



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the Public Programs application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/public/bridging-cultures-through-film-international-topics> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Public Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: 1913: Seeds of Conflict

Institution: Filmmakers Collaborative, Inc.

Project Director: Ben Loeterman

Grant Program: *Bridging Cultures* through Film: International Topics

2. Narrative

A. Program Description

This is a request for a grant to develop and write a 60-minute documentary film script that examines a pivotal yet largely overlooked moment in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the years just prior to World War I. *1913: Seeds of Conflict* looks at a time of transformation when Ottoman rule in Palestine was still strong, the personal identities of people living there were fluid and overlapping, and few could imagine the conflict that would dominate the region for most of the next century. While most scholars have focused on the later British mandate period as a locus of the Middle East conflict, this film focuses on the period *before* World War I, when Arab and Jewish nationalism first made contact, and the conflict was just beginning to germinate.

Seeds is a snapshot, a moment that captures the complexities and nuances of life in Palestine when relationships between Arabs and Jews were far closer than they are today. We will tap an exciting new vein of contemporary scholarship through historians working in Ramallah (Salim Tamari), Tel Aviv (Abigail Jacobson) and Gainesville, Los Angeles and New York (Michelle Campos, Arieh Saposnik and Louis Fishman) who are each exploring the period before the British conquest of Palestine in 1917 and all that would follow.

Our story's setting is the multi-cultural, multi-lingual Ottoman Empire in its waning years, a colorful society pulled between medieval and modern influences, where alliances have as much to do with familial ties as they do with the hierarchy of Ottoman rule. The district of Jerusalem (what would later become southern Palestine) is a region adapting to the growing forces of nationalism and a perceived threat to Ottoman sovereignty by European 'foreigners.' Zionism, the European-based movement for a Jewish homeland, and Arabism, or Arab nationalism, still nascent in this period, are the forces that propel our narrative.

We explore this seminal moment in history through the eyes of people who experienced its change and transition first hand:

Albert Antebi, an Ottoman Jew, who was known in Jerusalem as the 'Jewish pasha'. Antebi believed that political Zionism, the push to create a formal Jewish homeland or state in the empire, threatened the delicate balance Ottoman Jews had achieved in the multi-cultural Empire. Antebi lived from 1873 to 1919.

Ruhi al-Khalidi, a scholar from a notable Arab Muslim family, who then became a deputy to the Ottoman Parliament. Many believe al-Khalidi was prescient about what Zionism would bring to his fellow Muslims and to their native land. Al-Khalidi lived from 1864 to 1913.

Arthur Ruppin, who opened the first Zionist office in Jaffa after arriving from Germany in 1908. His mission was to coordinate the Zionists' purchase of land. The changes he witnessed and helped create would transform the region. Ruppin lived from 1876 to 1943.

Khalil Sakakini, a Palestinian Christian educator and nationalist whose fierce devotion to his home and its tradition of hospitality would land him in an Ottoman prison. His memoirs of the period provide another important lens through which we understand the ethnic intricacies of the era. Sakakini lived from 1878 to 1953.

By constantly shifting the point of view between these four main characters— a native Jew, a native Muslim, a European Zionist and a native Christian— men who knew and interacted with each other and witnessed contemporaneous events thoughtfully, yet from very different perspectives, our audience will learn about the promise and challenge of the period.

The film’s prologue captures a poignant letter Ruhi al-Khalidi’s uncle, a prominent Jerusalemite, Yusuf al-Khalidi, writes in 1899 to Theodore Herzl, the founder of Zionism, after Herzl’s visit to Palestine. Al-Khalidi appreciates the Jews’ desire to come to Palestine; he agrees that in theory it is a “completely natural and just idea” as a solution to the problem of virulent anti-Semitism in Europe. But given the circumstances of Palestine’s people and centuries of history, he reminds Herzl, “the reality is that Palestine is now an integral part of the Ottoman Empire, and what is more serious, it is inhabited by others than Israelites.” Instead of wielding the brute force that would surely be needed to uproot its present inhabitants, al-Khalidi implores Herzl, “For the sake of God, leave Palestine in peace.”

Zionists, hoping to become a potent political force, had held their first Congress in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. Word of the Congress quickly reaches the coffee shops of Jerusalem, where men like Yusuf al-Khalidi and his nephew Ruhi consider this new European movement that appears destined for the Holy Land. The al-Khalidis and their contemporaries closely monitor the writings and speeches of Zionist leaders in Europe. They’re concerned about what this could mean for Palestine. Meanwhile, Albert Antebi, an Ottoman Jew from Damascus who has quickly risen to become a respected Jerusalem power broker, is also watching. The feisty Antebi becomes enraged at the political pronouncements these Europeans are making about Palestine, a land they barely know.

As a native Ottoman, Albert Antebi is just as wary as Ruhi Khalidi of the spillover of European nationalism into Palestine. “They’re Europeans, they’re Germans, and Russians,” (b) (6), French historian Elizabeth Antebi, told us. “That’s enough for him not to like them.” And that’s not all Antebi doesn’t like. He sees the Zionists are upsetting a very delicate balance achieved by Ottoman Jews, a community well aware of “how good they have it,” says UCSD historian Hasan Kayali.

