

# RECONSTRUCTION DESTRUCTION

Competition for the Reconstruction of the Destroyed Palestinian Villages

# 2

1947-1949





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### **Competition Organisers**

The Palestine Land Society (PLS)  
Founder: Dr Salman Abu Sitta, PhD, MStructE, PEng

### **Competition Coordinator**

Antoine E Raffoul, RIBA, ICOMOS (UK)

### **Competition Administrators**

Palestinian Regeneration Team (PART)  
PA for the Competition: Denisa Groza (PART)

### **Awards and Exhibition Venue**

The P21 Gallery, 21-27 Chalton Street, London  
NW1 1JD, UK  
Director: Dr Yahya Zaloom

### **Participating Universities**

Al-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine  
Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine  
Islamic University of Gaza, Gaza, Palestine  
Palestine Polytechnic University, Al Khalil, Palestine  
University of Petra, Amman, Jordan  
University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan  
American University of Beirut, Lebanon  
Students from Occupied Palestine 1948

### **Graphic Design**

Roberto Gesuale (PART)

### **Competition Jury Members**

Dr Rasem Badran, Architect, Palestine  
Angela Brady, OBE PPRIBA, PDSA Brady Mallalieu Architects Ltd, UK  
Dr Nasser Golzari, University of Westminster Golzari-NGArchitects, UK  
Professor Robert Mull, Architect, University of Brighton, UK  
Dr Yara Sharif, Architect, Golzari-NGArchitects, UK  
Dr Viktoria Waltz, Architect & Consultant, Germany

### **The Destroyed Palestinian Villages A Concise History**

The First World War ushered an era of hope for the independence of Arab Provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Palestine and Iraq were entrusted to Britain, as Mandatory power, to prepare them for independence. Iraq became independent but Palestine did not. Arthur Balfour, the British Foreign Minister, issued a Declaration in November 1917 to facilitate the establishment of a “Jewish National Home” in Palestine. By the end of the Mandate in 1948, and as a result of illegal Jewish immigration from Europe, 30% of Palestine’s population became Jewish European settlers, who formed underground militias including the Haganah and the Irgun totalling nearly 65,000 (and increasing to 120,000 by the end of 1948) who went on the rampage on the heels of the UN Partition of Palestine in November 1947.

The UN General Assembly, the guardian of Palestine, passed their resolution which gave 55% of historic Palestine to the Jews and the remainder to the majority Palestinian population. Jerusalem was declared a Corpus Separatum under UN administration.

This non-binding proposal was abandoned by the UN in mid March 1948 in favour of UN trusteeship on Palestine. In the political turmoil resulting from the British announcement that their Mandate will end in May 1948, Jewish leaders ordered the Haganah in early April to attack Palestinian villages in accordance with their military operation named Plan Dalet. During the six weeks before Israel was declared a state on 14 May, and while the British Mandate was still in force, the Haganah attacked and depopulated 220 Palestinian villages, making up half of the total refugees today. In these attacks about two dozen massacres and atrocities were committed, the most notorious of which was the Deir Yassin massacre carried out on 9 April 1948.

The shock and anger resulting from these massacres, compounded by large demonstrations throughout the Arab countries, prompted their governments to send regular forces to defend and save the Palestinians. These forces entered Palestine on May 15, the day the British Mandate ended, unprepared, with no central command or unified plan.

Consequently, the Haganah, (today’s IDF), managed to conquer and occupied 78% of Palestine and to depopulate a total of 560 towns, villages and clans.

By the time The Armistice Agreement was reached, this conquered part of Palestine was greater than the proposed 55% of historic Palestine given to the Jews, only a few months previously - to become known as Israel with 85% of the Palestinians living in the part of Palestine occupied by Israel becoming homeless refugees. Their land is 93% of Israel's area.

Expulsion of the Palestinians was propelled by more than five dozen massacres and atrocities. The Israeli military machine had conducted about 31 operations associated with these massacres to assist in the depopulation of Palestinian villages.

After completing the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, the systematic destruction of the Palestinian landscape began. First, a wave of plunder and looting of Arab homes and businesses took place at the hands of Jews from nearby Jewish settlements and by Israeli officers. Destruction of villages and many historical parts of the cities was initiated to obliterate the traces of Palestinian presence and to prevent the return of the refugees to their homes.

During 1948 and shortly thereafter, the destruction was undertaken by the Israeli army and by the Public Works, followed afterwards by a plan of

destruction carried out by the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and assisted by Jewish archaeologists. The archaeologists' task was to spare any historical structures which may serve to highlight any previous Jewish history. The rest of the landscape was to be destroyed.

