

The Fight Against Clerical Colonialism: Arab Anglicans in Jerusalem, 1947-1949

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Introduction

Today in East Jerusalem, a five-minute walk from the Old City, connecting the bustling Salah al-Din and quiet Nablus Roads, you will find a quintessential 125-year-old English cathedral, which would not look out of place in Anthony Trollope's *Chronicles of Barsetshire*. Its Englishness reflects its founding as a center of missionary activity in the Holy Land and the identity of its English-speaking Church of England founders, but it does not reflect the identity of its indigenous Arab members. Thus, the church's architecture is an enduring symbol of the bishopric's¹ clerical colonial origins.² And yet, the name of the cathedral, St. George's, is the name of the patron saint of both England and Palestine.

While the concept of British colonialism is nothing new, I argue in this paper that despite the end of the British Mandate period in Palestine and the founding of the State of Israel, British clergy continued to maintain and promote colonial values within the Anglican Church in Jerusalem between 1947 and 1949. Despite the end of British rule in the region in 1948, the Anglican church's English leadership remained intact as did Britain's religious and cultural soft power. I describe this as "clerical colonialism", a term first employed by Laura Robson in *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*.³

Clerical colonialism in the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem was the result of over a century of protestant missionary activity in the Holy Land. In 1841, under Queen Victoria, the Church of England and the Prussian Lutheran Church founded a Protestant bishopric as a center for missionary activities in the Middle East.⁴ The churches worked together to evangelize and proselytize and agreed to alternately appoint a resident bishop.⁵ However, as it was forbidden to convert Muslims under Ottoman law, missionaries focused on converting members of the Eastern Churches to Protestantism. To increase Protestant presence in Palestine and spread the gospel, the Bishopric established schools, hospitals, and community centers.⁶ Bishop Samuel Gobat dedicated the first Protestant church – Christ Church at Jaffa Gate – in Jerusalem in 1849.⁷

¹ Also referred to as a "diocese," a "bishopric" is a group of churches in the same geographical area that are under the leadership of a bishop

² "Diocese Definition & Meaning," Merriam-Webster, Accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diocese>.

³ Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 1st ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2011), 136.

⁴ Gardiner H. Shattuck, *Christian Homeland: Episcopalians and the Middle East, 1820-1958* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2023), 33-34.; Mouneer Hanna Anis, "The Episcopal/Anglican Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion*, eds. J. Barney Hawkins, Ian S. Markham, and Leslie Nuñez Steffensen (Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2013), 274, doi:10.1002/9781118320815.ch25.

⁵ Shattuck, *Christian Homeland*, 61.

⁶ Shattuck, *Christian Homeland*, 20-21.

⁷ Shattuck, *Christian Homeland*, 33-34, 56.

He also ordained the first Protestant Palestinian priests in 1877 and opened forty-two schools.⁸ Since 1874, St. Paul's Church had served a predominantly Arabic-speaking congregation.⁹

In 1881 the Church of England refused to acknowledge the appointment of another Lutheran bishop. As this broke the original agreement, the joint Bishopric was dissolved and was replaced with separate Anglican and Lutheran bishoprics. George Blyth, a former missionary, became the "Bishop of the Church of England in Jerusalem" in 1887.¹⁰ Realizing the need for the steady external financial support of the Bishopric, Bishop George Blyth founded the England-based Jerusalem and East Mission.¹¹ In 1898, he dedicated the newly built St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem.¹²

That it is hard to find a reliable number of Arab members begs its own questions. In 1932, there were approximately 3,000 Arab Anglicans.¹³ By 1949, following the foundation of the State of Israel, there were three churches and three Arabic-speaking clergy for the approximately 700 Arab Anglicans in Israel "compared to about 2,500 a year ago"¹⁴ and twenty in West Jerusalem.¹⁵ By 1950, there were approximately 5,000.¹⁶ Nevertheless, English members continued to hold significant leadership positions.¹⁷ Yet Arab Anglicans were increasingly inspired by the Nahda and growing Arab nationalist movements.¹⁸ As the number of Arab Anglicans grew, Arab clergy sought increased representation and recognition of their identity as non-English Anglicans.¹⁹

The differing views of Palestinian and English church members on the role and treatment of "native church members" led to Palestinian Anglicans founding the "Evangelical Episcopal

⁸ Anis, "The Episcopal/Anglican Church," 275; Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 129; Shattuck, *Christian Homeland*, xv.

⁹ "Parishes – The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem," *The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem*, accessed January 24, 2024, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/parishes-2/>.

¹⁰ Shattuck, *Christian Homeland*, xv – xvi, 62.

¹¹ "Our History," The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association, accessed February 13, 2024, <https://www.jmeca.org.uk/how-we-work/jmeca-jemt/our-history>.

