

## Seized in Beirut

### *The Plundered Archives of the Palestinian Cinema Institution and Cultural Arts Section*

Rona Sela

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**Abstract:** One of the biggest acts of plunder by Israel was of a vast Palestinian film archive looted by Israeli military forces in Beirut in 1982. The films are managed under the repressive colonial control of the Israel Defense Forces Archive, which thus conceals many of them and information regarding their origin. This article documents my efforts to disclose the films and locate their institutions in Beirut, to chart their history, name their film-makers and open a discussion about returning them. It also provides a deeper understanding of colonial mechanisms of looting and truth production. I discuss the Third Palestine Cinema Movement and the various institutions that were part of the Palestinian revolution in the 1970s, with a focus on the Cultural Arts Section managed by Ismail Shammout.

**Keywords:** art looting, colonial archives, Cultural Arts Section, Israel Defense Forces Archive (IDFA), Palestinian archives, Palestinian Cinema Institution, The United Media

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### **Israeli Colonial Mechanisms: Military Plunder, Looting, Censorship and Erasure of Palestinian History**

This article discusses Palestinian film archives plundered by Israeli forces in Beirut in 1982, held by the Israel Defense Forces Archive (IDFA) and catalogued as 'Seized Films from the PLO Archive in Beirut' (Figure 1). The plundered archives contain historical documentation of daily life in Palestine before the Nakba (the Palestinian catastrophe and exile, 1948) that were gathered





**Figure 1:** ‘IDF and Defense Establishment Archives. Film Seized from the PLO Archive in Beirut. Memories of Glow – PLO: The History of the Palestinians since 1919 in Paintings and Photographs.’ Footage of the film directed by Ismail Shammout plundered from the Cultural Arts Section. The film is also entitled sometimes in English *Memories . . . and Fire*. Courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal and the Shammout family.

from various sources in the 1970s and early 1980s. It also includes documentation of Palestinian life after the Nakba in exile: refugee camps; military trainings; battles; civil war; resistance; political, cultural and social events; parades and interviews. Many of the films/film footage were filmed by Palestinians for Palestinian institutions; however, there are also a considerable number of items from foreign sources (some of them filmed by Palestinians) – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), television networks, news agencies and others. The documentation in these films is in many cases historically and culturally rare and unique, and therefore significant in shedding light on Palestinian visual history and resistance, as well as self-representation. They document the colonised rebellion, its anti-colonial struggle and the process of self-determination (Memmi 2003). Since they were taken as booty, they reflect the mechanisms of plunder and control and the production of knowledge by the coloniser (Sela 2009, 2017; Stoler 2002).

This article is a continuation of my research on Israeli colonial archives (Sela 2000, 2007) and especially how Jewish and Israeli entities and individuals plunder Palestinian archives and treasures, control and conceal them in their colonial military archives/bodies through aggressive means of control since the first half of the twentieth century (Sela 2009, 2013a, 2015, 2017). The genealogy of Israeli colonial plunder and erasure was described in depth initially in Hebrew (mainly before, during and after the Nakba; Sela 2009) and then in English (Sela 2015, 2017); the last research focuses on the seizure of many Palestinian archives (visual and others) in Beirut in the 1980s. These studies analyse the looting of Palestinian archives by pre-state

Jewish military organisations, Israeli military bodies and soldiers, or by civilians who internalised the codes of power during the twentieth century. Sites of plunder range from dead Palestinian soldiers (during battle), to guerrilla forces, private homes, photographers' studios (Figure 2), official archives and institutions (Figure 3). My studies show that the mechanism of power and erasure of Palestinian historiography does not end with physical seizure but continues with a deliberate, organised system of management and truth production which includes censorship and classification of the plundered archives/images or materials with Palestinian importance; restrictions on viewing and prevention of materials being returned to their owners and the public sphere; Western interpretation that reflects the world view of the coloniser, not the colonised, and is disconnected from the original context; and subjugation to Israeli laws, norms and terminology. They describe how the Israeli colonial state conceals Palestinian historiography from the public sphere – physically and consciously – and how the knowledge is blocked or produced.

This article focuses on films taken as booty in Beirut and moved to IDFA, and describes my efforts to disclose them and my research to locate the films' origin (where they were taken from), to describe their histories and return them to the public sphere. It therefore discusses the Third Palestine Cinema Movement and the various film institutions and archives active in Beirut as part of the Palestinian revolution before their disappearance in the 1980s. To the best of my knowledge, this research is the first to discuss the Cultural Arts Section (CAS)<sup>1</sup> of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). I also wish through this article to deepen understanding of colonial plunder and control, to dismantle and neutralise their destructive features and demand the return of history to its people.

Because Israeli colonial military archives classify Palestinian material (plunder from Palestinian sources) and material with Palestinian importance (produced by Jewish/Israeli entities), impose restrictions and obstacles on viewing it even if the censorship period has passed, and put great effort into preventing research that has the potential to rupture the official Israeli narrative (Sela 2009, 2013a, 2015, 2017), I had to develop a supportive set of tools to bypass the official colonial system. This includes tracking archival materials – remnants, signs, indications of erasure, clues and snippets of information; digging into the various layers of the archive, the overt and covert; conducting interviews with the looters, with the looted and with witnesses; and entering a long legal battle with IDFA's managers and legal advisers and with the State Archivist to open and return material to their owners. In many cases the original materials were classified, and my interviews with the looters, for instance, helped to provide missing information (ibid.).

When I started the research in the late 1990s, as an Israeli, I had access to some of the material. However, after the publication of *Made Public* (2009), which criticises Zionist repressive systems of ownership and accessibility, and the publication of an initial list of Palestinian materials in Israel's possession,



**Figure 2:** Chalil Rissas (Rasas), *Abd al-Qadir al-Hussaini Talking with a Palestinian Leader (Qazem Rimawi?)*, undated (1947–1948?). Haganah History Archives, courtesy of the Rissas family. The photograph was originally published in *Made Public* (Sela 2009). The photograph was looted from the photographer's studio by an Israeli soldier and given to the archive by a member of his family (1949) after Rissas's photographs were published in the Israeli military magazine *Bamahane*. 'Accepted since the mopping up operation of 1967, November 2002 – an opinion by the attorney general to allow the use of seized materials.'



**Figure 3:** Unknown photographer, *Parade on King George Boulevard (today Jerusalem Boulevard), Jaffa*, undated, probably early 1948. From 'Files of Land of Israel Arabs up until April 19', IDFA. The photograph was originally published in *Made Public* (Sela 2009). The photograph was taken as 'military booty', as defined by the archive, from the office of Rashid Al-Haj Ibrahim Head of the National Committee, Haifa. According to the archive, 'since November 2002, an opinion by the attorney general to allow the use of seized material in archive files' is in effect.

the IDFA's relation towards my research was altered. Some of the materials that were opened until then were later closed, and obstacles regarding my work intensified. Legal assistance did not help in many cases. When I tried to involve Palestinians in my research, they were not given permission to enter the archive (while I entered the archive, but faced many access limitations). The material that is held in the archives is open primarily to (Israeli) researchers who espouse the official Israeli narrative and history (Sela 2009, 2013a, 2015, 2017).

