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Religiosity, Nationalism, and Anti-Jewish Politics in Palestine and Poland: Islamic and Catholic Pilgrimages during the Interwar Era

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Abstract

This study in comparative global history sheds light on a largely ignored forum for the politics of transition from monarchical empire to nation-state in the Middle East and Central Europe—religious festivals at sacred shrines. It compares the role of key pilgrimage festivals at politically important sacred shrines: (1) the Islamic Nabi Musa (Prophet Moses) pilgrimage to the Haram esh-Sharif and Nabi Musa Tomb near the Dead Sea in Mandatory Palestine and (2) various Catholic pilgrimages to Jasna Góra in Częstochowa in interwar Poland. The author demonstrates how these events served as sacred forums for secular politics, where various political factions contested their partisan ideas of the nation, which included the elite nationalism of Grand Mufti of Jerusalem Hajj Amin al-Husseini and the Catholic-Endecja nationalism of Polish clerical leaders. Moreover, I examine the role of these pilgrimage festivals in some of the major conflicts afflicting their respective areas, such as Arab–Jewish violence and hostility in Palestine and wars for borders as well as anti-minority sentiment, especially anti-Semitism, in Poland.

The end of the First World War saw the fall of multinational monarchical empires and the rise of their successor states in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Whether in the independent successor states or in those under western European "mandatory" control, national self-determination emerged as the *Zeitgeist* of politics. Almost two decades ago, Aviel Roshwald's book (2005), *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires*, became the only extensive comparison of nationalism and nation-building politics in the newly emerging polities of Central Europe and the Levant. For example, Roshwald gives extensive focus to how Josef Pilsudski's volunteer militias not only mobilized the masses in the struggle for Poland's borderlands against its neighbors, as well as for national independence from an emerging Soviet Union, but also became the basis of some of the core popular myths and symbols of Polish nationalism. He compares this Polish legionnaire revolt of 1920 against the Soviet Union to the Arab Revolt of 1916, in which the volunteer struggle of ordinary Arabs for an independent Arab state likewise formed the basis of Arab nationalism in the Middle East, even as their cause was betrayed by the European neo-imperial politics manifested in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. However, Roshwald's exclusive focus on the secular symbols and events for comparing nationalism in these areas of Europe and the Arab world leaves an important forum for nationalism unaddressed, namely religion and popular religiosity.

One can certainly argue that nowhere in Europe or the Middle East have religious institutions, shrines, and festivals played a more blatant and pivotal role in the politics of transition from empire

to nation-state than in (Mandatory) Palestine and Poland (Freas 2017; Porter 2011; Roberts 2017). Each of these countries was home to a sacred shrine that was at the center of its nationality politics and became an important (Palestinian-Arab/Polish) national rather than just a religious symbol. One of these is the Haram esh-Sharif (atop the Temple Mount) in Jerusalem, which, as the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock sanctuary, marks the most important shrine of the Islamic world after Mecca and Medina (Freas 2017, 3). The other is the Marian shrine and Pauline Monastery atop Jasna Góra (Claremont) in Częstochowa (a city in southern Poland), which, particularly due to its significant involvement in nation-building politics during the interwar, and also in resistance against communism after World War II, is a central sacred nationalist symbol in Central Europe.

Next to these shrines, religious leaders, institutions, and events played key roles in the interwar history of Palestine and Poland. The key political figure of Mandatory Palestine was the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and official leader of Palestinian Muslims, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who mobilized Islamic religiosity by using the Haram esh-Sharif and the Nabi Musa pilgrimage, the most famous of Palestinian Muslim religious festivals of the time, which became officially regarded as a national festival (Roberts 2017, 76–77). In similar respects, in Poland the Catholic Church and its core sacred rallying-ground, the shrine of Jasna Góra, played a dominant role in the turbulent interwar politics of shaping and defining the Polish nation, a struggle in which it collaborated with nationalist followers of Roman Dmowski.

While scholars have examined the role of religion in Palestinian and Polish postwar politics as individual national case studies, this article marks the first attempt to develop an elaborate comparative analysis. For each comparative case, I examine pilgrimage festivals that integrated religious institutions, the aforementioned major shrines, and popular religiosity. In the Palestinian case, I focus on the annual Nabi Musa pilgrimage to the Haram esh-Sharif and the Nabi Musa Tomb near Jericho and the Dead Sea (Freas 2017; Friedland and Hecht 1996; Gerber 2008; Halabi 2007, 2013; Khalidi 1997; Matthews 2006; Mazza 2015; Roberts 2017; Zilbarman 2012). In that of Poland, I focus on various politically important pilgrimages to Jasna Góra, the most significant of which was the annual Feast of the Assumption (of Mary into Heaven) (Jabłoński 1999; Niedzwiedz 2016; Porter 2011, 361–390; Thiriet 2002).

I argue in this essay that both festivals integrated religiosity, nationalist politics, and conflicts. While in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, these conflicts played themselves out in secular forums for mass politics, such as protests, demonstrations, and government institutions, as well as the battlegrounds of violence, these pilgrimages served as potent alternative sacred forums for mass politics. They marked occasions where lay and clerical authorities used religious rituals and symbols and mobilized pilgrims for their own political interest and their own partisan ideas of the nation. They were also sites where opposing political factions and ordinary pilgrims challenged these authorities and their politics. Moreover, as forums for nationalist politics, these pilgrimages became part of the violent conflicts that engulfed both regions after the war, in this case clashes between Arabs and Jews in Palestine and struggles for the borderlands in Poland. They were certainly also part of the disputes over inclusion and exclusion in the national community in which, in both cases, anti-Jewish politics and sentiment played powerful roles.

Despite the common mainstream political role played by these pilgrimage festivals in their respective country's politics of transition from monarchical empire to successor state, there were certainly stark differences between Palestine and Poland after 1918. Foremost, the latter emerged as an independent nation-state, while the British denied Palestinian Arabs their national self-determination and forced them to share their country with a Jewish homeland. However, while certainly the discontent and patriotic spirit of resistance to the postwar order was more blatant in Arab politics in Palestine, it was not entirely absent in Poland either. To prominent right-wing ethnic nationalists, the western European–orchestrated postwar settlement was likewise a betrayal of their struggle for self-determination, as it forced "Poles" (Roman Catholic Polish-speakers) to share their country with a sizeable pool of "minorities" (Germans, Jews, Ukrainians, Belorussians) that made up roughly one-third of its population. Moreover, in the eyes of Polish nationalists, Paris left borderlands, particularly key western regions such as industrial Upper Silesia, under "foreign rule."

Joined by Polish clerics, these nationalists used Jasna Góra to spread their idea of a "Poland for the (Catholic) Poles" against opponents who were more accepting of a multinational Poland, and to wage a struggle for the borderlands. In comparison, Palestinian Arab nationalists used the Nabi Musa pilgrimage in their struggle for an Arab Palestine against the Zionist settlement project, as well as a forum for waging their own factional political disputes. Despite the undeniably stark differences in each of the countries concerned, the shrines and religious festivals of concern were key players in the tensions and conflicts between ethnic nationalism as an ideology and multinationality as a reality that was common to both interwar Palestine and Poland. In both cases, they served as sacred springboards for discourses of defiance, militancy, anti-Jewish sentiment, and national unity.

