

Palestine International Institute
(Aspiring to Bind Palestinians in Diaspora and Expatriates to the Homeland)



**The Palestinian
Community In USA**

pii@orange.org

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the Palestine International Institute for Research and Services

Contact: the Palestine International Institute

Amman – Jordan

Tel: 00962 65668318

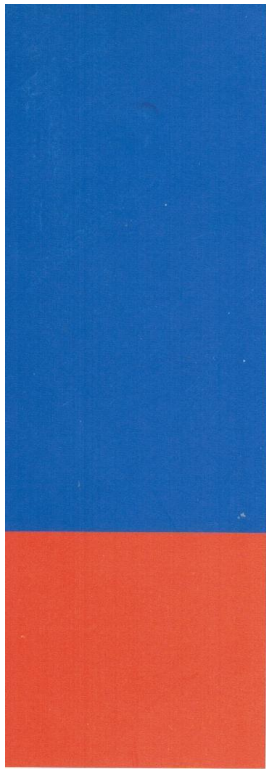
Fax: 00962 65668319

P.O.Box: 927906 Amman 11190

Email: pii@orange.jo

Website: www.pii-diaspora.org

Design & Layout: Kattan Advertising Agency, Amman - Jordan 



Palestine International Institute

(Aspiring to Bind Palestinians in
Diaspora And Expatriates to the Homeland)

**The Palestinian Community In
The United States of America**

Table of Contents

6	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND
8	PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES
10	PART II: ARAB-AMERICAN IMMIGRATION AND THE ARAB-AMERICAN COMMUNITY
10	Introduction
<hr/>	
11	History of Arab Immigration
11	The first arrivals
12	The First Wave (1880s-1920s)
13	The Second Wave (1950s-1960s)
14	The Third Wave (1970s-2000)
<hr/>	
15	Immigrant and Nonimmigrant Flows since 9/11/2001
16	Religious Affiliation
17	Education and Work
18	Organizations
19	Conclusions
<hr/>	
20	PART III: THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES
20	Palestinian Presence in the US
24	Trends in Palestinian Immigration
26	Distribution of Palestinian Communities
26	The New York Metro Area
27	The Chicago Area
29	The Detroit Area
30	San Francisco and the Bay Area
<hr/>	
31	Characteristics of the Palestinian American Community
31	Integration, Alienation and Assimilation
33	Politics and Activism
34	U.S. Policies in Palestine and the Middle East
40	The PLO in the United States
42	Palestinian Organizations in the United States
43	The American Federation of Ramallah Palestine (AFRP)

44	The United Palestinian Appeal (UPA)
45	American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)
46	The American Task Force for Palestine (ATFP)
46	The United States Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)
48	Other organizations
49	Palestinian US-based Media Outlets
49	The Journal of Palestine Studies
50	The Palestine Chronicle
50	The Electronic Intifada
51	Prominent Palestinian Americans
53	Academia
54	Authors, Poets, Playwrights, and Journalists
54	Business and commerce
55	Film and performing arts
55	Medicine
55	Music
55	Politics
55	Sports
56	Conclusions
<hr/>	
58	References

5

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This research project aims to gather and provide information that will allow for a better understanding of the Palestinian presence in the United States, within the larger context of Arab immigration to the US, and with the hope of providing a comprehensive overview of the demographic, social and political circumstances of this community in the US. Certainly, both past and present challenges have impaired comprehensive statistical studies from being conducted on the Palestinian community in the US. The first of these is that the US National Census Survey, which is conducted every ten years, does not include Arabs or persons of Middle Eastern descent in their classifications, let alone Palestinians¹. However, between 1980 and 2000, ancestry data was collected on the long form of the decennial census and, since 2003, all long form demographic questions, including ancestry, have been asked on the monthly American Community Survey².

While Palestinians have historically maintained a constant presence in the US over the past century, and while this immigration continues, arguably there have been four large waves of Palestinian immigration to the US. The first took place during the period between the late 1800s to the early 1900s, the second and third were instigated by the 1948 Nakba and the 1967 Naksa, respectively, while the fourth wave took place between the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. The first of the three waves largely consisted of Palestinian Christian populations, who immigrated as individuals to the United States seeking better economic opportunities and financial prosperity. Once economic and financial circumstances permitted, these mostly young men brought their families to join them. Much of the economic and financial success of the first three waves of Palestinian immigrants was gained through individual entrepreneurship and small, private business enterprises. Many also succeeded in embarking upon both academic and professional careers.

The fourth wave of immigration, which took place throughout the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s, proved different in that it was comprised of mainly younger Palestinians, from all walks of life and from all over the

Arab world, with the sole aim of continuing their education. Many of these young Palestinians came directly from Palestine (West Bank, Gaza, or the 1948 territories) itself, or from Palestine refugee camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. These Palestinians were particularly active in Palestinian politics (as were many of the earlier immigrants, although not as consistently or as comprehensively). Despite original intentions, many of these young Palestinian students nevertheless ended up settling in the US after graduating, finding jobs, getting married and establishing a life that included a continued engagement in the Palestinian national movement though settling in the US was not necessarily their plan upon arrival for university study. These four phases summarize the largest "waves" of Palestinian immigration, if one is to categorize immigration in such terms. Today, Palestinians continue to immigrate to the US, but not on the scale that took place in the past or during the time periods previously specified, and not according to the same incentives and motivations.

Historically, Palestinians in the US have maintained strong ties and affiliations with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Although an officially registered PLO office was only established on US soil in 1994 (the PLO Mission to the United States), and only after the signing of the Oslo Accords, ties with the PLO continued fairly consistently since the organization's inception in 1964. In the United States, these ties were also maintained with the establishment of an unofficial Palestinian Information Office, which was registered with the US Justice Department as a foreign agent in 1978. Though churches (and later mosques) provided an important gathering point for these communities and for maintaining social and cultural ties with other Palestinians and Arabs, the PLO's institutions in the US would play a large role in maintaining the strong ties and connections between Palestinian immigrants in the US and their homeland, and their struggle for national liberation. The events of September 11, 2001 (9/11) and the ensuing global political environment would represent a turning point that would significantly mark and affect the lives, well-being and consciousness of Palestinian communities, including Palestinian Americans residing in the US. The direct and open targeting of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims during the post-9/11 period fostered a multitude of reactions, with these communities experiencing a number of transformations.

Concepts, such as American citizenship (with most Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in the US being citizens), equal rights and civil liberties, began to shift. Within this context, Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in the United States would enter into an era in their history where they would become open targets of racial and political subjugation in the US for the first time.

PART I: OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

The United States is a federal constitutional republic of fifty states that comprise the United States of America, as well as one capitol district and several other territories. The federal government is composed of three distinct branches: executive, legislative, and judiciary, whose powers are vested by the US Constitution in the Office of the President of the United States (as Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces), the United States Congress (House of Representatives and the Senate), and the Federal Courts, including the Supreme Court.

The executive branch consists of the Office of the President, the Cabinet, and all other Federal Departments and Agencies. It is commanded by the President and is independent of the legislature (Congress) and of the judiciary. The President of the United States is elected to a four-year term, and is limited to two consecutive terms. The President acts as Head of State in diplomatic relations and as Commander-in-Chief of the US Armed Forces. As the nation's chief executive, the President oversees foreign policy, negotiates treaties with foreign nations and appoints ambassadors to other countries and to the United Nations (UN). The President also appoints members of the Cabinet in addition to Supreme Court justices and federal judges, although these appointments must be approved by the Senate, which oversees specific facets of government and of governance. Members of the Cabinet include – but are not limited to – the Vice President, the Presidential Chief of Staff, the US Trade Representative, and the heads of all major federal departments and agencies, such as the Secretaries of State, Defense, the Treasury and the Attorney General, who is the head of the Justice Department. The President and his/her Cabinet set the tone, agenda

and policy for the entire executive branch and how United States domestic and foreign policy will be enforced.

Legislative power is vested in the two chambers of Congress: the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate has 100 members, with each state allowed two representatives, regardless of size or population. The House of Representatives currently has 435 members, with each state's representation is proportional to its population. Each member of the House represents a specific geographic district within the state, while senators represent their entire state. Representatives are elected to two-year terms; senators are elected to six-year terms; and, both can be re-elected in consecutive and unlimited terms.

The primary function of these two bodies is to draft, debate and enact bills. Once a bill or law has been passed by the legislature, the bill is sent to the President for ratification. If the President ratifies a bill, it immediately becomes law. However, if the President vetoes a bill, Congress is not without recourse. With a two-thirds majority in both houses, Congress can override a presidential veto. Congress can also investigate pressing national issues, has the authority to declare war and the power to coin money. It is charged with regulating interstate and foreign commerce and trade and is responsible for oversight and for maintaining the military, although the President serves as its Commander-in-Chief.

The judicial branch (or judiciary) includes the Supreme Court and the lower federal courts, which are mandated to interpret the United States Constitution, federal laws and regulations, and to resolve disputes between the executive and legislative branches. The Supreme Court is comprised of nine justices, including the Chief Justice of the United States. Supreme Court justices are appointed by the President of the United States and must be confirmed by a majority vote in the Senate. Justices serve for life, barring retirement, resignation or impeachment.

The federal government's structure was established and is set by the US Constitution. Two political parties, the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, have dominated American politics since the American Civil War,

although other parties have and continue to exist. Major differences exist between the political system in the United States and that of most other “developed” nations’ democracies. These include greater power vested in the upper house of the legislature (the Senate), a wider scope of power held by the Supreme Court, the separation of power between the legislature and the executive, and the overwhelming dominance of a two-party system. Third parties have less political influence in the United States than in any other democracy in the “developed” world.

PART II: ARAB-AMERICAN IMMIGRATION AND THE ARAB-AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Introduction

Arab Americans are amongst the many ethnic groups that make up the population of the United States. They trace their origins to the Arab World, which stretches from northern Africa to western Asia. Arab Americans are as diverse as the 22 countries they come from³. They have been an integral part of American society since its inception, and, today, more than 80% of Arab-Americans are US citizens⁴.

With an estimated population of 4.2 million, Arab Americans live across the 50 states of the union, although two-thirds reside in ten states, and one-third of this total live in California, New York and Michigan, with 94% of Arab-Americans living in metropolitan areas. Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Washington DC and Northeastern New Jersey are the six metropolitan areas with the highest concentration of Arab Americans.

Lebanese Americans represent the greater part of the total number of Arab Americans residing in most of the states, except Georgia, New Jersey and Tennessee, where Egyptian Americans are the largest Arab group. Americans of Syrian descent make up the majority of Arab Americans in Rhode Island, while Arab Americans in Arizona are mostly Moroccan. The largest Palestinian population resides in Illinois, while the Iraqi and Assyrian/Chaldean communities are concentrated in Illinois, Michigan and California.

