Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works*

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Tawfik Canaan was a physician, an author, an advocate for the Palestinian cause, and a prominent scholar who is little known outside specialized circles. He graduated from medical school in 1905 and immediately began a career in which he occupied medical and administrative positions in several Jerusalem-area hospitals and clinics until his retirement at age 75. Canaan was a prolific writer. In 1914, at age 32, he published in German his first book, entitled *Superstition and Popular Medicine in the Land of the Bible*.[1] He also authored more than 37

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[1] From here abbreviated as "Superstition and Popular Medicine." The present article is an abridged version of its counterpart in Arabic, published in *Majallat ad-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya(h)* 50 (Spring 2002), pp. 69-91. The reader is referred to the latter for extensive notes and bibliography, and to the electronic version of JQF.

medical studies in his field of specialization, tropical medicine; and in bacteriology, particularly malaria; and in other topics, such as leprosy, tuberculosis, and health in Palestine. In 1932, his name and a synopsis of his life were included in a book published in Germany under the title, "Famous Doctors in Tropical Medicine" by Dr. G. Olpp, who was the director of the well-known medical center for tropical medicine in the city of Tübingen.

Canaan had interests outside the field of medicine. He was keenly interested in Palestinian folklore, popular beliefs, and superstitions. He collected a prodigious number of amulets and produced more than 50 articles in English and German on folklore and superstition. Beyond that, Canaan wrote two books on the Palestine problem. They reflected his involvement in confronting British imperialism and Zionism, and thus prompted the British Authorities to arrest him in 1939.

Previous Biographies

Tawfik Canaan lived the Palestinian tragedy since its beginning. As a distinguished physician in Jerusalem before 1948, and later as the director of the Augusta Victoria Hospital, he enjoyed an eminent status in Palestinian society, particularly in Jerusalem. Given his stature, it is surprising that Canaan's biographies were brief and in many cases limited. Before 1998, two biographical articles on Canaan were available. The first was written by the well-known biographer Ya'qub Al-'Awdat in 1971, and the second was written by Yesma, Canaan's daughter, in 1981, and was published in the journal *Society and Heritage* (al-Bireh). A comparison between the two articles reveals conformity in much of the information. Neither biographer seems to have benefited from the obituary placed by Bishop Daud Haddad in 1964 or to have consulted what Canaan himself wrote. Furthermore, references to Canaan in sources outside the fields of medicine and folklore were not considered. These are crucial omissions.

More recently, the biographical information on Canaan was enriched. A catalog was published in Arabic and English on the occasion of an exhibition organized by Birzeit University at the end of October 1998 under the title, *Ya kafi, ya shafi ...The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets: An Exhibition*. Unfortunately, this catalog was not widely distributed, and some of the information in it was brief and incomplete.

This article aims to present a new and thorough survey of Tawfik Canaan's life that draws not only on information contained in primary sources, but also on inference from sources that are not directly related to Canaan, such as diaries and memoirs by Palestinian celebrities of the period.

Childhood and Youth

Tawfik Canaan was born in Beit Jala on September 24, 1882, the second child of Bechara Canaan and Katharina Khairallah. After completing his elementary school, Tawfik, like his father before him, was enrolled in Schneller School, where he completed his secondary education from the Teacher's Division (Seminar). In 1899, he went to Beirut to study medicine at the Syrian Protestant College (now known as the American University of Beirut). Shortly after he arrived in Beirut, his father died from pneumonia. This put him in a very difficult situation. The family

Tawfik Canaan and Margot Eilender
Jerusalem 1912
Photo credit: Birzeit University Archive

was poor and depended on the salary earned by his sister Lydia, a teacher, and the pension his mother received for her deceased husband. Tawfik started giving private lessons and doing other work at the university to supplement his income.

Bechara left a strong impact on his son, but we do not know the mother's impact on him. Tawfik says the following about his father: "We used to go with my father on short and long trips all over the country in order to get acquainted with the country and the people. This continuous contact with the people nurtured in all of us, and particularly in me, love for the country and the people. This feeling of belonging and unshaken loyalty remained with me till this day."[2] Maybe these trips explain his knowledge of nature in Palestine, which was later reflected in his writings such as the article entitled, "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition," published in 1928. Faith and learning were givens in the Canaan household. The impact of the family and early upbringing remained strong in the children throughout their lives. Tawfik says, "At all stages in our lives, we the children carried a deep sense of the family blessing."

Tawfik Canaan graduated with honors from the medicine school in 1905, and he delivered the graduation speech on June 28, 1905. Entitled "Modern Treatment," his speech was published in *Al-Muqtataf* - seemingly to have been his first published piece. In it, he touched on the medical use of serums, animal organs, and X-rays.