The Nabi Musa and Jasna Góra pilgrimages were mass gatherings where nationalism was performed though religious rituals and popular (folkloric) religiosity. However, nationalism was neither a fixed nor a standardized entity, but rather a discourse inherently tied to specific interest-driven factional politics. (See Halabi [2007] for an extensive analysis of the Nabi Musa festival on the basis of competing interests and meanings rather than a fixed notion of nationalism.) To analyze it as such, I find it particularly helpful to draw on Rogers Brubaker's (2006) theory of nationalism as a phenomenon of "groupism." To Brubaker, bounded groups, be they ethnicity, race, nationality, class, etc., do not exist as fixed, concrete, and permanent entities, but rather happen (take place or become) when phenomena such as conflicts, movements, and mass gatherings are inherently represented in these group categories. In this sense, Brubaker calls for understanding such group categories not as nouns (nationality, race) but as verbs (nationalization, racialization). He refers to this act of creating and representing group categories as "groupism," or a "tendency to take discrete, bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis" (Brubaker 2006, 8). Studies of nationalism, Brubaker argues, must focus on the agent and act of categorizing social phenomena according to national/ethnic categories and labels, and take into account that these "groupist" discourses are not beyond dispute, as there are other ways of identifying and interpreting the objects of categorization (Brubaker 2006, 12–16).

In light of Brubaker's theory, here I analyze the nationalist discourses of various political actors, including lay and clerical leaders as well as nationalist activists and literati, as ideologically or interest-driven "groupisms" performed on the basis of religiosity. In the first section of this article, I demonstrate how these religious events were part of the major episodes of communal violence in their respective countries, while the second examines their role as forums of mainstream political discourses of inclusion and exclusion, of which anti-Semitism/anti-Jewish sentiment marked an important element. To accommodate space limits, this article focuses its analysis mainly on the major "groupist" politics of elites and authorities at the relevant pilgrimage festivals and addresses only some of the major reactions to them by ordinary pilgrims.

Violent Foundations

Palestine

After World War I, the annual Nabi Musa pilgrimage became a sacred forum for the negotiation of a new political order that betrayed British promises to Arabs for their own independent nation-state. Instead, the British and the French carved up the Ottoman-ruled Levant into arbitrarily drawn nation-states under their colonial (mandatory) control. In British-ruled Mandatory Palestine, Arabs felt double betrayal, as the Balfour Declaration decreed the building of a "Jewish homeland" through mass immigration.

Referred to officially in Arabic as "the Nabi Musa season" (*māwsim al-nabī mūsā*[1]), this was an annual week-long pilgrimage that began one week in advance of Orthodox Christian Easter Holy Thursday and ended a day before Eastern Sunday. The reason for this timing is to guard the Islamic character of the "holy city" by giving Muslims an occasion to be there at a time when pilgrims of

other denominations are celebrating Orthodox Christian Easter and every now and then also Jewish Passover. Indeed, Palestinians identify its origins in Salahuddin al-Ayubi's (Saladin's) *jihad* against European crusaders in the 12th century. The original aspect of the event, the Muslim pilgrimage (in Islam, *zīyarah* or visit) to the Nabi Musa Tomb near the Dead Sea, was meant to offset the arrival of Christian pilgrims to their own shrines in Palestine.

Over time, the Haram esh-Sharif became a central feature of the pilgrimage. In fact, pilgrims from around Jerusalem, Hebron, Nablus, and other parts of Palestine marched on foot first to Jerusalem to celebrate Friday prayer at the al-Aqsa Mosque before continuing their journey to the Nabi Musa Tomb. At the end of the pilgrimage week, they returned to the Haram in Jerusalem for the concluding festivities, before finally going home.

All of the pilgrims participating in the procession were male. They came to take part in a pilgrimage festival that was deeply embedded in Palestinian local peasant and bedouin folklore and Sufi popular religiosity. Although fundamentally an Islamic event, this folklore, along with Arab protest, which became a staple part of the festival, turned it into an extra-religious spectacle that during the Mandate period attracted even Christian Arab pilgrims, particularly Arab nationalists, and occasionally also Arabs from outside of Palestine. This festival also attracted tens of thousands of spectators of all sexes, ages, and denominations, including Jews and tourists from Europe. These crowds came to enjoy the color and diversity of this religious cum folkloric cum political festival: singing and chants, traditional local folk costumes, dervish dances, mock sword and buckler fights, and other rituals and spectacles, in addition to a sizeable folk festival and traditional flea market near the Nabi Musa Tomb (Asali 1990; Ghosheh 2010).

The first postwar Nabi Musa pilgrimage in April 1918 established one of this event's most important political features, collaboration between British governors and Palestinian Arab effendi (notables or *ayan*). With the aid of the Mufti (later Grand Mufti) of Jerusalem, a post traditionally held by members of the powerful al-Husseini family, the British effectively co-opted the event and thus succeeded the Ottomans in serving as its protectors (Pappe 2010). Like the Ottomans, the British used the festival to display their ruling apparatus in Palestine. This included soldiers, and in later years also Indian and Arab policemen, who escorted the pilgrims. It also included high-ranking government officials, such as Ronald Storrs, Edward Keith-Roach, and Herbert Samuel, who, along with Arab effendi leaders and representatives of the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities, officially greeted the pilgrims on their way to the Nabi Musa Tomb during their traditional stopover at Ras Al-Amud, an area on the outskirts of Jerusalem. In staging this multidenominational British–Arab friendship, the British intended to legitimate their rule in their role of what historian Awad Halabi refers to as "guardians of communal harmony" (2007, 134).

Their effort did not succeed for long. Spurred by the spirit of Arab nationalist revolt in Egypt and Syria, Muslim and Christian Arabs marched side by side in the pilgrims' procession during the second Nabi Musa pilgrimage (Ghosheh 2010, 459; Halabi 2007, 136; Roberts 2017, 140). For the first time the event became a forum of protest—indeed a sacred alternative to the secular street demonstrations in areas such as Jerusalem and Haifa. British records and Arab eyewitnesses noted the presence of what became a common feature at the event in succeeding years: voices of discontent to British rule, Zionism, and Jewish settlement, including Arab nationalist chants of "Long live King Husayn!" and "Long live Faisal!" (Roberts 2017, 79). Having attended the event, the notable Arab literati Khalil Sakakini claimed that "in 1919, the festival was the moment the Nabi Musa became transformed into a nationalist celebration," whereby he noted "the appearance of anti-Zionist and Arab nationalist chants" (Roberts 2017, 79).

