

# PALESTINIAN NOVELS AND MEMOIRS

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## **SUSAN ABDULHAWA**

Born in 1970 in Kuwait to refugee parents; was given to foster parents in North Carolina, U.S; studied Biology and Neuroscience; later on turned to journalism and writing; founder of the NGO Playgrounds for Palestine; heavily involved in the campaign for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions and as a speaker for al-Awda, the Right to Return coalition. Currently lives in Pennsylvania.

**Mornings in Jenin (2010)** (originally published as 'Scar of David' in 2006) follows four generations of the Abulheja family, who, after having been forced to flee their lands in 1948, have to build up a life and a home in the Jenin refugee camp. While the head of the family is brokenhearted over the loss of his lands and olive groves, his offspring becomes involved in the struggle for freedom, peace and home. Their story is told by Amal, the patriarch's granddaughter, who wants to pass on her family's story to her own daughter.

**The Blue between Sky and Water (2015)** tells the story of the Barakat family and their powerful women throughout the decades. Expelled from their home in 1947, the family - centering around Nazmiyeh, the eldest daughter - tries to rebuild life in a refugee camp in Gaza amidst violence and deprivations. A few generations later, Nazmiyeh's Americanborn grandniece Nur rediscovers her roots when she falls in love with a doctor working in Gaza.

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## **MAHA ABU DAYYEH (1951- 2015)**

Born in Jerusalem, was a visionary leader of the Palestinian women's movement. In 1991, she co-founded the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling in Jerusalem, and was crucial in its establishment as a leading institution for the promotion of women's rights in Palestine. In addition to directing WCLAC, Maha was an active advocate for human rights and democracy, serving on several boards of international, regional and local organizations such as Equality Now, or the Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre. She was awarded the French Republic Human Rights Award in 1998 and was the recipient of the Ms. Woman of the Year Award in 2002 in the US. She passed away on January 9th 2015 after a long battle with cancer.

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## **MUFID ABDUL HADI**

Born 1913 in Nazareth into a large and influential Palestinian family; graduated as an MD from the American University of Beirut in 1936; continued his studies in Britain and Germany; worked as a specialist in ear, nose and throat diseases in Germany from 1937-43; moved to Sweden and got married. Returned to Jerusalem in 1945 with his family and opened a practice; became a refugee to Amman and Syria after 1948; finally decided to return to Sweden.

**The Other Side of the Coin - A Native Palestinian Tells His Story** (republished by PASSIA in 1998) was originally published by the author himself in 1962 as he could not find a publisher due to the prevalent feelings of sympathy towards the Jewish people and resulting ignorance of the plight of the Palestinian people at the time. Abdul Hadi was raised in Palestine, but studied in Britain and worked in Germany during the years of World War II. When he was finally allowed to leave Germany, he and his wife settled down in Jerusalem, only to be turned into refugees a few years later. His observations of Palestine under Ottoman rule, of Nazi Germany and of Israel pre-48 provide an interesting insight into the turbulent and confusing politics of Europe and the Middle East.

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### **IBRAHIM ABU-LUGHOD**

Born 1929 in Jaffa; became a refugee when he took the last ship out of Jaffa to Beirut in May 1948; received a B.A. from the University of Illinois and a PhD in Middle East Studies from Princeton University in 1957. Worked as a field expert for UNESCO in Egypt for three years; then professor of Political Science at Northwestern University in Illinois. Founded the journal Arab Studies Quarterly; held two more UNESCO posts in Beirut and Paris; received American citizenship in 1975. Was elected to the PNC in 1977, remained on the council until 1991. Returned to Palestine for the first time since his flight in 1948. served as professor and vice president of Birzeit University; established the faculty of graduate studies. Four children with wife Janet Lippman; died of a lung disease in 2001. Exercised the right of return after his death – was buried in Jaffa as he demanded in his will.

**Resistance, Exile and Return: Conversations with Hisham Ahmed-Fararjeh (2003)** In the last years of his life, Abu Lughod met regularly with a former student protégé and shared his memories of childhood and youth in Jaffa, of his early involvement in Palestinian politics and his exodus in 1948, of his intellectual formation in American universities and of his advocacy for the Palestinian cause from abroad. In the absence of an autobiography, these interviews were edited in order to provide a cohesive memoir of his life, told in his own words.

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### **ATEF ABU SAIF**

Born in Jebaliya refugee camp in 1973; received a B.A. from Birzeit University and his M.A. from the University of Bradford, received his PhD in Political Science from the European University Institute in Florence; teaches Political Science at the University of al-Azhar in Gaza and is chief editor of Siyasat magazine published by the Public Policy Institute in Ramallah. Has published several short story collections, articles and novels. Lives with his wife and children in Gaza.

**A Suspended Life (2014)** Naeem, the owner of the only print shop in the Jebaliya refugee camp in Gaza who printed posters of the martyred members of the community is killed by an Israeli sniper, and thus turned into a martyr himself. When government plans to build a police station and a mosque on the spot where Naim's house stood become public, clashes erupt between the mourning residents and the police. "A suspended life" was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arab Fiction in 2015.

**The Drone Eats With Me: Diaries from A City Under Fire (2015)** Following the murder of three Israeli teenagers in July 2014, Israel launched the offensive "Operation Protective Edge" against the Gaza Strip in July 2014. While news coverage continued to report on the growing and devastating numbers of the killed and wounded, the anguish and terror felt by the ordinary population could not be expressed

through these channels. One year after, Abu Saif's complete diaries from these 51-days of relentless bombardment allow us to get at least a glimpse of the suffering of the people of Gaza. "The Drone Eats With Me" is foreworded by Noam Chomsky, and was shortlisted for the Palestine Book Award 2015.

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### **RASHAD ABU SHAWAR**

Born in 1942 in Thikrin near Hebron. Active in the PLO; published collections of short stories; novels and scholarly works; currently resides in Amman. Was awarded the al-Quds prize in 2015 for his entire body of works.