The Beginning of Canaan's Professional Life

Work had increased at the German Deaconesses Hospital (German Hospital) in Jerusalem in 1904, and there was a need to appoint an assistant doctor. The hospital offered Canaan the job before he graduated. He started his work in the summer of 1905 under the supervision of hospital director Dr. Grßendorf, a brilliant surgeon. Canaan notes in his diary: "Dr. Grußendorf was a skillful surgeon, and I learned a lot working under him. In order to gain as much scientific knowledge as possible, I worked a minimum of nine hours a day. Because of this, I could not open a private clinic during that period."[3] In 1906, Dr. Grußendorf went with some of the deaconesses on vacation and asked Canaan, together with Dr. Adolf Einszler, to assume the medical administration of the hospital as a shift physician.

[2] Abdullah 1998, p. 17.

[3] Schwake 1983, pp. 323-324.

After Canaan's appointment at the German Hospital, the hospital's capacity increased from 5,749 to 11,110 patients. And because physicians were scarce in Jerusalem at the outset of the twentieth century, it was common practice for physicians to seek the help of their colleagues to carry out specific duties or to act as hospital administrators in their absence. In 1906, Shaare Zedek Hospital (The German-Jewish Hospital) sought the help of Canaan as manager, most probably because Dr. Grußendorf was departing for Germany for a period of eight months. The hospital director, Dr. Moritz Wallach, was also in Germany to promote the newly established hospital. Yesma Canaan mentions that her father also worked for two periods of six months each at "The English Hospital" that belonged to the Anglican "London Jewish Society" for missionary work among Jews, but she does not give specific dates. It was no wonder that Canaan would, from time to time, work at the English Hospital, because its capacity increased remarkably between 1902 and 1912.

Canaan the Researcher: The Beginnings

In 1909, Canaan's first long article was published in the geographical journal *Globus*. The article, entitled "Agriculture in Palestine," was a translation from Arabic into German of a lecture delivered by Canaan on May 22, 1909. Unfortunately, the occasion on which the lecture was delivered is not known, but the subject matter gives us an idea about the intellectual and political atmosphere that prevailed in Palestine on the eve of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The basic idea of the article is that Palestine (by which Canaan meant the West and East Bank of Jordan, and includes the Golan, 'Ajloun, Houran, and Al-Balqa), which witnessed a deterioration and negligence in agriculture starting from the Ayyubid Period, and particularly during the Ottoman period, was doing much better in recent times. It is obvious from reading the article that Canaan (and with him, most probably, the original audience) was concerned about the poor state of the Palestinian peasants after centuries of exploitation and negligence. This negligence led to the deterioration of the agricultural land and terraces, despite the fertility of the land and its potential for exploitation if modern means had been used within the framework of a comprehensive economic policy.

Canaan's ideas on agricultural potential were influenced by experiments performed in Palestine, particularly by the German (Templar) colonies. Canaan urged Palestinians to learn from their experiments and also to imitate Jewish colonies (even though he also took a negative attitude toward them, describing them as "wholly depending on the contributions of wealthy Jews").[4]

Despite the article's shortcomings, it remains a basic reference on the development of agriculture in Palestine and a good diagnosis of its condition. In this first article outside the field of medicine, Canaan establishes himself as a well-versed researcher in the field of so-called "Oriental Studies." It is noticeable that he quotes not only the familiar names of his age, such as Schumacher, Bauer, Guthe, Burckhardt, and others, but also classical sources, such as Strabo and Josephus, as well as Arab sources like Mujeer ad-Din. The article demonstrates Canaan's interest in the future of his

[4] Canaan 1909, p. 286.

country by studying the conditions of peasants, who were at that time the productive force in Palestine. His interest in the peasants may have led him to study superstitions prevailing in the countryside, and particularly the use of amulets.

The Bible

The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is one of the basic sources that Canaan depended on in his comparison of past and present agriculture. Studies of the Old Testament were proceeding quickly during Canaan's time, and he knew the leaders of these studies, such as Gustaf Dalman, Albrecht Alt, and Martin Noth. Canaan used the four years that separated his graduation and the date he published his first article to absorb the contemporary trends in biblical studies, and the Old Testament in particular. We cannot attribute Canaan's focus on the Bible solely to his religious background. We must assume that Dalman, who headed "The Evangelical German Institute" since 1903, had influenced Canaan, especially considering that the two apparently shared the idea that it is not possible to understand the Old Testament without studying Palestinian folklore.

Specialization

In the summer of 1910, Canaan was put in charge of a polyclinic for the Municipality of Jerusalem and remained there until the clinic merged in 1912 with a municipal hospital established in the Shaykh Badr area. In 1911, he published his first basic medical article, entitle "Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis in Jerusalem," in Al-Kulliyeh (Beirut) journal. In it, he pointed out that he was conducting detailed studies with Dr. Wallach, director of Shaare Zedek Hospital, who provided him with the necessary statistics from the hospital.

