

# Carolinas Committee on U.S.-Arab Relations

## NEWSLINES

Volume 38, No. 1

The Newsletter of the Carolinas Committee on U.S.-Arab Relations  
An Affiliate of the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

May 2024

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## My First Time Outside the United States

*by Steven Greer*



*The males on the trip*



## NEWS AND ARTICLES



*Elephant Rock*

In December 2023, I had the privilege of attending a fully-funded trip to Saudi Arabia with Gateway KSA. Through this program I was able to expand my understanding of Saudi Arabia and experience the overwhelming hospitality of the Saudi people. I was incredibly pleased with the entire trip from the food, the excursions, the cultural exchanges, and the diverse group of individuals in my cohort. This trip is one that everyone interested in knowing more about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should have the opportunity to attend.

Our trip took us to three cities in the Kingdom: Jeddah, Al Ula, and Riyadh. In Jeddah, we spent

four breezy days on the Red Sea. I was impressed by the sheer size of the city and the never-ending list of places to discover. We visited such places as the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce, the Islamic Development Bank, and a plethora of museums and cultural sites that imbued us with the sense that Jeddah is a bustling metropolis with a storied past. We also learned about Jeddah's educational scene with our visits to the King Abdulah University of Science and Technology, or KAUST, and Dar Al Hekma. These were some of the most intriguing portions of the trip for me. I was especially impressed at the massive scale of KAUST and the fact that it only

began in 2008. I departed KAUST with the understanding that things in the Kingdom move rapidly.

The entire country is moving at a breathtaking pace towards its future and is experiencing massive economic, social, and cultural change. Nowhere was this more evident than in Jeddah with its skyline dotted by construction cranes and its people bustling in and out of department stores. I also enjoyed the leisure experiences that the city offered. We ate some of the most delicious food at the best restaurants. Two of us visited the Red Sea Mall in Jeddah, which remains one of my favorite portions of the trip. There were so many familiar stores and restau-

rants, including all the fast food places that I felt as if I were in my native South Carolina. Never did I think I would purchase a dress shirt from an H&M in a mall in Saudi Arabia.

I must single out our boat trip into the Red Sea, which was nothing short of amazing. I had never seen water so blue. Jeddah was magnificent. So much so I truly did not believe our trip could get any better until we went to Al Ula. Al Ula was almost indescribable. Everywhere we went the landscape was so picturesque that it was as if we were moving through a piece of art. Seeing it from the air was just as incredible when we flew over the city in a helicopter. The mountains were as dramatic as was the desert. This was the first time I had ever been in a desert and I was keen to absorb as much of it as I could. I was surprised by how quiet the desert is. It makes sense as the areas we visited such as Elephant Rock and Sharaan Nature Reserve are virtually devoid of traffic, animal life, and plant life. But still the lack of sound was something that I did not expect.

Unlike the other parts of Saudi Arabia, Al Ula maintained a much more relaxed pace. We spent a few days in this oasis dining at laid-back eateries and strolling around very interesting historic sites. The well-preserved sites of pre-Islamic origins of Hegra and Dadan were both fascinating. I learned so much about life in Saudi in pre-modern times. One of the highlights of the trip was the stargazing excursion in the desert. Our guide explained how early

## NEWS AND ARTICLES

peoples survived in the brutally harsh desert environment. They used the stars not only to navigate the desert terrain but to mark the passage of time and to keep a record of their mythology. I remember reflecting on how much life has changed for the people of this land and contemplated where their future will lead.

Our final leg of the trip took us to Riyadh, the capital of the Kingdom, which gave us a peek into a future that is already fast approaching. I had developed a minor ear infection at this point that prevented me from hearing out of my right ear. However, even with only one functioning ear, the Riyadh experience was just as enjoyable.

The megapolis of Riyadh was a far cry from Al Ula. I was amazed by the city's architecture. The buildings were straight out of a science fiction film with their clever designs and imposing forms. One of my favorite memories from Riyadh was one evening after dinner when a small group of us went to the King Abdullah Financial District. It was quite

immaculate and I felt very safe while we were there. I recall being impressed by the KAFD Grand Mosque. Like everything in the district, it was stunning.

