stratagem and that he was conniving with it. He suggested I should talk to the person in charge again to resolve the issue. While mulling this over, my visits to the archive became infrequent, though I still occasionally invented numbers. Then one day I was approached by the reading room supervisor, who informed me that I would not be allowed to see any more material from the archives, as a decision had been taken by Yitzhak Rabin, then minister of defense, to close the Jordanian archives to all researchers.⁸ In other words, I was being asked to leave.

The trespass into the archives and the (admittedly incomplete) access to the files that I was able to peruse has provided the following picture of what they hold. The files in the archives cover an eighteen-year period and contain regular reports from security officials stationed in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, Jenin, Tulkarm, Jericho, and a number of villages, covering the activities of individuals suspected of involvement in any kind of political activity, whether legitimate or otherwise. This surveillance encompassed both those deemed hostile to the regime and elite notables as well. Additionally, the files contain detailed information on matters relating to the Israeli-Jordanian cease-fire line, armed Israeli incursions, names of individuals suspected of spying for Israel, smuggling activities, and the prevention of infiltration, i.e., Palestinians trying to return to their homes behind the recently erected border.⁹ The security reports also contain descriptions of the general situation regarding economic and social affairs, the current state of “public opinion,” and detailed reports on the activity of individual political organizations: the Communists, the Ba‘thists, the Muslim Brothers, the Tahriris, and the Qawmiyyun al-‘Arab. This went hand-in-hand with collecting and filing any and all opposition publications, which took the form of leaflets, pamphlets, captured party documents, and reports on the organizational structure of these groups and their contacts with hostile elements, whether states or individuals beyond the kingdom’s borders.

The initial and foremost preoccupation of the Transjordanian regime in the immediate aftermath of the annexation of the West Bank in the post-1948 period was with the mufti and his supporters. Despite the public insistence that the annexation was in response to popular clamor expressed in the congresses held in Jericho and Nablus and the delegation of Palestinian notables (many of them former supporters of the mufti) who journeyed to Amman calling on King Abdallah to affect the “unity” of the two banks, it was clear to the authorities that the new regime was not popular. Public sentiment held Abdallah responsible for the fall of Lydda and Ramla, and the surrender of the Triangle to Israel. A sizeable amount of correspondence in the files in the early period is devoted to reporting and naming “agents of the mufti” and their nefarious stratagems to violently combat the

المكسوم

(المكسوم)



قيادة مضايقا القدس

المباحث

الرقم ١٠٥٧ / ١٧ / ١٩٥٧

التاريخ ١٩ / ١ / ١٩٥٧

مدير الامن العام / المباحث

الموضوع: التقرير السياسي الاسبوعي

١- النشاط السياسي

على اثر الاجتماع الذي عقد بتاريخ ٢٨ / ١٢ / ٥٦ في بيت الدكتور داود ميخائيل برام الله وقرار تأسيس فرع للحزب الوطني الاشتراكي فيها فكر الشيوعيين في عمل شسسي، لمناهضة القائمين على تأسيس هذا الفرع، فاجتمع كل من جبرا الانقر، ويحيى حمسوده وابراهيم بكر، والنائب فائق وراود، وابنا، حرب وبعين الشيوعيين في قصر الحمراء بالساعة الخامسة من مساء يوم ٢ / ١ / ٥٧ واتفقوا على تأسيس نادى يضم الشيوعيين في مدينتي رام الله والبيروه اطلقوا عليه اسم النادى العربي التقدمي وافتتحوا باب التبرعات له وبلغ ما جمع مائة وستون ديناراً وانتخب المدعو محمد عبد الرحيم امينا للصندوق. وقد بلغ عدد الحضور نحو خمسون شخصا سجلوا اسماهم للعضوية. ودار البحث في الاجتماع في موضوع اشراك السيدات في العضوية فعارض الاقتراح النائب السيد فائسق وراود وقد اتفق المجتمعون على ان يقوم المحاميان يحيى حموده وابراهيم بكر باتمام مسودة الاجراءات، وعلما بانسما ذهبنا الى عمان صباح يوم ١٥ / ١ / ١٩٥٧ لهذه الغاية. وقد علمنا بان هذا التنازل لا يقصد منه مقاومة الحزب الوطني الاشتراكي واهدافه. وانما يقصد منه مقاومة الاشخاص القائمين على تأسيس الفرع في رام الله وهم الدكتور داود ميخائيل وعيسى عقل، وحننا خلف، لمسا هو معروف عن ولائهم لبريطانيا. وانهم لجأوا الى الحزب الوطني الاشتراكي لمنافسة حزب البعث العربي والقضاء على زعامة السيد عبد الله الريماوى ومناقشة الشيوعيين، وقد لوحظ ان البعثيين يفضلون رجال الحزب الشيوعي على رجال الحزب الوطني الاشتراكي.