¹² "Diocesan History – The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem," The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem – The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, July 21, 2021, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/diocesan-history/>.

¹³ "Memorandum on The Jerusalem and the East Bishopric" by Athelstan Riley, May 1932. Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950 90ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 8-21, 13 (Hereafter referred to as "Memorandum on The Jerusalem and the East Bishopric" by Athelstan Riley, Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950).

¹⁴ One of the challenges in terms of the reliability of estimates of the Arab Anglican populations is the question of geography and borders, and who is included in each area designation, at the time of each estimate.

¹⁵ "Memo from H.S. Leiper," n.d., Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950 90ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 87-88, 87 (Hereafter cited as "Memo from H.S. Leiper", Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950).

¹⁶ Rev. Cubain's Letter for Arab Churches' Reconstruction Appeal "to the Churches of the Anglican Communion", n.d., Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4 Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA.

¹⁷ Statistics comparing the number of Anglican Christians in the Jerusalem Bishopric between 1938 and 1958, February 1960, Jerusalem and the East Mission GB165-0161, box 18, file 1, Anglican Christians in the Jerusalem Bishopric – Statistics 1959-1974, MECA.

¹⁸ Hannah Scott Deuchar. "'Nahda': Mapping a Keyword in Cultural Discourse," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 37 (2017): 50+. *Gale Academic OneFile* (Accessed April 29, 2024). https://link-gale-com.ezproxy4.library.arizona.edu/apps/doc/A516634421/AONE?u=uarizona_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=21863c45.

¹⁹ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 127; Daphne Tsimhoni, "The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community in Jerusalem and the West Bank." *Oriente Moderno* 2 (63), no. 1/12 (1983): 253. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25816866>.

(Arab) Community”, referred to as the “Palestine Native Church Council” (“PNCC”) by Bishop Weston Stewart, the Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem between 1943 and 1957.²⁰

Using correspondence between clerical leaders in the Church serving during the British Mandate and the early years of the newly formed State of Israel and the Church of England sat Lambeth Palace Library in London and the Jerusalem and East Mission Archives at the Middle East Centre at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, I examine Arab Anglicans’ fight against clerical colonialism, showing why and how Arab Anglicans resisted it and explaining why they were unsuccessful. This is not just a story of a small number of Christians in the Middle East or of indigenous members in the English-led worldwide Anglican Communion, but rather a case study of the enduring effects of colonialism and imperialism, even after the end of British rule. It is also part of the wider history of the founding of the Israeli State and British decolonization.

This paper, composed of four sections, begins by discussing the arguments for the recognition of Arab Anglicans in the Ottoman and Mandatory period, as well as the social and intellectual movements from which Arabs drew their arguments. In the second section I highlight how the PNCC’s financial crisis in 1949 was intimately connected to the clerical colonialism of the Anglican leaders and provided Arab clergy motivation to challenge it. In the third section, I will discuss how Arabs’ attempts to form an independent religious identity, distinct from the Church of England, in the newly founded State of Israel were thwarted.

A History of Arab Anglicans’ Demands for Recognition

English Anglican leaders repeatedly dismissed Arab Anglicans’ grievances and resisted their attempts to be recognized in local church governance and the worldwide Anglican Church. Arab Anglicans’ arguments for recognition reflected contemporary global postcolonial thinking and previously garnered Ottoman recognition. Additionally, they were deeply influenced by Arab Nationalist and Arabization movements in the Middle East.

Arab Anglicans questioned the Anglican hierarchy after decades of British imperial and colonial rule – of which Anglicanism was an expression. Their fight for recognition was driven by their desire to form a postcolonial Anglican identity and church structure in which all members were equal, financially supported, and represented. This struggle was coming throughout the former British Empire from South Africa to India. For South Indian Anglicans the solution was the founding of the United Church of South India which bound together Congregationalists, Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians in a Hindu-majority region.²¹

Arab Anglicans’ insistence on their recognition as a religious community distinct from the English-led Anglican Church was shaped by their history of being a triple minority. They were Arab and non-Muslim under Ottoman rule. They were non-Jewish under Israeli rule. They were non-English in the Anglican Church. In a letter to Archbishop Fisher, Bishop Weston stated that the Palestine Native Church Council, also referred to as the Evangelical Episcopal Community, rejected a draft ordinance “prepared by (the Anglican Church in Jerusalem’s)

²⁰ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine.*, 127.; Tsimhoni. “The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community,” 253. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25816866>; “Palestine Native Church Council in Israel” Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., 2 December 1949. Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21 file 4, Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA (Hereafter cited as Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection); “Anglican Bishops - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem,” The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, July 1, 2021, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/anglican-bishops/>.

²¹ Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers’ Union: Women, Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876–2008*, (Studies in Modern British Religious History, Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 204.

