

The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs

Part 2

Taufiq Canaan

As soon as the German Deaconess Hospital reopened in 1924, I was put in charge of the internal diseases department. The hard and constant work gave me the opportunity to write many scientific papers in medicine, which were published in German and English and in local medical journals. Twice I went to Europe for postgraduate studies. The first time in 1937, I went to the Charité Hospital¹ in Berlin to study heart and lung conditions. In 1932, I went to Hamburg and later to London for tropical diseases. These postgraduate studies helped greatly to increase my scientific background and widen my circle of knowledge.

In Jerusalem my private practice increased and I was able to send my four children to Europe. The expenses were enormous but I was able to pay everything for them. I also bought several land plots and built two houses.

By the end of the First World War, I was recognized as the best internal diseases physician in the country. Thus I was made a member of several committees of the Palestine Health Department, and was called often to other cities in Palestine to treat patients. I went to Hebron, Bir Sab'a, and Gaza in the south, to Nazareth and Tiberias in the north, and Amman in the east. When King Husayn traveled from Cyprus to Amman, I was called to treat him. Other members of the royal family were also treated. Many of the highest British officials had me as their house physician. The Palestine Government recognized me as a specialist in internal diseases and consulted with me often for cases in their government hospital.

The period between the two world wars was the most productive. During this time, the Jerusalem Arab Medical Association was organized – and to a high standard – through my efforts. Later, I organized branches in Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, and Gaza, which were joined under the name the Palestine Arab

Editor's Note:

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Medical Association. I was chosen president of the Jerusalem association (until 1954) and president of the Palestine association (until 1948 when, after the start of the Arab-Jewish war, the association ceased to exist). To enlighten the public, lectures were given on the radio about sanitation and hygiene. The radio director paid us £P2 per lecture, which was collected by the association. The funds enabled us to do hospital work during the Arab-Jewish war. The Palestinian Arab Medical Association also published a medical journal, two thirds in English – of which I was the editor – and one third in Arabic. It was stopped after the Arab-Jewish war and the occupation of two thirds of Palestine by the Jews.

Even before the birth of the Palestine Arab Medical Association, a medical association in Jerusalem had been organized with members from all denominations. It did not survive very long due to the different viewpoints toward the Jewish members.

The Palestine Arab Medical Association had three triumphs. The first was a congress which most of the physicians of Palestine and Transjordan attended. It was such a great success that the Jews bitterly criticized the Palestine Health Department for having supported and assisted the Arab society. This accusation was somewhat true. The highest European and Arab personalities attended the opening ceremony of the congress. I headed the congress and gave two lectures.

The second great triumph was the turnover of four hospitals to the association: the government hospitals in the Russian complex [Muscobiya], the Austrian hospital for infectious diseases in Bayt Safafa, and the two mental hospitals in Bethlehem. The turnover ceremony took place in the Russian compound in 1947. Present were the assistant director of health and other government doctors, a gentleman representing the International Red Cross, and Dr. Mohammad Dajani and myself representing the Palestine Arab Medical Association. We were to run these hospitals as soon as the British Mandate power left Palestine, on 15 May 1948.

The third success was a lecture for doctors and scientists about penicillin, which had just been discovered.

On 15 May 1948, the British left Palestine and the war between the Arabs and the Jews began. The Palestine Arab Medical Association took over as operator of the hospitals. The Russian hospital was in a Jewish area. The bombardment was severe and many shells fell around it. Dr. Ra'ad Bishara was leading it and he saw the futility of its upkeep especially as there were scarcely any wounded Arabs to be treated. He wrote to me about his conclusions and I worked very hard with the Jordanian military governor of Jerusalem (Colonel Abdullah al-Tal) until, after long negotiations, he allowed me to ask the International Red Cross to evacuate all of the Arab doctors and nurses and staff out of the Russian hospital and to bring them to the Arab sector.

The Austrian Hospice hospital worked very hard; at times the doctors had to work through the night to treat the wounded that flocked from all directions. We had at times about two hundred patients – some were placed on the floor – and we did not have enough physicians since most had run away just before the hostilities began. The hospital was bombed a few times by the Jews and I complained directly to Count Bernadotte. In the first few weeks of running the hospital we became short in provisions and petrol. I used

the radio to announce our great need and asked for donations. Soon it seemed the whole population began to come bringing what they could spare, and through their donations we were able to continue.

