

YONI FURAS

OXFORD HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

# EDUCATING PALESTINE

Teaching & Learning History  
under the Mandate



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# Educating Palestine

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YONI FURAS

OXFORD  
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*To Maya, Michael and Nuri*



# Abbreviations

AIU	Alliance Israélite Universelle's
AUB	American University of Beirut
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CZA	Central Zionist Archive
DIE	District Inspector of Education
DoE	Director of Education
HA	Haganah Archives, Tel Aviv
ISA	Israel State Archives, Jerusalem
JNF	Jewish National Fund
MECA	Middle East Centre St. Antony's College, Oxford
PBS	Palestine Broadcasting Service
PHBS	Palestine Board for Higher Studies
Shai	Sherut Yedi'ot, the Haganah's intelligence service
SOS	School of Oriental Studies
SPC	Syrian Protestant College
TNA	The National Archives, London
UCL	University College London



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From the age of sixteen until I turned twenty-eight, I saw myself as a radical revolutionary educator. During the time I was a *madrikh* (a combination of leader, guide, and counsellor) in a socialist-Zionist youth movement, I thought the inculcation of the true version of history was the ultimate panacea to all of society's ills. For me it was this history that made sense of guiding groups on pilgrimages to Tel-Ḥai, the Kinneret Cemetery, the death camps in Poland, and my *ḥanikhim*'s (members of the youth movement) draft to the army. This study about the unholy connection between history, ideology, and education is also very much a personal reflective journey.

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Don't believe the eagle's song,  
or the croaking of frogs.  
However far they expatriate, they shall remain  
Swamp dwellers, birds of prey.

Shlomi Shaban, 'Yehezkel Mamshil', 2000.

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# Introduction

In the lives of two prominent educators, 1920 was an eventful year. Khalil Totah (1886–1955), then 34 years old, was appointed by the British to head the Men's Elementary Training College, Palestine's most prestigious school for the training of teachers in Jerusalem. This was a major leap forwards for the young MA graduate of Columbia University's Teachers' College. It was a significant period for Chaim Arie Zuta (1868–1939), a pioneer in Hebrew education, as well. Zuta immigrated to Palestine from Czarist Russia in 1903 to continue his career as a teacher. Like Totah, Zuta engaged in the training of teachers at the Hebrew Teachers' Training Seminar, another Jerusalemite institute of similar prestige. In 1920, both educators authored a historical guidebook to Jerusalem, emphasizing the ties between nation, space, and history: one city, one physical space, two images of social realities. In their surveys of schools in Jerusalem, Zuta wrote about Jewish schools, and Totah about schools for Arabs.<sup>1</sup>

The April Nabi-Musa riots in Jerusalem, the bloodiest outburst of Arab–Jewish violence in decades, preceded Totah's nomination by a few months. Totah saw the threat of Zionism earlier on. Roughly a year earlier he had contributed an article to an edited volume titled *Reconstruction of Palestine*, published by the Palestine Anti-Zionism Society.<sup>2</sup> In this article about education and Palestine's renaissance, Totah noted the superiority of Jewish education established by 'Israelite colonialism' (*al-isti' mār al- isrā' ilī*) with tacit alarm and offered a unified education system for Palestinian Muslims and Christians.<sup>3</sup> In May, Zuta took part in a series of historic meetings of central Hebrew educators that were to lay the foundation for the Yishuv's (the Jewish community in pre-state Palestine) Hebrew elementary curriculum. In the discussions, Zuta emphasized the spiritual and physical virtues

<sup>1</sup> Khalil Totah and Büluş Şihādah, *Tārīkh al-quḍs*, 88–95; Chaim Arie Zuta and Eleazar Lipa Sukenik, *Madrikh li-yerushalayim*, 163–7.

<sup>2</sup> The Palestine Anti-Zionism Society was an organization established by the Syrian community in New York shortly after the publication of the Balfour Declaration: Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 104.

<sup>3</sup> Khalil Totah, 'al-Tahdhib', 107.

of the child and the need for development of national and universal moral values. The Arab inhabitants of Palestine, their language, and their history were absent from the minutes.<sup>4</sup> In the following years these two prominent educators would separately publish popular history textbooks for schools. In one book, the Balfour Declaration was heralded a mandate of salvation, and in the other, a catastrophe.

In July, the first High Commissioner was appointed, thus marking the official inception of civil administration and the implementation of British imperial policy, the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people. In November, Humphrey Bowman (1879–1965), the future architect of colonial education in the country, came to Palestine to head its Department of Education. Its smaller office and home compared to the ones he had enjoyed in his previous post in Baghdad, made Palestine in no way a promotion for this experienced administrator. As early as December, he noted in his diary that the Declaration was a mistake and that the British ought to abandon it.<sup>5</sup> Though certain he would stay only for one year, he remained until the eve of the Great Arab Revolt and repeatedly tendered his resignation from the early 1920s onwards.<sup>6</sup> Bowman's diaries are intriguing not only for his (nearly) illegible handwriting, but also because they reflected the complexity of his role. The architect of British colonial education in Palestine simply did not want to be there and reluctantly manoeuvred between the contradictions that stymied his task.

Total, Zuta, and Bowman or, more broadly, Palestinian or Hebrew educators and British colonial administrators, had different plans for the future of Palestine, as articulated in their pedagogy and educational policy. This book focuses on this educational triangle, and aims to delineate its history of interdependence and reciprocity by arguing that the encounter and friction between these three points of view was fundamental to the formation of Palestinian and Hebrew education and central to the rewriting of the past for history lessons. The decision to study this encounter through education and the teaching of history lies in its myriad and multifaceted articulations in the colonial, Palestinian, and Hebrew pedagogic discourse, the textbook industry, the life stories of educators and students, and the various forms of interactions between these interrelated spheres. Although the British were

<sup>4</sup> Va'ad ha-ḥinukh, *Tamtsit ha-protokolim*, the Arabic language is mentioned in passing on page 13.

<sup>5</sup> Bowman's diary, 20 December 1920, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>6</sup> Bowman's diary, 30 December 1923, 13 May 1926, 25 July 1934, Bowman files, MECA.

the patrons of the country, in the field of education, they were only one actor among many. Local educators such as Totah and Zuta were pivotal in envisioning and configuring the educational landscape within a national discourse. Education was a prime instrument for the dissemination of their vision of turning Palestine's people, spaces, and pasts into ideological constructs that were reconceptualized and manipulated to answer its calling. Still, education did not remain on the receiving end of national or colonial ideology because its image and perceived functions often changed colonial and national ideology. Therefore, the study of education consists of an analysis of exchanges between multiple interlocutors who had shifting degrees of influence on, and interaction with, each other.

The teaching of history in the schools of both the Arab and Jewish communities played, and continues to play, a fundamental role in this discussion by moulding the chaotic past into linear national narratives.<sup>7</sup> This inculcation of personal/collective stories articulates an inherent teleology, a destiny whose inception is situated at the beginning of times, and its eternal spirit moves constantly between redemption and catastrophe. The Arab or Jewish student is guided through a narrative that entails its own distinct essence regardless of its surroundings, and the spirit of the nation manifests as a permanent being within an ever-evolving reality.

This book seeks to trace, elucidate, and interpret the grassroots of these national-educational self-portraits. It looks at history teaching and education in general as a reflection of the intellectual, social, and political circumstances and interests that shaped the nature of Palestinian society, Arabs, and Jews, in Mandate Palestine, a quasi-nation-state with two conflicting *raison d'être*. It tells the story of the emergence of a modern education system and the structuring of a history curriculum under British colonial rule within new epistemic and physical borders drawn up after the end of the First World War.

It also seeks to decipher the mechanism by which the modern experience and visions of Arab or Hebrew modernity was translated into the teaching and writing of history. To do so it examines how concepts of race, culture, and civilization were adapted and reinterpreted in historical writing and pedagogy, how Arabic and Hebrew histories were written in these Western categories, and how, in this process, Arabs and Jews wrote themselves back into history,

<sup>7</sup> Eyal Naveh, '*Avar bi-se'arah*'; Nurit Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*; Elie Podeh, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Israeli History Textbooks*; Aryeh Kizel, *Hiṣṭoryah meshu'abedet*.

moving themselves from its margins to its centre as its protagonists. Furthermore, it examines how their 'modern' historiographies, written within a shared space that each history sought to appropriate as its exclusive property, related to one another and how these narratives reflected, and contributed to the conflict that would drive the two communities apart.

One of the most acute needs of the post-Ottoman education systems in the Middle East was for new history textbooks. These had to address not only the teaching of the community's old-new story, but also endow it with meaning, morals, and ethos. Writing these books was a taxing undertaking, as it entailed an epistemological shift, operating in a new discourse and politics of identity, within new borders. A group of teachers, school principals, and education department officials undertook the heavy burden of writing this story into a methodical course of study. This book focuses on the personal stories of these educators and their motivations for writing history. They wrote history with a specific purpose: as a socializing agent implemented in the history lesson, to prepare for the history examination, and to inculcate a formal version of the past. They wrote the new story, taught it, and negotiated its outlines with the British.

I have tried as much as possible to trace the social contextualization of this historiography rather than remaining confined to an intellectual history of Palestinian historiography or to a Palestinian history of ideas during the Mandate period. Hence, this is not a study of the history of Palestinian thought, or the emergence of Palestinian historiography, nor is it a survey of Palestinian nationhood and identity through the reading of textbooks. These categories are only one aspect of the complex sociology of Palestinian knowledge presented here, an arena composed of various and diverse players and agencies, shaped and transformed by their interplay and mutual influences. It is an arena in which no clear hierarchy or clear order exist between the plea for cultural capital, the challenge of socioeconomic mobility within the colonial context, and notions of nationalism or self-determination.

The analysis of the personnel files of educators from the Department of Education, the protocols of the Department's different committees, the unpublished diaries of British officials, the use of textbooks rather than 'real' history books, as well as school journals, enables a departure from, or a challenge to, the familiar historian-text-political context triangle of the study of historiography, where all too often one side (usually the third) forces itself on the two others. This study highlights the inner contradictions and complexities that characterized the lives, writings, and teachings of

educators under British colonialism. In examining these complexities, this study is attentive to Timothy Mitchell's Foucauldian view of schooling as a disciplining project for the consolidation of social order and collective obedience.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, I also adhere to Gregory Starrett's view of the school as a locus of tension and contradiction that can only be partially understood through ideology or discipline. Especially under colonial rule, there is much to investigate beyond the empire's objectives of students' and teachers' passivity. Even when meticulously constructed, as Starrett has argued, education has 'ambiguous and unpredictable influence.'<sup>9</sup>

### Natives and Nonnatives in Search of the New

The seeds of the *Nahḍa* and *Tehiyah*, the Arab and Hebrew cultural-national renaissance movements, had already been sown during the nineteenth century. Both movements sought to revive and revitalize their respective languages and history as an articulation of their identity.<sup>10</sup> This intellectual endeavour was primarily dominant in the field of education. However, although both Palestinian and Hebrew educational projects demanded a personal and collective existential metamorphosis, there is an essential difference between the conceptualization of both national projects and their distinctive grasp and experience of the modern. The creation of the new Arab articulated an educational ethos of personal and collective salvation through books, libraries, and primarily newly conceived, scientific, cultural, and globally acknowledged knowledge. This salvation involved the abandonment of all that was considered backwards and despicable in the native's way of life and was designed if not to de-nativize him, to reconceptualize its very notion of nativeness. The Hebrew curriculum revolved around the idea of nativization; that is, turning the settlers-immigrants-refugees into new Jews, who would not only know the land, but own and cultivate it. These contradictory trajectories, away from nativeness and towards it however, served similar national purposes.

Like other national movements, the driving force of negation was central to this conceptualization. Benjamin Harshav defined the three negations formulated by trends in Jewish nationalisms since the final decades of the

<sup>8</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 73, 78.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Lital Levy, 'The Nahḍa and the Haskala'.



nineteenth century: *Not here, Not like now, Not as we are/I am*. They express deep personal and collective existential discomfort with: (a) the physical place of living, (b) the collective political and social status including the future of education and professions, and (c) the collective 'We' that represents all that is considered wrong, especially in relation to a negative 'Other' to avoid fitting into the stereotypes that characterized the collectivity.<sup>11</sup> While the relevance of this theory is clear for Hebrew education, its relevance to Palestinian nationalism requires further discussion.

The Palestinian national movement was engaged in a project of cultural and economic development while fighting an anticolonial struggle over their home or homeland. The colonial experience of modernity was characterized by ambivalence and doubt, where the colonial subject adopted Western rationalism while asserting his capacity to resist Western political and cultural hegemony.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this book focuses on cultural translations in the formulation of the national modern, rather than viewing colonial modernity as pale mimicry of Western progress.<sup>13</sup> True (non-Western) modernity could only be achieved through authenticity,<sup>14</sup> whereas the 'authentic' and the 'modern' took on constantly debatable and shifting meanings and uses. The tension between the two encapsulated the modern Arab experience.

Nevertheless, even within the imposition of colonial modernity, Marshall Berman's definition of modernity as the attempt on the part of people to become subjects and objects of modernization still applies. It constitutes an attempt motivated by fear of disorientation, disintegration, and a *will* to change oneself and one's surroundings, and the wish to make oneself home in the modern world.<sup>15</sup> Hence national education sought to provide orientation, a trajectory grounded in what was considered authentic, yet motivated by a will for social change and reform.

For the Palestinian educational leadership located in the cities and emanating mainly from urban middle and upper classes, the subject of this project was a knowledgeable man of letters, one who would know his old-new culture, the world East to West, and who could become an asset to society as a diploma-carrying professional. Judging by the many photos of (male) secondary school students, with their tidy hair, ironed three-piece suits, and

<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution*, 17–18.

<sup>12</sup> Watenpugh, *Being Modern*, 5; Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 45.

<sup>13</sup> El-Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory*, 9. <sup>14</sup> Ryzova, *The Age of Efendiyya*, 3, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid*, 5, 13; see also Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, 13.

meaningful looks, the subject of this project sought to think and look like his equals in Cairo, Beirut, London, and New York. Yet, more than for the urban child of plenty, Palestinian education sought to include the predominantly poor and rural population in this project, because it saw them as a burden that was pulling their nation backwards.<sup>16</sup> In their bid for inclusion in this far-reaching process that offered new social, professional, economic, political, and spatial connections, they needed to change, and to transform. This was a new nativeness that put the nation in the place of the village or tribe, valued knowledge of a changing world from innumerable sources rather than the transfer of knowledge from father to son, introduced cross-country, regional, or global professional networks which contested local economic dependencies and favoured the use of leather shoes instead of walking barefoot. These transformations churned dilemmas over cultural authenticity and social mobility and required rethinking traditional class boundaries.

Social advancement via this educational process usually meant moving to the modernizing city or transforming the village and its people in its image (the latter being less likely).<sup>17</sup> Thus, the trajectory of the national-educational ethos ran contrary to the colonial educational plans that aimed at rural development while maintaining the peasants on their land.<sup>18</sup> Instead they moved from the periphery to the urban centres. Local Palestinian initiatives to build secondary schools were centred in the large cities, and none focused on agricultural education, but rather on academic training and preparation for the university level.<sup>19</sup> The Nablus Najah College, one of the educational centres of Arab and Palestinian nationalism, provides a good example of this orientation. In 1938, the school published a booklet that listed its graduates' professional careers. Only 13 out of the 210 school graduates between 1919 and 1937 (including three government employees who served as inspectors in the Department of Agriculture and Education) engaged in agriculture. Their most popular profession was teaching, but there were thirty doctors, pharmacists, and medical professionals and over

<sup>16</sup> The salvation of the *fellahin* by the advanced urbanites was a noticeable phenomenon as of the late Ottoman period, *Al-Quds*, 3, 16, 29 September 1908.

<sup>17</sup> Na'ama Ben Ze'ev, 'Returning for a Visit'.

<sup>18</sup> Esther Yankelevitch, 'ha-ḥinukh ha-ḥakla'i', 86–121.

<sup>19</sup> Agricultural schools were founded in Bayt Jamal by the Catholic Salesian order, in Deir Rafat by the Catholic Patriarchate, and in Latrun by the Trappist Fathers. An exception was Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi's agricultural school in Deir 'Amr for the orphans that was established in 1941, which gave priority to agricultural training: *al-Muntada*, 1 July 1943.

forty government employees.<sup>20</sup> The graduates of the government Kadoorie Agricultural School in Tulkarm (est. 1931), a symbol of the British educational vision of progress through agricultural reform, chose similar paths. Ironically, most of the school's professionally trained farmers preferred government jobs.<sup>21</sup> The lucrative future promised for al-Najah and Kadoorie's students was in the office, not the field. This norm had its roots in the post-Tanzimat era, in which post elementary government education, confined strictly to the urban elite, served as a conduit for the training of the Ottoman Empire's expanding civil service.<sup>22</sup> With the expansion of public education and state bureaucracy in Mandate Palestine, this dream became more tangible.

The shifting meaning of 'nativeness' had everything to do with the material prospects of the village versus the city, or the office versus the field. For most of the Mandate period, taxation, drought, plagues, and political volatility undermined the profits from agriculture for most Arab farmers. The average *fellah* (peasant) earned between £P25–30 in the 1930s, with an average annual debt of a similar sum,<sup>23</sup> while a teacher's salary with no official training ranged from £P60–96, and a holder of a secondary school certificate earned between £P96–192.<sup>24</sup> Although agriculture remained the profession of over half of the Arab population, with the rapidly increasing cost of living, the employment possibilities available in the village became less and less appealing to the younger generation, especially for the more educated.<sup>25</sup>

Zionism, on the other hand, embodied a vision of colonization engendered outside Palestine, and during the Mandate, its leadership, but most importantly for our purposes its educators, were not born or educated there. The colonization of Palestine and the establishment of a 'new society' sought to redeem the Jews and the land from their Eastern predicament; this was both an internal and an external colonization project. Hence, Zionism saw itself both as a vehicle for national modernity and as a Western power projection. Nativization, in the sense of transforming new immigrants of diverse cultures and faiths into a native cohesive collectivity, was Hebrew

<sup>20</sup> *Barnāmaj Al-Najah Al-Waṭaniyah 1938–1939*, 34–45.

<sup>21</sup> Roza I. M. El-Eini, 'The Implementation of British Agricultural Policy'.

<sup>22</sup> Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation*, 18–26.

<sup>23</sup> El-Eini; Roza I. M. El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape*, 119–20; Esther Yankelevitch, 'Te'omim sh-hufredu be-ledatam', Amos Nadan, *The Palestinian Peasant Economy*.

<sup>24</sup> Matthews, *Education in Arab Countries*, 224–5.

<sup>25</sup> Jacob Metzer and Oded Kaplan, *Meshek yehudi*, 150; Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 127–9.

education's greatest challenge. Sanctifying Hebrew as a language and as an old-new culture, establishing a spiritual connection to the land through its cultivation and mystification, turning the Bible into an historical, geographical guidebook for the country, and creating a physically strong subject that could turn vision into reality were the pillars of the Hebrew curriculum. For Hebrew education, the future was in the country's frontier, and required conquering it, civilizing it, and making it their own. The products of Hebrew agricultural work—its fruit, vegetables, and farming equipment—were part and parcel of every parade and festival in the cities, and were often held aloft by children or adolescents and symbolized the materialization of the return to the land.<sup>26</sup> Students, from the labour schools in the kibbutzim to the prestigious urban high schools mimicked the modest dress of the Halutz (pioneer).<sup>27</sup> Suit-wearing students gradually became the exception.

Jewish Palestine was overwhelmingly urban during the entire Mandate period and only 29.5 percent in 1922, falling further to 13.1 percent in 1945, of the Jewish job market was in agriculture.<sup>28</sup> Only a minority became Halutzim, but the few who did so shaped the ideal image of the new Jew. In their doing and being, they manifested the national collective ethos.<sup>29</sup> Yet despite the ascending bourgeois culture, colonization, cultivation and defence of the land were regarded with the highest esteem, especially in the school and youth movements where the role of the office clerk was downplayed and that of the cultivator of the land was venerated. Educated cultivators came in many shapes and forms, as graduates of agricultural high schools, as university graduates in the fields that could contribute to its betterment or as students in the elementary schools of kibbutzim and moshavim that were involved in agriculture.<sup>30</sup> Thus, Hebrew education played a central role in turning the geographical periphery into the nation's centre of focus.

This general outline of the two educational projects helps reframe their encounter during the Mandate. The negations discussed earlier were recast in the struggle over Palestine between a community that aimed to reform all that was native, and a community of settlers that aimed to become as native

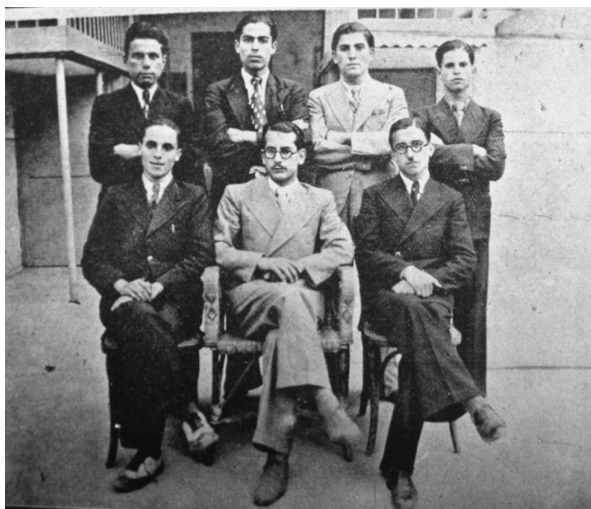
<sup>26</sup> Anat Helman, *Young Tel Aviv*, 58–9, 66–7.

<sup>27</sup> Dafna Hirsch, *Banu henah le-havi et ha-ma'arav*, 263–72.

<sup>28</sup> Metzger and Kaplan, *Mesheq yehudi*, 160.

<sup>29</sup> Anita Shapira, *Yehudim hadashim*, 12, 125–6, 133–7; Zeev Sternhell, *Binyan umah*, 55–8; Boaz Neumann, *Teshukat ha-halutsim*.

<sup>30</sup> Nirit Reichel, "Ofakim" mul 'hagshamah'; Esther Yankelevitch, 'Le-toldot bate ha-sefer', 309–22.



**Photo 1** Student Board of the English Club, al-Najah, 1938 (from: *Barnāmaj madrasat al-Najāh al-waṭaniyah 1938–1939*).



**Photo 2** Students at the Hebrew Kadoorie school, circa 1940. Uzi and Sarah Cohen collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevy Photo Archive, Yad Ben-Zvi.

as its foe. These different responses in fact were attempting to answer the same educational questions. What would make the community stronger, independent, and self-sufficient? More specifically, what kind of education would serve the community best in the struggle over Palestine?

## 'Dual Society' and 'Relational' Theories: A Compromise

The history of Palestine under the Mandate is seen, in broad terms, through one of two lenses that have dominated the literature. The dual society theory examines the two communities as entities with a distinct cultural, political, and economic essence and structure that evolved separately. The relational theory, especially in the last two decades, has challenged these self-evident ethno-national, cultural, economic, administrative, and interpersonal boundaries and highlighted the historical importance of encounters and interactions between Arabs and Jews as central to the evolution of both communities.<sup>31</sup>

The dual society theory underlines the minimal if not inexistent interaction between the majority of Arabs and Jews;<sup>32</sup> whereas only a tiny fraction of Palestinian Arabs spoke or read Hebrew, Arabic speaking Jews, an influential and significant community before the First World War, were also overshadowed socially, politically, and culturally by the massive influx of European Jews as of the 1920s, who became the overwhelming majority by the end of the Mandate.

This view was summed up in the Peel Commission report, which stated, 'There is no common ground between them. The Arab community is predominantly Asiatic in character, the Jewish community predominantly

<sup>31</sup> Jacobson and Naor reframe the question of Jewish-Arab relations during the Mandate in a broader Levantine perspective, by focusing on Mizrahi or Sephardi Jews in the Arab-speaking Middle East and their relations with their Arab neighbors: Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors*. Klein's study offers a history from below of Arab-Jewish relations in three mixed cities: Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common*. Hart discussed Arab-Jewish relations in Jaffa and Tel Aviv: Rachel Hart, *Ḳerovim-reḥokim*. For widespread cultural ties and shared leisure spaces, see Boaz Lev Tov, 'Shekhenim nokheḥim'; on aspects of Arab Jewish relations in late Ottoman Palestine, see Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*; on forbidden romantic relationships between Jewish girls and Jewish women with Arab men, see Tammy Razi, 'Yehudiyot-'arviyot?': 137–60. Political and administrative cooperation between Arabs and Jews in the Haifa municipality is examined in Tamir Goren, *Shituf be-tsel 'imut*, 364–5. On the influence of Palestinian culture on the evolution of Jewish-Israeli way of life, see Yonatan Mendel and Ronald Ranta, *From the Arab Other*.

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Metzger, *The Divided*; Smith's study emphasizes the role of British colonial policy in creating economic segregation: Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots*.



European. They differ in religion and in language. Their cultural and social life, their ways of thought and conduct, are as incompatible as their national aspirations.<sup>33</sup> This overview of the country's bifurcated society was reflected in its divided economy. In 1935 (before the Arab Revolt that further exacerbated national segregation), 96.5 percent of the Jewish labour force either were self-employed (including members of collective settlements) or were employed by Jewish institutions and private employers. Only three percent were government employees, and 0.5 percent were either employed by or provided professional labour services to Arabs.<sup>34</sup> According to the 'dual society' outlook, this division was actively established by the Yishuv whose ideology, institutions, and politics were mobilized towards the construction of a separate and distinct entity.<sup>35</sup>

Scholars who began to examine the Zionist movement through parameters of settler colonialism have taken a different approach and underlined the conflictual relations with the Arab population over demography, land, and labour that showed them to be crucial to the crystallization process of the Yishuv.<sup>36</sup> This scholarship has sought to challenge the dominant analysis of Zionism through an ideological prism and have delineated the materialist repercussions of its settlement movement beyond the Jewish community by emphasizing the points of encounter and mutual influence. These works have led to a new perspective on Palestinian society as a whole which stresses the importance and centrality of Arab and Jewish relations that transcended national and religious divides. Nevertheless, this scholarship has remained confined to urban space, the social and economic periphery of the mixed cities, and shared spaces of the administration. It has left rural Palestine (the Arab community's vast majority), nonurban Jewish settlements (of both the Old and the New Yishuv), and the mainstream social and economic spheres of both communities outside the picture.

Rather than arguing for or against these theories, it would be more advantageous to acknowledge their dialectical coexistence that fits the multitude of paradoxes that were at the heart of the Mandate system. Mandate Palestine was simultaneously a space shared by people who interacted as people regardless of their nationality, and, as the years went by, a society that went through accelerated processes of segregation in all fields of life.

<sup>33</sup> Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, Chapter XX, 370.

<sup>34</sup> Metzer, *The Divided*, 7.

<sup>35</sup> Aviva Haramish, 'The Yishuv'; Lissak and Horowitz's research is central in the consolidation of this theory; Dan Horowitz and Moshe Lissak, *Mi-yishuv li-medinah*.

<sup>36</sup> Goren, *Shituf be-tsel 'imut*, 364–5; Baruch Kimmerling, *Zionism and Territory*; Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor*; Michael Shalev, *Labour*.

The relational-reciprocal model suggested here draws on Baruch Kimmerling's pioneering argument that 'a wide range of mutual relations led to certain processes... *within* each of the two collectivities... and influenced the directions of their formation and crystallization... the particular characteristics of each of the two collectivities shaped the patterns of the mutual relations between them'.<sup>37</sup> Thus, the Zionist and Palestinian Arab national movements were shaped in crucial ways by their interactions with each other. When noting this dialectic tension, Deborah Bernstein summed up Arab-Jewish relations as follows: 'They constantly impacted and impinged on one another. This was part of their everyday reality, whether or not they acknowledged it'.<sup>38</sup>

In the case of history teaching and education in general, this interaction is less obvious because, to a great extent it was not based on actual 'face-to-face' encounters. In this domain, it is not the encounter but the significance of its absence that will be studied, as 'separation is itself a kind of interaction, a dynamic process of response to challenge and threat'.<sup>39</sup> As the conflict intensified, cultural, political, and economic fences grew higher. The higher they grew, however, the greater the preoccupation with the deeds of the national other. As we shall see, constant peeking over the fence (spontaneous, subconscious, or institutionalized), continually monitoring the national Other's education system, shaped the self-consciousness of both communities and had a formative role in their nationalist pedagogy. The process of forging a national narrative in each of Palestine's two education systems cannot be understood without the acknowledgement of this reciprocity.

Jonathan Gribetz's pioneering study *Defining Neighbours*, about Arab-Jewish relations in the late Ottoman period, is an important contribution in this sense. He shows that the important encounters were textual or philological, where translation and interpretation replaced actual dialogue. Gribetz found a tight connection in Arabic and Palestinian texts between the author's self-perception and his perception or definition of the Other, mainly the Jew.<sup>40</sup> By transposing Lital Levy's idea of *Poetic Trespass*, in which 'Arabic and Hebrew are bound together in a continuous state of creative tension' into the history of Palestinian and Hebrew pedagogy, this book investigates the shifting roles of Hebrew and Arabic in Palestinian and

<sup>37</sup> Baruch Kimmerling, 'A Model of Analysis'; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> Deborah Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Bernstein, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Jonathan M Gribetz, *Defining Neighbors*, 133–4.

Hebrew education, and it aims to show how both pedagogies were invented, contested, and revisited through the presence or absence of the other's voice.<sup>41</sup>

The juxtaposition and analysis of Arabic and Hebrew sources disclose the uncanny resemblance in their engagement with modern national history between the Arab and Jewish communities. It also illuminates the critical influence of the conflict on education in general and on history teaching in particular in both systems, as well as the way in which the conflict wrote itself into history from the inception of the mandate period.

This book investigates the reciprocal and formative influences of Arab and Hebrew education within a single analytical frame. However, it does not engage in symmetrically comparative exploration. While the sections on Arabic history instruction primarily examine sources that have previously been accorded little or no analytical attention, I have drawn more extensively on the more abundant literature on Zionist historiography in general, and Hebrew education in particular. The contribution of this book to the history of Hebrew education lies in its effort to put that history back into the dialogue with the Arab population and Arab education in which it in fact developed, but from which it has subsequently been abstracted.

### Historicizing Arab and Hebrew Education

Both Arabic and Hebrew education in Palestine have attracted the attention of scholars and educators during the Mandate and after its demise. The most comprehensive research on Arab education in Palestine and by far the most popular source of reference is Abdul Latif Tibawi's *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine*. If one can talk about a historiographic tyranny, this book deserves the label because it has shaped our perspective of Arab education during the mandate for more than half a century. Tibawi (1910–1981), who wrote his book while lecturing at an English university, was a District Inspector under the mandatory Department of Education. The book, apart from the marginalization of nongovernmental education, says very little about the conflictual nature of working under the British and instead stresses the shared civilizing mission of the British and Arab educators in Palestine.<sup>42</sup> An even greater misconception stems from Tibawi's scorn for his fellow Arab administrators, educators, and pedagogues. Relying almost

<sup>41</sup> Lital Levy, *Poetic Trespass*, 4, 12.