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**Zainab's Windows (1994)** is set in the city of Nablus on Christmas day in the years of the first intifada. Normal life is made impossible by the hardships of the ongoing occupation and the eruption of clashes between soldiers and the rebelling population. During one of these clashes, Nasser Al-Hawwash is hit by a bullet that leaves him hanging between life and death. At the same time, an Israeli brought to the hospital after a stroke is in dire need of a heart transplant.

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### **NASEER H. ARURI (1934-2015)**

Born in Jerusalem, was an eminent academic scholar and a life-long advocate for the Palestinian cause. Dr. Aruri held a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and served on the faculty of the University of Massachusetts - Dartmouth from 1965-98 and, at the time of his retirement, was Chancellor Professor of Political Science at that university. He was politically active as a member of the Palestinian National Council, and the Central Council of the PLO, and as a key member of several human rights organizations, incl. The Independent Palestinian Commission for the Protection of Citizens Rights (Ramallah), the Arab Organization for Human Rights, and as member of the Board of Directors of Amnesty International, USA (1984-1990). He is survived by his wife of 54 years, and their children and grandchildren.

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### **SUAD AMIRY**

Born 1951 in Damascus to refugee parents; raised in Amman; studied architecture at AUB, PhD from University of Edinburgh; member of staff at Birzeit University until 1991; founded the Riwaq Centre for Architectural Conservation in Ramallah; was a member of a Palestinian peace delegation to Washington, D.C. in the early nineties. Currently serves as director for the Riwaq Centre and as vice-chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Birzeit University. Is married to Salim Tamari with whom she lives in Ramallah.

**"Sharon and My Mother-in-Law" (2006)** sets in in 1981, when Amiry returned to Ramallah to take a teaching position at Birzeit University and tells of the absurdities and the agony of living under occupation. Based on entries into her diary which she kept from 1981 to 2004, and on e-mail correspondences with friends and relatives scattered all around the world, "Sharon and My Mother-in-Law" is a collection of anecdotes told with an ironic undertone, such as her dog Nura receiving a Jerusalem ID while thousands of Palestinians are still denied theirs.

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## LAILA AL-ATRASH

Studied Law and Arabic Literature, currently works as a news editor and columnist on literary topics for Amman magazine; has won numerous awards for her documentaries about prominent figures in Arabic letters. Member of the High Council and Executive Committee of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture, President of PEN Jordan.

**A Woman of Five Seasons (1990)** portrays women's struggle for independence and fulfillment in a traditionally patriarchal and repressive Middle Eastern society. Set against the background of the newly oil-rich state of Barqais, a haven for the impoverished Arabs from the heartland, 'A Woman of Five Seasons' follows the story of Ihsan Natour and his wife Nadia. While the ambitious Ihsan is concerned with pursuing his career and making himself a name in this new place, Nadia silently suffers from the oppression by her clueless husband, and from the futility of her struggle for freedom and independence.

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## LIANA BADR

Born in Jerusalem in 1950, raised in Jericho; studied Philosophy and Psychology in Jordan and Beirut; M.A. from Birzeit University; worked for various Palestinian Women's Organizations and as reporter and editor of the cultural section of alHuriyya. Runs the Cinema and Audiovisual Department at the PA Ministry of Culture, was among the signatories of the Geneva Accords in 2003. Married to Yaser Abed Rabbo, one of first main leaders of DFLP and PLO Executive Committee member, two children.

**Balcony Over the Fakahani (1983)** is a collection of three short novellas which follow the lives of three Palestinians, two women and one man throughout their successive uprooting -their flight from Palestine after al-Nakba, their eviction from Jordan during Black September in 1970, and their final exile to Beirut. The first piece is told from the point of view of Ysra, whose husband - a Palestinian resistance fighter - was killed in Lebanon, and whose father died while she was fetching water. The second piece of the story follows Su'ad, who hears accounts of her husband's fate from guests visiting her balcony in the Fakahani district in Beirut. The final piece is the memoir of a young Palestinian man and the troubled path of his family from flight and prison to exile in Tunisia.

**A Compass for the Sunflower (1989)** looks back on memories of occupation, expulsion and exile through the eyes of Jinan, a young Palestinian woman. Jinan lives in Beirut during the early 70's but is haunted by memories of violence and tragedy. Colours and images she encounters in her days in Beirut bring back images of dropping bombs, of operations without anesthesia, of wounded and helpless people in first aid camps. While she and her friends are trying to understand their place in the world and in the Palestinian 'collectiveness', Jinan finds herself caught up in an individual struggle for her place as a woman in a man's society.

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## GABI BARAMKI

Born in Jerusalem in 1929; graduated from Birzeit College in 1946; earned his Master degree from the American University in Beirut and his Ph.D. from McGill University in Canada. Co-founder of Birzeit University; served as its Acting President from 1974-93; co-founded the Palestinian European Academic

Cooperation in Education Program and the Palestinian Council for Higher Education; served as consultant to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Palestine for several years; died in 2012.

**Peaceful Resistance: Building a Palestinian University Under Occupation (2009)** Birzeit University, Palestine's oldest university, was officially established in 1975 against the backdrop of ongoing military occupation. In this memoir foreworded by Jimmy Carter, one of its co-founders sheds light on the obstacles the University faced throughout the years - attacks by the IDF soldiers on unarmed students, nightly arrests of faculty members and political campaigns of defamation. "Peaceful Resistance" makes a cause for education as a path towards a just, sustainable and peaceful future for the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

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### **MOURID BARGHOUTI**

Born in 1944 in Deir Ghassanein; studied English Literature at Cairo University; worked as a teacher in Kuwait and Egypt. Was a news anchor and political commentator at the Palestinian Radio in Cairo, was arrested for political activities; became a PLO representative in Budapest; started publishing his poems upon his return to Cairo in 1995; was awarded numerous prizes for his poetry. Currently lives in Cairo.