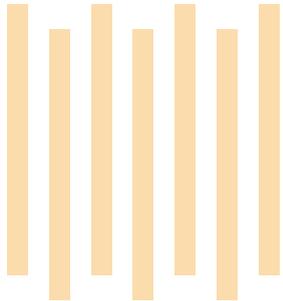
Using a list prepared by the JNF, buildings or structures representing Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Muslim (including Ottoman) architecture were destroyed. It took 15 years to complete this process, leaving only a few remaining buildings and the cactus fences which could not be destroyed.

A week after the June 1967 war, Biblical villages of Imwas, Yalu and Bayt Nuba in the West Bank and the 800-year old Moroccan Quarter (The unique Maghrebi Quarters) in the Old City of Jerusalem were destroyed. The cleared area of the Quarters is now the square in front of the Wailing Wall.

By the end of 2016, estimates show that there are 8,300,000 Palestinian refugees, who are not allowed to return to their homes. Of this number, 5,750,000 are registered with UNRWA, the UN Agency for refugees. Thus, two thirds of the total Palestinian population of 12.5 million, are considered refugees

residing away from their homes, mostly within walking distance or within a bus ride from their villages and towns. The remainder is either under Israeli rule or under siege in Gaza Strip.

International Law unequivocally affirms the Right of Return for all Palestinian refugees. UNGA resolution 194, affirmed every year since 1948, calls for the refugees to return to their homes. International treaties, regional covenants and human rights bodies and organisations have also affirmed this right. Only Israeli military presence prevents the implementation of this Right of Return.



### Documenting Destroyed Palestinian Villages

The near complete destruction of the Palestinian landscape with its long heritage and the vibrant life of its people, who have lived in Palestine for countless centuries (and never left *en masse* except through forced expulsion in 1948), necessitated the full documentation of their erased historical presence.

Since its inception in 2000, the Palestine Land Society (PLS) produced several Atlases and numerous one-sheet maps. The Atlases included *The Atlas of Palestine 1917-1966* and *The Return Journey Atlas*. The one sheet map showed all Palestinian towns and villages, classified as to their state of depopulation, their districts, dates and the cause of depopulation. The one sheet map was so popular and comprehensive in detail that it was allocated one page in *Cartography of the Twentieth Century*, a 2000 page compendium of major world maps in the last century, published by the University of Chicago Press.

There were four compelling reasons for documenting and producing the detailed plans of Palestinian villages:

1. The rural landscape and its villages were not properly surveyed during the British Mandate. Plans at a scale of 1:20,000 and smaller were made of all of Palestine. Villages appeared as dots or small polygons at this scale. On the other hand, Palestinian cities were properly surveyed. A last minute attempt by the British Mandate, (before their hurried departure), to remedy this situation under the Village Development program in 1945-6, in which about 5 dozen villages were surveyed to a scale of 1:2500 and 1:1250. But these were not generally known or accessible to the general public. Hence the need for proper map documentation of Palestinian villages.

2. The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine by Zionist forces, in 1948 onward, resulted in the depopulation of at least 560 villages, large and small. As stated

above, Israel started a systematic, programmed and comprehensive destruction of these villages a campaign which lasted for 15 years. Therefore, Palestinian villages have neither a paper record nor a physical presence.

3. All rural population became refugees, 95% of whom were registered with UNRWA. (Only 70% of the urban population registered with UNRWA). This population is the subject of a multitude of UN resolutions affirming their Right of Return. They represent the core of the Palestine Question under International Law.

4. The rural population has been the backbone of Palestinian resistance, since 1948 and particularly in the period 1968-1982. Since their expulsion in 1948, the refugees suffered the largest percentage of casualties in Israeli air and land attacks carried out against refugee camps inside Palestine and throughout the Middle East.

### Method of Work

The first stage was to collect scarce data in different places. Over the course of 4 years, PLS staff worked hard to collect, draft and record the information about the villages from these sources:

1. Village Books. These have been written by Palestinian individuals or by a small group from a village documenting their village life. The books were mostly printed and produced by a local publisher. The quality of the contents varied but provided a useful record of village life, traditions and customs as seen by its people. The books invariably contain wonderful not-to-scale sketches of the village. The books were hard to come by, but PLS collected about 250 of them through personal contacts or visits to cities such as Beirut, Saida (Sidon), Damascus, Amman, Ramallah, Gaza, Haifa and others.