<sup>42</sup> Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Arab Education*.

exclusively on English official sources and his personal experience, Tibawi gave very little credit, scope, or agency to this emerging group and its influence and authorship. This book seeks to write Arab administrators, educators, and pedagogues back into the history of Arab education in Palestine.

Later works on education during the Mandate continued to adopt Tibawi's colonial framework and reliance on British sources, mainly in order to criticize British education policy as having been dedicated to 'erasure and the spreading of ignorance (*tams wa-tajhīl*) of the Palestinian people in order to facilitate the future rule' of Zionism.<sup>43</sup> Although this criticism was widely expressed during the Mandate period,<sup>44</sup> I tend to agree more with Ylana Miller's argument that the British saw education as a way to maintain law and order and preserve the status quo, rather than utilizing it to spread ignorance among Palestinian Arabs. Wary that the schools would be transformed into bases of nationalist anticolonial indoctrination, the British partitioned the concepts of character building and citizenship from their cultural-political context of liberal democracy.<sup>45</sup> Rural education was inconsistent and fraught with contradictions, since the British 'wished to change attitudes [of the villagers] without touching reality, while the villager hoped to better reality without giving up values', thus pulling in opposite directions.<sup>46</sup>

Suzanne Schneider's recent volume meticulously conceptualizes these opposite trajectories. The British mobilization of a universal and humanist discourse, she argues, served their 'politics of denial', in which colonial power was projected through supposedly nonpolitical policies. The British attempt to depoliticize the curriculum failed in its encounter with Arab and Jewish educators, who creatively utilized it as part of their collective, national, and political identity-construction project.<sup>47</sup> This book echoes Schneider's emphasis on the inherent contradiction in the Mandate's pedagogy, which desired 'national education without nationalism'.<sup>48</sup>

In recent decades, with the ascendance of cultural and postcolonial history, the scholarship on Arab education in Palestine has been able to emancipate the historian from strict reliance on official government reports.

<sup>43</sup> Jamil 'Umar Nashwān, *Al-ta'lim fī filastīn*, 72, 78–83; Another early study is Muhammad Yousuf Abdulqadir's unpublished PhD dissertation. Abdulqadir, a native of Taybeh like Tibawi, who was a teacher during the Mandate, offers a more critical and less Anglophile analysis of the system. However, like Tibawi, Abdulqadir relies almost exclusively on English official sources, and Arab agency is missing from his survey: Muhammad Yousuf Abdulqadir, 'The British Educational Policy'; Nabil Ayyūb Badrān, *al-Ta'lim*.

<sup>44</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 164–6.

<sup>45</sup> Miller, *Government*, 96–7.

<sup>46</sup> Miller, 108.

<sup>47</sup> Schneider, *Mandatory Separation*, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Suzanne Schneider, 'The Other Partition'.

The incorporation of oral history, newspapers, journals, and memoirs have enabled a more profound, more complex understanding of Palestinian society.<sup>49</sup> For instance, Ami Ayalon's study of literacy played a pioneering role in shifting the historiographical focus, earlier confined to the conflict or to colonizer-colonized relationship, to a sensitive thematic overview of the social-cultural transformations in Palestinian society.<sup>50</sup> Following in Ayalon's footsteps, other works on educators and missionary and Islamic schools have shed light on the pedagogical links between local, governmental, Christian or Islamic institutions in the formation of a modern Arab identity.<sup>51</sup>

The teaching of history in the Arab system, however, has only been given its due weight in the pioneering work of John Harte. Harte presented an impressive corpus of sources from the period, on which my own work has been able to build, and which this book extends and further scrutinizes.<sup>52</sup> It responds to Harte's call for a more nuanced model of analysis of colonial education that challenges the perception of government schools as strictly an apparatus of suppression while underscoring the crucial role played by Palestinian educators and students in adopting, modifying, or rejecting the colonial syllabi.<sup>53</sup>

Numerous studies have been dedicated to Hebrew education in Palestine, the keystone of the Zionist enterprise.<sup>54</sup> Scholars have produced a wide range of works on the three educational trends during the Mandate period, the history of schools, and the biographies and pedagogy of prominent educators. The first generation of authors were senior administrators in the system, advocates of the Zionist revolution to which they were wholeheartedly committed, whose efforts were designed to contribute to this revolution.<sup>55</sup> In the last three decades, as part of the deconstruction of Zionism's historiographic paradigms and categories, Hebrew education has

<sup>49</sup> Ted Swedenburg's study, for example, revisits the Arab Revolt through interviews with veteran rebels from rural Palestine: *Memories of Revolt*.

<sup>50</sup> Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*.

<sup>51</sup> Inger Marie Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*; Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers*; Ela Greenberg, 'Majallat'; Kamal Moed, 'Hīnukh be-tsel'; Kamal Moed, 'Educator in the Service'; Thomas M. Ricks, *Turbulent Times*; Thomas M. Ricks, 'Khalil Totah'.

<sup>52</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past.' Other studies on the teaching of history include Tarif Khalidi, 'Palestinian Historiography'; Elizabeth Brownson, 'Colonialism, Nationalism'.

<sup>53</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 2.

<sup>54</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-hīnukh ha-ivri be-erets-yisra'el*; Eliezer Rieger, *Ha-hīnukh ha-ivri*, vol. 1; Noah Nardi, *Education in Palestine*; Elboim-Dror, *ha-hīnukh 1*; Reshef, *ha-hīnukh ha-ivri*; Yoav Silbert, 'Ha-ma'avak'.

<sup>55</sup> Rachel Elboim-Dror, 'Le-ha'pil 'im ha-sela'.

received a more critical analysis that suggests alternative historical perspectives. These studies have mapped the different agencies involved in the formation of nationalist education and highlighted the pedagogical controversy in Hebrew education between the promotion of a narrow provincial nationalist line and the inculcation of universal values and broader cultural horizons.<sup>56</sup>

Within the historiography of Hebrew education, the teaching of history during the late Ottoman and Mandate periods is considered an essential element in the cultivation of a Zionist worldview that highlights the reinvention of the Jewish past and the creation of a 'new Jew'.<sup>57</sup> Studies have surveyed Hebrew history textbooks and curricula during the Mandate, and have scrutinized the introduction of Zionist ideology into the taught narrative.<sup>58</sup>

These works on Hebrew education, although offering invaluable data and analysis, rely almost exclusively on Hebrew sources. This becomes a shortcoming, especially when examining the attitudes and ideologies of Hebrew educators towards the Palestinian Arabs without examining its reception amongst the Arabs. While able to expose the articulation of these attitudes from a Zionist perspective, this scholarship lacks the Palestinian perspective or voice and therefore provides a contextualization that is partial or misleading. This book attempts to provide these perspectives and voices to enable a reconsideration of our understanding of Hebrew education.

## Sources and Structure of the Book

This book focuses on the teaching of history while highlighting different aspects of the two education systems. There is no pretention here to offer a comprehensive history of education in Palestine during the Mandate period.

In the case of Palestinian historiography, which is still affected by statelessness and diasporic experience, constant displacement, and a lack of institutionalized archives, a hierarchical perception of historical sources hardly applies. Instead, in order to produce a description that comes closest to the historical truth, one is forced to use a mosaic of sources to overcome

<sup>56</sup> Yuval Dror, 'National Education'.

<sup>57</sup> Shaḥar, *Da' me-ayin bata*.

<sup>58</sup> Ruth Firer, *Sokhnim*; Nirit Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"'; Nirit Reichel, 'Ofaḳim' mul'. The most comprehensive study on Hebrew and Zionist teaching of history over more than a century is Yitzhak Conforti, *Zeman 'avar*.

the inconsistencies and scarcity of documentation. The main arguments and conclusions of this study arise from a dialogue between sources within this mosaic. The imperial perspective can be found in the personal documents of colonial officials now housed in the Middle East Centre Archives at St Antony's College, Oxford, and the files of the Department of Education in the Israel State Archive and in the British National Archives. On another level, the Education Archive at Tel Aviv University, the al-Aqsa Library, and the National Library in Jerusalem have invaluable collections of history textbooks and curricula. They also possess a collection of school journals written by students. Interviews conducted in Israel and the West Bank with individuals who had been students during the Mandate enable an additional angle of analysis. Both the journals and the personal encounters shed light on students' experiences in their history classes. Finally, the documents of the Shai (the Haganah's intelligence service) found in the Haganah Archive, Tel Aviv, and in the Central Zionist Archive in Jerusalem, the memoirs of educators and authors of textbooks, and numerous newspaper articles show the extensive engagement of Arabs and Jews alike with the education of the national other.

Chapter 1 surveys education in late Ottoman Palestine and illustrates the development and reach of Arab and Hebrew education before the British occupation. Chapter 2 traces the causes of educational segregation between Arabs and Jews and elucidates its sustainability through the weakness or failure of those prominent educators who sought another outcome. Chapter 3 looks into the engagement of both communities with the education of the national Other while stressing the importance that Arab and Jewish scholars, publicists, security apparatuses, and educators attributed to the way in which the other community was being educated and the reflective effect of this engagement.

Chapter 4 focuses on history textbooks authored during the Mandate period, and traces the history of their writing and their use in schools. Textbooks represented the 'correct' and distilled formal knowledge required by the system. I examine the central themes in these books and their dialogue with Ottoman, Egyptian, Lebanese, and Western sources, as well as the translation mechanisms employed as part of this dialogue. The chapter then applies a different lens to answer such questions as who wrote history and why? The sociological and intellectual affinities between these authors suggest that they were a distinctive group with specific characteristics. Finally, this chapter scrutinizes the loud echoes of the conflict in these texts. Chapter 5, which deals with the representation of ancient times in textbooks,

shows the resemblances between Arabic and Hebrew textbooks as to their use of the concepts of race and the disparities between them regarding territoriality and identity.

Chapter 6 examines the teaching of history through an administrative and pedagogical prism. It discusses the historical evolution of the Mandate's curricula and history syllabi and traces their origins. The history syllabus is viewed as a complex colonial document that reflects the pedagogical negotiations, negations, and oversights in history instruction. The pedagogical characteristics of history teaching are surveyed in pedagogical articles and books published during the Mandate period. The chapter concludes with the problematic intersection between the educational aspirations reflected in the syllabus and the pedagogical discourse of the intellectual elite with the 'normal' or peripheral classroom, and the challenges facing rank-and-file teachers while trying to comply with both.

Chapter 7 is dedicated to secondary education and the Matriculation exam. Although only comprising a fraction of the student population, these private and governmental schools represented Palestine's Ivy League. History instruction in these schools, which was heavily influenced by the Department's Matriculation exam, was frequently discussed in meetings of the Palestine Board for Higher Studies (PBHS) that was in charge of secondary and postsecondary education. This pedagogical attention was clearly disproportional to its quantitative share in the student population. Analysis of PBHS' internal debates and the history syllabi of secondary schools sheds much light on the relationship between history teaching, identity, and nationalism.

Chapter 8 completes the analytical framework by leaving administrators and educators to delve into the students' world, in an attempt to trace their voices as the product of this system. It examines the omnipresence of history beyond the history classroom and overviews the educational rationale that sought to mould a historical consciousness through an educational calendar, field trips, and youth movements. The latter part of the chapter discusses students' essays in school journals and the internalization of, and correspondence with, the material they were taught, thus underscoring the centrality and validity of historical study in these young people's identity formation.

In closing, I connect the dots that add up to a portrait of a Palestinian society depicted through its schooling and historical education. The result is a portrait characterized by networks of educators, bureaucrats, students, intellectuals, politicians, and spies, Arabs, Jews, and Britons. These multiple



actors sought to shape the country's future through education and the manipulation of the past. In the final account, they composed a society of simultaneously divergent and shared cultures and knowledge, whose educational system, though controlled by people who often, despite being in positions of objective political conflict, not only had much in common but sometimes maintained close, mutually appreciative personal relationships (especially between some British officials and Palestinian Arab educators). This encounter nonetheless produced and entrenched two mutually exclusive, closed, equally monolithic, one-dimensional visions of the past, under a colonial system which, contrary to its own aims and intentions, was as unable to broker mutual understanding in this sphere as it was in any other dimension of life during the Mandate.

# Reframing the Pedagogical Map

## Education in Late Ottoman Palestine

The most typical way to start a discussion on education in late Ottoman Palestine is through its gloomy portrayals in the local and regional press. ‘Education in general is poor in Palestine as in the rest of the Ottoman Empire. In Palestine, however, it is amongst the poorest’, lamented the ultimate Arab renaissance man of the period, Jurji Zaydan, on the pages of his widely read *al-Hilal*, adding that the existing colleges resemble Egyptian primary schools.<sup>1</sup> In 1911, the acclaimed religious scholar Sheikh Ragheb al-Khalidi (1866–1952) took to the pages of the *Filastin* to describe the deplorable state of Islamic colleges across the region and argued that corruption, bad management of funds, and the weakness of the Ottoman regime had led to this state.<sup>2</sup> Another commentator bemoaned the neglect of village education. The people of Shaykh Muwannis, he argued, would rather have their sons remain illiterate than send them to suffer under the ignorant village teacher.<sup>3</sup> An even darker reality was described in the 1916 survey *Vilayet Beirut*, conducted by the two young Arab-Ottomans, Muhammad Bahjat (1890–1980) and Rafiq al-Tamimi (1889–957). They noted that ‘the Muslims were indifferent to matters of education.’<sup>4</sup> The situation in Nablus, they reported, was such that the 300 young men who had left Nablus to study and later taught across the Empire could never return to this backward city so completely secluded from worldly affairs, that had nothing to offer them on the intellectual or social level, where its people simply ‘do not like learning.’<sup>5</sup>

Although Tamimi was one of the Nablus 300, he criticized his hometown harshly on every possible level. Strangely enough, however, this isolated city, so maligned by one of its Ottomanized sons (a future prominent

<sup>1</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *al-Hilal* 22, no. 8 (May 1, 1914): 603–7.

<sup>2</sup> *Filastin*, 15, 22 July 1911.

<sup>3</sup> *Filastin*, 29 July 1911.

<sup>4</sup> Translated by Greenberg, in Ela Greenberg, *Preparing the Mothers*, 12.

<sup>5</sup> Zuhayr Ghanāyim and Muḥammad ‘abd al-karīm Muḥāfazah, eds., *Filastīn fī nihāyat al-‘aṣr al-‘uthmānī*, 121–4.

educator during the Mandate period), produced hundreds of graduates who held senior positions all over the Empire. Thus, rare as it may have been, by the First World War, modern education in Palestine was already a reality whose development and expansion turned it into the talk of the day. Zaydan's, Khalidi's, and *Filastin's* attentiveness to the state of the schools was motivated by the fact that they had witnessed this process and envisioned better use of the country's human potential and resources.

Late Ottoman Palestine, especially in its developing cities and towns, experienced a boom in educational initiatives. Between the final decades of the nineteenth century and the First World War, numerous *kuttabs*, schools, seminaries, and colleges were established by the Empire, local institutions, or by Anglican, American, Russian, German, or French missions. This surge in education was primarily the outcome of a clash between international, imperial, and local interests. Missionary schools were seen as encapsulating the perils of Western encroachment on Ottoman land, a challenge that could only be answered by similar educational initiatives locally.<sup>6</sup> The schools, foreign or imperial, became loci in which notions of Ottoman citizenship, nationhood, and identity were solidified or contested.

The local Palestinian press responded to the expanding missionary activity with concern. An article in the Jerusalemite *al-Quds* entitled 'How shall the nation progress?' noted that local students in foreign schools knew more about the West than their nation and homeland and when asked about the East, responded in silence or disgust.<sup>7</sup> This kind of criticism paralleled the great appreciation expressed by these same media outlets for local initiatives and the establishment of new schools.<sup>8</sup>

The competition between empires gave birth to a burgeoning community of educators, both foreign and local, who were trying to make pedagogical sense of a period of dramatic changes. The seeds of Palestinian pedagogy during the Mandate period were sown during the late Ottoman period as a result of local agency, mainly Arabs from *bilad al-sham*, in reaction to the growing presence of mission schools in the country and an Ottoman Empire challenged by this presence that invested administrative and financial efforts to broaden the purview of Ottoman education. Separating these missionary and Ottoman projects from their local actors is counterproductive when trying to draw up an education map of Palestine since both depended

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 44–60; Martin Strohmeier, 'Muslim Education', 215–41; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 104–7.

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Quds*, 3, 7 September 1908.

<sup>8</sup> *Filastin*, 2, 19 August, 26 July 1911.

on local educators and the cooperation of their communities. This goes for the local nonmissionary and Ottoman initiatives as well. Local educators who started a school did not operate in a void but within the same educational arena, between Empire and mission. All influenced each other and all shared a social and spiritual vision for the same space.

These institutional borders, however, did not create barriers between students and teachers with different backgrounds. The students who had access to modern education benefited from a fairly inclusive cosmopolitan atmosphere. The Christian schools were open to Muslim and Jewish students and to graduates of Ottoman schools. Graduates of one mission school often taught in schools associated with a different mission. The emerging pedagogical scene, especially in Jerusalem but in the rest of the country as well, was in fact headed by a small group of local men who knew each other, read and wrote in the same journals, and more importantly were gradually involved in a project that transcended institutional and religious boundaries: fostering societal progress through literacy in Palestine.

Starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman state became gradually aware of the importance of state education, which was materialized by the late 1880s in Palestine with the establishment of a growing number of elementary schools in cities and towns supervised by local Education Committees (*lajnat al-ma'arif*).<sup>9</sup> Since the Ottoman administration mainly provided administrative supervision and not actual support, these committees were in charge of opening schools and allocating the funds to sustain them which were collected locally.<sup>10</sup> This translated into educational empowerment backed by the Empire.

Studies on education in Palestine during the late Ottoman period that have examined the Ottoman *Salname* (yearbooks) note the impressive development in educational institutions. One study reported that about 300 primary schools were opened in Wilayat Suriyya, and 210 in Wilayat Beirut during the 1890s.<sup>11</sup> The Palestinian historian Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh reported that in 1910, under the Mutasarifiyya of Jerusalem (including the Jaffa, Hebron and Nablus district), there were 528 schools, 56 for girls, 14 co-ed, and 458 for boys, of which 356 were under the Ottoman Education Department, and the rest under foreign auspices.<sup>12</sup> Still, these impressive

<sup>9</sup> Emine Önhane Evered, *Empire and Education*, 1–34.

<sup>10</sup> Farid al-Salim, *Palestine and the Decline*, 121–2.

<sup>11</sup> Attendance in Ottoman schools was also hampered by parents' fear that it could lead to conscription: al-Salim, 123.

<sup>12</sup> Mustafa Murad Dabbagh, *Bilādunā filastīn, al-juz' 10, al-qism 2*, 138.

numbers say more about the image of education in the imperial centre than the actual reality in Palestine. In the *Salname's* survey tables, most registered schools were local, often-seasonal village *kuttabs* taught by a sheikh according to a traditional curriculum.

The Rushdiya, or higher primary schools, were a continuation of primary education and had a six-year curriculum. These schools were rare in Palestine; in Nablus, for example, there were two for boys and one for girls (est. 1906), and in Tulkarm, there was one, attended by 150 students in 1915.<sup>13</sup> The I'dadiyya or preparatory schools were a continuation of the Rushdiya schools.<sup>14</sup> Operating as of 1901 in a two-year curriculum, they offered courses in Ottoman and general history, French, literature, chemistry, physics, and algebra. The graduate of I'dadiyya were able to continue to secondary education in the Sultaniya schools or the Mülkiye where the language of instruction was Turkish.<sup>15</sup> Before 1911 Palestine had only four I'dadiyya schools located in Acre, Nablus, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, a number that exemplifies the exclusivity of postelementary government education.<sup>16</sup> Late Ottoman Palestine was an educational periphery, and its relatively small cities and towns were regarded as less relevant to house these institutions, designed for the training of the Ottoman state's bureaucracy.

The expansion of Ottoman education was a result of the challenges posed by missionary activity that filled the void left by the state, and the growing local demands for proper education. These two reasons cannot be easily separated since they had mutual influences. Undeniably, during the half century ending with the First World War, missionary encroachment in Palestine changed Palestine's map of education dramatically. Especially in the urban centres of Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa, but also in their periphery, a variety of Christian denominations founded dozens of schools. As the editor of *al-Muqtataf* bluntly commented, *Bilad al-Sham* was 'in a state of degeneration and retardation' until the arrival of Europeans (*al-Afranj*) who revived its knowledge and eliminated its idleness.<sup>17</sup>

However, this survey overlooks the fundamental contribution of local educators to the expansion of missionary education. These locals were as

<sup>13</sup> Al-Salim, *Palestine and the Decline*, 126, 136.

<sup>14</sup> According to al-Dabbagh, there were three years of elementary level, three more years to the Rushdiya, and four for the I'dadiyya. The I'dadiyya was divided into two years that continued the Rushdiya and two years in an urban administrative centre (Vilayet): Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Bilādunā filastīn, al-juz' 3, al-qism 2*, 52.

<sup>15</sup> Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 69.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Salim, *Palestine and the Decline*, 127–8.

<sup>17</sup> *Al-Muqtataf*, vol. 7, no. 7, February 1883, 385.

important as foreigners in revolutionizing the pedagogical sphere from the 1850s to the First World War. An analysis of their activities helps re-evaluate it as an educational hybrid with more elusive boundaries between the foreign and local.

During this period, one name stands out as the most prolific writer on pedagogy and author of textbooks, one that was associated with a chain of schools that were the heralds of educational reform: Khalil Baydas (1874–1949), and the network of educational institutions belonged to the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society that was under the Russian mission in Palestine. The Russian mission established the Russian Teachers' Seminary in Nazareth in 1886, and another one in 1890, in Bayt Jala, for the training of women teachers, and it had an enrolment of 150 and 90 students, respectively by 1914. The seminaries were free of charge, enabling social mobility for underprivileged students. They dispensed courses in Arabic literature, geography, and history in Arabic, and had an anti-Turkish, Arab nationalist curriculum.<sup>18</sup>

Khalil Baydas authored Arabic textbooks and translated Russian textbooks into Arabic. Baydas was one of the Palestinians sent to study in Russian universities who was hired by the Anglican St George's School in Jerusalem after his return, and he taught Arabic to a generation of Palestinian notables before the War. Baydas's journal, *al-Nafayis al-'Asriyya* (1908–1924), often published articles about education and its challenges in Palestine, and it highlighted the relationship between 'ilm (knowledge), progress, and strength of the *watan* (homeland) and the 'West' as a role model, both of which are tropes we shall encounter later as well.<sup>19</sup>

Nakhle Zurayk (1861–1921) is another key example of this local agency. Born in Beirut, he taught by *Nahda* luminaries such as Butrus al-Bustani, Nasif al-Yaziji, Yusuf al-Asir, and others, and in 1892, he became the principal of the Anglican Men's College (*kuliyyat al-Shabab* later *al-Kuliyya al-Ingliziyya*) in Jerusalem, where the language of instruction was Arabic. Zurayk, known as 'al-mu'allim' (the Teacher), not only taught Arabic syntax and grammar but also Arab history and heritage. A charismatic intellectual, his influence far exceeded the classroom, as the most prominent Jerusalemites of the time would attend his lectures and

<sup>18</sup> Hannā Abū Hannā, *Dār al-mu'allimīn al-rūsiyah*, 24–9.

<sup>19</sup> *Al-Nafayis al-'Asriyya*, 15 July 1909, 721–3, 1 August 1909, 754–5, 1 September 1909, 858–64.

frequent his home.<sup>20</sup> Zurayk's reach extended into the Mandate period through his students. Prominent poets, writers, and educators were amongst his students, most notably in the field of education, and included Khalil Totah, Khalil al-Sakakini, and Ishaq Mousa al-Husayni, among many others.

The most prominent families considered the Anglican mission as providing the finest education in Palestine. Sheikh Ragheb al-Khalidi, a member of Jerusalem's Ottoman Education Department, founder of the Khalidi Library in 1900, and an ardent believer in educational reform, sent his three sons (one of whom was Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi) to study at St George's School. Isa'f al-Nashashibi studied there, as well, after persuading Ragheb's father of its value.<sup>21</sup>

Isa'f al-Nashashibi (1882–1948), grew up in a house that was a hub for the Jerusalemite intellectual elite. He was the inspector for Arabic instruction during the first decade of British rule and the editor of readers for the instruction of Arabic. His pedagogical thought and importance as a teacher had their roots in the late Ottoman period.<sup>22</sup> Nashashibi was sent to study at the Greek Catholic Patriarchate School (al-Madrasa al-Batrikiya), where, like Zurayk, he studied under the luminaries of the *Nahda*. When he returned, he became an Arabic teacher and published extensively in the Palestinian and Arab press.<sup>23</sup>

Yet another missionary venture that operated in Jerusalem from the 1860s placed great emphasis on the knowledge of Arabic. Established by the German Lutheran missionary Johann Ludwig Schneller (1820–1896), the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem, the largest school in the country until the First World War—which did not only admit orphans—taught Arabic and literature, mostly by Arab teachers, along with German and manual skills, and teachers were obligated to take Arabic tutorials.<sup>24</sup>

Another pioneer in the field of education was Sheikh Muhammad Suleiman al-Salih (1867–1940), an Ottoman government employee who travelled to Mecca and Medina and later to Istanbul, the Balkans, and other distant regions to study their system of education and didactic methods. Al-Salih first established al-Rawda al-Faiha' in Jerusalem, where the language of instruction was Arabic, and history and geography were taught

<sup>20</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Rise and Fall*, 137–8.

<sup>21</sup> Johann Büssow, 'Children of the Revolution', 55–78; For other Muslim notables who went to mission schools see 'Umar al-Slaih al-Barghuthi, *al-Marāḥil*, 96, 103.

<sup>22</sup> Jihād Ṣāliḥ, *Nafayis-Ruwwād al-maqdisiyyūn*, 425–32.

<sup>23</sup> See *Nafayis asriyya*, 1 July 1909, 661–2, about the education of women.

<sup>24</sup> Gil Gordon, 'Sokhen tarbut be erez zara', 38, 42, 47.

from Arabic sources, along with physical education and sports. In 1906, he established Rawdat al-Ma'arif, which operated during the Mandate as well, and was a symbol of academic excellence that combined an emphasis on Islamic studies and Arab nationalism.<sup>25</sup>

However, 'secular' and 'modern' education was not confined to mission. After the 1908 revolution, Ottoman government schools offered a more secular curriculum.<sup>26</sup> Leading educators in these schools were Arabs from *bilad al-sham*, who promoted a proto nationalist and progressive (as they saw it) education. In 1909, Khalil al-Sakakini along with Jamil al-Khalidi established the Dusturiyyah (constitutional) school that was open to Muslims, Jews, and Christians.<sup>27</sup> The school, venerated by the local press, was a revolution in itself, with no grading system or exams and a prohibition on corporal punishment.<sup>28</sup> Sakakini and Jamil al-Khalidi later became inspectors in the Department of Education under the British.

During the War years, under Jamal Pasha's rule, various government schools were established in Greater Syria. The culmination of Jamal's attempts to curb missionary dominance in education was the establishment of a Pan-Islamist college, the Selahaddin-i Eyyubi Külliyesi. Inaugurated in 1915, the short-lived Külliye that was meant to foster a new generation of Ottoman academics became a hub for progressive pan-Arab education. The language of instruction was Arabic, and the teaching staff included future senior officials and educators under the British, such as Sakakini, Is'af al-Nashashibi, and Rafiq al-Tamimi.<sup>29</sup> Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, a famous teacher and later inspector of Arabic instruction under the British Department of Education, was a student there.<sup>30</sup>

Baydas, Salih, Sakakini, Nashashibi, Zurayk, Totah, and others were not only friends and associates in the field of education. They also shared a concern for and engaged in the promotion of education in Palestine. Together, prior to the British occupation, they articulated a pedagogical discourse and programmatic platforms for educational progress in Palestine. This community reveals the continuity across the rupture of Ottoman and British rule, revealing a longer *durée* of Arab education inherited by the Mandate.

Working under Ottoman, Anglican, Russian, German, French, or *watani* (national) institutions, a community of Palestinian educators with a national

<sup>25</sup> Ya'qub 'Awdāt, *Min a' lām*, 342.

<sup>26</sup> Salim Tamari, 'The Great War'.

<sup>27</sup> Salim Tamari, 'The Short Life of Private Ihsan'.

<sup>28</sup> *Filastin*, 2, 19 August and 26 July 1911.

<sup>29</sup> Ya'qub 'Awdāt, *Min a' lām*, 79–80.

<sup>30</sup> Tamari, 'The Great War', 119; M. Talha Çiçek, *War and State Formation in Syria*, 181–4.



pedagogical ethos emerged. This cosmopolitan, educational Babel enabled the formation of an informal network of educators on the eve of the War. The British occupation and the establishment of the Department of Education followed by the co-optation of the central players in this network into its administration dramatically changed the picture.

### Ever Prepared: Hebrew Education on the Eve of the Great War

Whereas Arab education seemed poor at best, Hebrew education was described with great admiration and awe. 'Every man and woman in Mulabbis [Petah-Tikva] knows how to read and write', our late Ottoman travellers noted, and 'elementary education is mandatory, and it is utterly impossible for anyone to exempt himself from it'.<sup>31</sup> Zaydan's survey mentions similar enthusiasm, highlighting the superiority of Hebrew education over the rest of the country. While visiting Tel Aviv, Zaydan was 'amazed' by Herzliya Gymnasium's insistence on teaching all subjects including sciences strictly in Hebrew, while lamenting the absence of such policies in the Arab world.<sup>32</sup>

The favourable depiction of Hebrew education was also coupled with criticism. The Jews in *Vilayet Beirut* were described as foreign colonialist settlers, as opposed to the rightful (and ignorant) owners of the land. Their literacy was a source of both inspiration and peril, since their progress would eventually lead to complete dominance over the country.<sup>33</sup> Zaydan's survey underlines the exclusion of non-Jews from the progressive Hebrew schools that were ostensibly open to all religions, but, in practice, only admitted Jews. Mikveh Israel (est. 1870), the Alliance Israélite Universelle's (AIU) agricultural school near Jaffa, he noted, accepted non-Jews, but it was a rare to find any there.<sup>34</sup>

Mikveh's inclusiveness, although operating under an Ottoman decree that obligated it to serve all Ottoman citizens, triggered much controversy in the summer of 1912, when a series of articles in *Filastin* focused on the school's discriminatory practices. The few non-Jewish students that were admitted, *Filastin* noted, complained about their loneliness and humiliation, as well as the hatred and their mistreatment in the school.<sup>35</sup> This story

<sup>31</sup> Ghanāyim and Muḥāfaẓah, *Filastīn fī nihāyat al-ʿaṣr al-ʿuthmānī*, 231.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Hilal* 22, no. 8, 1 May 1914, 605.

<sup>33</sup> Jacob Yehoshua, 'Petah tiqyah'.

<sup>34</sup> *Al-Hilal* 22, no. 8, 1 May 1914, 607.