In 1912 and 1913, and during the first four months of 1914, Canaan specialized in tropical medicine and microbiology in Germany under Professors Mühlens, Ruge, Much, and Huntemüler. Mühlens was chief marine physician at an institute in Hamburg for ship and tropical diseases, particularly malaria, and was the founder of the International Health Bureau. Canaan likened this Bureau to the French Pasteur Institute. Mühlens headed the famous Malaria Mission to Jerusalem and prepared a report that gave a comprehensive description of the health conditions in Jerusalem on the eve of World War I. According to Leila Mantoura, Canaan's daughter, Canaan was Mühlens' assistant in this mission. From this we can conclude that Canaan specialized in tropical medicine in Hamburg, and while he was there he may have contacted the publishing house L. Friederichsen & Co., which specialized in publishing studies on the third world, to publish his book *Superstition and Popular Medicine*. Canaan studied tuberculosis with Hans Much, who also headed a mission to Palestine to study tuberculosis and published the results in 1913. Canaan contributed three research papers to this report.

Palestinian Folklore

In 1913, the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästinavereins* (Journal of the German Palestine Society) published an article by Canaan entitled "The Calendar of Palestinian Peasants," which was his first work in the field of Palestinian folklore. In 1914, he published his first book, *Superstition and Popular Medicine*. Over the next thirteen years, he published a number of articles in

The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society, established in 1920 by Albert T. Clay, the American Assyriologist. Canaan was chosen as a member in that Society. He was also a member in The American School for Oriental Research, which was established in 1900 and whose Jerusalem branch was headed from 1920 till 1929 by the American archaeologist William Foxwell Albright. In the articles that Canaan published during this period, he showed a special interest in superstition; examples include "Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine" (1920/1921), "Tasit ar-Radjfeh" (Fear Cup; 1923), "Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine" (1924-1927), and "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition" (1928).

Popular Beliefs

Canaan's interest in popular beliefs focused on the spiritual beliefs as they relate to daily practices, primarily among peasants, and not on the practices as such, as was the case with other researchers, such as Bauer, Dalman, and Granqvist. Canaan specifically focused on the superstition of the peasants and lower classes in cities. Popular beliefs often have roots in folkloric substrates from various periods, some of which predate monotheism, and are somehow related to magic. The article entitled "Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine," which was also published as a monograph, became a classic in the field of Palestinian folklore. The sanctuary (*maqam*) is the material expression of popular beliefs. The phenomenon of *maqamat* is perhaps the best source of information about ideological trends among Palestinian peasants. Contrary to monotheism, which is especially espoused in cities, and contrary to written history, also produced in cities, the spiritual systems related to sanctuaries are reflections of previous conditions or a reproduction of it, including historical elements that are embodied in the sanctuary and its *weli* or *shaykh*. The sanctuary of Shaykh al-Qatrawani in 'Atarah village, north of Ramallah, for example, is a personification of an earlier figure, namely, Saint Catherine, to whom a church was dedicated in the area surrounding the sanctuary (the example is Canaan's). The Shaykh, according to the popular tale, came flying from a distant place (Gaza) and settled in 'Atarah. The tradition seems to reflect an attempt to absorb a Christian religious personality within the Islamic system.

Demonology

If sanctuaries are the material expression of popular beliefs, the place of performing relevant rituals, and what confers protection and blessings on the villages, then this must be because the supernatural forces are found everywhere, affect the course of life, and bring good or bad luck, particularly diseases. This was the topic of Canaan's book, "Belief in Demons in the Holy Land" (1929, in German). In it, Canaan discusses the life of demons, their names, and areas of their effect. His perception of demons was the traditional one, namely, that they were originally deities within the polytheistic system, or within the framework of what Canaan called "primitive religions." With the advent of monotheism, the status of these gods, good or bad, was downgraded, but they subsisted in the unconscious of the community as demons. Canaan gathered in his book every reference to demons in Palestinian popular beliefs. He detailed their food, dress, appearance, and dwellings (terrestrial spirits and "hell" spirits), such as the carob tree. Canaan also gathered a long

list of demon names and their classes. It should be noted that the names of some diseases refer to names of long-forgotten demons, such as *al-khanuq* (diphteria), *ar-rih al-asfar* (cholera), and *at-ta'un* (plague).

Superstition

It is not known when Canaan developed his interest in superstition, which he singled out from the components of Palestinian folklore. But it is possible to say that Canaan's interest in superstition, particularly amulets, had started when he returned after completing his studies and began his professional life. Leila Mantoura, Canaan's daughter, says: "It was through the polyclinic [of the Jerusalem Municipality] and his visits to outlying villages and hamlets, on horseback, carrying a bag full of medicines, that he noticed many women and men wearing amulets. After treating them, he would discuss with the patients what protection these amulets offered, ... He often bought the amulets, or took them in lieu of payment for his treatment."[5] Later on, peasants would bring amulets to Canaan's house, and when he had no opportunity to go around in the country, he used to buy the pieces from antique dealers.