My duty was to gather the money for the upkeep of the hospitals. I wrote to all directions, especially to the Arab High Commission in Cairo. My requests were endorsed by the military governor. Thus I received two payments totaling eight thousand Jordanian dinars. In addition, two persons donated five hundred dinars each, and several convents gave fifty to eighty dinars each. The Lutheran World Federation helped with fifty dinars monthly for five months. With the money gathered with great difficulty, I was ordered to help the Palestine Health Department and a children's hospital for the Arab National Society. Thus I was able to run all the hospitals for seven months. At the same time, I had opened a new hospital in Bethany. In the end, the Jordan Government took over the responsibilities of all hospitals. Only those of Bethlehem remained our responsibility while the hospital in Bethany was closed.

As soon as the responsibility for the hospitals fell from my shoulders, I was employed by the Lutheran World Federation and charged to open polyclinics for poor refugees and non-refugees. I was able to start one in Jerusalem, another in Bayt Jala, a third in Bethany, and a fourth in Hebron. A few months later another clinic was opened in al-Taybeh. In 1956, Mr. Christiansen, on the advice of Dr. Farah, opened a clinic in Bir Zayt for one day per week. I was not asked about my ideas and believed it absolutely useless to have a clinic only once a week in a place where there are no other polyclinics. In 1957, a morning clinic was bought and was opened twice a week in the villages. The benefit was so small that it did not compensate for the expense in any way. Another very important duty was to store the chemicals I received and keep them under lock. My principle was to economize as much as possible so no cupboard was ordered, but the boxes in which the medicines had been sent were made into cupboards into which shelves were placed. In this way I had more than three dozen cupboards, and all had their locks. My successor found everything ready.

In 1951, I left the [polyclinic] work completely, for my other duties were great. It was possible for me to help the Protestant Arab hospital in Nablus and the National Hospital in Bethlehem with drugs and material for dressing wounds, especially since many of these articles were not used in the polyclinics. It was a crucial help in a time of great need. I should mention that while leading the hospitals of the Arab Medical Association I had to arrange first aid stations in Jerusalem and to provide them with the necessary material. I visited all of these widely scattered stations regularly on foot. The young men in these stations served without any remuneration and served well.

In addition to my work in the polyclinic, I was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Jerusalem. Not everything went on as it should as the board was divided. On 1 May 1950, the LWF took over Augusta Victoria Hospital from the International Red Cross, which gave overall responsibility for its activities in the Near East for the refugees to the UN body, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA). I had much work to do at the time, but the most difficult task was cutting the very high salaries. This was a condition set by UNRWA.

The hospital had 450 beds, all for refugees, and included departments for internal surgery, infectious diseases, children, gynecology, obstetrics, and tuberculosis. The hospital was equipped with the best laboratory in the country and a good x-ray department. The Lutherans contributed significantly for improvements, medicines, linen, the director's salary and additional sums to balance the budget.

In addition to directing all medical work, I managed the section for infectious diseases, which had between forty and fifty beds. During my service years in the hospital I was sick on two occasions, once I had a proctectomy and once for a slight heart attack. I am proud to say that I have been so honored and respected by the staff that nearly every member of the employees came from time to time to see me.

Palestinian Amulets and Folk History

In 1920 the Palestine Oriental Society was founded. I was the secretary of the society and the editor of its journal from 1920 to 1939. One important interest I had was the study and later the publication of *Folklore of Palestine*. My impulse for such a study was historical and biblical. I found that through a better understanding of the folklore one could understand much better the customs, superstitions, and wisdom of the Bible. It became rather easy to gather such material and slowly I began to publish articles in English and German journals. My first article was "Der Kalendar des Palästinensischen Fellachen" which was received so well that I was encouraged to write more. In all, I authored about thirty-five articles and five books.² This study gave me a name so that I was asked by European authorities about my ideas on several issues.

This interest in folklore study stimulated in me the desire to make a collection of amulets and talismans used in popular medicine to protect against and to cure disease. Slowly, I possessed the biggest collection from Palestine. Sir [Henry] Wellcome, the founder of the medico-historical museum in London, on hearing about my collection, asked through his friend Mr. Saint-John, to secure him one. I was able to send him a collection of 220 pieces.