Through the words of our central characters, coupled with new scholarship on the period, we come to better understand and *feel* Palestine of the early 20th century— a land experiencing burgeoning growth in agriculture and moving toward a more capitalist economy. Land is for sale, and new European immigrants, both Jewish Zionists and religious Christian pilgrims, are there to buy. The outrageous prices they pay fuel a land bubble that encourages already wealthy landowners to sell. The result pulls land out from under the feet of tenant farmers working it as their ancestors had for centuries, only to find themselves thrown off by fellow Arabs who sold the land and Europeans who understand neither their language nor their culture. These *fellahin* (peasants), writes Columbia University historian (b) (6)

Rashid Khalidi, are the first Arabs to clash with the Zionist settlers. Their experiences help spur the earliest formation of an Arab national consciousness.

The situation of Ottoman Jews is a welcome contrast to the horrible news of anti-Semitic persecution, pogroms and violence in Europe that is driving more and more European Jews to seek refuge in Palestine. Devoted equally to his Ottoman identity and his Jewish roots, by 1913 Antebi is forced to choose between the two—dual identities Ottoman Jews have been allowed for centuries seem less and less compatible.

Antebi’s letters and the memoirs of Khalil Sakakini lead us through the narrow, cobblestoned streets of Jerusalem. This is a pungent place, where Muslim families participate in the Jewish Purim holiday, where Rabbis, Priests and Imams hold court at coffee shops, and where business, and social ties assure that religious and ethnic identities are not the sole determinant of one’s place in society. Today, a new generation of scholars—including protégés of Rashid Khalidi such as Abigail Jacobson — are re-examining the connections among the groups and their frequent interactions before the First World War.

In 1908, Arthur Ruppin arrives in Palestine from Germany to set up the first World Zionist Organization office there. Soon afterwards, the group of intellectuals and military officers known as the ‘Young Turks’ revolt, overthrowing the Sultan’s authoritarian rule in favor of a parliamentary constitutional government. It’s not clear to Ruppin how the new Ottoman leaders will receive a growing Zionist movement. For several years, there have been increasingly louder petitions from Arabs and others to restrict Jewish immigration and, in particular, to restrict the ability of foreign Jews to buy land. After 1908, and the government’s desire to create a civic, Turkish Ottoman citizenry, new regulations encourage immigrants to adopt Ottoman citizenship, thereby becoming part of the polity.

Becoming Ottomans was *not* the Zionists’ main objective. A German Jew, Ruppin, like other European immigrants flooding the province, barely speaks Hebrew, much less Arabic or Turkish. Still, he tracks new Ottoman regulations concerning his Zionist enterprise and the growing resistance to Zionism being voiced by Arab writers in the press. Ruppin’s office closely monitors popular tendencies and public expressions, hiring Arabic-speaking Jews to respond to criticisms leveled against the Zionists. (His office’s collection of Arabic newspapers today provides scholars rich research sources from the period). Ruppin is no hardliner – he sees cooperation as the preferred way to deal with his Arab neighbors. But by 1913 he, like Albert Antebi, understands that the time for true cooperation is quickly passing.

After a year-long visit to the U.S., Khalil Sakakini returns to Jerusalem in the wake of the Young Turks’ revolt, and soon opens a school that will promote a renaissance in Arabic language, learning and culture. An independent-minded thinker, Sakakini refuses to be identified by any single element of his identity. While Sakakini would later be considered significant in the development of Arab nationalism, he famously wrote, “I am not Christian and not Buddhist, not Muslim and not Jewish, just as I am not Arab, or British, not German and not Turkish. I am just one among humankind.” Sakakini’s public grappling with his identity is yet another emblematic thread woven into the tapestry that is Palestine in this period.

Through the eyes of these four uniquely qualified observers, we learn that 1913 is a year when violence between Zionist settlers and Palestinian villagers escalates. In a bloody incident at the settlement of Rehovot, a Muslim and a Jew are killed. Meanwhile, Ruhi al-Khalidi is secretly writing two volumes he calls, “*Zionism, or the Zionist Question*,” reflecting years of research and observations of the movement up close. His book, explains historian Rashid Khalidi, “laid out the threat to both Palestine and the Ottoman Empire which [he] perceived in the Zionist movement.” By 1913, Ruhi al-Khalidi sees the shadow of the conflict to come. Revolutionary in its time, the book has never been published.

Arthur Ruppin can’t help but notice the growing Palestinian nationalism. Fearful of the threat he perceives, he presents a paper to the 1913 Zionist Congress in which he tells the assembled that this is the moment. Ruppin implores them to fundraise throughout the Jewish diaspora, and to purchase as much land as possible before it becomes impossible to buy.