2. Aerial Photographs. The British RAF conducted an aerial survey of Palestine in 1945-1946 in which thousands of photos were taken, mostly to a scale of 1:15000. The survey did not cover all of Palestine. PLS obtained a large number of these photographs before the source closed down.

These photos provided a very good record of the village structures just before they were destroyed.

3. Palestine Government Survey Maps. As noted earlier, these are indeed very rare. When available, they are to a scale of 1:2500 or 1:1250 providing house plans and their structures. Their date precedes the aerial photos.

4. Standard References such as Mustafa Dabbagh's "*Biladuna Filasteen*", Walid Khalidi's "*All That Remains*", and the Atlases published by PLS, particularly *The Atlas of Palestine 1917-1966* and *The Return Journey*. Other references include lists of village names and useful commentary on them.

5. Direct Contact. For specific questions, we connected with the elders of the village concerned, asking them to sketch or describe the village plan or identify house owners' names or check the plans we drew and comment on them. The response was moderate to poor.

6. Registered Refugees Data. We have a computer database showing the Registered Refugees, their names, their village of origin, family size and present camp of exile.

A team was assembled in the UK and in some Arab countries to undertake the documentation work. Arabic speaking researchers extracted information from references about each village. Mapping technicians did the extensive mapping work by digitizing, rectifying and annotating maps. Volunteers collected scarce data or contacted elderly people to identify and to confirm places or names.

As this work was self funded, its progress was slow and had to be revised when new data became available. A system of checks and balances produced the satisfactory final results.

On the basis of the above data, PLS prepared 6 maps for each village. According to the *Atlas of Palestine 1917-1966* based on *Survey of Palestine* and the Palestine grid of 1923, and using Geographical Information System (GIS), PLS staff drew village plans by rectifying existing aerial photos, survey maps or sketches.

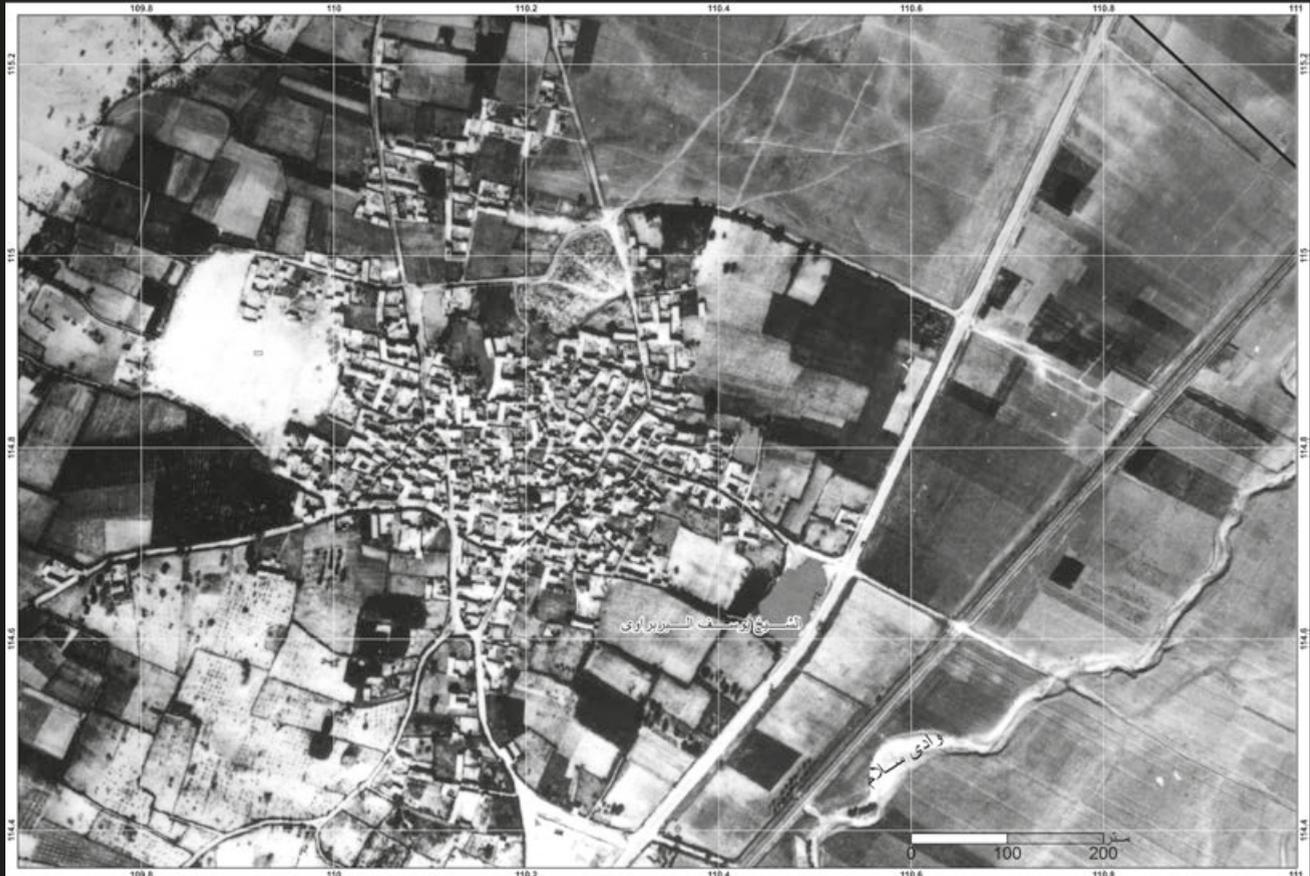
The first two of these six maps, show the village location and land features surrounding it with all the place names in Arabic, as known in pre-1948.