فقدت لجنة التوجيه الوطني برام الله اجتماعا بتاريخ ١٨ / ١ / ١٩٥٧ في قاعة الغرفة التجارية بحضور القائما لبحث مشروع الرئيس ايزنهاور المتعلق بمنطقة الشرق الاوسط ولم يتفق المجتمعون على اصدار بيان موحد. حيث ان الشيوعيين ارادوا ان يظل السب في البيان الخروج عن مبدأ الحياد والاتجاه نحو الكتلة الشيوعية مهما تكن ائتنائسج بينما اراد البعثيون ان تكون الارا منسجمة مع سياسة دول العالم العربي المتحرره كما اوسعها قادة هذه الدول، جلاله الملك المعظم وسيادة الرئيس جمال مبدد الناصر. وقخامة الرئيس السيد شكري القوتلي وهي الحياد الايجابي التي اهلنوها على الملا في جميع المناسبات. والذين يرون ان الانحياز للشرق اول للغرب لا يخدم مصلحة العرب وقد اتفق الاجتماع دون الوصول الى قرار معين.

بالساعة الرابعة من بعد ظهر يوم ١٠ / ١ / ٥٧ فقد اجتمع في منزل الشيخ سليمان الناجي الفاروقي في بيته باريجا حسره عدد من ممثلي اللائحين في اريحا وبحثوا فيه موضوع الاجتماع الذي سيعقد في قاعة المتحف بالقدس صباح يوم ١٠ / ١ / ٥٧ بدعوة من العيب السيد سعيد علاء الدين. وقد اتفق المجتمعون على حضور الاجتماع واعلام السيد سعيد علاء الدين بانه يمثل مكتب اللائحين في عمان ولا يمثل اللائحين في اريحا وانهم يعتمدون في قضيتهم على جلاله الملك المعظم والدول العربيه المتحرره. وعدم قبول اي مقررات الا اذا اقررت بموافقة جلاله الملك المعظم. وقيل في الاحتفاء ان...

regime. This was the task of agents and informers, in addition to personal surveillance of individuals who had exhibited any nationalist or anti-British activity in the pre-1948 period and were therefore deemed partisans of the mufti. Political assessments, provided by more senior officers, provide us with a window into the political views and concerns of Transjordanian officers. Handpicked by General John Glubb, the British commander of the Arab Legion, to man his tribal levies, their original task was to patrol Palestine's border in the buffer zone created by Churchill after his announcement in 1922 that the area east of the Jordan did not fall within the boundaries of the League of Nations Mandate. After 1949, these officers found themselves in the uncomfortable position of military governors ruling over an impoverished and embittered population which had grown accustomed to the somewhat more liberal ways of British colonial rule.

The period encompassed by the security files extends from 1949 to 1967 and although there are no formal demarcations it is possible to outline three distinct historical periods. The first was ushered in by the annexation of the West Bank during Abdallah's lifetime continuing through his assassination, the short reign of King Talal, and the assumption of King Husayn to the throne: roughly 1949–1953/4. The second extends from the recall of Fawzi al-Mulqi, the Jordanian ambassador in London, to fill the position of prime minister until the royal coup of April 1957. This period witnessed intense political activity and competition between the various political parties and a dynamic which appeared to be heralding the establishment of constitutional rule in the country. This was symbolized by the elections of 1955, which eventually led to the formation of a government representing a nascent national bourgeoisie under the leadership of Sulayman al-Nabulsi, head of the National Socialist Party (*al-hizb al-watani al-ishtiraki*), which emerged as the largest party after the freest elections ever held in Jordan in October 1956. Although political activity was primarily centered on the West Bank and, of course, Amman as the capital of the enlarged kingdom, Palestinians did not monopolize the political stage. A joint Jordanian-Palestinian political space had been created which reverberated to the drumbeat of a nascent Arab nationalism marshaled by Egypt under the charismatic leadership of Gamal Abdul Nasser. The army itself was part of this movement, with the formation of a free officers movement, which naively looked to the young monarch for leadership and which played a part in the expulsion of the British commander of the army General Glubb and the bringing to an end of British influence in Jordan.¹⁰