As Ruhi al-Khalidi is writing his book, Ruppin is exhorting Zionists, and Sakakini is educating Muslim and Christian students about their Arab heritage, Albert Antebi is enlisted to help resolve the bloody exchange at Rehovot. He comes to realize that it is too late to turn the clock back. The fight over this land will become an even bloodier one, and he decides he can no longer maintain an independent, Ottoman Jewish view. Feeling conflicted, he moves closer to those seeking to establish a formal Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The sides are drawn.

1913 is an admittedly arbitrary glimpse— a moment that captures the Palestine of a hundred years ago. It is a moment that scholars are looking at with renewed interest to better understand and rethink what has

happened since, and to solve issues that today seems so mired and intractable. Our plan is to prepare festival screenings and ready a national broadcast premiere in 2013, an informal anniversary of sorts, of a time that was different. A time when the conflict didn't appear so hopeless, and when diverse neighbors could still sit down together to discuss their differences over a strong cup of Turkish coffee.

B. Humanities Content

The related themes woven into our story are outlined below, followed by a summary of the new scholarship that informs the project.

1) Shifting Identities

At the apex of its power in the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire was a vast conglomeration of different religious and ethnic groups reaching from the Balkans to the Red Sea. Contemporary nations that once fell within Ottoman borders include Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Kuwait, Iraq, Egypt, Israel and Syria.

In Palestine, as elsewhere, people defined themselves through an alchemy of local, familial and religious associations *and* as citizens of the empire. Palestinian Ottomans were Muslims, Christians and Jews living in large towns such as Jaffa, Jerusalem and Haifa or in small villages, where the majority of the population lived and worked modest plots of land. Ninety percent of the population was Muslim, and the vast majority of Muslim, Christian and Jewish residents spoke Arabic as their primary language.

To manage this diverse population, the Ottoman government created the *millet* system, which organized the various religions and ethnicities. As Israeli historian Abigail Jacobson explains, "The system provided a degree of religious, cultural and ethnic continuity, but also allowed the incorporation of these communities into the Ottoman administrative, economic and political system."

The three millets were Greek-Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish. As the ruling religion of the Empire, Islam was not included in the millet system. So while religion was one's official 'identity,' it co-existed with other signifiers such as clan, village, religion and Ottomanism that could be layered upon each other, with one taking on more importance at one moment, and another at another moment.

"[There was] a completely different sense of identity among the entire indigenous population, all of which [saw] itself in a broader Ottoman context right up until World War I," Columbia University Historian and Professor of Modern Arab Studies Rashid Khalidi told us. "But that doesn't mean they didn't see themselves also as Jews, Christians, Muslims, or people from a certain city, or Sunni, Shia, etc."

"There were overlapping identities" explains Jacobson. "Because of the existence of Empire and its ability to provide an [umbrella] identity, there is a moment when people are not simply 'an Arab' or 'a Jew' -- identity was not as polarized as we see it today."

The exclusive identities such as religion or clan, and the inclusive ones such as Ottomanism or local affiliation such as Jerusalemite, allow for frequent interaction between various groups. Jerusalem of the late Ottoman period is a world in which Muslims, Jews and Christians maintain social and business relationships, celebrate Purim together, bring each other gifts for Eid and Passover, and join together in fervent celebration of 'brotherhood' after the 1908 Revolution.

As Salim Tamari, editor of the journal "Jerusalem Quarterly" and director of the Institute for Jerusalem Studies, explains, "There was no intermarriage, but there was a great deal of socializing, heavily

cemented by business and commercial contacts.” While Tamari qualifies that it was no ‘co-existence utopia,’ he asserts it was a social system that worked more smoothly than what would come after the war.

This fluid mix of identities would be lost during the British Mandate period [1920-1948], when people were forced to choose and declare their allegiance. Identities such as ‘Jew’ and ‘Arab’ suddenly emerge in stark opposition to each other, without the mediating space of Ottomanism. Those inflexible categories continue to impact life in Palestine and Israel and the conflict today.

Our film will remind its audience of a time when more nuanced identities existed, a sensibility not unlike the multiplicity of American identities today. These subtleties will be brought to life through the characters we profile and the ways they interacted before identities hardened and the conflict began.

2) Rising National Consciousness

Nationalism, the urge to identify with a strong national, ethnic group, was arguably the most significant political element transforming our world at the dawn of the 20th century. In the Ottoman district of Jerusalem (today, the southern half of Israel), two growing nationalist movements – Jewish and Arab – transformed the fluid identities of late Ottoman Palestine into the highly polarized ‘us vs. them’ paradigm of later periods. How these conflicting social forces interacted is another important theme we explore.

Fueled by ethnic pride and identity, nationalist movements surged through Europe in the 19th century. From Greece’s uprising against the Ottoman Empire in 1821 through the unifications of Italy and Germany, Europe was quickly transforming into a continent of nation-states. Threatened with loss of territory by these nationalist movements, the Ottoman Empire acted to defend itself against further losses by going to war in Bulgaria, Greece, and the Balkans from the 1870’s until 1913.

Russia sided with the nationalist movements in some parts of the Balkans, even going to war directly with the Ottomans over Bulgaria. Alert to this new geopolitical threat, Ottomans viewed Russians in the Holy Land, increasingly Jews fleeing oppression, with considerable suspicion.