Once they enter Israel's archives, Palestinian archives – those taken in an organised manner as booty and those looted by individuals – are subject to Israel's military archive laws, although they express a Palestinian narrative and not a Jewish/Israeli narrative, one of the archive's criteria.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Israeli Archives' Regulation Law* (2010), they are officially closed for a period of between 30 to 70 years, usually 50 years, as the IDFA states on its website.<sup>3</sup> Sometimes material is closed indefinitely if the custodians of Israel's official archives fear they 'might seriously harm state's security, foreign relations or the right to privacy.'<sup>4</sup> The control of Palestinian archives by military means, colonial/apartheid laws and censorship entrenches the system of appropriation and dominance, and they go through a process of erasure and suppression. Israel's attempt to control Palestinian treasures is rooted in its intent to instil or prioritise a Zionist/Israeli narrative, and to control the consciousness and memory of a people in physical conflict with the colonial occupier. Everything that challenges the Zionist/Israeli narrative is subject to repressive mechanisms and the threat of being eradicated (Sela 2009, 2013a, 2015, 2017). This process constitutes a validation of colonial power relations, as demonstrated by various researchers (Shepard 2015; Stoler 2002).

Despite this use of force on research and the writing of Palestinian history, the work of Palestinian researchers and others,<sup>5</sup> and projects for the conservation and study of Palestinian history,<sup>6</sup> are an active source of resistance against erasure. In line with this tendency is the proposal to read the colonial archive in a postcolonial manner that subverts its initial goal (occupy and control) through an interpretation that neutralises its colonial aspects, making it possible to return indigenous history to the public sphere (McEwan 2003; Sela 2009, 2015; Stoler 2011). Actions to return the material to their owners should also be taken.

It is important to emphasise that according to interviews with Israeli soldiers<sup>7</sup> and other documentations, the Security Service had in 1982 a list of PLO and Palestinian institutions and archives in Beirut and took everything indiscriminately without paying any attention to its intelligence importance. Israeli soldiers serve as subcontractors of the Security Service. This is how they also collected visual material of cultural importance to Palestinian historiography.

Although the films under discussion were distributed all over the world, very few have been found (for example, in Italy; see Buali 2012), and there are ongoing vast efforts, as later described, to find, collect and rebuild the archive. In addition, it is not known when the films in the IDFA were declassified.

I received formal authorisation to view a few dozen films/footage only in 2010, nine years after my first query to the archive regarding these films. Some were initially opened for the Israeli television series *Tekuma* (1998) to mark 50 years of Israel's existence and to relate the Zionist narrative (letter from Ilana Alon, director of the IDFA, 16 August 2011). It is likely that these are the films I was authorised to view. The IDFA response regarding the origin of these films stated: 'The archive does not know from which PLO body they were taken [...] the films were seized during the Shlom HaGalil war in 1982 – brought to Israel by the battalion for the technical collection of seized documents' (ibid., quoted in Sela 2017).

### **Visual Arts in Service of the Revolution: Background to Palestinian Photography and Cinema**

Palestinian photography's inception can be marked with the photographer Chalil Raad in Palestine (1891, the year Raad started to photograph). It continued, in the first decades of the twentieth century, with photographers such as Karimeh Abbud,<sup>8</sup> Fadil Saba and Ibrahim Rissas (Rasas),<sup>9</sup> who documented daily life in Palestine, worked independently and focused on civilian aspects (Sela 2000, 2010). The second wave of photography is represented by the Palestinian pioneers of photojournalism – photographers Chalil Rissas, Ali Za'arur and Hrnat Nakashian (Sela 2000),<sup>10</sup> who, beginning in the second half of the 1940s, documented Palestinian resistance before, during and after the Nakba, and whose work marked a significant change in Palestinian photography. They began photographing before 1948, operated independently or for newspapers and photo agencies, and usually not for Palestinian national institutions. Over time, their work was redirected for Palestinian national aims similar to that of first-wave photographers (Sela 2000, 2007). While Chalil Rissas and Ali Za'arur worked with the press – foreign and local – and Rissas joined the forces of Abed Al-Qader Al-Hussaini and created an impressive body of work that could have served Palestinian goals, little is known of the institutional use of their work in the time they were active (Sela 2000). However, they gave voice to the Palestinian struggle and narrative in the worldwide press and in Palestine around 1948. Palestinian photography from 1948 to 1982 has not yet been researched in depth.

The first attempts at Palestinian cinema began four decades after the inception of Palestinian photography, between 1935 and 1948, starting with the work of Ibrahim Hassan Sirhan and Jamal Al-Asphar and continuing with Ahmad Hilmi Al-Kilani and Mohammed Salah Al-Kilani (Khleifi 2001: 178–179).<sup>11</sup> George Khleifi argues that the second period in the chronology of Palestinian cinema (from 1948 to 1967) was one of silence, an attempt to digest the disastrous situation faced by the Palestinians – as a minority in the Diaspora and in Israel – after the Nakba (ibid.).

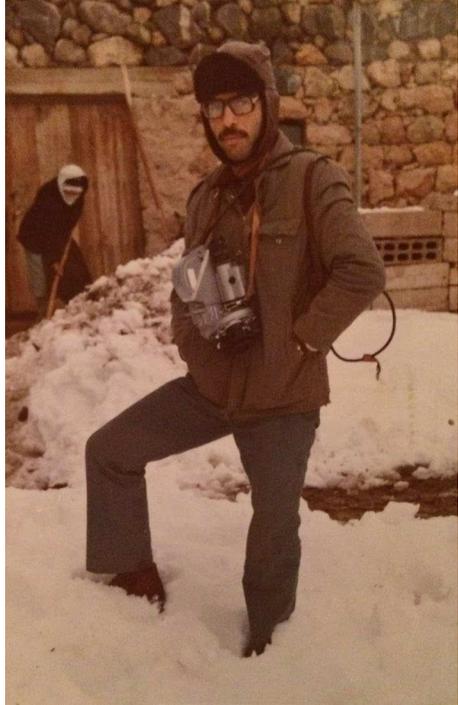
The third wave addressed in this article,<sup>12</sup> which came into being in the late 1960s, also began as a private initiative by photographers and film-makers<sup>13</sup> – people with a visual and historical consciousness and long-term vision. Sulafa Jadallah, a Palestinian from Nablus (born in 1941) who lived in Amman and whose work is discussed later, was the first female Palestinian film-maker. She started working in 1967, and late that year, together with Hani Jawhariyyeh<sup>14</sup> and Mustafa Abu-Ali,<sup>15</sup> established the Photography Section with the Fatah Information Office (Figures 4, 5, 6). These were young film professionals who met in Jordan – individual film-makers, innovative and pioneering – and who combined photography and film in the Palestinian struggle. In the beginning, they focused on photography (for example, documenting the battle of Al-Karameh and additional battles of the Fedayeen), and because of a lack of proper equipment and space, processed the films in the kitchen of the Fatah's Information Office. The first exhibition was presented in a large tent in the Al-Wihdat refugee camp near Amman. It travelled across the Arab world and paved the way for documentation of the armed struggle and dissemination of the images worldwide.



**Figure 4:** Sulafa Jadallah and Hani Jawhariyyeh, 1967-1968. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.

In 1968, under the influence of Jawhariyyeh and Abu-Ali, they began shooting documentary films and established the Palestine Film Unit (hereinafter, Film Unit).<sup>16</sup> Their aim was to document events, information and services in photographs and films for the press and for information purposes. At first the Fatah did not support the purchase of cinema equipment since it was sceptical about expanding its operations and focusing on film, so the film-makers borrowed cameras from other sources. However, after some time the Film

**Figure 5:** Mustafa Abu-Ali, early 1970s. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.



**Figure 6:** Mustafa Abu-Ali interviewed by the journalist Ahmad Sawan, early 1970s. On the wall, posters of the Palestinian Cinema Institution. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.