<sup>35</sup> Dotan Halevy and Amin Khalaf, 'Foreigners in Their Country'.

reflects the looser separation that existed during the late Ottoman period when it was possible to see past the Jewishness of the institution and benefit from its modernity. Jewish schools, although acknowledged to be part of a colonization project, were regarded as proper education for the privileged, as were the mission schools. It was not uncommon during this period to find Arab students in these schools just as it was possible to find Jews in the missionary schools (see Chapter 2). Within the greater imperial context, these were all springboards for social mobility.<sup>36</sup>

Zaydan's amazement and *Filastin's* attention were not coincidental. By 1914, the spread of Hebrew education through the establishment of schools and on the organizational level was visible in all the Jewish settlements and in the cities. Hebrew education, as part of the larger project of the creation of a Hebrew culture, were of dramatic importance during the final years of Ottoman rule, and, like Arab education, its diversity of methods and stances were highly apparent. Modern Jewish education could be found in the new settlements, in the Jewish Francophone AIU, the German-Jewish Ezra schools, and in the schools established by Zionist organizations. Even the Talmud Torah religious schools started to teach Hebrew and 'secular' subjects, and girls' education was expanding. In 1912, the Levinsky seminar for women teachers opened in Jaffa, and in 1913, a Hebrew teachers' training seminar was established in Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup>

Until the War, Hebrew schools with a clear Zionist affiliation remained in the minority, even within modern Jewish education.<sup>38</sup> Yet although they taught a curriculum that did not formally exist and lacked textbooks, syllabi, and even a relevant vocabulary, Hebrew teachers saw themselves as Zionism's vanguard, and were keen on gaining political and pedagogical hegemony over Jewish education as a whole in Palestine. The establishment of the Teachers' Union (*Histadrut ha-Morim*) in 1903 was a watershed moment in the history of Hebrew education. Its resolutions revolved around the writing of a syllabus for all Hebrew schools and their dedication to the creation of a healthy, working Hebrew generation. In particular it was decided that the only language of instruction from then on would be Hebrew.<sup>39</sup> The Union appointed a team to write a syllabus that was later circulated, introduced an entry examination for the appointment of new teachers,

<sup>36</sup> Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 84.

<sup>37</sup> Chaim Arie'el Zuta, *Darko shel moreh*, 128–40; Rachel Elboim-Dror, *ha-Ḥinukh* 2, 20–1.

<sup>38</sup> Joseph Azaryahu, *Ha-Ḥinukh ha-ivri*, 49.

<sup>39</sup> Azaryahu, 31–3, 39–40, 44; Rachel Elboim-Dror, *ha-Ḥinukh* 1, 211.

established its own press, published textbooks, edited pedagogical journals, and gave night classes. By 1913, the 59 members of the inauguration conference had grown to 350. The wave of immigration known as the Second Aliya (1904–1914) gave a strong boost to the Union with a high percentage of high school, university, and graduates of teachers' seminars, along with prominent Hebrew educators. The centrality of Palestine in their ideology and their plea for educational autonomy were the pillars of their activity.<sup>40</sup> Hebrew teachers were the core of Zionist activism, and included famous authors, artists, politicians, and intellectuals who were involved in all areas of cultural life, from music and translation to theatre and publishing. It was the Union that established Va'ad ha-Lashon ha-ivrit (the Hebrew Language Council) that was responsible for not only the dissemination of the language but also its development.<sup>41</sup>

In the annals of Hebrew education, switching from a European language of instruction to Hebrew was considered a real battle between 'foreign' Jewish interests and a genuine 'local' vision where everything that was not Hebrew was painted black.<sup>42</sup> The 1913 War of Languages for the exclusivity of Hebrew as the only language of instruction in Palestine marked another turning point in the history of Hebrew education. The 'war' was ignited by Hebrew educators against Ezra's plan to use German as the language of instruction in its newly established Technicum in Haifa. It led to greater administrative and pedagogical centralization and made all Jewish schools change their language of instruction to Hebrew.<sup>43</sup> This was also a critical period in the history of separation between Arab and Jewish students. *Filastin's* extensive coverage of the 'war' amplified earlier criticism on the exclusivist nature of Hebrew education. By using Hebrew as its language of instruction, *Filastin* argued, the new institution withheld technical and scientific knowledge from non-Jews.<sup>44</sup>

For the Zionist movement, the 'war' was a major step towards the institutionalization and monopolization of national education.<sup>45</sup> The Zionist Organization soon started funding Hebrew education in Palestine directly through Va'ad ha-Hinukh (the Education Committee, est. 1913) and was

<sup>40</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-ḥinukh ha-ivri*, 41–4; Elboim-Dror, *ha-ḥinukh* 1, 1:216–17, 224, 226, 230–1.

<sup>41</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-ḥinukh* 1, 1:232–5.

<sup>42</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-ḥinukh ha-ivri be-erets-yisra'el*, 13–24.

<sup>43</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-ḥinukh* 1, 1:310, 347–9.

<sup>44</sup> Emanuel Beška, *From Ambivalence to Hostility*, 119–23.

<sup>45</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-ḥinukh* 1, 1:349–50; Azaryahu, *Ha-ḥinukh ha-ivri be-erets-yisra'el*.

able to collect massive sums of money for its expansion.<sup>46</sup> This collectivist ideology, promoted by an eclectic voluntarist system, went through a process of centralization and unification that materialized under the British. Teachers and graduates of Hebrew education prior to the War would dominate the pedagogical sphere of Hebrew education until the end of the Mandate.<sup>47</sup>

Nevertheless, on the eve of the First World War, most Jewish students were studying in *heders* or philanthropic institutions like the AIU and Ezra schools. In 1913, 2600 students were enrolled in Hebrew schools, as compared with 3789 in the AIU and Ezra schools a year earlier.<sup>48</sup> These schools are usually depicted as non-Zionist because their administration did not work under the Zionist institutions and did not educate explicitly for Zionism, and the language of instruction was not necessarily Hebrew. However, the Ezra schools' curriculum emphasized instruction in the Hebrew language and included courses on agriculture and physical education, all within a local nationalist ethos that strengthened ties to the homeland.<sup>49</sup> In the Ezra Lemel school in Jerusalem, their strong emphasis on German notwithstanding, Hebrew courses were taught in Hebrew, and students often knew more Hebrew than German. The history course focused on Jewish and general history.<sup>50</sup> Hebrew in Hebrew ('*ivrit be-'ivrit*; i.e., teaching the Hebrew language while using it as language of instruction) was taught in some of the AIU schools as early as the 1880s. From 1908 on, schools operating in the Baron de Rothschild colonies (*moshavot*) took Hebrew as the sole mode of instruction.<sup>51</sup> In fact, Hebrew educators who worked in these schools made Hebrew language and culture increasingly dominant in Jewish education.

The First World War enhanced the unification of the Yishuv and forced it to find administrative and humanitarian solutions for the community.<sup>52</sup> The lack of funding during the War prompted non-Zionist and non-Hebrew schools to seek financial support from the Israeli Office (under which Va'ad ha-Hinukh operated) that was the clearing house for donations from all over the world, which further boosted its control and supervision over education in Palestine. By the end of the War, in spite of the grave conditions of

<sup>46</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh* 1, 1:151.

<sup>47</sup> Elboim-Dror, 1:242–61, 296–7.

<sup>48</sup> Elboim-Dror, 1:241–2; Moshe Rinott, 'Pe' ulatah', 357–58.

<sup>49</sup> Rinott, 'Pe' ulatah', 83, 38–41, 45–7.

<sup>50</sup> Rinott, 89–92.

<sup>51</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-hinukh ha-'ivri be-erets-yisra'el*, 15–26.

<sup>52</sup> The communal relief during the war brought the Sephardi elite closer to Zionist ideals, and closer to Zionists: Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 46–7, 51–2.

schools in the different localities, overall, there were more Hebrew schools than before, and the education budget grew considerably.<sup>53</sup>

### **Arab Systems of Education, Reconfigured as a Millet**

I lost my sense of amazement and wonder, and that was the rule in rural education, then [there was] the rule of intellectual silence required by school education, [one] that coerces the man to be prudent and restrained from a very young age... and in order to embellish this behaviour in our souls we were told that this is how the civilized behave (meaning the English).<sup>54</sup>  
Ihsan Abbas

The three decades of Arab education under the British were in many ways a continuation of the processes and challenges of the late Ottoman period. After the War, Palestine's expanding community of educators was revitalized with a younger generation that joined their efforts to promote literacy and progress. Administratively, education in Palestine was grouped under one unit for the first time, but policy-making and general interests were still determined in the imperial capital in London, as had been the case for Istanbul. Headed, as under the Ottomans, by a non-Arab, non-Palestinian Director of Education (DoE), the colonial Department of Education remained one of many players in the field of education that only achieved actual (though far from complete) hegemony over most Arab schools towards the end of the Mandate. In 1922, out of a total of 52,162 students (including Jewish students), 19,639 were under the direct supervision of the Department. In 1945–1946, out of a total of 124,927 Arab students, 81,042 were studying in government schools, and 43,885 were enrolled in private Christian or Muslim schools.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, the government system was almost entirely confined to the elementary level. In 1946, only 1,874 (2.2 percent) out of a total of 82,775 students were admitted to selective public secondary education. In other words, private secondary schools, educating mainly the urban

<sup>53</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh* 2, 2:36–9, 46–51, 91–2.

<sup>54</sup> Ihsan 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'i*, 171.

<sup>55</sup> Department of Education, *Annual Report 1945–1946*, 4.

financially privileged, preserved their dominance over secondary education during the entire period (see Chapter 6).<sup>56</sup>

More importantly, compulsory education was never promulgated by the British. As stated by Bernard De Bunsen, the last DoE, in his final annual report drafted in the summer of 1947, 'Education in Palestine is not compulsory and is by no means universal', and he lamented the fact that the government was not able to meet the public demand for education.<sup>57</sup> Although the number of government schools operating in 1919–1920 (124 schools) more than quadrupled, reaching 555 by 1947–1948, only 35–45 per cent of all Arab children received basic education after three decades of development.<sup>58</sup> In the rural periphery that depended the most on government services, the numbers were much lower. This was also the outcome of meagre financial investment. Expenditures on education never exceeded 6.4 per cent, while in most documented annual budgets, it ranged from 4 to 5 per cent, a considerably lower share than expenditures on security or public works (18–31 per cent) and only slightly higher than health.<sup>59</sup> Thus, there was a drive to educate Palestine, but the ways to achieve it were compromised by material and political factors.

If anything, the Department of Education in Palestine, given that it was situated within the greater ambiguity of British policy towards the Arabs, operated more like a department of an Ottoman millet than as part of an emerging national state on the verge of self-government.<sup>60</sup> Numerically, the Arabs were the majority, but politically and effectively, they were treated as a minority, a 'non-Jewish' community as proclaimed in the Balfour Declaration, with equal 'civil and religious rights' (but not political rights) to those of the Jews. The Department's contributions, of debatable magnitude, were not intended for a future state of Palestine under the sovereignty of the Palestinians but for the Arabs as a community within a state that would exist to realize other aspirations and safeguard other interests. It was in a sense a nonstate or non-nation-building project.

The *modus operandi* of local educators under this non-nation-building project was based on their awareness of the colonial balance of power and

<sup>56</sup> Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, *Education in Arab Countries*, 230–1.

<sup>57</sup> Department of Education, *Annual Report 1945–1946*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Colonial Office, *Report on Palestine Administration 1923*, 26; Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 270.

<sup>59</sup> Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress*, 13–14, 117; See for example Bowman's criticism on insufficient government support for village education: Ylana N. Miller, *Government and Society*, 159.

<sup>60</sup> Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity*, 44–54.

the pedagogical red lines it entailed. On the ground, the colonial Arab education system was the theatre of tense encounters between British education officials, local educators, and young students. Well-intentioned colonial officials sought to spread literacy, in general, as well as a knowledge of history, in particular, but one that was harmless, benign, and politically neutral.<sup>61</sup> Local educators, for their part, worked in cooperation with imperial rule in a volatile equilibrium. The hierarchical structure of the colonial Department of Education embodied this equilibrium. While headed by a British man-on-the-spot and a number of British bureaucrats, the Department's officialdom from the highest to the lowest echelons was predominantly Arab.<sup>62</sup> As we shall see, most Arab employees who climbed the occupational ladder in the Department, the leading pedagogues of the Arab community, remained loyal to the government in the best and worst of times. Simultaneously shaping and shaped by colonialism,<sup>63</sup> they embraced the benevolent gospel of British progress, while seeking to imbue it with their own independent vision of identity and nationhood. Thus, modern instruction in history, a product of this intricate encounter, materialized as an inextricable amalgamation of colonial modernism and nationalism.

Ranjit Guha describes the inherent connection between historiography and rule and highlights colonial power's hegemonic inclinations when writing the history of a subjugated people. In the case of Indian historiography, Guha argued that 'the alien colonialist project of appropriation was matched by an indigenous nationalist project of counter-appropriation', thus resulting in a colonial 'dominance without hegemony'.<sup>64</sup> As discussed in later chapters, in Palestine, the appropriation of history was the outcome of a conscious, and in some cases unconscious, dialogue between leading Arab educators and the Department, and between nationalist and 'universal' historiographies, rather than a counter-discourse.<sup>65</sup>

Palestine's colonial setting differentiated it from neighbouring countries, especially in relation to the construction of an education system, the structuring of a curriculum and the authoring of history textbooks. The Hebrew University (est. 1925)—which was not intended to educate Arabs—aside, Palestine was the only country in the region without a university, and

<sup>61</sup> Susanne Schneider, *Mandatory Separation*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> In 1943, for example, the senior administrative staff was composed of eighteen Arabs, six British nationals, and four Jews. Department of Education, Statistical Tables Diagrams for the Scholastic Year 1942-1943, M130/14, ISA.

<sup>63</sup> Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*, 119.

<sup>64</sup> Ranjit Guha, *Dominance without Hegemony*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*, 9.



**Photo 3** The caricature titled ‘The Schools’ Crisis’ reads: ‘Teacher: We have thrown out a thousand children ... like the rest of the schools ... Father: god increase the goodness of ... the Department of Education’,

Source: *Al-Mustaqbal*, 21 December 1945, 6.

although large numbers of Palestinian students could be found during the Mandate period at the American University of Beirut (AUB) and other universities, few Palestinians were ever promoted to senior professorship positions in these institutions, and very few completed Master’s degrees or PhDs in the humanities before 1948.

Furthermore, the Department of Education differed from the dynamic and politicized ministries of education in neighbouring countries. In Iraq, the dominance of local players in the Ministry of Education was determined in the early stages of British occupation. Even under the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon, the Ministries of Education were headed by highly educated, often nationalist, Arab bureaucrats.<sup>66</sup> To a great extent in Iraq and

<sup>66</sup> Habib Abu-Shahla, Lebanon’s Minister of Education in the 1940s, earned a doctorate in law from the Sorbonne in 1924. In Syria, as early as the 1920s, the French appointed the famous intellectual and founder of the Arab Academy, Muhammad Kurd ‘Ali as Minister of Education, and other Arab nationalists followed. Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate*, 330.



Egypt and to a lesser extent in Lebanon and Syria, state education in the interwar period became—not without difficulties and challenges—part of the state and nation-building apparatus.<sup>67</sup> The most obvious case was Egypt, where high-ranking bureaucratic positions in education were often held by historians and pedagogues. This bond between the state apparatus and historian-educators who were engaged in contemporary politics gave birth to a state-building-centred historiography inculcating an ethos of human development and virtue that was viewed through prism of the evolution of the Egyptian state.<sup>68</sup> These differences in colonial circumstances, however, did not seclude the Palestinian community from the pedagogical discourse that dominated the Arab world. Palestine's emerging community of educators was part of a greater network, which through different channels of communication consisting mainly of journals and newspapers, but also personal and professional relations, debated the near and distant past, the present and the future of the Arabs. The constant movement of intellectuals and teachers, which can be seen as an 'educational pilgrimage', contributed to the development of these ties. Palestinian teachers could be found all over the region, and Syrian and Lebanese teachers served as teachers and school principals in Palestine. Palestinian educators contributed articles and consumed the textual products of the superior Lebanese and Egyptian print industry.<sup>69</sup> In Iraq, Lebanon and Syria the 'Palestinian problem' that emerged during the interwar period was a topic of heated debate in the Arab press, especially during and after the Great Arab Revolt (1936–1939), and textbooks by Palestinian authors were circulated in Iraqi and Transjordanian schools, adding to the cross-border connections.<sup>70</sup> Palestinian educators were thus part of a network that transcended the colonial borders, and shared a vocabulary on questions of language and culture, the West, and the paths to national liberation. They formed a pan-Arab culture that asked similar questions about its past, debated the characteristics of the modern Arab subject, redefined the meanings of Arab masculinity, and discussed the role of an emerging, distinctive modern generation. The past decade's scholarship on the interwar period in Egypt, Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Syria demonstrated striking similarities across the region, in addition to differences from one country to another, thus revealing the depth of

<sup>67</sup> Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 229–64.

<sup>68</sup> Anthony Gorman, *Historians, State and Politics*, 27–8, 45–7.

<sup>69</sup> Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 2008, 149–50; Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 109–10, 113–16; Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*, 27–31.

<sup>70</sup> Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 2008, 153.

these mutual influences, and the dynamics of this cross-border network.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the Palestinian case remains unique as the locus of two contending national projects. Whereas Palestine was undoubtedly also part of the larger picture of Arab regional intellectual and cultural history in these years—as shown in this book—its specificities also made it compellingly different.

### A Mandate of Their Own: The Hebrew System

In the spring of 1918, delegates from all the schools in the territory occupied by the British declared that all the private schools formerly under the auspices of philanthropists and Zionist societies were now under the Zionist Organization. Ezra schools, which the British regarded as German enemy institutions, were shut, and their students and teachers associated with the Hebrew schools. It was decided that Hebrew would be the sole language of instruction. As a result, in 1920–1921, there were 135 educational institutions, 523 teachers, and 12,830 students under its administration, representing 80 per cent of the total Jewish student population of the time.<sup>72</sup> Although it had its share of financial and administrative ups and downs and some Jewish communities, especially the ultra-Orthodox, refused to be under its wings, it became clear that the centre of Jewish education in Palestine was now in Zionist hands and that the Va'ad and Teachers' Union had greater power and authority than ever.

The colonial Department of Education had different relations with Hebrew education than those established with the Arab community. From the start, the Va'ad was autonomous in determining its curriculum. At first controlled by the ZO, Hebrew education gradually came under the control and supervision of the Yishuv, with a final administrative disengagement from the ZO in 1932. Hebrew education operated in three separate systems that were called 'trends' (*zeramim*). The 'General' trend, the largest, central, nonreligious education system, was directly controlled by the Va'ad. The other two,

<sup>71</sup> Hilary Falb Kalisman, 'Schooling the State'; Wilson Chacko Jacob, *Working out Egypt*; Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya*; Jennifer Marie Dueck, *The Claims of Culture*; Heidi Morrison, *Childhood and Colonial Modernity in Egypt*; Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*; Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*; Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*; Omnia El-Shakry, *The Great Social Laboratory*; Keith David Watenpugh, *Being Modern*; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Modern Arab Historiography*; Marwa Elshakry, *Reading Darwin*; Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers of the Arab Past*.

<sup>72</sup> Shimon Reshef, *ha-Hinukh ha-Ivri*, 4–7.

the 'Mizrahi' trend (Zionist religious) and the 'Labour' trend (Zionist socialist) of the Histadrut were both autonomous in determining their curricula.<sup>73</sup> Theoretically, each trend shaped and taught its own version of history; in practice, as we shall see, the differences were not fundamental.

While some Jewish educators advocated cooperation with the Department, the dominant educational institutions strongly objected to any kind of British interference in Hebrew education. This made the relations between the Department and the Va'ad more administrative than educational.<sup>74</sup> The Department appointed two supervisors for the Hebrew system, but even they were refused direct access to schools. The Va'ad also insisted on Hebrew as the sole language of correspondence, to which the Department acquiesced.<sup>75</sup>

This insistence, Liora Halperin argued, was not a reflection of Hebrew's complete dominance over the Jewish community in Palestine. The Yishuv was a portrait of a diverse multilingual reality that would not or could not succumb to monolingualism.<sup>76</sup> This was not only reflected in the languages used by members of the Yishuv for commerce and leisure, or even the emphasis on the instruction of foreign languages in schools. This balancing act defined the conflictual essence of Hebraic purity, forever trapped between the ethos of the chosen people and the drive to become a people like all peoples. Hebrew education and the teaching of history were obvious products of this tension. In other words, Hebrew education (like Palestinian education), its language and pedagogical culture, was deeply rooted in and inspired by European modernist or progressive pedagogy, and it saw itself as part and parcel of its tradition. At the same time, Hebrew education sought to distil a version of nationalist exclusiveness, an authentic prototype that had its own distinct vocabulary, and its own history.

<sup>73</sup> On the Labour trend's leading pedagogues, the education system in Kibbutzim and the influence of both on the General Trend, in Yuval Dror, *Toldot ha-ḥinukh ha-ḳibutsi*, 19–21.

<sup>74</sup> Yoav Silbert, 'Ha-ma' avak'; Rachel Elboim-Dror, 'Memshlet ha-mandat'.

<sup>75</sup> Reshef, *ha-Ḥinukh ha-ʿIvri*, 154.

<sup>76</sup> Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion*.

## 2

# Roots of Educational Segregation

### *L'envoi*

Put me somewhere west of Rafa,  
Far from Palestinian broils,  
Far from where the rogues of Jaffa  
Hide their misbegotten spoils.  
While with platitude unending,  
And verbosity sublime,  
Council Members vie in spending  
The official's precious time...  
Let me dream, in some sweet-smellin'  
English homestead, of the DAY  
When the Jew desists from 'yelling'  
And the Bedou leaves the 'Freh'...  
When Husseini. and Beyrouti,  
Suleiman and Tukan Bey  
Realize that all their fruity  
Arguments have lost the day;  
When the schemes of Bolshevisky  
Mr Ben Guri and his crew  
Are estopped, - and Kalvarisky  
And his 'Baron' have their due...

H. Bowman<sup>1</sup>

On 11 April 1948, a few days before the end of the British Mandate in Palestine, Sir Henry Gurney, Chief Secretary in the Mandate government, wrote, 'It is a truism that this separatist system of education has tended to drive the two communities away from each other; but neither would have it otherwise.'<sup>2</sup> This observation was underlined a decade earlier by the

<sup>1</sup> The poem appears in Bowman's diary as '*L'envoi*' (lines written after the Advisory Council of 14 and 15 June 1921), MECA, Bowman files, 3B.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Gurney, *The End*, 111.

Palestine Royal Commission headed by Lord Peel. 'The existing Arab and Jewish school systems', it concluded, 'are defiantly widening and will continue to widen the gulf between the races.' It also stressed that the ideal solution is 'a single bi-national system', but that this was 'virtually impossible' under the Mandate.<sup>3</sup>

How did this become an impossibility and what is its history? This chapter traces the roots of Arab-Jewish segregation in education, and it examines the entrenchment of this segregation through the failed attempts to challenge it by British, Zionist, and Arab educators and senior officials. Segregation here is viewed in its broader sense that focuses on physical and conceptual separation and the educational barrier between Arab and Jewish students. We shall see how educational segregation, which was supposedly treated like an unwanted child by prominent pedagogues, became the prodigal son of the education systems.

Westminster was beneficial in enabling and administering this divide. In 1937, during the volatile years of the Great Arab Revolt, Ormsby-Gore, Secretary of State for the Colonies, had little faith in the Mandate and became a supporter of the partition plan. In an address before the House of Commons in July 1937, he noted that the articles of the Mandate prohibited the British from taking steps towards Arab-Jewish rapprochement, and added, 'We are not allowed under the Mandate to have mixed schools or to have any common system of education.'<sup>4</sup>

A few years later, the McNair Commission, which was appointed in 1945 by the Colonial Office to examine the Jewish education system, stressed that 'The disturbing aspect of education in Palestine which must strike everyone who examines it is its separatist effect. . . . [T]he two systems are in watertight compartments'.<sup>5</sup> The contradiction between the 'correct' educational vision for Palestine and the country's reality appeared in this report as well. The Commission called for further rapprochement between the Jewish and Arab communities, but instead of putting forward an actual plan, was satisfied with stating, '*the time may come* when it will be possible to unite Jewish and Arab students. . . .'<sup>6</sup>

In the early days of the Mandate, Bowman still considered this issue a challenge rather than a *fait accompli*. In early 1921 he wrote in his diary that

<sup>3</sup> Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 342, 344.

<sup>4</sup> See published protocol in *Palestine Post*, 30 July 1937.

<sup>5</sup> Great Britain, Colonial Office, *The System of Education of the Jewish Community in Palestine*, 6.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 7, 10 (emphasis added).

'this may be the beginning of a new era, in which Jew and Muslim, Catholic and Protestant, Greek Orthodox and Samaritan, Druze and Armenian, Copt and Anglican may not only live together in harmony, but may even come together and unite in the harmonious whole.'<sup>7</sup> Whether this was a naive diary entry, a deep personal conviction or both, this vision was shattered by the 1929 disturbances: 'one wonders how long if ever it will be before Jew and Arab can live together again in mutual confidence.'<sup>8</sup> The disturbances prompted Bowman's complete disillusionment: 'We have built for 10 years, & it has crumbled in 10 days,' he noted sadly on 4 September 1929.<sup>9</sup> Bowman's memorandum to the High Commissioner Chancellor after the disturbances called for the partition of Palestine into cantons, and stated that the national home was an immoral project that could only be achieved by military force. Ironically, he wrote, the two peoples are cousins, but these ties have been long forgotten, and, in any case, no one would be willing to give away his home, not even for his cousin.<sup>10</sup>

His disillusionment with Arab-Jewish relations continued until Bowman left Palestine. In his testimony before the Royal Commission in 1936, he claimed he had tried to bring the two people together through education, but to no avail. The main difficulty, he noted, was the insistence on the importance that 'both races' gave to their language, especially in Jewish education.<sup>11</sup> Arabs, he thought, had no problem studying in English but would never agree to study in Hebrew.<sup>12</sup> The Arabs, Bowman testified, 'say it is the business of the Jews to learn their language [i.e. Arabic] and not for them to learn theirs.'<sup>13</sup> Bowman admitted, however, that he had not invested real effort in writing a syllabus that reflected this goal. Only joint sports events and the meetings of the Board are mentioned in his testimony as successful attempts at bringing both communities together.<sup>14</sup> Before he left Palestine, Bowman tried to convince his Jewish and Arab friends to do more to 'reciprocate understanding.' Before the Second World War, he

<sup>7</sup> Bowman's handwriting is partially illegible; so 'whole' is thus an assumption: Bowman's Diary, 27 February 1921, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>8</sup> Bowman's Diary, 31 August 1929, *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Bowman's Diary, 4 September 1929, *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Bowman's Diary, 6 October 1929, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> On methodology, nationalism, and the instruction of Hebrew in Miriam Szamet, see 'H'inukha'im', 44-53.

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Bowman's public testimony, *Palestine Post*, 29 November 1936.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony before the Royal Commission 27 November 1936, BM 2/2/38-42, MECA; Private meeting, 2/2/97/8, Testimony before the Royal Commission 27 November 1936, BM 2/2/38-42, MECA.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

described a similar vision: 'Let us rather strive to encourage a friendly union of Arab states, with a contented and prosperous Jewry within its orbit'.<sup>15</sup>

This was too little, too late. Of the different battles that he needed to fight as Director of Education (DoE), he chose to abandon the front line of Arab-Jewish rapprochement through education. However, it is worth noting that Bowman had limited influence on Mandate policy as a whole and that whenever the Department threatened the Yishuv's autonomy in education, the Yishuv was able to bypass it by directly contacting the High Commissioner. Such was the case for the Kadoorie affair, where Bowman was unable to convince the Yishuv to cooperate in establishing a shared agricultural school using the funds contributed by the late Elias Kadoorie. The Yishuv's ostensible reasons for boycotting the initiative were language issues, the Jewish sabbatical year (*shmita*) restrictions, and kosher food—something that never kept Jews from attending non-Jewish schools outside Palestine.<sup>16</sup> Establishing an all-Hebrew model agricultural school was a Zionist ideal in itself, and there was no room for Arabs in it. Bowman was deeply offended by what he considered Zionists' political blindness in this incident.<sup>17</sup>

Unlike Bowman, Jerome Farrell (1882–1960), his successor in 1936, and senior official at the Department as of his arrival in Palestine in 1924, left no evidence suggesting a personal belief in the role of pedagogy in promoting understanding between the two peoples. If anything, Farrell represented the opposite approach to Bowman's failed vision, and he had conflictual relationship with the Yishuv's educational administration. Farrell saw a resemblance between Zionism and Nazism, and he depicted Zionism as an imperialist movement of 'racial self-worship', an 'inhumane mass selfishness of concentrated Jewry' unparalleled in history.<sup>18</sup> Farrell sought to abolish the administrative separation of the trend system in Hebrew education, and he demanded greater control by the Department over the Jewish schools, but he too failed.<sup>19</sup> Hebrew education, for Farrell, was an incurable virus injected into its youth, a 'spiritual corruption'.<sup>20</sup> Written during the late 1940s, these highly charged words with their anti-Semitic tone illustrate

<sup>15</sup> Humphrey Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 293–4.

<sup>16</sup> Bowman, 265. <sup>17</sup> Bowman, xvi.

<sup>18</sup> Jerome Farrell: Notes on Jewish Education and the McNair Report, 30 November 1946, CO 733/476/75089/2, TNA, cited in, Amikam Nachmani, *Great Power*, 167; Jerome Farrell, 'The Distribution of Educational Benefits in Palestine', 17 December 1945, Farrell, GB165-0104, MECA.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph S. Bentwich, *Education in Israel*, 29–30.

<sup>20</sup> Nachmani, 167; Farrell, 'The Distribution of Educational Benefits in Palestine'.

Farrell's long negative relationship with the Yishuv and Hebrew education in particular.<sup>21</sup> Given his attitude, it is doubtful he would have been either willing or able to succeed where his predecessor had failed.

Nevertheless, other voices in London did not share Farrell's pessimism. During the violent clashes that took place during the Arab Revolt, British MPs criticized the colonial policy of segregation in education.<sup>22</sup> The most vocal and explicit criticism came from the Conservative MP Ian Campbell Hannah, who had previously taught in China. Hannah did not only criticize the colonial educational policy, but also put forward an alternative.<sup>23</sup> As an educator and strong believer in the lessons that could be learned from history, he advised the Colonial Office to 'inspire both Arab and Jew with a tremendous enthusiasm to revive the greatness of the work they were carrying on a few centuries ago' in medieval Spain and Baghdad. Hannah truly believed that Arab-Jewish unity could be made possible by an educational syllabus that emphasized these periods. To this end, he offered to author special textbooks that would discuss these periods, an offer that was transferred to the Department of Education.<sup>24</sup>

Farrell sent a polite reply and promised to consider Hannah's proposal, while at the same time stating that the Department would not engage in the production of such a book. Farrell shelved Hannah's idea and it never received any attention at the Department.<sup>25</sup> As we shall see, Farrell completely overlooked or intentionally dismissed the idea of promoting understanding through history instruction in Palestine, despite the considerable influence he wielded in his different capacities.

