

Nusseibeh, Sari 1949- (Sari Anwar Nusaybah)

PERSONAL:

Born February 12, 1949, in Damascus, Syria; married Lucy Austin; children: Jamal, Absal, Buraq (sons), Nuzha (daughter). *Education:* [Oxford University](#), B.A., 1971, master's degree; [Harvard University](#), Ph.D., 1978.

ADDRESSES:

Home—East Jerusalem, Israel.

CAREER:

Philosopher, educator, and writer. Birzeit University, Palestine, assistant professor, 1978-90; Al-Quds University, Jerusalem, Israel, professor of philosophy and president of the university, 1995—. Also strategist for Unified National Command of the Intifada, 1988-1991; member of the Steering Committee of the Palestinian Negotiating Team, 1991-1993; cofounder and chairman of Higher Political Committees in the Occupied Territories, 1991-1994; chairman of the Technical and Advisory Committees to the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, 1993-93; [Woodrow Wilson](#) International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, fellow, 1994-95; Hebrew University, visiting lecturer, 1979-80; Balliol College, Oxford, England, visiting lectureship, 2003; cofounder of the Peoples' Peace Campaign, 2001; [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO) commissioner for Jerusalem Affairs, 2002; Commissioner for Jerusalem Affairs, 2002; cofounder and general secretary of the

Peoples' Campaign for Peace Democracy (HASHD), 2003—; Radcliffe [Institute for Advanced Study](#), [Harvard University](#), Cambridge, MA, fellow, 2004-2005; Baker Institute for [Public Policy](#), Rice University, Houston, TX, fellow, 2006; cochairman of the Israeli-Palestinian Science Organization (IPSO); UNESCO Chair of "Freedom of Expression."

MEMBER:

National Society for the Blind (1995—), Palestinian Association for Vocational Training (1990—2000), Dan Pearl Foundation (honorary member), Council on Foreign Relations, International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life (2002—), L'Institut Européen de la Méditerranée, Club of Monaco, World Affairs Council.

AWARDS, HONORS:

Corecipient of Peace Award, Foundation for [Middle East](#) Peace, 1994; Terni San Valentino peace award, Italy, 2002; UNESCO Chair of Freedom of Expression, Al-Quds University; [Common Ground](#) Award for Journalism in the [Middle East](#); Seeds of Peace Award, 2002; Lew Kopelew Award, Cologne, Germany, 2002; Roosevelt [Four Freedoms](#) Medal, 2004; In Exile Award, New School, 2004; XVI Premi Internacional Catalunya Award, 2004, for contributions to the development of cultural, scientific, or human values around the world; Brevet Commandeur de l'Ordre Leopold, 2006.

WRITINGS:

(With Mark A. Heller) *Beli Tupim ya-hatsotsrot: Hesder La-sikhsukh Ha-Yisre eli-Palestini*, Shoken (Jerusalem, Israel), 1991, published as *No Trumpets, No Drums:*

A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Hill & Wang ([New York, NY](#)), 1991.

Jerusalem, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (Washington, DC), 1995.

(Editor, with Moshe Ma'oz), *Jerusalem: Points of Friction, and Beyond*, Kluwer Law International (Boston, MA), 2000.

(With Anthony David) *Once upon a Country: A Palestinian Life* (memoir), Farrar, Straus ([New York, NY](#)), 2007.

Contributor to books, including *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 15th edition, 1984; *But Was It Just? Reflections on the Morality of the [Gulf War](#)*, Doubleday, 1992; *The Routledge History of Islamic Philosophy*, edited by Oliver Leaman, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1995; *Azmat al-hizb al-Siyasi al-Falastini*, Muwatin, 1996; *La Pluralidad y sus atributos*, Fundacion Duques de Soria, 2002; *Does Human Rights Need God?*, edited by Barbra Barnett, Eerdman, 2005; *Dio Salvi La Ragione*, Cantagalli, 2007. Contributor to periodicals, including *Asian and African Studies*, *Koroth*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Studia Islamica*, *History and Philosophy of Logic*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.

SIDELIGHTS:

Sari Nusseibeh is a philosopher and educator who has also been involved in politics in Palestine. He was the architect of the strategy of civil resistance during the 1987-93 intifada in Palestine (a political uprising against Israeli rule). Although he has primarily been an academic, Nusseibeh returned to the political arena in 2001 serving as the political commissioner for Jerusalem affairs in the [Palestine Liberation Organization](#) (PLO), making him the highest Palestinian official in

Jerusalem. He served in this post until 2003. Throughout his career, Nusseibeh has been an advocate of peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and has served in several efforts to bring about peace.