Enter Zionism, the nationalist movement to create a homeland for the Jews. Zionism was inspired by European currents of self-determination and pushed forward by anti-Semitic persecution in Europe. But unlike the Greeks, Italians, and Germans, Jews were a widely dispersed people without many of the social linkages that lend definition to a nationalist movement. Spread throughout the world, they spoke different languages, held different allegiances, observed different customs, and had no land of their own. At the turn of the century, Zionists from different ideological streams and viewpoints pushed to establish a patriotic, nationalistic Jewish culture in a land of their own. The land they set their sites on was one central to Jewish culture and religion for millennia – *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel) or Palestine.

The first migration (*aliyah*) of European Jews started dribbling into the port at Jaffa in 1882. Just over a decade later, Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl, stirred by his personal brush with anti-Semitism during France’s Dreyfus affair, pondered how to resolve the ‘problem’ of Europe’s Jews. His solution was the same as those found throughout Europe – establishing a national refuge and homeland. In 1897 he convened the first Zionist Congress in Basel, attended by about 200 representatives from 17 countries. What emerged was a politically organized national movement. Herzl declared later in his diary, “In Basel I founded the Jewish State.”

Jewish nationalism takes the form of a small, underfunded movement with a nascent national language and a resettlement program. Starting in 1904, with a larger second wave of Jewish immigration led by Russian Jews, the fragmented movement begins to create a larger presence in Palestine. The 2nd *aliyah* helped transform Zionism into a fully developed national and cultural presence.

Local Arabs were beginning to develop a national consciousness too, but as Rashid Khalidi describes it, they “were not in the same category as the people arriving from Eastern Europe.” Under Ottoman rule, Palestine was a geographic area, administratively part of greater Syria (*Bilad al-Sham*) that had been ruled by the Ottomans for over 400 years. The population spoke Arabic, and shared Islamic faith and heritage with the peoples of the Arabic speaking world. But, as Neville Mandel writes in his foundational work *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, “Nationalism in the European sense was almost unknown among the Arabs at the end of the nineteenth century.”

Still, this pan-Islamic identity begins to morph into a notion of Arabism in the early 20th century. Professor Khalidi identifies developments, often arising out of conflicts with the new Jewish settlers, that began to foster the notion of Arabism as a national consciousness. These conflicts were generally a result of the sale of land by absentee landowners — mostly Arabs from wealthy families in the cities — to the Zionists. Tenant farmers don’t learn that the land they’ve worked, often for generations, has transferred ownership until Russian immigrants who do not speak Arabic or understand the native culture, arrive to take possession of their acreage. Arab *fellahin* (peasants) are the first to experience direct conflict with the Zionists, but it is not until the plight of the mostly poor and illiterate *fellahin* reaches the ears of urban intellectuals, says Khalidi, that this becomes a point of mutual identification.

In his book, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, Khalidi argues that this important “shared element” – the mutual opposition to land sales to Zionists by the *fellahin* and the intellectual elites – “constituted an element of shared identity between those in the cities and towns of Palestine and those in the countryside, who now felt that in some way they shared the same fate...”

The Zionist issue also alienated Arabs from their Ottoman rulers. Khalidi goes on to say, “Zionism, it was charged, was being tolerated and even encouraged by the Turkish-dominated [Ottoman government] because of [its] lack of concern for the Arab provinces. These charges may or may not have been justified... However, they were widely believed, and constituted a potent weapon in the conflict between the Arabist tendency among the Arab elite and the [Ottoman government].”

Neither the Zionist nor the Arab national movements are isolated from the larger currents of European nationalism that are slowly destroying the Ottoman Empire. When the Empire loses its last European holdings in the 1912-13 Balkan conflicts, the true weakness of the Empire becomes apparent to Arabists and Zionists alike. Both movements understand they’ll need to prepare to fight for their own interests against the empire. The only question is when.

3) Constructing National Culture

For nationalist movements the world over, the goal of a national ethnic homeland is inextricably connected to the desire to create a space for a flourishing culture. Language, food, traditions, literature, music and religion are all part of the mix that Jews, Arabs, Greeks, Serbs and others hope to enjoy in their new national states.

Embedded in nationalism is a struggle for definition – who is the real Arab or Palestinian? The real Zionist or Israeli? Which language do they speak, which literature is their heritage, etc. In the context of late Ottoman Palestine, the issue of language becomes a contentious battle of words between Zionists and native Arabs, and within the Jewish community, old and new.

Zionists insist on using either their European language of origin, or Hebrew, creating a barrier with the predominant Arabic-speaking culture. In an editorial, the Arabic newspaper *Filastin* called Hebrew “useless to the world except as a weapon of Zionism.” With communication difficult, the distance

between communities grew. Native Jews like Albert Antebi wanted new immigrants to learn Arabic, but the idea is quickly shot down in the overall effort to renew Jewish culture in its own tongue.