The third and fourth maps show the digitized village houses and features plus an excel file of house owners' names owners if available.

The fifth and sixth maps show the present location of the village, the new roads near it (old roads to the village were obliterated), the kibbutz on the village land if any, the Israeli use of its land and Google satellite map of the site today.

An eleven-point report in Arabic about the village before the *Nakba* was written covering the following: village land area and its population in 1948 and today and the refugee distribution in Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, history and geography of the village, its families and house structure, agriculture, water resources, crafts and occupations, religious and historical sites, how the village was attacked, exodus path and present exile and the remains of the village today.

A total of 480 villages were thus documented excluding Beer Sheba district. In this last district 88 villages or clans are documented collectively in large scale maps. The record of villages is constantly updated when new information becomes available.





on the left BW: Barbara- Gaza District (1945)  
on the right: Barbara- Gaza District site today



صورة جوية للقريّة عام 1945

شكل 1-2 بيت جرجا غزة



صورة جوية لارض القرية اليوم

شكل 2-3 بيت جرجا غزة

13



on the left BW: Bayt Jirja- Gaza District (1945)  
on the right: Bayt Jirja- Gaza District site today



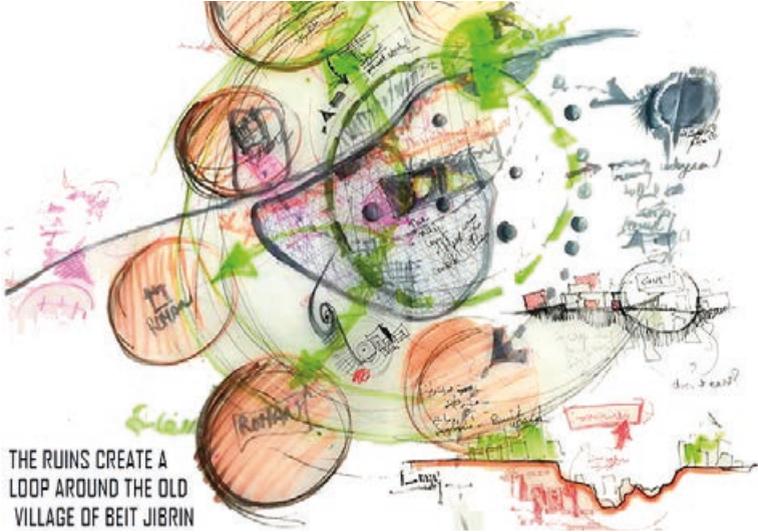




on the left BW: Summayl- Gaza District (1945)  
on the right: Summayl- Gaza District site today