Unit withdrew its backing. Following the events of Black September (1970), they moved their operations to Beirut and in 1970 changed their name to the Palestinian Cinema Institution<sup>17</sup> (hereinafter, Cinema Institution).<sup>18</sup> Cinema was enlisted in the service of the Palestinian revolution and became part of a broader movement – the Third Cinema Movement (Buali 2012).<sup>19</sup> (Figure 7)



**Figure 7:** Palestinian Cinema Institution logo. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.

Unlike the two earlier waves, this wave developed outside of Palestine and broke the silence of Palestinian photography and film. It created a cinematic image of traumatic Palestinian history – the resolute fighter replaced the figure of the refugee. ‘Palestinian resistance/revolution cinema’ was perceived as combative, was national, and enlisted for the struggle (Gertz and Khleifi 2006: 26, 181; see also Habashneh 2008). It was an alternative to the ghosts of colonialism, and to a large extent matched the model constructed by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino ([1968] 1991): ‘The cinema of the revolution is at the same time one of destruction and construction: destruction of the image that neo-colonialism has created of itself and of us, and construction of a throbbing, living reality which recaptures truth in any of its expressions’. Or, as Albert Memmi described it, ‘the colonized’s liberation must be carried out through a recovery of self and of autonomous dignity’<sup>20</sup> (1967: 128). The film-makers and photographers of the Cinema Institution looked for new forms of expression (Denes 2014), were largely against the model of ‘the perfect work of art’ of ‘bourgeois culture, its theoreticians and critics’, and ‘against its constant and methodical exercise of practice, search, and experimentation’ (Solanas and Getino [1968] 1991). They created ‘imperfect cinema’ (Espinosa 1979) and found their own ground-breaking decolonising path. ‘The message must be transmitted correctly, the language must be simple, the aesthetic clear [. . .] Generally, one must avoid complications and strive for clarity so that the

masses will understand the revolutionary content of the film' (Hennebelle quoted in Denes 2014: 237).

The Third Cinema Movement was born as militant, subversive cinema, and as part of the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist revolution in the Third World. It operated in the 1960s and 1970s, parallel to the main liberation movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa, and sought to undermine capitalist Hollywood cinema through its content, forms of visual expression, and modes of production and screening. Film-makers of the Third Cinema Movement were expected to join the liberation struggle and to create cinema measured not by its aesthetic or entertainment value but by its contribution to the revolution. Solanas and Getino ([1968] 1991) wrote, in an essay published in 1968 that basically became a manifesto of the Third Cinema Movement:

The anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of the Third World and of their equivalents inside the imperialist countries constitutes today the axis of the world revolution. Third Cinema is, in our opinion, the cinema that recognizes in that struggle the most gigantic cultural, scientific, and artistic manifestation of our time, the great possibility of constructing a liberated personality with each people as the starting point – in a word, the decolonization of culture.

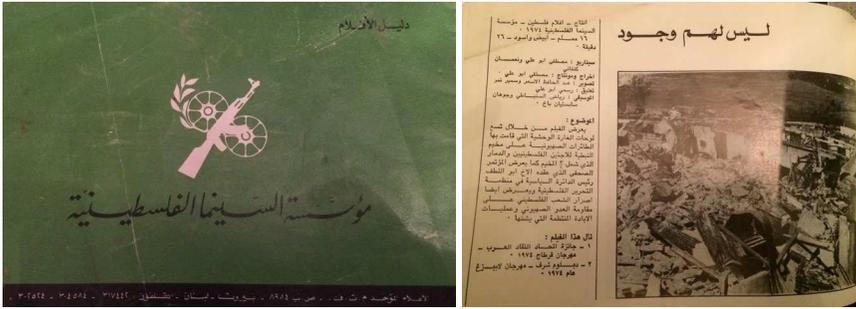
The film-makers of the Third Cinema Movement sought to raise awareness, crack Western colonial power structures and initiate discourse on the issue of people living under racial, religious, gender and ethnic oppression, or undergoing migration, exile and persecution or economic exploitation. They wanted to expose the struggles of a repressed, marginalised minority group and perceived cinema as a bridge that facilitates interaction between intellectual discourse and the masses, establishes new paths for education and dialogue, and enables new models for the nation's imagination.<sup>21</sup> They combined cultural and political criticism with visual elements, sometimes with cooperation of non-Third World artists. The Film Unit/Cinema Institution and its successors from other organisations were influenced by the views of the Third Cinema Movement, collaborated with it as detailed below, became part of it, and helped to shape its methods (see also Buali 2012). Their rebelliousness, passion and use of the camera to serve the needs of the struggle and revolution, matched the spirit of rebellion that typified Third Cinema film-makers, but also that of Jean Luc-Godard and Jean Pierre Gorin, who were interested in militant cinema and cinema collectives, in their avant-garde perspective, and in the Palestinian issue (Emmelhainz 2009; 2012: 8–11). The Film Unit film-makers, and especially Abu-Ali, assisted Godard, who was shooting material for his film on the Palestinian revolution (early 1970). Godard, discussing the role of literature and art in the political and artistic fields and the inconsistency that can develop between them (Emmelhainz 2012: 8), apparently influenced Abu-Ali who was struggling with the same issue from a cinematic and thematic aspect:

We asked ourselves, are the artistic and aesthetic values that we studied at the university appropriate for our people? Should we address the Arab and Palestinian people with the same approaches that we studied in London and Cairo? Could we express the experience of the Revolution in the traditional manner that was detached from the experience of the Revolution? Should we emulate the traditions that are created and employed by colonial cinema? Or should we develop new methods and a special language that are related to us and to our experience and to the particularities of the Palestinian Revolution? (Abu-Ali, quoted in Habashneh 2008)

The film-makers and photographers of the Film Unit/Cinema Institution operated as a collective, and in the beginning, did not take personal credit for their work, acting out of ideological motives. To ensure that messages of the struggle were communicated effectively, many discussions were held regarding the representation of their work – should they be more ‘artistic’ or realistic. Hence, they first screened films in refugee camps, after which they held discussions and distributed questionnaires (Gertz and Khleifi 2006: 30; Massad 2006: 35–36). It was documentary, national cinema, identified with the revolution, realistic and largely lacking a personal dimension, allowing the refugees to identify with it. As defined by Solonas and Getino ([1968] 1991): ‘A guerrilla cinema [. . .] the only cinema of the masses possible today, since it is the only one involved with the interests, aspirations, and the prospects of the vast majority of the people’.

Additional cinematic and visual institutions were established in Beirut under the influence of the Cinema Institution, other visual activists and the growing power of the Palestinian resistance. Understanding the power and influence of visual images in the mass media, they made extensive use of visual imagery (film, photography and graphics) for national needs. Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi mention, for example, the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) Arts Committee, which produced PFLP films for the liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Arts Committee. Most of them documented the political, military, social, economic and cultural aspects of Palestinian existence and resistance, hunted for Palestinian materials in archives elsewhere in the world and conducted visual research. They all confronted a lack of professional equipment and meagre budgets (Khleifi 2001: 183). Because of the multiplicity of bodies, the PLO, in the first half of the 1970s, founded The United Media in order to merge Palestinian media and communication – visual and writing – into one body (film, photography, journalism; see Figure 8).

The organization’s goals: the production of revolutionary films to attract public and world attention and mobilize it around the Palestinian revolution, the Palestinian issue and the struggle of the Palestinian people; establishment of a film library ‘archive’ containing video documentation and photographs, including images of the Palestinian people’s struggle and its development; and



**Figure 8:** *Films Guide – Palestinian Cinema Institution*. Beirut: The United Media, 1976. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.

strengthening ties with revolutionary and progressive cinematic movements worldwide and Palestinian representation at film festivals (N.A. 1976).