An article published in April 1940 in *Hazofeh*, the Mizrahi newspaper, responded to Hannah's proposal. The writer argued that there was no need for such a textbook as it already existed. The Jews, it stated, need no advice about their relations with the Arabs, for they teach the universal Torah of love (*torat ha-ahavah*) rather than the Torah of revenge and hatred taught in 'other schools.'<sup>26</sup> This article reflects political-pedagogical self-assurance, and the conviction that there was nothing to remedy in Hebrew education. Although Hannah failed to promote his idea, as discussed in Chapter 4, he had hit the nail on the head in recognizing the problem.

<sup>21</sup> Rachel Elboim-Dror, 'Memshelet ha-mandat'.

<sup>22</sup> For example, a speech given by Campbell Stephen, a Scottish MP, about the colonial policy of divide and rule in labour unions and in education: *Davar*, 5 August 1937.

<sup>23</sup> *Palestine Post*, 23 July 1939.

<sup>24</sup> *Palestine Post*, 27 July 1939 and 4 April 1940; *Davar*, 4 April 1940.

<sup>25</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 150–1. <sup>26</sup> *Hazofeh*, 8 April 1940.



Hannah's proposal and its failure reveals the ingredients of a rather simple pedagogical compound. The British colonial administration, here Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was handed Hannah's proposal, was probably well aware of the Peel Commission's recommendations on education but had neither the interest nor the energy to implement them.<sup>27</sup> The DoE, for his part, refused to engage in peace-oriented education of any kind, and finally, history textbooks, the products of this policy and a physical relic of this compound, reflected these pedagogical lacunae.

It was Farrell who introduced his successor Bernard De Bunsen, a man with no prior knowledge of the country, to Palestine. De Bunsen arrived during the hot violent summer of 1946 and served as DoE until the last day of the Mandate. In retrospect, De Bunsen stated that 'There was a big educational job' to do but no time to complete it. As 'the security situation worsened', he wrote, 'the job was to keep the schools going and prevent the dissolution of the system'. His personal take on an undivided Arab-Jewish state was that, 'It was a hope the British, if they ever had it, had long since jettisoned'.<sup>28</sup> De Bunsen believed that separation in education and the nationalist nature of both systems were a done deal.

This analysis was written in hindsight, decades after De Bunsen left Palestine. While in office, he still held on to at least a shred of his belief in the power of education in the country. The last DoE warned of a 'serious danger' to the future political settlement in Palestine if Arabs and Jews 'are going to be brought up in an exclusively national education ... ignoring, and even hostile to, the traditions and aspirations of the other community ...'. To defuse this hostility, De Bunsen suggested some control over syllabi and textbooks to prevent indoctrination and encourage the inculcation of a positive attitude towards the other community. De Bunsen recommended the establishment of a central educational organization (to replace the Department of Education) and a joint Arab-Jewish Advisory Council of educators. These institutions, De Bunsen hoped, would prevent both systems from drifting apart; ensure the proper study of the language, history, and culture of the other community; and foster contacts between teachers and pupils from both systems.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Yehoshua Porath, *In Search of Arab Unity*, 110–14.

<sup>28</sup> Bernard De Bunsen, *Adventures in Education*, 69, 72.

<sup>29</sup> Bernard De Bunsen, 'The Place of Education in the Political Settlement of Palestine', printed undated report, De Bunsen papers. I thank Tom Segev for giving me access to De Bunsen's papers found by his assistant and held by De Bunsen's widow.

De Bunsen was well aware of the impracticability of his scheme, unless both systems were willing to accept it in return for complete administrative autonomy. The new director acknowledged the critical nature of the historical moment in Palestine and understood that the Department should disengage from both systems. The objectives he drew up for possible future institutions marked a shift in the role of the British Mandate in educational administration in Palestine. Since both systems demanded independence, the only role left for the colonial administrator was to regulate and assure intercommunal understanding through education. The trajectory De Bunsen suggested would have been inconceivable to his predecessors, who saw themselves as the pillars of Palestine's education, while investing little energy in intercommunal understanding. Yet, here as well, by the time these insights crystallized, there was no time or energy to implement them.

### Mission Schools and the Sustainability of Mixed Education

Government reluctance to promote mixed education meant that the only place it could emerge was in Christian mission schools. The Peel Commission favoured these mixed schools for their high standard of education and their curriculum, which was broader than that of either the Arab or Jewish systems. The Commission especially appreciated these schools for not encouraging Jewish or Arab nationalism and instead fostering unity and friendship between their students of mixed races.<sup>30</sup> Jewish attendance at Christian schools began in the mid-nineteenth century and saw a gradual increase during the Mandate, from 469 students in 1929 to 1504 in 1942 (with a 60:40 ratio of Catholic schools to Protestant ones).<sup>31</sup> Over the years, amidst the massive growth of Hebrew education, mission's share of Jewish students declined sharply. In most cases, Jewish students only accounted for 10 to 15 percent of an entire school population, which was predominantly Arab.<sup>32</sup> In 1919, out of the 245 students at the Anglican Jerusalem Girls' College, 12 were Muslim, mostly in the elementary classes, and 22 were Jewish, mostly in the secondary sections, all born in Palestine.<sup>33</sup> In 1929, there were 238

<sup>30</sup> Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 341.

<sup>31</sup> Rachel Hart, *Ḳerovim-reḥokim*, 27–8.

<sup>32</sup> Department of Education, Statistical Tables Diagrams for the Scholastic Year 1942–1943, M130/14, ISA; David Kroyanker, *Mitham terah-sanṭah*, 49.

<sup>33</sup> The percentage of Jewish girls in the College increased during the late 1920s and 1930s, but this was a result of a temporary decrease in the total number of students. In 1927, there were 30 Jewish students out of a total of 111: Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 71–2.

students at St George's and 25 were Jewish, but in 1930 (after the 1929 events), there were only 18 Jewish students.<sup>34</sup> In 1937, there were thirty-seven Jewish students studying at the Terra Santa College in Jerusalem, out of 306 students.<sup>35</sup> After 1945, with the growing tension between the Zionists, British, and Arabs, there was a sharp decrease in the numbers of Jewish students in mission schools.<sup>36</sup>

Although the missionary schools were historically accepted by the Muslim elite as worthy institutions, the Jewish community in general refused to send their children to non-Jewish or non-Hebrew schools, and the families that did so were criticized.<sup>37</sup> This phenomenon was restricted to the urban elite in the mixed cities. In 1934, for example, 540 out of 898 Jewish students in mission schools were studying in Jerusalem.<sup>38</sup> In the Anglican schools, the majority of Jewish students were girls, since the community was less accepting of a foreign education for boys, the backbone of the national ethos.<sup>39</sup> These Jewish students were either from religious families who were fearful of secular Hebrew education (in many cases old Yishuv Sephardi families),<sup>40</sup> from the secular Jewish community, or refugees from Nazi Germany who preferred a classic European education to that offered by the Yishuv and sought language skills that could secure government employment.<sup>41</sup>

The numerical marginality of mixed education which presented no serious threat was perhaps one of the secrets of its relative success. Nevertheless, mixed education still deserves attention since it was the single existing challenge to educational segregation and survived despite the conflict until the end of the Mandate. The diary of Susanna Pearce Emery (1896–1986), an art teacher at the Jerusalem Girls' College (1919–1930) and later principal

<sup>34</sup> *ibid*, 168; *The St. George's School Magazine* 1, vol. 6, Christmas Term, 1929, 23.

<sup>35</sup> An exception was the Scots College in Safad that had a similar number of Jewish and Arab students: Schools Open to Arabs and Jews, 3rd Term 1936–37, CO, 733/362/2/71, TNA.

<sup>36</sup> Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 188.

<sup>37</sup> Liora R. Halperin, 'The Battle'; *Doar Hayom*, 20 October 1933; earlier criticism in *Hashkafa*, 9 April 1897; see also Pinhas ben Tsevi Grayevski, *Milhemet ha-yehudim ba-misyon*.

<sup>38</sup> A. Arnon, *Davar*, 20 November 1934.

<sup>39</sup> Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 177–8.

<sup>40</sup> In the Terra Santa College in Jerusalem, most of the students were from Sephardic families: Kroyanker, *Mitham*, 49. The Jerusalemite Valero family was a good example: Joseph B. Glass and Ruth Kark, *Sephardi Entrepreneurs*, 72–3, 369.

<sup>41</sup> Halperin, 'The Battle'; See, for example, the high numbers of Jewish girls applying to the Haifa English High School and turned down during the late 1930s, in Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 176–7.

of the English High School in Haifa (1932–1948) is an invaluable document for this purpose.

There was certainly a change of heart in Emery's case. In 1919, she expressed her pessimism about the Mandate's chances of success. She objected to Jewish immigration and depicted her Jewish students as clumsy and pushy. In her opinion, since the Jews were lowering the level of the school, their small numbers seemed preferable.<sup>42</sup> This type of opinion corresponded to the widespread ambivalence towards Zionism and the commitment to the spread of Arab progress that dominated the discourse of the Jerusalem & East Mission under which the Anglican schools operated.<sup>43</sup>

Emery's later diary entries are replete with usually optimistic descriptions of the effects of the conflict on the school. After the October 1933 disturbances, Emery noted that despite the parents' panic and difficult conversations at home, the school continued to operate as usual, and the staff did not detect any signs of national, religious, or racial ill-feeling among the pupils. She added that the school did not prohibit discussions of any nature, and newspapers were read freely.<sup>44</sup> Emery was confident that the school's spirit could overcome the national challenge since it represented 'something peaceful and friendly'.<sup>45</sup> This belief contrasted with Emery's criticism of what she saw as ultranationalist Hebrew education, with its overemphasis on speaking Hebrew, and the rebellious nature of the Zionist youth movements. Like Farrell and other British educators in Palestine, she saw the Hebrew education system as comparable to that of Nazi Germany.<sup>46</sup>

During the Arab Revolt, like most Anglican educators, Emery sympathized with the rebels and their cause.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, the diary gives an impression of the school as an Anglican haven of harmony, 'a symbol of normality and stability'.<sup>48</sup> In late 1938, Emery wrote that the Jewish girls even joined prayers in the school hall when all the school sang 'O come all ye faithful' at the end.<sup>49</sup> During the Revolt, school activities continued as usual, and although at the beginning, the Jewish students remained aloof, close friendships were quickly established, and the students went to each other's homes

<sup>42</sup> 26 October 1919, S. Emery, Box 2, File 4, 10–11, MECA.

<sup>43</sup> Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 107–9. <sup>44</sup> S. Emery, Box 2, 147, MECA.

<sup>45</sup> S. Emery, 25 September 1938, Box 3, 220, MECA.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Emery to the Bishop, undated, copied, and retyped with the original missing from the file, Miss Morgan's papers, Box 1/4, 2–4, MECA.

<sup>47</sup> Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 183–4.

<sup>48</sup> Okkenhaug, 179–80.

<sup>49</sup> S. Emery, 25 December 1938, Box 3, 225–6, MECA; S. Emery, Report of the English High School 1947–1948, Miss Morgan's files, Box 1/4, 36–9, MECA.

to visit.<sup>50</sup> In fact, friendship between Arab and Jewish students is mentioned in various memoirs of these schools' graduates.<sup>51</sup>

The atmosphere in mission schools was not always harmonious. During the final years of the Mandate, Emery noted, the numbers of Jewish students in mission schools decreased, and violent incidents between students took place.<sup>52</sup> In the Safad Scots College, many of the Jewish students volunteered for the Haganah and would occasionally skip classes to take up arms with 'a wink from the principal'. Shmuel Toledano, the son of a prominent Sephardic Tiberias Rabbi, scholar, and author, recalls that the dormitories were separate, that true friendships were not common, and that there was always suspicion since the students from prominent Arab families were vocal Arab nationalists. This suspicion led to an arrangement with the local Haganah forces, where, in case of danger, the students were told to ring the college bell, and forces would instantly come to their aid. In the early days of the revolt, fearing clashes, all the Jewish boarding students secretly arranged for a bus and at the break of dawn, left the school with no warning. Toledano never returned.<sup>53</sup>

Incidents of anti-Semitism also occurred but, in most cases, these were treated sternly by the principals. On the first day of the Second World War, to his surprise, Haim Steinberg, a student at Terra Santa College in Jerusalem, found a poster tacked to the entrance of the school stating 'Jews are not welcome here'. The school board expelled the students and the teacher involved.<sup>54</sup> At the College des Frères in Jaffa, Jewish students did not attend classes or were advised not to go to school by the administration whenever political tensions arose.<sup>55</sup>

Challenges such as these did not undermine Emery's belief that her school was fulfilling the true purpose of the Mandate by accepting students regardless of religious persuasion and pursuing a unifying humanistic vision of togetherness. History instruction in school, Emery noted, played a pivotal role in creating this humanistic unity at school.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Okkenhaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living*, 175; S. Emery's Report to the Royal Commission 1936, S. Emery, Box 2, 150–1, MECA. Another example of a close friendship can be found in Jamil I Toubbeh, *Day of the Long Night*, 9–11.

<sup>51</sup> Kroyanker, *Mitham*, 53; Me'ir Mevar-Maiberg, *Be-tsel ha-metsudah*; Orit Ichilov, *Between State and Church*, 33–4, 152.

<sup>52</sup> S. Emery, 10 November 1946, Box 3, 594, MECA.

<sup>53</sup> Shmuel Toledano, Interview, Jerusalem, 17 February 2015.

<sup>54</sup> Kroyanker, *Mitham*, 53. <sup>55</sup> Ichilov, *Between State and Church*, 36–41.

<sup>56</sup> Schools in Palestine, lecture given at the E. M. Annual Meeting, Caxton Hall, S.W.1, Miss Morgan's files, Box 1, 54–6, MECA.

However, despite their height, the walls of these mixed schools could not keep the Arab–Jewish tension out completely, and incidents of verbal and physical violence between students occurred alongside a certain level of distrust.<sup>57</sup> Still, these schools survived the entirety of the Mandate period without renouncing their inclusiveness, and Arab and Jewish students continued to study together. The idealized reality of coexistence in mission schools helps elucidate the dominance of segregated reality as an exception that confirms the rule. Arab–Jewish harmony was only possible when Jews represented a small minority in the schools that remained the privilege of the urban elite. Furthermore, the patronage of a third party such as a church or monastery enabled mixed education. This was achieved by the exclusion of Jews and Arabs from senior administrative posts, a policy that safeguarded the mission but cast a shadow over its sustainability as a wider (braver) initiative. It left mixed education within the realm of a foreign colonial civilizing mission. Tibawi's and George Antonius' criticism of the mission for 'striking at the root of the Arab national movement' by marginalizing Arab culture and Arab nationalism is another case in point.<sup>58</sup> The circumvention of political and national educational issues, rather than producing a pedagogy that confronted racism and segregation, further challenged these schools' ability to truly offer an alternative to, rather than avoidance of, the conflict.

Mixed education could have been more than simply an anecdote if the Department of Education had adopted a policy of establishing such schools or strengthening and extending the existing ones. The Jerusalem Law Classes school is a perfect example of a successful British foray into mixed education that was attended by 500 Arab and Jewish students in 1945.<sup>59</sup> The Department failed to initiate other such endeavours.

### Rapprochement as Lip Service

In a speech delivered in Russian before the Jewish community of Ekaterinoslav in 1903, Israel Belkind (1861–1929) noted that 'the attitude of the Arabs towards the Jews...is good, particularly to Healthy Jews of

<sup>57</sup> The Peel Commission noted in a similar spirit that the social ties created during the school years failed to survive the passage to adult life: Palestine Royal Commission, *Report*, 342.

<sup>58</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 65; George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 93.

<sup>59</sup> Assaf Likhovski, *Law and Identity*, 109–12.

courageous spirit such as the Jewish colonists in E'Y [Erets-Yisrael] who they treat with great respect.<sup>60</sup> The Arabs of Palestine intrigued and troubled the famous early Zionist and pioneer in Hebrew education since his immigration in 1882, and, in 1928, he published a short book about them. 'The great majority of this country's dwellers are inferior to our people in almost everything,' he wrote. To remedy their predicament, he suggested that Arab students should be allowed to enrol in Hebrew schools, to 'elevate' them through the instruction of Hebrew and universal culture. Belkind attributed metaphysical strength to the teaching of Hebrew, and he was certain that the Hebrew education of Muslims and Christians in Palestine could transform their hatred of Zionism into love.<sup>61</sup> Belkind's Jewish-Arab utopia was based on the fostering of modern Jew-loving, Hebrew-speaking Palestinian Arabs who were educated in Hebrew schools. This attitude towards the education of the Arabs with its strong colonialist overtones, is a good starting point for further exploration of this issue.

There were also voices within Zionism that contested educational separation and recognized the innate threat it posed.<sup>62</sup> Although on the fringes of mainstream Zionism, the central role of these educators as mediators between the communities, as challengers to this separation, or as advocates of reconciliation and cooperation is worth highlighting. The earliest doubts as to Zionism's morality in its colonization project led to questions about Jewish education in relation to the Arab population. Educators were the first to voice these concerns. In his famous 1905 speech and later article 'The Hidden Question,' Yitzhak Epstein (1862–1943) criticized Zionism's deliberate exclusion of the Arab people living in Palestine from the Zionist vision and acknowledged their connection to and love of their homeland. Epstein, an educator and pioneer in the methodology of Hebrew instruction, was not against the colonization project, but demanded it should be founded on the principle of equality with the Arabs. He envisioned an enlightened colonization project where the natives would join hands with the Jews. As part of a Jewish-Arab alignment, he declared that Jewish kindergartens and schools should willingly accept Arabs and give ample attention to the instruction of Arabic. Pedagogically, Epstein warned against an education based on hatred and prejudice,<sup>63</sup> although he also spoke of

<sup>60</sup> *Ha-Melitz*, 13 March 1903.

<sup>61</sup> Israel Belkind, *ha-'Arvim*.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Heller, *Mi-berit shalom*; Shalom Ratsabi, *Between Zionism*; Adi Gordon, ed., 'Brit shalom'.

<sup>63</sup> This article was published in the journal *ha-shiloah* in 1907 and later reprinted in various editions: Yitzhak Epstein, *She'elah ne'elamah*, 204–5.

educating and enlightening the Arabs.<sup>64</sup> During the Mandate, Epstein continued to criticize Zionism's cultural indifference towards Arab culture.<sup>65</sup>

Epstein, Belkind, and other enthusiasts advocated a kind of colonial humanism like the European colonialist discourse of the time. They saw it as the most preferable system and ideological framework to enhance control over the territory.<sup>66</sup> In his capacity as school principal in Rosh-Pina, for example, Epstein attempted to welcome Arab students from neighbouring villages, an endeavour that failed to materialize, as only four Arab students actually studied there. Still, this was a rare sight in contrast to the moshavot's dominant attitude of estrangement and scorn directed towards the local Arabs in the Galilee.<sup>67</sup>

The questions raised by Epstein touched at the core of Zionist colonization since they were expressed by a famous, leading educator, a man whose textbooks had revolutionized the teaching of Hebrew all over the Jewish world. After obtaining his doctorate in pedagogy from the University of Lausanne, Epstein returned to Palestine to head the Levinsky Seminar and later acted as supervisor of schools under the Zionist Executive.<sup>68</sup> These biographical details are important because, as we shall see, other prominent Zionist educators followed his lead in the formative years of the early 1900s.

Epstein's views had supporters in early mainstream Zionism especially before WWI, a period of greater polyphony of opinions than would later prevail. Victor Jacobson, the Zionist representative in Istanbul before the war, considered Zionism to be part of the revival of the East. A diplomat, Jacobson engaged in direct dialogue with Arab nationalists.<sup>69</sup> Jacobson articulated the problematic separation between Arabs and Jews in schools. In his address before the Zionist Executive in 1914, he reported on the Arabs' demand to open Jewish schools for their sons and suggested the establishment of courses for the Arabs at the Zionist movement's expense.<sup>70</sup>

Some Arabs found this sort of civilizing mission appealing. During the early stages of Jewish settlement, the Arab elite considered Jewish schools, primarily the Alliance Israélite Universelle (AIU), as another type of European school, in other words, as an elite institution offering better education.

<sup>64</sup> Epstein, 205. <sup>65</sup> Hanan Harif, 'Teḥiyat ha-mizrah', 149–51.

<sup>66</sup> Harif, 'Teḥiyat ha-mizrah', 88–92.

<sup>67</sup> Yuval Dror, 'Bet ha-sefer ha-kafri', 56–68; Yair Seltenreich, *Ha-anashim mi-kan*, 137–40; Yair Seltenreich, 'Dimuyim hadadiyim'.

<sup>68</sup> Shlomo Haramati, *ha-Morim ha-ḥalutsim*, 50–60; Shlomo Haramati, *Sheloshah morim*, 144–53.

<sup>69</sup> Israel Kolat, 'ha-Tenu'ah'.

<sup>70</sup> Ahron Cohen, *Yišra'el veka-olam ha-'arvi*, 109–10.



A few prominent Arab educators and authors of history textbooks such as Ahmad Khalifa and 'Umar Salih al-Barghuthi studied in these schools.<sup>71</sup> When comparing the AIU to his village *kuttab*, Barghuthi felt 'as though he had travelled from the dark ages (*hamājiyah*) to a civilized, modern era'.<sup>72</sup>

However, these ideas were only championed by a small minority, and questions about the right curriculum that would connect the Hebrew student to his surroundings and neighbours remained open. This explains why the importance of instruction in the Arabic language and culture was a recurrent issue, as of the inception of organized Hebrew education in Palestine. In 1903, at the meeting of the Teachers' Union, educators from across Palestine discussed making it part of the curriculum. Surprisingly, during the meeting, David Yellin (1864–1941), an Old Yishuv Jerusalemite and a key figure in Hebrew education in Palestine, objected to the idea of instruction of Arabic, stating that Arabic was for researchers not farmers, and that students could acquire colloquial Arabic from daily encounters with the Arabs. The meeting adjourned with the resolution that only one language should be taught, and that Arabic instruction remained a 'luxury' (*motarot*).<sup>73</sup> This luxury remained excluded from primary education and on the fringes of secondary education until the end of the Mandate.

Yellin's biography does not mesh comfortably with his pedagogical views on Arabic. A native Jerusalemite, half Iraqi half Polish, the founding member of the Hebrew Teachers' Union, co-founder of the Hebrew Language Committee, founder and principal of the Teachers' Training Seminar, a linguist, and a pedagogue, Yellin's activity and enthusiasm for the renaissance of the Hebrew language should be seen in light of the cultural renaissances of his era. The first renaissance was that of the Ottoman Empire. As a member of the Ottoman Jewish Society and the Ottoman city council of Jerusalem, the 1908 Young Turk Revolution filled Yellin with hopes of progress and modernism. To use Campos' terminology, Yellin was part of an Ottoman brotherhood that transcended religion and ethnicity.<sup>74</sup> The second renaissance that fascinated Yellin was the Arabic *Nahda*, another language reborn, manifested in the intellectual discourse of the Jerusalem elite of his

<sup>71</sup> Arab students from notable families could also be found at the Lemel school: Miriam Szamet, 'Hinukha'im', 69.

<sup>72</sup> Barghuthi, *al-Marāḥil, tārikh siyāsī*, 85–6, 93–4.

<sup>73</sup> Natan Efrathi, *Mi-leshon yehidim*, 35; Dov Kimḥi, *Sefer ha-yovel*, 389.

<sup>74</sup> Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 126; Ruth Kark and Nadav Solomonovich, 'Late Ottoman Palestine'.

time.<sup>75</sup> As a teacher in Ezra's Lemel school and the Teachers' Seminar he advocated intensive teaching of Arabic. A knowledge of Arabic, Yellin noted in 1911, could liberate the Jews in Palestine from what he termed a self-imposed 'narrow ghetto'.<sup>76</sup> In his scholarly work, Yellin stressed that the study of Arabic was the key to understanding Hebrew.<sup>77</sup>

In the early days of the British occupation, Yellin's knowledge of Arabic and close ties with the Arabs made him and a few other old Yishuv members the mediator propagandists of the Zionist movement who sought to find supporters for the national home project.<sup>78</sup> Prior to the Balfour Declaration, when the Sephardic Old Yishuv still contested the European hegemony, they championed an educational vision that fit their values. Sephardic Jews had a personal, intimate contact with their Arab neighbours. Their *modus vivendi* with the Arabs was the pillar of their vision for the future in Palestine. They knew them personally as members of the same community, which enabled a more inclusive Jewish communal identity and potential cooperation.<sup>79</sup> In a shared reality, they could not and would not overlook their presence or culture. The Sephardi-Old Yishuv oriented *ha-Herut* newspaper, for example, advocated the teaching of Arabic in Hebrew schools.<sup>80</sup> At the 1903 meeting, the educator Eliyahu Sapir called for the teaching of Arabic, the language of the country. Its instruction, he claimed, could 'influence our Arab neighbours by showing them our enlightenment in their language (*ha-ma'or she-banu*)'.<sup>81</sup> However as early as in 1903, this was a minority voice.<sup>82</sup> Nisim Malul, formerly a professor of Hebrew at the Egyptian University and advocate of Arab-Jewish cultural cooperation, called for the mandatory teaching of Arabic in Hebrew schools in Palestine in 1913. Malul suggested creating an Arab-Jewish Teachers' Union, emphasized Semitism as the Jewish connection to the East and called for the disengagement from Europe.<sup>83</sup> These views were harshly

<sup>75</sup> 'Ādil Mannā', *A'lām filastīn*, 74.

<sup>76</sup> Rinott, 'Pe'ulatah', 113–14; Cohen, *Yisra'el veka-'olam ha-'arvi*, 93.

<sup>77</sup> David Yellin, 'The Hippa'el-Nif'al Conjugation'; see also, Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif, 'Hebrew Literature in the Middle Ages', 254–6.

<sup>78</sup> Yitshak Gil-Har, 'Hit'argenut ve-hanhaga', 485–93, 496–7.

<sup>79</sup> Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 97–8.

<sup>80</sup> Jacobson, 89. <sup>81</sup> Efrathi, *Mi-leshon yehidim*, 34.

<sup>82</sup> Kimhi, *Sefer ha-yovel*, 387–8, 392.

<sup>83</sup> Rachel Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh*, vol. 2, 130; Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire*, 103–6; Yosef Gorni, *ha-She'elah ha-'arvit*, 50, 53–4; Moshe Behar and Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, 'The Possibility'. The educator Shmuel Ben-Shabat wrote on the same lines later during the Mandate: *Doar Hayom*, 21 October 1932. See also Rina Eyal (Ben-Shabat), *Sovu Pneikhem*, 2014, 69–95.

criticized by the Yishuv, which accused Malul and his supporters of promoting assimilation.<sup>84</sup>

Several non-Sephardic educators and visionaries shared these ideas as well. Haim Kalvarisky (1868–1947), a conspicuous example, believed that direct engagement with the Arabs could persuade them to embrace the Zionist project. In 1919, he argued for mandatory teaching of Arabic and Hebrew in Arab and Jewish schools.<sup>85</sup> Those who were not convinced voluntarily, Kalvarisky thought, would change their minds and even work to thwart the Arab national movement in exchange for material benefits.

Theoretically, the establishment in 1919 of the Palestine Club and the Palestinian Arab-Hebrew School by Kalvarisky in Tiberias sounded like a revolutionary venture. In May 1921, *Doar Hayom* noted that the Club taught Christians and Muslims Hebrew, Arabic, and English and worked for the promotion of peace and cooperation.<sup>86</sup> However, it was clear from the start that Arab cooperation did not depend on good will but rather was achieved and maintained through funds and promises of future employment. If they accepted, the Club members were utilized as local opposition to the anti-Zionist activity of the Palestinian Arab national movement.<sup>87</sup> Little is known about this Arab-Hebrew school, but it is certain that no Jews attended it. Moreover, by November 1922, the Arab principal appointed by Kalvarisky had left Tiberias and closed the school. In a letter to Kalvarisky, he wrote that the school had failed to achieve its central goal (the spread of Hebrew), and that Hebrew instruction had ceased because its students ‘who had no potential’ did not know how to read or write Arabic and had to be taught that language first. Stressing his loyalty and honesty, he concluded that the school was a waste of Kalvarisky’s time and money.<sup>88</sup>

Similar initiatives crafted by Kalvarisky or the Political Department of the Jewish Agency also had disappointing or tragic results. In the early 1920s, Sheikh Muhammad Adib Ramadan, the principal of the school in the Great Mosque of Ramleh, preached sermons condemning the use of violence and called for interreligious unity. The Supreme Muslim Council fired him for receiving money from the Jews. Sheikh ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Khatib, a teacher

<sup>84</sup> Itzhak Bezalel, *Noladetem tsiyonim*, 173–7.

<sup>85</sup> Haim Margalio Kalvarisky, ‘*Al parashat derakhenu*’, 26.

<sup>86</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 29 May 1921.

<sup>87</sup> Gilkin to Kalvarisky, 4 December 1922, J1/289, CZA.

<sup>88</sup> Saleh Jaris to Kalvarisky, 4 January 1923, *ibid.* Kalvarisky also established a school for the Arabs of Al-Ja’una that operated between 1919 and 1924; see Selteneich, *Ha-anashim mi-kan*, 140–2; *Ma’ariv*, 28 November 1958; *Hed ha-hinukh*, August–September 1942.

at the Jerusalem Rashidiya school and leader of the opposition to the Mufti, was assassinated in late 1938 by the Mufti's men.<sup>89</sup>

Kalvarisky's initiatives, which were unparalleled in their vision and scope, also reveal what undercut his actions.<sup>90</sup> In Tiberias, the fact that bribes could not spread the knowledge of Hebrew or support of Zionism among the Arabs, was clear to the Zionist leadership. His investment in the Hebrew education of Al-Ja'una, and the impressive Hebrew spoken by its children, did not turn them into proponents of Zionism. Nevertheless, Kalvarisky's network of bribes continued to receive Zionist funding during the Mandate. Although the Zionist leadership had little faith in him, he was one of the few to offer solutions to the hidden question.<sup>91</sup>

Some Zionist leaders thought that Arab resistance to Zionism emanated from ignorance as to the historical right of the Jews over Palestine and Jewish ignorance of Arab culture. In the early 1920s, Yosef Haim Castel, secretary of the Political Department of the Palestine Zionist Executive, suggested remedying this mutual ignorance by authoring Jewish history books in Arabic and translating books from Arabic to Hebrew to foster the ties between intellectuals from both peoples.<sup>92</sup> A native Jerusalemite from a Sephardic family, Castel had served in the Ottoman Army and worked as Yellin's secretary in the Teachers' Seminar. He was also a binationalist who called for the rewriting of the Balfour Declaration to safeguard the legitimate rights of the other inhabitants of the country.<sup>93</sup> The Arab Bureau of the Zionist Executive considered some of Castel's recommendations,<sup>94</sup> but they had no influence over the Va'ad.

The initiatives and the views of Kalvarisky, Castel, and others failed in their bid to reform the Hebrew curriculum. It is intriguing to see how a similar ideology and acknowledgement of the importance of Jewish-Arab rapprochement was promoted from within the system by the Director of Va'ad ha-Ḥinukh, but it failed similarly.