His first article on superstition, "Demons as an Aetiological Factor in Popular Medicine," was published in 1912 in *Al-Kulliyeh* (Beirut) and was a translation from German into English of part of his book *Superstition and Popular Medicine* (published in 1914). Accordingly, the starting point for investigating the particularity of Canaan's thought would be 1912 with a focus on the above book and not on Canaan's article, "The Calendar of Palestinian Peasants," which was published in 1913.

Canaan could not have completed the research for his book *Superstition and Popular Medicine* without a long process lasting years during which he gathered an extensive collection of amulets. In his 1912 article, Canaan wrote, "I have occupied myself during the past year with the subject 'Popular Palestinian Medicine' and have gathered a large number of amulets that are used in curative and preventive ways. It is certainly not sufficient merely to possess such a collection and to know superficially what each object means; therefore, I have endeavored to find how and where they were made, how they are used in the different parts of the country and for what ailments, how they act, etc."[6] Leila Mantoura stated that her father started collecting amulets in 1905. One can therefore surmise that his ideas on this topic matured between 1910 and 1912.

Superstition is reflected in the use of amulets, including charms and talismans. The importance of Canaan's studies in this field derives from the fact that he was the first to study the amulets within their context in the culture of Palestinian peasants and Bedouin, and by an Arab who was able to understand their connotations to the people who used them. The language of these amulets is expressed in words, gestures, and drawings. In the foreword of *Superstition and Popular Medicine*, Canaan wrote: "How many issues in superstition cannot be uttered or hinted at except through strange words that seem to reach the realm of the intangible. The word should be

[5] Mantoura 1998b, p. 9.

[6] Canaan 1912, p. 150.

replaced by drawings, pictures, signs, and conduct because uttering the word exposes healing through superstition to failure. Thus, we enter a world of interrelated superstitious symbols which overwhelm the entire oriental life."[7]

The difficulty encountered by the researcher and by Canaan in this field has to do with an esoteric knowledge possessed and protected by a minority of specialized persons, such as sheikhs and fortune-tellers, whose positions are similar to that of shamans. Some sheikhs have published books that deal with various aspects of this knowledge, such as *Shumus al-Anwar* by Ibn al-Haj at-Talsamani, and *Shams al-Ma'arif al-Kubra* by al-Bouni, two sources that Canaan drew on in writing his book. He also consulted a manuscript at Al-Khalidiyyah Library in Jerusalem that contains explanations of talismans. These books, however, were mostly a collection of remarks and instructions, which their authors used as manuals in their profession and were not meant as analysis or interpretation. Canaan made use of various historical sources and the information gained from sheikhs and from the patients themselves to formulate his own interpretations.

The phrase "popular medicine" in the title of the book does not refer to inherited popular practices for the treatment of somatic diseases, or to the use of (plant or other) natural extracts, as it might seem at first glance. Canaan rarely touched on this form of treatment or the materials used in it. Nor did he take up fortune telling, performed by the sheikhs or fortune-tellers, in his writings in general. Instead, he compared what he called "popular medicine" with medicine in the scientific meaning of the word and its related branches. The former relates the stages of the disease to superstition, or supernatural forces, and attributes remission to magical practices. Accordingly, Canaan, the "scientific" physician, classifies amulets under the subheadings etiology, diagnosis, prognosis, prophylaxis, and treatment and divides the chapters of his book accordingly. Under the subheading "Etiology" come evil spirits, such as the *Qarinah*, "Mother of Boys," and evil eye; and under the subheading "Prophylaxis" come charms, amulets, and special types of beads, such as the blue bead, eyes, alum, and finally the *mes*-branch taken from the *mes*-tree (*celtis australis*) that grows within the precinct of al-Haram in Jerusalem. The branch is put in a necklace or on the head and has a special effect if harvested on Laylat al-Qadr (27 Ramadan), the night when Muslims believe the Quran was revealed. Under the "Treatment" subheading are listed amulets and all kinds of talismans. In this chapter, Canaan touches on the topic of jewelry, which has the effect of amulets, and on special kinds of amulets, such as "the soul's bead," "the cat's eye," "the milk's bead." (for the flow of milk), and others. He also touches on special parts of animals, such as the *al-hitit*-horn (against poisoning).

[7] Canaan 1914, p. VIII.

Marriage and the Home

In January 1912, Canaan married Margot Eilender, the daughter of a German importer, and the wedding gift was a piece of land in al-Musrarah where, in 1913, they built a house. Three of Canaan's children (Theo, Nada, and Leila) were born in this house. In the new family house, Canaan opened a clinic, the only Arab clinic in Jerusalem. The house fell in the "no man's land" between the years 1948 and 1967, and it is still there to this day.