My interest in folkloristic studies began early after graduation. Already in 1912 I had two articles published in the magazine of the American University of Beirut *al-Kulliyya* about popular medicine, and in 1914 my first book *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel*. One year earlier a long article "Der Kalender des Palästinensischen Fellachen" appeared in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*.

Every year after the First World War, the students of the German Archaeological School came to my house where I gave them a lecture about Palestinian folk medicine and illustrated it from my collection. The members of the American School for Oriental Research came also, but not regularly every year. This activity on folklore gave me a good name in scientific centers. In 1957, I was asked officially by Professor Herzberg to help him issue the last volume of Dalman's *Arbeit und Sitte*. He had begun to write but died before finishing it. Professor Herzberg came to Jerusalem and we worked together on the book.

When we left our house in Musrara (in 1948) I had lost all of my folkloristic material that had not yet been published. I began to gather Arabic proverbs again, and was able to collect several thousand. My greatest loss was my not yet published book “Die arabische Frau v.d. Wiege bis zum Grab.” For this I had brought together an enormous amount of unpublished and new material. Nevertheless, I began to gather the material again and to note every custom I heard about. My collection of stories was never published. I had so many that in social settings I could tell one story after the other – for one and a half to two hours. Many were the same stories heard from the peasants about high moral teachings. For my children I was able to write a few fables.

Activities with the YMCA in Jerusalem

My activities in the YMCA still need to be described. I devoted a very large part of my time to the YMCA. I was a member even before the First World War, in 1908, and in 1913 and 1914 I became the president. During the First World War all activities came to a complete stop. After the end of the First World War, it resumed under the auspices of the American Council. Soon we had one flat in a big building, a few years later two and later three flats. The activities of the YMCA increased. A hut was erected for meetings. I was a member of the board and remained so to the end of 1946. Twice I was president, for several years the vice president. Our general secretary was Dr. [Archibald Clinton] Harte, a fine Christian who was able not only to lead the association forward but also he raised sufficient funds to erect a building which was the most beautiful in Jerusalem, and in the Near East.

It was a real pleasure to see the building grow every day. At last it was ready for occupation and functioning. The swimming pool was unique in the Near East. The organ was one of the best. From the tower one could study the topography of the surrounding regions. Maps on the four sides explained the situation of the different sites. The main building had several rooms for the hostel.

The activities of the YMCA were varied and very practical with departments for adults and for children. Membership reached about two thousand members. Through the endeavors of our general secretary we had a good and large library.

The YMCA was a great blessing for the country. It brought young men of all religions and denominations together. It was a center for study: evening classes were given in English, Arabic, French, bookkeeping, accounting, shorthand, and typing. The evening classes swelled so much that there were no empty places. During the Second World War, first aid lessons were given. Through excellent lectures in Arabic and English the scope of knowledge was greatly widened. The concerts, religious and popular, refined the tastes of the members. The excursions combined with comprehensive talks about the site increased the knowledge of and the love for the country. The library was used by all members for reference and study. The political and scientific journals kept everyone informed about events, politics, and discoveries. The physical department, with its swimming pool, showers, and indoor and outdoor sports strengthened the body. Last but not least,

the religious work, such as lectures on religion, missionaries' moral subjects, religious concerts, Sunday meetings, and pilgrimages to the holy places helped members to tread on the right path. Thus our beloved institution was our pride as its blessings shown on Jerusalem and its surroundings.

Political Actions in Palestine (1920–48)

I never belonged officially to any political party. My first political work – if it can be called so – was to bring the Christians, who were the minority, nearer to the Mohammedans.³ This was very difficult. The first thing to do was to know several important and influential Moslems. My visits to them were regular, at their feasts, in happy and sorrowful occasions. These visits brought me two advantages: first, I got to know, love, and respect them, and second, they saw in me a real friend. Slowly, the circle of Mohammedan friends increased. I began to take other Christians with me on my visits, and often invited members of both religions to my house. We never discussed religious questions in such meetings. The influence of the different convents and churches, especially the Orthodox, Armenians, Coptics, and Protestants, on the Mohammedans was good and slowly became better.

During the Turkish regime no parties were allowed and no one could speak about politics. After the English came the Arabs became anti-Zionist and anti-British. It is very curious how feelings changed completely from 1910 to 1920. Before the First World War, all the Arabs loved the British and wished them to come and free the Arabs from the heavy yoke of the Turks. At the beginning of the war – despite the fact that my wife was a German and my whole family had German education – we prayed for a British victory.