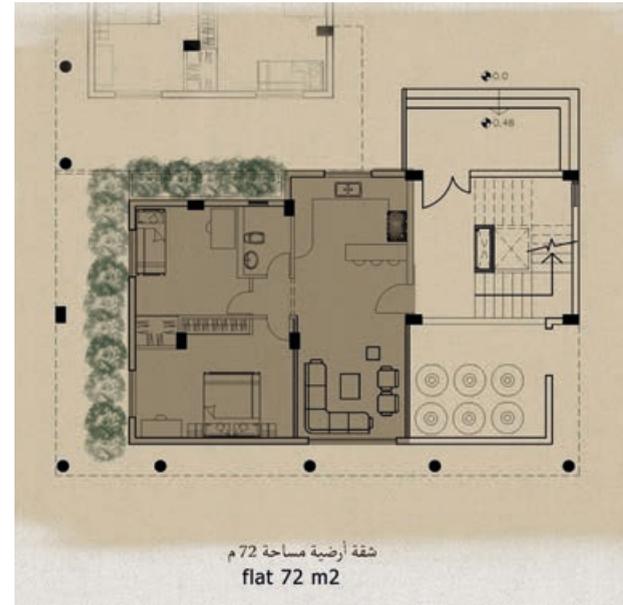


THE RUINS CREATE A LOOP AROUND THE OLD VILLAGE OF BEIT JIBRIN

2. Birzeit University Palestine



4. Birzeit University Palestine



3. Islamic University of Gaza





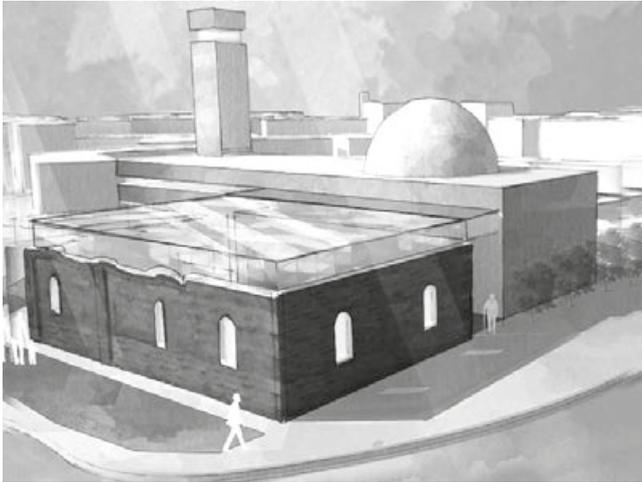
1. Islamic University of Gaza



2. Islamic University of Gaza

3. Al Najah University Palestine





4. University of Petra Jordan

6. University of Petra Jordan



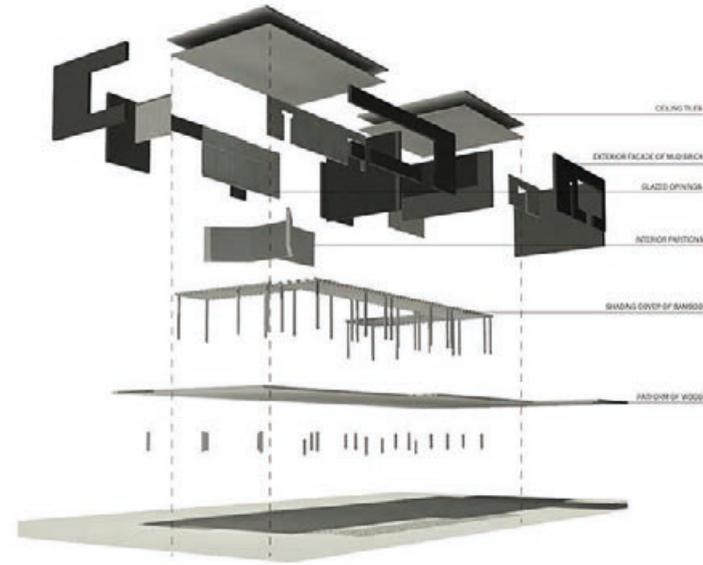
5. Islamic University of Gaza







2. University of Petra Jordan



3. Birzeit University Palestine



4. University of Petra Jordan



### **History behind this competition**

The first idea for this competition came about back in 2011 and the documentation of the villages started in full force, using a massive database created by Palestine Land Society (PLS). An organizing committee was formed in 2015 to run the competition.

The committee is headed by Dr Salman Abu Sitta, founder and president of the Palestine Land Society. He was assisted by Antoine Raffoul, RIBA, a British Palestinian architect based in London. Palestinian Regeneration Team (PART), under Nasser Golzari and Yara Sharif, has undertaken the administration of the competition and the Jury deliberations.

In the first academic year of the competition (2016-2017), three universities were invited and students were asked to select each a village from a list of 100 villages, out of about 600 that were destroyed in 1947-1949. The short list favoured villages amenable to reconstruction without much interference of the existing landscape. Two student winners were awarded monetary awards. Their travelling fellowship did not take place because, under Israeli occupation conditions, they were not granted visa to Europe.