Nusseibeh is also the coauthor of a memoir and the author or editor of several books focusing on the political and social aspects of Jerusalem and the relationship between the Jewish state and Palestine, and Palestinians. The author collaborated with Mark A. Heller for his first book, published in the [United States](#) as *No Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. The authors present a detailed solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by calling for an independent Palestinian nation located on the [West Bank](#) of Gaza. Believing that their proposal is the only solution for long-term peace in the area, the authors detail their plans, which include a permanent Israeli military presence and the right for Israelis to live and work in the new state. Noting that the authors disagree on many matters concerning the problem, which they outline in separate introductory statements, a *Publishers Weekly* contributor commented that "it is noteworthy that they have found so much common ground."

Nusseibeh is also the editor, with Moshe Ma'oz, of *Jerusalem: Points of Friction, and Beyond*. This book presents papers focusing on the future of Jerusalem. Contributors write of a master plan for Jerusalem, aspects of sovereignty, and the complexities of Jerusalem's holy places, including the universal significance and the historical path that has led them to their current status.

Nusseibeh's memoir *Once upon a Country: A Palestinian Life*, written with Anthony David, was called "a deeply admirable book by a deeply admirable man" by Leon Wieseltier in the *New York Times Book Review*. Wieseltier added: "It is largely a political memoir, about a reluctantly political Palestinian trying to bring politics to

his people, as the forces of occupation, religion and terrorism interfere with the very possibility of politics." Writing in the *Washington Monthly*, Joshua Hammer noted: "Nusseibeh has been trying to find a way out of the Middle Eastern wilderness for decades, and that often frustrating, sometimes hopeful journey is chronicled in this absorbing new memoir."

The memoir recounts Nusseibeh's life story, beginning with his time growing up in the Arab sector of the partitioned city of Jerusalem known as East Jerusalem. The author recounts how his family's history in the area can be traced back to the [Middle Ages](#). He also recalls his young fascination with the "No Man's Land," a small area of land that separated the Palestinians of East Jerusalem from the Jews of West Jerusalem. The son of a diplomat who was educated at [Oxford University](#) and Harvard, he is not very interested in the straightforward political process as he grows into adulthood until he is recruited into Fatah—the PLO. Disillusioned with the hope of a unified Palestine and a single Arab-Jewish state following the wars of 1967 and 1973, Nusseibeh recounts his growing role in political efforts as he is appointed by the late PLO leader Yassir Arafat to administer the Arab area of Jerusalem.

Despite constant setbacks and witnessing Palestine torn apart by settlements, barricades, corruption, and violence, Nusseibeh remains true to his long-held belief that a two-state solution can be found to the problems between Israel and Palestine. Eventually, Nusseibeh has an epiphany. Robert Hirschfield, in an article in the *National Catholic Reporter*, quoted Nusseibeh as saying in his book: "Instead of emphasizing a return to the seized lands of the past, I asked, why not emphasize the liberation of the human being?"

Writing of the [Camp David](#) peace talks in 2000, the failure of which was largely blamed on Yasser Arafat, Nusseibeh presents an opposing view of why the talks

failed, leading to the breakout of the second intifada. "Nusseibeh rejects the conventional wisdom that Arafat bears the brunt of the blame by refusing to accept Israeli Prime Minister [Ehud Barak](#)'s ostensibly generous offer," wrote Hammer in the *Washington Monthly*. "There's no question that Barak's concessions ... went far beyond what any previous Israeli government had been willing to offer, but Nusseibeh makes a plausible case that his brinkmanship set the stage for disaster. After years of mutual distrust, neither side, he argues, was ready to commit to the final settlement that Barak, with Clinton's backing, was pushing."

The author goes on in his memoir to describe the 2001 intifada and his collaborative efforts with the Israeli Shin Bet (an intelligence agency for the Israeli Defense Forces) chief to initiate the Peoples' Voice, a grass-roots effort to support a two-state solution to the problem. The plan ultimately fails and Nusseibeh raises the ire of many Palestinians who felt that he was offering to give up too many legal rights of the Palestinians.