**I Saw Ramallah** (published in Arabic in 1997, translated in 2005) was met with praise after its first publication in Arabic and was later translated to English with a foreword by Edward Said. In this autobiographical account, Barghouti describes step by step his visit to his hometown Ramallah and Deir Ghassaneh. After having lived in involuntary exile for thirty years, Barghouti muses about the discrepancies between his limited memory, longing imagination and the reality of a city scarred by occupation, and discovers that the events of 1967 have left him permanently

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### **RAMZY BAROUD**

Earned his PhD in Philosophy in Palestine from the European Centre for Palestinian Studies at the University of Exeter; served as Deputy Managing Editor of Al Jazeera online and as head of Aljazeera.net English's Research and Studies department; works as editor of Palestine Chronicle since 1999; taught mass communication at Australia's Curtin University of Technology, Malaysia Campus. Has published columns and articles in several international newspapers; has additionally published three books.

**My Father was a Freedom Fighter (2010)** A poignant, painful story of Palestinian dispossession and The story of the author's father, Mohammed Baroud begins when he is expelled from his village in the course of the Nakba and tries to rebuild life in a refugee camp in Gaza. Throughout poverty, corruption, love, loss and war, Mohammed holds on to the hope that the unlawful treatment of the Palestinian people cannot be ignored by the world outside and that one day he might return to the lands he was so violently and unjustly expelled from.

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### **SANAA SHANNAK (1964-2015)**

Received her diploma as a secretary from al-Inaash al-Usra Society in Ramallah in 1984, where she continued to work until 1994. Sanaa received further education at the Women's College of the UNRWA and the Maan Institute in Ramallah, before she came to work with PASSIA in 2004. Her work as administrative director and assistant researcher soon made her an indispensable member of the PASSIA team, for which we remain thankful until today. She retired in 2013 and passed away on Monday, March 30th after a long battle with illness.

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### **KHALIL BEIDAS**

Born in Nazareth in 1874; studied in Russia; worked as a principal of elementary schools in Syria and Palestine; was the publisher of An-Nafa'es (Treasures) and the subsequent anNafa'es al-'Asriyya (Modern Treasures); was involved in the 1916 riots against the Ottoman rule demanding equality for Arabs; was a short-story writer, novelist and one of Palestine's leading intellectuals; worked as a translator from Russian into Arabic (including a number of Tolstoy's and Pushkin's works); fled to Jordan then to Beirut during 1948 Nakba; passed away in Beirut in 1949.

After the Nakba, Beidas' extensive library was confiscated by the Israeli forces and - according to an Israeli researcher - handed over to the National Library of Israel, classified as 'abandoned property' alongside with other books and cultural items that belonged to the expelled citizens of Jerusalem. Among these books was the original manuscript of 'The Heir' (1920) which was rediscovered by two Palestinian researchers in one of the Israeli universities while they were working on establishing the first Palestinian online library. Set against the backdrop of the first World War, 'The Heir' tells a love story between an Arab and a Jewish girl. The girl works as an actress, but he tries to buy her out of the business by going into debts with Jewish merchants.

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### **AZMI BISHARA**

Born in Kafr Rama, Galilee in 1956; founded the National Committee of Arab Secondary School Students at the age of 18; co-founded the Arab Student's Union; received a PhD from Humboldt University, served as head of the Philosophy and Cultural Studies Department at Birzeit University; co-founded Muwatin (The Palestinian Institute for the Research of Democracy); elected to the Knesset in 1996 as representative of the National Democratic Assembly (Balad) of which he was also a co-founder; first ever Israeli Arab to run for PM in 1999 but withdrew his candidacy before the elections; accused by Israel of collaboration with Hezbollah in 2007; decided not to return and moved to Qatar instead where he now serves as General Director of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Qatar.

**The Checkpoint- Fragments of a novel (2003)** is a collection of episodes from the daily life of the Palestinians, memories of days of youth, and anecdotes of the absurdities of life under occupation, partly narrated by a Palestinian family father from the West Bank. With barbed wit, Bismara describes the kafkaesque system of hierarchies at the border checkpoints, but also turns his criticism towards his own people, who are paralyzed by corruption and the blind adherence to obtuse ideological explanations.

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## ISSA J. BOULLATA

Born in Jerusalem in 1929; graduated with an Honours B.A. in Arabic and Islamic Studies and a PhD in Arabic Literature from the University of London; joined the Law Institute in Jerusalem and gave courses in Arabic Language and Literature; taught at the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies until retirement in 2004; was awarded the 2004 Mentoring Award by the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) of North America; has three sons; currently resides in Montreal, Canada.

**The Bells of Memory (2014)** is the memoir of Boullata's childhood and youth in Jerusalem under the British Mandate up until the Nakba of 1948. Despite the violent and painful course of events that led up to the Nakba, Boullata recalls the Jerusalem of his youth and especially the Old City as an idyllic time and place in which Christians and Muslims lived peacefully, not only side by side but as an harmonious blend of cultures.

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## SELMA DABBAGH

Born in Scotland in 1970; the daughter of a Palestinian father from Jaffa and an English mother; has spent lengthy periods in Kuwait, France, Egypt and Bahrain, with almost annual visits to Palestine; worked as a human rights lawyer in London with frequent visits to the West Bank and Cairo; wrote short stories which have appeared in *New Writing 15* and *Qissat: Short Stories by Palestinian Women*; twice been a finalist in the Fish Short Story Prize for Beirut-Paris-Beirut (2005) and *Aubergine* (2004) in 2014; her radio play *The Brick* was broadcast by the BBC.

**Out of it: A Novel (2012)** follows the lives of Rashid and his family living under occupation in the Gaza strip. Rashid has earned a scholarship to study in London, his sister Iman is starting to sympathise with an Islamic resistance group, while their elder brother Sabri is working on a history of Palestine from his wheelchair. "Out of It" looks at the growing separation of a people divided by the matrix of military control, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.

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## SUMAYA FARHAT NASER

Was born 1948 in Bir Zeit; attended Thalitha Kumi boarding school in Beit Jala; studied biology, geography and education in Hamburg, Germany, received a Ph.D. in Applied Botany.; served as a lecturer at Birzeit University from 1982-97; served as manager of the Jerusalem Center for Women from 1997-01; cooperated with Bat Shalom (organization of Jewish and Arab Israeli women); received several awards for advocacy of nonviolence and dialogue; has published four books (three of which in German).