Attorney-General” in 1947 that recognized it as a religious community that constituted the already recognized Anglican Church in Jerusalem. The PNCC, instead “decided to try and secure from (British) Government official recognition of themselves, without the foreign element” as they argued that they were “already a ‘religious community’ under the pre-Mandate Turkish regime.”²²

Bishop Stewart thwarted their attempt to receive a separate status by rejecting Arab Anglicans’ argument that they should be recognized as a distinct Anglican religious community by the British government. He argued that the Ottoman-recognized “Protestant Community” and “‘Protestant Episcopal’ Community” included “a loose collection of non-Roman, non-Greek, non-Armenian Christians, whether missionaries or others.”²³ He also noted that Arab Anglicans could not successfully argue that the Arabic-speaking congregations were the “heir” to the Ottoman-recognized Church. At the same time, according to Bishop Stewart, quoting the PNCC chairman Rev. Najib Cubain, Arab Anglicans wanted “an existence separate from the (British) Bishop.”²⁴

However, in November 1947, without the knowledge of Bishop Stewart, Mandatory Palestine recognized Arab Anglicans as the “Arab Episcopal Evangelical Community.”²⁵ This raised the question as to what it meant to be Anglican and who could claim such an identity. As the Anglican Church hierarchy and identity is based on the authority of bishops who are the chief pastors²⁶ within their designated area, a diocese, the very notion of dividing the church between Arab and non-Arab seemed absurd to English Anglican leaders.²⁷ And yet, the PNCC did not give up.

Arabization of Churches and Growing Arab Nationalism

A process of Arabization and anti-clerical colonialism within the Church had begun before the Mandate. In the late Ottoman and early British Mandate periods, there was a “concept of a Protestant elite that spanned the Arab world (that) owed a great deal to the internationalizing discourse of the Palestinian middle-classes”, of which Arab Anglicans were often considered members.²⁸ The idea of a single Arab protestant church was even considered by the PNCC in September 1924 so that Arab Anglicans could remain evangelization-focused, community-driven, and a distinct Arab group. It never came to fruition, perhaps due to the Church leadership’s commitment to maintain Anglican unity.²⁹ The Protestant Arabization movement was greatly influenced by the Arab Nationalist (Nahda) movement, which attracted leading Arab

²² Bishop Stewart to Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, 313.

²³ Bishop Stewart to Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, 313.; “Note on the ‘Recognition’ or ‘Status’ of the Anglican Church” by Bishop Stewart, 2 December 1949, CFR AC 18.1 1934-1957 103ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London 77-78, 77 (Hereafter cited as “Note” by Bishop Stewart, CFR AC 18.1 1934-1957), 77.

²⁴ Bishop Stewart to Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, 314.

²⁵ “Note” by Bishop Stewart, CFR AC 18.1 1934-1957, 77.

²⁶ Responsible for upholding the faith, maintaining discipline, providing Christian leadership, ordaining clergy, and representing the Church.

²⁷ “Diocese Definition & Meaning,” Merriam-Webster, Accessed May 1, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diocese>; “Bishop Definition & Meaning,” Merriam-Webster, Accessed February 25, 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bishop>.

²⁸ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 128.

²⁹ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 135-139.

Christian intellectuals of the nineteenth century, such as Butrus al-Bustani and other Nahda (Arab Enlightenment) leaders.³⁰

However, by the mid-twentieth century, the British Empire was under threat. Even Anglican provinces in the Global South were demanding autonomy and indigenous leadership. In this context, church hierarchy were institutionally and psychologically struggling to maintain the Anglican Church in a postcolonial world. The challenge was immense for Church hierarchy as seen in Bishop Stewart's description of his local Arabic-speaking Anglican congregants as having a:

strong nationalist feeling of the local groups. They have had good reason in the past to fear the political results of acknowledging allegiance to any foreign – controlled body, such as the 'Church of England'. (In the First World War, Arab Clergy were sentenced to death for holding Letters of Orders and Licences to officiate issued by an English Bishop). Hence their insistence on a name which excludes 'Church of England', and even if possible 'Anglican'. It has been repeatedly explained that 'Anglican' may be Indian, Chinese, African or Papuan, but the word in Arabic connotes a degree of Englishry, and is therefore unpopular.³¹

The issues that the Arab Anglicans had faced during World War 1 intensified during the Mandate as they were accused of "collusion and collaboration with the British occupying power and, by extension, with the Zionist movement".³² A report, of unknown authorship, stated that international missionary work would succeed if its presence was less visible and that of the Arab Christians more prominent. The report went on to declare that "it is therefore increasingly important that Arab independence should be respected (by) foreign missionary bodies."³³ However, with the Church of England, the mother church of the Anglican Communion, thousands of miles away, decisions were made and shaped by British colonial interests. Growing awareness of this reality increased Arabic-speaking Anglicans' intention to belong to an "Arabized" Church, rather than an Anglicized one. However, informed by British understandings of colonial power, Bishop Stewart and the Church of England continued to resist Arab Anglicans' attempts at self-actualization and independence.