Contrary to the case with the American Jews, the American Arabs suffer a problem of defining their identity and of their weak political experience. Arabs had immigrated to the USA from numerous countries where democracy was still limited and where the local struggle in some Arab countries on the question of the common Arab identity and the mutual Arab relationship had left an impact on them. This has led to the question of how to build an effective Arab community in the USA or in any other Western society when the members of this community deny their Arab identity and are divided among themselves. Besides, how can one address the other non-Arab and have a dialogue with him/her when the Arab individual himself lacks the right knowledge about these problems and has no obligation regard them? How can American Arabs encounter the various challenges when their common cultural identity is doubtful to the extent, sometimes, of shunning it in favour of minor identities that give rise to divisions and conflicts inside the Arab communities? ⁵

History of Arab Immigration

The First Arrivals

While accurate information about the arrival of the first Arabs does not exist, records show that some Arabs were brought to the "New World" as part of the slave trade. The first record of slaves arriving to the New World dates back to the first half of the 16th century. Over the next 400 years, many more Arabs, particularly from North African countries, would join the 12-15 million others taken into slavery. Many of these slaves ended up in what would become the states of Georgia and North and South Carolina. It is difficult to ascertain exactly how some of today's Arab Americans are related to these slaves, as slaves were given new names.

With the invention of the steamship and improvements in transportation, interaction between the Arab World and the Americas increased dramatically during the 1800s. Improvements in transportation not only made immigration from Arab countries to the US much faster, easier and safer, it also made it possible for many Americans to visit the Arab World, and particularly the Holy Land. The shortening of distances also led to increased

activity by American missionaries in the Arab World, who encouraged Arab-Christians to further their education in the US.

US World Fairs, popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s, also attracted many Arab craftsmen and merchants from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, who traveled to the US to exhibit their products. Many of these merchants chose to remain in the United States; and, today, they are considered amongst the earliest Arab American immigrants.

The First Wave: 1880s-1920s

During the period 1880-1924, also known as "The Great Migration", a large number of Arabs would immigrate to the United States from what was once known as Greater Syria, which includes present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine. By 1924, approximately 200,000 of these "Syrian" Arabs were living in the United States. The majority of those who came during the Great Migration were Christian-Arab men, with only an estimated 5-10% being Muslim. By 1919, half of the Arab immigrants would include women, which was a much higher proportion than most of the other immigrant groups. The vast majority of these Arab immigrants suffered economic and political hardships in their countries of origin, due to the collapse of the silk trade. Furthermore, most Arab countries at that time were ruled by the Ottoman Empire, which was in serious decline. The people in these countries were heavily taxed and forced to serve in the Ottoman Army. Many of these "first wave" Arab immigrants settled in cities such as New York, Boston, Pittsburgh and Detroit, where peddling, textile and automotive industries promised employment.

Although it is possible to estimate the number of Arab immigrants who arrived in the US during The Great Migration, it is almost impossible to determine an exact number. These numbers are particularly complicated by the haphazard and random ways that Arab immigrants were classified during that period. Because Arab countries are located in both Asia and Africa, and because Arabs do not have common physical traits, Arabs were classified in a range that extended from Greek, Armenian, Turk, Ottoman, African, Asian, and White to European.

Arab immigration, like immigration from all non-European countries, slowed down around 1917. The decline in US economic growth during World War I gave rise to negative popular sentiments and a backlash against immigrants, similar to that which is taking place today. Subsequently, between 1917 and 1924, the US Congress passed several laws including the 1921 Quota Act and the Immigration Act of 1924. These laws established an immigration quota system that placed restrictions on immigrants from all countries except northern and Western Europe.

The Second Wave: 1950s-1960s

The second wave of Arab immigration took place during the post-World War II era, and was significantly more diverse than the first wave. Arab immigrants who arrived in the US during this period included people from Arab countries such as Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and Jordan in addition to Syria and Lebanon. These immigrants were both Christian and Muslim Arabs, many were highly educated, and came from urban middle-class backgrounds. Although strict immigration laws were still in effect, the US made an exception for this desirable group of educated immigrants.

During this same period, two other groups of Arabs made their way to the US. Yemenis, who were mostly unskilled single men, came to work in American shipyards, in the mining and car industries, and as migrant farmers in the valleys of California. A number of Palestinians were also allowed to enter the US as immigrants at this time. Following the creation of the State of Israel and the ensuing influx of Palestinian refugees, the US Congress passed the Refugee Relief Act in 1953, allowing 2,000 Palestinian families to immigrate. Another 985 families were allowed entry between 1958 and 1963. During this period, large numbers of Arab students also began seeking higher education opportunities in the US. Many were offered jobs after graduating and remained.

Unlike earlier groups of Arab immigrants, who specifically identified with their country of origin, village, church or mosque, this wave of immigrants was much more secular in character and imparted a strong sense of a broader Arab identity. They established national pan-Arab organizations

such as the Organization of Arab Students, as well the Association of Arab American University Graduates. It was during this period that the "Arab American" identity began to emerge. This was the time that Arab Americans also began to become more involved in American politics on both the local and national levels.

The Third and Fourth Wave: 1970s-2000

In 1965, the US government changed its immigration laws, largely in response to the civil rights movement. New immigration legislation, known as the Hart-Cellar Act, ended all restrictions based on national origin. Soon after, Arabs would once again join other people from around the world in entering the US as immigrants seeking new lives and opportunities.

This particular wave of Arab immigration would be the most diverse in terms of country of origin, religion and socio-economic status. What further distinguished this wave of Arab immigration was its high percentage of war refugees and asylum seekers, as many of the new Arab immigrants came from areas devastated by long and ongoing conflicts, including Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon.

These immigrants from war-devastated areas were mostly Muslim, urban middle-class merchants and professionals. Moreover, this wave brought immigrants from countries whose people had not historically had a large presence in the US. These included Iraqis, who began to flee their country in droves in the 1990s subsequent to the First Gulf War, the ensuing sanctions and the economic and political hardships that followed.

Historically, immigration from Sudan and Somalia to the United States was also rather limited. However, after the 1990s, these numbers increased significantly as people escaped wars, poverty, droughts and hunger. These particular communities continue to grow in Midwestern cities, today, especially the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota.

Finally, there has been limited immigration from the Arab North African countries of Libya, Tunis, Algeria and Morocco, as North African Arabs tend

to choose French-speaking destinations for immigration. However, of these smaller numbers of North African Arab immigrants to the US, most come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and the majority chose to settle in large urban centers like New York, Washington DC, Los Angeles and Boston.

Immigrant and Non-Immigrant Flows after 9/11/2001

The 9/11 attacks on the United States would prove to be a major turning point, and would have a profound impact on Arab immigration to the United States and in government policy towards Arabs and often Arab Americans. There is an assumption that the immigration of Arabs to the US declined after 9/11. However, the numbers of those admitted as immigrants, and immigrants from Arabic-speaking countries, who became legal permanent residents, have actually remained steady at around 4% of the total number of foreign nationals admitted as immigrants to the United States.

What has dropped drastically after the 9/11 attacks is the number of non-immigrants issued visas and admitted to the United States as tourists, students or temporary workers. The largest drop (70%) has been in the number of tourists and business visas issued to individuals from Arab Gulf countries, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Similarly, the number of student visas issued to individuals from Arabic-speaking countries has also dropped substantially, with the greatest numerical decline (65.3%) associated with student visa applications originating from the Arab Gulf countries. Egypt and the Arab Gulf countries were the hardest hit by tighter restrictions, but individuals applying for non-immigrant visas to the US from Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon have also been affected.

The causes for these declining numbers have not been fully investigated, although it can be argued safely that many are associated with tighter restrictions put into effect to protect "homeland security", particularly measures incorporated into the 2001 Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act (more commonly known as The USA Patriot Act) and its many provisions regarding visa applicants from Arab and Muslim countries. The USA Patriot

Act gave the government even wider inspective power and changed immigration rules to make them more restrictive for applicants from Middle Eastern countries. Furthermore, and as a result of increased monitoring of Arabs and Muslims by the FBI and the NSA, the number of deportations of individuals from Arab and Muslim countries ⁶ increased by 31.4% in the two-year period following 9/11 in the United States ⁷. Delays in visa processes and fears of being discriminated against have also been commonly cited as reasons for the continuing decline in immigration and non-immigrant applications to the US by individuals of Middle Eastern origin. Finally, while the flow of immigrants has remained steady, albeit slow, the number of Arab students and visitors to the US has declined substantially.

Religious Affiliation

Although the majority of individuals from the Arab World are Muslim, most Arab Americans are Christians, and most are either Catholic or Eastern Orthodox. According to a 2002 survey, 24% of Arab Americans are Muslim, 63% are Christian and 13% belong to another religion or do not practice any particular religious faith.

Today, Christian Arab Americans make up 65-70% of the Arab American community. Among these, 35% are Catholics (Maronites, Melkites and Eastern Rite Catholics), 18% are Eastern Orthodox (Antiochian, Syrian, Greek and Coptic), and 10% are Protestant. As previously mentioned, Christian Arabs from Syria, Lebanon and Palestine were amongst the first of the Arab immigrants to settle in the US, as early as 1850, albeit in small numbers. These numbers increased during The Great Migration (1880-1924).

Muslims comprise 25-30% of the Arab American community today. The Muslim Arab American population includes Sunni, Shi'a and Druze. Of the first wave of immigrants from the Arab World to the US, only 5-10% was Muslim. The rate of Muslim immigration to the US increased during the second and third waves of immigration, and subsequently decreased after 2001 in relative proportion to the rise in Islamophobia and the dramatic increase in hate crimes against Muslims⁸. Indeed, Islamophobia has become a political wedge issue, with candidates pandering to irrational fears of Arabs and Muslims, creating public hysteria in opposition to the building of

mosques, Islamic schools and community centers. However, despite this reality, many major metropolitan areas are home to sizable Muslim Arab American communities including Detroit, Chicago, Houston, New York City, Los Angeles and Washington DC.

Education and Work

Education is highly valued by Arabs and Arab Americans, due in part to a deep-rooted respect for scholarship in the Arab World. But, the earlier Arab immigrants (1880-1924) came from rural areas and had very little formal education. They worked long, hard hours in labor-intensive jobs like peddling. They also found work in factories and grocery stores. Meanwhile, many of the Arab immigrants who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s already had a college education and others came as students to obtain college and post-graduate degrees, and then remained in the US.

Today, 85% of Arab Americans have a high school diploma and more than 40% have at least a bachelor's degree. Studies also show that 17% of Arab Americans have a post-graduate degree, compared to the national average of 9%.

In terms of work, many of the early Arab immigrants made a living by peddling, which was one of the most attractive professions at that time because it required no capital or knowledge of English, yet it yielded a relatively high income. Soon after, many became suppliers and service providers, giving up the road and stationing themselves in certain towns along peddling routes to provide peddlers with provisions and places to rest. Some opened grocery stores or produce stands. Other early immigrants found employment in the steel industry in cities such as Birmingham, Alabama, Buffalo, New York and Pittsburgh and Allentown in Pennsylvania. A large Arab American community also established itself around the booming auto industry in the Detroit area.

Today, both Arab American women and men work or are employed in all fields and domains. Similar to the national average, about 60% of Arab American adults are in the labor force, with 5% unemployed. Due to a

focused priority on specialized education, many Arab Americans are in professions such as doctors, lawyers and engineers. 73% of working Arab Americans are employed in managerial, professional, technical, sales or administrative fields. 14% of Americans of Arab descent are employed in service jobs compared to 17% for Americans overall. Most Arab Americans work in the private sector (88%), although 12% are government employees.