Farhat Naser's second book, **Daughter of the Olive Trees (2003)**, was written in times of escalating violence and growing frustration, caused in part by the fruitlessness of the so-called peace process. Farhat Naser, an activist for the cause of Palestinian women, provides an inside account into the obstacles faced by Palestinian civil society - and women's groups in particular - in their quest for peace.

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## **IBRAHIM FAWAL**

Born in Ramallah in 1933; studied in the U.S and received his M.A. in film from UCLA; as assistant to director David Lean during filming of Lawrence of Arabia. Became professor of film and literature at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, received the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award for his first novel, 'On the Hills of God'. Currently lives in Birmingham, Alabama

**On the Hills of God (1998)** is the coming-of-age story of Yousef, a young and idealist Palestinian living in the idyllic town of Ardallah, who spends most of his days with his two best friends, a Jew and a Christian, in the last summer before the Nakba. Their carefree days are counted, however, as tensions between Zionists and Palestinians begin to erupt regularly and violently and their bonds are torn apart by forces beyond their control.

**The Disinherited (2012)** is the follow-up story to "The Hills of God". Yousef desperately searches for his bride Salwa whom he lost during the turbulences of Nakba. His journey brings him closer to his countrymen and he joins them in their struggle against expulsion. After finding Salwa, the couple wanders from exile to exile as they dream of a united Palestinian people and the return to their homeland.

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## **EMILE HABIBI**

Born in Haifa in 1921; studied in Haifa and Accre; joined the Palestinian Communist Party at the age of 19 and becoming one of its most prominent leaders; co-founded the National Liberation League at the age of 21; decided to stay in his hometown Haifa in 1948; was granted Israeli citizenship; served as a Knesset member from 1951-59 and then again from 1961-72; literary works received several awards such as the al-Quds First person to receive both Literature Prize by the PLO and Israeli Prize for Arabic Literature two years later. Died in 1996.

**The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist (1974)** Saeed, the eponymous protagonist, is able to escape the Nakba but decides to return to his occupied homeland. There, he naively falls into the hands of those in power, and becomes an informer for the Zionist state in exchange for the safe return of the woman he loves. His opportunism and compliance with the status quo later on isolate him from his son, who chooses the path of violent resistance. In "Saeed", Habibi translated his frustration with the absurdities of occupation into a sharp-tongued critic of Israeli politics and of the paralysis of the Israeli Arab community.

**Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter (1991)** On a moonless night, the protagonist of Habibi's last novel catches a glimpse of a mysterious women in the waves of the ocean. In trying to solve the mystery of this apparition, the protagonist - who strongly resembles the author - goes on a journey through ancient local legends and the collective memory of the Palestinian people.

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### **ABDUL RAHMAN ABBAD (1945-2015)**

Was born in Zakariya near Hebron, was a teacher at various institutes across Palestine (Hebron University, al-Quds University, the UNRAW College in Ramallah, and the Jerusalem Branch of Leeds University) as well as a prolific writer, publishing literary criticism, scholarly works on Arab Islamic culture as well as a novels, for which he received the Palestine Prize for Literature in 1989. He was politically active as a member of several religious institutions such as the Higher Islamic Council and the Higher Islamic Sufi Council, or the Faculty of Qur'an and Islamic Studies at al-Quds University.

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### **ANWAR HAMED**

Born in Anabta in 1957; PalestinianHungarian; moved to Hungary in 1980 for college; first short stories written when he was a teenage were published in Arabic; started writing in Hungarian when moved to Hungary; currently residing in London; works for BBC Arabic. His novel 'Jaffa Prepares Morning Coffee' was longlisted for the 2013 Arabic Booker Prize.

**Jaffa Prepares Morning Coffee (2012)** takes as its scene the multicultural city of Jaffa and the nearby village of Beit Dajan. The wide range of characters includes people of all three Abrahamic faiths and of different socio economic status, intellectuals and criminals, feudal lords and peasants, obedient women and aspiring girls, and follows them on their visits to Turkish baths and colourful markets, on family outings to the shore of Lake Tiberias and on life in the city after dusk.

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### **RAYMONDA HAWA- TAWIL**

Born 1940 in Acre to a prominent family of Palestinian Christians; studied at an Israeli boarding school and moved to Jordan in 1957, renouncing her Israeli citizenship; moved to Nablus where she joined the Arab Women's Union but remained critical of its segregation between men and women; organized acts of defiance against the occupation and the social structure, (demonstrations, sit-in strikes, concerts); opened a Palestinian news agency in Jerusalem in 1978, which published the Palestinian-oriented magazine Al Awda ("The Return"); was jailed and put under arrest several times for her political and journalistic activities. In the eighties, moved to Paris with her husband after attempted attacks on her life. Lives in Malta with daughter Souha, the widow of Yasser Arafat.

**My Home, My Prison (1980)** is the autobiographical account of Hawa-Tawil, the Palestinian activist who struggled simultaneously for national self-determination of the Palestinian people, and for her autonomy as a woman in a traditionally maledominated society. Held back by an unhappy marriage and the responsibilities of a mother but inspired by feminist writing such as Simone de Beauvoir, she took to writing columns herself and later established a political saloon in her home which was to become a key location for Palestinian activism and networking

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### **RULA JEBREAL**

Born in Haifa in 1973; grew up on the Dar el-Tifel orphanage in Jerusalem with her sister after the death of her mother; her father worked as imam and groundskeeper at the al-Aqsa Mosque; received a degree in physiotherapy from the University of Bologna on a scholarship Later on and graduated with an MA in

Journalism and political science from the same university; subsequently worked as a journalist and presenter.

**Miral (2003)** tells of the coming-of-age of young Palestinian girl growing up in East Jerusalem in the 1980's. Following the death of her mother, Miral and her sister Rania are raised and educated in a school for Palestinian refugee girls under the direction of Hind Husseini, the famous patron for orphaned children, who takes a special interest in Miral. Hind recognizes her intellectual capacity and her potential to become a leader in the peaceful resistance movement, but as she becomes more aware of the injustices which surround her, Miral is drawn towards the path of armed resistance. In the end, Miral has to decide between joining the resistance movement and the possibility of ending up as a martyr, or continuing her education under the guidance of Hind Husseini in order to become a future leader of her people.