A prolific publicist in Hebrew and Yiddish, and editor of the main Yiddish periodicals and journals, Dr Yosef Luria (1871–1937) was a passionate promoter of Hebrew in Hebrew instruction. Luria emigrated from Vilna (Vilnius)

<sup>89</sup> Hillel Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, 56–7, 130.

<sup>90</sup> Other suggestions to launch Hebrew courses for Arabs in 1919 failed to materialize: Gil-Har, 'Hit'argenut ve-hanhaga', 490.

<sup>91</sup> Arieh Bruce Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew*, 187.

<sup>92</sup> Y. H. Castel, A Proposal for a Political Work Plan in Relation to the Arabs Submitted to the Zionist Executive in London and Jerusalem for the Year, 1923, J1/289, CZA; Hillel Cohen and Yuval Evri 'Moledet meshutefet'.

<sup>93</sup> Neil Caplan, *Early Arab-Zionist*, 101–3.

<sup>94</sup> Memorandum from the 20 December 1923, J1/289, CZA.

(Vilna) in 1907 and instantly became active in the field of Hebrew education in Palestine. Prior to the First World War, while teaching history at Gymnasia Herzliya, he headed the Teachers' Union. Throughout his career at the forefront of Hebrew education in Palestine, Luria expressed views about Zionism and the Arabs that were exceptional for a man in his position. As a delegate to the 1905 Zionist Congress in Basel, together with Epstein, he advocated the need to study Arabic to encourage Arab-Jewish rapprochement in Palestine.<sup>95</sup> Six years later, Luria wrote 'We must face the truth...we have forgotten one people, the people dwelling in the country and firmly attached to it'.<sup>96</sup> After the violent clashes between Rehovot and the village of Zarnuqa in 1913,<sup>97</sup> Luria wrote in his diary, 'If we have a right to live in the country, it is only in the name of justice'.<sup>98</sup>

Luria was nearing the age of 40 and with a PhD in philosophy, a full-time job as a teacher, and head of the Teachers' Union, was still determined to become proficient in Arabic. His friend, Adel Jaber (1885–1953), the Arabic teacher at the Gymnasia, taught him privately.<sup>99</sup> After the British occupation, Luria continued to express similar views. In 1918, he proposed the establishment of elected parliaments for both peoples, with an equal number of delegates.<sup>100</sup> He envisioned a binational political system that would reflect 'the common interests of both peoples'.<sup>101</sup> An active member of Brit Shalom, Luria articulated in the movement's journal the need for Arabs to have control over their own education, and for the legitimacy of their national claim.<sup>102</sup>

Zionist educators depicted Luria as a true humanist, a liberal, and a renaissance man.<sup>103</sup> Yet there is no indication that Luria voiced these views in his professional work, suggesting that he detached his political vision before and after the war from his pedagogical practices. Luria was active, for example, in scuttling the Kadoorie initiative, and he refused to voice any criticism of the role of Hebrew education in widening the gap between the peoples in his testimony before the Peel Commission.<sup>104</sup> Luria and Yellin,

<sup>95</sup> Yonatan Mendel, *The Creation of Israeli Arabic*, 26.

<sup>96</sup> Gorni, *ha-She'elah ha-'arvit*, 52.

<sup>97</sup> Yuval Ben-Bassat and Gur Alroey, 'The Zionist-Arab Incident of Zarnuqa'.

<sup>98</sup> Yosef Luria's Diary, 9 August 1913, First notebook, National Library, Jerusalem. See also Yosef Luria, *Erets-yisra'el*, 23, 34.

<sup>99</sup> Yosef Luria's Diary, 10 June 1913, First notebook, National Library, Jerusalem.

<sup>100</sup> Gil-Har, 'Hit'argenut ve-hanhaga', 463–4.

<sup>101</sup> Yosef Luria, 'Gishatenu la-parlament'. <sup>102</sup> Yosef Luria, *Sheifotenu* 3 (1923): 10–24.

<sup>103</sup> David Kimche, ed., *Nefesh le-dr. yosef Luria*, 5–8.

<sup>104</sup> *Palestine Post*, 29 December 1936; About Luria's rejection of Kadoorie as a mixed school, see *Palestine Post*, 2 January 1933. See also Yankelevitch, 'Te'omim'.

the representatives of the Yishuv on the PBHS (the only Arab-Jewish committee in the field of education) were reluctant to cooperate with the Board.<sup>105</sup> Similar to his stand in 1903 on the teaching of Arabic,<sup>106</sup> Yellin warned the Board of 'the prevalent danger in the East of learning too many languages and not paying sufficient attention to science'.<sup>107</sup> In other words, Jews should only learn Hebrew and English.

In the Board meetings in 1924, Yellin and Luria abstained from all decisions not directly related to the Matriculation Exam.<sup>108</sup> The two attended the Board meetings with members of the Arab intellectual elite and leading educators such as Khalil Totah, Rafiq al-Tamimi, Is'af al-Nashashibi, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, George Antonius, and others. The Board, as a neutral encounter under British patronage during a relatively peaceful period, could have been utilized by the two educators to establish a bond with the Arab educators based on their own vision, but it was not to be, for a number of reasons.

Yellin and Luria were both enthusiastic supporters of Hebrew education; both were zealous fighters in the 'War of the Languages' and both considered that any other language instruction would undermine the vision of its rebirth in Palestine. Their plate was already full, and an educational engagement with the Arabs or Arabic was one challenge too many. Moreover, a true commitment to the Board could have curtailed the role of the Hebrew University in determining the trajectory of secondary schooling in Hebrew education. Investing energy in this kind of cooperation always came at the expense of cooperation within the fragmented Hebrew education system, itself brimming with rivalries and tensions.<sup>109</sup> Potentially, Yellin and Luria feared they would jeopardize their own position, status, and prestige in mainstream Zionist institutions by challenging the separatist educational paradigm or voicing a pedagogy that would have a detonative impact within the national movement. Instead, they worked within an attainable equilibrium, between the lines, and every so often, voiced daydreams which they had little intention of implementing.

<sup>105</sup> The first preliminary meeting of the Board was held on 3 April 1922: The Jerusalem Faculty of Higher (Oriental) Studies, Minutes, M2498/71, ISA.

<sup>106</sup> See also *Ha-Melitz*, 26 November 1896.

<sup>107</sup> The Jerusalem Board of Higher Studies, Minutes of the Fourth General Meeting, 22 October 1923, M2498/71, ISA.

<sup>108</sup> Board of Higher Studies, Proceedings of the Fifth General Meeting, 11 February 1924; Proceedings of the Sixth General Meeting, 20 May 1924, M2498/71, ISA.

<sup>109</sup> Luria's diaries reflect his pessimism and criticism of the achievements of Hebrew education in Palestine: Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh*, 2:386–96.

Within Hebrew pedagogical discourse, this was not a rare phenomenon. A relatively open pedagogical stance favoured advocating the educational vision of Arab–Jewish cooperation, even within the mainstream public sphere.<sup>110</sup> While they had no actual influence, published articles calling for curricular reform and emphasizing the need for Arabic instruction, or ‘to know our Arab neighbours and their culture’ as was a way to let off steam. Educators worried about this issue sent their message in a bottle, that could always remain sealed with the claim that other burning issues took precedence.

Eliezer Rieger (1896–1954), a senior supervisor in the general trend, provides a good illustration of this educational paradox. In his comprehensive volume on Hebrew education (published 1940), Rieger raises similar ideas as his Zionist-humanist predecessors, but concludes by warning that the instruction of Arabic could lead to the Levantinization of the Yishuv and that the Yishuv’s schools were still in need of ‘a period of segregation and seclusion’ to establish a unique national culture.<sup>111</sup> Since Rieger’s recommendations for Arab–Jewish rapprochement were never seriously discussed, it is clear that they were only intended to be lip service. Segregation and seclusion, what Rieger truly aimed for, were only digestible to the liberal pedagogue after a pseudo-humanist preface.

### Crossing the Lines

The actual promotion of Jewish–Arab cooperation in Jewish schools, rather than in print, came at a steep price because it meant crossing an unmarked line. In 1943, Dr Siegfried Lehmann, founder and director of the Ben Shemen Youth Village agricultural boarding school (est. 1927), published the most comprehensive book to date about Hebrew education and the Arabs. Lehmann, a sympathizer of Brit Shalom and Ihud, warned that Jewish life in Palestine inside ‘a walled off enclave’ would lead to a catastrophe like the one in Europe. Pedagogically, he severely criticized Zionist education for its emphasis on power, complete subjectivity, and inclination towards emotional propaganda.<sup>112</sup> Lehmann objected to what he saw as religious determinism emanating from the idea of the Jewish historical right over the country, an irrational concept that would distance the Jews from

<sup>110</sup> Sarah Glicklich-Slouschz, ‘Bet ha-sefer yeha-milhamah’.

<sup>111</sup> Rieger, *Ha-hinukh*, 1:217–27.

<sup>112</sup> Siegfried Lehmann, *Shorashim*, 22–5.

compromise. Instead, Lehmann put forward a view of political education based on an objective understanding of reality by examining situations from every possible angle that was empathetic to the legitimate feelings of the other people. Jewish nationalism, he wrote, was no different from Arab nationalism, as 'the Arabs love their land and freedom just as we do'. The love for my people, Lehmann argued, derives from love of justice and decency towards the other.<sup>113</sup>

History instruction, Lehmann noted, was crucial to this end. Rather than teaching European history, the Hebrew student must learn the history of the Orient and Arab and Islamic history. Rather than travelling to Europe, the Hebrew student must get to know the Orient. Like Malul, he argued that a true connection to the homeland could only be achieved by merging with the Orient.<sup>114</sup>

Lehmann tried to implement his theories in the Ben Shemen Youth Village. Arabic, for example, was a mandatory course and was given due weight in the curriculum with frequent mutual visits to the neighbouring villages.<sup>115</sup> The school held seminars promoting these ideas. In one of these seminars in 1931, under the title 'For Peace', the pacifist Nathan Hofshi spoke against the use of force and called on the students to follow Gandhi's example. The pedagogue Akiva Ernst Simon (1899–1988) spoke against Jewish nationalism. *Doar Hayom* denounced the institution for holding such events dominated by the Brit Shalom ideology, and accused the two speakers of poisoning the hearts of Hebrew youth.<sup>116</sup>

In Ben Shemen, 'Shvu'a ha-mizrah', literally 'the week of the East', was a full week dedicated to Arab culture that included encounters with Arab youth, performances of Arab music and dance, and speeches promoting Jewish–Arab coexistence. These events did not go unnoticed in the Yishuv. The 1941 event triggered a scandal after it became public that Arab participants sang nationalist songs, and an Arabic-speaking Jewish female student whose parents had been murdered by Arabs was chosen to give a token gift to the Arab participants, a Jewish National Fund box, on which the Arabic dedication covered its Star of David. The last straw was Simon's speech in favour of binationalism. The Revisionist *Ha-Mashkif* accused Ben Shemen's staff of treason and crimes against Zionism and called for their immediate

<sup>113</sup> Lehmann, 30, 159–62.

<sup>114</sup> Lehmann, 188, 190–2.

<sup>115</sup> Amichai Berlad, 'Dr. zigfrid lehman', 30–1, 130.

<sup>116</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 9 November 1931.



resignation.<sup>117</sup> Even *Davar*, which was more sympathetic to Lehmann's educational reputation, criticized Lehmann for incautiousness in administering the event, for inviting Simon as the only lecturer, and for not screening his lecture before it became public.<sup>118</sup> The Hebrew press demanded Simon's resignation and called on readers to 'uproot all the Ernest Simons'. Organizations such as the Jerusalem branch of the Teachers' Union and the university's Graduate Students' Union expressed similar views.<sup>119</sup>

Simon, who was history teacher, then a high school principal, and from 1939, a professor of education at the Hebrew University, also dedicated his life to education. He was a vocal supporter of mixed Arab-Jewish education and called for the recognition of Arabs' rights in Palestine.<sup>120</sup> In 1931, Simon published a book in German on the teaching of history. In the book, Simon articulated a self-reflective theory of instruction, in which the teacher constantly questions his values and historical interpretation and encourages his students to criticize his views.<sup>121</sup> Simon stressed the need for a revision in Zionist education, to make its primary aim to 'break down the walls of hatred and educate both peoples in mutual respect'.<sup>122</sup> This pedagogy obviously influenced his friend Lehmann.

After the Ben Shemen incident, students at the Hebrew University called for a boycott of his lectures and distributed pamphlets ridiculing him. One of these featured a cartoon depicting an Arab riding Simon like a donkey and shouting 'Long live Haj Amin and Qawuqji'. Shortly after his lecture in Ben Shemen, a bomb exploded in Simon's yard, and a few months later, during one of his lectures, a group of young men burst in, beat him, and forced him off the podium.<sup>123</sup>

The outrage after the 1941 event demonstrated the Yishuv's impatience with Lehmann's pedagogy. The outcry over Arabic letters covering a Star of David, a victim of Arab terror giving a gift to Arabs, the exposure of innocent youth to Arab nationalist songs, and nonmainstream Zionist ideas, all provided cover for deeper fears. Lehmann crossed a pedagogical Rubicon by replacing the hollow theories about getting to know one's

<sup>117</sup> *Ha-Mashkif*, 14, 15, 19 December 1941. Similar criticism was voiced in *Ha-Tzofeh*, 7 January 1942.

<sup>118</sup> *Davar*, 10, 12 December 1941.

<sup>119</sup> *Davar*, 29 January 1942; *Ha-Mashkif*, 11, 24 November and 19, 26 December 1941.

<sup>120</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 19 September 1930.

<sup>121</sup> Akibah Ernst Simon, *Das Werturteil im Geschichtsunterricht*; See the book review, Moshe Kalvari, *Davar*, 4 November 1932.

<sup>122</sup> Akiva Ernest Simon in, Kalvarisky, 'Al *parashat derakhenu*, 14, 17-18.

<sup>123</sup> Uri Cohen, *ha-Har yeha-giv' ah*, 55-7; *Ha-Mashkif*, 4 September 1941, 30 January 1942.

neighbours that were so widely accepted by mainstream educators, with concrete actions in that direction. He problematized central Zionist views and authorized the presence in his school, not only of Arabic and Arabs, but also to their views. Paradoxically, Lehmann's radical pedagogy that opposed the establishment of a nationalist enclave in Palestine isolated Ben Shemen, and turned it into an enclave of its own because it failed to spread its message beyond the institution's walls.

The initiatives of David Yellin's son Aviezer, a pedagogue and head of the Teachers' Union, along with David Avisar, a native Hebronite educator, further underscore the borders between Jewish and Palestinian educators. The two were responsible for two delegations of educators and students to Egypt. The first, in March 1926, was composed of ninety participants who visited schools, teacher training institutes, and universities. The tour was reciprocated by the visit of 112 Egyptian teachers, inspectors, and principals to Hebrew educational institutions.<sup>124</sup> Dr Benzion Mosenson, the principal of the Gymnasia Herzliya who hosted the delegation declared, 'One of the peoples of the East has reached out its hand to us'.<sup>125</sup>

The Palestinian and Egyptian press treated both visits as Zionist propaganda and as official Egyptian recognition of Zionism. The local Arab resentment triggered an unplanned visit of the Egyptian delegation to Arab schools as well.<sup>126</sup> In April 1935, a similar visit to Egypt was organized for 240 Jewish teachers and students. These large-scale delegations then ceased out of lack of interest or support from the Yishuv's institutions.<sup>127</sup>

For people like Yellin and Avisar, creating ties with the capital of Arab culture through the exchange of educational ideas was a possible bridge between Zionism and the Arab world. However, the same bridge sought to bypass the Palestinian Arabs, as concretized by the fact that they were overlooked on the reciprocal visit and were not considered as possible partners for similar visits. This was perhaps another early example where the road from Cairo to Jerusalem did not go through Palestine or the Palestinians.

Other visions contesting Zionist particularism emerged from the fringes of the Zionist movement; from there, it was easier to voice unconventional opinions and ideologies. The publications of binational movements such as Brit Shalom, Ihud, the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement, and the

<sup>124</sup> *Davar*, 12 April 1926; for more on Sephardic Jews and their criticism of Eurocentric Zionism, see in, Behar and Ben-Dor Benite, 'The Possibility'.

<sup>125</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 13, 18 April 1926.

<sup>126</sup> Akram Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 22–3.; *Doar Hayom*, 31 March, 20 April 1926.

<sup>127</sup> Shimon Shamir, 'Kishre ħinukh ve-tarbut'.



**Photo 4** A school exhibition dedicated to the Jewish National Fund, Bialik School, Tel Aviv, 1937–1939. The Gustav Rubinstein collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevy Photo Archive, Yad Ben-Zv).

Hashomer Hatzair party had no problem slaughtering the sacred cows of Zionist education. These various bodies called for similar reforms, such as the translation of textbooks into both languages, teaching historical periods of cooperation, the publication of booklets about the folklore of both nations, implementing mandatory instruction of languages, organizing summer camps in neighbouring settlements, student exchanges, and others.<sup>128</sup>

One of the issues discussed in Ihud's periodical *Ba'ayot Hayom* was a report submitted by the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation, a binationalist movement (est. 1939), to the Jewish Agency on the topic of the textbooks in use in Hebrew schools in which there was no mention of the Arabs living in Palestine. As the author queried sarcastically, 'did they all convert to Judaism?'<sup>129</sup> Another commentary criticized the coronation of heroic military figures and suggested counterbalancing them with a 'new perspective... a friendly, cordial, vivid description of the Arabs...' instead of 'purely Hebrew chapters... poisoning the soul of the Hebrew child and any sprout of a humane approach to his Arab brethren.' The writer went as far as to negate the religious justification to the land and

<sup>128</sup> M. Y. Gabriel, *Ba'ayot Hayom*, November 1942.

<sup>129</sup> *Ba'ayot Hayom*, 1 December 1940.

its utilization in the textbook, and underlined the hypocrisy of the instrumentalized secular reading of the scriptures for nationalist purposes.<sup>130</sup> Another article criticized the educational programmes sponsored by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), an institution that played a hegemonic role in the Yishuv's schools through the work and publications of the Teachers' Council for the JNF (est. 1925).<sup>131</sup> The writer debunked the JNF's notion of a chosen people exercising its inherited right instead of their moral responsibility.<sup>132</sup>

Radical voices supporting Arab-Jewish cooperation in education also came from the Hashomer Hatzair party, which as of the late 1920s identified, albeit with a certain amount of ambiguity, with binationalist ideology.<sup>133</sup> From the mid-1930s onward, the movement declared its vision for Jewish-Arab cooperation and appointed a committee to launch Arabic classes, establish ties with the Arab population, organize meetings between schools, hold joint festivals and ensure medical and agricultural cooperation. Hashomer members were active in the establishment of the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement and Cooperation which stressed the centrality of education in achieving their goals.<sup>134</sup> The party's vision of Arab-Jewish equality and solidarity in the labour market called for the establishment of mixed vocational schools and the teaching of both languages, evening schools for adults, and joint youth cultural clubs.<sup>135</sup>

Along with their own settlement movement and an independent political-cultural organization, this movement also had its own Arabists.<sup>136</sup> Ahron Cohen, a prolific Orientalist writer and binationalist visionary and activist, dedicated a book in 1944 to education across the Arab world, the only one of its kind in Hebrew during the Mandate. Cohen claimed that Zionist orientalist's research was rooted in prejudice, and criticized their reluctance to use knowledge to promote understanding.<sup>137</sup> Cohen blamed British imperialism and its interest in preserving illiteracy by underfunding education.<sup>138</sup> Cohen was nevertheless optimistic about the trajectory of

<sup>130</sup> *Ba'ayot Hayom*, 1 December 1940.

<sup>131</sup> Shoshana Sitton, *Hinukh be-ruah ha-moledet*.

<sup>132</sup> *Ba'ayot Hayom*, 16 February 1941.

<sup>133</sup> David Zait, *Tsiyonut be-darkhe shalom*, 145–50.

<sup>134</sup> David Zait, *Halutsim ba-mavokh*, 103; Cohen, *Yisra'el veba-'olam ha-'arvi*, 285–7.

<sup>135</sup> Miflegat po'alim ha-shomer ha-tsa'ir, *Pitaron du-le'umi*, 88–9.

<sup>136</sup> Joel Beinin, 'Knowing Your Enemy'.

<sup>137</sup> Ahron Cohen, *Haskalah ye-hinukh*, 4; Another prominent Orientalist with a similar approach was Gabriel Baer, a member of Ihud and the League, Heller, *Mi-berit shalom*, 321; see Baer's articles in a similar spirit, *Haaretz*, 29 March, 20 April, 14 September 1945.

<sup>138</sup> Cohen, *Haskalah ye-hinukh ba-'olam ha-'arvi*, 6–7, 10, 13.

Arab education, and he pointed to secularization as an important trend, together with the increasing interest in education.<sup>139</sup> In the book, Cohen quoted Totah's statement, 'do not think of me as a Zionist, but we have a lot to learn from the Jews', where he sought to convince his Hebrew readers of the positive value of these trends and the role Zionism could play in promoting them.<sup>140</sup> His work was designed to enable the Hebrew reader to get to know the Arabs beyond what many perceived as an existential threat.<sup>141</sup>

The 1948 war ended two decades of ambiguity in Ha-shomer ha-Tsa'ir's binationalist vision and proved the fragility of its nature, outrun by events and more powerful structural logic at work. Although there were disputes among the party's leadership regarding Ben Gurion's policy towards the Arabs, the movement's soldiers, commanders, and settlements aligned themselves wholeheartedly with it and presented no opposition to the displacement of Palestinian Arabs.<sup>142</sup> This does not necessarily mean that their radical binationalist educational agenda was staged. Rather it sheds light on a political instrumentalization of education to articulate a utopian vision. This is because utopias often serve as moral tranquilizers because on a declarative level, they are always there, even while reflecting the contrary of lived reality.

This handful of examples of pedagogical trespassing are exceptions that prove the rule. They highlight the difficulties of producing a counter-educational alternative to the undisputed power of educational segregation. Lehmann was able to experiment and create an alternative within his controlled environment, and it is doubtful whether implementing similar methods would have been possible in cities or towns monitored closely by parents and supervisors. Similarly, the binationalists were free to establish an alternative pedagogy if it stayed on the pages of their journals and away from actual young people. Like any other radical opposition, the delegitimization of these movements distanced their educational vision from practical experience. Binationalist education and alternative history instruction remained a theoretical construct, the creed of a few mostly isolated righteous men.

<sup>139</sup> Cohen, 63.

<sup>140</sup> Cohen, 37.

<sup>141</sup> Cohen, 20–1, 28.

<sup>142</sup> Benny Morris, *Ledatah shel be'ayat ha-peliṭim*, 437–58; Aviva Haramish, 'Mapam in the War of Independence'.

## Not That There Is Anything Wrong with Rapprochement

We know very little about Palestinian educators and their relationships with Jews. There is some evidence that senior officials at the Department of Education, such as Jibrail Katul, Hasan al-Karmi, and Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, were on good, friendly terms with their Jewish colleagues at the Department and their Jewish neighbours in the mixed wealthy neighbourhoods of Jerusalem.<sup>143</sup> Nevertheless, beyond the friendly relations, there are only a few examples of Arab engagement with Jewish education aside from the political debate. However, like the Jewish binationalists, Arab educators were among the main voices that contested the strict separation in schools between Arabs and Jews.

The most famous example is that of Khalil al-Sakakini, who had a complex relationship with the Jews in that he was a humanist educator, a fervent Arab nationalist, and anti-Zionist, who simultaneously maintained friendly relationships with Jews and Zionists.<sup>144</sup> In 1914, Sakakini confessed to his Jewish student and friend, a Zionist land purchaser, that he hated Zionism because it was 'trying to establish its nationalism on the destruction of others'. His beliefs did not stop him from teaching Arabic to Zionists during the war years.<sup>145</sup> Sakakini's education sought to go beyond sectarian separations, and the *Dusturiyyah* was open to all denominations including Jewish students. After the First World War, Sakakini continued teaching Arabic to Jews in evening courses.<sup>146</sup>

Sakakini tried to remain true to his humanist approach during the Mandate as well. He personally let two Jewish students enrol at the al-Nahda College, which was known for its nationalist spirit. When Gideon Weigert, formerly a student at Ben Shemen, asked Sakakini if he could go to the school, Sakakini accepted him and asked one of his friends to board him. Weigert admired Sakakini and often joined him at the Jerusalemite 'Piccadilly' café.<sup>147</sup> Sakakini had no problem being known as having contacts with Jews. In 1944, he even gave a long interview to his friend Jacob Yehoshua (1905–1982) for the journal *Hed-Hamizrah*. Yehoshua, a native Jerusalemite who wrote extensively on Arab society and culture, commented admiringly about the

<sup>143</sup> Larry Collins, *O Jerusalem!*, 127; Ghada Karmi, *In Search of Fatima*, 42–3; Klein, *Lives in Common*, 189.

<sup>144</sup> Moed, 'Hinukh be-tsel', 133–6.

<sup>145</sup> Sakakini's diary entry, 20 February 1914, Khalil Sakakini, *Kazeh ani rabotai*, 11, 49.

<sup>146</sup> Sakakini, 13.

<sup>147</sup> Gideon Weigert, *My Life with the Palestinians*, 27–34.

revolutionary methods of the old educator, without mentioning a word of Sakakini's nationalist views.<sup>148</sup>

Adel Jaber, a friend of Sakakini's and a teacher at the Dusturiyyah, was also in constant contact with Jews and Zionists.<sup>149</sup> Before and during the First World War, Jaber taught Arabic at Gymnasia Herzliya and was a close friend of Luria. For a short time, after the British occupation, he became a senior official in the new Department of Education.<sup>150</sup> In 1921, Jaber translated a chapter from a book by the prominent Zionist leader Max Nordau, and continued to teach Jews Arabic under the supervision of Va'ad ha-Ḥinukh.<sup>151</sup> After quitting his educational work, he continued to engage in educational issues as a member of the PBHS, a lecturer, and an author.<sup>152</sup> In 1940, Jaber was in contact with the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, and he toured the region, visiting Arab leaders to test their views on a future agreement with the Zionists. Jaber also wrote a settlement programme based on the principle of a Semitic federation of autonomous states in which Palestine would be a binational state. Shertok and Ben Gurion refused to authorize Jaber's proposal as a preliminary document for negotiations.<sup>153</sup> 'Umar Salih al-Barghuthi, a lawyer, scholar, and the co-author of a history textbook with Khalil Totah, also negotiated with the Zionists on a plan for the future of Palestine. To this end, Barghuthi met with Kalvarisky and Judah L. Magnes, a binationalist and the president of the Hebrew University, as well as others during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>154</sup>

Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi also corresponded with Magnes in the early 1930s. '[T]he friendship of the Arab should be in the long run more precious to Jews than obtaining millions of dunams or introducing thousands of immigrants,' he wrote to Magnes. In late 1933 he crafted a detailed plan for the cantonization of Palestine, which split it into two, an Arab and a Jewish canton, preserved the holy cities as open cities and the British as the liaison between the two cantons. Although he failed to elicit British or Zionist interest, Khalidi's plan, one of the first comprehensive road maps of

<sup>148</sup> *Hed Hamizrah*, 26 November 1943, 14, 28 January 1944.

<sup>149</sup> Sakakini's diary entry for 25 November 1914, Sakākini, *Kazeh ani rabotai*, 61.

<sup>150</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 22 September 1919; Adel Jaber, Reports on Personalities, 105/272/172–73, HA.

<sup>151</sup> *Davar*, 22 December 1930, 16 May 1943.

<sup>152</sup> Sakākini, *Kazeh ani rabotai*, 252; Mona Hajjar Halaby, 'Out of the Public Eye'.

<sup>153</sup> Cohen, *Yiśra'el v'ha-'olam ha-'arvi*, 265–7; Heller, *Mi-berit shalom le-ihud*, 168–9.

<sup>154</sup> Report submitted by Kalvarisky, 14 February 1930, J105/18, CZA; in 1943, Barghuthi took part in another round of talks for Jewish-Arab agreement: Heller, *Mi-berit shalom*, 260–4.

territorial compromise, was published, although unsigned, in *Filastin*.<sup>155</sup> Khalidi apparently engaged in similar attempts later as well. A Shai report mentions that in March 1942, he was approached by the British to serve as a mediator between the two peoples, but he refused, although the report also mentions that in September a meeting between Magnes and 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi was held in his home.<sup>156</sup>

George Antonius served as a senior official at the Department of Education until the late 1920s. As of the early 1930s, Antonius, a close friend, confidant, and neighbour of the Mufti, had been in contact with Magnes and other moderate Zionists, and made public visits to Jewish settlements. On the eve of the Arab Revolt, Antonius met a few times with Ben Gurion to try to find a way to prevent the outbreak of violence. Antonius accepted Zionism as a spiritual movement and acknowledged its achievements in Palestine but rejected it as a political project that caused the displacement of the Arabs. A natural-born diplomat, he saw the advantages of dialogue and negotiations over violence. Still, he remained loyal to the Mufti and failed to present an alternative to its strategies.<sup>157</sup> Caught between British oppression and the uncompromising Zionist vision, Antonius became the spokesperson of the Palestinian national movement.

Sakakini, Jaber, Barghuthi, al-Khalidi, and Antonius are five examples of educator-intellectuals who had close Zionist friends and engaged in negotiations with the Yishuv regarding a possible Jewish-Arab settlement. Nevertheless, during the Mandate and especially from the mid-1930s onwards, openly advocating Arab-Jewish cooperation was an extremely rare phenomenon that often ended tragically. Particularly in the field of education, there is no evidence to support the existence of such views, with the exclusion of local, typically ad hoc initiatives by teachers to visit Jewish settlements or schools.<sup>158</sup> Thus, if there is any evidence, it only exists between the lines. The failed attempt to establish an Arab university in Palestine can however help us here.

<sup>155</sup> Susan Lee Hattis. *The Bi-National Idea*, 122–5; *Filastin*, 27 December 1933. Bowman mentioned the division to cantons in his diary in 1929, and the idea may have been discussed between him and Khalidi: see Bowman's Diary, 6 October 1929, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>156</sup> Personal report on Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, File 2/B Series/175, Shai Archive, Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

<sup>157</sup> Susan Silsby Boyle, *Betrayal of Palestine*, 173–5, 177, 228–30; Hadara Lazar, *Shishah yehidim*, 191–5.

<sup>158</sup> According to a Shay report, Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, a DIE at the time, criticized a teacher from Qalansawe for attempting to institutionalize the reciprocal encounters with Even Yehuda and Kadima, and transferred him to a distant village, 'nekama be-more 'aravi': 7 October 1941, 105/197, HA.



As of the inception of the Mandate, the establishment of a university in Palestine was the dream of Palestinian intellectuals and educators. Bowman shared this dream and saw the British university as another centre of imperial influence. The plan to establish it, which was discussed and planned by the Colonial Office with the highest officials in Palestine's government, was dropped after the 1929 disturbances.<sup>159</sup> Tibawi offered further input, noting that the plan, configured already in 1922, three years before the inauguration of the Hebrew University, failed through lack of cooperation from the Jewish community. The Jews, according to Tibawi, were reluctant to integrate Jewish students in any institution that would not use Hebrew as the language of instruction. Tibawi claimed the Jews were afraid of losing their monopoly over the future institution and adhered to a systematic 'tendency to exclusiveness in education'.<sup>160</sup> With or without Jewish cooperation, it is doubtful whether the British seriously intended to go through all the trouble and financial difficulties that a project of this magnitude would have required.

