News Highlights



Jews Highlights

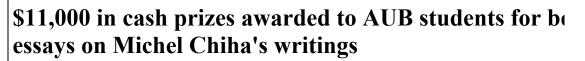
or:

ı Al-Azar, a Relations Officer,

e of Information and Public Relations, o:ma110@aub.edu.lb?subject=\$11,000 sh prizes awarded to AUB students for essays on Michel Chiha's writings

olas Saadeh's winning essay

- te George's second place essay
- in Hayden's third place essay
- th Bonazza's fourth place essay
- al Ramia's fifth place essay
- rek Tutunji's sixth place essay





Winners with their checks: [L-R] Bonazza, Hayden, Tutunji, George, Ramia, and Saadeh

Six AUB students were each awarded up to \$4000 in cash prizes for winning essays they submitted to the Michel Chiha competition about the late editorialist's newest published compilation.

Organized by the Center for Behavioral Research in collaboration with the Michel Chiha Foundation, the essay contest which was announced in February, was meant to encourage anglophone students to discover Chiha, a francophone writer. A renowned Lebanese thinker a one of the fathers of the Lebanese constitution, Chiha originally wrote his opinion pieces in th French language daily, L'Orient Le Jour, which he had partially owned.

Khalaf: For

the first

Michel

time,

Published in English for the first time in 2008, as part of an anthology entitled Palestine: Political Reflections, 1945-1954, Chiha's visionary and prophetic edito from the late 1930s until his death in 1954 were made accessible to a nonfrancophone audience, as Professor Samir Khalaf noted during the distribution of

prizes.

francophone

More than 90 students initially registered for the contest and read Chiha's antholog But only 23 met the May 15 deadline, producing essays from a variety of angles. Chiha is being read

in English The six finalists chose to study Chiha's anthology from different perspectives, son political, some psychological or literary, and others more personal.

Winners, who were described as an eclectic group with diverse interests, were announced by Professor Khalaf at a ceremony on June 11, after they read excerpts from their essays to a larg audience in College Hall.

Nicholas Saadeh, a first-generation Lebanese-American, an AUB medical student with a degre aerospace engineering, and an avid ballet dancer, grabbed first prize or \$4000.

Nate George, a Lebanese-American studying at the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern studie after having earned a degree in cinema from the United States, is also a DJ. He placed second with a \$3000 cash prize.

John Hayden, a Canadian with a degree in history from Toronto, is a master's candidate in the political studies and public administration department and an active member of the AUB choin He landed third, receiving \$2000. Ruth Bonazza, a Canadian-American with a degree in international affairs, is currently focusin on social and behavioral sciences at AUB, after having studied in Japan and taught school children in several places. She is an avid reader and swimmer and came to Lebanon because si fell in love with its beautiful rocks in a picture atlas book. She won fourth prize, or \$1000.
Paul Ramia, a biology pre-medical student who loves public speaking and athletics, came in fi with a \$500 prize; while Tarek Tutunji, a PSPA graduate who is currently pursuing a master's degree in comparative politics, is a member of the University Student-Faculty Committee, a writer for Outlook, and enjoys filming. He placed sixth, also receiving \$500. A jury composed of Professor Bashshar Haydar (Philosophy) Professor Samer Ghosn (Dermatology) and Professor Roseanne Saad Khalaf (Creative Writing), and two representing Chiha Foundation, blindly evaluated the essays over several weeks before choosing the winne
Nicholas Saadeh analyzed Chiha's prophetic editorials while interspersing his essay with perso accounts from his Palestinian maternal grandparents.
"Like [my grandfather], Chiha dreamt not of a land free of Jews but of 'Muslims, Christians, a Jews, collaborating in Palestine within one and the same governmentgiving Judaism 'the pea to which it is entitled'," he wrote.
Saadeh highlighted Chiha's anti-Zionist, though equally anti-racist political stances. "Although Chiha, like all noble people decried the horrors imparted on Jews by the Nazi regin in reference to its use as a justification for the usurping of Palestinian land, he courageously warned: 'Pity and politics make strange bedfellows'," wrote Saadeh. "The mark of a statesman the ability to rise above emotion and passion in times of crisis and remain loyal to the eternal truths which is the very definition of civilityDespite the atrocities being committed before hi eyes and the certainty with which he predicted the arrival of its repercussions in his homeland Lebanon, Chiha never wavered from his differentiation of Zionism and Judaism," he added.
Meanwhile, George spotlighted Chiha's still-relevant anti-Zionist arguments, almost 65 years is the political thinker had first raised them. Focusing his analysis on one editorial, titled a "Hori Without a Sun," George considered Chiha's "scathing denunciations of the Zionist project," as "devastatingly prophetic." However, he concluded that all hope is not lost, and if the internatic community would stop supporting Israel militarily, peace would still be possible. Hayden, on the other hand, chose to compare Chiha to Isaiah Berlin, a Latvian-born Orthodox and Zionist who is believed to have had a profound and lasting influence on liberal theory. Hayden argued that while Chiha represented the conservative Burkean side of liberalism, Berl "embodied the more modern, left-leaning liberal outlook." However, he added, "Berlin's libera values had made his ardent Zionism problematic." Hayden concluded: "What liberal values arpossible then, which do not recognize the rights of Palestinians?"
Choosing a more literary approach, Bonazza compared Chiha to Cassandra, the Greek goddes who had the gift of prophecy but was cursed by Apollo so that no one would believe her. Similarly, Bonazza argued Chiha "could see the future but could not alter it."

	"Although many tried to mute the impact of Chiha's writing by closing their ears, its significar lasts and lights a path for future speakers of truth and heralds to follow," wrote Bonazza. "It is as if history is mocking its readers, revealing missed opportunities and alternative yet inaccessible paths," wrote Bonazza. "On September 26, 1945, Chiha asks, 'Whence the wrath ages which recurs throughout history like an incurable disease, heralding unbridled fanaticism This 'wrath' comes from the failure of the international community to stop the creation of a singular Zionist state in Palestine," she continued.
	As for Ramia and Tutunji, they both addressed Chiha's writings in the context of current event Quoting Chiha, Ramia wrote: "The West has prevented the Jew, whom it has itself so often maltreated, from making peace with the Arab, his brother, who has never done him any harm."
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