No moment lent itself to be riper for the event's political instrumentalization than the third postwar Nabi Musa pilgrimage of 1920, better remembered as the Nabi Musa riots. In the midst of rising political and communal tensions, especially between Arabs and Jews, it marked the first time British authorities manipulated the pilgrims' path into Jerusalem—a practice that spurred disturbance and violence not just at this time, but also in years to come. As the Hebron pilgrims were heading back from the Nabi Musa Tomb to Jerusalem, they paused for some time for

"inflammatory" nationalist protest speeches. Afterward, the police rerouted them—allegedly to make up for time—to enter the Old City through the Jaffa Gate and pass through the Jewish quarter. Contrary to the "guardians of communal harmony" image the British strove to portray, in actuality, as Roberto Mazza (2015) argues, their policy of dividing Jerusalem according to communes primed its landscape for violence. As to how these riots started, the only factors that the various sides involved—Arabs, Jews, British—agree on is that there was an explosion in one of the stores the pilgrims passed after they entered the Jaffa Gate, which sparked rock throwing and other aggression between them and Jews. This outbreak of violence at the conclusion of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage set off four more days of violent riots in the Jewish quarter and caused the death of nine (four Arabs and five Jews) and injury of some 216 Jews and 23 Arabs, as well as vandalism and pillage to Jewish shops and businesses. Although it paled in size compared to subsequent outbreaks of communal violence, such as the Wailing Wall incident of 1929, the Nabi Musa riots were nevertheless the first major violent clash between Arabs and Jews in the post-Balfour Declaration era (Halabi 2007, 139–148; Jbara 1985; Mazza 2015; Roberts 2017, 139–153; Segev 2010, 127–144).

Scholars (for example Brubaker 1996; Wilson 2010), have emphasized the important role of violence in drawing mutually polarized sides and projecting group boundaries. The memory of the Nabi Musa riots serves as a prime example. Arab historians call it a *thawra* (revolt) and see it as part of a hallmark of wartime and postwar revolts for Arab national self-determination that included the 1916 Arab Uprising, 1919 Egyptian revolt, and the 1920 Syrian uprising (al-ʿUmar 1999, 16; Jarrar 1987, 56; Mohsin 1998, 38). The prime "insurgent" here was Hajj Amin al-Husseini, brother of the Grand Mufti Kamil. In the aftermath of the riots, Hajj Amin fled to Transjordan to escape his condemnation by the British to ten years in prison, although they soon pardoned him and let him succeed his brother as Grand Mufti after his death in 1921.

The British interpretation of the Nabi Musa riots is perhaps best exemplified by the Palin Report (1920) following the government's mandatory investigation into the incident. The report put the blame on a small group of Arab "provocateurs"—indeed people like Hajj Amin—who took advantage of a crowd that was "easily swayed by any Arab resistance movement." The blame was also cast on the "ineradicable tendency of the Arabs to tribal discord" and of Islam to anti-Semitism (Palin Report 1920). Such discourses echoed imperial British and European orientalist stereotypes of Muslims as violent fanatics (Roberts 2017, 14). These found an echo in British internal records, claiming that "disturbances are always to be apprehended" at the Nabi Musa ("The Jerusalem Riots" [1920] 2002, 2). Particularly after the riots, the Hebron pilgrims—those directly involved in their outbreak—were described as "a notorious center of fanaticism" (2). Such images of the pilgrimage were recurrent in British internal records as well as in the pro-Zionist English-language newspaper, *Palestine Bulletin* (after 1935, the *Palestine Post*) (*Palestine Bulletin*, April 6, 1931, 1; *Palestine Post*, April 11, 1936, 2). For the British, notions of pilgrims as violent and fanatical legitimated increasing military and police control over the Nabi Musa, which marked a major resolution of the Palin Report (1920). Only Zionists cultivated a more malicious and anti-Arab view of the riots by referring to it as a preconceived pogrom (Morris 2001, 96; Roberts 2017, 81).

The first three postwar Nabi Musa pilgrimages, and particularly the riots, laid the foundation for Arab nationalist and British "groupist" politics. For nationalists, the pilgrimage marked a forum for Arab unity in protest and resistance. For the British, it was an inherent showcase for the mandate system and imposed communal divisions: a display of an inherently divided Palestine where only British surveillance and security could preserve harmony. Both these narratives posited an essentially politicized and conflict-ridden image of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage that deliberately ignored its nevertheless still dominating traditionally peaceful character as a popular and family-oriented folk festival (Asali 1990; Ghosheh 2010, 113–134, 457–458, 468–485). Even the Palin Report (1920) admitted that in the moments before the outbreak of violence in 1920, most of the peasants passed through the Jaffa Gate peacefully, and "there was no preconceived intention to make an attack on Jews."

Poland

Central Europe's whirlwind of violent and contentious postwar politics likewise came to Jasna Góra. While Poland formally emerged from the war as an independent and sovereign nation-state, not all Poles saw it as such, however. Right-wing nationalists, such as the populist Endecja (National Democracy) movement of Roman Dmowski, blamed the Paris Peace Conference for leaving "Polish lands"—the borderlands they claimed—in "foreign captivity." They also protested that a sizeable part of the population is "not Polish" and that Roman Catholic Poles—to them, the core nation—made up only 62.5 percent of it. In similar respects to the Arab (Hashemite) uprising of 1916, within the first three postwar years, the military government led by Josef Pilsudski staged military offensives to capture desired territories for the formation of a greater Polish state. The national Catholic Church led by patriotic clerics was actively involved in this nation-building effort, for which it mobilized the shrine of Jasna Góra (Alvis 2017; Pease 2010; Porter 2010).

Jasna Góra is Poland's Catholic counterpart to the Haram esh-Sharif. It is home to the nation's most important religious icon, the painting of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa, a city situated in relatively close proximity to Upper Silesia and Krakow. The painting is on display in the basilica of the Pauline monastery that dates back to the late 14th century. Since then, pilgrims have arrived to pray before the icon mostly from the lands of modern Poland as well as its Slavic neighbors. Pauline monks took an active role in attracting them to the site by furnishing important occasions. During the interwar era, the largest of these was the Feast of the Assumption (August 15) (Jabłoński 2002).

The Marian icon remains inherently tied to the myth of the miraculous rescue of Jasna Góra from falling to a siege by the Protestant Swedish army in 1655, when its mere sight to the attackers caused them to retreat. This drove King Jan Kazimierz of the Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania allegedly to crown the Black Madonna painting as "Mary, Queen of Poland." In the interwar era, clerical and lay nationalists used this myth, along with Jasna Góra—and the Virgin Mary altogether—for their sacred cum national struggle for an ethnically Polish and Roman Catholic nation (Porter 2011, 209, 360–394).

Jasna Góra's interwar function as a forum for Catholic-nationalist "groupism" was initiated with its active engagement in the territorial struggle of the immediate post–World War I era, especially the Polish-German conflict over Upper Silesia. After the war, Polish national leaders demanded this eastern borderland of Germany, which was particularly valuable for its coal mines and metallurgy plants, and was almost entirely Catholic, though situated within a larger mostly Protestant State of Prussia. As a way of resolving the issue, the League of Nations prescribed a plebiscite for March 1921 in which the Silesians, the natives of the province, were to decide on its nationality. The Catholic clergy viewed the campaign of propaganda and agitation that preceded the plebiscite not only as part of a fight to "liberate" this region from what nationalist eyes was a 600-year Protestant German yoke but also as an inherent part of their larger struggle for a fundamentally Catholic Poland. As their contribution to the campaign, the Pauline monks, in collaboration with the Catholic leader of the Polish Upper Silesian national movement, Wojciech Korfanty, organized pilgrimages for ordinary Silesians to Jasna Góra as a means of using religiosity to promote Polish patriotism. Supported by the Polish government, their efforts helped bring 266 pilgrimage groups led by local parish clerics and a total of 55,892 Silesian pilgrims in the second half of 1920, including women, men, children, and youth groups of the Polish nationalist Upper Silesian movement. About 10,000 Silesians arrived to join one of the largest pilgrimages of the early postwar era—the festival of the Virgin Mary's Birth on September 8, in which they joined another 70,000 pilgrims from various parts of Poland (Jabłoński 1998, 83–85). The organizers aimed to integrate Silesians with "their Polish siblings" to promote a common Polish national consciousness based on the struggle to "return (Upper) Silesia to its Polish motherland" (Jabłoński 1998, 2002).