What can be inferred from Tibawi's criticism of the Yishuv is that the Arab community could have benefited from the Yishuv's support and cooperation to establish such an institution. Tibawi fully supported the idea of one Palestinian university with different departments reflecting the academic needs of both communities. Similarly, in the case of Kadoorie and the PBHS, Tibawi apparently hoped to see a mixed secondary agricultural institution and believed that one examination board could answer the needs of both communities and could have certainly benefited from Jewish cooperation. These assumptions are all, of course, based on hindsight.

One Shai report however corroborates this assumption. In late 1946, Tibawi met A. L., a Shai agent, whom he had previously encountered. A. L. probably presented himself as a journalist, and Tibawi showed interest in the publication of his views in the Hebrew press and suggested a future meeting at the home of Jacob Yehoshua.<sup>161</sup> Tibawi, like Sakakini, had no problem meeting Jews, even in periods of tension. His personal relations with the Jews would only amplify his disappointment at their reluctance to see him personally or his colleagues as possible partners, a crucial feature that shaped Arab-Jewish relations and the annals of the Palestinian-Zionist encounter.

<sup>159</sup> Testimony before the Royal Commission 27 November 1936, Private/Secret meeting, BM 2/2/97/4-5, MECA. See also, Pinhas Ofer, 'A Scheme'.

<sup>160</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 123.

<sup>161</sup> A.L., Report on a meeting with Abd al-Latif Tibawi, undated (presumably November 1946), 230/105/159, HA.

## Conclusion

Educational segregation was the product or mirror image of Palestinian–Jewish relations: two national movements in conflict over the same space. To this, we must add the British support for, or incompetence in challenging, segregation. The two instances in which a joint educational project was feasible, namely, the establishment of a university in Palestine and the establishment of an Arab–Jewish agricultural school, failed to achieve their aims.

We have seen how the strength of educational segregation was rooted not only in the dominance of those who were committed to it but also in the isolation and hesitancy of those who contended with it. Although these educators held unorthodox views about the future of Palestine, they failed to swim against the tide of segregation, even when they were convinced of its dangers. This was not because the challenges facing Arab and Hebrew education were overwhelming, given that Arab and Jewish educators did the impossible on various other fronts. As educators, they were expected to follow the hegemonic discourse rather than reinvent the wheel. As we have seen, educators could speak their minds in articles and personal conversations, but even in this small opposition group, self-censorship kept them from promoting actual educational plans in accordance with their vision. Thus, Arab and Jewish students were spared the perils of mixed education.

The story of these educators also reflects the introspective nature of their profession, which impacted their ability and inclination to ask questions and challenge conventions. Perhaps the everyday encounter with children and young people engaged in constant soul searching and identity development affected them as well. It was no coincidence that in the few places that could have fostered the imagination of a different reality, educators and education were key players. These were the source of both their strength and their weakness.

### 3

## Peeking over the Fence

‘The Arabs know very little about the Jews, but the Jews do not know a lot about the Arabs and if there are Jews who think they know the Arabs...this is often derived from prejudice, something worse than not knowing.’ Ahron Cohen, 1944<sup>1</sup>

The authorship and activities of the few educators who envisaged alternatives or challenged educational segregation remained on the fringes of the wider ideological, cultural, and political engagement with the national Other that internalized segregation and defined itself through it. This chapter focuses exclusively on texts in Arabic and texts in Hebrew that deal with the education of the national Other, and it deconstructs the stakes involved, its nature, and the reciprocal impact of the two education systems. Intelligence documents, newspaper articles, and books reveal the great interest of both communities in the education of the national Other.

During the Mandate period, Zionist scholars, authors, politicians, and intelligence operatives produced numerous works about the Arab community in Palestine. These works, some of which were made public and others that remained confidential, reflected either academic curiosity and fascination with the Oriental or suspicion and essentialization of the enemy. Some mirrored a combination of both. Palestinian Arab intellectuals, authors, and politicians wrote less about Jews and Zionism during the same period, although in comparison to other topics, Zionism received ample attention.

From the inception of Zionist colonization, Arabs were objects of scrutiny. Paradoxically, as articulated by Krakotzkin, the Jewish exodus from Europe and colonization in the East facilitated Jewish integration in the West and the acceptance of the Jews as a European nation. This project also meant the construction of the Oriental—the Arab—as the ultimate Other of the Western Zionist vision. It treated the Orient with ambivalence, as

<sup>1</sup> Cohen, *Haškalah ye-ḥinukh ba-‘olam ha-‘arvi*, 4.

primitive and violent on the one hand but as a role model for authenticity on the other.<sup>2</sup>

In his study on the emergence of Hebrew culture in Ottoman Palestine, Saposnik challenges this approach by arguing that while a Eurocentred perspective could be found in early Zionist thought, it was accompanied by 'notions of the decline of the West and a concomitant anticipation of a rebirth of the East, in which a Jewish return there would play an integral role.'<sup>3</sup> The perceived polyphony of voices, possibilities and fascinations with the Arabs and the East turned gradually into clear monotonic axioms under the highly politicized reality of British rule. While belittling Arab national aspirations as a vocal political strategy, the engagement of Zionist institutions, especially that of the Political Department and its Arab Bureau with the inner politics of Arab society, and their profound interest in its political, cultural, and economic life was in fact indicative of the opposite. Through its various institutions, the Zionist movement was extremely attentive to the Arab population. Apart from the scholarly work on Arab and Islamic history published by Jewish Orientalists in Palestine, Hebrew books about Arab society in Palestine and other Arab countries were published, and contemporary books were translated from Arabic to Hebrew.<sup>4</sup>

The School of Oriental Studies (SOS) at the Hebrew University was founded in 1926. Its professors, with only two exceptions, were all of German descent and were all graduates of German universities.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the German model, at the Hebrew University, Jewish studies and Oriental studies were separate because the former was established to develop a national consciousness defined by its distinctiveness from the latter.<sup>6</sup> Grounded in a more inclusive, more engaged tradition of nineteenth-century German Orientalism, visions of teaching contemporary colloquial Arabic and incorporating Arab

<sup>2</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, 'Oryentalizm'.

<sup>3</sup> Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew*, 149.

<sup>4</sup> The historian and geographer Ze'ev Vilnay published a two-volume survey on the history of Palestinian Arabs, including contemporary aspects of Palestinian society, Ze'ev Vilnay, *Toldot ha-'aravim*; The Orientalist and journalist Michael Assaf published a comprehensive three-volume study, *Toldot ha-'arvim be-erets-yiśra'el*; Assaf along with Menachem Kapeliouk, an Orientalist and translator of Arabic literature, were drafted by Eliyahu Sasson to disseminate pro-Zionist propaganda in Arab newspapers, 'Sasson to Moshe Shertok', 24 July 1940, 105/378/93, HA. About Kapeliouk, see also in Yoav Gelber, *Shorshe*, 99.

<sup>5</sup> Levi Billig, who was born in London and graduated from Cambridge, and Yosef Rivlin, who was born in Jerusalem and graduated from the University of Frankfurt, Menahem Milson, 'Reshit limude ha-'aravit', 575–88.

<sup>6</sup> On the history of Jewish studies in the early years of the Hebrew University, see David N. Myers, *Re-Inventing the Jewish Past*.

scholars into the School's faculty existed but failed to materialize. The favourable discourse on Islam, and the interest in studying it as a rationalist sister religion to Judaism in a de-Orientalized Orient was part of an intra-European or Jewish-European discourse that focused on Islam rather than Muslims. In the newly established academia in Palestine, the possible theoretical inclusion of Judaism within the Orient was met with even greater philosophical and ideological ambivalence.<sup>7</sup>

Orientalist professors, with their firm belief in critical distance and closure and strict dependence on the written word, devoted very limited academic attention to the Palestinian Arabs.<sup>8</sup> Orientalism for German Jews, who suffered from anti-Semitism in Germany, was a form of mediation between East and West. This was their Zionism, and this was also the focus of their academic research.<sup>9</sup> In fact, most professors were either sympathizers or members of Brit Shalom, founded a year before the SOS. Their sympathy for the Arabs did not produce scholarship on the Arabs living in Palestine. Nevertheless, the SOS played a crucial role in training a generation of scholars who later followed a different approach.

These students chose to leave the reified atmosphere of academic careers and work for Zionist institutions by tapping into the knowledge and methods acquired at the university.<sup>10</sup> Prominent Arabists of the Yishuv, including Reuven Zaslanski, Yaacov Shimoni, Eliyahu Eilat, and others, studied at the SOS. These two generations represented different strands of Hebrew Orientalism. On the one hand were academics and their alienation from all that was not scientific, and on the other were their students who criticized their teachers' lack of knowledge of colloquial Arabic and their focus on esoteric fields. These students employed the philological methods they had learned to intelligence gathering or political action. Their texts were also different: newspapers replaced classical books, and face-to-face encounters with people replaced the text as a sole source.<sup>11</sup> Classic Arabic texts were replaced by contemporary historiography on the Arabs, which was perceived to be crucial for a good understanding of the 'psychology of the East'. One recommended reading list for the training of agents in 1942 included

<sup>7</sup> Miriam Frenkel, 'Ketivat ha-historyah', 23–61; John M. Efron, 'Orientalism', 80–93; Susannah Heschel, 'German Jewish Scholarship'; Raz-Krakozyk, 'Orientalism'.

<sup>8</sup> Gil Eyal, *The Disenchantment*, 62–4.

<sup>9</sup> Eyal, 65; Hanan Harif's account of Rivlin's translation of the Qur'an is a fine example of the multiple mediations at work between East and West, Hebrew and Arabic, and possibly between Jews and Arabs: 'Islam in Zion'.

<sup>10</sup> Eyal, *The Disenchantment of the Orient*, 71.

<sup>11</sup> Eyal, 74–6.

the works of H. Gibb, A. Rustum, P. Hitti, G. Antonius, A. Rihani, 'A. al-'Aref, and other works of Arab, Jewish, and Western scholars.<sup>12</sup>

This approach is reflected in '*Arve erets-yisra'el* (The Arabs of Erets-Yisra'el, 1947), Yaacov Shimoni's (1915–1996) comprehensive survey of Palestinian Arabs, which would be used as a textbook in Israeli higher education for decades to come. He is explicit that the book does not presume to be purely scientific in nature because it deals with the Arab present, 'and this is far closer to us... [than a] dry scientific view'.<sup>13</sup> Shimoni, a Jew of German descent, one of the founding members of the Arab Shai,<sup>14</sup> an educator and an Orientalist who had his own weekly radio show on the sociology of Arab society, displays impressive knowledge of the Arab sources and the local Palestinian press. However, he also had intelligence gathered by the Shai at his disposal. These sources and the advice provided by Arabists were essential to the book because, according to Shimoni, 'in Arab matters one should not accept the written word as pure fact and a living reality'.<sup>15</sup>

Eliyahu Epstein-Eilat (1903–1990) is another example of a departure from the classical academic approach by the first generation of professors at the Hebrew University. Epstein, a Jew of Ukrainian descent who studied in a *heder* as a child, was an enthusiastic Zionist from his early teens. Upon his arrival in Palestine, he dedicated himself to the idea of Hebrew labour and learned Arabic while working as a construction worker with the local Bedouins in Ma'an and al-Salt, in Transjordan. Epstein was later one of the first ten students accepted to the SOS, and he combined his studies with volunteer work in the Haganah. Epstein left the Hebrew University and transferred to the AUB, since he was more interested in the sociology of the Arabs than their philology. During his university years, he returned to Transjordan and lived with the Bedouins for a few months, adopting their dress and customs. This study led to the publication of a book on the life of the Bedouins in 1933. While in Transjordan Epstein was asked by the Political Department of the Jewish Agency to file reports on Arab notables he was in contact with. Later, Epstein's knowledge and ties with Arab intellectuals and leaders in Transjordan and

<sup>12</sup> Tuvia Arazi, A recommended bibliography for personal training of agents, May–September 1942, S25/22695, CZA.

<sup>13</sup> Yaacov Shimoni, '*Arve erets-yisra'el*', 9–10.

<sup>14</sup> The Arab Shai was the department in charge of collecting intelligence on the Arab community in Palestine and the Arab world under the Shai.

<sup>15</sup> Shimoni, '*Arve erets-yisra'el*'.

Beirut led to his recruitment to head the Near East Section of the Political Department, a post he held for ten years (1934–1944).<sup>16</sup>

In his book, Epstein wrote that ‘almost none of the Bedouins know the shape of a letter’, and the authorities’ attempts to establish government schools were received with no enthusiasm: ‘What need does the son of the desert have in *madani* (urban) education that would only poison his mind, giving and adding nothing of use. To excel at riding, to hit the target and to know the desert and its customs, that is the doctrine needed by the Bedouin youth and not a book.’ Epstein then highlights the dreadful fate of teachers sent to the desert. In the Bedouins, Epstein thought he could identify an authentic form of kinship with the Jews. When looking at the Bedouins he saw ‘pictures from the Bible being resurrected...’<sup>17</sup> Like other Orientalists, he mixed appreciation and dismay, arguing that the Bedouin has both the ‘perception of a child’ for everything foreign to him and a ‘rich natural intellect’ that enables creativity and inventiveness.<sup>18</sup>

This sort of Orientalism was comparable with the scholarship of local urban or urbanized Arab intellectuals. They too ‘Othered’ the villagers, fellahin, and Bedouins in publications such as the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, a joint intellectual project for Jews and Arabs. Stephan Hanna Stephan noted that ‘The oriental mind, abounding in imagination, loathes exactitude and...has no use for abstractions.’<sup>19</sup> Taufik Canaan depicts the confrontation between Bedouin and Byzantines as barbarians versus civilization.<sup>20</sup> The esteemed author and educator Elias N. Haddad, in his article about the Arab peasants’ methods of education, asks, ‘Have they any aim in life, or do they leave everything to fate? Have they any elements of culture?’ Haddad colours his survey with superstitious beliefs and violence.<sup>21</sup> A similar scholarly approach can be found in the writings of the historian-anthropologist and colonial official ‘Aref al-‘Aref on the Bedouins.<sup>22</sup> An outspoken anti-imperialist nationalist in the early 1920s, his books were translated into Hebrew during the Mandate period. al-‘aref also spoke and read Hebrew and in times of relative peace, gave lectures at Jewish institutions.<sup>23</sup> As suggested by Khalidi and Tamari, their ‘nativist ethnography’ aimed to show the historical roots

<sup>16</sup> David Tidhar, *Entsiklopedyah*, 2897–9; Avraham Hayim Elhanani, *Be-orah*, 164–72.

<sup>17</sup> Eliyahu Epstein, *ha-Bedvim*, 9, 100–1. <sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 110.

<sup>19</sup> Stephan Hanna Stephan, ‘Studies in Palestinian Customs’.

<sup>20</sup> Taufik Canaan, ‘Byzantine Caravan Routes’.

<sup>21</sup> Elias N. Haddad, ‘Methods of Education’; see similarly in Taufik Canaan, ‘Mohammedan Saints’; Taufik Canaan, ‘The Child’; a comprehensive study on Haddad, Stephan and Canaan’s work is Sarah R. Irving, ‘Intellectual Networks’.

<sup>22</sup> Arif al-‘Arif, *Toldot Be’er-Sheva’ u-shvateha*, 1936.

<sup>23</sup> *Ha-tzofeh*, 23 February 1941; *ha-Boker*, 9 May 1941.

and cultural patrimony of the Palestinian native.<sup>24</sup> Likhovski argues that this interest in amassing knowledge and representations of these groups' backwardness was part of an ideological system that sought to justify and consolidate control over them.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, the nativeness of Bedouins and fellahin was not seen as a role model or a source of national inspiration but rather was utilized as a symbol of the past. It constituted its relevance, and the natives' relevance to the nations' future. This ethnography also reflected an attempt on the part of urban intellectuals, like their Zionist counterparts, to be accepted into a Western circle of scholars. They could only do so by othering those who could be mistakenly identified as their kin. A shift away from this kind of nativeness characterized this scholarly and national project.

There were no works comparable to Shimoni's and Epstein's in Arabic. Palestinian Arabs had little interest in the Jewish community as an academic anthropological or social object of scrutiny. Arabs did publish works on Zionism, the Zionist movement, and Jewish history. However, their central aim was to formulate counter arguments to Zionist claims and British policy in Palestine, and in doing so, they provided a critical history of Zionism that would contradict the Jewish claim to a historical right to the country, and hence call for Arab unification to fight Zionism. These works were written as political manifestos, and although the authors read the works of Zionist thinkers and Jewish historians, none of them incorporated Hebrew sources into their books, and it is doubtful whether they spoke the language or saw it as a necessity in their struggle against Zionism.<sup>26</sup> The threat posed by the settler society demarcated their scholarship and confined it to the political realm.

Hebrew education was analysed through this political prism. 'Isa al-Sifri (1894–1949), who taught in government schools prior to his stint as a publicist, does not mention any Hebrew sources in his book and only devotes a short paragraph to Zionist education, noting that it is dominated by 'pure Jewish administration' and pursues strictly Zionist Jewish ends.<sup>27</sup> Al-Sifri also mentions the utilization of Jewish sports associations for the inculcation

<sup>24</sup> Khalidi, 'Palestinian Historiography'; Salim Tamari, 'Lepers, Lunatics and Saints'; comparable to the Egyptian ethnography written during the same period, El-Shakry, *The Great Social*, 49–53.

<sup>25</sup> Assaf Likhovski, 'Kinun gevulot'.

<sup>26</sup> Sa'di Bisīsū, *Al-Ṣahyūniyah*; Yousef Heikal, *Al-qaḍīyah al-filastīniyah*; Jabra Nicola, *Fī al-'ālam al-yahūdī*; Nicola was probably the only one who spoke Hebrew. However, in his book there is no reference to Hebrew contemporary sources; Ran Greenstein, 'A Palestinian Revolutionary'.

<sup>27</sup> 'Isa al-Sifri, *Filastīn al-'arabīyah* (2001), 20.



of nationalist zeal and military training.<sup>28</sup> Mahmud al-'Abidi (1907–1978), a school principal in Safad, included a similar, though less critical depiction of Jewish education in his history and civics textbook. The book, first published in 1937 and reprinted six times by 1947, was authorized by the Mandate's Department of Education for use in its schools. 'Abidi's description of Arab education remains rather dry and discusses budgetary and administrative issues. Jewish education, on the other hand, is discussed with an emphasis on its independence and educational goals that are dedicated to 'rooting (*tarassukh*)' nationalist and patriotic ideals 'in the mind of the child', 'above all' in Jewish tradition, the Hebrew language, Jewish history, and 'sacrifice and devotion' to the establishment of the Jewish nation in their ancient homeland.<sup>29</sup> Both al-Sifri and 'Abidi, who were dedicated Arab nationalists, merge this criticism of a one-dimensional, indoctrinating Jewish education with subtextual fear, appreciation, and envy of the apparent conviction and vision of Jewish education in Palestine.

Arab writers also utilized Hebrew education as further proof of the government's discrimination against the Arab community and its support of the Jews. The arrival of the McNair Commission of Enquiry in 1945 raised anger and suspicion amongst the Arabs. The Arab press depicted the appointment of a commission to focus on Hebrew education as a deceitful 'Zionist manoeuvre' that symbolized the discrimination felt by the Arabs of Palestine.<sup>30</sup> The objective of the Commission, one article argued, was to take more from the Arab education budget to contribute to the Jewish plan to take over Palestine. It protested the government's indifference and suffocation of Arab education.<sup>31</sup> A critical article in *al-Ittihad* argued that while the Jews invested their entire education budget in genuine school needs, the Department's budget simply paid the salaries of its employees.<sup>32</sup> As of the early 1920s, there were calls to take up the Zionist model of self-reliance in the field of education since the Department was not attentive to the nation's needs. The nation's rich—an editorial in *Mirat al-sharq* noted—should invest their money in education 'so the nation can come out of the darkness into the light'.<sup>33</sup>

Jewish autonomy in education was also contrasted with the British restriction of Arab education. Towards the end of the Mandate, there was a

<sup>28</sup> al-Sifri, 19–20.

<sup>29</sup> Mahmud al-'Abidi, *Ma'lumāt madaniyah*, 222.

<sup>30</sup> *Filastin* 16, 17 August 1945; *al-Difa'*, 3 December 1944, 16 August 1945, 105/73/101, HA.

<sup>31</sup> *Filastin*, 9 December 1945, 105/73/142, HA.

<sup>32</sup> *Al-Ittihad*, 3 December 1944.

<sup>33</sup> *Mirat al-Sharq*, 3 November 1920.

growing demand for the transfer of education to Arab hands.<sup>34</sup> This demand for autonomy was based, *inter alia*, on the argument that the Arabs were interested in education as much as the Jews were.<sup>35</sup> One Shai report noted that this Arab initiative to establish an independent system similar to the Jewish one was only natural and had started a bit late.<sup>36</sup> In order to achieve this autonomy, Arabs were keen on proving to themselves and to the government, based on the extensive investment of various communities in education with limited government support, that the Arabs' desire to educate their sons was not inferior to that of the Jews.<sup>37</sup> In an introspective *al-Difa'* article, the columnist feigned to address the Jews while clearly sending a message to its Arab readers, 'Are you [the Jews] alone in this country? ... Do you alone have a will to educate your children? Have you forgotten that the Arabs were once masters of the West? ...'<sup>38</sup> *Filastin* was more explicit, stating, 'The Arabs are eager for education more than the you [Jews].'<sup>39</sup>

This knowledge of the Other, its own internal politics and relations with the British can also be gleaned from a close reading of newspapers. The daily Palestinian and Hebrew press published special columns dedicated to reports on what was written in Arabic or Hebrew, often criticizing the content and style. This phenomenon was another form of communication between the communities that did not depend on personal encounters. Knowing what the Other was up to in his own language consolidated political and linguistic barriers since this knowledge came solely through the mediation of editors and translators who usually published articles with direct, primarily negative, political implications for the other community.

Hebrew education, in this sense, appeared as a role model and competitor, with its virtues enshrined as an incentive for the development of Arab education. In an article acknowledging the role of Zionist education in the fulfilment of the Zionist project, *al-Difa'* criticized the fact that Palestinian Arabs who leave the country to study abroad take theoretical courses rather than training for practical professions such as engineering and chemistry. These subjects, the writer argued, could allow them to compete with the Jews in agriculture and industry.<sup>40</sup>

This utilization of Hebrew education as an incentive for the development of Arab education dominated Dabbagh's writing as well. Mustafa Murad

<sup>34</sup> See various newspaper article extracts and Shai reports from September–October 1947, 105/315A, HA.

<sup>35</sup> *Filastin*, 4 January 1945.

<sup>37</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 3 December 1944.

<sup>39</sup> *Filastin*, 14 December 1944.

<sup>36</sup> Yanai, 3 March 1947, 105/315B/85, HA.

<sup>38</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 11 December 1944.

<sup>40</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 19 March 1945.

al-Dabbagh (1898–1989), as Assistant District Inspector of Education (DIE) of the southern district, devoted a whole book in 1935 to rural education, in which he compared literacy in the Arab Muslim and Christian sectors. Dabbagh highlighted the fact that Tel Aviv was the most literate city in Palestine with 93 percent literacy, compared with 13.7 percent in Khan Yunis and 12 percent in Majdal, and superior in that sense not only in relation to the Jewish communities in Leningrad, Moscow, Egypt, and Eastern European countries, but also in relation to the Balkan countries and Italy. In other tables, Dabbagh charted the low literacy rates of the Arab population in general and the rural Muslim population in Palestine in particular.<sup>41</sup> Dabbagh also discussed the lower infant mortality rates amongst Palestinian Jews compared with those of Arab Muslims and other countries.<sup>42</sup> His message was clear: whereas the Jewish community was able to establish a modern society with high standards, the Arab population was lagging behind. Dabbagh's depiction of the village school as a 'lighthouse guiding the inhabitants of the entire village' delivered an explicit message to educators, underlying their responsibility in remedying this predicament.<sup>43</sup>

Dabbagh's engagement in the politics of the national movement was consistent with the role he assigned to education in the conflict over the future of the country. The Shai monitored his work closely, and its reports tend to confirm these motivations. In them, Dabbagh appears as an inspector who promoted the establishment of secret student associations and firearms training.<sup>44</sup>

### Spying on Educators: Arab Education through the Eyes of the Shai

Zionist intelligence gathering in Palestine preceded the First World War. When the Haganah was founded, volunteer agents who tapped their connections with the Arabs and the British as sources engaged in intelligence work. Their efforts produced a massive corpus of sources and reports that reveals their agents' views and approaches to the Arabs in general and Arab

<sup>41</sup> Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, *Madrasat al-qarya*, 132–3, 137.

<sup>42</sup> Al-Dabbagh, 107–9.

<sup>43</sup> Similarly, an Iraqi educator argued that the school should serve as the village's Ka'ba, Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 246–7.

<sup>44</sup> Personal report, Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh, 12 June 1946, 105/315B/170, HA.

education in particular. In some cases, this corpus includes data on personalities and localities that can only be found there.

During the 1930s, as violent clashes between Jews and Arabs became more frequent, intelligence on all facets of Arab society became a prime necessity for the Yishuv. Arabists at the Arab Bureau of the Political Department of the Jewish Agency, for example, began to produce summaries almost daily of newspapers from across the Arab world in 1935. The Shai was set up in 1940 with the objective of creating a sufficiently wide network to glean and funnel information on political groups to the Haganah.<sup>45</sup> At its inception, most informants had poor operational knowledge, and the intelligence data they supplied was a by-product of their contacts with their neighbours or business associates. Better information began to be collected from 1943 onward, when the Shai started reading the daily Arab press, which led to a more in-depth understanding of Arab society.<sup>46</sup> Agents classified articles according to topic, cut them from the original pages, and pasted them into designated files, and sometimes translated or summarized them in Hebrew. If the agency had further information on a specific publication, it would be added to the file.

The Shai education files thus included newspaper extracts with information about education, formal government documents on education, reports filed by agents who visited schools or met with educators, and random information about incidents in schools. Informants were either paid or received other benefits such as jobs.<sup>47</sup> All data were sent to the agency (*lishka*) where it was catalogued, thus constituting an historical archive of intelligence gathering. The agency produced a summary report every few days that enabled Shimoni to create a comprehensive index of Arab personalities that included over 2000 names in 1945.<sup>48</sup> As of late 1944, general surveys (*skīrot ma'ar*) were published once a week, and they became more detailed and professional over time.<sup>49</sup> These surveys also included all Arab book publications. The publication of Tamimi's, Khalidi's, and other textbooks, for example, are mentioned along with a short summary.<sup>50</sup>

These intelligence reports took on hegemonic prominence in the highest echelons of the Yishuv's leadership; they *knew* the Arabs through them and made their decisions according to them.

<sup>45</sup> For more on the history of the Shai, see Asa Lefen, *ha-Shai*; Moshe Yegar, *Toldot ha-maḥlaḳah ha-medinit*, 300–1.

<sup>46</sup> Gelber, *Shorshe*, 510–11, 515. <sup>47</sup> Gelber, 513–14, 525.

<sup>48</sup> Gelber, 516–19. <sup>49</sup> Gelber, 525.

<sup>50</sup> Yediot ma'ar, 27 February and 20, 27 March 1946, 8/234, HA.

## The Mapping and Classification of Everything: The Village Files

From its establishment in the 1920s, the Haganah invested its energies in the mapping and surveying of Arab villages. This was initially done by volunteers from diverse localities and professions. During the Arab revolt, the more informal collection of data of the 1920s turned into systematic reports by armed militiamen or trained agents. However, comprehensive reviews of education and literacy were not documented in what was known as the Village Files until later.<sup>51</sup>

Operation Arab Village, the project behind the village files, was initiated in 1940, and it lasted until the end of the Mandate. The Shai conducted 945 surveys, covering 620 villages and eighty-six Bedouin tribes. In total, 65 percent of all Arab and mixed cities and 75 percent of all Arab villages were surveyed. Two Arab informants, later assassinated for collaboration, authored hundreds of these files. The project responded to several key Zionist interests beyond military and security reasons. The data were valuable to the JNF for the purchase of land, as well as to Zionist historiography, since the reports included historical data on sites related to Jewish history and the historical origins of the villagers. The Yishuv's leadership saw the propaganda potential in proving that villages had been founded by foreigners during the nineteenth century, thus demonstrating that their inhabitants could not be considered natives.<sup>52</sup> The maps, photographic surveys, and information about weaponry and membership in 'gangs' served the Haganah and the Israel Defense Forces in the 1948 war.<sup>53</sup> By 1947, hundreds of villages had been surveyed, providing invaluable data on literacy rates and education in general. In some cases, these are the only surviving data about the displaced communities of the 1948 war.

The village of Rehaniya, for example, in the early 1940s, had sixty percent male literacy, literate people,<sup>54</sup> whereas amongst the 'Arab Al-Bassa (Wadi Faliq) and 'Arab al-Zangariyye, there were 'no literate people'.<sup>55</sup> The reports also noted the availability of newspapers and radios under the heading of education. In most cases, the availability of both also meant that a government school had

<sup>51</sup> The formation of the Palmach in May 1940 and the patrols of special survey units led to further upgrades in information collection, Salomon, 'Hakarato ve-ti'udo'.

<sup>52</sup> Shimri Salomon, 'Sherut ha-yedi'ot'; this theme would recur in the historiography of the conflict. See Peters' fabricated book, Joan Peters, *From Time Immemorial*.

<sup>53</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing*, 17–22; Eyal, *The Disenchantment*, 85; Gelber, *Shorshe*, 526–7.

<sup>54</sup> Circa 1941–1945, 105/226/104–105, HA.

<sup>55</sup> 105/227, 105/226, HA.



**Photo 5** Students learning Qur'an in a village school, 1940. The Bitmuna Collections, Photo Schwartz.

been built in the village. In An-Nazla al-Gharbiya in the Tulkarm district, there were five literate people, but no newspapers or radios,<sup>56</sup> whereas in the village of Sa'sa', a radio set was located in the mukhtar's house; *Filastin* and *al-Difa'* were read regularly; and there was a government school with two teachers.<sup>57</sup> In large villages such as Taybeh, there were seven radio sets in 1942, but newspapers were still purchased in neighbouring Tulkarm.<sup>58</sup> The files also reflect the prominence of the traditional *kuttab* in villages all over the country in the 1940s, where *kuttab* Sheikhs were paid in wheat.<sup>59</sup> In the village of Bayt Liqya in the Ramallah area, the *kuttab* was described as 'an old school, a *heder*'.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Circa 1942, 105/227, HA.

<sup>57</sup> Circa 1941–1945, 105/226/110, HA.

<sup>58</sup> 105/227/128–33, HA.

<sup>59</sup> 105/226, 105/227, HA.

<sup>60</sup> 13 March 1947, 105/95/A, HA.