World War I

In 1913, Canaan was appointed director of the Malaria Branch of the International Health Bureau, which was a world center for conducting medical research and microscopic examination established by The German Society for Fighting Malaria, The Jewish Health Bureau, and The Jewish Physicians and Scientists for Improving Health in Palestine.

After spending four months in Germany, Canaan returned to Palestine in August 1914 to work in the German Hospital with Grußendorf. He might have stayed in this position but for the coming of October when the Ottoman Empire actually entered World War I. Since he held the Ottoman nationality, he was forced to join the Ottoman army and to work under difficult conditions. Like many officers at that time, he contracted cholera and typhoid. At the beginning, he was the physician for a contingent in Nazareth, but in the same year he was transferred to 'Awja al-Hafeer, where the German chief physician appointed him as Head of the Laboratories on the Sinai Front. In this capacity, he was able to move between Beer as-Sab', Beit Hanoun, Gaza, and Shaykh Nouran. Canaan took advantage of this movement between cities, including Damascus, Amman, and Aleppo, and collected more than two hundred amulets.

The Leprosy Hospital

At the end of the war, Canaan resumed his professional activity and, in 1919, he became director of the Leprosy Hospital (Asylum of the Lepers) in Talbiyyah, which used to be called *Jesushilfe*, following the death of its director, Dr. Einszler.[8] It was also the only leprosy hospital in Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan. Leprosy was considered an incurable disease; however, the progress in the field of bacteriology and microscopic examination, in which Canaan himself participated, made it possible not only to treat that disease, but to cure it by using chaulmoogra oil. Canaan said that since 1921, "Every case which had some hope of recovery, regardless of how small, was treated with determination at the Leprosy Hospital."[9]

In 1923, the German Hospital was reopened with a capacity of fifty patients, but actual medical work could not be started until the following year because it needed further renovations. The Hospital consisted of three divisions: Internal Medicine, Gynecology, and Surgery. Canaan was in charge of the Internal Medicine Division, where he remained until 1940, when it became difficult for the German Hospital to continue to operate. German citizens had already left Palestine by 1939, including his friend Eberhard Gmelin (who headed the Surgery Division of the hospital), or were arrested by the British Authorities.

Political Struggle

The British authorities arrested Canaan on September 3, 1939, the very day that Britain and France declared war on Germany. He appeared twice in court and was ordered released, but the so-called The Criminal Investigation Department objected and he was imprisoned for nine weeks in Akka. His wife was arrested because she was German, and so was his sister Badra, who was accused "of inciting Arab women against Britain."[10] His wife and sister were

[8] In many cases, Canaan's time at different hospitals overlapped.

[9] Canaan 1926, p. 46.

imprisoned in the women's prison in Bethlehem with Jewish criminal prisoners, the first for nine months, and the second for four years. When their periods of detention ended, they were sent to Wilhelma, southwest al-'Abbasiyyah (near Jaffa), one of the German colonies that were transformed into detention camps for German Palestinians.

Canaan's wife and sister Badra had been politically active since the beginning of the revolt in 1936. Leila Mantoura wrote: "In 1934, my mother and aunt Badra were among those who founded the Arab Women's Committee in Jerusalem. This was a charitable society at the outset, but soon took on a political nature in the year 1936 during the general strike."[11] In fact, the Arab Women's Committee was involved in political activity prior to 1936, at least since the establishment of committees in Jerusalem and other cities, following the convening of a general conference for Palestinian women in October 1929. By May 1936, the Committee was strong enough to publicly call for civil disobedience and continuation of the strike. Badra participated as assistant secretary in the Palestinian delegation to The Eastern Women's Conference that was held in Cairo in mid-October 1938 in support of Palestine.

Ya'qub Al-'Awdat claims that Canaan, his wife, and his sister were accused of "propaganda for Hitler's Germany."[12] It is not known whether this was the official charge, nor do we know the type of court in which they were tried. This was part of the British policy for eliminating what was left of the Palestinian resistance movement and its symbols under the pretext of the war. Since the beginning of the 1936 revolt, Canaan clearly expressed his rejection of British and Zionist policies, in particular the policy of open-door Jewish immigration to Palestine. He opposed Zionism whenever possible, as was shown in his response to an article that appeared in one of the German medical periodicals in 1925, in which the writer commented on Jewish health establishments and on Zionism and touched briefly on Palestinian establishments. Canaan published his response in the same periodical. He pursued this approach even after 1948. In 1949, he wrote a short article to refute the claims of an official U.S. report "that the death rate among the [Palestinian] refugees is running no higher than normal for the Near East."[13]

The Palestine Arab Cause

Canaan's political position was clearly expressed in two works of his, namely, *The Palestine Arab Cause and Conflict in the Land of Peace*, both written in 1936. The former was published in English, Arabic, and French. The 48-page booklet *The Palestine Arab Cause*, originally written in English, resembled a political pamphlet directed at British public opinion. It was originally published in the form of articles in the local and foreign press shortly after the outbreak of the general strike in 1936. For the British Mandate, Canaan's writing was considered subversive. Canaan questioned whether the British policy was intended "to force Palestinian Arabs to evacuate their whole land in order to make room for Jews."[14] He went further by describing the policy as "a destructive campaign against the Arabs with

[10] Mantoura 1998a.

