

# Musrara, the Center of the World

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As essential as water or the air we breathe,  
streets are the corridors of the soul  
and the dark trajectories of memory.  
—Paul Virilio, *Panic City*<sup>1</sup>

“The Cypresses are still there.”

Michel looks at them, high up behind the wall that surrounds a four-story white building, and his eyes begin to wander, thirsty, trying to recognize the little that remains from his distant childhood.<sup>2</sup> They are ancient eyes, Michel's, folded under the weight of an eighty-year-old man. He is already tired from the walk uphill along a little street in the center of Jerusalem, just outside the ancient walls of the Old City. But his breathing is light, concealed by the slightest of smiles, gentle and innocent, because that anonymous little street in the old quarter of Musrara is Michel's *memory lane*. That is what he calls it in his impeccable British English: the *street of his memory*. The memory of his childhood and of the fixed images of 1948 that marked a before and an after, the hiatus in his life. And the hiatus of Jerusalem.

Michel looks around like a stranger. He looks like the passers-by who use the little street to get to the offices of the Jerusalem city hall, just over the hill where a large square opens up. Michel, however, has no urgent business at city hall. His arrival point is his memory lane. He is there, after decades, only to remember. Memories rush from the mouth of that bent old man with the tidily combed white hair. His memory lane was called Baldwin Street when he was small, named in honor of the crusader king in 1918 by the British authorities, together with a committee that brought together representatives of the three religious communities to rename the streets. Baldwin was a gracious street at the end of the 1930s, full of villas with gardens. Look there, the house of the French consul,

and then that of Judge Khayyat – large, very large with a real park surrounded by a wall. Right in front of the Khayyat estate was the house in which Michel lived as a small boy for ten special years: from 1938, in the middle of the great Arab revolt against the British and Zionist immigration, until 1948, the year of the birth of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war, the year of the Palestinian catastrophe – the Nakba.

The little house of Michel’s childhood was a single story, like many in the small but important quarter of Musrara – a prestigious area which in successive censuses counted at least 130 one- or two-story buildings, as well as churches, hostels, and convents. Musrara was a built-up area, triangular in shape, established around 1875 in a place whose name in Arabic perhaps means “field of pebbles.” It is bordered to the south by the walls of the Old City, to the west by the commercial district of Jerusalem, to the north by the Orthodox Jewish neighborhood Mea Shearim, and to the north-east by the primarily Muslim district of Shaykh Jarrah. From the architectural point of view, Musrara mirrors the typical style of fin-de-siècle Jerusalem: local stones, sloping roofs on four sides, Arabic windows high and arched in the upper part, and metal book-end window shutters. Then there were the gardens: rose gardens separating houses from the street, and behind them fruit-trees – pomegranates, almonds, mulberries, and medlars – and those tall and austere cypresses that have resisted wars, new inhabitants, and rampant speculative building.

Musrara was the first mixed district to develop outside the Old City walls, where the Jerusalemite middle class – Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Ottoman citizens – lived and in time consolidated their day-to-day life. There they freed themselves from the constraints of the sixteenth-century walls built by Suleiman the Magnificent, which until 1873 were closed at night to protect the inhabitants from external dangers. In Musrara, the class of well-to-do that had developed at the end of the Ottoman Empire in the decades preceding the First World War placed themselves “at the mercy” of the countryside and villages that ringed Jerusalem and furnished the city with vegetables, milk, olives, and manual labor.

Michel’s father, a representative of a new post-World War I middle class, brought the family to Musrara. An accountant employed by the British Mandate administration, he was accompanied by his family to his postings: in the southern town of Beersheba, where Michel was born, then to Bethlehem, and finally Jerusalem. In Musrara, Michel’s family, Christian Palestinians, rented their house from a rich Muslim Palestinian, Ibrahim al-Ansari. “Renting a house instead of buying took place ever more often in the city during the thirties,” explains Salim Tamari, who writes on Jerusalem between the Ottoman Empire and the British Mandate. Renting a house was one of the signs of modernity that even Jerusalem, the archetype of a holy, celestial city, was experiencing.

Despite his age and the emotion concealed by his gentle manner, Michel bathes himself in distant memories. He walks through Musrara, along the narrow streets that still recall the old urban weave of the district before the tragic interruption of 1948. He passes the houses, remembering who lived there. He identifies every building with a surname, a trade, an outline of daily life, until he reaches today’s Ha’Ayin Het Street that goes west from the Old City walls, past the Salesian Sisters’ convent. The nuns there continue to operate a kindergarten frequented by Palestinian children in a district



The house called Bayarti. American Colony Photo Department, "Hebrew University and Lord Balfour's Visit. Arab Protest; Black Flags Displayed," April 1925, G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

that is now only Jewish, and for the most part ultra-orthodox. Michel turns and looks up, indicating another two-story building. "It is the first house we lived in, here in Musrara. We rented it from the Giacaman family." The Giacamans, another well-known family in Jerusalem, had subdivided that little building into four apartments, with one shared water pump. Now there is a music school in the house, to which a crude extra level has been added. A little further along, where there is now a busy photography school that has a large area for exhibitions and lively cultural programs, the Bayartis used to live. "They were of Lebanese origin, hence the name," Michel explains in a subdued, muffled voice.

Michel relives the distant past as if it were yesterday: the steps, the people, and certainly the trees. "Yes, that was where the Cyprus was, in the garden of our neighbor's house. They came from the big family Dajani. The head of the family was called Tawfik Wafa Dajani, and was a clothier. And there were the sons whom we played with every day." Michel smiles as he reels off the names of his playmates without any hesitation: Walid, Sa'eb, Aseeb, Nabil, Aida, and finally Naida. He was Christian, his neighbors Muslim, together in a street less than two hundred meters long, almost touching the Old City. In fact, only five minutes on foot separate the memory lane where Michel used to live and play from the New Gate and the school he attended, the Collège des Frères. The most important private school in Jerusalem, it was founded in the mid-nineteenth century by the Lasallian Brothers, a French Christian order specializing in education

whose institutions still exist in eighty-two countries, including in the Middle East. It was then, as now, the school for the Palestinian elite.

Michel's *memory lane* is today a street of overwhelming nostalgia, even though in his youth tension was not only in the air. Nearly two hundred meters of barbed wire divided the street in half. As the end of the Mandate approached, the British decided that to maintain a minimum of public order in the city, it was necessary to separate and divide the adversaries – with barbed wire along Baldwin Street, or with a metal gate at the top of the hill, where the Jerusalem city government is now, where those with permission were allowed to pass. These were the employees of various British institutions, like Michel's father, or those who worked beyond the checkpoint, in offices, hospitals, convents, or the plethora of buildings that (Christian) Westerners had built since the middle of the nineteenth century.