**Photo 6** A classroom, Tel Aviv, circa December 1937. At the back, Bialik's photo at the center. The poster on the right encourages to drink orange juice, and the one on the left reads 'at the Hebrew orchard' and 'Hebrew labor'. The Gustav Rubinstein collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevy Photo Archive, Yad Ben-Zvi.

Where government schools were found, the teachers' names, place of origin, education, political affiliation, and influence on the local population were indicated. In some cases, the report plainly mentioned 'an ordinary man' or 'neutral' teacher, which meant that he had no political affiliation to the Husaynis or Nashashibis.<sup>61</sup> Some teachers and principals were reported as being loyal to the government,<sup>62</sup> and in some cases, when a clear political tendency was known, the reports indicated whether the teacher had a bias towards the Mufti or the *mu'aradah* (opposition). In the village of Safarin, for example, a government teacher was reported to express his hatred of the opposition.<sup>63</sup> However, in many cases, teachers of both parties worked together in the same school, and opposing political views coexisted among

<sup>61</sup> This was the case for the teachers in Kafr Qara (report filed 23 April 1942), and Kafr 'Abbush, Kafr Zibad, 'Illar, Deir al-Ghusun, Qalansawe, Miska, in the Tulkarm area *circa* 1942 (105/227, HA) and al-Kalisa, Sa'sa', al-Na'ima, Ras al-Ahmar, Hunin, and Meiron in the Safad area, 105/226, HA.

<sup>62</sup> As in the case of es-Samu' and Yatta in the Hebron area, *circa* 1941–1943, 105/95B, HA.

<sup>63</sup> 27 April 1942, 105/227, HA.



the staff.<sup>64</sup> Whether neutral or ordinary, the vast majority of teachers were listed as 'having no influence' in the village, or simply as 'useless'. This was probably because of teachers' 'fear of the government' as one report suggested,<sup>65</sup> but mostly because village teachers were considered outsiders in the village where, in many cases, they were posted for only a short time. Thus, noticeable influences of the kind the Haganah was interested in were rare in village schools.

These data on literacy and education helped paint a general picture of the village to meet the needs of the Haganah. Whether the displacement of Palestinian Arabs was a prior historical plan or an outcome of the war, the data thus collected targeted possible threats. Illiteracy or high literacy rates, a traditional kuttab or a modern school, or the presence of an influential nationalist teacher were valuable details for the assessment and classification of a village and the potential challenge it could pose in a violent confrontation.

The village files—their problematic aims and methods of collection notwithstanding—nevertheless provide information on Arab education that was not recorded anywhere else, especially with regard to villages that were displaced in 1948, and they shed light on communities that did not produce any written documentation on their village. In addition, since many villages did not have a government school until 1948, there is no documentation on their education in either the files of the Department of Education or Palestinian historiography.

### Insurgents, Nazis, Communists, and Teachers

Previous affiliation to a 'gang' or familial relations with 'gang' members were of particular interest to the Haganah. An examination of roughly 150 village files reveals that there were very few cases of teachers known to have joined the rebels or affiliated with rebel activity. Teachers' involvement in the Arab revolt can be found in the personal files of the Shai, which consist of various biographies. A teacher in Majdal, for example, 'excelled during the bloody days as an agitator and speaker', and was in contact with the Higher Arab Executive.<sup>66</sup> Another teacher was dismissed from his post as a government

<sup>64</sup> See reports on Shweiki and Qaqun, *circa* 1942, 'Anabta, 10 July 1942, 105/227, HA.

<sup>65</sup> Tirat bani ša'ab, 25 March 1942, 105/227, HA.

<sup>66</sup> Report undated, presumably *circa* 1941, 105/273/120, HA.



teacher for his activity during the revolt and was later incarcerated; he engaged in smuggling, was involved in the drawing of swastikas on the walls of Tulkarm, and finally, reported working as the principal of a Muslim school in Haifa.<sup>67</sup>

Since the daily press, which was carefully read by the Shai, published all new appointments made within the Department, agents would report problematic new appointees. *Filastin* published news on 3 September 1944 of the appointment of Muhammad Taher as Deputy DIE for Samaria. On 18 January, it was noted that al-Taher was from the Palestinian village of Silat al-Harithiya, and that he was an active member of the 'gang' of his uncle, Yusuf Abu Durra, one of the main leaders during the Arab revolt.<sup>68</sup> These reports reflect the *modus operandi* of the Shai, which involved crosschecking public information with intelligence collected by agents and informants on the ground.

Nevertheless, it is striking that during the revolt, only ninety teachers were reported as having been arrested, and only ten were dismissed.<sup>69</sup> The few cases of teachers who joined the rebels and engaged in actual fighting were an exception.<sup>70</sup> As with all government jobs, joining the rebels meant jeopardizing the job one had trained for and risking imprisonment. In fact, Arab government employees were caught between the rebels, the government, and their own personal interest and safety.<sup>71</sup> In most cases, the latter two had the upper hand.

During the Second World War, the Arab Shai focused on 'fifth column' activity; that is, Arab support for the Nazis, especially when Palestine was under the threat of Nazi occupation.<sup>72</sup> The files from the war period are filled with detailed reports on public opinion and anti-British or pro-Nazi activity. Naturally, the deeds and whereabouts of Haj Amin in Germany and the Husaynis' supporters in general were widely covered, whereas educators appeared sporadically. The head of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* was reported as mobilizing young people and teachers in Jaffa, in preparation for the coming disintegration of the British Empire, acting on the advice of his Nazi

<sup>67</sup> Yousef Muhammad Jaber, October 1943, 105/272/156, HA.

<sup>68</sup> Report, 18 January 1945, 105/73/22, HA.

<sup>69</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 198–9; Ibrahim Snobar, who served as Assistant DIE in Haifa, mentions only one incident of a teacher joining the rebel forces after being humiliated by British troops. That teacher became one of the leaders of the revolt in northern Palestine, Ibrahim Maḥmūd Ṣanawbar, *Tadhakkurāt ibrahīm ṣanawbar*, 22–3.

<sup>70</sup> Falb Kalisman, 'Schooling the State', 144.

<sup>71</sup> Miller, *Government and Society*, 131.

<sup>72</sup> Gelber, *Shorshe*, 530–3.

friends.<sup>73</sup> Darwish al-Miqdadi, the admired history teacher from the Arab College, was also reported as supporting the Nazis, and spreading Nazi propaganda from Berlin. Both the Shai and the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) tracked Miqdadi, his family and their dissemination of Nazi propaganda.<sup>74</sup> A group of teachers returning from Iraq after the Rashid Ali coup (in which Miqdadi participated as well) were said to be freely distributing Nazi propaganda.<sup>75</sup> Ishaq Darwish, a school inspector under the Supreme Muslim Council was reported to be 'an ardent pro-German'.<sup>76</sup> A teacher from Tulkarm was said to speak fluent German and was depicted as a Nazi supporter.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, one agent reported after a visit to the northern Tulkarm area, that the Arabs were reluctant to engage in propaganda and that those spreading it had no influence. In schools, he added, students were not exposed to propaganda either.<sup>78</sup> Based on these reports, it is hard to determine the scope of Nazi support in schools. The sporadic events and the tight British supervision of government employees suggest that this support was marginal at most.<sup>79</sup>

In addition to Nazi sympathizers, the Shai and the CID targeted Communists. Communism in Palestine—often a joint movement of Jews and Arabs—threatened and challenged the Zionist movement, while the Empire considered Bolshevism to be its nemesis.<sup>80</sup> The encounter between Communism and the Empire is symbolically embodied in the story of Mahmoud al-'Oda, an art teacher from the village of Sanur who was teaching in the Jerusalem area. Al-'Oda was reported to have been drawing Stalin riding a horse and trampling over Ramsay MacDonald on the blackboard when Bowman entered the classroom and ordered his dismissal. Subsequently, the teacher became destitute and became a debt collector for the 'gangs'.<sup>81</sup> British sensitivity to any expression of Communist views, an ideology of

<sup>73</sup> News from Jaffa, 2 September 1941, 105/200/241, HA.

<sup>74</sup> See 30 August and 16 September 1942, 105/198, HA and 17 April 1941, 105/200/56–8, HA.

<sup>75</sup> 26 September 1941, 105/200/53, HA.

<sup>76</sup> Report undated, presumably the summer of 1942, 105/273/141, HA.

<sup>77</sup> 23 January 1942, 105/200/360, HA. <sup>78</sup> 26 July 1942, 105/198/607, HA.

<sup>79</sup> For more on the Arab community and the national leadership during the war, see in Joseph Nevo, 'ha-Tenu'ah ha-le'umit ha-'arvit'; Mustafa Kabha, *ha-Paleštinim*, 45–8. Kabha argues that between 9,000 and 17,000 Palestinian Arabs joined the ranks of the British army; this parallels the general anti-Nazi mobilization in Egypt.

<sup>80</sup> See CID reports on Daud Hamdan to DoE, 24 February 1946, 47/617/269/301–50, HA; CID report on communist propaganda at the Rashidiya, 17 August 1939 and Shai on Student Communist Activity, and 17 April 1940, 47/792/253/101–202, HA; Communist Arab teachers and press workers in Jaffa were reported as spreading anti-British anarchy and confusion, News from Jaffa, 29 October 1941, 105/200/294, HA.

<sup>81</sup> Report submitted on 30 October 1946, 105/177/94, HA.

limited and local influence in Palestine, prevented the employment of vocal Communists and led to the dismissal of employees who expressed such views. However, as shown in Chapter 8, interesting attempt was made by young Communist activists to circumvent British censorship through a student journal.

### Hotbeds of Nationalism

Both national movements perceived the other's education system as being utilized explicitly to nurture nationalist sentiments. For the Arab critics of the Department of Education, the pedagogical autonomy given to the Jews to run their schools according to the Zionist ideology contrasted with the restrictive, apolitical, and antinationalist educational programme imposed upon the Arab population. The Yishuv usually conflated Arab nationalism with extremism and regarded it as perilous.

In his book, Shimoni noted that the teaching materials authorized by the Department were based on Western-European foundations, and included Arabic, Arab history, the 'nurturing the national Arab sentiment', and Arab literature.<sup>82</sup> Lehmann argued that it was no surprise that government education was nationalistic since its teachers were educated at the Arab College, 'the bastion of young nationalist intellectuals'. He also wrote about the inculcation of pan-Arab ideology and its vision of restoring past Arab greatness.<sup>83</sup>

For Zionist educators, whose goal was to produce a generation of Hebrew natives, Arab familiarity with their history and to a greater extent, what was perceived as their authentic connection to their religion, land, and places of worship, were all considered sources of inspiration and critical challenges at the same time.

In an article he published after a visit to the Arab village school of Dura, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, an historian, Orientalist, and a prominent Zionist leader, expressed awe at the order and cleanliness of the school. What impressed Ben-Zvi the most were the school's facilities for agricultural education and its mission of 'education not to cherish the homeland alone, but the village, agriculture and environment as well'. Ben-Zvi noted that the school was an illustrative example not only for the Arabs but for Jewish educational

<sup>82</sup> Shimoni, '*Arve erets-yisra'* el, 384.

<sup>83</sup> Lehmann, *Shorashim*, 103–5.

institutions as well. Rather than despising the fellahin, Ben-Zvi wrote, Jewish teachers should learn from them, visit their schools and see what 'primitive peasants have done in a distant village...but most importantly [learn] about vocational, agriculture and craftsmanship education of the young generation, neglected not only in our city but in our village as well'.<sup>84</sup> Ben-Zvi's focus here was not the Arab school, but the lessons it could teach the Yishuv.

Joseph Klausner, a history professor at the Hebrew University and a Revisionist Zionist, took Ben-Zvi's message further, and depicted the perilous consequences of indifference and lack of internal motivation to preserve the sanctity of the country among Yishuv youth, on whom rested the future of the nation. This indifference, according to Klausner, was due to the marginalization of Jewish history 'written with the blood of our heroes' within the instruction of general history. Klausner contrasted this indifference with a story about an Arab scholar who spoke perfect Hebrew and was sent by Brit Shalom to speak to Jewish students. In Nahalal, the students asked the Arab about his origins, and he answered that he was 'from holy Jerusalem'. The students reacted by saying: 'What, are you a hypocrite as well?... What sanctity is there?' Klausner noted that the Arab was amazed and replied, 'If Jerusalem and the homeland are not sanctified, why do Jews specifically want the Land of Israel? In what way is it better than another country?'<sup>85</sup>

It is no coincidence that Klausner specifically cited Rubhi Kemal, an Arab intellectual who spoke perfect Hebrew and was affiliated with Brit Shalom to make his point.<sup>86</sup> Kemal was not only a threat because he spoke Hebrew. In his encounter with the Hebrew youth of a model settlement like Nahalal and its famous agricultural school, his authentic appreciation of Jerusalem was explicitly pointing a finger at secular Zionism. Klausner's cry for more Jewish education was meant to remedy young people's lack of ties to the land. Jewish youth should be connected to the soil as much as the Arabs are, he argued. This angle should also be considered when examining Zionist writing on Arab nationalism. The acknowledgement of its validity and authenticity was a challenge to Zionism since it inherently questioned its own authenticity.

<sup>84</sup> *Davar*, 16 May 1935.

<sup>85</sup> *Ha-mashkif*, 27 May 1942.

<sup>86</sup> About Kamal and his visit to Nahalal, *Ha-mashkif*, 12 July 1939. On Kemal's lectures in Hebrew in *Ha-tzofeh*, 28 January, 5 May 1940; *Davar*, 12 May, 24 November 1940. For more on Kamal's career after 1948, see *Davar*, 7 September 1952, 14 October 1955.

Zionist intelligence paid attention to nationalist tendencies in Arab education from the inception of British rule. The Bureau of Information, which operated under the Zionist Commission was set up in 1918. While the accuracy of its reports may be uncertain, it is clear that these reports were crucial means of conveying the political atmosphere in Arab circles to the Zionist headquarters in London. One report noted that Is'af al-Nashashibi stated that he structured the school curriculum 'according to the Arab nationalist spirit' and that if the government knew what was being taught 'it would surely close our schools'.<sup>87</sup> Another report noted that Nashashibi told the students of one school to wear Sharifian hats and reported that a Sharifian flag was raised in St George's School.<sup>88</sup> During Faysal's short-lived government, delegations made appearances in schools to spread the idea of Arab unity, and during the 1920 disturbances, schools could not be kept out of the national turmoil.<sup>89</sup>

In these early sources, Rawda College is mentioned a few times as being ultra nationalist. On one occasion in 1920, its students reportedly shouted, 'Autonomy, unity or death', referring to the Faysal government.<sup>90</sup> The school attracted similar attention throughout the Mandate years. In 1947, Rawda College, which was under the control of the Husaynis, was said to have produced 'nationalist and gang leaders and criminals graduates'.<sup>91</sup> In general, the Husaynis, who were considered the most anti-Zionist, were under the watchful eye of the Shai in the field of education as well.<sup>92</sup> This surveillance of schools with a direct political affiliation and anti-Zionist bias, although they only represented a tiny minority, prompted the general impression that all schools were hotbeds of nationalism.

However, some reports reflected a different approach. One on 'the nature of Arab schools' noted that the prohibition of any kind of engagement in politics was enforced and that teachers were fearful of losing their jobs or speaking out against the 'official opinions' and being slandered for doing so. Their students, 'much more so', were said to know nothing about politics, and 'all they know comes from conversations with idlers and complete bums (*yoshve kranot u-baṭṭanim mushba'im*). They know that there are Jews

<sup>87</sup> 8 May 1920, Jerusalem 57, 80/1459/12, Shneerson, HA.

<sup>88</sup> 9 July 1921, 80/1459/13, Shneerson, HA.

<sup>89</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 195.

<sup>90</sup> 16 March 1920, 80/1459/12, Shneerson, HA.

<sup>91</sup> Beitari, 'On the Nature of Arab Schools' Students, 5 January 1947, 105/315/B/172-3, HA.

<sup>92</sup> Report on a Meeting of Educators, Members of the Arab Party held in 24 January 1947, 105/315/A, HA.

and Arabs, Mufti and treasonous panderers.<sup>93</sup> Agent Beitari reported that the only schools that permitted any engagement in politics in Jerusalem were the private schools (Rawda, al-Nahda, al-Umma, and al-Ibrahimiya).<sup>94</sup>

Some reports demonstrated an awareness of the clamp down on nationalism in government schools. One report mentioned that graduates of a school in Nablus, when seeking employment at the school, were asked why they had chosen a career in teaching rather than other professions. All but one answered that they wanted to serve their homeland and all were rejected except for the one who manifested no political tendencies.<sup>95</sup> The files include official circulars and signed forms circulated by the Department of Education prohibiting all communication with the press, political activity, or affiliation with political organizations.<sup>96</sup>

Independent students' or teachers' unions were of particular interest, and for that matter, all coordinated student activity was under close surveillance. Information on student unions, their members, their organizational hierarchy, and all their published materials were collected and translated by the Shai.<sup>97</sup> Some documentation revolved around supposedly innocent local societies whose aim was to combat illiteracy.<sup>98</sup> Agent A. L., for example, personally visited a few youth clubs and organizations in Jaffa, spoke with teachers and students, and noted that the boys from the 'Students' Committee to Fight Illiteracy' made a good impression.<sup>99</sup> Other reports deal with unions that were more vocal, anti-imperialist, or anti-Zionist such as the pan-Arab Union of Palestinian Students in Cairo.<sup>100</sup> One report mentions a gathering of two thousand students in a Jerusalem mosque during a strike organized by the principals of a number of schools. The principal of St George's, who refused to allow his students to strike, was 'grabbed by the neck' and was forced to allow his students to strike.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Beitari, 'On the Nature of Arab Schools' Students'.

<sup>94</sup> Beitari.

<sup>95</sup> News from Nablus, 21 October 1940, 105/378, HA.

<sup>96</sup> See newspaper extracts from 23 February and 11 September 1947 and reports from 1 October and 16 January 1947, 105/181/126, 163, HA.

<sup>97</sup> Almost an entire file was devoted to this topic, 105/73, HA.

<sup>98</sup> One in Haifa, reported on 14 April 1946, 105/315/C/75; see also the report on the student union in Acre, 24 August, 1947, 105/315/A/72, or Palestinian Arab students studying in Cairo demanding financial assistance from the Department, Palestinian Students League in Cairo to Director of Education, 5 February 1947, 105/315/A/108.

<sup>99</sup> A. L. 'Fighting Illiteracy in Jaffa, 28.2.1947; 9 March 1947, 105/315/B/179-80, HA.

<sup>100</sup> A Call and Statement for the Arab Student, signed by The Union of Palestinian Students in Cairo and printed in Haifa, undated, 105/315/A/84, HA.

<sup>101</sup> 5 May 1946, 105/315/B/54; see also a report on the student strike in St Luke's, 17 May 1946, 105/315/C/54, HA.

These reports on student organizations reflect the widening phenomenon of autonomous student mobilization amongst Arab students in the late 1940s, which was part of the social, cultural, and political mobilization in Palestinian society at the time. The documentation casts doubt on the Shai's perception of the chaotic, criminal, and 'gang'-like characteristics attributed earlier to student nationalist activity.

Surveillance of secondary schools attended by scions of the Palestinian elite who would become the future generation of leaders of the country produced the most detailed reports. An agent would usually be sent to have informal conversations with the teachers or principals of an institution, sit in on classes, and later file a report to the central office. The level of detail in these reports is impressive and surprising. One agent managed to put his hands on the entire student register of the College des Frères and the Bishop Gobat School detailing the students' age, religion, place of origin, class, and adding personal information where known.<sup>102</sup>

The agents carrying out these missions spoke fluent Arabic, and their knowledge of Arabic and Arab and Islamic culture provided a cover that gave them a warm, unsuspecting welcome in the schools they visited. Yizhak Navon (1921–2015), agent Yoram,<sup>103</sup> produced detailed reports on Arab education in Jerusalem. Navon, the fifth president of Israel (1978–1983), was a native Jerusalemite from a prominent old Yishuv family that had strong ties with its Arab neighbours, a student at the SOS, and an Arabic teacher. Along with his familial background, his perfect Arabic made it easy for him to access any Arab institution. A. L., presumably Alexander Lutzki (1911–1971, later Dotan),<sup>104</sup> a Jew of Russian descent who produced numerous reports on education and educators, studied Arabic and Islam at the Hebrew University, was a member of the research department under the Arab Bureau of the Agency's Political Department, and maintained contacts with Arab notables across the Arab world.<sup>105</sup>

Lutzki's reports are more akin to those of a school inspector than an ordinary spy. In one report, on his visit to the Women's Training College, after detailing the curriculum, the names of the entire staff, and the number of students, Lutzki noted that 'the craft work is unsatisfactory according to

<sup>102</sup> 20 July 1945, 105/95/A, HA.

<sup>103</sup> The agent 'Beitari' mentioned earlier might also be one of Navon's aliases; he was a member of the Betar Movement prior to his enrolment in the Haganah.

<sup>104</sup> I wish to thank Prof Yoav Gelber for helping me locate the identity of this agent.

<sup>105</sup> *Davar*, 27 December 1971; Yegar, *Toldot ha-mahlakah*, 358; Yoav Gelber, 'Reshitah shel ha-brit ha-yehudit-druzit'.

the principal and requires improvement... I visited the history course... they were dealing with Medieval times in Europe according to an English textbook, but the class was in Arabic... the needlework of the third grade seemed infantile... the vice principal... gives the impression of being a talented woman... [Miss] 'Abdu [the gym teacher]... is also the prettiest... of all teachers, dresses in a Western style and elaborately'. Lutzki's confidence in his acquired Arabic is noticeable in a comment he made about an Arabic teacher, noting that she 'was not always punctilious about correct reading'.<sup>106</sup>

Other reports on teachers in elite schools were filed as part of the 'Landau Plan', which was devised in late 1944 by the Political Department to strengthen its ties with the Arab population and minimize its dependence on informants. The plan was to train an agent who would reach out to a list of Jews who had good contacts with Arabs and infiltrate Arab circles through them. His cover would be that of a journalist or author interested in the life of the Arabs. The Department chose Jacob (Eyal) Landau (1916–1999) for the job.<sup>107</sup> A Jew of Russian descent, Landau had immigrated to Palestine in 1935. An Orientalist and an Arabic teacher in the Hebrew Gymnasium in Jerusalem, he published his first Arabic textbook in 1945.<sup>108</sup> These credentials fit him like a glove for the operation.

On 12 December 1944, Landau organized a party at his home. Four young Jews attended the 'party': Landau, Shimoni, Navon, and Haim Verpel who also spoke Arabic.<sup>109</sup> Five Arab teachers also attended the event, all from the Rashidiya or the Arab College, thus representing the elitist group that was of prime interest to the Arab Department.<sup>110</sup>

The report includes biographical details, an assessment of the character and the level of knowledge of the Arab teachers. Ismail Shahed was depicted as 'graceful and of great social talent', who 'showed proficiency in Ancient and modern Arab literature' and had relations with notables. Jamil Saleh, on the other hand, a maths teacher, was said to have 'a lesser education than the others' and a desire to become a 'faranji' (a Westerner) with his elaborate

<sup>106</sup> A. L., 'A Visit to the Women's Teachers' Training College, Jerusalem, 29.1.47', 2 July 1947, 105/315/B/175–7, HA.

<sup>107</sup> Gelber, *Shorshe*, 622.

<sup>108</sup> *Davar*, 24 August 1945; On Landau's work as an Arabic teacher, Dov Kimche, Abraham Bartana, and Zvulun Tuchman, eds., *ha-Gimnasyah ha-ivrit*, 229, 257, 258.

<sup>109</sup> More on the role of Shimoni and Landau in the 1948 war in *Davar*, 21 December 1979. Since 1946, Navon headed the Arab Department of the Haganah in Jerusalem. I have no further information on Verpel, except what was mentioned in the report: 'who was supposed to serve as an emissary to Egypt from the Youth Department'.

<sup>110</sup> Jacob (Eyal) Landau, 'Landau to Sasson, Party for Arab Teachers', 13 December 1944, 105/73/1–2, HA.



dress, English speaking, and presumed knowledge of Western music. Shahed, originally from Nablus, a graduate of the Rashidiya and the AUB, dominates the report, as he 'made the impression of possessing a strong national consciousness. He severely attacked the Arabs who distance themselves from Eastern music and by that wish to emphasize the European spirit'.<sup>111</sup>

Cultural-religious issues were the pillars of these reports. In another report, based on an interview with a college principal, the agent chose to describe the stages in girls' education in detail, the social problems involved, and the gradual shift from being fully veiled to training and hiking in shorts and short sleeves. However, he noted that the Arab intellectuals showed no support for girls' secondary education, which was the root cause of their illiteracy, and he pointed out that male Arab university students preferred educated non-Arab women.<sup>112</sup>

These documented encounters shed light on the Arabs' role in shaping the Zionist self-perception. The study, classification, and mapping of the Arabs by these Orientalists or agents delineated the borders of the Zionist collectivity and demarcated it from the Arabs. Zionist identity became Western by definition, which implied the negation and exclusion of the Eastern.<sup>113</sup> Arabs could only attempt to become Westerners, but this was a foil, a façade disguising their true Oriental essence.

According to the report, Landau's party did not go smoothly. While browsing through the pages of a book, Shahed found a chapter 'of Arab nationalist nature, discussing imperialism in the East and read it aloud... I felt he saw this [the chapter] as a hint to the Jews and was glad to find it and read it to us. We did not comment and moved on to other business.' Thus, Shahed's attempt to ruin the party failed. They were there to network. Political discussions could have jeopardized the mission.

Landau's dedication to Arabic instruction for Hebrew speakers and his genuine interest in Arab culture are reflected in the conversations he reported that revolved around contemporary poets, authors, and the Arabic language. He spent long hours with these teachers. Shahed came to his house for tea, and Wasfi Hijab came to see him teach at the Hebrew Gymnasium after Landau visited Hijab in his rooms at the Rashidiya boarding school. Hijab spoke Hebrew, had studied philosophy at the Hebrew University, and according to Landau, wanted to get closer to Jewish society.

<sup>111</sup> Landau.

<sup>112</sup> A. L., 'A Visit to the Women's Teachers' Training College, Jerusalem, 29.1.47'.

<sup>113</sup> Gil Eyal, 'Ben mizrah'.

Hijab's interest was nicely aligned with Landau's mission, and Landau was obviously impressed with Hijab's knowledge and seriousness. Still, it was important for him to note that both Shahed and Hijab had a favourable opinion of Jewish education and agreed that it was far superior to Arab education.<sup>114</sup>

Landau concluded, 'I felt that the party was successful and believe it will be followed by an invitation from the Arab side...I hope through them to make contacts with the teachers of the college'.<sup>115</sup> The friendship between Landau and the Arab teachers was indeed an 'authentic' bridge between educators and between cultures. With no professional training, he showed impressive instincts as an agent. This kind of recruitment was common in the Shai that based its network of agents on volunteers, thus making up for its poor resources for intelligence work with decisiveness and commitment to the cause.

Navon also visited Arab schools with the same degree of confidence. He wrote a six-page report on al-Nahda College in Jerusalem, with the names of all the teachers, a breakdown of all the students according to religion and origin, and a short history of the school. Navon wrote that the central aims of the school were 'to educate a generation that would resurrect the Arab nation from its ruins and rebuild it on healthy foundations of pure Arab knowledge unaffected by destructive Europeanization. To educate a freedom-loving generation and unite it around the idea of Arab nationalism... while opening the eyes of the Arabs in the country to what is happening around them'. This school, Navon reported, 'is perhaps the most nationalist one in Jerusalem... the hatred towards the British is tangible... although the teachers use English as the language of instruction'.<sup>116</sup>

The attitude towards Zionism and the study of Hebrew or Jewish history were also given attention in these reports. Navon noted that the Nahda's 'attitude to the Jewish renaissance in the land of Israel was indeed highly negative and exceptionally noticeable and that the teachers frequently combined nationalism and politics in classes. The young men have vigour but lack organizational power that could unite them', and added that the

<sup>114</sup> Landau to Sasson, 23 November 1944, 105/210, HA. Soon after making his acquaintance with Landau, Hijab left to study philosophy at Trinity College, Cambridge where he began his PhD under the supervision of Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Palestine Post*, 17 July 1945.

<sup>115</sup> Landau, 'Landau to Sasson, Party for Arab Teachers'.

<sup>116</sup> Yoram, 'Arab High School Al-Nahda', 24 July 1945, 105/95/A/158, HA.

lectures in the school's association all revolve around the state of the Arabs, the Arab golden age in history, and the study of 'ancient national poems'.<sup>117</sup>

As was the case for the examples in the previous chapter, the agents believed that the Arabs should learn Jewish history because they thought it would provide proof of their historical right to the land, and learn Hebrew to enable coexistence in the country. They considered anti-Zionism an extremely irrational notion; all the Arabs needed to do to remedy this extremism was to study Jewish history.

Agent Lutzki noted that in the Women's Training College library, there were no books about Jewish history<sup>118</sup> and that the principal, Miss Hacker, had never visited a Hebrew school and was unfamiliar with the Jewish/Zionist goals in the country. Lutzki then asked her 'What do you teach about the Jews?' and was told that according to the instructions of the Department, this subject was not taught. Anti-Jewish influence was due to the 'Arab home', the principal noted, and nationalist enthusiasm was noticeable after vacations. Lutzki offered to introduce her to Jewish society and culture and invited her to attend a performance at 'ha-Bima', the Hebrew theatre.<sup>119</sup> Lutzki also interviewed Willard Jones, the principal of the Friends Boys' School in Ramallah, and defined him as 'an ardent anti-Zionist'. Lutzki was shocked that after twenty-five years in Palestine, Jones had never paid a visit to a single Hebrew school, the Hebrew University, or the National Library.<sup>120</sup> Lutzki saw an educative purpose to the meetings, and stressed the importance of Hebrew instruction in Arab secondary schools to each principal 'just as we nurture Arabic instruction'.<sup>121</sup>

Elitist education, as perceived by Navon, Landau, and Lutzki, corresponded to the existence of a self-aware urban class. Contrary to the violent threats posed by the rural population, the educated elite posed an intellectual challenge in the form of a nationalism that could not be dismissed as savagery. Labour Zionism, the hegemonic power in the Yishuv, confronted this elite and its aspirations from a socialist perspective. As argued by Michael Assaf, an Orientalist scholar and journalist in his 1939 review of Antonius' *Arab Awakening*, the urban elite's rhetoric of Arab nationalism was nothing but

<sup>117</sup> Yoram, 'Arab High School Al-Nahda'.

<sup>118</sup> A. L., 'A Visit to the Women's Teachers' Training College, Jerusalem, 29.1.47'.

<sup>119</sup> A. L., 'A Conversation with Miss Hacker, Principal of the Women's Training College, 8.12.46', 17 December 1946, 105/315/A/96-7, HA.

<sup>120</sup> A. L., 'A Conversation with Willard Jones, Principal of the Friends School in Ramallah, 5.2.47', 10 March 1947, 105/315/B/174, HA.