The third period, stretching from 1957 to 1967, saw the suppression of all organized political activity and the outlawing of political parties, with the exception of the Muslim Brothers, the only party which supported the regime's enmity toward Nasser and his Arab nationalist policies. (Indeed, the Muslim Brothers were to extend their support to the regime in the post-1967 period and in the subsequent clash between the regime and the Palestinian national movement which would culminate in the army crackdown of September 1970.) While the army continued to provide fertile ground for plots and competition between officer cliques, based on both political and local regional affiliations, the main threat to regime survival in the post-1957 period appeared to be external. This increased with the conclusion of Egyptian-Syrian unity in 1958, the Iraqi military coup of 1959, and the embrace of the Palestine entity project and the steps taken to establish

مكتبي وشخصي

سیدی الهاشا .

- منذ التحاتي بهذه المنطقه وانا ادرس اخلاق القوم هنا ونواياهم واليكم ملخص دراستي .
- ١ - يحقد الناس على الحكومه اجمالا وكلهم ساخط بالرفم عما يظهره البعض من الاخلاص والمحبه ويعلمون اسباب سخطهم بما يلي .
 - أ - لم يتبدل الوضع في نظرهم كثيرا فبعد ان كانت الزعامه الى الحاج امين وجماعته جاء بدلهم سليمان بك واقرباءه ومحسوبيه وسيطروا بنفوذ الحكومه .
 - ب - لم يحاول سليمان بك واعوانه ان يغير سياسته الانتقاميه فقد زاد ايدلوه لاختصاصه بعد ان مسك زعم الحكومه في الضفه الغربيه بيده ووضع اخيه جمال مديرا للاداره وسلمت الوظائف الرئيسيه لاهضاء حزب الاحرار بل اخذ من وراء ستار يسيئ الى الآخرين وبالوقت نفسه يظهر بالوطني الحريص والزعيم المعتدل .
 - ج - عدم التفات المسؤولين في عمان لبقية الشعب واخذهم بما يليه عليهم سليمان طوقان واخيه جمال واعوانهم .
 - د - ما يقم به سليمان طوقان وما يحيكه من مؤامرات ودسائس للتباعد بين الحكومه والشعب -
 - هـ - ليبقى الفضل عند الحكومه والواسطه بينها وبين الناس وهو يتوخى من وراء ذلك امين رئيسين .
 - ١ - ان يشبع ميوله وضروره ويبقى الزعيم الاوحد بعد ان زال من للميدان الحاج امين وغيره ويرغم الشعب على التفرغ تحت اقدامه وطلب مساعدته وعطفه .
 - ٢ - ان يوهم الحكومه انصارهم فعلا الزعيم الاوحد والذي يجب عليها ارضاءه وتقريبه .
 - هـ - يعمل سليمان طوقان وجماعته على خلق مشاكل وقتن ليحولوا دون سير الامور بشكلها الطبيعي وتعترف الناس على ابواب المراجع ولتترك الحكومه في عمان له ولاعوانه -
 - بمعالجة الحاله ليطول لهم الحكم وليقتضوا ما يريدون .
 - انني امتدنا جازما انه لو اذراء التعللون الصحيح مجرد عن الانانيه والمطامع الشخصيه والحزبيه لسهل قيادة الشعب وتوجيهه التوجيه الصحيح .
 - و - يوهمو على الحكومه بان هناك قلاقل وحركات وان الحاج امين يحيك الدسائس ويدبر المؤامرات لقتل زيد من الناس او لخلق القوضى الخ بالوقت الذي كل ذلك من نتج عقولهم وصنع ايديهم والسبب الداهي لذلك هو ما ذكرته اعلاه .
 - ز - عدم مجاراة المسؤولين هنا بعمل دعايه طيبه للحكومه واشتراكهم في مجالسهم الخصوصيه -
 - بالتجاهل والشغب على الحكومه اذا ما اقدمت على عمل حازم كعلاج وحيد لاستقرار الامور في هذه الظروف المضطربه .
 - ح - ويضع هبلواء اللوم كله في كل مناسيه على الحكومه وهم يتصلون من كل مسؤوليه -
 - ويقولون مثلا (انهم قبلوا هذه المراكز التافهه تحت ظروف قاهره وانهم يترقبون كل فرصه للسفر في الظليعه امام الشعب الذي يبيع اذا ما واثت الفرصه التي ضيعتها عليهم الحكومات العربيه ومنها الاردن تلك التي استعمرتهم وانزلتهم . الخ
 - ط - استماع بعض المسؤولين للاخباريات والوشايات المختلفه والمغرضه على الموظفين الاردنيين -
 - من رجال البوليس ان لا يوجد خلافهم في هذه الضفه تلك التي تضعف عزائم المسؤولين الحقيقيين والغيريين على تنفيذ سياسنة الحكومه والحريصين كل الحرص على تسوية الامور واستقرار الامن .
 - ي - يمكن القول ان ٩٥٪ من الشعب الان بين شيوعي وراغب فيها وكاره للديموقراطيات وذلك حيا في الانتقام وكراهية في امريكا وهيئة الامم .
 - لا اعني بكلمة شيوعيين انهم فعلا يعتقدون المذهب او يفضلونه ولكنهم كما اسلفت لا يرون ما يحولهم او يصرفهم عنه فهم يقولون بصراحه وفي كل مجلس هاهي امريكا تقدم الرجال - والمعدات لكلي ولايين الدولارات لنصرة كوريا بالوقت الذي خذلت فيه العرب وهاهي ونصرت اليهود عليهم وتركتهم في هذا الوضع المؤسف وهذا الجو الصالح ليدور الشيوعيه .