The situation, however, became unsustainable in 1947, as the end of the British Mandate neared and the United Nations recommended the partition of Palestine. The stories of the disruption to Musrara's life are familiar. The growing tension, the subdivision of the district into zones, the barbed wire, the fights. Clashes between Palestinians and Zionists intensified. There was shooting, even on Michel's *memory lane*, and the family – like many others – began to think of going away, of leaving the house for a day or two, perhaps even for some weeks, until the waters had calmed. And then, return. The discussions were daily: to leave or to remain, clinging to their possessions and risking their lives.

On 9 April 1948, news spread that there had been a massacre at Dayr Yasin, one of the villages in the ring around Jerusalem, carried out by Zionist paramilitary groups, the Stern Gang and the Irgun. The number of dead is still part of the historical battle.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the real number of victims, the massacre unquestionably changed the perception of the war for Palestinian civilians. In Jerusalem, and Musrara in particular, not only did news of the massacre spread by word of mouth, but Palestinians were frightened by the sight of the survivors paraded through the streets by the Stern Gang and the Irgun. Benny Morris describes how after the massacre, the Irgun and Stern Gang “subsequently transported the remaining villagers in trucks in a victory parade through west Jerusalem before dumping them in the Musrara quarter, outside the Old City walls.”<sup>4</sup> Meron Benvenisti, the former deputy mayor of Jerusalem in the 1970s, still remembers witnessing, at fourteen years old, the “disgusting spectacle.”<sup>5</sup>

The Dayr Yasin massacre was the decisive trigger for flight from Jerusalem's city center and the surrounding villages. Doubts gave way to fear. Michel remembers the morning of 20 April as if it were yesterday, the last photographic click of his memory. The night before they had slept less than two hundred meters from their house on Baldwin Street to avoid the mortars of the fighting between the Palestinians at Musrara and the Jews at Mea Shearim. They took shelter in the Saint Louis French hospital immediately in front of the New Gate. They returned home in the morning to Baldwin Street to get their suitcases, took a taxi, and arrived in Beirut about midnight: Exile.

Michel and his brothers could not have known the significance of the journey. That was the last time that they would run through the streets that they had taken to school for

the last ten years. As usual, they passed by the house of a British official on the corner between Baldwin Street and the one that then was called Saint Paul Street and later, after 1948, was renamed Shivtei Israel Street, the street of the Tribes of Israel. Michel still remembers clearly the official's house and the small wall – though now in their place there is a tall building that can be seen kilometers away – behind which a puppy named Fifi would bark every time the children passed on the way to the Collège des Frères. On the morning of 20 April 1948, however, there was no school on account of the war. Nor was Fifi there barking, only a swallow on the little wall, wings spread, unable to fly. The children looked at it, wondering if it were dead, and then one of them hit it. The swallow flew away. “I remember it as if it were yesterday. It found its freedom, that we are still lacking.” There was no rancor in Michel's words, only a sad awareness.

Since then Michel had not returned to Musrara to revisit his *memory lane*. And now, upon his return, he cannot shake free of discomfort. It's as if one feels an interloper in the part of Jerusalem that became “west” in 1948, unwelcomed.

## Pencil Marks on the Ground

On 30 November 1948, just a few months after Michel and his family, like almost all Musrara's inhabitants, had fled and fighting had exhausted the entire city, Moshe Dayan and Abdallah al-Tall traced in pencil the dismemberment of Jerusalem amid the ruins of a house in Musrara. It was a physical demarcation line for almost twenty years, impassable from 1948 to 1967: the time during which the city was divided in two, from north to south, between the newborn Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. Neither Dayan nor Tall could have known that the long wound they traced on the pavement of a dilapidated house would pass into Jerusalem history as the most quoted and untouchable line (at least formally) of the city. And what had been one of the richest middle-class districts of the city would never be the same.

The line drawn by Dayan and Tall separated the Israeli army and the Jordanian Arab Legion, which for months had fought each other through the streets of the city. It was a front-line. Through many twists and turns Dayan and Tall decided the fate of Jerusalem. Jerusalem's composite society was not the only victim. From the geopolitical point of view, too, the Israeli Dayan and the Jordanian Tall embodied the protagonists of Jerusalem's division, making a clean sweep of other political participants. The Israeli-Jordanian agreement excluded the other Arab countries, the remnants of the British Empire, and, partially, the UN. According to Avi Shlaim, the city that was “the scene of some of the fiercest and bloodiest fighting of the entire war, was quietly partitioned between the two sides along the cease-fire line in order to pre-empt the United Nations' move to turn it into an international city.”<sup>6</sup> Say good-bye to the 1947 UN partition plan and with it the *corpus separatum*, and the idea that Jerusalem could not merely be divided between two national communities, that above all, Jerusalem could be a city for everyone, and for the whole world.

Dayan, in his memoirs, emphasized the annoyance – his own and, he claimed, Tall's – felt during the international mediation on the cease-fire. During one of the meetings,



Musrara and the red tile roofs. American Colony Photo Department, “Jerusalem & Olivet from Tower of Italian Hospital Showing Nort[h] City Wall & Damascus Gate,” c. 1934–1939, G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

irked by the contribution of the UN representative, the American colonel Roger Carlson, Dayan asked his Jordanian colleague to abandon the gathering and go speak in another room. According to Dayan, Tall “said yes, and to the surprise of all those present, four officials in every delegation, and almost half a dozen UN observers, we got up and left. In our one-on-one consultation we very rapidly overcame our differences, returned to the gathering and announced our agreement that became the protocol.”<sup>77</sup>

Since then, Musrara, the little district outside the Old City, would never be the same. Reduced and split by the Green Line, it was fragmented into three pieces: the most important part from the residential perspective, would remain in the west, the central zone would remain for almost twenty years as a no-man’s land, and the more commercial area to the east of the Green Line remained with its back to the Damascus Gate. The little houses of Musrara still remain today as a memento of pre-1948 Jerusalem, and a living portrayal of how the city has changed in the course of decades.

With its division there died a certain idea of Jerusalem, with its districts *extra moenia* that converge toward the Old City. The fulcrum of the community, the market, the holy places, the exchange, they were all still there. The city-fortress was still the center around which life revolved. The cease-fire line, however, removed the heart of Jerusalem from what was defined as the “new city,” the west. The armistice plan followed, for hundreds of meters, the Old City walls, which became ramparts for the Jordanian soldiers overseeing the truce. The *center* thus becomes a *boundary*.