Riyadh also provided great educational opportunities. Our discussions at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies were incredibly enlightening. His Royal Highness Dr. Abdullah Bin Khaled Bin Saud Al Saud laid out for us quite clearly the goals of Saudi foreign policy and Dr. Ghazi and Ms. Huda Alhalaisi explained to us the role of the Shura Council as advisors to the monarch. Both discussions were very insightful on how Saudi Arabia engages both its own people and the world beyond its borders. Our discussions at the Prince Saud Al Faisal Institute for Diplomatic Studies were candid and engrossing. I learned more in just a few days in Riyadh than I had in my studies of Saudi Arabia's foreign and domestic policies prior to this trip.

As I reflect on this trip, a few other thoughts come to mind. First, our guide Luluwah was an

*The entire group*





absolute gem. She was clearly very proud of her country and just a fun person to be around. I recently learned that she will be leaving Gateway KSA and I have to say it makes me sad for any “future leaders,” as she called us, that will be taking part in future iterations of this trip. She was one of the best parts of my time in the Kingdom. The same goes for the fabulous people in my cohort. They were a gathering of some of the most incredible individuals I have ever had the pleasure to meet. I am so grateful that I was with them as I could not imagine what the Gateway KSA trip would have been like without them.

Secondly, I learned that the Kingdom is committed to centering Islam in all that it does. Everywhere we went a mosque was always close at hand. From what I could see, Islam flows seam-

lessly into all facets of life in the Kingdom. This is, of course, not surprising as the Kingdom is responsible for the two most holy sites in Islam within its borders. Everything we did included Islam in some form or fashion. Even the flights we took on Saudia Airlines included a dua from the Prophet Muhammad which played right before takeoff. It was all so thought-provoking as a non-Muslim. I had only explored Islam and the Middle East in an academic context or through limited interaction with Muslim friends and colleagues. Upstate South Carolina does not have a large Muslim community so this was quite a valuable opportunity for me to learn more about Islam.

This trip was a collection of first experiences for me. It was the first time that I had ever been outside the United States. I learned

far too many things from the moment I left our local airport to the time I returned home to list here. It was certainly a departure from what I had experienced in my life thus far but a welcome occurrence, nonetheless. I developed a better understanding of Saudi Arabia through Gateway KSA, but also a better understanding of my own community in comparison. I found that people there are much the same as people here. Although it is a world away from my home in Spartanburg, Saudi Arabia contains a diverse array of people most of whom are kind, welcoming, and willing to share their culture and ideals with those interested in knowing more about them.

I am so lucky to have had this opportunity and I thank Dr. Joe Dunn for making it possible.

## Model Arab League as Preparation for Life

by Erin Smith and Rebecca Creel



Poston Twins today

### Introduction (by Joe Dunn)

Identical twins Erin and Rebecca Poston graduated from Converse twenty years ago in 2004. Because few, if any, could tell them apart, the diminutive dynamos, usually referred to simply as “the Poston twins,” were a phenomenon whose energy, wit, intelligence, and sparkle overshadowed any room. They were stars of Model Arab League for their entire four years on the delegation. Erin leaned toward chairing and delegation administration; Rebecca was primarily a debater. Today both are accomplished professionals, married with

children. Erin Smith has worked as a professional fundraiser and community activist, head of several statewide non-profit organizations, and Rebecca Creel heads her own law firm. Both live in Columbia, South Carolina and are as virtually inseparable and as effervescent as ever.

As college roommates pursuing the same major, they often finished each other’s sentences and were like a collective personage. In the following essay written together, as would be their nature, they reflect on their Model experience that lead to their mutual career successes.

### Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:

Participation in MAL, at both the regional and national levels, demanded a high level of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As a delegate, each student was required to analyze complex global issues, propose feasible solutions, and negotiate with peers to reach a consensus. For a litigator, these are crucial skills; from the boardroom to the courtroom. Understanding complex systems and being able to translate that to assist clients with their legal issues is vital.