As the political turmoil in the region worsened, so did the disparity between the visions of the church held by Anglican leadership and Arab clergy and congregations. For example, in 1946 the Rev. Francis J. Bloodgood, the American Chaplain to the Bishop in Jerusalem, described "Christianity in the Holy Land (as being) in a state of spiritual depression that can be most clearly compared to the 'depression' in the early 1930s [...] It is the land that epitomizes all human strife. Therefore it is the land that supremely needs the one Gospel of reconciliation."³⁴ This assessment echoed colonial theory as it affirmed the view that while there were Christians in the Middle East, they were "helpless" and "(needed) salvation" by Western Christians. The

³⁰ Hannah Scott Deuchar, "'Nahda': Mapping a Keyword in Cultural Discourse," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 37 (2017): 50+. *Gale Academic OneFile* (Accessed April 29, 2024). https://link-gale-com.ezproxy4.library.arizona.edu/apps/doc/A516634421/AONE?u=uarizona_main&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=21863c45.

³¹ "Note" by Bishop Stewart, CFR AC 18.1 1934-1957, 78.

³² Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine*, 127.

³³ "Arab Nationalism and Christian Advance," n.d. Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 18, file 3, Anglican Church in Palestine, Israel Reports and Memoranda 1897-1967, MECA, 2-4.

³⁴ "Report of the Rev. Francis J. Bloodgood American Chaplain to the Bishop in Jerusalem January 1945 to May 1946," by Francis J. Bloodgood, 13 August 1946, CFR AC 18.1 1934-1957 103ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 64-66, 66.

very notion that the Arab Anglicans would want self-governance and independence, was viewed as a threat to the soft power wielded by the Church of England and expressed in “clerical colonialism.”³⁵

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations accepted Resolution 181, the Palestine Partition Plan which proposed dividing “Palestine into two independent States, one Palestinian Arab and the other Jewish, with Jerusalem internationalized”.³⁶ The following day, Zionist and Arab forces began to fight for the land they both claimed. Following months of fighting and the conquest of most of Palestine, Israel declared independence on May 15, 1948.³⁷ This marked the end of British rule of Palestine and the founding of the State of Israel. Although Arab Palestinians were no longer under British imperial rule, British clerical colonialism remained. But due to movements for postcolonial identity formation not just in the Middle East, but across much of the British Empire, Arab Anglicans were emboldened to fight for their due recognition and autonomy.

Arab Anglicans’ Financial Crisis in 1949

In 1947, Bishop Stewart wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury Geoffrey Fisher that “a great deal of (Arab Anglicans’) discontent would disappear if they had an Arab bishop [...] At the moment, all their emphasis is on ‘self-governing,’ with ‘self-supporting’ a creditable second.”³⁸ But by 1949, the lives of Arab Anglicans had worsened and their primary concern was financial. As Rev. Farah wrote, “our financial state is extremely critical on the whole. [...] I do not know what will be the future of the PNCC.”³⁹ It was no longer time for philosophical arguments for Arab Anglican recognition. They now had to fight for their fundamental ability to survive as a faith community.

As a British national Bishop Stewart was keenly aware that despite being victorious in World War II, Britain was engaging in building a postwar society that would not only address the immediate problems of food rationing, housing, and a peacetime economy but also the economic and social inequalities it had long struggled with.⁴⁰ In 1942 the *Beveridge Report*⁴¹ made clear, Britain faced challenges of “want, ignorance, disease, squalor, and idleness.” British people became more concerned with domestic than foreign issues.⁴² As a result, the Jerusalem Bishopric

³⁵ Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine.*, 136.

³⁶ “History of the Question of Palestine - Question of Palestine,” United Nations, Accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>.

³⁷ Maha Nassar, “Week 5: World War II to 1948 War,” *MENA484: History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1800 to Present* (lecture, The University of Arizona, February 2022).

³⁸ Andrew Chandler and David Hein, *Archbishop Fisher, 1945-1961: Church, State and World* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 41.; Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury from Bishop Stewart, Fisher Papers 1947 Vol 29, 314.

³⁹ “Memo from H.S. Leiper”, Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950, 87.

⁴⁰ Weston to Farah Reply, March 16, 1949. Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4, Palestine Native Church Council 1947-1949, MECA.; “The Impact of the Second World War on the People of Wales and England,” Swansea University, accessed February 26, 2025, <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/history/history-study-guides/the-impact-of-the-second-world-war-on-the-people-of-wales-and-england/>.