We had a friendly attitude with the Jews living in the Holy Land at the time of the Turks. I had many good friends among them. They lived in peace with the peasants and employed many Arabs in their colonies. All these conditions changed radically when the Zionist movement began. The British did not come as liberators, but as conquerors who wanted to rule and not to free the country.

At this time, two parties arose among the Arabs of the country. One was led by the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni and the other by Raghیب Bey al-Nashashibi, who was a former member of the Turkish parliament. The first followed an extreme policy and had the majority of the Arabs backing it. The second group was more moderate and was helped by the British Mandate. The mufti was the head of the Husayni family, while Raghیب Bey was the leader of the Nashashibi family.

Haj Amin was very bright, but had a hard head. He rarely took the advice of anybody who did not belong to his most intimate circle. Already before the formation of the two parties, I had a collision with him. A few years after the First World War, the YMCA associations held their International Congress in Jerusalem on the Mount of Olives. The mufti began from the first day to attack the congress in his daily paper run by his cousin, *al-Jami' a al-'Arabiyya*. Every day a new and more severe attack appeared. In this way we lost the interest and sympathies of many members of Congress who came from all over

the globe. I tried several times to see the mufti, but he was very busy preparing for the al-Nabi Musa procession and feast. I had to go down to al-Nabi Musa, and spoke there with him very earnestly. He, seeing his mistake, gave at once orders to stop everything. But one chance of gaining the sympathies of the world was lost.

Great Britain was decided – to push the Balfour Declaration at any cost. Thus from the very beginning it favored the Jews: the new regulations were carried out so as to favor the Jews. But one must say that many a British official suffered very much under these abnormal and unjust ways. Slowly, the number of illegal immigrants was equal to, or even more than, the legal ones. All the Arab protests were shelved. Nothing was done to bring justice. One commission after another was sent. Their recommendations were in favor of the Arab cause, but the government never followed their advice. Naturally, demonstrations, strikes, and fights followed. The latter increased to a real guerrilla war. The Jews also formed bands for attacking Arabs and British. The latter were treated at times in a most disgusting manner. The British punished the Arabs in an inhuman manner. But the Jews were treated more or less gently.

I felt I had to do something for my country. The best was to open up the eyes of the world to the injustices done by the Mandate. I gave lectures, wrote pamphlets and books about the Arab cause. Some of my pamphlets were printed four different times and were translated into French and Arabic. My pamphlet *the Palestine Arab Cause* was reprinted by a member of the British parliament under his name (with my permission). The *Worker* published it also in two editions. My booklet *Conflict in Land of Peace* exploded like a bomb in the Jewish quarters. But what were my endeavors and those of many other Arabs in comparison to the world-wide Jewish propaganda? I gave a testimony before the UN Commission and proved that all of the Jewish propaganda – that the health of the Arabs became better, their mortality fell and their standards were raised and so on, due to [Jewish] immigration – was not true.

The Jews bombarded our hospitals several times. I had to take concerted actions and protested to Count Bernadotte, to the International Red Cross and once to the United Nations. My cable to the Syrian representative, Mr. Faris Khoury, was: “Beg to protest against repeated bombing of Arab hospitals, Jerusalem, by Jews. Stop. International Red Cross Committee had no results.” The answer from Count Bernadotte reads:

2 August 1948

Dear Dr. Canaan,

Before I left Rhodes I received your letter of July 19th. Yesterday and today I had discussions with the Arab and Jewish Government in Jerusalem on matters of demilitarisation of the Jewish area. I hope that this matter, which has already been accepted in principle by both parties concerned shall be solved although it might take quite some time before all the details will be agreed upon. I therefore hope that bombing of hospitals and Christian and Mohammedan places will not occur in the future. You can be quite sure that

I am going to take up all violations in the spirit of the Truce and that if I am not able to straighten out the matter I promptly will report them to the Security Council for their action.

Sincerely yours,
Count Bernadotte

This noble man was killed soon after, treacherously by a Jewish hand.