[11] Mantoura 1998b, p. 12.

[12] Al-'Awdat 1971, p. 32.

[13] Canaan 1949, p. 33.

the ultimate aim of exterminating them from their country." Canaan also questioned the nationality laws enacted by the Mandate that prevented Palestinian immigrants in the Americas, who were at that time citizens of the Ottoman Empire, from obtaining Palestinian citizenship.

The Palestine Arab Cause concludes with these words: "We appeal to the sense of justice of every Britisher to help us in our fight for existence..."[15] Canaan asserted: "We will continue our struggle for life in peaceful ways until we attain, with God's help, a better life, or we die never to rise again," in case there was no response to the basic demand of the Palestinian Arabs, namely, an immediate and complete halt to Zionist immigration. Canaan had a clear, uncompromising, and unreconciliatory position concerning national demands, as shown in a document sent to the Higher Arab Committee on August 6, 1936 and signed by Canaan, as well as many national personalities. There is even an unconfirmed evidence that Canaan strongly supported providing Arab rebels with arms. Canaan's approach in this booklet reflects an appraisal of the Palestinian problem from a clear national perspective, notwithstanding the apologetic language he sometimes used towards Britain that might seem inappropriate from a modern perspective.

Conflict in the Land of Peace

In his book, *Conflict in the Land of Peace*, Canaan documents the Palestinian problem in greater detail and responds to those who criticized *The Palestine Arab Cause*, particularly the "comments" by an anonymous person published in a pamphlet, which enumerated the "benefits" that the inhabitants of Palestine derived from the Jewish immigrants. Canaan refuted the presumed benefits, such as the availability of scientists at the Hebrew University and hospitals, the funds that were brought into Palestine (for example, through land purchases, of all things!), the improvement in agriculture, the rise in the average wages of the Palestinian worker, and the improvement in the health conditions among peasants. With respect to the last point, Canaan, who was well-versed on the subject, did not deny that the Jews had dried out some of the swamps and streams here and there, and thus contributed to the control of the widespread malaria epidemic. However, these preventive measures were undertaken, primarily, for the benefit of the Jewish colonists themselves, and for transforming land bought at a very low price into agricultural land. Canaan also pointed out that the Jews employed Egyptian laborers for digging wide channels necessary for the drying out process and that tens of these laborers died, as was documented in a booklet entitled *Hadera*. He wrote, "Baron De Rothschild supplied the money and the Egyptians gave their lives."[16]

Canaan also stated what the Zionists did not, namely, that the Palestinians too had dried out the swamps under the supervision of the Department of Health and that their achievement in this respect was, undoubtedly, greater than that of the Jews. The Arabs had provided financial support and unpaid labor in the following areas: Birkat Ramadan, Wadi Rubeen, Wadi al-Qabbani, Al-Lajjoon, Nahr an-Na'ameen, At-Tanturah, Deir al-Balah, and tens of other valleys throughout Palestine.

[14] Canaan 1936a, p. 10.

[15] Canaan 1936a, p. 21.

[16] Canaan 1936b, p. 87.

Finally, Canaan stated that the work done by the Jewish Hydro-Electric Co. of Rutenberg brought down the level of water at Lake Tiberias, which led to the spread of malaria. He cited two reports issued by the Department of Health for the years 1924 and 1935 to the effect that the increase in the malaria cases around Tiberias was the direct result of the low level of the lake, which provided an ideal environment for the growth of the malaria microbe. There had always been cases of malaria infection among the Bedouins and in the Arab villages around Tiberias, such as Tall Hom, At-Tabighah, Al-Majdal, and Tiberias.

The Arab Medical Society of Palestine

The Arab Medical Society of Palestine was established on August 4, 1944 in accordance with a decision taken by the Arab Medical Conference, which was held in Haifa in 1934. The Society consisted of the other medical societies in the various cities. Canaan was chosen as president for that Society, Dr. Rushdi at-Tamimi (Haifa) as Vice-President, Dr. Mahmoud Taher ad-Dajani as Secretary and Office Manager, and Dr. Sa'id ad-Dajani as Treasurer. In December 1945, the first issue of the Society's journal (*al-Majallah at-Tibbiyyah al-'Arabiyyah al-Filastiniyyah*) was published in Arabic and English. Canaan was a member of the editorial board and Mahmoud ad-Dajani was editor-in-chief. The Society held its first medical conference in Palestine in July 1945. Among the invited guests was Howard Walter Florey, who was awarded the Nobel Prize that year in Physiology and Medicine for isolating and purifying penicillin for general medical use.