Organizations

When Arab immigrants began arriving to the United States in the 1800s, they were a very small minority. Like many immigrants at that time, they lived in their own ethnic enclaves and remained fairly isolated from the American mainstream. Their children, who attended public schools, felt pressure to assimilate into mainstream American culture. Many Arab Americans changed their names, and spoke their native language and enjoyed their food only within the confines of their homes. However, despite the pressure to assimilate, Arab Americans found ways to preserve their culture and to serve their communities. As early as the late 1800s, Arab Americans created social and political institutions and organizations to meet their needs as immigrants, American citizens, activists and professionals.

They also established Arabic-language radio shows and newspapers to keep themselves and their communities informed and connected. For example, the first Arabic newspaper was published in the US in 1892. By 1930, there were 50 Arabic publications. Early Arab Americans organized religious and cultural institutions and clubs to socialize with those from their hometown and to help newcomers adjust to life in America. Examples of early Arab American organizations included the Syrian Ladies Society of New York, which was established in 1907 and was dissolved only in 2000; the Southern Federation of Syrian Lebanese American Clubs founded in 1931; and the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada established in 1952.

As early as 1930, Arab Americans began organizing annual festivals and conventions where people came from all over the country to spend a few days together. One of the largest of these annual festivals is held by the

American Federation of Ramallah (also known as the Ramallah Federation), which attracts almost 4,000 people annually who trace their roots back to the town of Ramallah, Palestine.

After the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a significant increase in the number of political and social organizations established by and for Arab Americans, both to improve political participation and to better serve the communities in which Arab Americans live. One such organization is the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). Founded in 1971 by a group of volunteers in Dearborn, Michigan, ACCESS has grown into the largest Arab American human services institution in the United States. Other important national political Arab American organizations include the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Arab American Institute (AAI), both founded in the 1980s. Examples of professional organizations include the National Arab American Medical Association (NAAMA), the Network of Arab-American Professionals (NAAP), the Arab Bankers Association of North America (ABANA), and the Arab and Middle Eastern Journalists Association (AMEJA), amongst others.

Conclusions

Arab Americans have been an integral part of American society for centuries. The first cohesive group of Arab immigrants came to the US during The Great Migration (1880-1924), and was comprised mostly of Christian villagers from Syria and Lebanon, with fewer numbers coming from Palestine. Others came after World War II and were mostly urban, educated, middle class professionals. Since the 1970s, a new wave of immigrants arrived, and continues to arrive, mostly from Arab countries devastated by conflicts.

Today, with a population estimated at 4.2 million, Arab Americans are an extremely diverse group that can be found in every state and in every profession in the United States. To stay connected, Arab Americans have built their own political, cultural and social networks, services and organizations, which help new immigrants with adjusting to their new lives in America, or fight discrimination or promote the involvement and participation of Arab Americans in political processes. It is certain that the weakness in the Arab

identity will result in a weak role for the Arab community in the USA, as well as in its responsibility in publicizing the right information about the Arab issues. Besides, lacking of an agreement on the nature of "Arab identity" on behalf of the Arab immigrants is likely to make them active only in limited sectarian fields that belittle their status and effect and is apt to turn them away from the priorities of expected activities. This means that they become only concerned with the people coming from their own country or belonging to their religion. In such a case, a one and unified Arab or Muslim community is impossible to form, which means that having a common and effective activity in the American or Western society in general is impossible.⁹

PART III: THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN THE UNITED STATES

The Palestinian community is a large and vibrant component in American society, and constitutes an important bridge between the Middle East and the United States, as Palestinians are amongst the most active of all the Arab Americans. They are deeply conscious of their heritage and their engagement with Palestine, the Palestinian people and their national aspirations. Recent statistics indicate that in line with the general trend of Arab Americans, more than 80% of Palestinians in the US have citizenship¹⁰, which allows for the remainder of this research to refer to them as "Palestinian Americans".

Palestinian Presence in the US

The precise size of the Palestinian community in the United States is the subject of some speculation and debate since, like most Arab Americans, Palestinians are simply classified as "White" in most US Census Bureau statistics, not to mention the fact that the US Immigration and Naturalization Service has only rarely recognized "Palestinian" as a nationality. In the 1980 Census, the first in which respondents had an opportunity to list their ancestry, only 21,288 individuals listed "Palestinian". Meanwhile, the Palestinian Statistical Abstract for 1983 listed 108,045 Palestinians as living in the US¹¹. In 2000, for the first time, the Census Bureau attempted to measure the Palestinian presence through the "long form" used by a small minor-

ity of respondents, and concluded from this very limited data that there were 72,112 Palestinian Americans living in the United States. Other educated estimates differ, placing the number of Palestinians living in the US at around a more reasonable 200,000 figure¹². This figure, in fact, seems to account rather accurately for the statistical remark according to which "the Census Bureau identifies only a portion of the Arab population through the question on 'ancestry' on the census long form, causing an undercount by a factor of about 3".¹³

Based on a State-by-State profile on Americans of Arab descent, it was possible to draw the following table, accounting in detail for the Palestinian presence on US soil.¹⁴

STATE (in alphabetical order)	NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS	% ON TOTAL ARAB ANCESTRY POPULATION
ALABAMA	440	4%
ALASKA	45	3%
ARIZONA	310	1%
ARKANSAS	250	5%
CALIFORNIA	19075	7%
COLORADO	685	4%
CONNECTICUT	190	1%
DELAWARE	120	4%
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	216	6%
FLORIDA	6000	6%
GEORGIA	270	1%
HAWAII	50	3%
IDAHO	50	2%
ILLINOIS	9400	11%
INDIANA	600	4%
IOWA	120	2%
KANSAS	320	4%
KENTUCKY	475	5%
LOUISIANA	1170	7%
MAINE	44	1%
MARYLAND	1530	6%
MASSACHUSETTS	650	1%
MICHIGAN	3800	2%
MINNESOTA	1000	5%
MISSISSIPPI	270	4%
MISSOURI	865	5%
MONTANA	35	2%
NEBRASKA	170	2%
NEVADA	250	2%
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	
NEW JERSEY	4300	5%
NEW MEXICO	90	2%
NEW YORK	5990	4%

NORTH CAROLINA	610	3%
NORTH DAKOTA	0	
OHIO	4600	7%
OKLAHOMA	445	4%
OREGON	555	4%
PENNSYLVANIA	1825	3%
PUERTO RICO	535	22%
RHODE ISLAND	90	1%
SOUTH CAROLINA	320	3%
SOUTH DAKOTA	20	1%
TENNESSEE	1180	5%
TEXAS	6410	7%
UTAH	290	5%
VERMONT	25	1%
VIRGINIA	2825	5%
WASHINGTON	1180	6%
WEST VIRGINIA	55	1%
WISCONSIN	1190	11%
WYOMING	12	3%
TOTAL	80947	

Projecting the statistical undercount factor of 3 on the total listed in the table below, we find that the number of Palestinians living in the United States would reasonably fall within the range of 200,000-250,000.

Trends in Palestinian Immigration

The colonial partition of Greater Syria after the end of WW I (Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916) and the subsequent failure by regional and international actors to establish and recognize the state of Palestine, up until now, which immigrants can call their country of origin, is one of the reasons why a more precise figure for Palestinian immigrants cannot be determined. In US Immigration and Census records up to 1920, all Arabs, Turks, Armenians, amongst others, were classified as coming from «Turkey in Asia». Moreover, not until recently did the Immigration and Naturalization Service recognize «Palestinian» as a nationality. Otherwise, Palestinian immigrants were historically recorded as having come from: 1) Within current Israel («Palestinians from 1948», as they are known within Palestinian communities) or the occupied territories; 2) One of the Arab countries that received refugees from the Arab-Israeli wars, especially Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria; 3) Another country to which Palestinians immigrated in search of economic opportunity.

Palestine's unique political history makes it difficult to determine exactly when the first Palestinians immigrated to the United States, and how many came. Most sources refer to Arab immigrants, in general, and indicate that, while a small number of Palestinians, mainly Christian, came to the United States before 1948, the vast majority have arrived since then.

As with many other Arab Americans, Palestinian immigration to the United States began in earnest at the end of the 19th century, in direct response to economic and political «push factors» in their home country. Arab immigrants were a significant part of The Great Migration, the period in US history between 1880 and 1924, when more than 20 million immigrants entered the country. Some Middle Eastern Arabs immigrated to the United States after 1908, the year the Ottoman Empire began mandatory military service for its subjects in certain areas. The majority of these individuals were Christians from present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine, as Muslims were more fearful of cultural assimilation in Western society. By 1924, there were approximately 200,000 Arab Americans living in the United States, many of them tracing their origins back to Palestine.

The early Arab immigrants settled all over the country, often peddling wares door-to-door before opening shops and businesses. The pioneers amongst these immigrants were primarily young men, whose families followed when positive reports were received or when individuals returned home with proof of their success. Many of these immigrants came to the United States for economic reasons, in search of enough wealth to allow them to return to their homelands, and live comfortably there. Yet, many ended up staying and became American citizens due to the political, social and economic instability that characterized their countries of origin throughout the 20th century.

Increased tensions during the British Mandate for Palestine (1922-1948) and continuing Jewish migration to Palestine from Europe eventually induced Muslim Palestinian migration. However, the restrictive Immigration Act of 1924, which reflected the isolationism prevalent in America between the World Wars, along with the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, served to reduce immigration significantly during the second quarter of the century. However, the aftermath of World War II and the Arab-Israeli war following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, and the consequent displacement of about 700,000 indigenous Palestinians, brought greater numbers of Palestinian immigrants, most of whom were refugees, to the United States.

The third and greatest wave of Palestinian immigration began after the Six Day War in 1967, when the whole of Palestine fell under Israeli military control. This final wave, unlike other mainly "economic" Arab immigration, was punctuated by dramatic civilian dislocation and flight, which has continued to the present day. In 1970, many Palestinians migrated to the US following the Palestinian-Jordanian debacle, also known as "Black September", and the strained relations that ensued in the wake of this crisis. Emigration again increased in 1982, in response to the deteriorating conditions of Palestinian life in Lebanon after the Israeli occupation, the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Sabra and Shatila massacres. By 1985, the Palestinian American community was estimated at approximately 90,000. By the end of the decade, the community had nearly doubled. The final link in this chain of misfortunes was the First Gulf War (1990) and the expulsion

of Palestinians from Kuwait and most of the other Arab Gulf States.

Since 1948, immigration to the United States has attracted Palestinians suffering from the economic, political and social upheavals brought about by the contraction of local options for refuge. But unlike early immigrants from Palestine, those who came to the US after 1967 were much better educated as a result of the UN-sponsored schools and increased attendance at all the universities in the Middle East. These Palestinians came to the US in search of better economic and higher educational opportunities. Thus, many in this third wave of immigrants were professionals, who ended up filling relevant positions in American society ¹⁵.