Establishment of The United Media was approved at the recommendation of the Palestinian National Council in Cairo. Initially, Kamal Nasr, a poet and the official spokesman of the PLO, managed it until an Israeli assassination attempt on his life in April 1973 (Slyman 2012).<sup>22</sup> The United Media operated as a unifying body for only a short time; after that, its operations became the responsibility of the Cinema Institution.<sup>23</sup>

### Gender and Resistance

Women played an important role in the fight against colonialism. Researchers show that women suffer violence twice in colonial regions and areas of conflict, because of the coloniser’s attempts to defeat the colonised or because of oppression towards men, which is then transmitted towards women (Jacobs 2013; Kevorkian 2009: 69–70; Peteet 1991: 33–37). However, oppression can also have the opposite effect – it can empower women, shape a new sense of self-worth and pride and enable mobilisation, social transformation and release from traditional gender constraints (Peteet 1991). Repression and control are, therefore, catalysts for uprisings (Peteet 1991; Sela 2013b; Tzfadia 2008). According to Sheila Rowbotham (1993: 206–209), acts of resistance enable women to cope and survive violence, and position themselves against domination. Peteet, who discusses resistance of Palestinian women, claims that the force, internal or external, that was imposed on them led to their political consciousness and to developing modes of resistance but also feelings of control and independence:

Their participation in formal politics became an indicator of modernization, radicalism, progressiveness, and social development and a sign of the rejection of the ‘backward past’ [...] The resistance was a component part of their vision of the future society they wanted to established (1991: 103).

Peteet demonstrates that until the civil war in Lebanon, spontaneous and unorganised activities of individual women were driven by a desire to take an active stance in shaping the present and future of their communities and to take part in the national struggle (ibid.: 108–112). Rowbotham shows that visual documentation was part of the struggle against silence and silencing and that the struggle of Palestinian women (and other women in zones of conflict) against colonialism was facilitated by ‘rewriting our histories, documenting our memories, exposing the world to the cruelties of Empire and reinventing civil disobedience’ (Rowbotham 1993: 185; Sela 2013b). She quotes bell hooks, who suggested, ‘We would consider crucial both the kind of image we produce and the way we critically write and talk about images’ (Rowbotham 1993: 208).

The female creators under discussion used visual tools in their battle against colonial oppression, initiated their activism and found new forms of visual resistance. I focus on two figures – Sulafa Jadallah and Khadijeh Habashneh – who had a significant and pioneering role in the Palestinian visual revolution, in establishing the new medium of cinema, and in the initiating and founding of visual archiving of the Palestinian resistance in stills and cinema. I also discuss Tamam Al-Akhal, a painter and deputy manager of the CAS; Zeinab Shaath, a singer and composer; and Mona Al-Saudi, an artist and manager of the Section for Visual Arts, all of whom were highly active in their field as part of the rebellion. Many other female creators were involved in the visual Palestinian resistance in Beirut and further discussion about their work is required.

Sulafa Jadallah, introduced above, was a pioneer of stills and cinema in the revolution (see Figure 4). A Palestinian who lived in Amman, she studied cinematography at the High Cinema Institute (in 1964) in Cairo.<sup>24</sup> She initially worked alone as a still photographer, mainly portraiture, documenting martyrs (in 1967) and developed the films in her kitchen. After a while, she established an official photography department. A meeting with Jawhariyyeh and Abu-Ali (1968) led to collaboration, and they began to shoot experimental and documentary films. Jadallah broke many conventions and joined the Fedayeen in their training and fights, together with Abu-Ali and Jawhariyyeh. She went to battle areas dominated by men and overcame sociological and physical obstacles. However, she was forced to retire from her activities very early in her career after she was seriously injured in the head with a bullet while documenting a Fedayeen training exercise (in mid-1969). Her contribution to revolutionary photography and cinema is significant. She established the Photography Section with the Fatah and the infrastructure for photography and film documentation (Film Unit) for telling the Palestinian narrative and the revolution. Various creators continued in her footsteps. She died in 2006.

Khadijeh Habashneh, a Jordanian clinical psychologist and member of the Jordanian Theatre Group, devoted her life to the ‘Palestinian question’. She met and married Mustafa Abu-Ali after she had completed her studies in Cairo and he had just started with the Photography Section/Film Unit (1968). They moved to Beirut in 1970 where she worked as a volunteer at the Cinema

Institution and with the Palestinian women's movement. In 1974, she officially joined the Cinema Institution (Figure 9).<sup>25</sup> Her major role was in establishing an archive (1976) to store and preserve the films of the Cinema Institution and its film-makers, as well as rare historic documentation of Palestine and Palestinians, while understanding the importance of archiving for future generations. Thus, the Cinema Institution collaborated with other bodies that dealt with Palestinian issues such as UNRWA, and Arab and foreign television networks. UNRWA films, for example, were at last stored, because of the war, with the Cinema Institution Archive, and still photographs with the CAS. Tamam Al-Akhal, who worked alongside her husband, Ismail Shammout, in the CAS, as I later discuss, claims that the still photographs and movies of UNRWA were first transferred to them when UNRWA left Beirut. They kept the photographs because of Shammout's interest in this field, and passed the films on to the Cinema Institution. Al-Akhal said that the films were in massive metal boxes that took up a lot of space and they were not able to store them. Kais Al-Zubaidi, who worked with the CAS, also remembers that the films were transferred to Palestinian organisations.

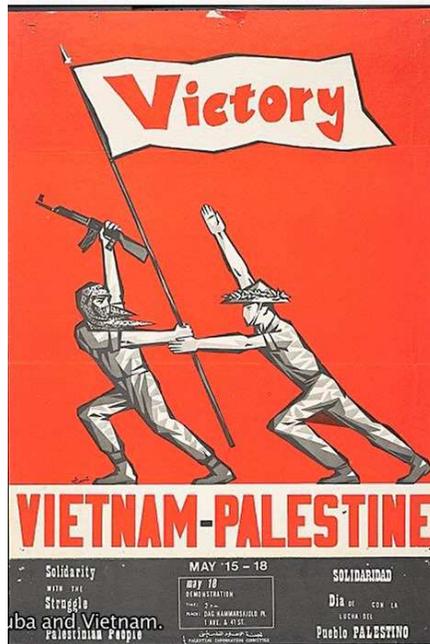
Khadijeh Habashneh also established a cinematheque (1976) which screened films from similar liberation groups all over the world – from Cuba, Vietnam, China and the Soviet Union (Figure 10). The Cinema Institution



**Figure 9:** Khadijeh Habashneh and Samir Nimer, 1979. Courtesy of Khadijeh Habashneh.

was in contact with film-makers from other countries who viewed the camera as a revolutionary tool in the people's struggle, and some of the films were created in collaboration with foreign artists,<sup>26</sup> or foreign artists who gave voice to Palestinians.<sup>27</sup> The Institution's films were presented at various festivals, among them the first Palestinian festival (Baghdad, 1973) and subsequent ones (1976, 1980; see Massad 2006: 33–36), and at the Leipzig Festival.<sup>28</sup> In a later period, Habashneh started to direct films. *Children Nevertheless* (1979–1980),<sup>29</sup> her first film, describes the suffering of Palestinian children in exile and in Palestine: orphaned survivors after the massacre in Tal Al-Za'arar (1976) raised in the Al-Sumood Children Home; the death of many other children in the massacre; the impossible life of the survivors; harmful employment of children from the occupied territories by Israelis and more. Her second film, which she did not manage to complete, dealt with women's resistance and their role in the revolution. This topic and children's suffering were two typical themes that characterised female activists (Peteeet 1991: 107). This unfinished film was seized from Rock Studio in Beirut (June 1982) with other films that were being edited during that period. After the entrance of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), Habashneh was not permitted to enter the area and the reels disappeared.