From its inception, the Society's activities were not confined to Palestine. Following an attack on the Syrian Parliament, the Society offered 700 pounds to support relief work. The Society also planned to implement a number of projects but was thwarted by the events that took place in 1947/1948. Among these projects was "The Piaster Project," which called for collecting contributions for building a hospital in memory of Aminah Badr Al-Khalidi. The Society was able to collect the amount of 1,500 pounds.

The Society played an effective role when the political and security situation in Palestine deteriorated, and did its best despite difficult and dangerous circumstances, such as the killing of Drs. Mikhail Ma'louf and Jabra Nasser and the wounding of Raghib al-Khalidi. The Society began to train and organize relief units and centers in the cities and villages, and to provide medical aid to the Palestinian and Arab freedom fighters. It also contacted the Red Cross and started cooperation with it for the protection of hospitals and the other humanitarian institutions. The Society did its best to provide the necessary resources; it sent an appeal to the medical societies and Red Crescent and Red Cross organizations in a number of Arab capitals. Some of these groups responded by sending limited medical aid.

With the approach of the end of the Mandate, the Higher Arab Relief Committee was established on 24 January, 1948 so as to assume the task of receiving aid coming to the country and supervising its distribution. The Committee was established with initiative from the Society and in coordination with the Higher Arab Committee, and was headed by Dr. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi, and had among its members Tawfik Canaan, Zleikhah ash-Shihabi (Head of the Women's Union),

Izzat Tannous (Secretary of Beit Al-Mal Al-'Arabi), and Mahmoud ad-Dajani, Secretary of the Society.

The Catastrophe and the Exodus

On 22 February, 1948, bombs and mortar shells hit some Arab houses in al-Musrarah Quarter. It is likely that by the end of that month Canaan's children left the house, but Tawfik, his wife, Badra and Nora, Canaan's sister-in-law, remained. Leila Mantoura tells us that Canaan was able to deposit his collection of amulets and 250 icons at an international organization in West Jerusalem at the beginning of the year. She says that the family left the house after it suffered a direct hit on 9 May. Each of them took a small suitcase, and the group entered the Old City at night in accordance with arrangements made between Canaan and the Latin Patriarchate. They sneaked in through a small door that led to the roof of the Latin convent. The Greek Orthodox Patriarch gave the family a room in the convent to live in. The family stayed in this room for two and a half years. Mantoura wrote the following about this tragic event in the family's life: "Mother and father would go daily to the top of the Wall of Jerusalem to look at their home. They witnessed it being ransacked, together with the wonderful priceless library and manuscripts, which mother guarded jealously and with great pride. They saw mother's Biedermeyer furniture being loaded into trucks and then their home being set on fire."[17] Canaan lost his house and his library, as well as three manuscripts ready for publication.

Despite these painful events and fear of a potential Zionist attack on the Old City, Canaan continued his work as physician and treated patients in his new, humble home. In his capacity as head of the Arab Medical Society of Palestine, he continued to carry out his duties to his country, as witnessed by 'Abdallah at-Tall and Izzat Tannous.

To preserve the hospitals, the Arab Medical Society of Palestine succeeded, after arduous negotiations with the Mandate Government, in taking over a number of hospitals in Jerusalem and Bethlehem. These were the Central Hospital, the Hospice Hospital, the Infectious Diseases Hospital near Beit Safafa, and the Mental Hospital in Bethlehem. In early May 1948, the Society officially took control of the Central Hospital, with its facilities in the Russian Compound (*al-Mascobiyyah*), and the Austrian Hospice Hospital. The Central Hospital, which was supervised by As'ad Bisharah, started receiving the wounded and the sick. However, the Red Cross flag that flew over the building did not prevent the Jews from shelling it and destroying a big part of it. Then, the Jewish militias occupied the surrounding houses and a part of the hospital and continued shelling the medical facility, preventing anyone from getting to it. The Society was forced to evacuate in October 1948. The Austrian Hospice, which the Mandate Government transformed into a hospital in early 1948, was managed by Canaan, who, together with a number of physicians, nurses, and volunteers, did their best to keep going during the Jerusalem battle, until they were finally forced to evacuate due to the continuous shelling.

New Beginning

At that difficult period in Jerusalem, and following the influx of refugees there, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF)

[17] Mantoura 1998b, p. 13.

appointed Canaan as manager of medical operations. Canaan contributed to the establishment of clinics at the Saint John Hospice, near the Eighth Station in the Old City, and in 'Aizariyyeh, Hebron, Beit Jala, and Taybeh (near Ramallah). He also used to regularly visit the mobile clinics, which were established by the LWF in rural areas.