Homilies delivered at prayers and other agitation directed at these Silesian pilgrims by the Pauline monks mark the sacralization of the territorial struggle. These clerics referred to Jasna Góra as "Poland's Jerusalem" waging a "holy struggle" for Catholicism and a Catholic Poland ("Jasna Góra a

Górny Śląsk …" [n.d.] 1999). One of Jasna Góra's propaganda pamphlets called on Silesians to regard the plebiscite as a "holy struggle before the eyes of Poland and the whole world, a struggle for the defense of faith, the kin language, and your ancestral Piast land [Upper Silesia]" ("Odezwa z Jasnej Góry" n.d., 164–165).[2] One of the monks leading prayers asked the Black Madonna to "look to our Silesian brothers … and save … [them] from [German] captivity … [where they are] threatened with the loss of their Polishness *and perhaps even their faith*" ("Odezwa z Jasnej Góry" n.d., 164–165; emphasis mine). Polish clerical nationalists ridiculed their German Catholic contenders, the Upper Silesian Catholic Center Party, led by the eminent priest and politician, Otto Ulitzka, as "Judases" (traitors) and those who "benefit the socialists and communists" ("Jasna Góra a Górny Śląsk …" [n.d.] 1999, 172). To emphasize that Germany is—whether based on its Protestantism or secularity—anti-Catholic, they alluded to the recent uprising in Berlin by the Communist Spartacists and the coming to power of the German Social Democratic Party ("Jasna Góra a Górny Śląsk …" [n.d.] 1999, 172). Clerical nationalists and their lay Endecja allies used similar propaganda against the left (secular liberals and communists) in Poland. Most importantly, they did so against their main political rival, the nationalist-socialist Pilsudski, who in their eyes, as head the Polish Socialist Party and an advocate of a multiconfessional and multinational state, was a leftist and a secularizer (Porter 2011, 159, 178, 182).

Despite the church's effort, close to 60 percent of Silesian participants in the plebiscite voted for Germany. However, as recent historiography demonstrates, they commonly made their choice based on material interests and other mundane circumstances rather than German or Polish patriotic conviction (Bjork 2009; Karch 2018; Polak-Springer 2015; Zahra 2010). Poland's church backed the Polish government's instigation of a violent revolt in Upper Silesia in May 1921, which aimed to take by military force what they could not attain at the voting polls. Marking one the bloodiest of postwar Central European military conflicts, the violent two-month struggle between Polish and German volunteer militias that resulted from this uprising led to as many as 1,760 combatant casualties and engulfed the region in unprecedented local level communal violence (Polak-Springer 2015, 33; Wilson 2010). Clerics at Jasna Góra gave this violent offensive their blessings and during its course continued to organize pilgrimages for Silesians, who now included insurgents and civilians who fled from Upper Silesia to nearby Częstochowa to escape the violence (*Goniec Częstochowski*, July 3, 1921, 2; Jabłoński 1999, 69–104). In similar respects to the Nabi Musa riots of April 1920, which historians treat as part of the hallmark of revolts for Arab self-determination in the Middle East, in Polish national historiography the "Third Silesian Uprising" is remembered as part of a teleological array of violent insurgencies for Poland's independence that date back to the late 18th century.[3] In both cases, the relevant shrines and pilgrimages were inherently connected to the violence, through which they emerged as powerful political symbols that clerical and lay leaders continued to use for their own "groupist" politics during the next decades.

Pilgrimages in the Struggle for the Soul of the Nation

Palestine

Following the riots, as a way of tightening their grip on Islamic religiosity, the British established an intermediary body, the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC), at the head of which they put the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who thereby officially became the "representative" of Islam/Muslims in Palestine. Although the SMC had only administrative powers over Islamic institutions and religiosity, the 26-year-old Hajj Amin nevertheless utilized the religious symbolic capital of his new leadership post, particularly his role as master of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage and Islamic shrines, in an effort to establish himself as the premier champion of both Arab nationalism and Islam. One of his obstacles in this effort was opposition from the al-Husseini's eminent effendi rivals, the al-Nashashibi, who the British left in charge of Jerusalem's municipality as a way of keeping the Palestinian notable class divided among themselves and dependent on them. Another was to balance fulfilling British demands for the Nabi Musa festival to be orderly and law abiding on

one hand, and appeasing Arab nationalists, who were eager to use the occasion as a forum for protest and defiance, on the other (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 15, 1930, 1; *Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, May 2, 1932, 1). As he strove to keep the pilgrims peaceful and compliant, Hajj Amin also worked to restrain the rising spirit of discontent and rebellion among a new generation of Palestinian Arab nationalists (Halabi 2013; Mattar 1992; Roberts 2017). He left it to the more valiant discourses of the Palestinian press's coverage of this pilgrimage to compensate for the limits he imposed on displays of angry outrage and disruptive dissent against the postwar order.

Arab press venues portrayed the Nabi Musa pilgrimage as a military march and display of protest and defiance. A good example is the following excerpt from the pro-Grand Mufti daily, *Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya* (*The Arab League*), of an eyewitness's account to the Hebron pilgrims' procession into Jerusalem in 1927:

> I read in those [pilgrim] eyes and faces the claims of the people—freedom! Rights! … I read all this with my eyes as well as heard it with my ears coming from those mouths and from the depths of their chests with a voice that sounds like thunder and artillery. The *Umma* [Islamic/national community] in this festival was as if in a [military] state of general mobilization and as if the beating drums and clashing cymbals called the people to the field of combat and battle. (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 28, 1927, 1)

During the festival in 1930, the same press venue depicted the procession from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea as a march of civil protest against "the politics of oppression, tyranny, and attrition, as well as a demand for the usurped rights of Arabs, who are prepared to fight for the sanctity of this country to the end" (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 15, 1930, 1). Three years later, the Islamist-nationalist venue, *Al-Jāmiʿah al-Islāmiyya* (*The Islamic League*) promoted this motif of militant protest in a more Islamic flavor by noting that the pilgrim youth chanted "we are soldiers of God [Allah], the nation's youth; we detest humiliation and resist oppression; lift the banners and march to Jihad!" (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-Islāmiyya*, April 10, 1933, 1). Moreover, almost every year the speeches of Arab notables explicitly honored Saladin, the festival's alleged founder, which also reinforced this image of defiance and (holy) struggle.

The mixture in overtures to nationalism and Islamism evident in these press statements was hardly anything peculiar during the interwar era, when discourses and symbols of Islam and the nation went hand in hand among Palestinian Arabs active in civil society organizations (Budeiri 1997, 191–196). Arab press venues certainly perpetually emphasized that Muslim and Christian Arab pilgrims marched side by side and represented them as part of "the *Umma*," a term used to depict both the Islamic and national community (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 15, 1930, 1; *Lisān*, March 28, 1923, 3; Tibi 1997).