The Cinema Institution Archive, which contained significant, invaluable Palestinian footage and films, disappeared (together with technical equipment)



**Figure 10:** Vietnam-Palestine, Solidarity with the Struggle of the Palestinian People. Poster by Ismail Shammout, courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal and the Shammout family.

in Beirut in the 1980s, apparently on two different occasions. The first, as mentioned, was from Rock Studio, while the second was apparently in 1986. The archive, which went thorough various phases (including French patronage), was moved from the Al-Fakhani region in Beirut, where many PLO offices were concentrated, to the Al-Hamra region in Beirut, since it was not safe to leave in its original place, and it was from here that it also disappeared in 1986.<sup>30</sup> The research, based on different sources, reveals that various Cinema Institution films that were in the editing stage at Rock Studio were seized by the IDF and are therefore in the IDFA, but the archive has not confirmed this. If they *are* in the hands of the Israeli military archive, they have not yet been declassified. It seems that the entire archive of the Cinema Institution is also in Israeli hands (maybe taken by Israel in 1986), since the films that the UNRWA handed over to the CAS and which were moved to Cinema Institution also appear in the IDFA catalogue as ‘PLO Archive, films seized by the military from the PLO archive in Beirut’. When (and if) the IDFA opens all the materials taken in Beirut, it will be possible to assert definitively that the entire film archive of the Cinema Institution is in Israeli hands. This is in addition to UNRWA films, and the material taken from Rock Studio which probably *are* in Israeli hands. Habashneh has been working for many years on rebuilding the archive. She collects copies of films sent abroad to various festivals, or films sent for processing to overseas laboratories (Buali 2012).

The activities of the Cinema Institution were studied extensively thanks to Habashneh’s efforts in disseminating information and the efforts of other researchers (Al-Zubaidi 2006; Buali 2012; Denes 2014; Jacir 2007a, 2007b; Khleifi 2001), but the work of other film bodies were not researched in depth,<sup>31</sup> and most of the fruits of their work disappeared, were lost or were scattered around the world. Research is required for both academic/theoretical research and for the collection/discovery of physical material.

## The Regime of Knowledge

Ann Laura Stoler deals with the production of knowledge as an institutional vehicle but also as ‘a site of imaginary’. According to her, colonial archives ‘fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed and reproduced the power of the state’ (Stoler 2002: 97; see also McEwan 2003; Sela 2000, 2007, 2009, 2015, 2017; Stoler 2011). The regime of knowledge of colonial archives is reflected in how they are structured and function together with their patterns of colonial operation. As I discussed previously (Sela 2017), colonial archives, and especially archives holding plundered material, regulate the seized content and subjugates it to the coloniser’s laws, rules and terminology. Todd Shepard (2015: 870) demonstrates that there is a “dispute” over archives’ as there is a convention – which he offers to read ‘against their archival grain’ – that through their existence and the ways in which they function, they help constitute a state.

Michelle Caswell (2011) shows how plundered (Iraqi) records became ‘pawns’ in an elaborate political game.

The politics behind the IDFA control over the films that were seized in Beirut reflects the same pattern, which I discuss here through various examples. They are catalogued in the archive as ‘seized films from PLO archives in Beirut’, when in fact there is no such institution. The archive erases the identity of the institution for which they were created and does not investigate their origin although more than thirty years has passed (Sela 2017). Only after much research, meetings with looters and their victims, and a battle with the IDFA’s managers and legal advisers did I succeed in finding its origin. The fact that there is no previous research about CAS was also an encumbrance.

Furthermore, the IDFA expropriates their copyrights – they put a yellow IDFA label on the films (Figure 1), request a fee for their use and demand credit when publishing the material. After a long struggle, the archive opened in my presence a list of approximately 1,200 films or film footage, some appearing several times in various versions. However, and as mentioned above, only a few dozen films have been released to the public.

The archive also controls the content – reading and interpretation – using Zionist terms in place of the original Palestinian ones. For example, Palestinian fighters are defined as ‘terrorists’ or ‘gangs’, and scenes from the Palestinian Nakba are described as the Israeli ‘War of Independence’ (Sela 2017). Since there was nobody by the name ‘PLO Archive’ in Beirut, and the archive and military spokesperson did not make the effort to find from which entity the films were plundered, only after a decade of research did I discover that the archive taken by the IDF and held by the IDFA, among others, was the CAS archive. I verified this fact with its creators and other film-makers who were active in Beirut at the time, as well as with an IDF soldier who participated in plundering the archive. In the same collection of the hundreds of looted films, a large amount of CAS raw footage was opened at a later stage and was found on different reels of film, further confirming this information. I discuss here the activities of the CAS, since I believe that in the political, legal and ethical debate over seized/plundered archives the colonised is the first to have a right to such valuable property. This comes before any ‘universal human right to which all people, regardless of national affiliation, are entitled’ (Caswell 2011: 211). Although Caswell addresses a ‘third, postcolonial approach to cultural property’ (ibid.: 213), this option, which I also raise (Sela 2017), does not contradict indigenous primary rights.

Influenced by the energetic cinematic and visual activities of Palestinian groups in Lebanon serving the revolution, the PLO established the CAS of the Information and National Guidance Department.<sup>32</sup> The PLO began to understand the power of visual representation. They appointed Ismail Shammout, one of the pioneers of Palestinian painting in exile,<sup>33</sup> to establish the CAS (Figures 11, 12, 13). Shammout administered the CAS from the late 1960s until 1983 (after 1982 its operations were symbolic). It was located on the third floor



**Figure 11:** Ismail Shammout, Al-Lydd, 1946. Courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal and the Shammout family.



**Figure 12:** Ismail Shammout in his first exhibition, Gaza, 1953. Courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal and the Shammout family.



**Figure 13:** Ismail Shammout in his studio, 1966. Courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal and the Shammout family.

of a building housing a number of additional PLO offices and its embassy on Al-Mazra'ah Street in Beirut. Shammout was responsible for the direction and spirit of the CAS, which dealt with visual arts – primarily paintings but also with graphics (posters), photography and cinema. Tamam Al-Akhal<sup>34</sup> (Figure 14) organised, among other things at the CAS, exhibitions of Palestinian art and craft in Beirut and around the world.<sup>35</sup> Shammout and Al-Akhal were painters and attached great importance to painting. However, they also collected Palestinian handcrafts (musical instruments, embroidery, various handcrafted goods, etc.) and curated a travelling exhibition that toured around the world, entitled 'Palestinian Heritage Exhibition'. The CAS also collected historical photographs and founded an archive of negatives. Shammout (1972) even used historical photographs in his films, as noted later, and the CAS published an informational photography book, *Palestine: Illustrated Political History*.

Ismail Shammout made a number of films between 1972 and 1974 as part of his activities at the CAS. His films were artistic – experimental in nature and part of the first wave of avant-garde revolutionary films that combined experimental-abstract elements with documentary. It is not clear what motivated Shammout to make films. The archive of CAS together with the collection of the 'Palestinian Heritage Exhibition' disappeared in Beirut. Tamam Al-Akhal recognised the building of CAS in the photograph depicting the seizure by Israeli soldiers (Figure 15).



**Figure 14:** Tamam Al-Akhal painting in her studio, 1970s. Courtesy of Tamam Al-Akhal.

To date, I have found two of Shammout's films in the IDFA among hundreds of films 'that were brought to Israel by the IDFA documents collection division'.<sup>36</sup> The first film, *The Urgent Call*, was considered lost; this is its first exposure since it disappeared and was taken by IDF soldiers in Beirut during the 1982 war. The film was based on a poem written by Lalita Panjabi and composed in English by the singer Zeinab Shaath. The singer sings/asks:

Can't You Hear The Urgent Call of Palestine?  
 Tormented, tortured, bruised and battered  
 And all her sons and daughters scattered.  
 But she whispers above the roars of the guns  
 Beckoning to all her daughters and sons.