⁴¹ Officially entitled *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (Cmd. 6404).

⁴² Rob Ainsley, “Beveridge Report,” Internet Archive, November 19, 2008, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140722140251/http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/takingliberties/staritems/712beveridge-report.html>.

no longer received generous amounts of British aid, nor did Bishop Weston feel he could request more funding.⁴³

At the same time, Arab Anglicans lives had been turned upside down by the Nakba and 1948 War. While many British nationals were evacuated, at the expense of the British Government, at the beginning of the War, many Arabs were displaced from their land.⁴⁴ Their focus was survival as they feared for their friends, family, and neighbors. By 1949, Arab Anglicans needed financial aid to meet their most basic needs of food, housing, and education. Not only were they suffering economically, but also pastorally, as people of faith. Anglican congregants were displaced, and churches were desecrated. St. George's Cathedral and Hostel were hit by a shell in June 1948.⁴⁵ At two Anglican churches, "crosses were broken and bibles torn."⁴⁶ The financial crisis effected the work of the church. For example, Rev. Farah's Arab parish, St John's in Haifa, had insufficient money to maintain the quality of its feeding center and St. John's Day School lacked money and students to start the academic year.⁴⁷ Now Arab Anglicans no longer simply demanded recognition of their identity. They demanded financial help, so that they could survive as faithful Anglicans.

While Arab Anglicans felt desperation, Bishop Stewart felt frustration. He was tired of receiving "complaints" and demands for more financial support from the Arab Anglicans.⁴⁸ So, when Rev. Cubain's requested a reconstruction appeal for the Arabic-speaking churches, Bishop Stewart refused. He would not authorize an appeal that only benefitted Arab churches because he claimed that the non-Arabic-speaking Anglican churches and schools had "suffered just as heavily as the P.N.C.C. properties."⁴⁹ Furthermore, he was concerned that the PNCC continued to increase its deficit.⁵⁰ He was adamant that there should be no "reconstruction appeal" that would only help one race in the Church.⁵¹ However, the Anglican Church was the best chance Arab Anglicans had for garnering economic support as they did not have a powerful advocate, unlike British Anglicans.

Bishop Stewart gave 4000 Palestine Pounds between 1948 and 1949. But on the twenty-second of October 1949, he notified Rev. Cubain of a \$10,000 donation from the United States. This was marked as being "for the Bishop's distribution and use in helping the Arab Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and other Churches with their work among refugees." Of that sum he

⁴³ Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain regarding the PNCC, October 22 1949. Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4 Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA, 1-2 (Hereafter cited as Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain regarding the PNCC, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection).

⁴⁴ Memorandum on the Evacuation Orders from Secretary of the Jerusalem and East Mission "to members of council", 25 February, 1947, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection, GB165-0161, box 62, file 3, 1947-1950, MECA, 1-2, 2.; History of the Question of Palestine - Question of Palestine," United Nations, Accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.un.org/unispal/history/>.

⁴⁵ Notice of St. George's Damage from D. J. Balfour to E. Mills Esq., CBE, 1948, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 62, file 3, 1947-1950, MECA.

⁴⁶ Letter to Archbishop Fisher from Bishop Stewart, 27 December, 1948, Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950 90ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 60.

⁴⁷ "Memo from H.S. Leiper", Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950, 87 -88.

⁴⁸ Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain regarding the PNCC, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection.

⁴⁹ Response from Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain's letter on June 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection, 2.

⁵⁰ Response from Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain's letter on June 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection, 1.

⁵¹ Response from Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain's letter on June 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection, 2.

promised only 500 pounds to the Arab Anglican community, but he reiterated his annoyance that the PNCC was still “complaining of lack of support from either C.M.S. or myself”.⁵²

Eventually, in 1950, Bishop Stewart approved the Reconstruction Appeal. Rev. Cubain, in his capacity as the chairman of the Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community (PNCC), requested 15,000 pounds from “the Churches of the Anglican Communion” for Arab Anglicans who numbered approximately 5,000, had “20 centres of work” and “five schools in operation”, which were served by “eight priests and a deacon”.⁵³ However, Bishop Stewart did not receive the gratitude from the community that he might have done if had not delayed the appeal.