A little to the north, still along the line traced by Dayan and Tall, on the outskirts of Musrara, is the Mandelbaum House. For nineteen years it was the only crossing point linking the city's two sides. The only Jerusalem's crossing point, at least for the fortunate few who could cross the demarcation line between east and west. The house of Simcha Mandelbaum also belonged to a family – Jewish this time – who had chosen to leave the crowded and unlivable Old City and buy a piece of land further north, outside the Damascus Gate. The Mandelbaums built a small three-storied house, clearly visible even today from what the inhabitants of Jerusalem call Road No. 1, the four-lane axis that cuts the city from north to south. Built after 1967, it is the most trafficked road of Jerusalem and more or less follows the Green Line in its most important stretch.

It is a street that marks the definitive alteration of Jerusalem's networks of movement. For centuries before 1948, the Old City was the fulcrum from which streets left in all directions to important urban centers. Jaffa Street, Hebron Street, Nablus Street. After the division of Jerusalem, these streets lost their relevance; the Old City was no longer the heart but an atrophying appendage, set aside near the Green Line. Especially after the 1967 War and the constant stretching of the city boundaries, the Old City became a small tessera in a new, increasingly extensive mosaic of Jerusalem.

The Mandelbaum House remains a sort of outpost along Road No. 1, in front of the large Israeli hotels that have been built on no-man's land and that accommodate hosts of Christian pilgrims, Israeli settlers, and Jewish-American tourists. Over the years, it was frequently an outpost in the clash of communities in Palestine: in 1929, during the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–1939, and in the war of 1948. During the first Arab-Israeli war, the house was often used by armed men of the Haganah, prompting the family to leave the building. They were just in time: on 14 April 1948, Jordanian legionnaires attacked the building, using explosives, and killing thirty-five Haganah fighters.<sup>8</sup> April was indeed the cruelest month in 1948 in the waste land that was the heart of Jerusalem. The day before the attack on Simcha Mandelbaum's house, a convoy of doctors and nurses escorted by Haganah forces were ambushed on their way to the Hadassah hospital on Mt. Scopus. The attack was revenge for the Dayr Yasin massacre. There were seventy-nine dead, their names inscribed on a memorial stone at the top of the street, almost forgotten today where it stands not ten meters from one of the radical Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem. Like Palermo in Roberto Alajmo's description, Jerusalem is a city of tombstones and plaques that are more ideal than physical. It is a route marked by struggles and stone slabs, a pilgrimage among the dead.<sup>9</sup>

## **Outside the Walls**

Once upon a time, before the 1948 tragedy, Jerusalem tried to be a modern city. The Ottoman Empire found itself reforming and revising the administrative, political, and social-economic management of the Levant. It was a turbulent period that straddled decades in the mid-nineteenth century, starting from the Tanzimat movement for internal reform, passing through the conquest of Jerusalem by the founder of modern Egypt,

Muhammad ‘Ali Pasha, up to the Ottoman reconquest. The administrative restructuring of the empire that followed brought with it the institution of the municipality of Jerusalem.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Jerusalem – holy and iconic, but at the same time economically marginal – assumed a much more clearly defined dimension. Its *sanjak*, the province of the empire that extended from Jaffa to Beersheba, passing through Hebron and Gaza, became more relevant, and the city itself assumed an institutional and socio-economical aspect different from the past. The last decades of the Sublime Porte marked the emergence of a local political and economic society that negotiates its spheres of action with the central power of Istanbul. It is not only the Palestinian notability, the great families, who manage their relationship with the Turkish administration. The real change was in the birth of the municipality, therefore in the formation of the council and in the new figure of the mayor. Far from being the *longa manus* of Ottoman power, the town council became the instrument for changing the city. It was the communal administration that intruded on the daily life of the city, firstly determining and creating infrastructures, and secondly becoming the referents of a community of Ottoman citizens that included the various religious confessions.<sup>10</sup>

After the Crimean War and the 1856 Treaty of Paris ended the Russian monopoly over Christians in the Ottoman Empire, France, Great Britain, and Prussia entered into the political management of Christian interests in Jerusalem. The European powers gradually imposed their presence in Jerusalem, waiting for the day that the Holy City would be no longer under Istanbul. Each anxious to demonstrate its own national genius, France, Great Britain, Russia, Prussia, and to a much lesser degree Italy set their architects and masons to work in Jerusalem. The increased European presence in the city was aesthetic as well as political.

The difference did not go unnoticed. In 1897, the Frenchman Victor Guérin published the first volume of his description of the Holy Land, of the scenery, the cities, and the religions. His was not just a description of a pilgrimage, but a study of the social, economic, and political development of the city at the end of the nineteenth century. Guérin wrote:

What is immediately clear today to the eyes of a pilgrim just arriving in Jerusalem from Jaffa, are the huge constructions of the Russians, a kind of citadel that is also political and religious, built at the gates of the city, in the very place where the city has always been and where it will always be attacked. Its erection appears as threat of the schism and of the Muscovite Empire that aspired more than ever to take hold of the Holy Places.<sup>11</sup>

When it was constructed a century and a half ago, the so-called “Russian compound” was meant to serve various purposes. From a strictly religious point of view, it served to accommodate Russian Orthodox pilgrims. From a political angle, it showed, by the architectural strength of its buildings, the power of Moscow in the Holy Land and in confrontation with the declining Ottoman Empire. Last but not least, it affirmed that Russia also had a say in the future of Jerusalem, as Guerin noted. From a much more

mundane perspective, the imposing Russian compound – at one time comprising a church, hospital, hostel, and convent – has been adapted to various uses by Israeli institutions. It hosts city hall’s offices, as well as the police station infamous to Palestinians. For them, it is to the notorious *Muskubiyya* that prisoners are taken for interrogation, and even for days in isolation.

The “huge constructions” of the compound are clearly visible on the maps Victor Guérin had drawn some years previously in 1881. The imposing buildings are not far from the Old City walls. Also outside the walls, Guérin noted “schools and hospitals recently founded by Prussia and England, visible testimonies of the efforts made by heresy to dispute Catholicism’s sole possession of the sacred land. . . . There are, moreover, private houses, consulates, gardens, and even cafés.”<sup>12</sup> They are marked “Maisons Nouvelles et Jardins” on the map between the Russian compound and the Old City. Those “Maisons Nouvelles et Jardins” were the first nucleus of Musrara. Private houses and consulates, houses of important or rich families that wanted to leave the narrow spaces and small houses of the Old City, the overcrowding and the irresolvable infrastructural problems that resulted.

