

I had made regarding how Western donor states and Palestinian refugees each perceived UNRWA.

I also came across unexpectedly useful documents, on a range of disparate topics, at the IPS. Records relating to diet and nutrition in the refugee camps in the 1960s added a new perspective to my earlier findings about Palestinian grievances regarding UNRWA rations at this time. Additionally, a wide range of documents detailing the response to the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and subsequent Sabra-Shatila massacre illuminated the uncertainty of UNRWA's role in the wake of the PLO's departure from the country.

At AUB, my research focussed on the Palestine Political Posters Collection, which holds posters from a range of nationalist organizations across the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. In the absence of national or organizational archives, this collection is vital for understanding the historical ideology and strategy of the Palestinian nationalist movement. The posters provide illustrative evidence of the various organizations' internationalist tilts, their perceptions of the UN and how they represented the refugee camps politically.

The Palestine Oral History Project, the other major source for my research at AUB, is currently being finalized and is, unfortunately, not yet available in its entirety. Nevertheless, I was able to have several useful conversations with AUB archivists working on the project, to get a sense of its scope and the topics it covers. I also saw previews of some of the video interviews, indicating the combination of gratitude and criticism that typically characterized the refugees' relationship with UNRWA.

Finally, I was able to spend a short amount of time in Shatila and Burj al-Barajneh refugee camps, speaking to Palestinian refugees about their experiences and historical interactions with UNRWA. These conversations confirmed my hypothesis that the relationship between UNRWA and the refugees has always been highly politicized, and that UNRWA's interactions with the Palestinian nationalist movement have occurred within this framework. My time in the camps was especially useful for helping me plan the next stages of my research.

A History of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

Francesco Leopardi (The University of Edinburgh)

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The main purpose of the PhD research project that brought me to Beirut was to write a history of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) between 1982 and 2007. After the 1982 PLO eviction from Lebanon, the PFLP experienced a process of weakening that gradually led this prominent leftist faction to marginalization within the Palestinian national movement. Several factors contributed to this process: both 'objective' external factors that were out of the PFLP's control, and 'subjective' factors stemming from the PFLP's own agency. The goal of my research was to assess the significance of the PFLP's policies in determining its decline.

My research therefore focused on the PFLP's response to the main events that marked the recent history of the Palestinian national movement such as the 1987 Intifada. In particular, it looks at how the PFLP proved unable to exploit

some occasions to stop its marginalization and regain its prominence. I also delineate a pattern that surfaced in policy fluctuation that marked the PFLP's political actions, notwithstanding the very different scenarios that the faction faced throughout the period under scrutiny, and that ultimately had a negative influence on the PFLP itself. In other words, the PFLP's stances and policies did not appear consistent throughout the studied period due to reasons such as the lack of strategic planning, the lack of renewal in the party structure and internal frictions. These fluctuations undermined the effectiveness and the credibility of the PFLP's agenda.

The main source for my historical research was the PFLP's official mouthpiece, the *Al-Hadaf* magazine. *Al-Hadaf* has published a wide range of official documents such as political statements, congress memoranda, the PFLP leaders' declarations and interviews, as well as many analytical articles. The detailed study of this material enabled me to observe the evolution and fluctuations of the PFLP's rhetoric and action, detecting the major shifts in its trajectory. This documentation is critically read in the light of the wider literature on the Palestinian national movement, as well as official publications issued by the PLO and other Palestinian factions.

The complete collection of *Al-Hadaf* is currently only held by the Library of the Institute of Palestine Studies (IPS), located in the Lebanese capital, hence the reason for my research travel. At the IPS Library I was able to retrieve material stretching from 1995 to 2013.

Besides my archival work, I also had the opportunity to interview some PFLP's members, including officials who were directly or indirectly involved in the decision-making process, now settled in Beirut. I conducted four interviews with former and current PFLP's members, in addition to others outside Lebanon, which gave me insight on the PFLP's internal dynamics. Furthermore, in Beirut I had the chance to have conversations with experts in Palestinian politics such as Dr Yezid Sayigh, Carnegie Endowment Senior Associate and Dr Mahmoud Swaid, former Director of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

The research travel to Beirut was fundamental for the successful completion of my PhD research project. Therefore, my utmost appreciation goes to the Council for British Research in the Levant that provided me with the necessary support to carry out such an important part of my study.

Sulayman al-Ghazzi: Christian Monasticism under the Fatimid Caliphate

Rosie Maxton (Cambridge University)

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Christian Arabic literature, in other words Arabic literature that deals with Christian theology, has a rich and diverse history. It remains, however, a relatively understudied field in Western scholarship. As early as the 8th century AD, individuals from the different churches of the Middle East, such as the Melkites, Nestorians and Jacobites, had begun to translate biblical, patristic and hagiographical texts from Greek into Arabic. This enterprise also involved composing original works in Arabic, most of which pertain to the apologetic genre—that is treatises which sought to define and defend the beliefs and practices of the Christian faith.