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the Palestine Liberation Organization with Ahmad Shuqayri as its designated head in the early 1960s. The mufti was a thing of the past; indeed, in this period he and his handful of supporters were being transformed into allies of the regime as Shuqayri and the new political organization staked a claim to speak in the name of all Palestinians.

At the same time, political parties remained outlawed, their members – including establishment figures like Sulayman al-Nablusi himself – either in jail, exiled, or under constant police surveillance. The prevailing political climate and the regime's attempts to monitor the mood of the kingdom's population and the activities of oppositional currents are fully recorded in the content matter of the security files which, as a result of the restructuring of the security services with the help of United States in the late 1950s,¹¹ became more formalized and comprehensive in their content.

Israeli interest in the Jordanian security archives, which came into its possession in the immediate aftermath of June 1967, was exclusively security oriented. The captured files provided a wealth of material “in real time” about political organizations and networks that for all intents and purposes had been underground since the government crackdown of 1957. Israeli security operatives mined them for the names of members of underground organizations and their political activities. The image of omnipotence which Israel security (Shin Bet) agents projected and which was internalized by Palestinians under occupation was the direct outcome of the Jordanian security regime built with United States support in the ten-year period elapsing from April 1957 to June 1967. The (charitable) assumption is that the Jordanians did not leave their security archives behind deliberately, but that the sudden and immediate collapse of the Jordanian front and the hurried and disorganized departure of its army from the West Bank did not leave time for an orderly evacuation, which presumably would have ensured that politically sensitive material would have been destroyed rather than being left behind.