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### **JABRA IBRAHIM JABRA**

Born in Bethlehem 1919 to a poor Christian family; studied English Literature Exeter and Cambridge University and received an MA in Literature Criticism from the latter; later worked as an English teacher and Director of the Arts Club in Jerusalem; moved to Iraq in 1948 and taught at the University of Baghdad; wrote books on literary criticism, prose poems, short stories and novels; was awarded the Thornton Wilder Award for Translation from Columbia University in 1991 for his numerous translation from English into Arabic; passed away in Iraq in 1994.

**Hunters in a Narrow Street (1960)**, inspired by the author's own experiences, follows Jameel Farran, a Christian Arab, who is forced to flee from his hometown Jerusalem in 1948, to his life in exile in Baghdad where he becomes a university teacher. An outsider at first, he is invited into the lives and homes of the Iraqi political upper class when he is hired as a private teacher for the daughter of a wealthy family. When he falls in love with his student, he is thrown into to the complex conflicts which shape the Iraqi society - the people yearning for freedom while being restrained by traditional moral systems and a repressive dictatorship, the tensions between the decadent upper classes and the deprived majority, and the overarching scepticism shaping interconfessional relations.

**The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood (1987. translated 2012)** are the memoirs of Jabra's childhood and youth in Bethlehem and Jerusalem in the 1920s. In vivid and colourful pictures but without nostalgic glorification, Jabra's tells of the people who influenced his coming of-age, notably the women in his family - illiterate and uneducated, but capable and loving women - and his ill father. While his writing in itself is not political but rather focuses on descriptions of human experiences, Jabra - who became a refugee himself in 1948 - achieves to create a fine tension between his memories of a colourful and exciting childhood, and the sense of the horrors which were to come a few years later.

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### **MUJID KAZIMI (1947-2015)**

Born in Jerusalem, was raised as a refugee in Jordan and went on to study Nuclear Engineering at the University of Alexandria. He received his PhD in 1973 from the Massachusetts Institute for Technology (MIT), where he served as a faculty member for the remainder of his life. In addition, Prof. Kazimi was an active member of several networks dedicated to connecting Arab academia abroad, such as the MIT Arab Student Organization, and the Association of Arab-American University Graduates (AAUG), serving

as a president for both. His academic achievements made him an inspiration and role model for his students and colleagues alike, in the Arab and the international sphere.

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### **HATIM KANAANEH**

Born in Palestine; studied medicine at Harvard University during the sixties; returned to Palestine in 1970 with his Hawaiian wife; served as Public Health Doctor of the sub-district of Acre. Moved to Hawaii after the attack 1976 on six non-violent Palestinian protesters but returned again two years later. Co-founded the Galilee Society, an NGO “dedicated to improving the health and welfare of the Palestinian minority within Israel.” Served as consultant to UNICEF’s mission to the Palestinian Authority for a short period in the nineties; finally returned to his hometown where he established a center for child rehabilitation and served as physician.

**A Doctor in Galilee: The Life and Struggle of a Palestinian in Israel (2008)** Drawing from entries in his journal which he has kept since the late seventies, Kanaaneh looks back on his years as a village doctor in the Galilee, blending personal with political anecdotes and emotional moments with moments of rational analysis. Lightened up by rather particular sense of humour - a humour most likely developed as a reaction to the absurdities of life as a Palestinian under Israeli rule - he describes the systematic racial discrimination enshrined into the Israeli bureaucratic and political institutions.

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### **GHASSAN KANAFANI**

Born in Acre in 1936; grew up in Jaffa; became a refugee in 1948 and relocated to Damascus; went to university in Damascus and became involved with the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM); received an UNRWA teaching certificate in 1952; worked as a teacher in Kuwait and as an editor of several pro-Nasser newspapers; was appointed as spokesperson of the Popular Front for the Liberalization of Palestine (PFLP) in 1969; works include short stories, theatre plays novels. Was assassinated by a Mossad car bomb in Beirut on July 8, 1972.

**Men in the Sun (1963)** follows the hardship and struggle of three Palestinian on their search for a better life in Kuwait. The story unfolds at a critical time in the history of the Palestinian people when the traditional order and political, social and human realities were altered by events on both a regional and international scale. Kanafani drew on his own experiences as a former refugee to paint this vivid image of the struggle of his three tragic protagonists.

**“Umm Sa’d” (1969)** creates a larger-than-life portrait of a Palestinian mother whose son has decided to join the fedayeen. In conversations between the eponymous mother and her cousin, a young Palestinian writer and intellectual, Kanafani describes delicately the feelings of sorrow and despair over the sudden decision of her beloved son and his passage from boy to soldier.

**Returning to Haifa (1969)** is the story of Said and Safeyya who had to leave their son behind in the chaos of al-Nakba. Twenty years later (the Mandelbaum Gate has been opened), the couple returns to see what happened to their home and their son. Much to their surprise, they find that their home is now the home of Miriam, a widow haunted by memories of Holocaust, and their son, who was adopted and raised by Miriam as a Jew.

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## **GHADA KARMY**

Born in Jerusalem in 1939 to Palestinian-Syrian parents; grew up in Jerusalem but fled to London in 1948; studied medicine and practiced as physician for migrants and asylum seekers. Became involved in Palestinian politics after 1972; earned doctorate in history of Arabic medicine from London University; published comments and articles in newspapers and magazines, including *The Guardian*, *The Nation* and *Journal of Palestine Studies*; is a fellow and lecturer at the Institute of Arab & Islamic studies at Exeter University.

In **“In Search of Fatima: A Palestinian Story” (2002)**, Karmy reflects on her childhood in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Katamon amongst Palestinian Christians and Muslims, one of them Khalil al-Sakakini, the famous Palestinian scholar. The family had to leave Jerusalem in 1948 and fled to London, where her father found work at the BBC Arabic office. *“In Search of Fatima”* is not only an intimate autobiographical account, but also seeks to transcend the author’s own experience of flight and exile and explore the subtle psychological implications of displacement and loss of identity.