For this second academic year of the competition (2017-2018), 150 destroyed Palestinian villages were listed for students to select from. This selection formed the basis and the subject of this competition. Eight Palestinian and Arab universities were invited to nominate 4 top students each from their architectural and planning departments. Each of the 4 students had to work independently from the others and produce the work in parallel with his/her regular academic activity to compete for one of the top three prizes. Hopefully, the designs will be recognized by the respective universities as credits towards the student's graduation portfolio. At the end of this academic year students from only 4 universities were able to make submissions by the deadline.

In November 2017, the students began work on the second year competition by making their preferred selection of villages from the list submitted by the Committee. Some villages may have been their ancestral home or their neighbours' birthplace.

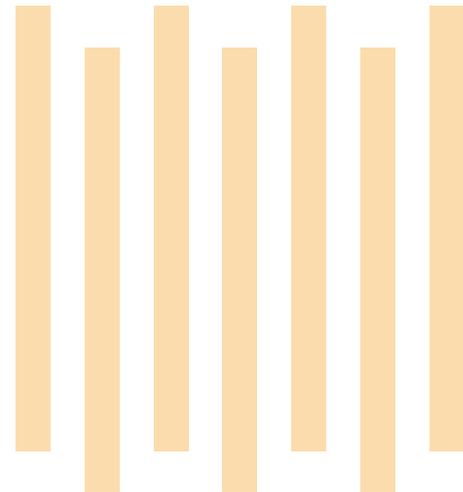
Strict Terms and Conditions for the competition were sent to the students (Brief to Students) and to the universities (Brief to Faculty). Each university was required to appoint a University Coordinator to

represent the university and its students and to liaise with the Organising Committee where necessary. The students and the coordinators were given access to the database of the selected villages by the use of given User and Password.

For the jury, the Committee selected 5 distinguished international architects and planners from Germany, United Kingdom, Palestine, and Jordan. They agreed to meet for deliberation in London on 6 September 2018.

The Committee decided to provide monetary prizes to each of the top 3 winners selected by the jury. Additionally, the first prize winner will be awarded a one week Travelling Fellowship in Europe to visit and study destroyed villages (whether by war or by natural disaster) and to produce a report at the end of the trip.

Official announcement of the winners will be made on 7 September 2018 at an exhibition of the winning designs to be held (for 2 days) at the P21 Gallery in London. The general press and TV organisations will also be invited.



### Design Guidelines

Competing students were urged to be creative and inspired and not be discouraged or dissuaded by the negative political conditions existing in Palestine. They were urged to revive and resurrect the centuries-old history of the village before being destroyed.

They were urged to think positively and firmly in the inevitability of the Right of Return. This is a fundamental factor sustaining all stages of the competition.

Competing students were given new present-day population figures to enable them to design for new urban densities, including cultural, political and social institutions including educational facilities, clinics and hospitals.

They were encouraged to preserve past and near historical and religious sites and traditional water resources such as wells and springs which formed the heart of Palestinian agricultural life in the past.

Competing students were also encouraged to erect memorials for the victims of the *Nakba* and for the known martyred Palestinian resistance leaders.

Such memorials are considered an important urban element linking the village past to its present.

The Design Guidelines called for efficient use of modern road systems with new diversion to the village sites. The use of the present central water system is also allowed.

Since, in present day Palestine, agriculture is not going to be the only occupation of the village inhabitants, students were required to encourage and allow for light industry, manufacturing, services and regional tourism including visits from relatives in *al-shataat* (the diaspora).

Finally, it is worth noting that Palestine occupied in 1948 may be divided into ten architectural zones each enjoying familiar characteristics such as terrain, water availability, building materials, traditional and vernacular architecture. Uniformity in design of each of the ten zones needs to be encouraged.

A short report and basic maps for selected villages were issued to the students including the history of the Palestinian *Nakba*. This was supported by an extensive list of references for the students to fall back on.

## Looking to The Future

It is the wish and hope of the Competition Committee that this second stage of the competition is but a prelude to a series of follow-up exercises in architectural and planning competitions for the reconstruction of destroyed Palestinian villages: each subsequent competition will build upon the success resulting from the previous ones.

The Competition Committee, on a practical level, hopes to form an official organisational body (a Charity or an NGO) in cooperation with international institutions to conduct its annual competitions which, it hopes, will attract not only more universities inside Palestine, but also international institutions and individuals from around the world.

