

Six Singular Figures: Understanding the Conflict: Jews and Arabs Under the British Mandate

Hadara Lazar



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This is the story of six people who lived and worked in Palestine in the 1930s; remarkable nonconformists who tried to find a solution to the deteriorating relations between Jews and Arabs, the two peoples living under British Mandate rule. Some took an active part in dialogues between the two peoples and believed that it was possible to live together, although they knew that the chances were slim. When World War II broke out, the contacts ended.

Two Jews—Manya Shochat and Judah Leib Magnes; two Arabs— Mussa Alami and George Antonius; and two Britons—Arthur Wauchope and Orde Wingate, left their distinctive mark on the events of that period, when the Arabs of Palestine realized that they might become a minority under the Jews, whose numbers were growing because of the persecution in Europe.

Hadara Lazar has spoken to the descendants of these six individuals and has explored archives and libraries, in Israel and abroad, to produce a book whose personal voice places it squarely in the middle ground between history and literature. Succinctly and with spellbinding narrative skill, she describes the uniqueness, the inner strife, the controversial actions, and the extraordinary, sometimes tragic, lives of her six subjects. And through their portraits, a turbulent and fateful period emerges from the past, during which it might have been possible to prevent what has happened and is still happening between Jews and Arabs today.



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