“Much of my practice is finding solutions to very difficult problems. Sadly, happy people don’t need lawyers,” Rebecca noted. In the same way, the non-profit world demands complex strategic planning, particularly as it relates to high-level fundraising. In my time with various disability organizations and charities, including the Epilepsy Foundation, The Humane Society, The Alzheimer’s Association, and Pruitt Health Hospice, Erin continues, “honed my ability to approach challenges with a structured and analytical mindset.” Whether it was navigating a complex litigation or making important life decisions, the critical thinking skills cultivated in MAL proved to be an effective cornerstone of our success.

### Effective Communication, Negotiation and Diplomacy:

One of the primary objectives of Model programs is to simulate



Poston Twins at work

the diplomatic process, where effective communication is paramount. Rebecca explains, “As a delegate, I learned the art of expressing my ideas clearly and persuasively, adapting my communication style to different audiences. This skill has been invaluable in the legal field, enabling me to navigate diverse and difficult families, communicate with colleagues and clients effectively, and champion their causes.” Similarly, Erin remarked that “fundraising demands the highest level of communication. Building a fundraising base is about building relationships, a core tenant of the MAL program.”

The diplomatic negotiation techniques learned in MAL clearly transcend the conferences and have direct applications to post-college life. In the committee rooms, MAL students learned to find common ground, build alliances, and negotiate compromises.

es. These skills prove valuable in navigating workplace conflicts, fostering positive relationships, and reaching agreements in professional and personal spheres, including within the family, both Rebecca and Erin affirm. “As a parent, the ability to effectively communicate with a child, adapt communication styles to different ages and needs, and convey complex concepts in a simple manner is crucial,” stated Erin. Rebecca added “the diplomatic finesse learned in MAL has proven handy in negotiating with a toddler or a difficult opposing counsel.”

### Global Awareness and Cultural Sensitivity:

Model programs expose the participants to a wide array of global issues and cultures with which many were otherwise unaware. The MAL program heightens each delegate of the world’s inter-



connectedness. “Having a global perspective has been instrumental in understanding and appreciating diverse cultures, backgrounds and needs of each client. Ensuring a sense of security and ease with a client by appreciating where they come from is critical in effectively advocating for a client. It is a crucial aspect of thriving in an increasingly interconnected world,” Rebecca explains. Being more adaptable, open-minded, and culturally sensitive are qualities that Erin has found invaluable in both her personal and professional life, filled with diverse experiences and people. Both mothers note that instilling a sense of global citizenship and cultural curiosity is important in raising their children.

### Time Management and Organization:

Model Arab League demanded meticulous preparation that included research, writing, and public speaking. Juggling those responsibilities highlighted the importance of effective time management and organization – skills that were indispensable in the ‘real world’ where the demands on time are varied and often overwhelming.

“Not unlike MAL, managing time is essence in my career. Tight deadlines, voluminous information, and high-pressure situations are par for the course. The ability to manage time effectively and perform under pressure, skills developed during MAL, have been instrumental in meeting the demands of owning and running



*Postman Twins at work*

a fast-paced legal practice,” Rebecca reported. Erin, whose first husband passed away from a rare form of cancer, found these skills critical in her meeting the complex needs of a family. “Coordinating care across providers and across states, with a small child was daunting, but having served as Head Delegate during my senior year, I was well-prepared to coordinate so many complex schedules and ensure my husband received the best care possible.”

### Resilience and Adaptability:

Participating in Model programs meant facing unforeseen challenges, be it a sudden shift in diplomatic relations or a change in the committee’s agenda. These experiences taught the twins to adapt quickly and remain resilient in the face of uncertainty, a quality that proved crucial in navigating the

unpredictable nature of adulthood.