Distribution of Palestinian Communities

The majority of early Palestinian immigrants initially settled on the East Coast, before industrial jobs prior to and after World War II drew these immigrants, amongst many others, to urban industrial centers in the Midwest. Later, other opportunities drew immigrants all the way to the West Coast. Today, the largest concentrations of Palestinian Americans are in New York and parts of New Jersey, Detroit, San Francisco, Chicago and Jacksonville, Florida (see table on page 21-22).

New York Metropolitan Area ¹⁶

Community leaders estimate there are 30,000 Palestinians in the New York Metropolitan area. Although New York City is symbolic in its large population of pro-Zionist Jews that have also achieved great power, wealth and success, Palestinians have still managed to establish their own closely knit and active community in the area.

Palestinians first came to New York City in the 1880s, with small numbers of refugees also arriving after the 1948 Nakba. Up until the mid-1960s, Palestinian immigrants were an evenly distributed sample of the Palestinian Diaspora, with refugees from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine all being represented. But the majority of Palestinian immigrants in the New York Metropolitan area came after the 1967 occupation of the West Bank, mainly

from Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, and their surrounding villages, with the numbers of these immigrants peaking in the second half of the 1980s and in the early 1990s. Most came in search of better opportunities for themselves and their families, far from the violence and grim future prospected to them by the Israeli occupation. However, tightened immigration policy following the 9/11 attacks has significantly reduced Palestinian entry to the United States.

The largest Palestinian community (in the New York area/in the US) lives in the Paterson, New Jersey area, where Main Street is also known as "Little Ramallah", and where Palestinians run their own well-established businesses in the most diverse trade sectors. The Bay Ridge area of Brooklyn between 4th and 8th Avenue and 60th and 80th Street also hosts a large community, with their businesses located along 5th Avenue and Ovington. At the same time, many families in search of quieter neighborhoods are beginning to move to Staten Island to the northeast New Brighton area.

An estimated 95% of the Palestinian population in the New York Metropolitan area is Muslim (Sunni), with the remaining 5% being Christian (mainly Eastern Orthodox). However, the first allegiance of Palestinians is typically to their Palestinian identity.

The Chicago Area ¹⁷

Palestinians began migrating to Chicago in the late 19th century. They were a significant part of the contingent of "Syrian" Arab traders at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, selling religious artifacts, textiles and handicrafts from the Holy Land. Arab migration to the United States and Chicago increased between 1890 and 1921, until overseas migration to the United States was halted by immigration quotas.

But while the Syrians and Lebanese were largely Christians, the Palestinians settling in Chicago were mostly Muslims. Many of the former brought their families over before immigration quotas took hold; the Palestinians failing to do so remained largely an all-male community until after World War II. Early Palestinian immigrants lived either in boarding houses or behind

their small retail shops on Chicago's South Side. From the beginning of The Great Migration of black southerners to the North, Palestinians developed a trading niche in the emerging black communities on the South Side, selling food and dry goods as street peddlers or shopkeepers. By the early 1970s, they owned nearly 20% of all small grocery stores in Chicago, most located in African American communities. Today Palestinians, while still maintaining this niche market, have also diversified into used-car dealerships, gas stations, auto repair shops, ethnic stores and fast-food restaurants, serving mostly "minority" communities.

In the 1950s, most Palestinians with families moved into apartments and homes just west of Chicago's "Black Belt." By the 1970s, they formed a concentrated residential community in Gage Park and Chicago Lawn, on the South Side, and had established a business district with stores catering to Arab clientele. Chicago's largest concentration of Palestinians still lives in these areas and in the communities to the south and west of them. In the 1980s, many upwardly mobile Palestinian families moved to the southwest suburbs, increasing the Palestinian population in those areas.

A minor Palestinian Christian community established a presence in Chicago in the 1960s, settling in a widely dispersed area on the North Side. Primarily Greek Orthodox by religion, Palestinian Christians concentrated on the retail trade and operated businesses on the North, South and West Sides of the city.

Palestinian migration to Chicago, both Muslim and Christian, has increased steadily since the late 1960s. It is largely comprised of extended families from the West Bank, where Israeli military occupation since 1967 has stimulated extensive Palestinian emigration. Yet, due to the nature of local immigration patterns, to this day, Chicago hosts the largest and arguably most influential concentration of Muslim Palestinians in the United States. This local Palestinian community was also the main contributor to a large mosque built in Chicago's Bridgeview suburb in the 1970s. However, regardless of religious affiliation, a refugee identity firmly prevails amongst Palestinians living in the Chicago area, as it does amongst all Palestinians living in Diaspora.

The Detroit Area ¹⁸

The Detroit Metropolitan area has always been a favorite destination of Palestinian immigration, as it offers the largest concentration of ethnic Arabs and a community that provides newcomers with an already existing social network and familiar way of life, as it happens in the all-Arab town of Dearborn. Already-settled Palestinian communities provide primary group support in order to supply new immigrants with the facilities to settle, find work and adjust to the American system.

The auto industry and its allied economic opportunities in Detroit attracted Arab immigrants early in the 20th century, with Christian and Muslim Palestinians having lived and worked in Detroit since the early 1930s. However, their numbers would grow significantly after 1948. By the 1960s, this community had swollen to include all social strata and a large number of politicized and educated newcomers. These Palestinians hailed from rural areas seeking economic opportunities and refuge, and from middle-class families seeking higher education and professional opportunities.

Although no exact figures exist on the number of Palestinians living in the Detroit Metropolitan area, educated estimates suggest that the ratio of Muslims to Christians is nearly equal. Initially establishing their communities within the boundaries of Detroit, Muslim and Christian Palestinians gradually developed different settlement patterns. The most common form of immigration was through the sponsorship of family members amongst whom the first newcomer had set roots. The socioeconomic background of immigrants would dictate the area of settlement and their later mobility. Muslims initially congregated in Highland Park and the south end of Dearborn, and with improved economic conditions, they moved northward into Dearborn. The Christians initially settled in Detroit and then moved to the western suburbs of Westland, Livonia and Farmington Hills. Although, today, Palestinian presence in Detroit is minimal, many Palestinians, especially Christians, started their lives there.

San Francisco and the Bay Area ¹⁹

The San Francisco-Bay Area's Palestinian community, with an estimated 20,000 members, is one of the largest of its kind in the US. The San Francisco community, like the city itself, has a unique personality. It is a close - knit and exceptionally active politically and socially. Until the 1960s, Arab and Palestinian immigration to the US was motivated by economic factors and limited by legal restrictions. Thereafter, immigration was sought for other reasons. Although economic considerations remain a significant incentive, education, technical opportunities, and a more liberal political atmosphere, especially like that which is found in the Bay Area known for its widespread support for civil rights, became important factors motivating Palestinian immigration.

At a time when older communities had almost become acclimatized to the US social and political scenes, a younger generation of Palestinian immigrants, socialized and politicized in the Arab world of the 1950s and 1960s, made their way through the United States to San Francisco and the West Coast. These were students seeking technical and professional training, and families looking for better opportunities in a more liberal atmosphere. These newcomers brought energy and zeal into an already established Palestinian community and reinvigorated its features with new political and social orientations. Today, the San Francisco-Bay Area is host to an extremely dynamic movement of young Palestinian Americans, who have embraced a radical political discourse of liberation and return, aimed at reuniting the Palestinian people, possibly, if not explicitly, around a one-state solution and framework. Some of the more noteworthy youth associations and organizations in the area include the local branch of the transnational Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM) and the recently established United States Palestinian Community Network (USPCN), with its central offices based in San Francisco.

The majority of Palestinians in the San Francisco-Bay Area, as elsewhere in the country, are professionals or small businesspeople. Many are grocery or liquor store owners, with 95% of the area's 600 small groceries said to be Palestinian- owned. The community's level of education is high, as it

is amongst all the Palestinians dispersed throughout the world. There are social clubs for the natives of various West Bank towns, such as the local branch of the Ramallah Club, with social-club gatherings and church and mosque socials having a distinctly political flavor, which helps constitute this close knit community that incessantly strives, along with millions of other Diaspora Palestinians, for the recognition of the basic and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Characteristics of the Palestinian American Community

If Palestinian Americans are difficult to pinpoint numerically, they are anything but politically indistinct. As noted in Christison's 1988 research, first-generation Palestinian immigrants tend to rapidly adjust to American society and yet, they remain, to an unusual degree amongst immigrant communities, highly conscious of and deeply involved in the politics of their native land. Even more unusual is the fact that American-born second and third generations of Palestinians exhibit a high and growing degree of political consciousness and ethnic pride. This political consciousness tends to affect their degree of political acculturation. For Palestinians, submerging their political identity in order to become "fully American" has been impossible. This uncommon-for-a-refugee-community attachment to their homeland is no doubt linked to the political repression, displacement, foreign occupation and mass expropriation of land that Palestinians have been experiencing for over 60 years. As Christison puts it, "because there is Palestinian land but no homeland, because that land is under foreign occupation, and because Palestinians have refused to accede to that occupation without some political compensation, there is, for a great many Palestinians, a sense of incompleteness in the adoption of any other homeland, a sense of something still to come that perpetuates the vision of a foreign homeland and thereby differentiates them from other immigrant Americans".²⁰

Integration, Alienation and Assimilation

Palestinian Americans for the most part have adapted quickly and successfully to American society while retaining a remarkable level of awareness

and involvement in the culture and politics of their homeland.

Alienation seems to be rare among Palestinian Americans, though it does exist for certain segments of the population. Older Palestinians who are supported by their grown children tend not to integrate because they do not need to learn English to survive; they mostly socialize within their own groups and have the least amount of contact with the rest of American culture. Women, more than men, are more prone to remain on the margins of American society because, in many cases, they are kept from the mainstream culture in order to perform their role as the main protectors and transmitters of Palestinian culture to their children.

Others are simply more tradition-bound and for religious and cultural reasons oppose many of the customs and trends that are more common in the dominant culture (more open sexuality and relations, alcohol consumption, less emphasis on traditional family structures, etc.). They worry about raising their children in the United States, especially girls, and some even resort to sending their children back to the Middle East for their education during what are deemed critical teenage years.

In most cases, the majority of Palestinians are reasonably comfortable in the US, but regard their condition as American citizens more as a temporary respite on the path towards full and officially recognized Palestinian identity and "citizenship". This is particularly true with second and third generation Palestinians. While the conventional wisdom about the American-born children of immigrants is that they reject their parents' ethnicity in their effort to become fully American, for the most part, this tends not to be true with young Palestinians. Young Palestinian Americans bear many of the stigmas of complete assimilation, such as difficulties speaking in their mother tongue, the ability to speak impeccable English, marrying or socializing with non-Arabs; yet, they have not lost their acute sense of Palestinian identity. Moreover, they appear quite capable of handling their dual identity comfortably, particularly as the Palestinian struggle continues to gain increasing visibility and more popular support as a political issue.

Politics and Activism

Though Palestinian Americans have experienced a generally smooth transition to their new American culture, many feel unsettled because of the ongoing conflict and the continued occupation of their homeland, and the failure to establish a viable Palestinian state. Ironically, it is for the lack of a sovereign Palestinian state that Palestinian Americans tend to be acutely conscious and committed to the Palestinian culture and cause.