Like their counterparts the world over, the stock and trade of Israeli security operatives, when not forcefully extracting information from suspected subversive elements, is the shuffling of such reports. They took the veracity of the information in the archives at face value and, in the initial stages of the occupation at least, based their operative decisions on this readymade information. Much of the factual information contained within them was probably correct, but much was also outdated and a compilation of hearsay, denunciations by unnamed informants, and forced confessions. These can perhaps be of use in academic research as a window into the workings of the regime and its attempts to control people and neutralize their political activity. As a source for the dynamics of political life, however, they need to be supplemented by research which covers other facets of material reality and, when it comes to the biographies of individual actors, perhaps to be complimented by the political memoirs of field activists and political leaders (though these, too, have to be handled with special care, as they suffer from a number of limitations).¹²

That archival collections held by national authorities, even in democratic societies where a measure of popular oversight exists, are not immune to “tampering” by the political executive was confirmed a few years back when a scandal broke out in the UK in relation to a case brought by former Mau Mau detainees from Kenya requesting compensation. It soon transpired that not only were hundreds of thousands of documents

مكتوم شخصي

قائد منطقة نابلس المباحث

رقبته / مقاطعة نابلس الساحل
الرقم / ٢٥ / ١ / ٢٥ / ٢٥
تاريخ / ١ / ٢٦ / ١٩٦٢

ارجو ان ابين اليكم بادناه مايشاع وما تحدث به الالسن من مختلف الطبقات في

في المدينة

تستطيع القول ان الناس ينقسمون في الآونة الاخيرة الى ثلاثة اقسام -
طبقة المثقفين - تقول هذه الفئة وهي ابعد نظرا عن باقي الفئات ان جلاله الملك المعظم
اصدر اراءه يحل مجلس النواب السابق واعلن ان الانتخابات المقبلة (الحالية) ستكون في منتصف
التيار هذه والحريه التامه لكي يفسح المجال امام مختلف فئات الشعب لانتخاب ممثلهم وتولت دار
الانتخابات اذاعه هذا التيا الذي استقبله الرأي العام بارتياح تام ثم بدأ المسؤولون يصرحون
بين الحين والآخر وفي كل مناسبة ان الانتخابات ستكون حرة نزيهه كما اعلن عنها جلاله
الملك المعظم وما ان حان موعد الانتخابات وبدأ العازمين على ترشيح انفسهم يراجعون متصرف
المواد والذي انهمم انه لا يقبل اي شخص يريد خوض المعركة الانتخابيه مالم يبرز شهاده -
حسن سلوك من الامن العام الذي ان المسؤولون لم يقبلوا رسم الترشيح الامن النواب
السابقين والسيد عبد الله الخطيب وتقول هذه الفئة ان الحكومه بهذا العمل قد ارتكبت
خطا كبيرا بعدم انصاحها المجال امام اشخاص آخرين معروفين ببعدهم عن الحزبيه وكان بالإمكان
رفض طلبات من تعتقد الحكومه انهم حزبيين او ان لهم اتجاها سياسيه خاصه ويفضلون ان تجرى
انتخابات ويخوض هذه المعركة فتمه بالاضافه الى النواب السابقين .

وظفه من هذه الطبقة تقول اننا نحن شعب لا يزال يحتاج الى توجيه وارشاد والفرد فيه لا يستطيع
ان يختار مثله الذي يعتقد انه يعمل لمصلحته ، اذا نحن في غنى عن مجلس النواب والاميان
والفضل ان يكون هناك مجلس استشاري مؤلف من عشرون شخصا من خيرة رجال هذا البلد
من حيث الكفاءه والمقدرة والبعده عن الحزبيه ، وبهذه الوسيله توفر الدوله الشيء الكثير
وتجعل حدا للقتال والقتيل ويروا تب هولا النواب والاميان البالغه مايه وخمسون الفا مسن
الذك تأخير نستطيع ايجاد مشاريع وتجعل حدا للمحسوبيه والوساطه .

الفئه المتوسطه ان هذه الفئه والتي تعتبر اكبر الفئات تنظر الى طريقه الانتخابات النيابيه نظيره
بلوه لا الاستياء وعند ما يلتقي شخصيا آخر من هذه الفئه ويسئله عن المرشحين فيجيبه فيجيبه
انهم معروفين (اربعة عبيد وييك واقفا) وهذا الاصطلاح له معنيان معنى بعيد وهو التهمك
اللا ذم والمعنى الاخر ان الاربعه بيده اسمه في كلمه عبد الروي وبمثلا والبيك هو نعم طوتا ن
والاغرا راند النمر . لصر ما لدره نصفه كما نرى في هذا الرسم الخاص وفي هذا الرسم
اما الفئه الثلثه وهي اقل الفئات فهي غير مكثره لما يحدث