This community by petit bourgeois and middle class Palestinians, mostly Christians but also Muslims, tested the potential of a cosmopolitan city outside the ancient walls. It was what Salim Tamari described as a hidden part of the city’s history: “a late Ottoman and early Mandate Jerusalem, with a thriving nightlife and a considerable degree of intercommunal interaction and cultural hybridity.”<sup>13</sup> Musrara is an integral part of this cosmopolitanism. Signs of modernity, for example, reached that district before others. The sewage system was brought to Musrara by the Ottomans in the nineteenth century. Electricity first arrived in the city in the large Notre Dame complex that acted as the divider between Musrara and the Old City, and – from a political point of view – represented the strong presence of France, a Catholic power, before the arrival of the British Mandate.

Admittedly, electricity is not sufficient to define a community as modern. But Musrara was also home to experiments that cut heavily into the cultural and educational anachronisms of Jerusalem at the end of Ottoman influence. One example rises above all: the Dusturiyya, the school founded in 1909 by the prince of Palestinian pedagogy, Khalil al-Sakakini. Open to the different religious communities, without corporal punishment, open to a critical relationship between teachers and students, without examinations and homework, innovative and even revolutionary, the Sakakini school provided a secular alternative to the Ottoman mold of education. Even more than this, the Sakakini school was also an alternative to the institutions opened by the ever more present foreign powers in Jerusalem. The Dusturiyya – the name means “constitutional” in Arabic – is an example of Jerusalem’s overlooked modernity, the secular modernity at the heart of the City of Three Faiths, above all in its openness to all religious communities, including Jews. “Among its students,” writes Haim Hanegbi, a controversial figure of the Israeli Left and an exponent in the early 1970s of the movement of the Black Panthers in Jerusalem, “there were also some Jews, for example the children of the Mani, Moyal and Amzaleg families, members of the old Sephardic Jewish community

of Jerusalem.”<sup>14</sup> Everyone could attend a school that would represent, for the Palestinian pedagogue, the expression of a city that contains cosmopolitan potential within its own composition and in its lines of communication with the sea (Jaffa) and the Syrian north (Damascus). Sakakini was only the most famous exponent of a Palestinian middle class that gave the city a precise imprint between the decadence of the Ottoman Empire and the arrival of the British.

Modernity is also the social life conjugated according to standards different from the communities’ traditional social codes. It produces a neutral place where diverse groups of inhabitants could meet and interact with each other. Jerusalem’s modern social life was not only found in the evening visits made by middle class families with families of different faiths (Michel, for example, still remembers the smell of sesame oil in the house of his father’s Jewish friend who had a shop on Jaffa Street). Concerts were also sites of modern socialization. Cafés and cabarets were concentrated between Musrara, Jaffa Street, and the Russian compound, serving as “the nodes where the Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Armenian populations could interact, creating a confessionally shared space and neutralizing the diktat of social prohibitions.”<sup>15</sup>

The microhistory of Musrara prior to 1948 has other protagonists: the Sephardic community, Jewish Ottoman citizens that through the decades up to the birth of the State of Israel had relationships, sometimes excellent and sometimes tense, with Zionist immigration. Ironically, looking at the city from a post-Green Line perspective, Jews were concentrated in houses to the east of the 1948 armistice line. The Valeros, one of the most important Sephardic families in Palestine, owned not only a good part of the lands in the northern sector of the new city, in districts such as Mahane Yehuda and Romema, but also plots and commercial enterprises just outside the Damascus Gate, where today Palestinian business is conducted in little shops and street vendors sell food in front of the ancient walls.<sup>16</sup>

The “new city,” in Jerusalem is therefore a composite. It was not just condensed into the area determined by rapid Zionist immigration. The Ottoman Palestinian “little world” stepped out of the confines of the Old City, opened up before Zionist immigration, and then grew in parallel with the demographic and urban expansion of the new Jewish quarters of Jerusalem. It is the world of the Palestinian districts that is now to be found in the Jerusalem west of the Green Line. Before 1948, the development was primarily toward Lifta, in the north, in the direction of business, the railroad, new roads, and the sea. Now, Israeli real estate agents sell the Arab houses in Baq’a, Talbiyya, and Qatamun for high prices. Now, those houses and those neighborhoods are marked as western Jerusalem. Then – dozens of years before 1948, before 1967, before 1993 – the development of the Palestinian bourgeoisie was concentrated to the west, attracted by Jaffa, by access to the sea, by the port of reference, by the passage through which goods and men would arrive. There it is still possible to glimpse Ottoman and Mandate Jerusalem through the porticos and the arched windows of the ground floors (on which three or four floors were built in successive decades).

Some say that Jerusalem was more lively and cosmopolitan than it is today, now that it is the symbol of religious orthodoxy. Between the nineteenth and twentieth



Aerial view: Musrara outside Damascus Gate. American Colony Photo Department, "Air Views of Palestine. Jerusalem from the Air (Old City). Jerusalem. Damascus Gate Section. Closer View with the Governorate etc. outside the Damascus Gate," 1931, G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

centuries, in fact, Jerusalem was a city in which ethnic divisions existed, and at the same time provided a space for an urban way of living devoted to mixture. Jerusalem was a *mélange*: an Old City that closed its gates in the evening; and a new city that was emerging, not only composed of new areas of Jewish immigration, but also of Palestinian areas that even today indicate some of the richer city neighborhoods.

When in 1948 the war divided the city, it also created a definition for the various parts of Jerusalem that contradicted the city's history and contemporary development: an Israeli west and a Palestinian east. As if from one or the other part of the Green Line nothing of the respective communities existed. The Arab houses to the west of the armistice plan, however, are testimony that a diverse city really existed.

## **Within Reach of the Snipers**

Musrara was split in February 1949 by the war and the armistice plan supported by the international community. In the east, it lost its character as a district and was more or less reduced to a commercial street beginning at the Damascus Gate and winding for some dozens of meters to the north. A wall of three or four meters rose suddenly in front of this line of shops and workshops, protecting the Jordanian-administered part of the city. A few hundred meters divide the Palestinian from the Israeli part of Musrara. The heart of the district was dead, while in the stretch from one part to the other, known in

Jerusalem by its English term, *seam*, there are soldiers on guard and barriers to defend them from snipers. The western part of Musrara was essentially deserted, deprived of its inhabitants and of the bourgeois life that had characterized it since the first decades of its existence.

From 1948 and for the nineteen years that followed, until the conquest of the city by Israel in the 1967 War, even the ancient walls of Suleiman the Magnificent between the Damascus Gate and the New Gate became ramparts where Jordanian soldiers were posted. On the other side, in the big Notre Dame complex, there were Israeli soldiers. Barely a dozen meters separated the patrols that gazed across at each other for nineteen long years, during which the UN archives were filled with denunciations of violations of the cease-fire from one side or the other. For nineteen years, there were only skirmishes and snipers reigning over a fragmented district.