Though Bishop Stewart did give money to the Arab Anglican community, the fact that he repeatedly dismissed their cries for help as being unfounded, points to a pattern of pastoral neglect shaped by a colonial mindset. He failed to acknowledge the full extent of Arab Anglicans suffering, by equating it to the suffering of British Anglicans. He was also condescending when being critical of Arab Anglicans as he described them as seeming to not understand the “true meaning” of Anglicanism as distinct from other Protestant denominations. Bizarrely, he also stated that they might be “punished” financially for their continual complaints by the failing state of their congregations and representative body. Writing to a supporter in England, he candidly shared his view on Arab Anglicans:

Frankly, the Arab Anglican Church is, at the moment, ruined, and unless we come to their rescue I see no alternative for them but to leave us and merge themselves with the Presbyterians of the Lebanon or the Lutherans of Palestine: the latter, at least, have plenty of money, and would gladly swallow them. You probably are already aware that, in spite of what we have done for their relief, and in spite of their persistent agitation for years to be as independent as possible of an English Bishop or any English Missionary organization, they are now vociferously complaining that the Bishop and the Missions are doing nothing to help them. The complaint is irritating and untrue, but I cannot think that it would be right to retaliate by leaving them to shift for themselves.⁵⁴

Bishop Stewart saw the Arabic-speaking congregations as needing the protection of the British-led Anglican Church to “save” the churches from their own “ruin.” While he felt they were ungrateful and disloyal, he still had pastoral responsibility for them. But he was hypocritical. While he refused their attempts at agency, he bemoaned their lack of agency. Without recognition Arab Anglicans could never be self-supporting. This was clerical colonialism.

A Struggle for a Postcolonial Identity

The struggle for financial viability was a practical illustration of the reality of clerical colonialism as it stemmed from Arab Anglican’s lack of representation and agency. But this was not just an issue within the Bishopric. Although Bishop Weston repeatedly acknowledged the PNCC (or, as the Arabs call it, the Evangelical Episcopal Community) in internal communication, he refused Arab Anglicans’ requests to be officially recognized by the new Israeli government.

⁵² Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain regarding the PNCC, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection.

⁵³ Rev. Cubain’s Letter for Arab Churches’ Reconstruction Appeal “to the Churches of the Anglican Communion”, n.d., Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4 Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA.

⁵⁴ “Christian News from Israel” a Letter from Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., 27 December, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, 18 File 4 Anglican Church in Palestine. Israel correspondence 1915-1969, MECA.

While resistant to the PNCC's ecclesiastical arguments for recognition and representation, Bishop Stewart had complex feelings towards the situation. As he explained to Archbishop Fisher in September 1947, he felt that "the common distinction in the past between 'the Mission,' i.e. the foreigners, and 'the Church,' i.e. the indigenous body, with a corresponding division of function, has been disastrous in its effects. [...] but that the responsibility lies at our door, who have failed to teach them a truer ('idea of the Church')." ⁵⁵ Despite feeling some shame for the effect of the division between Arab and British Anglicans, the Bishop was committed to maintaining the status quo and not assisting Arab Anglicans in their wider aspirations. He was still their spiritual leader and pastor.

Significantly, at the same time as he was corresponding with Archbishop Fisher, Bishop Stewart communicated with Geoffrey Clayton ⁵⁶, the Archbishop of Johannesburg. ⁵⁷ The Diocese of Johannesburg, embroiled in South Africa's growing apartheid implementation, had a similar challenge of incorporating "indigenous leadership" in a white-led diocese. ⁵⁸ Archbishop Clayton agreed with Bishop Stewart that if Arab Anglicans and their Council were recognized, their leader could not have the title of bishop. The possibility of two bishops, one of whom represented the Arab Christians, would undermine British leadership and sow division in the Anglican Communion across the postcolonial world. ⁵⁹ Neither bishop wanted indigenous members to divide the Church along racial lines. Clayton suggested that if the PNCC wanted to distance themselves from the Church of England, Bishop Stewart could change his title from "Bishop of the Church of England resident in Jerusalem to "Bishop in communion with the Church of England resident in Jerusalem." The phrase "in communion with" would distance Arab Anglicans from association with the Church of England while still recognizing that they were Anglican and thus in relationship with the whole Anglican Communion. ⁶⁰ While Arab Anglicans would have likely supported this, Bishop Stewart did not seem to.

Arab Anglicans fought for representation not only within the Church, but also in the context of the State of Israel. The 1947 Partition hampered pastoral ministry. As a result of the Partition, clergy needed a permit to travel, which made pastoral ministry more difficult. ⁶¹ Bishop Stewart wrote that "on my recent visit across the Jewish lines I was unable to see any of the places in question not even our own Arabic-speaking Church of S. Paul." ⁶² While most Anglicans privately opposed the Partition Plan of 1947, Rev. Cubain, leader of the PNCC, publicly rejected it. When he did so, Bishop Stewart responded by questioning whether he had acted with the Council's approval. His outspokenness showed that English leadership was not

⁵⁵ Bishop Stewart to Archbishop Fisher, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, 314.

⁵⁶ He was the Archbishop of Johannesburg from 1939 to 1949.

⁵⁷ Carroll E. Simcox, "Apartheid and the Archbishop," *New York Times*, August 4, 1974, <https://www.nytimes.com/1974/08/04/archives/apartheid-and-the-archbishop-the-life-and-times-of-geoffrey-clayton.html>.