Violent episodes have marked the history of the Palestinian presence in the United States, causing Palestinian Americans to feel they are often the subjects of ethnic prejudice and political stereotyping. For instance, in 1985, the Palestinian director of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Alex Odeh, was assassinated in Los Angeles; and, in 1987, seven Palestinian resident aliens and the Kenyan wife of one of these men, who came to be known as the "L.A. Eight", were arrested and put through deportation proceedings on charges of belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a large faction within the PLO, which is considered a subversive organization inside the United States.²¹ 9/11 and the subsequent wave of Islamophobia did not make things easier for Palestinians and raised doubts about their safety and constitutional rights in the United States. But Palestinians generally respond with outstanding aplomb to such challenges, which serve to reinforce their sense of Palestinian identity rather than an unhealthy attitude towards America.

In this same context, it is important to differentiate between political activism and political consciousness. In general, most Palestinian Americans, like most Americans, are not politically active. For example, they do not actively partake in protests and demonstrations or write letters to their congressmen. At the same time, it is rare to find a Palestinian who is ignorant of the origins of the Palestinian problem or unaware of the political issues involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Palestinian Americans tend to be more active in church or mosque groups and social organizations, particularly local associations, than in explicitly political organizations. But, it remains difficult to draw the line between the social and the political, or to say with any certainty that a social gathering is not by its very occurrence a political

statement. Moreover, the family networks and village ties that held Palestinian society together before 1948 appear to continue to function in the Diaspora through a wide array of popular organizations, which will be examined in more detail later in this research, and which have served to forge a common political identity for this community.

U.S. Policy in Palestine and the Middle East

The genesis of this rich landscape of political, cultural and social actors, cementing the common identity of Palestinians inside the United States is also inextricably tied to the history of US policy on the Palestinian issue.

Since the inception of the Palestinian issue, with the birth of the State of Israel and the consequent displacement or the Nakba suffered by millions of Palestinians in 1948, the United States government has been unwavering in its view that the establishment of the Jewish State was a historical necessity. This unwavering view has been coupled by a commitment to support this state by all means possible. John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, described this position best while still in his post at the United Nations in 1948 where he admits that "while the United States acknowledged the birth of Israel involved certain injustices to the Arab States. The situation was not one where there was any solution that was totally just to all concerned. Nevertheless, there had to be a solution and, we believed, a peaceful solution... Therefore, our policy could be looked upon... as completing one phase of a historical development which, when completed, would permit of better relations than ever before with the Arab States".²²

As the interests of the United States were tied more to certain Arab States than to the stateless Palestinians, the latter remained off the American political agenda throughout the 1950s and most of the 1960s. The Palestinians were not considered in any given political context, nor did the American public have any informed knowledge about the historic tragedy that had befallen these people, especially with the hold that pro-Zionist media outlets (in cinema, television and the publishing industry) had on the hearts and minds of the American public. The Nazi experience in Europe and the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, with its recurrent wars (1948 , 1956 & 1967)

legitimized the notion that Jews, innocent victims of Hitler's regime and the victims of European persecution, in general, must have a strong state to protect them from further persecution inflicted, this time, by the Arabs. This led to the political demonization and dismissal of the Palestinians in the 1950s and 1960s, with an entire generation of American policymakers thinking it is unnecessary to learn the Palestinian story, and lacking any formidable knowledge on the Palestinians, as a people.

Throughout the Eisenhower, the Kennedy and the Johnson administrations, the Palestinians were superficially and erroneously categorized as "Arab refugees", and were only one small part of a larger picture in which the US thought it wisest to maintain a neutral position with respect to the interests of Arab states. For instance, the Eisenhower administration encouraged resettlement schemes for the Palestinian refugees,²³ but the future status of the Palestinians was only considered in the context of maintaining US influence in the balance of power in the region with the Soviet Union. There was little sense that a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict necessitated, first and foremost, addressing the national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

During his mandate, President Kennedy was sympathetic to aspiring nationalisms throughout the world and pursued the friendship of Arab leaders, with the promise of putting America's best efforts towards a resolution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. His administration also offered various resettlement schemes for these "Arab refugees". However, again, the Palestinians themselves were absent from any discussion. In fact, the seeds for the close and enduring ties between the US and Israel were planted with the Kennedy administration. Kennedy was the first US President to authorize selling military armaments to Israel in 1963, ending a 15-year military embargo on the Arabs and the Israelis. He was also the first president to affirm the US had a "special relationship" with Israel, and the first to grant the Jewish community singular access to the White House.

President Lyndon B. Johnson took the nature of this relationship to a higher level. He turned a blind eye to Israel's diversion of the Jordan River in 1964 and went beyond Kennedy's position on the embargo by supplying the Is-

raeli army with quantitatively and qualitatively superior military assistance and weaponry.²⁴ He had little understanding of the Arab world, and soon developed a personal dislike for Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, whose sharp and defiant rhetoric contrasted with Israel's loyalty and friendliness towards the United States. The Johnson administration began to look at Israel for stability in the region and considered the newly-formed PLO little more than a proxy organization created to serve the interests of its Arab patron, Egypt. Johnson's circle of friends and advisers also included several Israelis and influential supporters of Israel, whose opinions were particularly critical in shaping US Middle Eastern policy after the 1967 War and the subsequent occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. And, while the PLO emerged as the first and sole organized resistance movement to establish a political agenda for the Palestinian people in the aftermath of 1967, American policymakers still failed to see Palestinian national aspirations as being at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Instead they moved closer to Israel and further from the Palestinians.

This status quo remained throughout the two terms of Nixon's presidency (1969-1977), and although Richard Nixon had no particular attachment to Israel, his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, did. Kissinger was an avid friend and an adviser to Israel. This influential statesman's strategy and his policies on Cold War globalism prevailed throughout Nixon's mandate (and beyond). This policy stance viewed Israel as the most important ally against Soviet encroachment in the oil rich region and against the rise of Arab leftist and national movements. Because US interests were deeply embedded in a policy of frustrating Soviet advances in the region, little attention was paid to the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the conventional wisdom about this conflict was unquestioningly accepted.

The struggle for power between King Hussein of Jordan and Palestinian guerrilla organizations, which erupted into a semi-civil war in September 1970 (also known as 'Black September'), would further reinforce the notion that Israel was an invaluable and strategic asset in the region, in its readiness to intervene at the immediate request and behalf of the US. The underlying causes of the ongoing conflict lost value in the eyes of US policymakers and aid to Israel skyrocketed. Following the 1967 War and Black

September in 1970, military credit extended to Israel increased ten-fold from 1971 to 1973. During the October 1973 War, this military aid increased exponentially to \$2.2 billion .²⁵

Despite the growing popularity of the PLO and its leadership in the popular struggle against the Israeli occupier, and despite the PLO's attempts to impose its very existence on Western public opinion throughout the 1970s, through both diplomatic and armed action, the United States remained wary of Palestinian aspirations and initiatives, and rejected any conciliatory advances in the discourse presented by the PLO and its allies.

Successive American governments remained strongly bound to its regional ally. When the Palestinian issue began to make inroads as the "heart of the conflict", a demonizing rhetoric was used against the PLO. Israel's supporters sought to delegitimize the PLO as the Palestinian's political representative, and the organization came to be viewed in popular perceptions and in policy-making circles as a terrorist organization. By the mid-1970s, the United States' anti-Palestinian view was wholly embodied in its policy stance towards the PLO.

Jimmy Carter was the first American president to draw Palestinians from their political marginalization. Carter regarded the Palestinians as a disenfranchised people whose aspirations and position had been ignored as a major factor in perpetuating the conflict in the Middle East .²⁶ He frequently and openly referred to the need for a Palestinian homeland²⁷, and used the terms 'PLO' and 'Palestinians' interchangeably, causing several rifts and crises in diplomatic relations. He firmly believed that a just solution to the conflict could only be found by involving all the parties concerned in the negotiating process. He did not share the American abhorrence for the PLO, and repeatedly invoked the right of the Palestinians to be presented at the negotiating table.

However, the traditional pro-Israeli frame of reference would prevail, and Carter's position would not triumph over the powerful pro-Zionist and pro-Israeli lobby operating on Capitol Hill and in the American mainstream. Despite this pressure, when the right-wing Menachem Begin was elected as Israel's prime minister in 1977, and Carter was pressured to consent to Begin's

aggressive settlement policies, Carter would remain an honest broker in the conflict. He put forth tireless effort in trying to convince the PLO to accept UN Resolution 242 and to concede to at least an implicit recognition of Israel's right to exist, in order to reach a meaningful resolution to the Palestinian problem. But, when the PLO refused to submit to the script demanded by the United States without obtaining reciprocal concessions from Israel, Carter's efforts began to concede to settling for what he believed was an attainable rather than ideal peace. The 1978 Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, which was successfully negotiated by Carter, was viewed by Carter himself as being a mere temporary settlement that still ignored the core issue of the Palestinian people's national aspirations. Despite this failure, Carter is credited with introducing the aspirations of the Palestinian people to the Americans as a legitimate cause.

These advances would be mitigated by the Reagan administration that followed Carter's, which immediately reset the course for a marked setback in US policy towards the Palestinians. Reagan came to office in 1981 as a strong supporter of Israel. He was never interested in a neutral approach to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Supporters of Israel filled virtually every portfolio in Reagan's foreign policy team, while committed pro-Israeli activists occupied key lower level positions in his administration. The attention paid to the Palestinian issue by Carter had raised alarms amongst the pro-Israeli Jewish community and Israel's supporters, and led to an upsurge in pro-Israeli public relations campaigns combined with a renewed effort to delegitimize and, in some cases, even deny the existence of Palestinians.

Grassroots support for the powerful Israeli lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), reached unprecedented levels as its membership and budget quadrupled between 1980 and 1987. Without fear of reprisals and with no constraints from the US, Israel's grip on the territories occupied in 1967 tightened and the settler population quadrupled during Reagan's first six years in office.

Although American policymakers could not totally ignore the Palestinians after Carter, the Reagan administration committed itself to ignoring their national aspirations and to excluding the PLO from any peace process. In

keeping with the spirit of this policy, Reagan utterly refused to acknowledge the PLO's role as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and rebuffed any conciliatory initiatives put forth by its leadership. The Cold War was still the priority in United States policy, and Israel represented its most loyal and valuable ally in the region within the context of this policy.

Ironically, the administration most adamantly opposed to negotiating with the PLO would be the one that eventually authorized dialogue with the organization. This change in tack was the outcome of shifting public opinion and unprecedented levels of public sympathy towards the Palestinians after the eruption of the First Intifada in 1987. Consequently, peace initiatives launched at the end of the 1980s eventually concluded in the 1993 Oslo Accords in 1993²⁸ and in the creation of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a semi-state and governmental entity with limited control over the West Bank and Gaza²⁹. Amongst other controversial achievements, the Oslo Accords led to a higher level of recognition and an elevation of the PLO's official and juridical status within US territory.