UCLA professor Arie Saposnik says the Zionists' endeavor was, "not only to revise Judaism, but to revise the definition of culture. What they sought to create encompassed everything from the way in which Jews dressed to the art they created and the literature they read, to how holidays were celebrated. Politics, economics, and even medicine were mobilized to become dynamic parts of a new identity."

While the challenge for Muslim Arabs was hardly as daunting, they also worked to achieve a cultural revival as part of a growing national movement. The renaissance of existing Islamic culture was the work of men like Khalil Sakakini who instilled Muslim and Christian children with a new love and appreciation of their Arab heritage. As Rashid Khalidi explains, "Arab nationalism represented both a revival of old traditions and loyalties and a creation of new myths based on them, an invention of tradition... Thus, as Arab nationalism took hold, what had been described for thirteen centuries as the glories of Islamic civilization came to be called the glories of *Arab* civilization."

Unlike the new Zionist culture, many Arab cultural linkages such as religious observance, language and geographical space existed as signs of a newly defined people. Ironically, as modern Palestinians today strive toward a state of their own, the very same issues of culture—for example, which songs do we sing—loom alongside questions about political, economic and social organization. Themes of shifting identities in defining a people are every bit as vibrant topics in the region today as they were then.

4) **Reframing the Past – New scholarship**

1913: Seeds of Conflict will expose a wider public audience in three societies—Arab, American and Israeli, to an exciting new surge of scholarship developing around recent study of the late Ottoman period. Israeli, Palestinian, American and French scholars are looking at this period anew, creating a different lens through which to view this era of transformation.

Michelle Campos' new book, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*, describes an aim as, "to reconfigure the Palestinian historical landscape to the proper *shared* framework. Communal life in late Ottoman Palestine was interdependent and intertwined on a much more significant level than we have previously allowed." In looking more closely at this period, Campos and others are studying relationships in Ottoman Palestine *before* nationalism became a force.

Abigail Jacobson describes her work as bringing a "relational" paradigm to the study of the Middle East. "The basic premise of the relational paradigm is the belief that the histories of Jews and Arabs in modern Palestine can only be grasped by studying the ways these communities interacted within a complex web of economic, political, social and cultural interactions and relations... Examining the interaction and relations between the national communities, as well as *within* each national group, and analyzing how factors such as religion, ethnic identity or country of origin created complex webs of identification, aim at complicating and questioning the nationally-based binary of Arab/Jew." Jacobson's *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule*, is due out this spring.

Salim Tamari's *Mountain Against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture*, 2008, is widely considered a groundbreaking examination of Palestinian life that goes beyond the usual focal point of the 1948 war to address the earlier, formative years. Tamari is preparing to publish an English translation of selected excerpts from Khalil Sakakini's memoirs, a great help to our project.

Arieh Saposnik's *Becoming Hebrew: The Creation of a Jewish National Culture in Ottoman Palestine*, details Zionist efforts to redefine Jewish culture not simply by uprooting and transplanting themselves, but by seeking to affect a dramatic revolution in every aspect of Jewish life.

In addition to these new findings and streams of thought, we have also examined the large body of works that have laid the foundations for historical studies examining early relations between Zionist pioneers and Arab inhabitants of the Ottoman empire.

The work of **Rashid Khalidi**, Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University, has been central in our research. In his book, *Palestinian Identity; The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, he critically assesses the narratives that make up Palestinian history and identity. After Khalidi's relationship with President Obama from their earlier days together in Chicago was politicized during the 2008 presidential campaign, he has sworn off all formal contact with media projects. Nonetheless, we held an extensive phone conversation with Dr. Khalidi, and include in our submission letters of support from two of his former students, now scholars in their own right.

Other foundational work that informed our work includes that of **Walter Laquer** and **Neville J. Mandel**. Laquer's *A History of Zionism*, 1972, identifies the initial streams of Zionist philosophy and beginnings of the Zionist movement. Mandel's *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I*, 1976 traces the beginnings of Arabic Nationalism.

Abigail Jacobson, Salim Tamari, Michelle Campos and Louis Fishman among others, are rediscovering the ways in which the communities that co-existed in Palestine for centuries negotiated the changes wrought by the rise of national consciousness. These historians are revealing the social complexities of life in late Ottoman Palestine. Their work informs and inspires our project.

C. Visual Approach

1913: Seeds of Conflict will capture the lush colors and cultural strands of late Ottoman Palestine underscored, at times, with the urgency and gravity of today's Palestinian/Israeli conflict, filtered through the lens of history. Original footage of our subject matter is scant, but we have already located one film that focuses largely on the Zionist endeavor shot by a European Jewish filmmaker in 1913. Together with a trove of photographs, it will provide period imagery that we will both use and draw on for the dramatic sequences of the film. High Definition video, a medium director Ben Loeterman has increasingly mastered in several films to great advantage, increasingly allows for a wide variety of camera looks.