Once upon a Country received widespread critical acclaim. *Foreign Affairs* contributor William B. Quandt called *Once upon a Country* "a remarkable political document and a sophisticated analysis of the core issues." Elaine C. Hagopian, writing in the *Middle East Journal*, noted: "Throughout his memoir, Nusseibeh demonstrates a nuanced understanding of Israel's [strategy and tactics](#) to subvert negotiations that could lead to a viable Palestinian state." In addition to commenting on the author's political acumen, other reviewers also addressed Nusseibeh's reflections on his own life and on his balanced view of the political problems of the region. For example, writing in *Kirkus Reviews*, a contributor referred to the memoir as "a humane, responsible entry in a discourse marked by irresponsible inhumanity." A *Publishers Weekly* contributor commented that the author "draws on deep roots in his account of a dramatically displaced life."

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES:

BOOKS

Nusseibeh, Sari, and Anthony David, *Once upon a Country: A Palestinian Life*, Farrar, Straus (New York, NY), 2007.

PERIODICALS

Biography, summer, 2007, Nomi Morris and Elon Amos, review of *Once upon a Country*.

Booklist, February 1, 2007, Hazel Rochman, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 20.

Book World, April 15, 2007, Robert Malley, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 4.

[*Christian Science Monitor*](#), May 22, 2007, "'Once upon a Country': A Path to Mideast Peace?," p. 13.

Commonweal, October 12, 2007, Leslie Woodcock Tentler, "Philosopher & Statesman," review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 33.

Foreign Affairs, winter, 1991, William B. Quandt, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, p. 202.

International Affairs, July, 1992, Emma Murphy, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 558.

International Journal of Middle East Studies, February, 1993, Fouad Moughrabi, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 181.

Journal of Palestine Studies, spring, 1993, Fouad Moughrabi, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 181.

Kirkus Reviews, February 1, 2007, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 115.

Library Journal, September 15, 1991, Sanford R. Silverburg, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 100.

Middle East, March, 1992, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 42.

Middle East Journal, summer, 2007, Elaine C. Hagopian, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 549.

National Catholic Reporter, May 25, 2007, Robert Hirschfield, "A Graceful Memoir about a Bitter Conflict," review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 4.

New York Review of Books, December 19, 1991, Lee H. Hamilton, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 20; April 26, 2007, Amos Elon, "Hard Truth about Palestine," review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 26.

New York Sun, May 2, 2007, Efraim Karsh, "A Palestinian Two-Step," review of *Once upon a Country*.

New York Times Book Review, December 29, 1991, J.C. Hurewitz, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 25; April 1, 2007, Leon Wieseltier, "Sympathy for the Other," review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 12; April 15, 2007, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 6.

Political Studies, December, 1992, Fred H. Lawson, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 786.

Publishers Weekly, August 30, 1991, review of *No Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 73;
January 29, 2007, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 52.

Reference & Research Book News, August, 2005, "Jerusalem: Points of Friction—
and Beyond," p. 47.

Tikkun, March-April, 2007, review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 81.

Times Higher Education Supplement, February 21, 1992, Lawrence Tal, review of
No Trumpets, No Drums, p. 21.

Times Literary Supplement, January 24, 1992, Andrew Gowers, review of *No
Trumpets, No Drums*, p. 8.

Washington Monthly, June, 2007, Joshua Hammer, "A Reason Not to Despair: Few
Players Have Navigated the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict with More Integrity Than
Sari Nusseibeh," review of *Once upon a Country*, p. 55.

ONLINE

Al Quds University site, <http://www.alquds.edu/> (December 3, 2007), faculty profile
of author.

Carnegie Council Web, <http://www.cceia.org/> (December 3, 2007), profile of author.

Chicago Peace Now, <http://www.chicagopeacenow.org/> (December 3, 2007), profile
of author.

Council on Foreign Relations Web site, <http://www.cfr.org/> (December 3, 2007),
brief biography of author.

Dissent Magazine, <http://dissentmagazine.org/> (December 3, 2007), Jon Wiener, "Bridging the Divide: An Interview with Sari Nusseibeh."

James A Baker III Institute Web site, <http://bakerinstitute.org/> (December 3, 2007), profile of author.

Jerusalem Post, <http://www.jpost.com/> (April 29, 2007), Ruthie Blum, "One on One with Sari Nusseibeh."

Palestine/Israel Resources, <http://www.geocities.com/> (December 3, 2007), biography of author.

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University Web site, <http://www.radcliffe.edu/> (December 3, 2007), "Radcliffe Institute Fellows 2004-2005."

Sari Nusseibeh Home Page, <http://sari.alquds.edu> (December 3, 2007).

Truthdig, <http://www.truthdig.com/> (May 3, 2007), Jon Wiener, "Palestinians' Hard Choice: An Interview with Sari Nusseibeh."