⁵⁸ Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union: Women, Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876–2008*, (Studies in Modern British Religious History, Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 212.

⁵⁹ "Memorandum" from Geoffrey Clayton to Bishop Stewart, 25 September, 1947, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 318 (Hereafter cited as "Memorandum" from Geoffrey Clayton to Bishop Stewart, Fisher Papers 1947 Vol 29).

⁶⁰ "Bishopric in Jerusalem Ordinance No. of 1947," 1947, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 316; "Memorandum" from Geoffrey Clayton to Bishop Stewart, Fisher Papers 1947, vol. 29, 319.

⁶¹ "Memo from H.S. Leiper," Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950, 87.

⁶² Bishop Stewart to Archbishop Fisher, Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950 90ff 60-62, 60.

respected or acknowledged by all Anglicans in Jerusalem.⁶³ Referring to the PNCC, Bishop Stewart noted that “so long as they speak for their own ‘Community’, and not for the Anglican Church, there is no fatal damage done”, while describing the PNCC as being “at the moment quite out of control.”⁶⁴ Although Bishop Stewart was willing for the PNCC to speak for itself, he refused to recognize the PNCC as having any authority to speak for all Anglicans, even though the majority of the members of the diocese were Arab.

Bishop Stewart felt a deep sense of betrayal when Rev. Khalil Jamal, a member of the PNCC, took matters into his own hands when he wrote to the Israeli Minister of Religions requesting recognition of the Evangelical Episcopal Community (the PNCC). In 1949 Arab Anglicans requested to be recognized officially as the Evangelical Episcopal Community by the Israeli government. As Arab Anglicans had been targeted in the early twentieth century due to their perceived support of British foreign policy, they wanted their chosen name to distance themselves from the English Church. Unlike earlier Anglican foreign missionaries whose mission focused on “educating” and “enlightening” the indigenous population, Arab Anglicans described themselves as “Evangelical” because they wanted to empower their community while remaining “episcopal”. This showed a dedication to maintaining an Anglican leadership hierarchy, as long as it was representative of their community. According to Bishop Stewart, Rev. Jamal, who was based in Nazareth, did so “without full consultation both with myself and with other Arab members of our Church who are not now resident in Israel”.⁶⁵ Upon receiving, Rev. Jamal’s request, the Israeli Government asked Bishop Stewart to confirm the validity and authorization of Rev. Jamal’s request. Appreciating Government communication, he wrote “the Israeli Government in fact appears to be better aware of the correct procedure for an Episcopal Church than some of my clergy.”⁶⁶ This illustrated a common bond between the Israeli government and the Anglican Church as they both had a stake in maintaining English leadership of the Church. The church leadership wanted to remain “in power”, while the Israeli government wanted stability within church leadership and to foster good relationships with international superpowers, like the British. Both were threatened by Arab leadership.

In 1949 however, Dr. Wardi, the editor of *Christian News from Israel*, added to tensions within the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem when he referred to “the Anglican Church and the Arab Episcopal Church as being two bodies.”⁶⁷ Bishop Stewart was furious at the differentiation made between the “Anglican Church” and the “Arab Episcopal Church” as that was “the very thing that I had particularly asked him not to do.” Bishop Stewart wrote to a supporter that the Arab Episcopal Church was not a “separate Church” because “there is no such thing as the Anglican Church. There is the Church of England, and there is the Anglican Communion of

⁶³ “Statement By the Committee of the Christian Union of Palestine Addressed to All World Religious and Political Bodies,” 3 March, 1948, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 62, file 3 1947-1950, MECA.

⁶⁴ “Christian Union of Palestine” Letter from Bishop Stewart to D.W.I., March 17, 1948, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 62, file 3 1947-1950, MECA.

⁶⁵ “Memo from H.S. Leiper,” n.d., Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950 90ff, Lambeth Palace Library, London, 87-88, 87 (Hereafter “Memo from H.S. Leiper”, Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950).; Bishop Stewart to Minister of Religions, December 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4 Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA.; Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection.

⁶⁶ “Memo from H.S. Leiper,” *Bell Papers Palestine Israel 1932-1950*, 87-88; Bishop Stewart to Minister of Religions, December 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection, MECA; Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection.

⁶⁷ *Christian News from Israel* was “issued by the Department for Christian Communities in the Ministry for Religious Affairs”.