هناك اشياء اخرى تتناولها الالسن وهي ان جميع الاشخاص الذين عزموا على ترشيح انفسهم
ولدى مراجعتهم الحكاه الاداريين واتهموا بالحصول على شهادات حسن سلوك من دوائس
الامن في عمان ذمب الكثير منهم يوم اصبلن عمان وقابلوا عطوفه مديرا الامن ولم يحصلوا على
نتيجه وطلب اليهم مراجعه معظم معالي وزير الداخليه وحاووا مقابله جلاله الملك المعظم فلم
يتكلموا ومن هنا يتنوا ان موضوع الانتخابات اصبح ليست في صالحهم

في ان يتلوه موضوع الانتخابات كما هو الان بدأ بعض الاشخاص يشعرون ان الحكومه لا ترضى سيوري
ترشيح النواب السابقين وهذا كان في حقه لحظه تخللتها المشروبات الروحيه اقامها السيد راشد اظا
السوري من زمرته يعوز الخطيب ويهاها بالاضافه الى كلمته النيابيه بعض الاشخاص من المد يشسه
والقروي . وفيه ان هذه الحفله اتبعه بعد ان عدا ناك ان فوزه وزملايه بات مضمونا كما وفيهنا
ان السيد عبد الله الخطيب بعد ان ترضى نفسه نتيجته نصحه من قبل اطباغه الذين اكدوا له
عدم مقدرته على معاديره القراش فيقبل سنده والقاس يعلقون ان عبده الخطيب تأشب في بيته .
فيما اليكم علمنا ان المدعو ان امين القاسم ونزيه كعنان سيقمان دعوى لدى محكمه العدل العليا
على الحكومه لعدم تمكنهم من خوض المعركة الانتخابيه ارجوا العلم وسنواصل تتبعها يحدث ونوافيكم بكل
التيه في حينه سيدي .

الرئيس الاول
قائد مقاطعة نابلس
احمد يعقوب

relating to colonial rule in various countries within the domain of the British empire destroyed in order to bury evidence of colonial “misrule” and in an attempt to create a narrative “favorable” to the colonial power,¹³ but the existence of a “secret archive” was revealed, where tens of thousands of documents were stored, giving the lie to the claimed sanctity of the official body of “national archives.”¹⁴ If this was and is possible in a country with a long democratic tradition and which upholds the claims of the “neutrality” of the civil service, then one can only imagine how political authorities in less entrenched democratic societies behave. Perhaps a flag needs to be raised at all so-called “national archives,” as a warning that such holdings are at the mercy of political masters past and present, proclaiming in bold letters “hazardous material, handle with care.”

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Endnotes

- 1 I would like to thank Yaron Sachish and Moriah Kapach for the help they extended in navigating the index and locating documents, enabling me to overcome my linguistic shortcomings.
- 2 Bernard Wasserstein recently published *The Ambiguity of Virtue* (2014) a somewhat obtuse attempt to defend the Judenräte from charges of collaboration. To my mind his most interesting work remains *The Secret Lives of Trebitsch Lincoln* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), the tale of a Hungarian Jewish adventurer who reinvented himself as, among other things, a Christian missionary, an Anglican minister, a British member parliament, and a Chinese war lord.
- 3 Gil Eyal, “Dangerous Liaisons between Military Intelligence and Middle Eastern Studies in Israel,” *Theory and Society* 31, no. 5 (Oct. 2002): 653–693.
- 4 Shay Hazkani, “Catastrophic Thinking: Did Ben-Gurion Try to Rewrite History?” *Ha’Aretz*, 16 May 2013, online at www.haaretz.com/israel-news/catastrophic-thinking-did-ben-gurion-try-to-rewrite-history.premium-1.524308 (accessed 7 June 2016). Hazkani discusses the role Moshe Ma’oz and Uri Stendhal played as “official historians” charged by Uri Lubrani, advisor to David Ben-Gurion, to create an Israeli narrative regarding the story of the Arabs’ “flight” in 1948.
- 5 Amnon Cohen’s *Political Parties in the West Bank* was published by the Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University, Jerusalem in 1972. The first version to appear in book form was published by the Magnes Press, Jerusalem in 1980. An English version was published by Cornell University Press in 1982, and it was translated to Arabic and published in al-Ram, Jerusalem, in 1988.
- 6 In a response to a question by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* in April 1987, Cohen denied that he had said the above. This entailed a denial of what he had written on page 9 of the English edition of his book. “Denied Access to Archives, a Scholar Abandons Project,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 15 April 1987. The article quotes Cohen and Alsberg.
- 7 Alsberg explained that the archives were structurally attached to the prime minister’s office, that they were a research facility for the cabinet, which consequently had the authority to open and close archival materials. As a result of the impasse we were facing, he had decided to refer the matter to them requesting guidance. This was obviously their solution.
- 8 A current (2016) online statement on the web address of the Israel archives proclaims open access to the Jordanian files. Like with Schrodinger’s cat, this may or may not be true, simultaneously. Only by applying for access to the Jordanian security files will we be able to ascertain whether access to the files is open or not. A recent work that refers to the Jordanian documents is: Mustafa Abbasi, “The Education System in East Jerusalem during the Period of Jordanian Rule, 1948–1967,” *Journal of Politics and Law* 6, no. 4 (2013): 174–186.
- 9 The Jordanian rationale was that it was constrained to do this in order to avoid Israeli “punishment.” Israeli policy early on established a firm principle that policing the armistice line was the responsibility of the Arab side and that any failure to do so would result in severe punishment. This continued to be a mainstay