**Figure 15:** Tamam Al-Akhal recognizing the building of Cultural Arts Section in the photograph photographed by Shlomo Arad depicting the seizure by Israeli soldiers, 18 December 2015. Photograph by Rona Sela.

In the background are photographs of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees and olive trees. Later, the poet Kamal Nasr, mentioned above, calls for coexistence between Jews and Palestinians in Palestine. At the end of his speech, a caption appears stating that he was killed by Israelis. The film in the archive is probably the full version.

The second film *Memories . . . and Fire* (sometimes entitled *Memories and Glow*; see Figure 1) describes chronologically Palestinian history in the twentieth century; the film is illustrated throughout with photographs and with Shammout's paintings.<sup>37</sup> In the IDFA, there are various rough cuts of the film – in English (colour) and Arabic – at different stages in the editing process, and a variety of raw materials. There are also two, probably complete, Arabic versions in black and white with sound – with full film-making credits.<sup>38</sup> The film opens with a description of a time of 'innocence', of life in Palestine at the start of the twentieth century that is idyllic and tranquil. For example, it features the paintings *Palestine Spring* (1960) – three women dancing in the orchard and Palestinian harvesting; *Lod the Berry Bride* (1965) – a young woman in a green dress holding a basket of berries; *Palestinian Celebration* (1970) – eight young women dancing in their traditional dresses. The film continues with a description of the Palestinian rebellion in photographs – from 1919 – documenting the determination of the resistance. Most of the historical photographs, from various sources, are from the CAS and describe the uprising from the 1940s. Palestinian photographers (such as Rissas) photographed many of the pictures, but there are also historical photographs taken by other photographers, for example the photographs of Zionist photographer Zoltan Kluger describing the uprisings in Jaffa in 1933.

The next section of the film deals with rupture, trauma and exile. It includes Shammout's famous and formative paintings: *A Refugee Scream* (1964), a mother carrying a baby and screaming for help; *We'll Be Back* (1954), an elderly Palestinian man looking back at the land he has left and protecting his child; and *Where to . . . ?* (1953), a father and his children being exiled in a desolate, barren landscape. The focus is on the human element – the suffering, misery and anguish reflected in the faces of the people. Most of Shammout's paintings of the catastrophe were painted not long after the Nakba, during his studies in Cairo.

Following next are photographs of refugee camps – probably photographed by UNRWA. After that a representation of the resistance, portrayed through Shammout's paintings. For example, *The Warrior* (1968) – a portrait of a Palestinian fighter; and the symbolic, famous *Battle of Al-Karama* (1969) – a male and female fighter, a boy and a dog with a backdrop of a giant yellow sun. The fighters are dressed in black and white, their raised hands holding a gun. The boy waving a hand to the left and the sun in the background symbolise hope. The year 1965 appears on the screen followed by still photographs – probably taken by the Film Unit – of male and female Palestinian fighters. The film depicts the shattering of the colonial image and building of the decolonised Palestinian narrative as described above: from the description of unity and simple, idyllic past, and homogeneity of the lost landscape and identity, through the Nakba and the rupture, to the uprising, struggle and revolution (Gertz and Khleifi 2006: 9). In 2015, I showed Tamam Al-Akhal and her sons Shammout's films, which are at the IDFA, for the first time since the Israeli seizure.

*Anti-Siege* (1977),<sup>39</sup> which I also found (a complete version) in the IDFA, is built from still photographs, film clips – black and white, and colour – and music alternating with narration. It was directed by Kais Al-Zubaidi from Iraq.<sup>40</sup> Al-Zubaidi devoted a significant portion of his work to Palestinian cinema even before his collaboration with the CAS: his films *Far from Homeland* (1969),<sup>41</sup> *The Visit* (1970)<sup>42</sup> and *Testimony of Palestinian Children in Wartime* (1972) were produced by the Syrian Film Institute.<sup>43</sup> In the mid-1970s, Al-Zubaidi directed the following short films for the PFLP in collaboration with the CAS: *A Voice from Jerusalem* (1977), *Anti-Siege* (1977), *Homeland of Barbed Wire* (1980), *The File of a Massacre* (1984), *Palestine: A People's Record* (1984).<sup>44</sup>

The IDFA categorises *Anti-Siege* as 'description of the IDF's attitude and its harsh treatment of Palestinians in the occupied territories' – the original title and names of the film-makers having been dropped from the IDFA catalogue. The film depicts the flow of settlers to the territories after the occupation in 1967, construction in Jerusalem in the occupied areas (French Hill), Begin's speech at a press conference on the rights of the Jewish people, Israeli soldiers guarding settlers and the Palestinian uprising – demonstrations, burning tires, strikes and how the army suppresses disturbances. It is probable that Al-Zubaidi's other films are also in the IDFA.

## Epilogue

The Third Palestine Cinema Movement, part of the Third Cinema Movement, helped in establishing the Palestinian decolonisation process, and was revolutionary in its approach. ‘Guerrilla’ cinema aspired to change the existing situation and to assist the process of liberation. At first it was collective, serving the people, the revolution and the Palestinian struggle, and was distributed in unconventional ways, for example in refugee camps, but later it also sought to reach a wider audience through conventional film distribution methods such as festivals. It was seeking ground-breaking forms of expression that were not Westernised, visually or ethically, and that incorporated different visual disciplines – still photography, painting and graphics – of a subversive nature. The scope of activity of Third Palestine Cinema Movement in Beirut in the 1970s is striking. Various groups produced many films during this period, giving visual expression to the Palestinian struggle. At the same time, the Cinema Institution established a cinemathèque that screened films created in Beirut as well as those from various Third World countries such as Vietnam and Cuba, which influenced the struggle and the cinematic language of the struggle. Many of the films directed and produced by Palestinian film-makers shown at festivals around the world led to collaboration with their global counterparts and with theorists, deepening the anti-colonial dialogue between Palestinian groups and others. There was also a significant change in the field of conservation. Different entities, visual and others, established archives to document and preserve Palestinian life and history (the Cinema Institution, the CAS, the PLO Research Center [Sela 2017] and more) and for the first time, as part of a Palestinian process of decolonisation, began to collect and maintain materials in a formal, structured manner. Parallel to cinema, there was also a flowering of experimental modes of visual expression. Many exhibitions were presented in Beirut and around the world, infrastructure for a permanent Palestinian Museum was established and various Palestinian visual bodies set up organisations to assist artists.

From the start of the twentieth century, soldiers and various Jewish and Israeli military bodies initiated and organised the looting of Palestinian archives, most of which were subsequently stored in military archives in Israel. IDF and various Israeli security bodies took visual and other archives from many Palestinian bodies and institutions in Beirut in 1980s. As far as I know, these are the archives taken: the PLO Research Center (see Sela 2017), the CAS archive and the collection of the ‘Palestinian Heritage Exhibition’, Cinema Institution films from Rock Studio and UNRWA films that were stored in the Cinema Institution archive. I assume that more archives, as well as the entire archive of the Cinema Institution, were taken and are in Israeli hands, and only when the IDFA opens all materials that were taken by Israel in Beirut will it be possible to know the extent of material in Israeli hands.

The IDFA consciously controls Palestinian materials to its own advantage, and acts to erase them from the public sphere through regulations and laws. Israel refrains from disclosing the extent of Palestinian material it holds and restoring it to its owners, making it difficult to write Palestinian history. Nonetheless, decolonial/postcolonial practices are taking place in the writing of Palestinian history and postcolonial reading of colonial archives. They undermine the foundations and objectives of the colonial archive, altering its content and extracting the vanishing history it tries to bury or conceal. Or, as El-Shakry (2015: 921) suggests, follow the inaccessible trail of a history without documents; flush out what is dead, missing or hidden; and make public the systematic, known erasure.