Churches, and it is theologically rather important to maintain the fact that while I myself am ‘Bishop of the Church of England resident in Jerusalem,’ I am here to represent the Anglican Communion of Churches.”⁶⁸ In another letter, Bishop Stewart wrote to Rev. Cubain, the head of the PNCC, “Must I once more repeat that the Church does not consist only of the P.N.C.C., but of all its members of whatever race?”⁶⁹ Bishop Stewart remained steadfast in his belief that he had to keep members of the Anglican Church united as people of a common faith. His position obviously also contained an element of self-service as Arab Anglicans’ fight for autonomy was a threat to Bishop Stewart and British church leaders.

Arab Anglicans’ fight for nominal as well as actual recognition pointed to British Anglicans’ resistance to colonial Anglicanism in the Middle East. While Arab Anglicans were successful in creating their own organization, they could not obtain independence or be recognized in the newly formed Israeli State as fully representing the Anglican Bishopric in Jerusalem – a sign of continuing clerical colonialism. At this time the British leadership of the Church of England was still able to contain Arab Anglicans’ self-identity and agency.

Conclusion

By the end of 1949, Arab Anglicans still lacked agency, power, or a commanding voice within their church. They remained dependent on the Church of England through their bishop who denied their ability to be self-supporting as he controlled their access to funds. They had neither ecclesiastical representation nor state recognition. He blocked their attempts at self-determination both within the church and in relation to the newly formed Israeli government.

The power for change in the Anglican Church was still firmly in the hands of the Church of England leadership in both the Middle East and in London. As British nationals led the Church of England and had been formed in the context of the British Empire, it was no surprise then that when the demand for an Arab bishop was first raised in 1952 by the Evangelical Episcopal Arab Church (PNCC), Bishop Stewart simply denied it.⁷⁰ However, after his retirement in 1957, a new attitude toward Arab Anglicans quickly became evident.⁷¹ That summer, Archbishop Fisher issued a “new reorganization” scheme “following negotiations with representatives of the Evangelical Episcopal Arab community.”⁷² In 1958, Rev. Najib Cubain, who had earlier been the PNCC’s chairman, was “selected from among the Arab local clergy” to become the first Arab Bishop of the newly created Diocese of Lebanon, Jordan,⁷³ and Syria.⁷⁴ In 1976, the Diocese of Jerusalem finally consecrated its first Anglican Arab Bishop, Faeq

⁶⁸ “Christian News from Israel” a Letter from Bishop Stewart to G.D.L., 27 December, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 18, file 4, Anglican Church in Palestine, Israel correspondence 1915-1969, MECA.

⁶⁹ Response from Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain’s letter on June 1, 1949, 23 June, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection GB165-0161, box 21, file 4, Palestine Native Church Council Correspondence 1947-1949, MECA, 2 (Hereafter cited as Response from Bishop Stewart to Rev. Cubain’s letter on June 1, 1949, Jerusalem and the East Mission Collection).

⁷⁰ Tsimhoni, “The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community,” 254.

⁷¹ Anglican Bishops - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem,” The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem – The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, July 1, 2021, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/anglican-bishops/>.

⁷² Tsimhoni, “The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community,” 255.

⁷³ This included modern-day East Jerusalem.

⁷⁴ Tsimhoni, “The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community,” 255; “Anglican Bishops - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem,” The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, July 1, 2021, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/anglican-bishops/>.

Haddad.⁷⁵ Thus, the Diocese of Jerusalem was finally led by an Arab Anglican. In contrast, South Africa consecrated its first black suffragan bishop in 1960.⁷⁶

This illustrates the way in which the worldwide Anglican Church was navigating a postcolonial world, ending an era of clerical colonialism, and moving towards a fully indigenized Church.⁷⁷ Arab Anglicans' cries for recognition were answered when the Church of England hierarchy began to facilitate the decolonization of the church by promoting local indigenous leadership and listening to indigenous members of the church.⁷⁸ Indigenizing the Church meant strengthening the Church so that it could better serve its members and cultivate their faith. It demonstrated that non-British people could lead and manage their own Church and diversify the perspectives and influences of the Church of England.

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, as the former Bishopruc is now constituted, stretches across modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine and Jordan. That it has a Palestinian Archbishop, 7,000 members, the vast majority of whom are Arab, twenty-eight congregations, and thirty institutions shows the extent to which Bishop Stewart's fears of indigenizing and empowering the Church's Arab members were unfounded.⁷⁹ Despite there having been more conflict in the Middle East since 1949 than Bishop Stewart could have ever imagined, the diocese's Arab members are a beacon of light and hope.

⁷⁵ Tsimhoni, "The Anglican (Evangelical Episcopal) Community," 256.

⁷⁶ Cordelia Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union: Women, Anglicanism and Globalisation, 1876–2008* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2009), 212.

⁷⁷ Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union*, 212.

⁷⁸ Moyse, *A History of the Mothers' Union*, 202.

⁷⁹ "Home - the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem," The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem - The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, accessed August 16, 2023, <https://j-diocese.org/wordpress/>