Even after the Arab-Israeli war came to an end, I continued my political life as much as I could. In the first few days there was neither the opportunity or the people to whom I could speak, for there were few tourists. Later, I was able to speak to private tourists as well as to groups explaining the full facts. This was done repeatedly. Reports written originally to my daughter were sent to the LWF. I helped some European friends in sending reports and I wrote a few articles. With time my political library about the Palestine question was the largest.

My political activity put me on the black list of the Jews and accordingly that of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Palestine Police Force. The British had me on the black list. I had been educated partly in a German school, my brothers and sisters were sent to Germany to have their higher education, I worked in the German Hospital and the Leper Home, which was at the time a German institution, and my wife was German. These were the external causes. The real cause was that I was a nationalist Arab.

During the First World War, they had no way to put me in any concentration camp, as I was in Aleppo when Aleppo fell. All Arab prisoners were understood to be the prisoners of emire Faysal, and the emir set them all free.

But no sooner was the Second World War proclaimed, then my wife, my sister, and myself were taken away. My sister and wife went in the women's prison in Bethlehem. I was transported to the prison of al-Mazra'a, north of 'Akka. I was released after two months' detention, my wife after nine months, and my sister after four and half years. I was brought once to a court, my wife twice, and my sister four or five times. Every court ordered our release. But as the High Commissioner had the right to refuse the judgment, it was not carried through.

During my detention, no Christian Arab came to my children to visit or help them. They were quite alone as I had no relatives whatsoever in Palestine. The really good friends were Mr. Miller, the Secretary of the YMCA, Mr. Najati Nashashibi, and some other Mohammedan friends who looked after them. Mr. Miller came every single day to see if they needed anything. No one in my family will ever forget his kindness. I am sorry to say that no Christian Arab ever came to see my children. We had the same experience during the First World War when, during my absence in the front line, no one except Mohammedan friends looked after my family. They visited them and supplied the house with some of the most important provisions.

It was due to efforts of Mr. Miller that my wife and my sister were evacuated from the prison in Bethlehem to the German Colony, Wilhelma, which was adapted into a

concentration camp for the Germans. Here we could visit them once a month. Two days after I was released I was allowed to visit my wife and sister [in Bethlehem]. It was a terrible sight, to know they were detained in such a dirty place. The occupants were criminals, bolsheviks, harlots, and the like. I went home heartbroken and wept like a child. In Wilhelma they were among good, educated people, and they could cook what they liked.

Soon after we got out, my son Theo had a position in Wadi al-Far‘a to build one of Tegart’s buildings. We visited him there, as we did in Jericho, when he was working in the ruins of Khirbat al-Mafjar [Hisham’s Palace]. He then left to Beirut.

My practice soon returned to its former state. But the political conditions became more unsettled. In the third and fourth month of 1948, most physicians left Jerusalem – a very great shame. I, the oldest, decided not leave. My wife and I had no children with us. The girls were married and Theo lived in Beirut. As our house was in the firing zone, we decided to move. The Greek Orthodox convent gave us one furnished room. We carried a few things from home, hoping that we could soon return back. But our house was completely lost with all our furniture, my beloved library and several unpublished articles. One of them was a book on the Palestine Arab woman.

A few days after we moved to the Greek Convent, our house caught fire. When I saw it at 8 p.m. my heart bled. I did not believe it and so I went to the Franciscan convent. Here the custodian led me and I saw how the whole ceiling and upper story were in flames. Thus I had now no house, no furniture, no car and even the good sum of money which I had left there was lost. I was sorry for only a few hours and then I got over it and slowly forgot it. Although I took only fifteen Palestine pounds with me when I left my house, the Almighty helped me wonderfully and I had never to ask for help.

The four of us – my wife, sister, sister-in-law, and myself – lived in one room. It was our kitchen, sitting/dining/sleeping room and office for treating patients. But we were thankful for having a roof above our heads. It is a shame the LWF never thought of giving us any room in the Muristan [in the center of the Christian quarter in the Old City]. Soon the monks of the Greek convent gave us a second room which served as a sleeping room for my sister and sister-in-law and an office for me during the day. My work during this period was very hard. I went twice daily to the Austrian Hospice hospital, and to the Convent of the Soeurs de Sion, where I had my office for the Jordanian Red Crescent and Red Cross.