**Return: A Palestinian Memoir (2015)** While *“In Search of Fatima”* focuses on her childhood in Jerusalem, *“Return”* tells us of Karmy’s return to the land of her birth. Karmy, a renowned doctor, academic and activist, leaves her adoptive country for a voyage that is both professional and personal - working with the Palestinian Authority, she seeks to understand this land and its people from the point of view of a political activist, but at the same time she hopes to find a connection to the land of her birth which she knows more from books than from experience. Her impressions turn into an intimate and emotional account of a tortured and ravaged land, and honest reflections about the future that lies ahead, both for the Palestinian people and for exiles like herself.

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## **SAHAR KHALIFEH**

Born in Nablus in 1941; studied English Language at Birzeit University; earned an MA from Chapel Hill University in North Carolina, received a PhD in Women’s Studies and American Literature from Iowa University; began writing shortly after the 1967 war, first novel in 1974; returned to Palestine and founded the Women’s Affairs Center in Nablus; won numerous literary prizes for her works such as the Qassem Amin Golden Medal for Feminist Writing or the Naguib Mahfouz Medal For Literature.

**Wild Thorns or The Cactus (1975)** tells the story of a conflict between two old friends in the face of Palestinian resistance. Usama, who returns from working in the Gulf to support his people believes wholeheartedly in violent Palestinian resistance and is angered by the adjustment of his people to the realities of occupation. Adil on the other hand is torn between his belief in the cause and the necessity to support his family by working in Israel. Through this lense, Khalifeh explores the larger concepts of exile and return, the destructive power of fervent nationalism and the conflict between the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the politically active exile Palestinians.

**The Sunflower (1980)** portrays the day-to-day life of Palestinians living under occupation in Nablus. Cut off from other places and caged in by walls, fences and curfews, the residents are trapped in a vicious circle of economic plight and a growing dependence on the goodwill of donors abroad. Resources are scant, and waste is everywhere. While the young still find the energy to rebel against the military forces,

the older residents wither away emotionally and sexually. Over the irreversible demise of this urban society lures the system of military occupation and its merciless acts of collective punishment.

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### **SAMIA NASIR KHOURI**

Born in Jaffa in 1933 to a prominent family of Palestinian Christians – her father and aunt founded Birzeit School and were crucial in its development as a university; graduated from Birzeit College in 1950; B.A. from Southern University in Georgetown, Texas; worked as Exec. Secretary and Director of the women students' activities at Birzeit College; became Board member of YWCA; served as national President of YWCA Jordan and later as first nation President of YWCA Palestine; President of Rawdat al-Zuhur School for 17 years.

In her autobiographical account **“Reflections from Palestine - A Journey of Hope” (2014)**, Khoury looks back on the hardships of life under occupation, and the challenges and obstacles faced by countless Palestinian families. The humiliating practices endless violations of human rights by the military forces - arrests and detentions, separation of families, the insecurity of residency rights - traumatized an entire people. She describes the euphoria of the beginning of the peace process and the growing disillusion after the realization that its promises were false, and the anger with the deliberate ignorance of the international community.

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### **RABAI AL- MADHOUN**

Born in Al-Majdal, Ashkelon in 1945; fled with his family to Khan Younis in 1948; studied at Alexandria University; turned towards a career in journalism, and became involved with the DFLP; quit politics in the eighties to focus on his literary career; currently residing in London; editor to the al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper in London.

**The Lady from Tel-Aviv (2009)** Many years after Walid Dahman was exiled in Europe, he returns home to Gaza, and meets an Israeli, Dana Ahuva, who happens to have a seat next to him on their flight back to Tel Aviv. Their conversation turns into an exploration, not only of the others beliefs, but of oneself's convictions. Touching upon the concepts of memory and history, “The Lady from Tel-Aviv” puts into question the adherence to ready-made explanations and encourages to to think outside one's own ideological box.

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### **SAMIH AL-QASIM (1939-2014)**

Born in Zarqa, Transjordan, was known as the Palestinian “Resistance Poet”. He was born to a Druze family and raised in Rameh, al-Qasim was deeply influenced by the events of al-Nakba and al-Naksa, an influence which is strongly reflected in his numerous collections of poetry. In addition to his poetry, he was politically active as a journalist, as a member of the Communist Hadash party and as an advocate for Palestinian rights, which led to him being jailed and put under arrest several times. He died in 2014 after a long battle with illness.

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## AHMED MASOUD

Grew up in the Gaza Strip; moved to the UK in 2002 to complete postgraduate studies in English Literature; earned a PhD in Literature studies; danced dabke to fund his education; founder of Al Zaytouna Dance Theatre in 2005; was awarded an Arts Council grant to write and produce a play on the Syrian crisis entitled *Walaa – Loyalty*; published many journals and articles including a chapter in *Britain and the Muslim World: A Historical Perspective*; wrote a number of plays.

**Vanished: The Mysterious Disappearance of Mustafa Ouda (2015)** chooses as its stage life in the Gaza Strip in the period from 1981 until 2011, encompassing the difficult years of the two intifadas as well as the years of hesitant hope following the Oslo Accords. With the help of a friend, the young protagonist Omar tries to find his longlost father, while the women in his family try to find the best way to survive with dignity in a society that becomes more conservative and more contradictory at the same time under the reign of military occupation. An early version of “Vanished” won the 2011 Muslim Writers Awards for the ‘Unpublished Novel’ category sponsored by Penguins. In 2015, it was shortlisted for the Palestine Book Award.

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## AKRAM MUSALLAM

Born in Talfit near Nablus in 1972; graduated from the department of letters and holds an MA in International Studies from the University of Birzeit with; writes for the daily *al-Ayyam*; editor-in-chief of the political quarterly magazine *al-Siyasa*; published his first novel *Hawajis al-Iskandar (Alexander’s Obsessions)* in 2003; won the A. M. Qattan award in 2008; won a grant from the Arab Art and Culture Fund in 2010 for his third novel *Itabas al-amr ‘ala al-laqlaq (Confusing the Stork)*.