Where historical documentaries once strained to achieve a consistent overall texture, today's audience demands that we mix it up, combining the saturated colors of lush urban settings with drained hues of historical recreations to enhance our story telling. These techniques build on director Ben Loeterman's recent stylistic successes in films such as *The People v. Leo Frank*. Loeterman relies on the rigorous research and attention to detail to create images that many filmmakers reserve for only their subject matter. This helps the film provide not just information, but a fully transporting experience. **Seeds**, like the *Frank* film, will rely heavily on contemporaneous newspaper reporting. For *Frank*, rather than use cheap or flashy visual gimmicks, Loeterman sent animators to a period newspaper press used stop-motion effects to create headlines rolling off the presses. Similar approaches to detail will help us evoke the sights, sounds, and even smells of early 20th century cafes and soukhs in Jerusalem—especially relevant to international subject matter conveying a sense of place and people culture as well as a storyline.

Words are every bit as important as images in creating a visual approach. Once considered controversial, Loeterman does not hesitate to employ accomplished actors for his films, and critics have taken note.

About *Frank*, which it called ‘mesmerizingly recreated,’ the NY Times said, “The film mixes traditional documentary talking heads with re-creations by actors, but it reverses the usual percentage: instead of a few sketchy re-enactments amid lots of chatter from professorial types, it relies heavily on its actors, who work from court transcripts and other historical documentation. And the cast is not made up of the usual no-names. Will Janowitz (“The Sopranos”) is Frank; Seth Gilliam (“The Wire”) is Conley.”

We will similarly attract top talent—rich in character and authentically thick in their accents—to bring first person accounts from primary sources to life. The film’s characters are not only colorful individuals; they’re also emblematic of distinct social groups: Arab Muslims, Ottoman Turks, Middle Eastern Jews, Arab Christians and Ashkenazi (European) Jews. Capturing the feel of their world(s) will allow our viewers to better understand the strands that make up the tapestry of our story.

D. Resources

Life of the Jews in Palestine is a film shot in 1913. The original negative was found in 1997 at the Centre National de la Cinematographie in Bois D’Arcy France. We plan to make extensive use of the film.

Alliance Israelite Universelle Archives, Paris, France

Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, Israel

Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem, Israel

The Department of Manuscripts and Archives of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem

Imperial War Museum, London, United Kingdom

Institute for Palestine Studies Library, Beirut, Lebanon

Jerusalem City Archives, Jerusalem, Israel

Khalidi Library, Jerusalem, Israel

The Sarah and Yaacov Eshel Peace Library, Givat Haviva, Israel

Turkey General Directorate of State Archives, Istanbul, Turkey

The Library of Congress, Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Washington, DC

The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum, Bristol, United Kingdom

E. Audience

Our target audience for *1913: Seeds of Conflict* spans three continents: North America, Asia and Europe. BLPI will promote *Seeds*’ national US broadcast around the country through festival and targeted screenings. We will integrate the broadcast and screenings with an engaging social media presence, utilizing outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. A blog, with a young audience and peace-building initiatives like Seeds of Peace in mind, will be started during production to build the film’s audience and spark interest in the upcoming film before its completion.

The film will present content in a way that encourages application to today’s current events. To that end, we will create a space on the web where scholars can post their research, and discuss its implications for how we might more creatively approach today’s seemingly intractable challenges in the region. We plan

to link a network of existing sites organized by the academic centers and institutes we will be tapping.

Audience studies suggest that thoughtful adults are increasingly turning to television to nourish their hunger for historical knowledge, just as teachers are increasingly turning to video and new media to help bring historical subjects alive for their students. Our media team is recognized for responsibly and effectively pushing the dramatic envelope of documentary filmmaking while adhering to rigorous standards of research and scholarly discipline through careful use of the historical record.

F. Humanities Advisers/Media Staff

Humanities Advisers

Michelle Campos is Assistant Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History at the University of Florida, Gainesville. She earned her Ph.D. in 2003 from Stanford University, after teaching at the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University. Her book, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early-Twentieth Century Palestine*, Stanford University Press, 2010, explores the development of Ottoman collective identity in the aftermath of the July 1908 Ottoman revolution.

Beshara Doumani is Professor of History at UC Berkeley and a widely published author. Doumani's focus is on 'recovering the history of social groups, places, and time periods that have been silenced or erased by conventional scholarship on the modern Middle East.' He earned his Ph.D. from Georgetown University and taught for two years at Birzeit University in the West Bank. Doumani is working on two books: a social history of the Palestinians, and a comparative history of women and the family in Palestine and Lebanon.

Abigail Jacobson teaches at Tel Aviv University and at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzlyia; her Ph.D. is in Middle Eastern History. She served as the Israeli coordinator of Hands of Peace, an initiative that brings Israeli and Palestinian youth together in Chicago involving local religious communities, with a long-term follow up program in Jerusalem.

Issam Nassar is Associate Professor of History at Illinois State University. He specializes in the cultural history of the Middle East. His publications include: *Different Snapshots: Early Photography in Palestine: 1850-1948 (in Arabic, 2005)*; *Photographing Jerusalem (Columbia U. Press, 1997)*. He is the co-editor of several books including, with Salim Tamari, *Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyyeh Memoirs, 1904-1917 (IJS, 2003)*.