While participating in the Arab Court of Justice during my senior year” Rebecca reported, “Each delegation was to prepare and circulate legal briefs. We represented Kuwait and Harvard was representing Iraq. Their brief wasn’t circulated until the evening before our oral arguments and presentation. Under the rules at the time, I could have “won by default,” but I was determined to win on my own efforts rather than on a technicality. I spent the entire night revising my brief and preparing to argue and win, which I did. Much like in my litigation practice now, there are some very long nights, but being able to pivot is often the difference between success and failure.”

Erin echoed her sister, noting “MAL simulations are known to be unpredictable, requiring each of us to think on our feet and

adapt to changing circumstances and facts. As a parent and professional, life is no different. Unexpected challenges come up, and the ability to handle emergencies with calm and adaptability is central to success and happiness both at home and at work.”

### Conclusion *(by Joe Dunn)*

In reflection, Rebecca and Erin share that their journey through Model Arab League was not merely a series of conferences but comprehensive preparation for the challenges of adulthood both personally and professionally. The skills acquired of critical thinking, effective communication, negotiation, global vision, time management, and resilience formed a solid foundation for navigating

the complex landscape of life after college. The program not only equipped them both with the tools needed for success but also instilled in both a sense of purpose and a commitment to making a positive impact on the world.

While the twins chose different paths to fulfill that passion and commitment, the skills learned were universal. “MAL began for me as a great college extracurricular program that I shared and enjoyed with my sister. It was transformative,” said Erin. “The ability to research, communicate effectively, negotiate diplomatically, and understand diverse perspectives—all nurtured in the committee room—prepared me for the rigors of the legal profession, but also let me approach life with a

unique and enriched perspective. My journey from the committee room to the courtroom is a testament to the enduring value of the MAL program,” Rebecca concluded.

Erin, waxing nostalgically, continued, “My journey from Head Delegate to parent and professional fundraiser was an indirect one, but speaks to the lasting impact of the Model program. Building relationships, passionate communication, and complex problem solving – pillars of MAL advocacy – are central to my success as a professional fundraiser and mother. From boardrooms to kindergarten classrooms, MAL armed me with a diplomatic toolkit for navigating the intricacies of professional and personal life.”

### *Joe Dunn adds:*

I could tell so many stories about both of these amazing young women. But I will suffice it with only two vivid memories. The first, Rebecca has already alluded to, when she took on two Harvard pre-law students and literally eviscerated them in the mock trial case. They had no idea what they were up against and apparently did not take seriously enough this diminutive, pretty young woman with a sweet smile and charming South Carolina drawl. It was virtually a scene from the movie *Legally Blond* (2001). As I watched this performance, seldom have I ever been more proud of a student, and I knew that I would never want to come up against her in a court room.

For Erin, again we return to their 5-foot statures. In one committee room where she served as chair, the room was long and narrow. Delegates at the far end could barely see her above the table. Always inventive, to elevate herself, she scooped up a tall stack of thick telephone books and sat on top of them in her chair so that she was more visible. Winner of several best chair awards, she literally commanded the room in any situation.

Both young women set a standard and demanded that younger delegates adhere to the same high principles. They remain legends of Converse folklore. Our delegates to this day remember and celebrate their predecessors, and among that number, the many stories handled down about the “Poston twins” or the “twinkies” as they were often called, place them high on the list of those who will never be forgotten.



## A Career Enhanced by Model Arab League

by Olivia Haas



*Olivia at border protest*

Nine years ago, I was a teenager from Atlanta, Georgia, who thought a small school in a place called Spartanburg, South Carolina was not where I was going to learn about the big, globally-connected world. I naively assumed D.C. was the only place where I could learn to use my voice to stand up and speak out. However, after I witnessed the Model Arab League (MAL) demonstration at a prospective student recruitment day, my mind started to change and I opened up to Converse College.

Like many of Dr. Dunn's students, as I started college I was overwhelmed, trying to understand what international affairs looked like in real life. Freshman year, I distinctly remember hearing the news about horrendous terrorist attacks executed by ISIS in Beirut and Paris. Grappling to understand the reality, I asked my

roommate what she thought. She confessed she ignored bad things happening in the world. I was shocked, as a goal of mine in college was to learn about the issues facing the world to find my path in helping solve them. The conversation highlighted not only my lack of knowledge but also how complicated issues can feed apathy and helplessness.