## Acknowledgements

This article is dedicated to the women pioneers of Palestinian visual arts – painting, photography and cinema – in the twentieth century: Karimeh Abbud, the first Palestinian female photographer (from 1914) who defined herself in 1924 as ‘the only nationalist photographer’ (*El-Carmel*, 7 February 1924); Tamam Al-Akhal, one of the first Palestinian artists after the Nakba living in exile, deputy manager of Cultural Arts Section and a curator of Palestinian arts and crafts exhibitions that toured the world in the 1970s; Sulafa Jadallah, the first female Palestinian film-maker, active in Amman in the late 1960s, who played an important role in driving Palestinian Revolution Cinema, and Khadijeh Habashneh, founder and director of the first Palestinian film archive and cinematheque in Beirut from the mid-1970s to 1982.

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**Rona Sala** is a curator and researcher of visual history and a lecturer at Tel Aviv University. Her research focuses on the visual historiography of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian photography, colonial Zionist/Israeli photography, colonial Zionist/Israeli archives, human rights violation, plunder and looting of Palestinian archives and their subjugation to repressive colonial mechanisms, and on constructing alternative postcolonial archives. She also researches the development of alternative visual practices connected to civil society systems, asking to replace the old Israeli official gatekeepers. She recently directed a film entitled *Looted and Hidden: Palestinian Archives in Israel* (2017). For more information, visit [www.ronasela.com](http://www.ronasela.com). E-mail: [ronasela@netvision.net.il](mailto:ronasela@netvision.net.il)

## Notes

1. The information on the Cultural Arts Section is from meetings with Yazid Shammout, 24 April 2015, 29 August 2015, 13 January 2016; meeting with him and Tamam Al-Akhal, Bashar and Bilal Shammout, 16–18 December 2015, and continuous correspondence with them; a meeting with Kais Al-Zubaidi, 29 August 2015; and Armes (2010).
2. According to David Ben-Gurion's guidelines from 19 December 1948, the IDFA would gather materials relating to the IDF and pre-state military bodies, the history of self-defense in the Diaspora and the role of Jews in the development of the military arts. See <http://www.archives.mod.gov.il/about/Pages/odot.aspx>
3. <http://www.archives.mod.gov.il/about/Pages/hukimtkanot.aspx>.
4. 'Criteria for the declassification of restricted archival material deposited in the IDFA', <http://www.archives.gov.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7-%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%9D-1955.pdf>.
5. In the visual field, see e.g. Denes (2014); Farhat (2012); Gertz and Khleifi (2006); Habashneh (2008); Jacir (2007a, 2007b); Khalidi (1984); Khleifi (2001); PFF (2014); Sanbar (2004).
6. For example, the Palestinian Poster Project Archives ([www.palestineposterproject.org](http://www.palestineposterproject.org)), IBRAAZ Forum, the work of Habashneh to restore the Palestinian Cinema Institution archive as described below, projects of the Palestinian museum currently located in Birzeit and more.
7. The interviews were conducted for more than a decade since 2001. Some of the interviews were documented in video and are in the hands of the author.
8. Her archive was probably looted as well and is currently located with an Israeli private collector. However, I have not yet succeeded in charting the path of looting.
9. This is how the photographer wrote his name in English. The academic transliteration of his name from Arabic to English is Rasas. The archive of Rissas (Ibrahim and Chalil) studio was looted as described here.

10. Hrnat Nakashian, although an Armenian, connected his fate, like many other Armenians, to that of the Palestinians (Sela 2000: 173).
11. Khleifi (2001), Gertz and Khleifi (2006) and Al-Zubaidi (2006) are among the first to chronicle Palestinian cinema during the twentieth century.
12. The third wave refers here not only to the visual representation of the Palestinian people but also its connection to the Third Cinema Movement.
13. Over time, graphics too became a tool in the conflict. See PFF (2014) and the Palestinian Poster Project Archives ([www.palestineposterproject.org](http://www.palestineposterproject.org)).
14. Palestinian, born in the old city of Jerusalem, 1939. He died while documenting the battle in the mountains in the region of Ain Toura in Lebanon, 11 April 1976.
15. Born in Al-Malha, Palestine, 1940. Following the shock of the Deir-Yassin massacre amongst the Palestinian population, the family was exiled to Bethlehem and finally settled in Amman (1952). He studied architecture at Berkeley (1961) and cinema in London (1964–1967). He died in 2009.
16. They first used the name Film Unit in *No to the Peaceful Solution* (1969). In various places, the name also appears as the Film and Image Unit since they continued to shoot stills in parallel with cinema (N.A. 1976). Khleifi (2001: 180) also mentions Salah Abu-Hanud (Palestinian, born 1944) as one of the founders of the Film Unit.
17. Information on the Palestinian Cinema Institution (in early years known as Palestine Film Unit) and its founders is taken from meetings with Khadijeh Habashneh, 12–13 August 2013, 25 October 2015, 17–18 December 2015; conversations on Skype, 22 November 2015, 29 December 2015 and lengthy correspondence, specified later; a conversation with Abu Darif, one of the founders of the Palestinian Cinema Institution, 8 November 2015, and correspondence, specified later; Al-Hassan (2004); Buali (2012); Denes (2014); Gertz and Khleifi (2006); Habashneh (2008); Jacir (2007a, 2007b); Khleifi (2001); N.A. (1976); PFF (2014); Sharur (2012); and additional information that appears below.
18. Habashneh maintains they started using also the name Palestine Films only after they began, in addition to photography, to produce movies. The name Palestinian Cinema Institution was adopted after they began to win prizes in festivals. In various films, for example in Mustafa Abu-Ali's *They Do Not Exist* (1974), the name Palestine Films as well as Palestinian Cinema Institution appears.
19. Photography, although a significant part of the visual revolution, was pushed aside in recent research.
20. However, Memmi argues that in order to break free completely from the negative image imposed by the colonizer, one must stop taking the colonizer into account, as a model or as an antithesis, cease the struggle against him, and break free from 'the colonizer's deception' that creates one's situation also in times of revolt (1967: 137–140). Regarding the role of the Third Cinema Movement in the revolution: 'The filmmaker should place his role as revolutionary or aspiring revolutionary above all else. In a word, he should try to fulfill himself as a man and not just as an artist' (Espinosa 1979).
21. For additional information on the Third Cinema Movement, see <http://thirdcinema.blueskylimit.com/texts.html>. See also influence of researchers, mainly of Third World origin (Fanon 2001; Freire 2000) and texts on the role of cinema in the revolution and as a tool for change (Solanas and Getino [1968] 1991; Espinosa 1979).