However, particularly after the Wailing Wall incident, the most widely distributed newspaper, *Filasṭīn*, which was known to represent the voice of urban upper-class and effendi Arab nationalism, pointed out the presence of "Jews" at the Nabi Musa festival in a way that represented them as an unwanted "other" (Kabaha 2007). In 1931, *Filasṭīn* expressed outrage and appall at the "great extent of mixture of Jews with Arabs" in the final ceremony of the pilgrimage, the "festival of banners," in Jerusalem. It accused "Jews" of conspiring to make trouble at the event and criticized the police for neglecting to prevent a scenario that threatened the outbreak of "a new revolt in the country" (in recollection of the Wailing Wall incident two years earlier; *Filasṭīn*, April 4, 1931, 4). During the initial arrival of the Hebron pilgrims to Jerusalem in the next year's pilgrimage, this venue singled out the presence of "Jews" in a commonly sizeable and diverse crowd of spectators watching the pilgrims' procession, and emphasized how in previous years they refused to wear the Nabi Musa paraphernalia badges that Arab children gave out to the crowd (*Filasṭīn*, April 26, 1932, 6). In 1935, this venue blatantly represented Jews as outsiders in its statement that "for the first time," "foreigners, especially Jews" were "officially participating" in the festival despite its being "an Arab nationalist (*qawmī*) and religious festival" (*Filasṭīn*, April 20, 1935, 5).

This voice of effendi "groupism" also used another anti-Jewish trope in its reflection on the festival—portraying communists as Jews and Zionists. The Palestinian Communist Party was indeed an organization dominated by individuals of Jewish descent, although they were adamantly hostile to Zionism, the Arab effendis, and upper class ("bourgeois") nationalists (Flores 1980, 265–272). The communists strove to attract lower class ("proletarian") Arabs into their ranks, and particularly in the early and mid-1930s, saw in the Nabi Musa pilgrimage an opportune mass gathering to penetrate with their agitators and propaganda. The effendi sided with the British in their hostility to communism and played on anti-Semitism to slander communists as Jews, and on some occasions, even Zionists. Such racialization of communists, who during the interwar era tended to be fundamentally rebellious to ethnic/racial labeling, was very much in the spirit of what Paul Hanebrink (2018) refers to as the Judeo-Bolshevik (or Judeo-communist) myth—an inherent association of communism with Judaism among the European right-wing. In echo of the latter's common emphasis, *Filasṭīn* described Karl Marx as a "Jewish man from Germany" (April 28, 1932, 1). Press articles on communist presence in the ranks of the crowds at the Nabi Musa pilgrimage emphasized that most were Jews and few—if any—were Arabs (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 22, 1932, 2). A good example of the use of this Judeo-communist myth in effendi "groupist" politics was *Filasṭīn*'s coverage of the Nabi Musa of 1930, which was marred by tensions reverberating from the Wailing Wall riots in the preceding year, as well as discontent arising from the global economic crisis. The venue referred to communist agitators, who tried to exploit this anxiety, as "Zionists" working to convince peasants that "all the beloved [Arab] national movements constitute but a handful of effendi, leaders of big families, and former officials from the Turkish [Ottoman] era, who were stripped of their positions by the mandate government" (*Filasṭīn*, April 19, 1930, 1). Portraying the Zionists as the masterminds behind communist agitation, *Filasṭīn* claimed they worked to "disturb the peace that Arabs [conveyed in the songs they] chanted, and spread their spies made up of communists and whoever belongs to them" (*Filasṭīn*, April 13, 1930, 2). Such Zionization and Judaization of communism marks how effendi nationalists resorted to fomenting anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish sentiment to protect their own class interests. Vis-à-vis the "Judeo-communist" enemy, the upper-class nationalists represented the Nabi Musa pilgrimage as a forum that united urbanites and villagers in a "Palestinian national movement that gave rise to common [classless] national feelings" (*Filasṭīn*, April 19, 1930, 1).

Despite such utopian overtures by the press, in actuality the festival served the interests of notable families, foremost those of the al-Husseini. Speeches by Hajj Amin, as well as other elites at the event, called for "peace," "calm," "order," and "unity," which, as Halabi argues, went hand-in-hand with other Grand Mufti-promoted symbols in legitimating an effendi (*ayan*) nationalism based on class conservatism and collaboration with the British (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, April 5, 1931, 3; *Filasṭīn*, April 28, 1927, 1; Halabi 2009, 71; Halabi 2013). The upper-class nationalist and especially pro-Grand Mufti press hardly ever launched stark attacks against, but rather often praised, British security measures at the Nabi Musa, which in 1930 the pro-Zionist *Palestine Bulletin* described as "grim war preparations" that included a machine gun, barbed wire, armored cars, and soldiers (*Al-Jāmiʿah al-ʿArabiyya*, May 1, 1932, 1; *Palestine Bulletin*, April 14, 1930, 1; *Palestine Bulletin*, April 18, 1930, 1). Such security was particularly welcomed by the Grand Mufti, since outbreaks of political and tribal violence occasionally occurred during the festival. Of particular threat to the al-Husseini was opposition to their status as heads of the SMC and presiders over the festival on the part of their eminent effendi rivals, the al-Nashashibi. Regarding the festival as co-opted by their al-Husseini rivals for their own political use, supporters of this "anti-Mufti" faction worked to sabotage its successful turnout by agitating in order to discourage pilgrims from participating (Halabi 2007, 241–243; Storrs [1925] 2002). This factional rivalry drove Hajj Amin to appeal to the British to protect him from feared assault or even assassination during the pilgrims' parade ("Memorandum of the Secretary of State for the Colonies" [1937] 2001).

The use of the festival as a display of "unity" based on British–effendi collaboration also did not go unchallenged by ordinary pilgrims based on their own interests, which had little to do with

effendi or even Arab nationalist politics. The riots of 1920 were just the first moment of violence, which was at least in part a result of British alteration of the pilgrims' customary route. The following year, the Hebron pilgrims refused to walk along the new route British authorities tried to impose on them for "security" purposes, but no incident resulted ("Report on the Political Situation" 1921). The next decade saw the invigoration of a younger generation of populous Palestinian Arabs, who were weary of effendi-class compliance. In the Nabi Musa festival of 1932—the year of the establishment of the *Istaqlāl* (Independence) Party, which was committed to representing this discontent—violent clashes occurred between police and pilgrims in village of 'Ayn Kārim on the outskirts of Jerusalem after the British prevented from practicing their "old traditions" of marching under their own village banner (*Filasṭīn*, April 24, 1932, 6; Matthews 2006). According to Halabi (2009, 76), the British wanted to maximize the number of pilgrims identifying directly with their main trustee, the Grand Mufti and SMC, rather than their localities. Six pilgrims and one policeman were injured as the villagers tried to break through the police line formed to enforce the prohibition (Halabi 2007, 357).