Elliot Abrams, who served as Senior Director on the National Security Council for Near East and North African Affairs, believes that George W. Bush was the first American president who had clearly adopted the two-state solution as a basis for a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli struggle. The Camp David Accords that were signed by President Carter did not include any articles regarding the necessity of the establishment of a Palestinian state, while President Reagan had refused such a solution and President George H.W. Bush had an ambiguous stance on the matter. Even President Clinton's speech in 2000 about the Palestinian state did not represent the official position of the USA.³⁰

President George W. Bush believed that separating Palestine and Israel would serve the interests of the two states, only if the Palestinian state adhered to peace and democracy. Bush believed that the first obstacle in the way of this concept is Yaser Arafat's leadership. The American Administration had accused Arafat of supporting terrorism and corruption; it was, therefore, impossible to find a Palestinian state unless Arafat quitted and a

new leadership that would take upon itself fighting terrorism and founding a democratic regime was freely elected.³¹

President Obama had repeated the US support of the Israeli security, as if Israel had been a weak third-world state that was surrounded with strong enemies. Israel, however, has been for many years the receiver of the most generous American support that reaches \$8.5 billion per day in military aid only, or a fabulous total of \$3,102,500,000 in 2012. Nothing, on the other hand, is granted to Israel's enemy, Palestine, in military aid.³²

Like other Arabs in the USA, Palestinians in general, do well in their individual businesses but fail in collective activities. This may be due to the political divisions regarding present Arab problems, or it may be due to lack of experience in institutional work, where the ego is always dominant. It may also be due to negative attitude toward common and organized work, where success of the other is considered one's own failure. True it is that in the USA there are numerous active centers, institutions and societies with Palestinian names, some of which are named after Palestinian villages and towns. Still there is no continued coordination between them, which makes them good in singing alone, but unable to be part of an orchestra. No matter what the reasons that stand behind lack of organized and collective activity in the American field, this has become a gravely negative condition that should not continue, especially at a stage where the Palestinian Cause has become marginalized on both the international and Arab levels, while Israel continues in its settlement and Judiazation projects in the occupied Palestinian territories.³³

The PLO in the United States

When the PLO was established in 1964, it was not officially recognized by the United States. However, an unofficial PLO Information Office was established in New York and was administered by Sadat Hassan, who also served as the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations. In the meantime, a certain level of relations between the US government and the PLO continued to exist from the 1970s onward. After Oslo, relations between Palestine as represented by the PNA and the United States also

continued, but not as diplomatic relations in the traditional sense. Since the United States still does not recognize Palestine as a state, the US government remains very cautious not to define relations with the PNA as fully diplomatic.

Although the PLO's diplomatic contacts with Western European and Third World countries steadily expanded in the middle of the 1970s, the PLO's insistence on the right of the Palestinian people to armed resistance against the occupation, its political vision of liberation, and its claim to the right of return for Palestinian refugees prevented it from making diplomatic headway with consecutive US administrations. At the same time, the US government still considered the PLO and its dominant political wing, Fatah, both of which were under Yasser Arafat's leadership, as being terrorist organizations. Consequently, the US would not support Palestinian aspirations at the UN, and US diplomats in the Middle East and elsewhere were under explicit orders by the State Department to avoid all contact with Yasser Arafat or any other form of representation on his behalf. For instance, US Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, was forced to resign in 1979, after meeting with his counterpart from the PLO in a brief, unofficial meeting.

In 1975, Washington also agreed to a demand made by the Israeli government that the PLO explicitly recognize the State of Israel as a precondition to any dealings with the PLO's representatives. This agreement was in line with US policy first formulated by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, also in 1975, which was to reject any dialogue with the PLO until it accepted UN Resolution 242 and recognized Israel's right to exist. As the PLO did not make such recognition explicit, at that time, the US government refrained from any official relations with the PLO, and the PLO was not allowed representation or offices on US soil, except for the PLO Mission to the United Nations, which falls outside the jurisdiction of the laws of the United States.

President Jimmy Carter offered a change in the American attitude towards the Palestinians and their national aspirations. Soon after coming to office in 1977, Carter advocated the creation of a Palestinian state; and, in 1978, the PLO was allowed to establish the Palestine Information Office in Washington DC. The Palestine Information Office was registered with the Justice

Department of the United States as a foreign agent until 1988, when it was closed following the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act in December 1987 under President Ronald Reagan. This act classified the PLO as a terrorist organization and prohibited all of its activities, except for the dissemination of information, on US territories. However, a series of court rulings in the United States repealed this prohibition, although stricter monitoring of the office's activities was permitted by the courts.

Following the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in November 1988, the PLO publicly recognized Israel, and official channels of dialogue were opened between the PLO and the US government. In 1989, the Palestine Information Office was renamed the Palestine Affairs Center, which maintained this status until 1994 when it became the PLO Mission to the United States, after the Oslo Accords were signed by Israel and the PLO in September 1993. The PLO Mission became the official representative of the PLO in the United States. On July 20, 2010, the United States State Department agreed to upgrade the status of the PLO Mission in the United States to "General Delegation of the PLO".

The following representatives led the PLO Mission since 1978:

- Hatem Hussein: 1978-1982
- Hassan Abdel Rahman: 1982-1991
- Anees Barghouti: 1991-1993
- Hassan Abdel Rahman: 1993-2005
- Afif Safieh: 2005-2008
- Maen Rashid Areikat: May 2009-Present

Palestinian Organizations in the United States

Lacking any form of official representation in the United States for over three decades, Palestinians in the United States became extremely active in establishing their own representative institutions, which had both political and socio-cultural functions.³⁴ Palestinian Americans were instrumental in the development and establishment of the first Arab American political organizations such as the Arab American University Graduates (AAUG) and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). With the experience gained over time and through their active participation in the broader

Arab American community, Palestinian Americans have also increasingly focused on developing their own distinct social, cultural and political organizations. An incredibly rich portfolio of associations, organizations, networks, clubs and foundations has allowed the Palestinian community in the United States to remain connected with one another, and with their culture, people and homeland in Palestine. Today, this community has carved a significant space for itself within the American political scene and within the very fabric of American society.

Some of the more active organizations that have come to inhabit a prominent position and significant presence in the life of the Palestinian community in the United States include:

The American Federation of Ramallah Palestine (AFRP)

Numerous social organizations have emerged in the Palestinian American community based on towns or villages of origin in Palestine. These organizations work to bring people of common ancestry throughout the country together, mainly for social, cultural and philanthropic purposes. The largest of these Palestinian town/village associations, the **American Federation of Ramallah Palestine (AFRP)**, is also one of the largest Arab American organizations of any kind.

Founded on September 7, 1959 and with local chapters in 18 states and 26 cities, the American Federation of Ramallah Palestine (AFRP), today, is considered the oldest and largest Palestinian organization in the United States. The Federation is an entity with non-profit status, and has an elected executive committee with headquarters in Detroit, Michigan. It has chapters in a wide network of locations, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, Jacksonville (Florida), Houston, Detroit, Chicago, Washington DC, Cleveland, Buffalo and Hempstead (New York).

The Federation was founded by a group of young students, who first had the idea of uniting the Palestinian community from Ramallah in the Diaspora in 1952.³⁵ They established the bi-monthly Hathihe Ramallah Magazine, which is still published today and focuses on the retention of the cultural

heritage and identity of Palestinians in the United States.

The mission of AFRP, as presented on their website ³⁶, is:

- To perpetuate and enhance the close ties which exist among the people of Ramallah through the formulation of local clubs.
- To instill and nurture their ancestral language, culture and heritage in Ramallah's youth in the United States.
- To better orient the American public with the Arabic culture and heritage, and to promote better understanding of the political aspirations of the Palestinians, in particular, and the Arabs, in general.

Over the years, the AFRP has implemented many programs aimed at the preservation and diffusion of Palestinian culture in the US, such as Arabic language classes, dabkeh training, youth and women's programs, in addition to cultural, social and charitable programs that support and foster Palestinian communities in the US. Such initiatives include providing scholarships to college and university students, leadership training for youth, sponsoring cultural events, and raising money at local clubs for relief funds or civic service programs. Healthcare programs that assist Palestinians living under the occupation in their homeland are also an important part of the Foundation's activities.

The largest and most publicized event amongst all of the AFRP activities is its yearly convention, which is held in July and is attended by over 2,000 people annually. During the convention, a new cabinet and president are elected and the Foundation's annual agenda is set.

The AFRP also works with a network of other Palestinian, Arab and non-Arab organizations in order to ensure that the plight and the voice of Palestinians in the United States is justly heard in American society.

The United Palestinian Appeal (UPA)

Amongst the most active Palestinian American philanthropic organizations in the **United States is the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA)**, which has raised and distributed millions of dollars in charitable aid to Palestine. The UPA focuses mainly on humanitarian projects that aim to benefit the Pales-

tinian people in Palestine.

UPA was established in 1978 in New York by Palestinian Americans from the business sector and the professional community who shared a vision of establishing an efficient and professionally managed charity, which would assist Palestinians in need, and which would contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of Palestinians in Palestine. In 1985, UPA became the first Palestinian American charity to be registered with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) as a Private and Voluntary Organization (PVO). Over the years, UPA has committed itself to empowering Palestinians living in various areas in their homeland, including Gaza, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, amongst others, through a diverse portfolio of programs that include healthcare, emergency relief, education, employment and support to micro-enterprises.

American Muslims for Palestine (AMP) ³⁷

With over a dozen chapters in several states today, **American Muslims for Palestine (AMP)** is one of the largest Palestinian Muslim organizations in the United States. AMP was formed in 2005 with the purpose of educating Americans about Palestine. It was a volunteer organization until August 2008, when a national office for the association was established in Palos Heights, Illinois. Today AMP is a strictly donation-based, widely staffed national organization that runs several advocacy, awareness and socio-cultural programs.

The mission of AMP is to educate the American public about the Palestinian cause and raise awareness on issues pertaining to Palestine and its rich cultural heritage, by providing information and training, and by networking with other individuals and organizations. AMP educates the public and the media through educational events, such as lectures, workshops and training held at colleges, universities, churches and other public forums, such as libraries. ³⁸ They publish exceptional educational material, which is distributed to politicians, journalists, students and the public at large. They also support campus activism through Students for Justice in Palestine and other Muslim student associations, as well as run educational campaigns

for Muslim students in high school. Today, AMP has broad outreach with the American public and its base of volunteers, members and donors continues to expand.

The American Task Force for Palestine (ATFP)

Amongst the several distinctly Palestinian American political organizations that have emerged in recent decades, the American Task Force on Palestine (ATFP) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, which was established in 2003 in Washington DC to advocate the two-state solution to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and to serve American national interests.

Although the ATFP Board of Directors is all Palestinian American, the organization defines itself as “an American organization advocating for a Palestinian state, but not a Palestinian organization”³⁹. ATFP focuses on mainstream advocacy within Washington policy circles and seeks to engage in policy conversations that influence those who shape policy. The organization also works towards building closer ties between US leaders and the Palestinian National Authority. Moreover, the organization’s approach represents a paradigm shift in advocacy for Palestine in the United States in the sense that it fully embraces its American identity while advocating for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

ATFP’s President and Founder, Dr. Ziad J. Asali is a retired physician with a long history of activism in Palestinian and Arab American organizations. Today, ATFP holds annual galas that have hosted keynote speakers such as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in 2006 and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in 2010.