Unsettled by my roommate's choice of blissful ignorance, I discussed the news with Dr. Dunn, who shared the historic and religious background of ISIS. His insight compelled me to organize a panel open to the community to learn about historical, religious, and political aspects of this terrorism. Instead of shying away from difficult conversations, we gathered as a community to wrestle with an issue with nuance. Dr. Dunn helped me realize that I did not need to be in a position



*Olivia in her freshman year*

of power to effect change on campus.

As I started MAL, I found a community of people equally passionate and inquisitive about the larger world. Although, there were certainly stressful times, due to the high level of rigor that went into preparing for competitions, I had discovered my place. Over time I realized that the research, writing, and debate preparations were not just for competitions, but were to help me develop as a leader and thinker who was not timid to speak out. When I was selected as the Student Body President, I continued to organize panels to bring facts and perspective on national and international affairs, such as the influx of refugees fleeing their homes and the effects of the termination of the DACA program. I believe MAL was a formative factor that empowered me to speak up outside of the debate context.

When I enrolled in Dr. Dunn's course, "Women in Africa and Asia," I started putting together what my career in international affairs could be. As I reflected on the stories of women who had suffered and fled their homes to escape war, torture, and persecution, I noticed a troubling pattern: these brave women seeking refuge were often met with institutional violence and discrimination in the countries that were supposed to provide a haven of safety. And this was also occurring in the United States.

I interned during the summer at the Latin American Association in Atlanta where I conducted research and wrote policy proposals contextualizing the causes of forced migration from Central America to the U.S. Model League had prepared me well to conduct policy research from the hours of research each week for our Sunday evening practices. During this policy internship, I still had a nagging sense of disconnectedness from the issue of immigration. Through the auspices of the Bard Globalization and International Affairs program, I spent a semester at Central American Legal Assistance (CALA) in New York working one-on-one with immigrants fleeing persecution in search of safety in a new country.

After graduating from Converse, I continued working at Central American Legal Assistance (CALA), from the basement of a church in Brooklyn, New York, advocating for and working with recently arrived, low-income im-



*CALA group*

migrant families. I learned from these families about the hardships, discrimination, and persecution they faced in their home communities. I witnessed and gained a profound insight into the impact of our laws on people seeking safety: families being separated, people stuck in the shadows without protection or promise of a future, and some deported back to inevitable harm, or even worse, death.

While immersed in immigration law, I challenged myself to imagine what change could look like and be effective. Unsure that the legal field was my path to help achieve the change desired, I took a graduate course that examined how social transformation is achieved. In the course, I analyzed the tools of successful labor and civil rights movements of the 20th and 21st centuries. My next step was to go to Oakland, California to work in the Urban Leaders Fellow program with the Oakland mayor's office to view

how policy and community work fit together. I realized quickly that my heart is working with directly-impacted individuals and centering the voice of these individuals to achieve change.

I have now returned to non-profit immigration law and have been accepted to University of Georgia School of Law. My experience working in the system compels me to seek the expertise to engage more deeply in addressing the injustices of our immigration laws. In reflecting on my journey to law school, I think back to that second-semester sophomore year and the "Women and Africa and Asia" course as a pivotal moment that helped me find the path that I continue on today. Dr. Dunn shining a light on the trails and tribulations of the poor and disposed of the world is something I will always be grateful from my years at Converse. And Model Arab League played a large role in my personal development.