The houses with the red tiles are not only abandoned; many have been partially destroyed by grenades and the passage of war. Houses that no longer have the fascination they once had, left empty because of the sniper fire, while the little streets closer to the no-man's land are full of mines. No one from the west thinks of going there to live, despite the scarcity of housing. Some, however, are willing to occupy what is left of Musrara. These are the families of Jewish immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East, forced to live in transit camps organized by Israel, primarily in the Negev. The waves of *olim*, new citizens, are too numerous, and it is difficult for a new state to satisfy the need for houses. The transit camps are not seen as transitory, the promised accommodation is late in arriving, and as a result – tired of waiting – many of the Jews coming from the Arab world and from Iran, the *mizrahim*, decide to go to Musrara and to other broken-down districts, and occupy the houses as squatters.

The life of the new inhabitants of Musrara was very difficult. More than one of these inhabitants told us: “Here they used to shoot first. And we who lived there were cannon fodder on the borderline. In one room like this, ten of us were living in impossible conditions: cold in winter, hot in summer. There were hardly any schools and the children were always hungry.” Still others talked of the mines that made some areas of Musrara dangerous. Four or five families lived in the houses of the well-off, often with only one communal bath and one makeshift kitchen. The sewers, built during the Ottoman period, had suffered the damages of war, as had all other utilities. This was a working class suburb in the shadow of Suleiman the Magnificent's Walls.

Musrara's houses did not provide a solution for problems that only grew worse with time. The Israeli authorities, after a first attempt to block the settlement of the *mizrahim*, responded by building – hastily and cheaply – small working-class apartments, public housing similar to that which filled post-war Europe. These *shikunim*, the Israeli version of concrete working-class housing, arose on the outskirts of major cities. In Jerusalem, they were built in Qatamun, a wealthy Palestinian quarter that ended up west of the Green Line, and Musrara, the neighborhood of the no-man's land.

The new inhabitants of Musrara were part of the wave of immigration that between 1948 and 1964 brought some 650,000 new citizens to Israel. They were considered second-class citizens and gathered under one huge single stereotype – *Moroccans*. The

Israeli establishment, like some 85 percent of the Jewish population of Palestine in 1947–1948, were Ashkenazi Jews coming mostly from Europe. They did not comprehend the profound variation within the immigrant *mizrahim*: They had all come from the *Orient* (hence the name) and they were not acculturated, not refined. They were not Europeans; whether they were Yemeni or Moroccan, whether they came from the great Jewish middle class of Cairo or Baghdad, made no difference. The Mizrahi question, in Israel, was born in the 1950s and became the subject of study, feeding an intellectual and social debate that continues today.

The newborn Israeli state tried to forge a common national culture out of the melting pot, to erase the obvious differences among the diverse groups that made up its young society. “In practice, Ashkenazim could maintain their European identities (short of the Yiddish language and shtetl manners), but North African and the Middle Eastern Jews were asked to suppress their culture while at the same time provide local flavor, token of food, dress, and music, thereby creating an indigenous link for a Middle Eastern nation conceived by European architects,” writes Amy Horowitz, a scholar of popular Israeli culture. Thus, “Lebanese salad became Israeli salad, one example of the absorption of customs without differentiating among former group identities.”<sup>17</sup>

Yet again, the microcosm of Musrara is exemplary. The quarter’s *mizrahim* describe their arrival and their life in Israel as an existence marked by discrimination in an effort to keep their own ways of life and at the same time be recognized as Israelis on an equal level. The result is complex: A life on the brink between conservation and assimilation. Paradoxically, Musrara remained an “Eastern” district even after the Palestinian flight of 1948, though its social life changed definitively from the Palestinian and Jewish middle class of the late Ottoman and Mandate periods to a new social group, poor and discriminated against. The post-1948 inhabitants of Musrara were new citizens of the state of Israel, though they shared with the middle-class Ottoman Sephardim an Arab-Jewish culture that distanced them from the Ashkenazi Israeli élite.

Musrara became a sub-proletarian urban district amidst “the pungent odors of Moroccan food, coffee and spices,” as Roger Friedland and Richard Helt, architects who came to study Musrara at the end of the 1970s, wrote. Friedland and Hecht, in their weighty study of Jerusalem, give a perfect description of the “Moroccan neighborhoods,” of which Musrara is one.

Many Jerusalemites steer clear from the Moroccan neighborhoods, fearing violent gangs, drug dealers, pickpockets, prostitutes, and the unattended children who seem to roam there with no purpose except to make trouble. Despite years of community work, these neighborhoods remain central in the drug trade; heroin has replaced hashish as the primary narcotic on the local market. The Moroccan kids who grow up tough, angry and undisciplined, fill the Israeli prisons.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, the panorama of Musrara is not a postcard. More than 2,000 people live in 610 lodgings, often consisting of little more than one room. One-third survive

on social benefits. There is overcrowding, degrading living conditions, and for children poor education. Dropping out of school is a normal practice, as it is the delinquency of minors. Unemployment weighs heavily on males in traditionally conservative Sephardic families. Fathers work (or don't), mothers take care of the house, and there are many sons who often revolt.

## **Black Panthers in Musrara**

Koko Deri has criticized the Ashkenazi establishment for a long time. He was a member of the Black Panthers, the urban underclass movement that made Golda Meir's life difficult prior to the 1973 War. His attic apartment was opposite the armistice line, a hundred meters from Damascus Gate and Arab Jerusalem. It consisted of a twelve square meter room, a large terrace, and a tiny bathroom. The *panterim*, the Israeli version of the Black Panthers across the Atlantic, was born there in Koko's attic at the beginning of the 1970s. They shared with their original counterparts a revolt against the establishment, in this case Ashkenazi, and self-pride. The Mizrahim "have always been made to feel second class," as African-Americans were. They imported the logo of the Black Panthers, the closed fist that has reappeared in rebellions the world over, reproduced in the graphics and posters of the Arab revolts of 2011, especially nearby Egypt where it featured in the logo of the 6<sup>th</sup> of April movement.

Koko jealously guards the memory of heroic times: the myth of the *panterim*. The young men of Musrara would gather in that attic facing the wall of the Old City. They would listen to music on an old transistor radio and smoke – that's all. In the beginning, these working class boys were not political, they needed to pass the time somewhere other than in the streets. They were, however, truly street boys, marked as school dropouts with temporary jobs, some of the youngest from reformatories and on public assistance. They did not do military service because of their police records. They had nothing to do with the leftist militancy of certain members of the Israeli middle class or intelligentsia.