Similar violence occurred at the Nabi Musa pilgrimage in 1937. This was a particularly turbulent time in Arab–British relations in Mandatory Palestine, just months after the end of the General Strike that led to the outbreak of the bloody Great Arab Revolt. As previously, British "crowd control" measures sparked violent clashes between pilgrims and police. In this case, with the consent of Hajj Amin, the British decided that they would have the Hebron pilgrims returning from the Nabi Musa Tomb enter the Haram esh-Sharif via the King Faysal (Nasl) Gate rather than the customary Majlis (Nazir) Gate. As in previous years, pilgrims made a forceful standoff in defense of what they regarded as the pilgrimage's rightful order. Throwing chairs and rocks at the police blocking the Majlis Gate, they were finally able to break through once they were joined by other pilgrims from Nablus and Jerusalem. Before they did so and won, however, one policeman fired his gun, injuring two of the pilgrims. Despite his bullet wound, one of these injured nevertheless still managed to break through the police line and was hailed by *Al-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmiyyah* as "the hero of Hebron" (April 30, 1937, 3). Meanwhile, the defiant crowd of pilgrims shouted praises to leaders of the General Strike and chanted "long live the nation" (*Al- Al-Jāmi'ah al-Islāmiyyah*, April 30, 1937, 3; Halabi 2007, 376). Just as this press venue abandoned its respect for effendi "peace" and "order," so too in the end did Grand Mufti Hajj Amin succumb to the rising populist Arab revolutionary spirit. After this festival, he joined the Great Revolt and had to flee Palestine, eventually finding refuge in Germany under the Nazi regime.

Poland

While Arab nationalists at the Nabi Musa pilgrimage called for the unity and inclusivity of Muslim and Christian pilgrims, Polish clerics were more restrictive in their concept of the core nation, which in their minds exclusively consisted of the Catholic Pole. Yet, the two groups did share two common elements: a notion of militant religious struggle against the "other," and of excluding Jews from ideas of national "unity"—indeed, in reaction to quite different political circumstances and based on different ideas.

Jasna Góra's engagement in another postwar conflict, the Polish–Soviet War, was fundamental to this trope of Catholic-Polish militant struggle against its enemies, particularly "communism" and "secularity." When the Red Army routed Pilsudski's armed legions and pursued them to Warsaw in August 1920, the young Polish republic was on the verge of collapse to Soviet Russia. During the critical Battle of Warsaw, the Pauline monks organized national prayers for this city's defense, thereby working to turn Jasna Góra into a spiritual center for Polish patriotic solidarity. As Pilsudski's grand victory at the battle coincided with the height of the pilgrimage season, church leaders mobilized the nation's masses to Jasna Góra. In early September, they called "on all those able to head to Jasna Góra for a repentant pilgrimage; let entire parishes with a priest at their head lead them to their queen [the Black Madonna]" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 8, 1920, 1). Two

days later, some 100,000 pilgrims gathered to give thanks to a victory that became known in Polish Catholic and nationalist tradition as "the Miracle on the Vistula River" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 10, 1920, 1). Catholic nationalists compared it to "the miracle of how Mary defended the Jasna Góra cloister from Swedish onslaught" in 1655 and how—marking another of the Polish church's favorite religious cum nationalist historical myths—Polish King Jan Sobieski "saved Christian Europe" by defeating the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Vienna 27 years later (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 8, 1920, 1).

In the aftermath of the Battle of Warsaw, clerics aimed for these pilgrimages to turn Jasna Góra into a holy gathering ground of the core nation: Catholic Poles of "all classes," "from all over Poland" purified themselves by repenting and paying homage to the Marian icon, the sacred symbol of the nation (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 8, 1920, 1; *Goniec Częstochowski*, September 10, 1920, 1). In this sense, these pilgrimages were what Anthony Smith describes as "a communion of believers coming to coincide with a particular *ethnie* [ethnicity] or vice versa" (2010, 33). The church was quick to turn the "Miracle on the Vistula" into one of its annual pilgrimage festivals, integrating it into its celebration of the Feast of the Assumption. Just as the narrative of Catholic-Polish militant struggle against Bolshevism became one of the main pillars of clerical nationalism, so too did this event become one of the largest and most important of pilgrimages to Jasna Góra (Jabłoński 2002, 192).

To Catholic nationalists, this "groupist" narrative depicting Catholic-Poland's "other" combined religious with nationalist elements: the anti-Bolshevik struggle was not just one against the enemies of Poland, but of Catholicism and Christianity, religion in general, and "Western civilization." The last element was particularly present in their label of the Red Army as "hordes of wild invaders," whereby they drew on popular orientalisms associating Soviets with Asiatic and particularly Mongolian medieval invaders of Christianity (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 8, 1920, 1; Porter 2011, 179–184). Drawing parallels to the myth of Sobieski saving Europe from Islamization, in a homily at a large pilgrimage festival in 1936, a priest even claimed that "the defense of Poland's capital was a defense of the whole world [from communism]" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, August 15, 1936, 3).

The Feast of the Assumption of 1934 serves as a prime example of the church's use of this pilgrimage for its Catholic-Poland "groupism." Representing one of the most well-attended episodes of this annual pilgrimage festival, it gathered high-ranking church leaders, including August Hlond, Poland's Primate since 1926, and hundreds of other clerics all over Poland, in addition to 100,000 pilgrims from all over the country. Among them were some of the guests of honor, representatives of the Poles from Abroad Association (Związek Polaków z za Granicy). The latter was a state organization whose purpose was to build networks with Poles living abroad, especially in other parts of Europe and North America, which fed the nationalist myth that not only does the Polish nation's size transcend the territorial borders of Poland, but is global in character (*Goniec Częstochowski*, August 16, 1934, 1). In this sense, the organization was essentially Poland's answer to the more renowned Association for Germandom Abroad (Verein für das Deutschtum im Ausland), which Adolf Hitler was using at the time to represent a similar idea of the grandiosity and might of global Germandom. The Poles from the Abroad Association promoted a similar Polish pan-nationalist "groupism" that Brubaker (1996) specifically calls "external homeland nationalism."

At this festival, church leaders appropriated and sacralized this pan-national "groupism." Delivering his homily outdoors to the large crowds of pilgrims through megaphones and to the larger nation through radio broadcast, Teodor Kubina, the Bishop of Częstochowa, spoke of "a Reich of 4 million Poles in the United States" ("8 million Poles in total" according to the Maritime and Colonial League) that was "a miracle of Polishness and the [Catholic] faith" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, August 16, 1934, 1). In using the Polish equivalent of the German term "Reich" (*rzesza*), he and other nationalists who invoked it hardly cloaked drawing inspiration from Nazism. The term's use during this event by speakers for the Maritime and Colonial League (Liga Morska i Kolonialna),

a state organization dedicated to exploring possible lands for Poland to colonize in Madagascar and other areas in Africa, also made its inherent imperialist character quite clear (1).

In contrast to Hitler's racial characterization of global Germandom, the Polish clerics based their concept of a global Polish nation fundamentally on Catholicism and language. Not only did Bishop Kubina's homily emphasize this, but so did the head of the Polish Roman Catholic Union in America, who declared that the "essence of Polishness is faith and the Catholic Church, through which our emigrants maintain their nationality" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, August 16, 1934, 1). Whereas the Nazis represented "the Führer" (Hitler) as the essential unifying symbol of global Germandom, for lay and clerical Catholic Polish nationalists, this function was attributed to the Marian shrine atop Jasna Góra. This was made particularly clear in the speech of a certain Dr. Wolf, a delegate of the Poles from Abroad Association, who described Jasna Góra for Poles abroad as "a star leading to [Polish] brotherhood and unity" (1). Using the Hajj pilgrimage in Islam as a metaphor, he called on "the city of Częstochowa" to become the "Mecca for the entire Catholic world" (1). This tribute to Jasna Góra's Catholic universality was a venerating but empty statement. In actuality, it alluded to the Marian shrine as a symbol of Catholic-Polish nationalist universality.