Our Son Theo’s Life

Theo settled in Beirut and had a large circle of friends, most of them European. His architectural work began to develop and increase, and his name was overshadowing the names of his partners. Theo was often invited and made many invitations. In Jerusalem, he had a few undertakings: the Ambassador Hotel, the Jerusalem Cinema, and two buildings for the municipality. These brought him nearby often. The building of Aridah in Lebanon and the Ambassador in Jerusalem made him a real name. In his free time he went with

European friends and visited the different ruins in Lebanon. This inclination accompanied him from his youth when he had always showed a special interest in archeology. This love made him work for one year gratis in the repair of the platform of one of the theaters in Jarash. He had gathered real archeological skill during his work in Khirbat al-Mafjar.

He was a sweet boy. Every time he came to visit us he came with a shining happy face. He was greatly attached to us and to his sisters. Theo got excited with us only if we spoke to him about marriage. Why he refused even to think of it, we never knew.

He was inspecting the platform of the [Jarash] theater from an arch in front of it, when he must have slipped. He fell on a large slab of hard stones, and fractured his skull. He remained unconscious for about half an hour, then slowly stopped breathing and passed away. Theo surely did not feel any pain after the fall. His companion Ms. [Diana] Kirkbride, who was working with him on the repair, said he was smiling just before he fell and he continued doing so even after death. The Director of Antiquities in Amman, Mr. [Gerald] Harding informed Mr. Christiansen who gave the news to my sister. She told us that Theo was dangerously ill, after a fall. My wife and I ran to Mr. Christiansen. My first question was, "Is Theo dead?" He answered, "Dear Doctor. Yes, it is so." My wife and I broke down. Knowing that I had many duties I at once arranged for the transport of the body to Jerusalem. Mr. Abu Dayyeh was kind enough to go in a car to Amman and bring the body.

Our children Leila, Nada, and Sami in Beirut were informed. The local papers brought the sad news. The radio announced his death. The funeral was set for the next day which was a Sunday, 5 September 1953. The whole time on Sunday before noon people flocked in by the dozens to offer condolences. More than 130 wreaths were brought. Leila and Sami arrived Sunday before noon. The procession went from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. I hired three buses for the hospital personnel. More than fifty cars. The road was one continuous black line for a long distance. A great number of people from Bethlehem, Bayt Jala, and Bayt Sahur had gathered. Representatives of all churches and denominations were present. Nada arrived during the church ceremony. We were showered with a very great number of cables and letters expressing sympathy and great sorrow. And for weeks and weeks friends and others flocked into our home to console.

My wife and I visited the tomb nearly weekly for about one year, and then we went every two or three weeks, always with flowers. Doubtless it was and is the best cared for tomb.

My Activities in Retirement

In May 1955 I resigned from my work in the AVH where I was the medical director and the chief of infectious diseases section. Kaiserswerth gave me the so-called Gardner's House, saying in a letter that I may have it as long as I live. It was the lower flat of a small building, composed of four rooms and accessories. Thus we remain in the complex of the AVH but outside the hospital. This house had several advantages: it had the best

views of the whole complex and it lay far from the wards so that playing children would in no way disturb the sick. The house had a most beautiful view: in the east one saw the mountains of Moab, the Dead Sea (only part), and the wilderness of Judea; on the south we had Abu Dis, Bayt Faji, the Mount of Olives with the Russian tower, and on the horizon the ruins of Herod's tomb. If we walked about eighty meters to the west, we had the most beautiful panorama of Jerusalem. Our house was within the complex of Augusta Victoria and far from the hospital and barracks. On clear days part of the Dead Sea could be seen shining at two different places. The Moab mountains changed their hue from a blue-reddish to a rose color. Everyone who visited us enjoyed this view. For our grandchildren the house was perfect. They could roam in the fresh air, and play in the shadows of the trees without inconveniencing anybody.

Our friends came in and out. Some of them came repeatedly and took us out with their cars for a drive or to gather flowers. In the first year we had friends for food once or twice every week. It was so nice to have others with us. Slowly we had to stop this nice custom, because people started talking. We did not have many visitors in the evenings. We played cards, listened to the radio, read, and did other small jobs. As a rule, at nine I went to bed.