According to Deri, in a view that is not uncommon, "The paradox is that it was the far-leftist Ashkenazis who brought awareness of our situation. They convinced us to struggle against the Ashkenazi establishment to obtain more equitable living conditions." It was the "white" boys who would gather a hundred or so meters away from Koko's attic who brought American protest myths to the attention of the "blacks." The Musrara boys, ranging in age from eighteen to twenty, became politicized in turn. They began going down into the square to ask for equality with the others. The leaflet distributed at their first demonstration reads: "We are demonstrating for the right to be considered equal to all the other citizens of our country." Their main requests were to enjoy the rights they had been denied: the right to decent housing, thereby putting an end to the degrading districts; free education and housing for the needy; abolition of the authorities dealing with juvenile delinquency; salary increases for workers who support large families; and the final and most political request, full representation of the "Eastern Jews" in all the country's institutions.<sup>19</sup>

From March 1971 on, the *panterim* held unauthorized demonstrations and marches, and employed the controversial tactic of stealing food in order to distribute it to the poor. More than anyone, they challenged one of the most important leaders in the country's history, Golda Meir. "They are not so nice," Meir, the "Iron Lady" of Israeli politics, famously said of the Israeli Black Panthers, a sentence now carved on a plate affixed in Musrara to commemorate the movement. The *panterim*'s reply, voiced by Saadia Marciano, the movement's most charismatic member and an activist until his death of a tumor at age 57 in 2007. "The cake is for everyone," said Marciano, whose boyish face became iconic, "or there will be no cake." The challenge to Golda Meir and the Ashkenazi establishment was clear. At a demonstration in Zion Square, in the center of Jerusalem, the protesters burned the effigy of the Israeli prime minister.

The *panterim*'s actions were above all symbolic. They stole milk from Rehavia, a well-to-do area of Jerusalem, and gave it to the needy families, arguing that even the cats had milk in Rehavia's houses, while in the Qatamun district's *shikunim* the babies lacked it. This was too much for the Israeli government, still in the hands of the Labor party and other left-wing parties. The leaders of the Black Panthers were arrested and put in administrative detention, demonstrations were repressed, and many among the protesters were injured and dozens imprisoned. The revolt continued throughout 1972, with its ups and downs, until it was buried on the day the new war began. Yom Kippur, 1973: the war Israel did not win, the war that continues to be the country's deepest psychological wound.

Though the movement of the Musrara's *panterim* was not strong enough to withstand the 1973 War or the passage from a movement to a more structured organization, their cause did not end with the last of their demonstrations. It had not just been a boys' game that they had carried out. This is confirmed by the results of the commission of inquiry ordered by Meir, the Horovitz Commission, into minors in poverty. The report not only underlined that the poorer economic sector was that of the "immigrants from Asia and Africa," but also that the government had no strategy to combat the distress. Not only had the living conditions of the *mizrahim* worsened during the 1960s, but, even more grievously, discrimination grew proportional with their level of education: the more they were educated the more they were discriminated against.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps historians will not agree with the reading given by Koko Deri and his friends – Reuven Abergil, Saadia Marciano, Charlie Biton, and Kokhavi Shemesh, among others – of the Black Panthers. "We have changed Israel," argued Koko. Certainly, the *panterim* were the Israeli face of the post-1968 movements that had spread worldwide. They gave significance and dignity to a socio-political condition – that of the *mizrahim* – long hidden, despite the flames of protest lit some years previously, in the depressed Haifa neighborhood of Wadi Salib, where in 1959 the first effort was made to bring the Israeli government's attention to the needs of the "eastern Jews." Perhaps because times had changed, or perhaps because the *panterim* emerged from the heart of Jerusalem, there was a revolt from 1971–1973 originating from a forgotten place like Musrara. Even after becoming Jewish, Musrara left its mark on the history of Israel, if only because from that moment on the *mizrahim* became an electoral body capable of influencing election

results, of dictating conditions, and therefore of deciding whom to send to government.

With time, the *mizrahim* became one of the bases of consent of the Israeli Right. They were the hard core on which Begin constructed his surprising victory in 1977, when for the first time the country participated in the defeat of the Labor party and Likud's access to power. It is not, therefore, by chance that one of Begin's first acts, just a month after the elections, was to launch an enormous project of reevaluating towns and neglected districts. Project Renewal was an ambitious plan that involved – at the financial level – the state, municipalities, and above all the Jewish diaspora. The plan was aimed at the hundreds of poor districts, overwhelmingly inhabited by *mizrahim*, victims of a housing policy defined as “spatial enclosure” and “that denotes the geographic segregation of the lower strata of [Israeli] society.”<sup>21</sup> Begin's plan involved almost half a million people and a total cost of two billion dollars, of which one-quarter would be paid by the diaspora community through the Jewish Agency. In the first five years, starting in 1978, more than thirty thousand housing units were renovated. The national plan included Musrara, a district of little relevance from the point of view of numbers of inhabitants, but important for the image of Israelis – the Black Panthers' Musrara. This was how Begin compensated one of his important bases of support and at the same time confirmed that – in his government – there were truly two Israels. And thus the name of Menachem Begin, thirty years exactly after 1948, returned to Musrara, no longer for the blood spilt in conflict but rather heralded for renovating the old houses of the district.

## **Musrara to the Musrarians**

What happened in Musrara happened in many old town centers, as for example in Europe, that were left to decay in favor of the development of large peripheries. There was a very real economic interest in letting the district fall into decline. Those involved with Project Renewal spoke clearly: “There is evidence that the public authorities chose to allow Musrara to deteriorate because the long-run plans were to rebuild it as a small business district or more affluent neighborhood.”<sup>22</sup> The thought was to drive the inhabitants to abandon the old Arab houses for a little apartment elsewhere, in which there would at least be a kitchen and bathroom worthy of the name. The strategy worked for some inhabitants. The majority, however, did not want to leave Musrara. They had in mind the experience of another district near the walls of the Old City, Yemin Moshe. The neighborhood founded by Sir Moshe Montefiore had suffered a similar fate; its inhabitants, in exchange for their decaying lodgings, had received an insignificant compensation, especially compared with what the district would become over the years. Yemin Moshe is now one of the most expensive and attractive places in Jerusalem.

Musrara's *mizrahim*, however, did not leave the neighborhood. On the contrary, they fought to have a say in its renovation. The experts and benefactors who arrived to redevelop the area in fact tried not to impose to the inhabitants any top-down town plan. If there were to be renovations, they should be decided by the residents according to the principle “Musrara to the Musrarians,” even though the community requests aroused

some perplexity. The example that comes to everyone's mind is the story of the *mikveh*, the ritual bath. A *mikveh* was in fact among the inhabitants' first requests, even before a synagogue. David Guggenheim, one of the architects invited to plan the restructuring of the district, interpreted the request as necessary because many of the houses were lacking decent hygienic services. The ritual bath, therefore, came from a common and daily need, even greater than religion. Perhaps it was also a cultural necessity, seeing that almost all the inhabitants came from North Africa where the *hammam* served the double purpose of hygienic services and a place to meet.