**L’Histoire du Scorpion qui russelait de sueur (2008)** The protagonist - a Palestinian who lost his leg and his energy to a rusty nail – is haunted by the image of a scorpion which he once saw as a tattoo on the glistening shoulder of a young woman in an Israeli night club. The scorpion comes back in his dreams, tries to climb up the walls of his room and falls down every time, sweating and powerless, but nevertheless unwilling to accept his defeat. Starting from this metaphor, Musallam builds up a bitter critique of the results of the Oslo agreements and the failure of the second intifada.

*(Was not translated into English, only French and Italian. Original title: Sirat al-’aqrab alladhi yatasabbab ‘araqan)*

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## IBRAHIM NASRALLAH

Born 1954 in refugee camp near Amman; studied in the UN agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) schools and at the UNRWA Teacher Training College in Amman; worked as teacher in Saudi Arabia for 2 years and as a journalist between 1978 and 1996; returned to Jordan and worked for several newspapers; has published numerous books of poetry, novels and children’s books. In 2009 ‘*The Time of White Horses*’ was shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction.

**Time of White Horses (2007)** follows the life of Hajj Mahmud, chief elder of his idyllic village in the mountains of Jerusalem, his son Khalid and his horse al-Hamama. This semi-fictional, semi-factual saga begins in the early twentieth and continues from the demise of the Ottoman empire and the growing

conflicts between indigenous Palestinians and Zionist immigrants, through the trauma of the British mandate until the establishment of the State of Israel. Nasrallah focuses on the rural side of Palestinian society, on their daily preoccupations and aspirations.

In **Lanterns of the King of Galilee (2012)**, Nasrallah brings to life another episode of Palestinian history: the life of Daher al-Umar al-Zaydani (1690-1775), a visionary and respected leader from Tiberias who aspires to challenge the rule of the Ottoman empire and establish an autonomous Arab state. "Lanterns of the King of Galilee" follows his path to power, a path shaped by loyalty, betrayal, love and loss, and explores the intellectual and spiritual history of Palestinian society. Daher, a -for his times rather progressive thinking advocate for the ideals of justice and religious tolerance - was heralded by several scholars as the first manifestation of a Palestinian nationalism.

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### **SARI NUSSEIBEH**

Born 1949 in Jerusalem where he also grew up; studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University and received his PhD in Islamic Philosophy from Harvard University in 1978. Taught at Birzeit and Hebrew University; founder of technical committees for the Palestinian negotiation team since Madrid 1991; president of al-Quds University from 1995 until 2014; succeeded Hussein as head of the Jerusalem portfolio in the PLO in 2002. 2008 poll conducted by Foreign Policy magazine saw him among the 100 most influential intellectuals around the world. Married to Lucy Austin; four children.

Sari Nusseibeh's memoir **Once Upon a Country (2007)** takes us through his turbulent life story, inevitably intertwined with that of his embattled country. Born into one of the four prominent families of Jerusalem and as son of the governor of Jerusalem under Jordanian rule, Nusseibeh became involved in Palestinian politics during his studies of Islamic philosophy in London. During his time as a professor and member of the PLO elites, he emerged as one of the most outspoken Palestinian advocates of peace negotiations and a two-state-solution. His memoirs however do not only look back on his own experiences, but additionally make a case for the rights of the Palestinian people, a people continuously deceived by the Israeli promises of a substantial peace process.

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### **KARL SABBAGH**

Was born as Khalil Sabbagh (after his grandfather) in Worcestershire to a Palestinian Christian father and an English; parents divorced soon after his birth; he thereafter grew up with his mother in England; known as a prolific writer, journalist and television producer in England.

**Palestine: A Personal History (2006)** traces back the lives of the Sabbagh clan back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when one of the author's ancestors served as a vizier under the rule of the first Palestinian sheikh, Daher al-Omar al-Zaydani. This historical account of the cultural richness and political and philosophical accomplishments of the Palestinian people is combined with an analysis Zionist settlement in Palestine in the early 20th century and contradicts the often expressed slogan of the Zionist movement of "a land without a people for a people without a land".

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## EDWARD SAID

Born in Jerusalem in 1935; studied in Princeton and Harvard; PhD in English Literature in 1964; taught at Columbia University from the 1960's until his death. Visiting professor at Stanford, Yale and John Hopkins University; active member of several renowned American and international associations, serving for example as the president of the Modern Language Association, member of the Council on Foreign Relations or as an executive board member for PEN International. Independent member of the PNC from 1977-93; quit in protest of the Oslo Accords. Co-founded the Palestinian National Initiative in 2003; died of leukemia that same year.

Prompted by a diagnosis of leukemia, **Out of Place: A Memoir (1999)** is a documentation of life in Palestine in the 1930's and 1940's. Edward Said was born in 1935 to a Lebanese mother and a Palestinian father with American citizenship. From an early age on, Said (whose blatantly English first name was given to him out of admiration for the Prince of Wales) was aware of his unclear belonging. His family's frequent moves and his education in British and American schools in Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon did not alleviate his confusion. His intimate account sheds light on his ambiguous relation to his ambitious and emotionally intense parents, especially his mother, his discovery of English literature and his tumultuous years of adolescent rebellion.

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## JEAN SAID MAKDISI

Sister of Edward Said; was born in Jerusalem in 1940; studied in Cairo and the United States; is the author of *Beirut Fragments: A War Memoir*, selected as the New York Times Book Review Notable Book of the Year in 1990. Lives in Beirut, where she remained with her husband and their three sons throughout the civil war.

**Teta, Mother and Me: An Arab Women's Memoir (2005)** sheds light on the experiences of the women of the Said family. Going back as far as the 1880s to their maternal grandmother's childhood in Ottoman Syria, Said aligns her mother's memories of the two world wars with her own experiences of raising family amidst the terrors of the Lebanese civil war. It is not just a collection of research and reminiscences, but a careful social study which sheds light on the private and political lives of Palestinian women.

