

For Immediate Release



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AUB remembers alumni who participated in establishment of the UN Charter in 1945

A world without the United Nations might seem unthinkable in this day and age but as little as 68 years ago, in June 1945, delegates of 50 nations gathered in San Francisco to create a world organization aimed at saving “succeeding generations from the scourge of war which twice in their lifetime had brought untold sorrow to mankind,” as the charter states. The charter also pledged to respect the equality and sovereignty of all member states and promised to help preserve freedom and promote the universal recognition of fundamental human rights. Member states also agreed to support social progress and better living standards for people all over the globe.

Of these original delegates, 20 were affiliated with the American University of Beirut as graduates or former students, the highest representation from one single institution of higher learning. Five among them actually signed the UN Charter. The AUB President’s Club organized an exhibition and produced a booklet that represented a modest attempt to examine the lives and goals of these notable individuals, on Monday June 10 at West Hall in honor of its former alumni’s achievements.

“This project is unique and special in the fact that it points to the future that awaits our students and graduates,” said Provost Ahmad Dallal. “This is yet another achievement of the President’s Club in their insistence on identifying projects that are extremely meaningful to our students’ intellectual development.”

According to US Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy who attended Harvard, more world leaders have been educated at the American University of Beirut than any other institution he

could think of—even Harvard, and there were more graduates of the American University of Beirut at the establishment of the United Nations than from any other institution.

“We felt that the mission of the President’s Club should not be limited as it had been in the past, to improving student welfare on campus, but to highlight as well the pioneering role AUB students have played all along, not only at the national and regional levels, but at the international level as well,” said Mona Chemali Khalaf, chair of the AUB President's Club.

“Today we welcome the children, grandchildren and grand grandchildren of those illustrious men.”

Perhaps the best known Lebanese signer of the document (the AUB delegates came from Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria) was Charles H. Malik (1906-1987), an AUB professor of philosophy who became Lebanon’s first Ambassador to the United States and the thirteenth president of the UN General Assembly. But his greatest achievement was perhaps his distinguished role as chief motivator and coauthor, along with Eleanor Roosevelt, of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, signed in 1948.

Other Lebanese delegates included: Angela Jurdak Khoury (1915-2011) the first Lebanese woman diplomat, not only in Lebanon’s diplomatic service, but possibly the first in the Arab world, and the only woman among the AUB attendees at the UN conference; and Sobhi Mahmassani who was serving as the legal advisor to the Lebanese delegation both to the conference and the establishment of the Arab League in Alexandria in 1944. He also participated in the founding conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Beirut in 1948.

From Iraq: Abdul Jabbar Chalabi (1906-N.A.); Abdul Majid Abbas (1910- N.A.); Darwish Al Haidari (1907-N.A.); Philip Hitti (1886-1978) - adviser; Mohammad Fadhel Jamali (1903-N.A.); Hashim Jawad (1911-1969); Majid Kaddouri (1908-2007); Mohammad Ibrahim Adham (1920-N.A.); and Salih Mahdi Haidar (N.A.)

From Syria: Fares Al-Khouri (1877-1962); Farid Zein neddine (1907-N.A.); Naim Al-Antaki (1902-N.A.); Nazem Al-Koudsi (1906-1998); Raja F. Hawrani (N.A.); and Toufik Hunedi (1919- N.A.).

From Iran: Ghassem Ghani (1893-1952).

From Saudi Arabia: Ahmad Abdul Jabbar (1921) and Jamil Baroody (1905 -2020).

“The task was quite arduous and could not have been completed without the support of various organizations and individuals,” said Khalaf.

The President’s Club thanked Nawwaf Salam, Lebanon’s ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations in New York, for the provision of documents, speeches, and pictures available in the United Nations archives. Special thanks went to Philip Khoury, chair of the AUB Board of Trustees, and to Faysal Al Kudsi, Malek Mahmassani, Khaled Saab, Maha Abdul Jabbar Ajlani, and Hilda Khoury Tohme for all the valuable documents and memorabilia related to their parents or relatives.

The project was carried out in cooperation with AUB’s Jafet Library, led by Lokman Meho, university librarian, who was personally involved in the research process; Kawkab Chebaro, head of the Archives and Special Collections Department, who put at the club’s disposal all the information and facilities available in her department; and Sara Jawad, web and graphic designer for the booklet design. Also for the thoroughness, efficiency, and dedication of Samar Mikati, archives librarian, and the archives staff, who were instrumental in the materialization of the project.

Sincere appreciations went to Jean-Marie Cook for editing the booklet, to Professor Cornelia Krafft for her creative and artistic contribution, and to Christian Moussa for the graphic and exhibition design.

“Unfortunately, tracing the original AUB delegates has been difficult,” said Khalaf. “We would be grateful for any information anyone might have on these delegates described in the exhibition and booklet.” A brief black and white documentary was shown detailing the UN conference and participants.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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