The signs are already there. Stretching a hand to and reaching out for, the world beyond the borders of Palestine, will ensure that humanity is expressed through the power of the free mind and of the creative thought.

# Competition for the Reconstruction of the Destroyed Palestinian Villages

**Rasem Badran**, is an award winning Palestinian architect from Jerusalem based in Jordan. He received his Diploma from Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany in 1970, and his Honorary Doctorate in Architectural Design from Jordan University of Science and Technology. He is a member of the International Jury for the ARCASIA Award for Architecture (2003). He became Chair of the Architectural Academy in Sofia replacing the late and renowned Egyptian architect Hassan Fathi as member of the International Master Jury for the Agha Khan Awards for Architecture. He was the recipient of the Palestinian Award for Architecture in 1995.

**Angela Brady**, OBE, PPRIBA, PDSA, FRIAI, from Ireland graduated from Bolton St DIT Dublin School of Architecture. She won a post graduate scholarship at Kunstakademiet in Copenhagen. Founder in 1987 with partner Robin Mallalieu of Brady Mallalieu, a practice specialising in sustainable design. She was elected the 74th president of the Royal Institute of British Architects (2011-2013). As chair of RIBA Women in Architecture (WIA 2000-2005), she curated the successful 'DiverseCity' exhibition which featured in 34 cities worldwide. In 2015, she was awarded an OBE for services to architecture. In 2016, she received the Irish Republic 'President's Distinguished Service Award'.

**Nasser Golzari**, is the principal partner in Golzari - NG Architects an award winning architectural practice based in London. Golzari is a senior lecturer at the University of Westminster and has taught at a number academic institutions in UK and abroad. He was a visiting Professor at Art University of Isfahan and Honorary Dean at Nazeer Hussein University in Karachi where he assisted to set up new university curriculum. Golzari was the founding editor of A3 Times architectural magazine and A3 Forum. As an architect, Nasser has worked both in private and public sector since 1986 with built projects in UK and international. A number of the projects have been shortlisted and won awards. Of those, is the RIBA's President Commendation Award for Research 2016 on affordable self-help prototype 'Green Learning Room'. In addition the project was listed amongst top 16 self-build projects - NaCSBA competition, 2015 as well as RIBA Constructing Communities competition exhibited in 2016 in London Festival of Architecture. Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction in 2014 – commendation award for PART team in collaboration with Riwaq. Golzari was part of the Aga Khan Award RIWAQ's winning team in 2013.

**Professor Robert Mull**, studied and taught at the AA, was a member of NATO (Narrative Architecture Today). In 2000 he became head of the then UNL School of Architecture and later in 2010 Dean and Director of

Architecture at The Cass (Sir John Cass Faculty of Art, Architecture and Design) and founding tutor to the Free Unit until 2016. Robert has taught widely, holding visiting professorships in Vienna and Innsbruck. In 2012 he co-founded the Moscow School of Architecture (MARCH) where he is honorary Professor. He is currently Professor of Architecture and Design and Head of School at the University of Brighton and the Director of Innovation at London-based urban design practice Publica. He is also currently visiting Professor at Umeå University, Sweden. Robert was co-curator of the 'Rip it Up and Start Again' series and helped initiate the 'Turncoats' and 'Twins' debates. Recently Robert has collaborated with Alexander Brodsky for Drawing Matter's 'Sheds' at Hauser and Wirth, Somerset and has co-curated the 'Art as Labour' programme at Nikola Lenivets outside Moscow. Robert is a trustee of the Architecture Foundation and of the London School of Architecture. Robert is currently running the Global Free Unit focusing on live projects within the refugee crisis and disadvantaged communities and other institutions such as prisons, schools and arts organisations.

**Yara Sharif**, is an architect and partner in Golzari-NGArchitects since 2006, a London based practice combining her work there with research and teaching academic activities at difference institutions including the University of Westminster London and Oxford Brookes University. Her Doctorate won RIBA's 2013 Commendation Award for research. She co-founded

the Palestine Regeneration Team (PART), a design-lead research group seeking creative and responsive spatial possibilities in Palestine with the aim of healing fractures caused by a painful Israeli occupation. PART won the 2014 Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction and RIBA Constructing Communities competition exhibited in 2016 in London Festival of Architecture. She worked for a number of years at RIWAQ on revitalisation project winning the 2013 Agha Khan Award for Architecture. Sharif has been active in research and publication including her contribution to The Social (Re) production of Architecture and her recent acclaimed book Architecture of Resistance.