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## RAJA SHEHADEH

Born in Ramallah in 1951; attended the Quaker School in Ramallah; studied Literature and Philosophy at the AUB; received legal training in Britain; then returned to Ramallah and joined his father Aziz in his private practice. Established a private legal firm in 1978, co-founded al-Haq (Law in the Service of Man) in 1979; served as its director until 1991. Prominent scholar in issues dealing with the Israeli occupation violations of international law, member of the International Advisory Council of the Netherlands Institute of Human Rights and the Human Rights Advisory Group of the World Council of Churches. Author of several books. Currently lives in Ramallah.

**Strangers in the House (2001)** tells of Shehadeh's ambiguous relation to his father Aziz, a prominent Palestinian lawyer, and the first public figure who dared to advocate a two-state-solution in 1967. This



daring move isolated the family from their community and put an additional strain on their lives, already complicated by the arbitrary rule of the occupier. Includes a foreword by Anthony Lewis.

**When the Bulbul Stopped Singing (2003)** is an account of the effects of occupation and siege on the lives and mentalities of its subjects. Prompted by the invasion of Ramallah by the Israeli army in March 2002, Shehadeh speaks of the frustration and the rage one resents towards the omnipotent forces of occupation, forces who arbitrarily deny entry, who put under arrest and make a dignified and peaceful daily life impossible for the Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza.

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### **ADANIA SHIBLI**

Born in Palestine in 1974; obtained a Ph.D. in media and cultural studies from the University of East London; published short stories and essays in several literary magazines; wrote a play that was staged at the Tristan Bates Theatre, London, and as part of the New Works festival at the New World Theater in Amherst, Massachusetts; currently residing in Berlin; has a postdoctoral fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin.

**Touch (2002)** is told from the perspective of a Palestinian girl living within the occupation. Shibli takes us through the different phases of the young girl's life, her relations with her family and her eight older sisters, the discovery of love, questioning the meaning of life, educating herself, and her first encounter with death when she experiences significant events one after the other until she realizes the national tragedy she is living in. *"Touch"* won the A.M. Qattan Young Writer Award and was longlisted for the Best Translated Book Award in 2011.

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### **MAHMOUD SHUKAIR**

Born in Jerusalem in 1941; and grew up there; studied at Damascus University and has an MA in Philosophy and Sociology; subsequently worked as a teacher and journalist; was editor-in-chief of two magazines from 1994-2000; was also director of literature for the Palestinian Ministry of Culture; was jailed twice by the Israeli authorities, lasting nearly two years; deported to Lebanon in 1975; has lived in Beirut, Amman and Prague; resides in Jerusalem since 1993.

**Mordechai's Mustache and His Wife's Cats: And Other Stories (2007)** Mordechai is a timid and quiet Israeli Jew living in Tel Aviv. For absurd reasons, Mordechai reenlists in the Israeli army, where he comes into contact with Palestinians for the first time in his life and finds himself torn between sympathy for the obviously frightened and unarmed men at the checkpoint, and his obligation to protect Israel from potential terrorists. While enabling the reader to understand Mordechai's thoughts and motivations, he nevertheless stays a ridiculous character in this confrontation between the conquered and the conqueror.

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## **SALIM TAMARI**

Born in Jaffa in 1945; fled in 1948; studied at Birzeit University and later graduated with a B.A. in politics from Drew University in New Jersey, United States, and an M.A. in sociology from the University of New Hampshire, and a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Manchester; has been a sociologist at Birzeit University since 1971; appointed director of the Institute of Jerusalem Studies in 1994; served on the refugee committee in the multilateral peace talks held following the Madrid Conference of 1991; has been a visiting fellow at Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT, a visiting professor at the University of California Berkeley, New York University, Cornell University, and the University of Chicago; currently a director of the Institute of Palestine Studies and an adjunct professor at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University.

**The Storyteller of Jerusalem: the Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh (2013)** explores the life and times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, a composer, oud player and poet who lived and worked in the Old City of Jerusalem during one of its most turbulent times. As a child living under the crippling rule of the Ottoman Empire, Wasif first discovers his love for music, through which he encounters people from all stratas of the Jerusalemite society. Later on, throughout the times of the British mandate and the increasingly tense and violent years leading up to the Nakba and the establishment of the State of Israel, Wasif becomes an attentive observer of the changes around him.

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## **YAHYA YAKHLIF**

Born in Samakh in 1944; fled with his family to Jordan in 1948; trained as a teacher in Ramallah and worked in Saudi-Arabia; joined the PLO in 1967; received a BA in Arabic Literature from AUB in 1969; elected PNC member; responsible for the Palestinian Information Center from 1971-77; Deputy Secretary General for the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists 1981-90; appointed Director General of the Palestinian Department of Culture in 1987; assigned Deputy Minister of Culture in 1994 and PA Minister of Culture in 2003. Awarded the Palestine Prize for novels by the PA Ministry of Culture in 2004; Minister of Culture from 2005-06. Prolific writer and novelist.

**A Lake beyond the wind (1991, translated 1999)** sheds light on the story of Samakh, a peaceful village on the shore of lake Tiberias, which was captured and turned into a military outpost by the Haganah in 1948. Shifting between several points of view - the residents of the village, a young Palestinian who joins the Arab Liberation Army, his Iraqi brother in arms and poet, and so on - Yakhlif paints a vivid image of life in rural Palestine, and of the despair brought about by war and displacement.

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## **YASMINE ZAHRAN**

Born 1933 in Ramallah; educated at Columbia University in New York and at University of London; received a doctorate in archaeology at Sorbonne, Paris. Worked for UNESCO; established, directed, and taught at the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology in Jerusalem; lives in Paris and Ramallah. [still alive?]

**A Beggar at Damascus Gate (1995)** links the stories of a university professor and two lovers – a Palestinian woman living in exile in France, and a British man who is never cleared of the suspicion of working as a spy. The professor finds their journals in an almost abandoned hotel near Petra. He is

drawn into their passionate and conflicted relation of love and suspicion, and finally decides to edit their notebooks into one manuscript.

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