My Summer Internship

by Anna E. Scott

The summer between junior and senior year of college is typically spent figuring out what you plan to do post-graduation. For me, that meant spending ten weeks in Washington, D.C. completing the USSIP Summer Internship with the National Council on US-Arab Relations. Many students from across the country apply for this program each year, but only a limited number of 25 are accepted. I was competing with students from Brown, Columbia, Yale, and many more. Once I received my letter of acceptance, I went through a series of interviews with various partner organizations for the external portion of the internship. I was offered and accepted a position with Islamic Relief USA, a close-knit environment with a strong international reputation. I served as a public affairs intern, which meant that I constructed blog posts, attended advocacy meetings, and learned about the lobbying process on Capitol Hill. The work was primarily remote, and I was happy to

be able to work at my own pace to meet deadlines and use my spare time to enjoy all that D.C. had to offer. The National Council portion of the internship included lectures from the Council’s president Dr. John Duke Anthony and a series of guest speakers from various branches of government or private enterprise. The topics ranged from GCC relations to the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and even how to secure a job at the State Department. We also visited many sites that the program coordinators Delaney Leslie and Hannah Norton arranged, such as the Holocaust Museum, Library of Congress, Museum of the Palestinian People, and the embassies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait. We also attended a Washington Nationals baseball game. One of the major highlights of the summer was being invited to attend a formal dinner reception by the Muslim World League, where His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa gave

a powerful presentation followed by a fantastic three-course dinner. Islamic Relief USA provided me further experiences that included numerous networking opportunities as well as site visits to the Capitol, the White House, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, and the House of Representatives office buildings. Meeting the organization’s public affairs team initially was very intimidating. These experienced individuals with years of on the Hill and/or in nonprofits provided a model of what constant and tire-some advocacy entailed. However, they made me feel incredibly welcome and ensured that I adjusted well to life in D.C. I have had some wonderful external college experiences, including last year’s trip to Saudi Arabia with KSA Global. These are opportunities not to miss in one’s undergraduate years. They are great resume builders and they prepare you for the world after graduation. Do not miss out on these experiences of a lifetime.

Internship in DC





# Converse Dominates at Southeast and National Models

## SERMAL

The Converse Model Programs team experienced one of the best years in its 37 years of competitions. After totally dominating International Model NATO in Washington, DC in February with the Outstanding citation in every one of the six committees, the team also virtually swept both the Southeast Model Arab League (SERMAL), held at Converse March 15-17, 2024, and the National University Model Arab League (NUMAL), held in Washington, DC, March 21-24, 2024.

At SERMAL, the team represented Egypt and Kuwait. With the Outstanding award in 6 of the 8 councils and the second place Distinguished Award in the two other councils, the Egypt delegation was the overwhelming Best Delegation. Georgia State (Oman) finished second, and three delegations, University of Arkansas-Little Rock (Tunisia), Converse (Kuwait), and Spartanburg Community College (Somalia) tied for the Distinguished designation among the 14 delegations.

Converse’s S. Feser was selected the Outstanding Chair with Jack Stokes and Faith Nanna cited as the co-Distinguished chairs. Anna Scott served as the Secretary-General for the Model.

The newly appointed president and CEO of the National Council on U.S-Arab Relations, Delano Roosevelt, grandson of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, was the keynote speaker.

## NUMAL

The National Model this year convened at the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center followed by a faculty dinner at a local Ethiopian restaurant. Sessions during the model were held at George Mason University.

In one of its most resounding performances in its history, the Converse Model Arab League delegation competing against 22 of top programs in the country, literally dominated the National Model Arab League competition this weekend in Washington, DC.



The two annual rival best delegations, Converse and Northeastern, pictured together at NUMAL.

Like at SERMAL, the delegation, representing Egypt, took the Outstanding Award in 6 of the 8 councils (although in different councils than at SERMAL), with the Distinguished Award in the other two councils. Other winning delegations were Northeastern University (Djibouti), Georgia State (Oman), Brigham Young University (Iraq), George Mason University (Lebanon), and University of Wyoming (Morocco).

Repeating performances at SERMAL, Jack Stokes and S. Feser were cited by the faculty as the Outstanding Council Chairs.