**Viktoria Waltz**, is a German architect from Dortmund. She received her Diploma in Engineering from the Technical University of Berlin in 1967. From 1973-2007, she was a lecturer at Dortmund University on Urban Management and Social Housing. In 1986, she received her Doctorate Degree in Political Science from the University of Dortmund Department of Spatial Planning (Paper was on Zionist Settlement in Palestine). In 1988, she took a sabbatical leave to research social issues in the Old City of Jerusalem. In 1997, she worked as an expert to the German government program CIM on collaboration with The Palestinian Ministry of Housing developing housing policies for the Palestinian Territories. Since her retirement, she has been working as a consultant in Jordan, Iraq and The OPT.

The Organising Committee for this competition wish to thank all its staff members who worked hard behind the scenes and away from the limelight to make this competition a technical success.

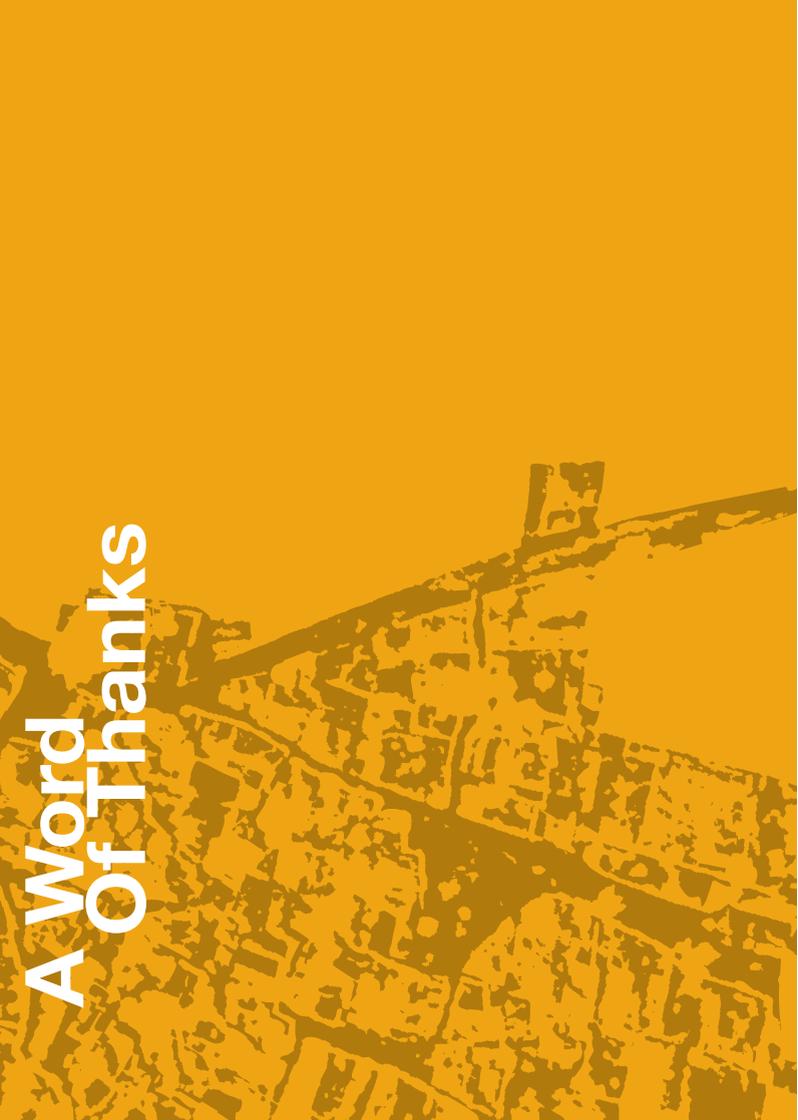
Thank you to all those individuals who donated generously to enable this competition to take place. They shall not be named but they will be remembered.

Also, special thanks go to PART, its founders and staff members, Denisa Groza in particular, for contributing ideas, for administering this competition and for offering their offices as a venue for jury deliberations.

No fair judgement can be made without an independent jury: thanks to the esteemed members of this year's international jury who accepted our invitation to participate, to deliberate and to select the three winners. Their work is a model for future juries.

Finally, we wish to thank The P21 Gallery and its Director Dr Yahya Zaloom, for allowing the Awards Ceremony to take place on its premises and for providing the exhibition space for the three winning entries.

*The Organising Committee  
London, September 2018*



A Word  
Of Thanks

1948  
*Lest We Forget!*