The United States Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)

Another recent development in the United States has been the emergence, mainly from university campuses, of a new political perspective that endorses a one-state solution, which would replace both Israel and Palestine, and which, according to this perspective, would facilitate the Right of Re-

turn for the Palestinian people.

The **United States Palestinian Community Network (USPCN)** is a Palestinian community-based grassroots network that emerged from the Palestinian Popular Conference that took place in Chicago on August 8-10, 2008. Over one thousand members from various Palestinian communities and organizations from across the US participated in the conference, in an attempt to find a resolution to the political and representational crisis affecting the Palestinians in the Diaspora. Reflecting upon the strategic need for creating open spaces of conversation amongst Palestinians in the US, and for empowering this community, the USPCN is a new initiative that is aims at "strengthening communication between Palestinian communities in order to advance participatory democratic practices within the network, coordinating amongst Palestinian associations in the US, and establishing and developing local chapters of USPCN in Palestinian communities"⁴⁰.

The mandate of the USPCN is to unify the voice of the Palestinian community around achieving the following goals:

- Self-determination and equality for the Palestinian people;
- The right of all Palestinian refugees to return to their original homes, lands, properties and villages (a natural right supported by international law and UN Resolution 194);
- Ending the Zionist occupation and colonization of Palestine.

Today, the USPCN has chapters in several states and is composed of both individuals and organizations that focus on empowering women, youth and student activism. During the Second Popular Conference held in Chicago on October 29-31, 2010, a USPCN Student Committee was also formed. The network supports a political agenda that has its roots in the "liberation and return" principle that characterized the Palestinian liberation movement in the 1960s and the 1970s and rejects the official path taken after the PLO recognized the State of Israel in 1988 and the subsequent signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. It maintains a particular focus on the Palestinian Right of Return and endorses most anti-occupation and anti-Zionist civil protest campaigns and actions, such as the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) campaign against Israel.

Other Organizations

Other extremely active organizations, associations and networks in the United States carrying on with the task of advocating the liberation and self-determination of the Palestinian people include:

- **The Arab American Non-Profit and Solidarity group** (which includes ISM, Free Gaza Movement, Free Palestine Movement, Freedom Road Socialist Party, the Palestine-American Friends Service Committee and the Inter Faith Peace Builders delegation for Palestine/Israel);
- The non-profit students society **Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP)**, first established at the University of California, Berkeley, with chapters today in over 30 universities across the United States (including Boston College, Columbia University, Cornell University, Georgetown, Florida State, Harvard Law School, University of Chicago, University of Pittsburgh, and University of North Carolina);
- **The Palestinian Youth Movement**, a transnational group spread across the five continents, with members concentrated in the areas of San Francisco, San Diego, New York and Chicago in the United States. The Palestinian Youth Movement participated in the 2008 and 2010 USPCN popular conferences, in the 2012 World Social Forum in Brazil and the 2013 Shatat Conference in Vancouver, Canada. It has also conducted speaking tours across Philadelphia, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and Michigan, reaching out consistently to the larger Palestinian communities in the United States;
- **Al Awda** is an organization that was specifically founded with a commitment to advocating the right of return of Palestinians.

Palestinian Contributions and Achievements in the United States

Palestinian Americans have thrived in and contributed greatly to society in the United States. Countless Palestinian Americans have made major contributions to American life in the fields of the arts, sciences, academia, business, politics and sports. In this section, we try to provide a brief overview of these contributions and achievements, which shed a ray of light and hope for the future and freedom of the Palestinian people, wherever they

may be, despite the dire straits that have befallen the Palestinian liberation movement of late.

US-Based Palestinian Media

In this time where the internet has come to dominate the fields of both traditional and social media, it becomes difficult to track precisely the media outlets that Palestinians in the United States have created and manage on US soil. Geographic localization and media sourcing makes much less sense today than it did before the advent of the Internet Era, with electronic media (journals, newspaper, radio stations, etc.) that is accessible by anyone anywhere, and where information travels under many guises (blogs, fora, newsletters, etc.).

However, the Palestinian American “media” scene is undoubtedly very lively in terms of its production and outreach. This scene includes numerous Palestinian film festivals that take place throughout the year and annually in Chicago, Boston and Washington DC, to mention a few; several Arabic-language radio stations where Palestinians receive ample and dedicated air-time; and a number of both on- and offline publications that contribute to raising awareness, conducting analysis, and educating the public on the Palestinian cause, in general, and the Palestinian identity in the United States, in particular. The following platforms, which will be described briefly below, have had a particular impact on raising awareness about Palestine, the Palestinian people, the conflict with Israel, the Israeli occupation, the Palestinian cause, identity and presence in the United States and elsewhere.

The Journal of Palestine Studies⁴¹

The Journal of Palestine Studies is a quarterly publication and is the oldest and most respected English language journal devoted exclusively to Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is published by the University of California Press on behalf of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Washington DC, the American branch of the homonymous institute founded in Beirut in 1963, which also supports the Institute of Jerusalem Studies in Ramallah. Its first issue was published in 1971 and is still regarded today as a major source of analysis and accurate information on the Palestinian

question. Its current editor is Palestinian historian and Columbia University professor Rashid Khalidi.

It contains feature articles, interviews, book reviews, quarterly updates on conflict and diplomacy, a settlement monitor, detailed chronologies, documents and source material and bibliographies of periodical literature. Hosting perspectives on the conflict by academics, policy makers and diplomats, the journal provides comprehensive information on the region's political, religious, and cultural concerns.

The Palestine Chronicle ⁴²

The Palestine Chronicle is an independent, self-sustained online newspaper largely focused on Palestine, Israel and the Middle East region. It is based in Washington State and its website was established in September 1999. Through the years it has grown in importance and scope thanks to the support received from important scholars, writers and activists. Amongst others worth mentioning are Dr. Hanan Ashrawi and Prof. Noam Chomsky, who are honorary members of the editorial board; and Sam Hussein, Dan Lieberman, Omar Barghouti and Kathleen Christison, who are regular contributors to the newspaper's contents.

The Palestine Chronicle focuses on the issues of human rights, national struggles, freedom and democracy and has built a team of professional independent journalists, writers and authors, who do not support any specific political party or agenda.

The Electronic Intifada ⁴³

One online platform that has certainly won widespread sympathy for the Palestinians and has provided an outstanding contribution to Palestinian political life through its constant watch, analysis and first-hand reporting on all Palestine-related events is the Electronic Intifada.

The Electronic Intifada is an independent online media news publication and educational resource that focuses on Palestine, its people, politics, cul-

ture and place in the world. It was founded in February 2001 by Ali Abunimah, Arjan El Fassed, Laurie King and Nigel Parry, as a pioneering online resource for media analysis, criticism and activism as related to Palestine. Its headquarters are located in Chicago, Illinois. Readers and private foundations are its only donors, and it receives no funding from any government or political party.

It can be rightfully considered an activist publication, with its wide array of blogs accompanying the news section in all fields, from politics to art, music and culture, to international law, human rights, media and civil protest campaigns. Its publications are informed by editors and contributors committed to the principles of human rights, anti-discrimination and social justice. Writers and reporters are usually Palestinians who live in Palestine or elsewhere in the Diaspora, with other contributors coming from human right organizations and backgrounds from all over the world.

One of its distinguishing and most interesting attributes is the Electronic "Watch" the Electronic Intifada conducts on a spectrum of key issues related to the Palestinian cause that also have a profound impact on American political life. The website's blogs link contains a "Media Watch" and an "Israeli Lobby Watch", plus a "Rights and Accountability" and a "Power Suits" section that keep track of events and actors in the fields of politics and economy who act or speak out against the best interests of the Palestinian people, both inside and outside the United States.

The Electronic Intifada has received widespread recognition in the United States, including the 2003 American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee Voices of Peace Award and the 2009 Crossroads Fund Donald F. Erickson Synapses Award.

Prominent Palestinian Americans

Palestinian Americans have become important contributors and a dynamic segment in American society. Numerous stories of personal success punctuate the simultaneous efforts of these individuals towards integration and preservation of a Palestinian identity. The contribution of Palestinian Amer-

icans to every field of American life has been outstanding and has played a fundamental role in keeping the struggle for freedom and self-determination alive.

This section will present a list of some of the more prominent Palestinian Americans who have made achievements in the widest possible range of activities, from politics and academia to sports and entertainment.

Edward Said (1935-2003)

Of all the prominent Palestinian Americans, it is impossible not to think first of the late Edward W. Said, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, a literary theorist, and a public intellectual who was a founding figure of the critical-theory field of Post-colonialism. In the words of The New York Times, Edward W. Said was "a polymath scholar and literary critic at Columbia University who was the most prominent advocate in the United States of the cause of Palestinian independence"⁴⁴.

Edward Said, born in Jerusalem during the period of the British Mandate for Palestine, was an American citizen through his father Wadir Said, whose service in the US Armed Forces during WWI granted him and his family US citizenship. Said attended schools in Cairo and Jerusalem, but due to behavioral problems, was sent by his parents to complete his studies in the United States, first at Northfield Mount Hermon preparatory boarding school in Massachusetts, then to Princeton and Harvard, where he received a Master's and a PhD degree in English Literature, respectively. In 1963, Edward Said joined Columbia University where he was appointed professor and worked there until his death in 2003⁴⁵.

Edward Said is considered one of the most influential literary theorists and critics in the world, a leading intellectual and a founding figure in postcolonial theory, the field where he produced his most famous work, "Orientalism", a critique of the culturally inaccurate perceptions and representations that are the foundation of Western thought towards the Middle East. He was also an outspoken champion of the Palestinian cause and a long-serving member of the Palestinian National Council. Through his intellectual

work, he came to be regarded as one of the most important figures in introducing and explicating the Palestinian national narrative and experience to Western audiences.

After this due tribute to the late Professor Edward Said, the following section briefly lists other prominent Palestinian Americans, who have worked tirelessly to maintain the Palestinian identity and have kept the just cause of the Palestinian people alive in the United States and elsewhere, and who have contributed outstanding achievements in the most diverse fields and branches of human knowledge .

Academia ⁴⁶

Walid Khalidi, an Oxford University Educated Palestinian Historian who has written extensively on the Palestinian exodus. He taught in Harvard Center for International Affairs, Princeton University and the American University of Beirut.

Rashid Ismail Khalidi, is a Palestinian-American Historian of the Middle East and is the Director of the Middle East Institute of Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York.

Majid Kazimi, TEPCO Professor of Nuclear Engineering and Director of the Center for Advanced Nuclear Energy Systems (CANES) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT);

Ibrahim Abu Lughod, Celebrated sociologist who was committed to defining an Arab-American identity that would lead to the formation of a distinct interest group within American society (not very good!)