of Israeli policy vis-à-vis its Arab neighbors in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and beyond. Jordanian efforts notwithstanding, Israeli retaliation policy was the order of the day. Two major instances of Israeli retaliation resulting in large loss of Arab life were Qibya in October 1955 and al-Samu' in November 1966.

- 10 Shahir Yusuf Abu Shahut, *Dhikrayat Shahir Yusuf Abu Shahut 'an harakat al-dubbat al-Urdiniyin al-ahrar, 1944–1957* [The Memoirs of Shahir Yusuf Abu Shahut's Recollections of the Jordanian Free Officers Movement, 1944–1957] (unpublished manuscript, n.d.).
- 11 See: Jack O'Connell, *King's Counsel: A Memoir of War, Espionage, and Diplomacy in the Middle East* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011). O'Connell was CIA station chief in Amman from 1963 to 1971.
- 12 In the Jordanian case we have a relatively plentiful collection of memoirs penned by political actors, both military – such as 'Ali Abu Nuwwar, Nadhir Rashid, Dafī al-Jam'ani, and Abu Shahut – and civilian – including members of the communist party and Ba'thist activists, among them Na'im al-Ashhab and Fa'iq Warrad. See: 'Ali Abu Nuwwar, *Hina talashat al-'Arab: mudhakkirat fi al-siyasa al-'Arabiyya, 1948–1964* [When the Arabs Vanished: Memoirs from Arab Politics, 1948–1964] (London: Dar al-Saqi, 1990); Nadhir Rashid, *Mudhakkirati: hisab al-saraya wa hisab al-qaraya* [My Memoirs: An Account of the Palaces and of the Shacks] (Beirut: Dar al-Saqi, 2006); Dafī al-Jam'ani, *Min al-hizb ila al-sijn, 1948–1994: mudhakkirat* [From Party to Prison, 1948–1994: Memoirs] (Beirut: Riyad al-Rayyis li-l-kutub wa al-nashr, 2007); Na'im al-Ashhab, *Durub al-alam, durub al-amal* [Paths of Pain, Paths of Hope] (Ramallah: Dar al-tanwir li-l-nashr wa al-tarjama wa al-tawzi', 2009); Fa'iq Warrad, *Mudhakkirat Fa'iq Warrad: khamsun 'am min al-nidal* [Memoirs of Fa'iq Warrad: Fifty Years of Struggle] (Ramallah: Hizb al-sha'b al-Filastini, 2005).
- 13 Caroline Elkins, "Looking beyond Mau Mau: Archiving Violence in the Era of Decolonization," *American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (June 2015): 852–868.
- 14 David M. Anderson, "Guilty Secrets: Deceit, Denial, and the Discovery of Kenya's 'Migrated Archive,'" *History Workshop Journal* 80, no. 1 (Autumn 2015): 141–160.



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