Pilgrimages atop Jasna Góra served as a forum for anti-Semitic discourses that were common to the interwar Polish Catholic Church. One of its most commonly cited examples is Primate August Hlond's 1936 pastoral letter, in which he emphasized that "Jews" were behind a whole list of woes, from freemasonry, godlessness, Bolshevism, and subversion, to immorality, pornography, usury, and even human trafficking. In particular, he claimed that "Jews" waged war on the Catholic Church (Alvis 2017; Pease 2010, 110–119; Porter 2011, 311-12). Although—as historians have long emphasized—this anti-Semitism was quite different from the Nazi idea of Jews as a "parasitical race," like the display of Catholic pan-nationalism analyzed above, it marked an echo of ideas the Nazis subscribed to in spirit if not exactly in content. In the words of historian Brian Porter, "Catholic anti-Semitism would not have taken the shape it did had racialist ideas not been such a key component of European culture at the time and secular anti-Semitism could not have gained so much support had it not shared a lot of common ground with Christianity" (2011, 273). Polish clerics shared with right-wing European movements a discourse of "Jews" as an abstract and omnipresent enemy of the national community, which rarely had anything to do with what local Jews/Jewish communities actually did or stood for. This is fundamentally different from the Palestinian Arab case, which was foremost a reaction to Zionism and British pro-Zionist settlement politics, despite discourses surrounding the Nabi Musa festival that occasionally also promoted abstract and groundless scapegoating of "Jews" and Zionists.

The inspiration of the rising radical right-wing populist sentiment, and particularly the Nazi-German neighbor, on Polish-Catholic nationalist anti-Semitism had its echo in pilgrimages at Jasna Góra. Anti-Semitic ideas were a major pillar of unity between the Endecja and the church in Poland—next to their mutual support of the idea that the essence of the nation was the Catholic Pole (Porter 2011, 290, 339). Right-wing nationalists found in the well-visited pilgrimage festivals a fertile ground for their politicking—indeed, in similar respects to Arab nationalists at the Nabi Musa. The busy pilgrimage season of the Spring and Summer of 1936 drew the participation of Endecja factions that scapegoated Jews for communism, which, despite the rising Nazi threat, continued to be the Polish church's favorite "enemy of Catholicism." One of the pilgrimages took place on May 22 and was visited by about half of Poland's Catholic university students, or 20,000 individuals, and 100,000 other pilgrims (Jabłoński 2002, 195).

As Porter noted, speeches and resolutions read by clerics and academics that day amounted to a "preparation for battle" against what the church regarded as its main enemies, such as communism and "free masonry," a term that often referred to liberalism and secularity, but also had a history of association with "Jews" (2011, 334). A statement in the speech of one librarian from Lwów captured an important aspect of the event's spirit: "We, today's Polish youth … who have recognized that behind masonry and behind communism there has always stood international Jewry, have resolved to fight the horrible Jewish-masonic plague that is destroying our nation by preventing us from

building our own civilization" (Porter 2011, 334). This trope of "Jews" as "destroyers of culture/-civilization" is clothed here in anti-Catholic guise, as the atheist Bolshevik and secular, liberal, free-thinking mason. Other official statements made at this pilgrimage echoed the slogan of "Jewish communism" (*żydokomuna*; *Akademickie Ślubowanie Jasnogórskie* 1936). This Feast of the Assumption of 1936 brought members of the Dmowskian Nationalist Party (Stronnictwo Narodowe) to Jasna Góra with slogans such as "Long live Poland without Jews and Communists," and "Communism Is the Enemy of the Church" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, August 15, 1936, 3). They came to this occasion to take part in a sacred celebration of the 15th anniversary of the "Miracle on the Vistula," the secular version of which mobilized a march of some 400,000 of their counterparts through the streets of Warsaw" (3).

Such populist radicals were present at Jasna Góra pilgrimages since the early 1920s. However, at that time, their politicking at the sacred site did not go undisputed the way it did during the 1930s. For example, a pilgrimage in mid-July of 1921 saw the presence of Dmowskian nationalists, who received public blessings at a common prayer led by the head of the Pauline Cloister. Afterward, clerics and laymen in their ranks took advantage of a ready sizeable audience of pilgrims to proselytize what they called a "politics based on Catholic morality," which included open denunciation of Pilsudski and his followers as "worse than the Bolsheviks" (*Goniec Częstochowski*, July 14, 1921, 2). At least part of the pilgrim crowd reacted in open outrage at such slurs of "Poland's savior" from the Soviets. A war of hostile shouts broke out, with some crying "long live Dmowski" and "hang Pilsudski" (and other leftist politicians), and others switching the two names around within the same slogans. According to the press, the antagonism almost led to blows (2).

Such political conflicts at Jasna Góra were recurrent to the point that they drew public outrage at their inciters, among them nationalist clerics. A press venue from the nearby industrial region of Dąbrowa complained that this sacred site, "which is supposed to be a center of unity for Poles and pilgrims all over the world," has become a forum for partisan politics that results in "profane behavior" both inside and outside the basilica with the Black Madonna painting (*Goniec Częstochowski*, September 8, 1921, 2). Such protest echoes pilgrim opposition to effendi–British manipulation of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage. However, in Palestine, the rising tide of a new populist nationalism overwhelmed the effendi's politics of collaboration with the British by the revolt of 1937. In contrast, in Poland, Pilsudski's death in 1935 led to a right-wing turn in the government, stronger ties between church and state, and greater resonance for Catholic nationalist propaganda at Jasna Góra.

Conclusion

Just as scholarly interest in religion in nationalism is relatively recent, so too is any extensive consideration of the role of secular politics in pilgrimage festivals. This comparative study in cultural history contributes to the recent revision of a longstanding anthropological thesis—also known as the *communitas* theory—of Edith and Victor Turner that pilgrimages mark an escape from societal structures, conflicts, and divisions (Coleman and Eade 2004; Eade and Katić 2016; Eade and Sallnow 2013; Jansen and Notermans 2009). Certainly the pilgrimages examined in this article demonstrate the contrary: the evident continuation of secular politics through religious rituals performed at sacred symbolic sites. Religious and lay authorities presiding over the Nabi Musa and Jasna Góra pilgrimages used them to promote their own partisan "groupist" imaginings of the nation. The Nabi Musa festival emerged in 1918 as a prime forum for the negotiation of the dynamics of the new political order in Palestine, in particular the power conflict between Arabs, the British, and Jewish settlers on one hand and the nature of the Palestinian Arab national community on the other. In 1920, this festival saw the tensions surrounding the establishment of this new order turn into violence, which all the more highlights how everyday Mandatory-era politics continued at this sacred ritual. The Nabi Musa pilgrimage's grand master, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, used it for his effort to transform his religious-based power as Grand Mufti and official leader of Palestinian

Muslims into that of a national Arab leader. Certainly for him, this marked quite a complicated, turbulent, and dynamic process of using the spectacle to demonstrate his loyalty to the British, on which his institutionalized political status depended, on one hand, and marshaling, containing, and subordinating Arab defiance and discontent, effendi factional rivalry, and increased anti-effendi and populist sentiments on the other.