In 1950, UNRWA and the LWF jointly established the Augusta Victoria Hospital was established, in the same building and with the same name, on the at-Tur (Mount of Olives). Canaan played a role in its establishment, too, and he was appointed its first medical director, a position he held until the spring of 1955.

The Last Years

Canaan and his wife could not overcome the loss of their son Theo, an architect who died in 1954 while renovating an archaeological monument in Jerash. When Canaan retired, at the age of seventy-five, he was offered a house on the grounds of the Augusta Victoria Hospital. There he lived with his family and continued to write until his death on January 15, 1964. It is likely that he died before his last article, "Crime in the Traditions and Customs of the Arabs in Jordan," was published (in German) in the *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästinavereins*, No. 80, in 1964. He was buried in the Evangelical Lutheran Cemetery in Bethlehem, near Beit Jala where he had spent his childhood.

Status and Esteem

By virtue of his position, Canaan came in contact with virtually all segments of Palestinian society. He treated people from all social classes. He examined Sherif Hussein of Mecca in Amman with a number of other physicians from Jerusalem before he died in 1931. He also removed a bullet from the thigh of Abu Jildah, the notorious Palestinian rebel and hero to some, most probably in 1936.

Canaan's name was frequently mentioned in the biographies of the Palestinian elite: he spent one evening with Khalil Sakakini in Damascus in 1918, where the latter had to stay until the end of the war. Then Secretary of Beit Al-Mal Al-'Arabi Izzat Tannous mentioned him on several occasions. Many of his acquaintances gave him amulets as gifts, like Mousa Kadhim al-Husseini, and the Lebanese Dr. Ibrahim Bek 'Alam ad-Din, head of the Venereal Diseases Division at the Department of Health.

Among his non-Arab friends were Hermann Schneller, grandson of the founder of the Syrian Orphanage House and manager of the House until 1940, and Lydia Einszler, the wife of his colleague Adolf Einszler, with whom he used to exchange amulets. Canaan was acquainted with a number of specialists in the field of Palestinian archaeology and Old Testament. These included William Foxwell Albright, Nelson Glueck, and Kathleen Kenyon, all of whom worked in the field of Palestinian archeology, and Albrecht Alt, Martin Noth, and Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, who were pioneers in Old Testament studies in Germany. Among the many physicians Canaan knew was the famous Jewish Czech ophthalmologist, Albert (Abraham) Ticho, who was a surgeon and headed the Jewish Ophthalmology Hospital (closed in 1918).

Among his friends and acquaintances were Dr. Shafiq Nasr Hanna Haddad from Haifa, who was a specialist in tropical medicine and who, like Canaan, studied at the American University of Beirut, and Dr. Yusuf

Hajjar, of Lebanese origin, who worked as a physician and first surgeon at the Government Hospital in Jerusalem. Among the people who used to frequent Canaan's house was Judah L. Magnes, who participated in founding the Hebrew University and became its president during the period 1925-1948. He was well-known for his conciliatory attitude between Arabs and Jews, and he was author of the book *Like All the Nations?*, which Canaan quoted often in his books.

Canaan also knew many sheikhs who prepared his amulets, as well as fortune-tellers and Sufis. Among these were Ibrahim Hassan al-Ansari (Ad-Danaf), a custodian of al-Haram al-Sharif, Shaykh 'Atif ad-Disy, a Qadiriyyah follower, and the famous Shaykh Mahmoud al-'Askari al-Falakki from al-Dhahiriyyah, who practiced fortune-telling in Jerusalem. Canaan also was acquainted with antiquity dealers, from whom he bought amulets, such as Ohan, the well-known Armenian dealer, who had a shop in ad-Dabbaghah Quarter in Jerusalem until 1948.

Canaan was a permanent member of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) Board of Directors in Jerusalem. He was chosen as president three times and when he retired, he became an honorary member of YMCA for life. Canaan laid the cornerstone for the new Leprosy Hospital on an-Najmah Mountain on the road to Birzeit. The hospital was rebuilt under the supervision of the Moravian Sisters and Canaan was a consultant there until 1956.

Canaan was awarded eight medals that we know of: The Order of the Red Crescent and The Iron Cross, both during World War I, and the Holy Sepulchre Cross with a red ribbon, awarded by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in 1951. In the same year, he was awarded The Federal Merit Cross from the Federal Republic of Germany.

The works of Tawfik Canaan are of major significance, especially today, when Palestinian heritage is still being systematically silenced and replaced by elements foreign to Palestine and partly artificial. All through his folkloric writings, Canaan, like Dalman, has exemplified the close and intimate connections between Palestinian and biblical traditions. This should lend some thought to the essential question of who are the true "owners" of the land in the broad cultural sense.

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See footnote 1 for more source references.