Ismail al-Faruqi, Former professor of religion at Temple University and authority on Comparative Religion and Islam

Naseer Aruri, Chancellor Professor of Political Science at University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth

Hanna Batatu, Marxist historian most known for his work on Iraqi history;

Nadia Abu El Haj, Author and Professor of Anthropology at Barnard College and subject of a major tenure controversy case at Columbia University

Leila Abu-Lughod, Professor of Anthropology and Women's and Gender Studies at Columbia University

Leila Farsakh, Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Boston

Samih Farsoun, Professor of Sociology at American University and editor of Arab Studies Quarterly

Nadia Hijab, Journalist with Middle East Magazine and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies

Joseph Massad, Professor at Columbia University known for his work on nationalism and sexuality in the Arab world

Hisham Sharabi, Professor Emeritus of History and Umar al-Mukhtar Chair of Arab Culture at Georgetown University

Rosemarie Said Zahlan, Historian, journalist and author, also sister of Edward Said

Khalil Barhoum, lecturer in Arabic at the Division of Literatures, Cultures and Languages at Stanford University

Hatem Bazian, Senior Lecturer in Islamic Law and Society in the Department of Near Eastern and Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley; Co-Founder and Academic Affairs Chair at Zaytuna College, the first Muslim Liberal Arts College in America

Rabab Abdulhadi, Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies/Race and Resistance Studies and the Senior Scholar of the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative, at the College of Ethnic Studies, San Francisco State University

Seif Da'na, Associate Professor of Sociology and International Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside

Authors, Poets, Playwrights and Journalists

Susan Abulhawa, Author, Poet

Ali Abunimah, Journalist and Co-Founder of The Electronic Intifada

Ismail Khalidi, Playwright, Author

Sahar Khalifeh, Novelist and Founder of the Women's Affairs Center in Nablus

Suheir Hammad, Poet

Nadia Hijab, Journalist with Middle East Magazine and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Palestine Studies

Naomi Shihab Nye, Poet, Songwriter and Novelist

Business and Commerce

Sam Bahour, Co-founder of the Palestine Telecommunications Company,

first private telecommunications company in the Middle East

Tom Gores, Billionaire businessman

Film and Performing Arts

Hanan Alattar, Operatic Singer; Actress

Cherien Dabis, Film Director

Mai Masri, Filmmaker and Director

Dean Obeidallah, Comedian

Tareq Salahi, Actor

Medicine

Laila Al-Marayati, Director of Women's Health at the Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center in Los Angeles

Hashem El-Serag, Doctor and Medical Researcher on Hepatocellular Carcinoma (HCC) and the Hepatitis C Virus

Music

DJ Khaled, DJ; Record Producer

Fredwreck, DJ; Record Producer

Simon Shaheen, 'Oud and Violin Musician and Composer

Politics

Imad-ad-Dean Ahmad, Head of the Minaret of Freedom Institute, a libertarian think-tank

Justin Amash, Congressman from Michigan

Huwaida Arraf, Co-Founder of the International Solidarity Movement

Mubarak Awad, Founder of the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Non-violence

John E. Sununu, US Senator from New Hampshire (2003-2009), son of John H. Sununu

John H. Sununu, Governor of New Hampshire (1983-1989) and White House Chief of Staff to President George H.W. Bush (1989-1991)

Sports

Omar Jarun, Soccer Player; Member of the Palestine National Football Team

Ramsey Nijem, Mixed Martial Artist

Omar Sheika, Boxer

Conclusions

This study is one of the first comprehensive attempts to research and document the vast and diverse reality of the Palestinian Community in the United States. The topic presents an uncommon complexity and breadth, strictly connected with the geographical extension and the unique cultural diversity that characterizes American society.

We tried to determine the approximate number of Palestinians living in the United States, mostly as US citizens, their distribution in the 50 states and their settlement patterns in some of the bigger metropolitan areas; we presented a sociological abstract of the integration vs. alienation processes that inform the life of Palestinians moving from their homeland to the new reality of American life, and their degree of political consciousness and activism; we traced a comprehensive political history of the relationship between the US and the Palestinian liberation movement and the PLO's presence on US soil; and we provided an overview of individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to American society and, more importantly, have incessantly and passionately advocated the just cause of the Palestinian people in their quest for freedom, justice and self-determination.

This study is only a first step, without any pretensions of covering all the issues that impact the ever-changing reality and socially complex conditions of the Palestinian community in the United States. However, with this step, we lay the first brick in moving towards that direction, with the hope that others will find this introduction to the Palestinian community in the US useful, and with the hope that, one day, it will inspire a wider, more comprehensive and complete study on arguably one of the largest and more influential Palestinian communities outside the Middle East.



References

1- The 1980 census was the first in which respondents had an opportunity to list their ancestry. However, unlike Asian, white, or black, "Arab" is not a racial category for the Census Bureau. Rather, Arab Americans are considered white (Caucasian), defined as a "person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa".

2- The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey collected as a rolling sample to replace the "long form" of the decennial census, which used to ask the question on "ancestry"; it captures demographic details of the US population and its subgroups to provide an updated profile of American characteristics. It is sent to a small percentage of the population on a rotating basis throughout the decade. No household receives the survey more often than once every five years.

3- Countries of origin of Arab Americans are: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The largest five groups are Lebanese (28,8%), Egyptian (14,5%), Syrian (8,9%), Palestinian (7,3%) and Jordanian (4,2%).

4- Statistical source for the introduction and the "Education and Work" paragraph: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates (2007-2009).

5- Subhi Ghandour, "A Palestinian Role in The USA Looking for an Institute"
(دور فلسطيني في أمريكا يبحث عن مؤسسة), Al-Rai Newspaper.

6- In 2003, the Department of Homeland Security implemented the National Security Entry/Exit Registration System (NSEERS), which required males over the age of 16 from certain countries (19 out of 25 were Arabic-speaking countries) who had entered the United States since 2002 to report to immigration offices to be photographed and fingerprinted on an annual basis.

7- 8- The percentile rise in deportation orders for nationals of other countries was 3.4% in comparison.

9- Several of the 2012 presidential candidates have made Islamophobic remarks, including Michelle Bachmann, who committed her voters to "rejection of Sharia Islam and all other anti-woman, anti-human rights form of totalitarian control"; and Herman Cain, who said: "Based upon the little knowledge that I have of the Muslim religion, they have an objective to convert all infidels or kill them" (21/03/2011), and "A reporter asked me, would I appoint a Muslim to my administration. I did say no." (28/03/2011)

10- Data from the Census Information Center (CIC) of the Arab American Institute Foundation (AAIF), which conducts research on the Arab American population using data available from the Census Bureau and projections based on other surveys by reputable scholars and organizations such as Zogby International. <http://www.aaiusa.org/pages/demographics/>

11- Kathleen Christison, "The American Experience: Palestinians in the US", Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 18 No. 4 (Summer 1989)

12- In 2010, the Arab American Institute Foundation counted 252,000 Palestinians in the US, and the Palestinian American Council an estimated 179,000.

13- <http://www.aaiusa.org/pages/demographics/>; Reasons for the undercount include the placement of and limits of the ancestry question (as distinct from race and ethnicity); the effect of the sample methodology on small, unevenly distributed ethnic groups; high levels of out-marriage among the third and fourth generations; distrust/misunderstanding of government surveys among more recent immigrants resulting in non-response by some.

14- 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS), US Census Bureau.

15- A study of Palestinian Arab immigrants from Israel, the West Bank and Gaza published in 1994, used the 1980 census to look at socioeconomic characteristics. Among the 90% of Palestinian American men and 40% of women who are in the labor force, 40% and 31%, respectively, have either professional, technical or managerial positions. Around 25% of the total labor force works, while the self-employment rate is a significant, at 36%, compared to 11% for non-immigrants. Of the self-employed, 64% is in retail trade, with half owning grocery stores.

16- All the information contained in this section can be found in the "All Peoples Initiative" website at the following address: http://www.bcnychurchplanting.org/uploaded_files/Palestinian%20Profile.pdf

17- All the information contained in this section can be found in the "Encyclopedia of Chicago" website at the following address: <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/946.html>

18- All the information contained in this section is available in "Arabs in America: building a new future", edited by Michael W. Suleiman, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1999.

19- The information contained in this section refers to the article "Uprising captivates Palestinians in the US...", by Kathleen Christison, appeared on the Christian Science Monitor, October 21, 1988.

20- Kathleen Christison, "The American Experience: Palestinians in the US", p. 19, Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 18 No. 4 (Summer 1989).

21- By 2007, after a 20-year trial that reached all levels of the US judicial system, including the Supreme Court, the charges against six of the eight members were dropped and permanent residency was granted to them.

22- US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1948, Vol. V, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976.

23- For example, the Eric Johnston Plan in the mid-1950s was an economic development and water distribution plan for the Jordan River Valley whose ultimate purpose was to make

resettlement economically feasible for the Arab states.

24- He did not even protest when Israel attacked an American communications intercept ship, the USS Liberty, killing 34 American naval personnel, in circumstances that clearly indicated the attack was not an error.

25- William B. Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967* (Washington and Berkeley: Brookings Institution and University of California Press, 1993).

26- During Carter's political career, he had already been on the frontline of Blacks' desegregation struggles in the Southern United States.

27- Jimmy Carter actually advocated the creation of a Palestinian state shortly after coming to office at a meeting held in Clinton, Massachusetts on March 16, 1977; he is quoted as saying "There has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered for many, many years".

28- The actual signing of the Oslo Accords was hosted by President Bill Clinton, who was elected to office in 1992.

29- 30- Subhi Ghandour, "A Palestinian Role in The USA Looking for an Institute" (دور فلسطيني في أمريكا يبحث عن مؤسسة), Al-Rai Newspaper.

31- <http://www.afrp.org/> - The information contained in this paragraph was taken and edited from this website.

32- 33- Subhi Ghandour, "A Palestinian Role in The USA Looking for an Institute" (دور فلسطيني في أمريكا يبحث عن مؤسسة), Al-Rai Newspaper.

34- Among those who had a brief but intense history on US soil, worth mentioning are the Palestine Human Rights Campaign started by the Zogby brothers in 1977 and the Palestine Solidarity Committee in 1988, born on the upsurge of the First Intifada in 1987 and publishing through the mid-90's a bimonthly newspaper called "Palestine Focus".

35- Today the Ramallah community in the United States has approximately 35.000 members

36- The information contained in this section is taken from the American Muslims for Palestine website - <http://www.ampalestine.org/>

37- Titles such "Anti-Defamation League: A protector of civil rights or a silencer of freedom of speech?" and "The Great Islamophobic Crusade and many others are downloadable from their website, in the "AMP Publications" link.

38- This and all other information in this paragraph can be found on the AFTP website: <http://www.americantaskforce.org/>

39-From the USPCN website: <http://uspcn.org/>

40- The information contained in this paragraph can be found on the IPS website: <http://www.palestine-studies.org/index.aspx>

41- The information contained in this paragraph can be found at the following website: <http://palestinechronicle.com>

42- The information contained in this paragraph can be found at the EI website: <http://electronicintifada.net>

43- Edward W. Said, Polymath Scholar, Dies at 67, by RICHARD BERNSTEIN; published: September 26, 2003, New York Times Obituaries; <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/26/obituaries/26SAID.html>

44- President Barack Obama was one of his students.

45- This list of famous Palestinian American is retrievable on Wikipedia at the following address: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Palestinian_Americans (wikipedia is often looked down upon as a source – is there not another resource that this information is available on?)