Equally impressive were the Converse selections for Council Chairs for next year named through a competitive interview process. Converse will head half the councils next year: Jack Stokes will return as chair of the Joint Defense Council; Pashion Israel will head the Heads of State Council; and two Converse freshman were selected to be National Chairs, Kate Hanchon in the Political Council and Kimberlain Williams in the Environmental Council. National chairs write the topic guides during the summer for next years’ models. Gretchen Berry was selected as an Assistant Secretary General who monitor the councils during the National Model.

Converse head delegates Anna Scott and Samm White prepared and led this year’s delegation that set new records in its overwhelming performances all of its models this year.



ACJ NUMAL



Summit NUMAL



Palestinian Council NUMAL



# Converse Interfaith Program

by Joe Dunn



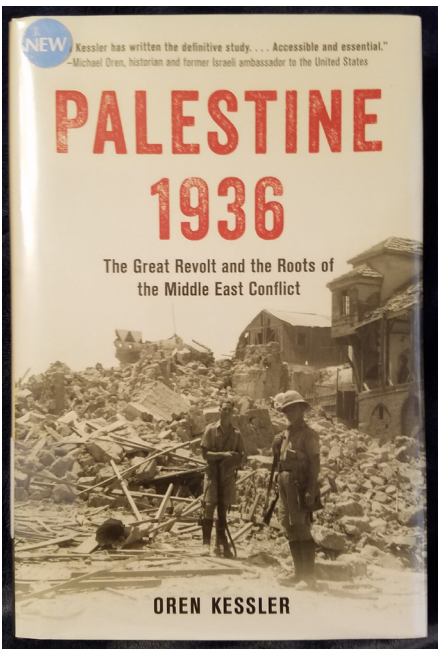
Religious Diversity Seminar

The Converse University Interfaith Excellence Program on February 22 hosted a Fireside Chat on religious diversity in the community. Panelist included Fareeha Qazi, a local Muslim activist and social justice advocate, originally from Pakistan, and Father Bartolomew Leon, a Maronite Catholic priest, who shepherds Maronites primarily from Lebanon and Jordan, but he also serves the larger Arab Catholic community in Greenville, South Carolina. Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Anne Garner also was part of the panel. As they related personal experiences from their activities in the community, all three stressed the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation. This was the first of several fireside chats with different members of the various faith communities.

# Palestine 1936: The Great Revolt and the Roots of the Middle East Conflict (2023)

By Oren Kessler

Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Charles A. Dana Professor of History & Politics, Converse University



Oren Kessler argues that the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, the first Intifada, is the most significant event in the development of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the least addressed for a general audience. This uprising against the British mandate policies, he argues “was the crucible in which Palestinian identity coalesced,” but it turned out to be a tragedy. The community was split apart, the economy decimated, thousands killed or wounded, Arab Palestine’s fight-

ing capacity diminished, the first wave of Palestinians refugees created, and pragmatic leaders gave way to extremists.

For the Zionist Jews, a transformation also occurred. With thousands of Jews trained and armed by the British, the seeds of the Jewish military was born, and a more militant Zionist leadership rejected accommodation and turned to military might and terrorism to gain and retain the land. The British determined that their dreams for the Palestinian mandate were a greater cost than they were willing to pay and thus planned to withdraw.

Surprisingly, little scholarship in English, Hebrew, or Arabic has significantly addressed this time period. Kessler approaches his narrative history through focus on a few key protagonists in the three-sided conflict: Zionists Chaim Weizmann, David Ben-

Gurion, Moshe Shertok, and Vladimir Jabotinsky; Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husseini, Musa Alami, and George Antonius on the Palestinian side; and British colonial officials Arthur Wauchoppe, Harold MacMichael, William Ormsby-Gore, and Malcolm MacDonald. The profiles of the individuals are enlightening and fascinating

The subject is unbelievably complex, but Kessler has produced a balanced, fair-minded, readable account full of small details and insights in a modest-length account. Although he projects the book for the general reader, that may be a reach. In truth, one must have a sound background in the region and conflict to follow the twists, turns, and machinations of the events. But with some level of understanding of the subject, it is a good and valuable read. I gained immeasurably from reading it.