Arieh Saposnik received his Ph.D. in History and Jewish Studies from New York University, then joined the faculty at UCLA in 2009 as Associate Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and as Gilbert Chair in Israel Studies. His research focuses on the history of Zionism and Israel and on the varieties of Jewish nationalism. His book, *Becoming Hebrew: The Creation of a Jewish National Culture in Ottoman Palestine* was published in 2008.

Salim Tamari is Professor of Sociology at Birzeit University and has authored several works. He edited the volume *Essays on the Cultural History of Ottoman and Mandate Jerusalem (IJS, 2005)* and is Senior Fellow and Director of the Institute of Jerusalem Studies. He is editor of "Jerusalem Quarterly."

Media Team

Ben Loeterman (Writer/Director) is one of public television's most prolific writer/directors of historical and public affairs documentaries. He worked for PBS's flagship current affairs series *Frontline* for over

twenty years from its inception in 1982. Loeterman has contributed programs to the PBS history series *American Experience* including *Golden Gate Bridge*, *Public Enemy #1* and *Rescue at Sea*. He has received national Emmy awards for outstanding achievement in directing and investigative journalism, Amnesty International's Media Spotlight Award and two duPont-Columbia Journalism Awards. In 2009, Loeterman directed *The People v. Leo Frank* for PBS with NEH grants for scripting and production.

Amy Dockser Marcus (Principal Consultant) is a reporter for *The Wall Street Journal*. She was based in Israel as the *Journal's* Middle East correspondent from 1991 to 1998. Her first book, *The View from Nebo: How Archaeology Is Rewriting the Bible and Reshaping the Middle East*, was named one of the top nonfiction books of the year by the *Los Angeles Times*. She was awarded the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Beat Reporting for her coverage of the physical, monetary, and emotional costs of cancer.

Laura Longworth (Producer) has played significant roles in the making of nearly a dozen documentaries for PBS. For *American Experience*, Longworth produced *Gold Rush* and *Golden Gate Bridge*. For *Frontline*, she served as associate producer for *Inside the Terror Network* and *Let's Get Married*. Longworth was the producer of *The People v. Leo Frank*, an NEH supported film for PBS.

James Callanan (Cinematographer) has been the Director of Photography for many films on PBS, including Ben Loeterman's *The People v. Leo Frank*, and David Grubin's *Jews in America* and *The Buddha*. He shot in collaboration with Loeterman for *The War that Made America*, *Public Enemy #1* and *Rescue at Sea*. Collaborating with director David Grubin, his work includes *Oppenheimer*, *RFK*, and *Abraham and Mary Lincoln: A House Divided* (Emmy nominee for cinematography).

Peter Rhodes (Editor) has edited dozens of films for PBS and the BBC, as well as several independent documentary features. His extensive work with Ben Loeterman includes *The Prize: Oil, War and Strategy* (1992), *Frontline: Who Was Lee Harvey Oswald?* (1993), *Frontline: Apocalypse!* (1999), *BBC/Frontline: Real Justice* (2000), *The American Experience: Public Enemy #1* (2000), and *The War That Made America* (2004). Rhodes is currently editing with Ben Loeterman on a film about architect John Portman.

G. Distribution Plan

We will scaffold distribution of the film along the lines of a small indie feature film through special screenings and film festivals, followed by broadcast on PBS and in international markets, followed by non-theatrical, educational and home markets. In Arab broadcast markets, we will approach Al Jazeera, Al Jazeera English and state-owned television channels in Egypt, Lebanon, and Syria with additional distribution in the Gulf States. In Israel, we hope to work with either IBA (Israel Broadcasting Authority) or Channel 8 and in Great Britain, with BBC or Channel 4. We will seek additional distribution worldwide, likely through existing UN channels. A comprehensive teacher's guide will accompany web and DVD distribution through Facing History and Ourselves and similar organizations.

H. Bibliography of humanities scholarship that informs the project

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I. Ancillary Activities

Even at this most preliminary stage, we have begun to consider integrating the film with a major research and exhibition project by the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, which may tour in the Middle East. In addition, we will seek 'affinity partners' for the film that will broaden its reach and access such as Seeds of Peace and Facing History and Ourselves, both educational organizations.

J. Progress/Work Plan

Progress to date

"*History is a guide to navigation in perilous times.*" David McCullough

Our interest in the topic began in 1993, when Seeds of Peace was founded on a simple idea: to bring children of war-torn places into a camp setting and plant the seeds for a more secure future together. Last year, while heading to the Middle East to attend a film festival, Loeterman read *Jerusalem 1913: Origins*

of the Conflict, by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, Amy Dockser Marcus. Suddenly his 20+-year interest in Seeds of Peace was rekindled in a new form. Marcus's book draws on the writings, diaries and letters of three characters emblematic of social forces and events long before 1948 or even the British Mandate of 1920, figures who point to the true origins of today's Israeli/Palestinian conflict. For Loeterman, steeped in telling (NEH-funded) acted documentaries, it means the chance to present a revealing 'guide' to the situation in the Middle East 100 years after these events.