Dick Gunther, a successful contractor, presided over Project Renewal's national committee and served as the bridge between the Jewish community of Los Angeles that adopted Musrara through the Jewish Agency and the inhabitants of the tiny district of Jerusalem. For four years, he shuttled between the Pacific and the Mediterranean, clashing with a mentality that was not his, and with a group very removed from his surroundings. "Many of the people I have met must have spent certain periods in prison for having committed various crimes, nevertheless they were brilliant and obviously had the ability to manage successfully," he wrote in his memoirs.<sup>23</sup> Gunther had never made use of a ritual bath in his life; nor had the other members of the committee, all secular Jews. The district's wish however was respected and obstacles, such as the need to request a rabbi for permission to continue excavation after skeletons were found, were overcome. The *mikveh* became one of the most important places for the Musrara community. The choice landed on a one-story house that had belonged to the Ansari family prior to 1948 and had been hit several times during the war, once by a grenade. Yes, it was actually the house where Michel had lived together with his family for ten years before fleeing in the April of 1948.

For Guggenheim, sitting in his office in the trendy German Colony neighborhood amid the papers on Musrara, jealously preserving the archives and records of a singular experience, Musrara represents a "unique urban weave that furnished a rich visual environment," and "evidence of the history and way of life in the Jerusalem of old times." The renewal of Musrara – since then, the Israeli authorities imposed on the district a Hebrew name, Morasha – had been above all a human more than professional experience. It involved the challenge of restoring the Arab houses and making them come to life again, but also an encounter with a close-knit but difficult social body in the inhabitants of Musrara, an attempt to offer them a piece of a better and more beautiful world by means of architectural tools, and above all to offer them work, a future. Many of the same inhabitants worked on the revision projects, hired by the contractors.

In Musrara, Begin's plan worked. The district became one of the most trendy places in Jerusalem. The renovated Arab houses – to which the *mizrahi* squatters had obtained titled through provisions in the Absentee Property Law, which had stripped them from their original Palestinian owners – were passed from hand to hand. This is how Musrara changed its skin, as many of the squatters who had arrived and occupied the rubble of the district, restored the house and secured its ownership, and then moved away. They sold the renovated houses for high prices and chose to go and live in brand new modern apartment buildings far from the center of Jerusalem.

## The Invasion of the Ultra-Orthodox

For a period, Musrara became again middle-class and sought-after, as it had been in the first years of its existence in the first half of the twentieth century. The Palestinian middle class had been replaced by the Israeli intelligentsia, by the small international community made up of journalists, diplomats, UN officials, and, especially, artists. The new wave had taken the place of the pre-1948 Palestinians and the *mizrahim* who had given birth to the Black Panthers. It coincided with the Oslo parenthesis, when many in Jerusalem believed in peace, in a two-state solution, in a city in which it was possible to cater for the different identities of its inhabitants. It was a brief period, no more than ten years: a golden age that would reunite Musrara's bourgeois origins with the new age. The Arab houses were transformed, levels added upon levels, upsetting the original pre-1948 urban and architectural structure. The original "skyline" was immortalized in a few old photos that show a long stretch of red tiled roofs on a square base.

Since then, however, Musrara has not resisted the thrust of the Israeli-Jewish orthodox that have arrived *en masse* in Jerusalem, searching not only for mystic inspiration but also for houses. In recent years, French and Americans have joined in crowding out Musrara's secular intelligentsia, once again changing the customs of a quarter that had for years been filled with the smells of Jewish-Moroccan cooking and now assumes the veils of the orthodox Jewish women and a culinary mix that varies from east European *cholent* to chicken broth. In the social housing of Musrara, small anonymous and grey three-story buildings, the *mizrahim* have been replaced by the ultra-orthodox migrants from the nearby enclave of Mea Shearim. Musrara today is increasingly an appendix to the most orthodox district of the city, without any ties to the district's past.

The Salesian convent and the kindergarten frequented by Palestinian children is a record of a different district. The property had been returned to the Catholic order after a long and difficult legal battle with the Israeli authorities, who had requisitioned it like they had other buildings. Now the Salesian convent is the image of a Christian presence in Musrara that stretches west to the great Russian compound and the area of the Ethiopian Christians, and east as far as the Dominican Bible School, the *École Biblique*.

From the other part of the ancient front, beyond Road No. 1, Arab Musrara has never found its new identity: the identity of residents, of a community that lives in the district. Musrara today is only a functional place, from businesses to logistics to transportation. The line of shops from the Damascus Gate opens up into an area where all the delicacy of relations between Israelis and Palestinians is concentrated. These communities lap each other, almost touching yet continuing to ignore each other, in those almost communal hours that end the Muslim Friday and begin the Jewish Sabbath. Ultra-orthodox families hurry through the streets leading from Mea Shearim to the Damascus Gate. Busloads of Muslim pilgrims (Palestinian citizens of Israelis for the most part) have just left the streets that encircle the part of the Old City closer to the Dome of the Rock. Above, helicopters circle between Musrara and the Mount of Olives. It is as if the no-man's land marked by the Mandelbaum Gate, the passageway between east and west from 1948 to 1967, remains conjugated according to the vocabulary of a low-intensity



Notre Dame de France Hospice. On the far right, Musrara. American Colony Photo Department, "Damascus Gate and Environs Notre Dame de France Hospice," c. 1900–1920, G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

conflict. The faithful of all the Religions of the Book brush by; international observers swarm among the little hotels and the religious centers; Palestinians pack the terminal of the small buses that go to the Arab villages around Jerusalem (many of them cut off from Jerusalem because of the separation wall built by Israel since 2003). And in the middle of everything, still on Road No. 1, the visible line that divides one Jerusalem from the other (settlers excluded), are the tracks of the light rail. The light rail is the funereal monument to the idea of a city that is separated by peace and divided between two identities, recognizing the value of both. It unites Jewish Jerusalem, reaching as far as Pisgat Zeev, the settlement on the edge of Ramallah, and connects the Israeli settlements built to the east, in the part occupied in 1967, with Jaffa Street, still and always the commercial heart of the Jewish district.

