

As I walked through Ramallah one day, I stopped to read a plaque about a certain Mukhlis Amro who had been a member of a literary society in the 1920s. I was intrigued – and thus the idea about the theme for this issue was born. Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Palestine was home to a people with a sophisticated, cultured class that cherished the noble pleasures of life. In coffee houses (gathering places for all kinds of people, among them the educated and privileged classes), entertainment was provided by *hakawatiyyeh*, narrators of stories and epic poetry. With the arrival of the gramophone and radio (favorites in cafés), increasing literacy, and the new Ottoman constitution of 1908 that allowed for newspapers to be published, cafés also became centers for literary societies, such as the Vagabond Party founded by Khalil al-Sakakini. This was not a land without a people! In this issue you will read about trends, developments, and activities that took place in pre-*Nakba* Palestine – and I am inviting you to be pleasantly surprised!

Sincere thanks go to the Ministry of Culture for its sponsorship of this issue. Gratitude is extended also to the authors who contributed articles, among them Minister of Culture Dr. Ehab Bessaïso, Osama Daher, Al-Mutawakel Taha, George Al Ama, Dr. Ali Qleibo, Dr. Khalil Nakhleh, Rima Nasir Tarazi, Dr. Adania Shibli, Munir Fakher Eldin, Walid Salem, and last but not least, Issam Khalidi. Articles in this issue feature the Grande Dame of Poetry, Fadwa Tuqan, whose centennial is celebrated in 2017; the art and music scenes in Palestine; important personalities, such as Aref al-Aref who chronicled life in Jerusalem, Khalil al-Sakakini whose most precious collection of books was lost in 1948, and Jubran Kazma who utilized popular mobilization in efforts to prevent Zionist appropriation of Palestinian land during the British Mandate. Accounts of modernist trends in thought that were prevalent in pre-Mandate Palestine and of sports societies with their active calendars, as well as a brief history of Al-Rama Village in the Galilee paint vivid pictures not only of Palestine's active and versatile society, and its love of life, but also of the country's economic and agricultural development. Our Personality of the Month is author Emile Habibi, and Artist of the Month composer Salvador Arnita, thanks to authors Tamam Musleh, currently an intern with TWiP, and Saleem Zougbi, Bethlehem Academy of Music. Be inspired to read our Book of the Month and visit the Museum of the Month and the many events listed.

Wishing all of us a more peaceful world, where the prosperity of others is considered an asset rather than a threat!

Tina Basem and the entire team of TWiP



Forthcoming Issues

October 2017: **Jerusalem Lives**

November 2017: **Census, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

December 2017: **Export Palestine**



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