Marcus agreed to loan us 5 boxes of original research for the preparation of this proposal. They contain not only original writings of the figures involved from private libraries, family archives and other rare sources from Israel to Istanbul to Paris, but also the unpublished dissertations of a new generation of rising young scholars, some of whom studied with Professor Rashid Khalidi at Columbia University.

Why? In Marcus's view, "They've uncovered new documents that give new insights into identity, and what they relate to as younger scholars is the fluidity of identity in the period and the relationships between peoples (both within communities and across communities). This is a kind of Facebook approach to historical interpretation. The younger scholars all grew up in a time period in the Middle East when identity was really locked into place, you weren't able to cross boundaries as much in the national conflict, and so it is not surprising that what they gravitate to in the new material they are uncovering is the fluidity of the time period and the complexity of the identities."

We have conducted extensive telephone interview with scholars in Palestine (Salim Tamari), Turkey (Louis Fishman), Israel (Abigail Jacobson), France (Elizabeth Antebi) and in New York (Rashid Khalidi), Gainesville (Michelle Campos), Los Angeles (Arieh Saposnik) and Berkeley (Beshara Doumani). All have been generous with their time, engaged in the subject and excited by the prospects for our project.

Our immediate plan is to continue research and translate unique documents from their original Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew, German and French. We plan to translate excerpts of Khalil Sakakini's diaries, selected on advice from Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar, IPS scholars who work closely with Sakakini's writings. Another research task is Ruhi al-Khalidi's two-volume *Zionism or the Zionist Question*, which has never been published and remains an original manuscript in Arabic at the Khalidi Family Library in Jerusalem. Harvard scholar (b) (6) Walid Khalidi, will help choose pieces for translation.

We have arranged with our international co-producer, Fisher Features, Ltd in Tel Aviv, to provide research and production support on the ground in the Middle East.

Work Plan

We will continue to work on several fronts, including: content research, contact with scholars and advisers, refining a funding strategy and submitting additional grant applications. The attached treatment serves as the basis for primary work under this Scripting Grant. Our goals during the grant period include:

- On-site archival research in Jerusalem (Zionist Archives and Khalidi Library) Beirut (Inst. for Palestine Studies), London (Imperial War Museum) and Paris (Alliance Universelle Israelite)
- Identify and pre-interview on-camera participants
- Possible on-camera interviews with elderly participants (Walid Khalidi (b) (6))
- Prepare a shooting script with commensurate documents such as shooting schedules

Our anticipated schedule:

September

Distribute the most recent version of the treatment to scholars. Initial script drafting. Prepare databases

of all identified archival material. Gain access to and engage further research at private collections and plan for site visits. Conduct phone interviews with key participants and family descendants. Identify new material that will add depth and complexity to the script.

October

Most of October will be dedicated to preparing a research trip to visit archives, review collections, meet participants and scout historic locations in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Ramallah, and Paris.

November

November will be dedicated to intensive scriptwriting, transcribing pre-interview quotes of on-camera participants, and integrating archival material. Fresh insights, scholar comments and new information gleaned at archives will provide the material to write a refined script. Consult with scholars on factual accuracy and proper balance among competing perspectives. Script drafts will be circulated to scholars for review.

December

In December, we will convene a video/Skype conference to have our consultants review and discuss the script in detail. Rewrites based on their comments will then be re-circulated to scholars for final review. The resulting script will be incorporated into our NEH production grant submission in January 2012.

K. Organization History

Ben Loeterman Productions, Inc.

Ben Loeterman Productions, Inc. (BLPI) has produced programs for the PBS flagship series *Frontline* and *American Experience*, for WQED Pittsburgh and PBS, Sundance Channel and the BBC in England. Primary funding for these films has come from NEH, CPB, PBS, major foundations (Sloan, Rockefeller, Park) and corporate sponsors (BNY Mellon). In 2007, BLPI received an NEH grant to script and then produce *The People v. Leo Frank*, which aired to critical acclaim with glowing reviews in the NY Times, LA Times and Associated Press, which ran in the Washington Post, Boston Globe and elsewhere.

Filmmakers Collaborative, Fiscal Sponsor

Filmmakers Collaborative is a non-profit association of documentary filmmakers founded in 1986. The tax-exempt corporation was formed to provide support and resources for independent producers in greater Boston as well as fiscal sponsorship for their work. NEH-supported films produced through Filmmakers Collaborative include *Tupperware*, *Mary Pickford* and *Louisa May Alcott*. Since its inception, FC has administered over \$6 million in grants from national funders including the NEH and NEA.

Fisher Features Ltd., International Co-Producer

David Fisher founded Fisher Features Ltd. after a nine-year stint as Director General of the New Foundation for Cinema in Israel. In his capacity as head of NFCT, Fisher created an international network of relations with TV station directors, film festival programmers, movie theater directors, distributors and buyers. The company has an extensive network of researchers, translators and production contacts.