One year after leaving the hospital work I was engaged by the Lutherans to examine and treat the children in their schools with a small salary. Every year two visits were made in the autumn and in the spring, and every boy and girl was examined well. The second year I did the work gratis. In addition to this duty I could be of some help to Mr. Christiansen in the distribution to the Greek convents: St. George (in Wadi Qilt), Quarantal [Mount of Temptation], Mar Saba, St. Theodosius, Mar Elias, and Bethany. In autumn of 1956 I resigned from this work but Mr. Christiansen asked me to continue for 1957. For the 1956–57 school year I made the examination in the autumn. When I asked in the spring for a car, Mr. Christensen informed me that there was none available. After a number of further requests without a positive answer, I stopped bothering.

The period following my resignation was spent in studying, reading, writing notes, talks, preparing Christmas decorations, presents for Christmas, and flower pressing. The last were presented to Talitha Kumi, where the most beautiful flower cards were made. From 1954 to 1957, I pressed yearly many thousands of flowers. The proceeds from the flower cards were given to support the Talitha Kumi orphanage.

The political conditions in Jordan and in the Arab countries grew more and more tense. I had to keep up to date which I did from the following: reading one or two of the daily papers which appeared in Jordan; bringing daily, or whenever it was possible, the Egyptian and Lebanese papers; reading the cuttings from English newspapers which dealt with political questions in the Near East that my daughter Yasma always sent to me; reading the most important books and periodicals dealing with the Arab question; and direct and repeated contact with some of our best minds. In this way it was possible for me to be more or less up to date. Many Europeans and Americans visited me to know my ideas. Besides reading a lot, and keeping one of the best libraries about Palestine, I tried to help my country whenever I could. Thus I gave repeated talks to American and

German tourists; many tourists who were interested in the local situation came to my house. I published a few articles and gave material for publishing.

My connection with the government in Jerusalem, and to a somewhat lesser extent with Amman, was always very good. In the first five years after the armistice between the Arabs and Jews I was invited to every important official occasion in Amman. In Jerusalem also, in the years following the war I was invited to every important occasion. In this way I was able to help the LWF a great deal. The same cordial relations existed with all of the convents.

My medical practice lessened, as I did not care much for it. Ninety percent of all treatments were gratis. Medical journals continued to arrive and kept me informed of the most important advances in medicine. I had to discontinue my attendance at the medical meeting of the Palestine Arab Medical Association because they held their lectures in a third-floor room and it was difficult for me to climb the staircase.

[During my career I was given a number of awards.] In 1938 the German Empire presented me with the decoration of the Red Cross. The consul general pinned it to my chest in a soirée given by the German Deaconess Hospital.

On 30 November 1955, the patriarch of the Orthodox Churches in Jordan, Monsignor Timotheos honored me with the Golden Cross of the Holy Sepulchre. As he was sick in bed, Archimandrite Kyriakos, the custodian of the Holy Sepulchre, presented me this high decoration with a speech stressing that his beatitude the patriarch confers on me this great honor for the service I have done for the sick, to science, to the Orthodox convents all over the country and to the refugees, irrespective of their denominations.

In the autumn of 1957, the German ambassador to Jordan Herr von Schubert honored me in the name of West Germany with the “Golden Verdinst Kreuz, I Class” for the continuous help I offered to the German Missionary Institutions in Palestine during the last four decades. This happened to be on a Sunday afternoon on which the members of the German Archeological Institute were having tea with us.

On 10 May 1958 the Medical Association of the American University of Beirut decided unanimously that I should be the only recipient of the 1958 award. Dr. Amin Majaj from Jerusalem happened to be in Beirut and volunteered to present the golden medal.

Endnotes

- 1 Today the hospital is Europe's largest university clinic.
- 2 His five books are *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin*, *Dämonenglaube*, and *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine*, *The Palestine Arab Cause*, and *The Topography and Folklore of Petra*.
- 3 Although Canaan's usage of "Mohammedan" rather than "Muslim" may seem jarring to the contemporary reader, it is worth noting that this reflected Canaan's engagement with a Western academic tradition, within which the former term predominated well into the mid-twentieth century. However, as a local Arab whose scholarship

indicates sensitivity to the nuance and breadth of Muslim religious and cultural practices in Palestine, it is important to distinguish between Canaan's usage of the term and its usage either by Western Orientalist scholars – with whom he engaged intellectually in the study of Palestine, but from a significantly different positionality – or by European Christian polemicists – who sought to discredit and disparage the Muslim faith by reducing it to a cult of Muhammad, portrayed in their writings as a false prophet, and with whom Canaan shared nothing in common, intellectually or politically.