22. The assassination is depicted in Ismail Shammout's film *The Urgent Call*, which I discuss later.
23. There was much overlap between the activities of The United Media and Cinema Institution even before then. The guide dedicated to the Cinema Institution (N.A. 1976) also includes films that carried The United Media credit.
24. In her last year of study, she directed the film *Al-Jabel* [The mountain] (1964) with the Egyptian cinematographer Wahid Farid (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TmWhcFCXds>).
25. She currently shares her life between Amman and Ramallah.
26. For example, *Tel al-Zaatar* (1977, dir. Mustafa Abu-Ali, Pino Adriano [Italian] and Jean Chamoun [Lebanese]).
27. For example, *Al-Fatah Palestine* (1970, dir. Luigi Perelli), or *Palestinians: The Right to Life*. Film-makers from the PFLP, for example, collaborated with revolutionary Japanese artists from the Red Army in the film *Red Army/PFLP, Declaration of World War* (PFF 2014: 5).
28. Although Solanas and Getino ([1968] 1991) believe that guerrilla cinema should find subversive and unique ways of distributing films, they did not rule out Western distribution, such as participation in festivals, to reach as wide an audience as possible.
29. Cameramen: Samir Nimer, Mohammad Awad; editor: Monna Sabban; director: Khadijeh Abu-Ali (during that time, she adopted her husband's family name). The film is a collaboration with the Union of Palestine Women.
30. From correspondence with Habashneh on 3 March 2015 and a Skype conversation with her on 29 December 2015. The many attempts made to trace it, among them by the film-makers Aza Al-Hassan, Abu-Ali and Habashneh, proved fruitless. Gertz and Khleifi (2006: 33) raise various hypotheses with regard to the archive's history (see also Sela 2017).
31. Knowledge about the work of the various bodies is often contradictory.
32. The credit in the English version of Ismail Shammout's film *Memories . . . and Fire* is Cultural Arts Section, Information and National Guidance Department. The CAS is also known as the Department of Culture and Information. See e.g. Al-Zubaidi's film *Anti-Siege*.
33. Born in Al-Lydd (Lydda) in 1930, exiled to Khan-Younes in the Gaza Strip in 1948. From 1950 to 1954, he studied painting at the College of Fine Arts in Cairo and in 1954 exhibited in Cairo together with the artist Tamam Al-Akhal. He held his first exhibition of paintings in Gaza (1953). Shammout continued his art studies at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome (1954–1956). He then moved to Beirut and married Al-Akhal (1959). Between 1964 and 1966, the family lived in East Jerusalem and Al-Bireh and returned to Beirut in 1966. Following the PLO departure from Beirut, the family moved to Kuwait. He died in Amman in 2006.
34. Born in the old city of Yaffa (Jaffa). Her paintings, colourful and figurative, reflect personal uprooting and loss, and describe the tragedy. Her home with Shammout in Beirut was a meeting place for visual revolutionaries. She lives in Amman.
35. An equivalent unit in the PLO, the Section for Visual Arts, grew out of The United Media and was managed by the Jordanian artist Mona Al-Saudi, as mentioned above. During the period discussed, Al-Saudi was associated with the

- establishment of an exhibition that could serve as a foundation for the permanent Palestinian Museum (Shrara 2014).
36. Ilana Alon, manager of the IDFA, 16 August 2011.
  37. The film's title is the same as a painting of Shammout from 1956; it shows an elderly man in exile sitting next to a coal fire, and in the background, sleeping family members. Dabashi (2006: 199) mentions two other Shammout films: *Young Soldiers* (1972) and *On the Road to Palestine* (1974), but Al-Akhal claims that these were only experimental and never developed into films. They are probably in the IDFA and so far have not been opened.
  38. Photographer and director: Ismail Shammout; music: Abdallah Abu-Al-Jjabin; editing: Ibrahim Bashir; assistant photographer: Chir Kush.
  39. Al-Zubaidi claims the film is a collaborative effort of the CAS and the Democratic Front, with whom it worked frequently (correspondence with Al-Zubaidi, 27 December 2015).
  40. Al-Zubaidi, born in Baghdad 1939, studied at the German Academy of Film Arts in Babelsberg (formerly East Germany) and graduated in film editing (1964) and cinematography (1969). He worked for German and Palestinian organisations and for Syrian TV. Al-Zubaidi published a book dedicated to the history of Palestinian cinema (Al-Zubaidi 2006). He lives in Berlin.
  41. Describing the life experienced by children living in refugee camps. He filmed daily life in the camps and then invited the children to his studio where he recorded their impressions as they viewed the camp scenes (PFF 2014: 4).
  42. Avant-garde short film (texts, photo collage, paintings, 9 minutes) describing a Palestinian refugee's visit to his occupied home, his wife and son. The film was shot with the Syrian National Film Organization (PFF 2014: 5).
  43. Al-Zubaidi created the film following the book published by Mona Al-Saudi, *In Time of War: Children Testify* (1970) – paintings and drawings created by children in refugee camps. He combined the paintings and drawings and the voices of children describing their creations together with documentary footage shot by Jawhariyeh (PFF 2014: 6).
  44. Also known as *Chronicle of a People*, testimonies of key Palestinian figures.

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## Appendix

### *Films Produced by the Palestine Film Unit/Palestinian Cinema Institution*

The list of films was compiled by Khadijeh Habashneh and appears here thanks to her generosity.

- *The Palestinian Right*, black and white, 16 mm, 9 minutes, 1969.
- *With Soul and Blood*, black and white, 16 mm, 35 minutes, 1971.
- *The Zionist Terror*, black and white, 16 mm, 22 minutes, 1972.
- *Al-Arqoub*, black and white, 16 mm, 25 minutes, 1973.
- *Palestinian Newsreel*, issue no. 1, black and white, 16 mm, 22 minutes, 1973.
- *Palestinian Night*, black and white, 16 mm, 15 minutes, 1973.
- *They Do Not Exist*, black and white, 16 mm, 24 minutes, 1974.
- *Winds of Liberation*, black and white, 16 mm, 25 minutes, 1974.
- *To Whom Is the Revolution?*, black and white, 16 mm, 24 minutes, 1974.
- *Palestinian Newsreel*, issue no. 2, black and white, 16 mm, 21 minutes, 1975.
- *Kufar Shouba*, black and white, 16 mm, 30 minutes, 1975.
- *Victory in Their Eyes*, black and white, 16 mm, 35 minutes, 1975.
- *On the Road to Victory*, black and white, 16 mm, 23 minutes, 1976.
- *Palestinian Newsreel*, issue no. 8, colour, 16 mm, 35 minutes, 1977.
- *Palestine in the Eye*, black and white, 16 mm, 22 minutes, 1977.
- *Because the Roots Don't Die*, black and white, 16 mm, 55 minutes, 1977.
- *War in Lebanon*, black and white, 16 mm, 55 minutes, 1977.
- *Tal Al-Zaatar*, colour, 16 mm, 75 minutes, 1977.
- *Palestinian Visions*, colour, 16 mm, 32 minutes, 1978.
- *Children Nevertheless*, colour, 16 mm, 22 minutes, 1979–1980.
- *A Song of Freedom*, black and white, 16 mm, 25 minutes, 1979.
- *The Longest Days*, black and white, 16 mm, 30 minutes, 1983.

### *Teamwork*

- *No to 'Peaceful Solution' (surrender solution)*, black and white, 16 mm, 20 minutes. Teamwork supervised by Mustafa Abu-Ali. Produced by the Palestine Film Unit, 1969.
- *The Four Days War*, black and white, 16 mm, 25 minutes. Director: Samir Nimer. Joint production by the Palestine Film Unit and the Tunisian Film Institute (SATBAC), 1972.
- *Sarhan and the Oil Pipe*, black and white, 16 mm, 25 minutes. Joint production by the Palestine Film Unit and the Artistic Unit of Ezziddeen Al Jamal (Lebanon), 1973.
- *Why We Plant Roses? Why We Carry Arms?* colour, 16 mm, 30 minutes. Director: Qasim Hawal. Joint production by the Palestine Film Institute and the Democratic German TV (DDR TV), 1974.
- *Palestinian Newsreel*, 3rd ed., black and white, 16 mm, 20 minutes. Teamwork supervised by Mustafa Abu-Ali. Produced by the Palestinian Cinema Institution, 1977.

- *Palestinian Newsreel*, 4th ed., black and white, 16 mm, 15 minutes. Teamwork supervised by Mustafa Abu-Ali. Produced by the Palestinian Cinema Institution, 1978.
- *Palestinian Newsreel*, 5th ed., black and white, 16 mm, 15 minutes. Teamwork supervised by Mustafa Abu-Ali. Produced by the Palestinian Cinema Institution, 1979.