The situation in Poland was arguably less complicated than in Palestine. Indeed, the masters of Jasna Góra, the Catholic Church and their lay right-wing nationalist allies, hardly had any overlord to contend with, but rather only faced factional competition from their Pilsudskiite rivals and what, in their eyes, was a Poland "threatened" by (religious and ethnic) diversity. Just as the Nabi Musa served as a springboard for effendi "groupism," these Polish clerical and lay nationalists used Jasna Góra to propagate their message of a Poland for the Catholic Poles and to prophesize struggle against Jews and secularism. In sharp contrast to the Palestinian festival, which nationalists used as an occasion to unite Muslim and Christian Arabs, on the basis of common opposition to Palestine's subjugated status, Polish nationalists used Jasna Góra to wage their struggle to exclude those they regarded to be non-Catholics and non-Poles from the national community. While defiance and resistance were key discursive aspects of their "groupism," the "Jewish threat" to Polish nationalists, marking the core of their fear-mongering rhetoric, was much more of an imagined and mythologized concept in comparison to the Palestinians, who were faced with the Balfour Declaration and the building of a Jewish homeland.

While forums for hegemonic partisan "groupisms," the pilgrimages examined in this essay were also, in the words of John Eade and Michael Sallnow, "an arena for competing religious and secular discourses" (2013, 2). In this sense, this comparative study supports the more recent dominant anthropological view of pilgrimages as spectacles of multiple meanings, which are ascribed by their various agents, including religious authorities and ordinary pilgrims (Coleman and Eade 2004; Eade and Katić 2016; Eade and Sallnow 2013; Halabi 2009, 76). Quite blatantly, ordinary pilgrims at the Nabi Musa festival challenged police manipulation of the traditional pilgrimage route and defied effendi–British demands for peace and order with open violence. However, as Halabi (2007, 370; 2009, 76) points out, this violence was not necessarily an expression of Arab struggle to liberate Palestine, but rather a contestation of the ownership and meaning of this pilgrimage festival. Certainly, the Nabi Musa offered much more than just political speeches and parades headed by the Arab effendi and British notables, but also various folkloric and religious traditions, such as performances by Sufi societies, peasants, and bedouin, in addition to village banner displays and a sizeable traditional folk festival outside of the Nabi Musa Tomb. It is therefore quite safe to assume that pilgrims did not come mainly to take part in Mandatory-era politics, but rather as part of these more traditional aspects of the event, not least, the religious ceremonies, and even (but not only), as the Turners would have it, to experience a spirit of *communitas* (egalitarian organic community) that transcended societal boundaries and divisions. Ordinary pilgrims did not necessarily imagine this spirit as a sole manifestation of the Palestinian-Arab *Umma* or national community—of the unity of town, village, tribe, or Muslims—among other collective categories (Halabi 2009, 72–76). However, using the press, elite Arab nationalists worked to marginalize this diversity of meanings and impose a reductionist official meaning of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage as a national festival and forum for the struggle for national self-determination. Indeed, in doing so, they promoted the secularization of this age-old religious event.

In similar respects, the clerical and secular nationalist domination of Jasna Góra certainly did not represent the sentiment of ordinary pilgrims. Those who came from Upper Silesia during the struggle for that borderland did so as part of a society strongly embedded in Catholic folk religiosity to pray to the Black Madonna icon, which was believed to be a miracle-worker, rather than out of Polish patriotic sentiment. Moreover, pilgrim and public opposition to the use of the icon for right-wing nationalist politics and the secularization of this shrine's religious function likewise underline the limits of nationalists' success. As in the case of the Nabi Musa festival, nationalists used their authority and press venues to impose a reductionist national identity on religious pilgrimages such

as the Feast of the Assumption. Particularly in the post-Pilsudski era of the late 1930s, which saw a closer political alliance between church and state, this nationalist secularization process of these festivals hardly encountered any viable opposition.

This comparative study also demonstrates how Islam and Catholicism—here as manifested through sacred symbolic sites, rituals, pilgrims, as well as religious leaders and institutions—were part of the postwar global political *Zeitgeist* of national self-determination. Certainly, the prewar legacies of religious cum political struggle inherent to the pilgrimage festivals and shrines examined in this article predisposed them to serve as sacred alternatives to secular mass rallies for conflicts concerning nationalism and nation building after 1918. In the case of the Nabi Musa festival, Arab nationalists tapped into its association with Saladin's *jihad* against the Crusaders and for Muslim control of Jerusalem. In the case of Jasna Góra, their Polish counterparts drew on the site's legendary role in wars against Protestants and Muslims (Ottomans) as a metaphor for (Catholic) Poland's struggle against its enemies. What Max Weber called the "spatialization of charisma"—which anthropologists of pilgrimage use to denote the influence of the symbolism, history, and legend associated with shrines and festivals—facilitated both Arab and Polish nationalists' imagining of their respective pilgrimages as a manifestation and struggle for a certain partisan vision of the nation (Eade and Sallnow 2013, 8). For example, in both cases there was a commonly shared vision of the pilgrimages as militant marches to holy war for what Arab and Polish nationalists saw as the struggle for independence and the supremacy of the core nation against Jews and other "minorities" in Palestine and Poland. In this sense, both cases of pilgrimage festivals in this article exemplify what Brubaker refers to as the "nationalization of religion," as well as the inherent secularization of their age-old religious character, even as this nationalist politics became only one aspect of their characteristics and one of their competing meanings.

The use of the Nabi Musa pilgrimage as well as pilgrimage festivals at Jasna Góra as a religious-based forum for political disputes among Palestinians and Poles transcended the interwar years examined in this article. After being closely controlled by the British and turned into a low-key event during the Arab Revolt in Palestine (1936–1939) and World War II, the Nabi Musa festival was suspended until its revival in 1987 under the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist militants, all forerunners of Hamas (Zilbarman 2012, 106–107). Since then, pilgrimages to the Haram esh-Sharif continue to serve as occasions for political demonstrations of (Palestinian) Arab nationalist and Islamist defiance of Zionism and Israeli expansionist politics. In similar respect, interwar pilgrimages to Jasna Góra became the foundation for this site's central role in the Polish resistance against communism after World War II. In the post-communist era, pilgrimages to this site became a forum for disputes over the nature of the new Polish national community, which militant populist nationalists, such as the Dmowskian All-Polish Youth (Młodzież Wszechpolska), use today to protest against what they regard as "Europe's Islamization" (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, April 14, 2018).

Notes

1 Arabic letters were Latinized here with reference to the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies Transliteration System. However, Arabic author, person, and place names are written according to their common Latinized spellings.

2 "Piast" refers to the medieval dynasty ruling Silesia, which national histories claim as Poland's first dynasty.

3 These include the Kosciuszko Uprising of 1794, the November Uprising of 1830, the January Uprising of 1863, and the Poznań (Greater Poland) Uprising of 1918.

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