Arab Musrara is, like Palestinian Jerusalem, today composed more of footprints – a transit zone – and less of a continuous, livable, cohesive urban fabric. But today's reality is itself only the footprint of a history in which there has been a sudden break. It is like a fossil buried in the stone that follows that same historic path of the two parts of Musrara: the Israeli part fully within the social changes of the country; the Palestinian part, frayed, and no longer the soul of a time, without a new identity that could take the place of its ancient heritage. Arab Jerusalem is more and more split into tiny islands, compounds, enclaves, districts that have lost the necessary connection to the city life. The reasons, of course, lie in the conflict. Most of all they can be found in the push for a "united and undivided" Israeli Jerusalem, which has already distorted the city.

Jerusalem is now both the most populous Israeli city and the Palestinian city with the most inhabitants.

Michel's *memory lane*, however, is still there. With the accuracy of satellite technology, one need only go to Google Maps, put the cursor on the eastern Mediterranean, skim over the coast, and advance to Jerusalem. Position the cursor at the crossroads of Ha' Ayin Het, where Moshe Dayan and Abdallah al-Tall drew the Green Line, to arrive at the end of the slope, as far as Shivtei Israel Street. According to the "virtual" calculations, it spans exactly 190 meters. Travelling in the real and complicated life of the City of Three Faiths, these 190 meters have become the regular passage for those who have some business in the city offices, the imposing complex built in the 1990s at the top of the hill.

There exists, in fact, an ordinary, everyday city that sometimes follows a logic different from a religious logic, and sometimes uses the alibi of faith to cover the purely political. The rites of petty bureaucracy are mundane and territorial, because of which for example our little street has become a sort of transit area. Almost all the customers of Jerusalemite bureaucracy follow the same habits. They leave their cars down below in the parking lots on the main road, Road No. 1. Then they go up the hill, Israelis, Palestinians, employees, customers, residents, all of them walking slowly because the uphill trek is tiring. All are joined by bureaucratic obligation: to pay the local house tax, register a document, or file a protest. Those 190 meters have become one of the few stretches of Jerusalem in which east and west, Israeli and Palestinian, secular and orthodox, may not share words but at least a piece of asphalt on which they walk. In a city that is united only by Israel's laws and not by a shared everyday life, a piece of asphalt is at least something. Those 190 meters are a sort of microcosm, a place where much of what happens in Jerusalem takes place.

For a few moments, they may observe the little world composed of a strange cocktail of social housing and old villas, bourgeois buildings and unlicensed structures. In the most recent years these have become the home and district of young ultra-orthodox families.

Men and women come and go, babies play, cars are parked. It is the to-and-fro of a district that is full of mothers and babies, for whom the rhythm of the week is regulated by religious practices, by prayers and daily studies according to the strict division of duties between men and women, and above all by the obsessive respect for *Shabbat*, the Jewish Sabbath. If it were not for this connotation, so strongly determined by orthodoxy, the daily activity would resemble that of any city. Then, the *Sonderweg* of Jerusalem, its special and unique destiny – symbol of so many cities past, present, and future in strife – appears in the form of an Israeli police van. Police with sub-machine guns get out, stop four young Palestinian boys about 14 years old, at most 15, and ask for their documents. A few too many words are exchanged, the kids scramble over the wall, and the least subservient one, his identity card checked by radio, is pushed into the van and driven away. His destination is likely two hundred meters further on, not even ten minutes on foot from the silent little street: the notorious Muskubiyya, the old Russian compound that through the course of history has changed both its owner and its purpose.

There in Musrara, Michel's *memory lane* remains, spanning 190 meters, no more than five minutes on foot in an area that, practically speaking, is known only to someone

who lives in the city, far from the eyes of tourists intent on following with precision the obligatory stages of their pilgrimage, who rarely look beyond the sacred stones. If they were to raise their eyes beyond the walls of the Old City, they would notice a small cluster of houses with red-tile roofs, like a little village placed on a gentle slope.

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#### Endnotes

- 1 Paul Virilio, *City of Panic* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2005), 11.
- 2 Michel is a pseudonym, used to respect his wish to remain unnamed, to preserve his precious and modest anonymity.
- 3 Numbers vary between at least one hundred victims mentioned by Benny Morris, one of the champions of Israeli revisionist historians to the 254 listed by the *New York Times* correspondent in Jerusalem, in an article published as soon as the news of the massacre spread.
- 4 Benny Morris, *The Birth of Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 255.
- 5 Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 116.
- 6 Avi Schlaim, *Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* (London: Penguin, 2007), 32.
- 7 Moshe Dayan, *Story of My Life* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976), 158.
- 8 Kai Bird, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age Between the Arabs and Israelis, 1956–1978* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 23–24.
- 9 Roberto Alajmo, *Palermo è una cipolla* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2005), 43.
- 10 Roberto Mazza, *Jerusalem: From the Ottomans to the British*, (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009).
- 11 Victor Guerin, *La Terre Sainte, Jerusalem, et le Nord de la Judée* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1897), 6.
- 12 Guerin, *La Terre Sainte*, 6.
- 13 Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 73. See also, Salim Tamari, ed., *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighborhoods and Their Fate in the War* (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Badil, 2002).
- 14 Haim Hanegbi and Tzachi Ostrovsky, *Palestinian Houses in West Jerusalem: Stories and Photographs*, accessed 16 May 2015, online at [zochrot.org/sites/default/files/palestinian\\_houses\\_english.pdf](http://zochrot.org/sites/default/files/palestinian_houses_english.pdf). The Amzaleg were British citizens, bankers and, like the Moyal family, represented some Sephardic families who were living in Jerusalem under the Ottoman Empire, before the waves of Ashkenazi Zionist immigration.
- 15 Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 182.
- 16 Joseph B. Glass and Ruth Kark, *Sephardi Entrepreneurs in Jerusalem: The Valero Family, 1800–1948*, (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2007), 169.
- 17 Amy Horowitz, *Mediterranean Israeli Music and the Politics of the Aesthetic*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010), 38.
- 18 Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, *To Rule Jerusalem*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 85.
- 19 On the political demands and the historical trajectory of the panterim, see Deborah Bernstein, “The Black Panthers – Conflict and Protest in Israeli Society,” *Youth and Society* 16, no. 2 (1984): 129–152; and Oz Frankel, “What’s in a Name? The Black Panthers in Israel,” *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics, and Culture* 1, no. 1 (June 2008): 9–26.
- 20 Gideon N. Giladi, *Discord in Zion* (London: Scorpion, 1990).
- 21 Shlomo Hassan, *Urban Social Movements in Jerusalem: The Protest of the Second Generation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 21.
- 22 Center for Jewish Community Studies Staff Report, *Project Renewal: An Introduction to the Issues and Actors* (January 1980), 19.
- 23 Dick Gunther, *How High is Up?* (Austin: Emerald Book Co., 2009), 153.