<sup>121</sup> A. L., 'A Conversation with Miss Hacker'; A. L., 'A Conversation with Willard Jones'.

incitement of the poor and the weak to fight for the elite's dominance. The book, Assaf added, was filled with lies, fabrications, and superficial propaganda. Antonius's acknowledgement of Jewish historical ties with Palestine and support of Zionism as a spiritual project while denying the Jews' rights to the land was the hardest argument to refute. Zionism and Arab nationalism, according to Assaf, were not contradictory because Arab independence had already been accomplished and all the Jews wanted was Palestine, a small part of the Arab world. Assaf thus asked Arab Palestinians to 'limit themselves' only in this small piece of land.<sup>122</sup>

Elite urban secondary schools, with their impressive architecture, modern educational curricula, and above all their staff and students, would not or could not agree to 'limit themselves.' Although representing a small minority, they were the symbols of a growing community in Palestine that produced the types of knowledge, arguments, and organizations that threatened Zionism the most. The energy invested in intelligence gathering at these schools reflects the fear generated by this growing community.

This fear was also seen in the quotes the agents included in their reports, as well as in particular Arab views of Jews. One report noted that while writing an assignment about what he did in his leisure time, one student replied, 'I wander around the street and whenever I see a Jew, I throw stones at him.' In general, the agent concluded, 'Arab students think that every Jew is a criminal and a terrorist, and the word Jewish is a synonym for dirt, hatred of religion and Arabs... all [Arab] speakers of Hebrew are traitors'.<sup>123</sup> Another report quoted a teacher, 'a notable and important personality amongst the Arabs', who stated that the Jews were 'a weak people, cowardly, liars, deceitful and perhaps clever', and pose no challenge to the Arabs and could be displaced easily. This teacher, depicted as preaching extreme nationalist ideas, is also said to be 'single, and exhibiting homosexual tendencies that distance students from him'.<sup>124</sup> In some cases, teachers were plainly depicted as anti-Semitic.<sup>125</sup>

Descriptions expressing contempt and scorn for Arab education, evidently influenced by what these agents read and thought about the Arabs' view of them, were commonplace. 'Out of a hundred students, you will find only 8-9 that study persistently and vigilantly. The main reason is that there

<sup>122</sup> *Davar*, 24 January 1939. Shimoni articulated a similar analysis of Arab politics and the national movement, *Davar*, 5 December 1943.

<sup>123</sup> Beitari, 'On the Nature of Arab Schools' Students'.

<sup>124</sup> Yoram, 'Arab High School Al-Nahda'.

<sup>125</sup> 'Report', 19 May 1946, 105/315/B/55, HA.

is no atmosphere of learning and content [Torah] in their schools.<sup>126</sup> The Arab teachers 'are no different in anything from any other Arab... [During recess] they mainly discuss women and prostitution and... politics.'<sup>127</sup> One teacher was quoted as saying that the Arabs are stupid, and the agent added in brackets, 'I have the impression that he is not wrong.'<sup>128</sup>

Since day to day classroom teaching was not usually recorded, the files usually only included striking random anecdotes. One agent reported that students stabbed a teacher in Tirah and gravely injured him after he gave them bad grades,<sup>129</sup> and that another student strangled a teacher in the Arab College after his students left his class protesting his continuous interest in their sisters.<sup>130</sup> Here as well, the selection of events reveals much about the Shai's perspective on Arab education.

The Shai was spying on schools because it considered them a possible threat. In the files, newspaper articles that mention pedagogical issues or administrative changes were rarely translated or given special attention. The focus was on independent organizations among the Arabs, nationalist Arabs, vocal Arabs in general in the field of education, and intriguing stories of violence and disgust. This information is valuable in that it reflects the Zionist engagement with its Arab neighbours. If indeed the Zionist leadership saw the Arab population through the eyes of these agents, Arab education emerges as chaotic, violent, and primitive. In the case of elite schools, they were seen as inculcating extreme Arab nationalism, along with indifference or hatred towards the Jews, their history, and their culture under the cloak of Western education. While former or acting educators wrote some of these reports, there is no evidence of a shared cause or challenges. When visiting an Arab school, they chose to report solely on different expressions of the enemy's modes of action, with education being merely one of them.

While there is little Arab writing on Jewish society or Jewish education, it reflected a similar trajectory. Jewish education was seen as yet another apparatus of the Zionist project and was therefore a threat. However, for some educators and scholars, the development of the Yishuv educational system was a role model. Highlighting the virtues of one's enemy was a cautionary tale, where those benefitting from superior education would inherit the land.

<sup>126</sup> Beitari, 'On the Nature of Arab Schools' Students'.

<sup>127</sup> Beitari, 'On Arab Schools in Jerusalem, 9 December 1946, 105/315/B/169, HA.

<sup>128</sup> Yoram, 'Arab High School Al-Nahda'.<sup>129</sup> 13 August 1945, 105/73/177, HA.

<sup>130</sup> Yanai, 22 January 1947, 105/315/A/26, HA.

## Conclusion

When examining the nature of both education systems, this discourse of suspicion and fear is worth keeping in mind, not only because educators often took part in this work of espionage, but because the higher echelons of both communities based their views on these kinds of texts, which later percolated into institutions in general and created a mirror effect. When under threat, education leaves little room for questions, since decisive answers are needed; extreme nationalism can only be responded to with extreme nationalism.

In a prophetic speech before the Twentieth Zionist Congress against the two-state solution proposed by the Peel Commission, the Zionist leader Menachem Ussishkin gave a masterly description of the nature of this reciprocity. Ussishkin warned that Arab education under the Jewish state would unavoidably enhance already existing extremism, and naturally teach its students that they were living in an exile (*galut*) from which they had to liberate themselves. Today, he stated, they teach that the Jews want to steal their land, and in the future, they shall say it had already been stolen. This can only be confronted by a radical Jewish militaristic education, for 'there shall be peril after every step we take, and we will have to defend ourselves and we shall be in this state for decades... *is this the proper inception of a state?*'<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> *Davar*, 16 August 1937 (emphasis added).

## 4

# Writing History

‘You must write for children the same way you write for adults, only better’. Maxim Gorki

The previous chapters examined the segregation between the Arab and Jewish educational sectors, as well as both communities’ involvement and their reciprocal influences. This interaction is an essential prelude to this chapter which examines the authorship of history textbooks. It discusses other key contributory factors and agencies by exploring the social mediations and collective representations in this historiography as manifestations of conflictual relationships in colonial society.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it contextualizes the Palestinian and Hebrew history textbook.

The chapter begins with the history of textbook production in Palestine, and then it deals, in detail, first with the Palestinian and later with the Hebrew, the close-knit network of educators and bureaucrats who produced educational history texts. It elucidates their common reasons to educate and to write history and the ways in which these authors’ criticism of the present and vision for the future shaped their pedagogy and their particular instrumentalization of the past. The chapter introduces the new Arab as a pedagogical concept that embodied the educational goals of these authors, and it ends with an analysis of the national Other in Hebrew and Arabic history textbooks.

### Traveling Knowledge: The Production of Arabic Textbooks in Palestine

Writing the history of the production of textbooks in Palestine is an exercise in genealogy. It entails mapping the roots and historical moments of transitions and evolution where ‘[r]ecurrent redistributions reveal several

<sup>1</sup> Quentin Skinner, ‘Meaning and Understanding’; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 2–3.

pasts, several forms of connexion, several hierarchies of importance, several networks of determination, [and] several teleologies.<sup>2</sup> It involves tracing the historical process of physical production, import, export, and consumption of textbooks. Entangled in this process are the ideas, traditions, and sociocultural-intellectual dialogue triggered by their products.

A survey of the development of textbook production in Palestine thus requires a relocation of Palestine from its strict physical and conceptual borders into an inclusive, dynamic, and flexible entity. On the one hand, Palestine was a fragmented society with a multitude of players having different interests within different communities and locations. Greek, Russian, Anglican, French, American, and German missions, operated separately in Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem, Nazareth, and various other localities, ran their own schools, printed their own textbooks, and sent their students for training abroad. On the other hand, it was a community ruled by one Empire with one centre, while at the same time, it was a consumer of cultural and intellectual products from its larger urban centres such as Cairo and Beirut. While certain examples of textbook production might be seen as directly related to a single linear development of an idea or concept, this chapter shows to what extent history textbook production was complex and rhizomic.

Mission and private schools were using textbooks for decades before the British decided to import textbooks from Egypt rather than form local partnerships. While the modern history of Arabic textbook production dates to the Bulaq press in Cairo in the 1820s, the mission schools in Palestine, similar to the ones operating in Lebanon and Syria, pioneered the writing, translating, and printing of textbooks in Arabic. Although the emergence of this textbook production industry in Palestine was an integral part of a greater educational shift in the entire region, the prominent figures of the *Nahda* in Lebanon and Egypt overshadowed the story of the local Palestinian industry.

In Palestine, the production of Arabic textbooks for school use can be traced to the late nineteenth century. In the 1880s, Iskandar Kazma, a Damascene Arab and graduate of the Ecclesiastical Academy in Moscow, translated religious textbooks from Russian to Arabic for Russian Orthodox schools in the country. Kazma went to Jerusalem in 1883, opened several elementary schools in Northern Palestine, and served as chief inspector of all Russian schools in the Galilee.<sup>3</sup> Khalil Baydas authored two books on

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Archaeology*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Hanna Kildani, *Modern Christianity*, 141–2.



pedagogy and two arithmetic textbooks; he also wrote other texts for Arabic and religious instruction prior to the First World War.<sup>4</sup> In 1898 he published a translation of the Russian Hebraist Akim Olesnitsky's book on the geography of the Holy Land that was used to teach geography in the Russian schools.<sup>5</sup>

The Franciscan schools in Palestine used textbooks printed at the Franciscan press (est. 1846).<sup>6</sup> Father Didoqsus Snan al-Halabi, a teacher at al-Madrasa al-Qudsiya and a supervisor of the order's schools, authored a number of Arabic and arithmetic textbooks from 1901 to 1906, which replaced older books authored by another Franciscan priest in 1898.<sup>7</sup>

The Holy Sepulchre Printing Press under the Greek Patriarchy produced textbooks for its schools as well. Two textbooks designed for the use of the Greek Orthodox schools, *The Geography of Palestine* and *Holy History*, were published in 1904, and both are unique in that they juxtapose Arabic and Greek script.<sup>8</sup> George al-Khuri Siksik (b. 1878), a teacher and later a supervisor in the Greek Orthodox schools, authored prayer books for the Greek schools (1913). Sheikh Fuad al-Khatib, the famous poet and minister in Faysal's Syrian government, authored an Arabic textbook prior to the First World War, while teaching Arabic at the Orthodox School in Jaffa, and he published it at the Holy Sepulchre press. The German mission contributed to the production of textbooks as well. The author and esteemed educator Elias N. Haddad started teaching Arabic in the Teachers' Seminary of the Syrian Orphanage in 1904, and the first part of his seven-volume Arabic textbook was circulated in the institution in 1913 (it would go through twenty-one editions).<sup>9</sup>

These examples are representative of the emerging local industry of textbook authorship that mainly catered to the instruction of Arabic. For history courses, these schools used their own versions of history textbooks in the mission's language or in Arabic translation. Ottoman textbook production—in particular, modern history textbooks—increased sharply

<sup>4</sup> Abū Ḥannā, *Dār al-mu'allimīn al-rūsīyah*, 37, 40; Yehoshua Ben-Hananiah, 'Le-toldot ha-ḥinukh ha-'arvī' (2); Spencer Scoville, 'Reconsidering Nahdawi Translation'.

<sup>5</sup> Khalīl Baydas, *Kitāb al-rawḍah al-mu'ānasah fī wasf al-arḍ al-muqaddasah* (Ba'bdā: al-Maṭba'ah al-'uthmāniyah, 1898).

<sup>6</sup> Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Reviews of Snan's book can be found in 'Maṭbū'āt sharqīyah jadidah', *al-Mashriq*, no. 11 (6 January 1901): 524; See also, Yehoshua Ben-Hananiah, 'Le-toldot ha-ḥinukh ha-'arvī' (1).

<sup>8</sup> *Jughrāfiyat filastīn*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at al-qabr al-muqaddas, 1904); *Tārīkh sharīf* (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at al-qabr al-muqaddas, 1904).

<sup>9</sup> Gil Gordon, 'Ha-ṭov mi-kullām'; Yehoshua Ben-Hananiah, 'Le-toldot ha-ḥinukh ha-'arvī' (3).

after 1908. However, very little is known about Ottoman government schools operating in Palestine, and even less is known about the textbooks they used. It is certain, however, that these textbooks were authored, printed, and approved in the capital, far from the peripheral cities of Palestine.

A few textbooks from the Mandate period help reconstruct some of the links between the late Ottoman and the Mandate period. The bibliographies included in some of the books reflect the authors' knowledge and selection of the available corpus. These references also correspond to the authors' sources of inspiration and their perceptions of what constituted proper sources for the writing of history, and they signal the scope of the Ottoman, American, Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Christian, Muslim, and Arab historiographies. Late Ottoman sources echo the intellectual dialogue between Europe and Istanbul prior to the War. Textbooks written by American missionaries, their students, or American historians translated into Arabic at the Syrian Protestant College (SPC) introduced another historiographic tradition to the region. Finally, the surge in Egyptian historiography was another dominant source of influence that amalgamated all the other historiographic trends.

The best places to start this investigation of bibliographies are the Torah and the Qur'an. Both are mentioned as valid sources of history in textbooks and books that deal with ancient history. The Bible was also widely used by Western historians as a historical document, with the revelation marginalized and the human story magnified. Myers's and Breasted's textbooks, which were extensively cited in Palestinian textbooks, and discussed later in the chapter in depth, are good examples.

The earlier sources mentioned in these textbooks adopted this tradition as well. Yusuf Dibs, a Maronite bishop of Beirut who is mentioned in most bibliographies, used the Torah as the historical framework in his massive history of Syria. Jurji Zaydan started the historical narration in his 1890 history textbook with the Biblical creation and the flood stories.<sup>10</sup> In the foreword to his 1884 history textbook, authored for the students of the SPC, Harvey Porter discusses scientific scrutiny of the historical validity of the Torah, only to conclude that there is no contradictory evidence for the flood.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *al-Tārikh al-ʿāmm, munḍu al-ḥaliqāʾ ilā hādhihi al-ayyām* (Cairo, 1890), 23–5.

<sup>11</sup> Porter adopts the Biblical narration of the beginnings of human races and peoples: *al-Nahj al-qawīm fi al-tārikh al-qadīm* (Beirut, 1884), 5–6, 185–6; An earlier amalgamation of the story of creation and the flood with contemporary European historiography can be found

Another corpus of sources mentioned in these bibliographies is that of the classical Arab historians such as al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir and Abu al-Fida'. Although cited and employed in textbooks authored by Totah and Barghuthi and the senior Department official Husayn Ruhi (1878–1960), their absence is striking in others. Aside from issues of language and style, which were perceived as archaic for the young student, they were also set aside for what was considered more progressive, trustworthy historiography. The new writings of Arabic and Ottoman historians were based mainly on Western sources, and clearly overshadowed classic Arabic historiography, even in Arab nationalist history textbooks such as Miqdadi's. This mechanism of tacit cultural effacement and replacement embodied in these new history textbooks was a clear departure from traditional historiography in favour of a lighter, Western, or modern Arabic literature.

Late Ottoman historiography had already made that shift and was therefore another model, especially for Palestinian authors and educators such as al-Tamimi, Izzat Darwazah (1887–1984), and Sa'id Al-Sabbagh (1899–1967), who read Ottoman Turkish as part of their elementary or secondary education. Gürpınar's survey of late Ottoman historiography stresses the magnitude of this 'epistemological assimilation' of Western and primarily French historiography as a paradigmatic hegemonic framework. Ottoman historical epistemology, he argues, 'has to be posited within the mechanism of knowledge transmission from the West via intellectual intermediaries' from the Third Republic to the Ottoman sphere. Progress as a central force in European historiography wrote itself into the Ottoman textbooks.<sup>12</sup> Other scholars are more cautious in their assessment of this relationship, and they consider the Ottoman textbook to combine both Ottoman and Western influences and thus create an 'understandably heterogeneous creation'. In the search for an authentic Ottoman history, pedagogues called for the indigenization of knowledge and for the Ottomanization of history.<sup>13</sup>

In particular, after the 1908 revolution, the Ottoman state sought to reinvent the Empire through its past, to unite the Ottoman nation, and to create the concept of Ottoman citizenship. The Ottoman history textbooks mentioned in these bibliographies were an outcome of this process because they were mostly written by educators and senior administrators directly

in an 1872 Egyptian history textbook: 'Abdallah Abu al-sa'ūd, *Kitāb al-dars al-tāmm fī al-tārīkh al-'ām* (al-Qāhirah: Maṭba'at wādī al-nīl al-miṣriyah, 1872).

<sup>12</sup> Doğan Gürpınar, *Ottoman/Turkish*, 135–7.

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Carr Fortna, 'Education for the Empire', 223; Ebru Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans*, 11–13.

employed by the state.<sup>14</sup> Mehmed Murad's six volumes of *Tarih-i Umumi* (universal history), for example, appear as a source in Rafiq al-Tamimi's modern history textbook.<sup>15</sup> Murad (1853–1917) wrote the book while teaching history at the *Mekteb-i Mülkiye*, the state civil administration school, where al-Tamimi would study years later. Murad later published an abridged edition for the school in which he stressed the moral lessons of history as the foundation of proper administration and as ethical guidance for good civil servants.<sup>16</sup> Ali Reşad (1877–1929) and Ahmet Refik's (Altınay, 1881–1937) textbooks that convey a strong sense of loyalty, love, and admiration of the Ottoman fatherland, also appear as sources.<sup>17</sup> Reşad, whose textbooks dominated the second constitutional period, was an educator, administrator, prolific historian, and translator. Refik, a well-published historian of the late Ottoman and early republican period, translated Charles Seignobos' *Histoire de la Civilisation* in 1912.

Ottoman scholars note the impact of Seignobos on Ottoman historiography during the second constitutional period, and have analysed the adoption of his view of history as civic instruction in the service of the nation.<sup>18</sup> Seignobos's works were popular in the Arab (Ottoman) world as well. His influence is another example of a shared (rather than a detached) Ottoman–Arab–European dialogue and the exchange of ideas and knowledge. A few of Seignobos's massive volumes on the history of civilization (1905–1906) were translated relatively quickly after their publication by the Syrian historian Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876–1953) and the Lebanese historian Jurji Yanni (1854–1941).<sup>19</sup> Seignobos's historiographic methodology continued to have an impact later on, as well, since he is mentioned as a prime source of inspiration for Taha Husayn, the leading Egyptian intellectual.<sup>20</sup> However, this shared intellectual sphere was not confined to translations of

<sup>14</sup> Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans*, 15; Betül Açıkgöz, 'The Transformation of School Knowledge'.

<sup>15</sup> Rafiq al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh ü rûbâ al-ḥadīth* (Jerusalem: Maktabat bayt al-maqdis, 1946), 374; Murad's book also appears in the following textbooks: 'Izzat Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm* (Jerusalem: Maktabat al-andalus, 1936), 206; Sa'id al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat al-qadima wa-tārīkh sūriyā wa-filastīn* (Jaffa: al-Maktaba al-'aşriyah, 1944), 3; Taysir Zūbyān, *Zubdat al-tārīkh al-'ām* (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at bayt al-maqdis, 1923), x.

<sup>16</sup> Meltem Toksöz, 'The World of Mehmed Murad'.

<sup>17</sup> Boyar, *Ottomans, Turks and the Balkans*, 27–8.

<sup>18</sup> Gürpınar, *Ottoman/Turkish 1860–1950*, 136–7.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Seignobos, *Tārīkh al-ḥadārah*, trans. Muhammad Kurd Ali (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Zāhir, 1908); Charles Seignobos, *Tārīkh al-tamaddun al-ḥadīth*, trans. Jurji Yanni (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Hilāl, 1909).

<sup>20</sup> Abdelrashid Mahmoudi, *Taha Husain's Education*, 164.

Western scholarship. Shidyaq's Arabic textbooks and Zaydan's scholarship and prose were translated into Turkish, and they gained popularity at the turn of the century.<sup>21</sup>

For some Palestinian authors who were educated under or saw themselves as part of the Ottoman order, the late Ottomanized national historiography imbued with European historicism was a good alternative to Western offerings. Yet even for historians of the time who read this literature, especially after the First World War, Ottoman historiography ceased to be a source of inspiration and in Mandate Palestine, it was hard to find texts in favour of the Empire. In the new historical narrative, the Ottoman period was literally left behind.

In 1946, Dr Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, an inspector in the Department of Education, noted that the Ottoman period was one of the darkest in the region's cultural life. Al-Tamimi, who unlike al-Husayni was educated in Istanbul and was employed as a state official, referred in his textbooks to the Ottomans mainly as 'the Turks', and stressed that late Ottoman reforms were initiated in response to British and French pressure.<sup>22</sup> History textbooks depict the Ottomans as savages, tamed and educated by Arabs, who betrayed them and set up a corrupt, incompetent, authoritarian regime that left Palestine after 400 years of rule with nothing but the 'darkness of ignorance and stupidity', a common trope in Arab nationalist writing.<sup>23</sup> Arab proponents of Ottoman (*al-atrāk*) sovereignty were venerated. Dhaher al Omar, 'Ali Bey and the Lebanese Umara all symbolized local Arab resistance to the oppressive *bashawāt al-atrāk*.<sup>24</sup>

This was the case in Egyptian textbooks, a prime source of reference for Palestinian textbooks. Egypt's adoption of the Orientalist theory of Ottoman decline and stagnation contrasted with a vigorous dynamic Egypt, and both narratives found their way into Palestinian texts. Egypt's pioneering industry of literary, scientific, and pedagogical journals and books was *the* Arab or local source of inspiration for Palestine's emerging community of educators.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Johann Strauss, 'Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire.'

<sup>22</sup> Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, *al-Kitāb al-'arabī*, 4; Rafiq al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh al-'aṣr al-ḥāḍir* (Jaffa: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyah, 1946?), 169–71.

<sup>23</sup> 'Umar Salih al-Barghuthi and Khalil Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn* (al-Quds: Bulus wa-wadī' sa'id, 1923), 229, 257–58, 262–3, 289; al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 161, 134–5; Shukri Harami, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī al-tārīkh* (Jerusalem: Maktabat bayt al-maqdis, 1939), 62–3; Darwish al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah al-'arabiyyah* (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif, 1932), 482; See also, Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 236; al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 161–6; 'Anabtawi and Ghunaym, *al-Mujmal*, 117, 125, 140.

<sup>25</sup> By the turn of the century, Egypt already had its own children's magazine sector: Morrison, *Childhood*. Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Akhhār 'amr ibn al-'āṣ wa-akhlaqihī', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 1 (31 October 1923): 19–23; Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 51–3.

The first decades of Egyptian state education under Muhammad 'Ali were characterized by the hegemony of the colonialist mindset that Egyptians were inferior and backward. Egyptian educators and intellectuals embraced the colonial perception that these features needed to be remedied through modern education.<sup>26</sup> By the time of the British conquest of Palestine, Egypt already had its own academic life with a new generation of Egyptian professors of history trained in Western universities and a growing modern universal education system. Egyptian history textbooks were often authored by graduates of Western (mainly British) universities and in some cases, by professional historians who, as in Palestine and the Ottoman state, were directly involved in the Ministry of Education.<sup>27</sup>

Egyptian textbooks of the pre-War period emphasized progress, and a change in conduct and virtues that encouraged order, organization, cleanliness, and good citizenship, all of which were crucial for the well-being of the state.<sup>28</sup> History textbooks advocated the centrality of the *dawla* and its institutions, and exalted and legitimized the ruler and his role in the modernization of Egypt.<sup>29</sup> Authored by state officials and educators, this history was closely entwined with the political scene.

About a third of the reading material was dedicated to the forty-three years of Muhammad 'Ali's reign, although ancient Egypt received ample attention as well. In secondary schools, a full academic year was devoted to ancient Egyptian history. Similar to the Arab Palestinian and Zionist national quantum leap from medieval or ancient times to modernity, the syllabus jumped from the ancient Egyptian Pharaohs to Muhammad 'Ali.<sup>30</sup>

Egypt's history went through a process of Egyptianization to become an all-encompassing concept of being: *al-shakhsiyya al-Misriyya* (the Egyptian personality), *al-ḥadārah al-miṣriyah* (Egyptian civilization), and *al-thaqāfah al-miṣriyah* (Egyptian culture).<sup>31</sup> All of these books shared a similar starting point that portrayed Egypt as the most highly civilized of all realms. The ancient Pharaohs were cast as unifiers of the Egyptian nation; Hyksos and the Romans were branded as tyrannical foreign rulers; and

<sup>26</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 98.

<sup>27</sup> Barak A. Salmoni, 'Historical Consciousness', 179; Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History*, 65–71; Anthony Gorman, *Historians*, 26–7, 45–7; Michael J. Reimer, 'Egyptian Views'.

<sup>28</sup> Lisa Pollard, *Nurturing the Nation*, 120–1.

<sup>29</sup> Gorman, *Historians*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Salmoni, 'Historical Consciousness', 166–7.

<sup>31</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, 'The Tropes of Stagnation'. Al-Sabbagh, *al-Madanīyat al-qadīma wa-tārīkh sūriyā wa-filastīn* (Jaffa: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyah, 1944), 12; Nicola Ziadeh, *al-'Ālam al-qadīm* (Jaffa: al-Maktabah al-'aṣriyah, 1947), 74.

the merging and intermarriage of the Pharaohs with Persians were decried as a national peril.<sup>32</sup>

Most of these features found their way into Palestinian textbooks and thus point to the dominance of Egyptian sources. One source mentions the nationalist spirit (*al-rūḥ al-qawmīya*), while another glorifies the nationalist renaissance movement (*ḥarakāt al-baʿth al-waṭanī*) that helped drive the foreign Hyksos from the country.<sup>33</sup> Admiration for Muhammad ʿAli can also be found for the man ‘sent by God to save Egypt’, the founder and builder of modern Egypt, loved by Egyptians for his just, egalitarian rule.<sup>34</sup>

This adherence to the Egyptian model does not mean, however, that minor adjustments were not made so that the story could fit the Palestinian narrative. The rule of Tuthmosis the Third, for example, is considered the time when ‘real colonialism began’, when Syria refused to Egyptianize and ‘kept its Semitic nature’.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, after the Syrian rebellion against Ibrahim Pasha, ‘he finally understood the difference between the obedient ignorant Egyptian *fellah* and the stubborn Syrian, and his aspiration for freedom and independence’.<sup>36</sup> Miqdadi’s description of Muhammad ʿAli emphasized his Turkish origins and culture, and made it clear that while Egypt benefited from his rule, he did it all out of personal interest.<sup>37</sup>

Books written by Lebanese historians such as Jurji Yanni, Philip Hitti (1886–1978), and Asad Rustum (1897–1965) also appear in these bibliographies. Hitti and Rustum, who earned their BAs at the SPC and obtained their PhDs in history from American universities, served as professors of history at the AUB, which was an institution of crucial importance to Palestine in the field of education, as we shall see. It is hard to assess the influence of these two professors, especially that of Rustum, a student of Breasted who remained in his post for most of the Mandate period. It is certain, though, that the influence of these two Arab historians, who were rising stars in the local academic world, exceeded the readership of their books.<sup>38</sup> Rustum, and Fuad Afram al-Bustani, a fellow

<sup>32</sup> Salmoni, ‘Historical Consciousness’, 166–76.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Sabbagh, *al-Madanīyat*, 12; Ziadeh, *al-ʿĀlam al-qadīm*, 74. A similar description can be found in Taysir Ḍubyan, *Zubdat al-tārikh al-ʿām* (Jerusalem: Maṭbaʿat bayt al-maqdis, 1923), 12.

<sup>34</sup> Al-Sabbagh, *al-Madanīyat*, 169; al-Tamimi, *Tārikh ʾurūbā al-ḥadīth*, 160–2; Ruhi, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 86–7; Wasfi ʿAnabtawi and Husayn Ghunaym, *al-Mujmal fī tārikh al-ʾuṣūr al-mutawassiṭa wal ḥadīthā* (Jaffa: al-Maktabah al-ʾaṣriyah, 1943), 114–115, 117, 131, 142.

<sup>35</sup> Ziadeh, *al-ʿĀlam al-qadīm*, 78.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Sabbagh, *al-Madanīyat*, 171.

<sup>37</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 461.

<sup>38</sup> Ilyās Qaṭṭār, Lamyā Rustum-Shihādah, and Jān Sharaf, *Asad Rustum*, 42–8, 188–201; Quṣṭanṭīn Zurayq, *Naḥnu wa-al-tārikh*, 67–8.

teacher at the AUB, wrote a series of history textbooks entitled *Tarikh Lubnan* (the History of Lebanon) for state elementary to high school use. The publication of these books in 1938 that put forward a particular Lebanese national identity was funded by the Ministry of Education,<sup>39</sup> and was reedited six times before 1946. Palestinian textbooks written in the 1940s mention *Tarikh Lubnan*,<sup>40</sup> as did earlier Egyptian textbooks that highlight the Egyptian or Lebanese national narratives stretching from ancient times up to the modern period. These histories challenged both the Palestinian and the pan-Arab/Islamic narratives, which prompted the authors if not to write a programmatic national history, to delineate a more specific Palestinian narrative within greater Islamic, Arab, or global histories. In the introduction to his textbook on European history, Rafiq al-Tamimi sums up this point in an understatement in which he argues that the Egyptian textbooks not only fail to fit the demands of the Palestinian student but also tend to exaggerate or overemphasize certain periods while minimizing others.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, Western sources or translated Western sources in Arabic played an important role in the production of textbooks both in form and content. This was the case for Elihu Grant's *The Orient in the Bible* (1920), mentioned in Totah and Barghuthi's book. Grant, Totah's teacher, mentor and close friend for forty years, was an American Quaker missionary who established the Friends Boys' and Girls' Schools in Ramallah.<sup>42</sup> As in the case of the direct American Protestant influence on the history curriculum of the SPC, Grant's view of the Orient through his readings of the Bible clearly found its way into his student's historical conceptualization. Philip Van Ness Myers's *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (1906), which was translated into Arabic in 1912, and James Henry Breasted's *Ancient Times* (1916), translated in 1926, are central sources of reference as well. These books gained prominence, although Arabic sources were available. Al-Tamimi's book on European history sets a good example. His bibliography covers a variety of European sources in French and English but none in Arabic. Although Tamimi, a sworn nationalist, was proficient in Ottoman Turkish, his sources on the Orient are classic late nineteenth-century orientalist books such as Stanley Lane-Poole's *The Story of Turkey* (1888) and William Miller's *The*

<sup>39</sup> Asher Kaufman, *Reviving Phoenicia*, 117–18.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh al-ʿaṣr al-ḥādīr*, 372; al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh urūbā al-ḥadīth*, 3. <sup>42</sup> Thomas M. Ricks, 'Khalil Totah'.



*Ottoman Empire* (1913).<sup>43</sup> Niranjana attributes this preference for Western sources to the symbolic power attached to English, which enabled the colonized to validate access to their own past through colonial discourse.<sup>44</sup> For Tamimi, perhaps even more so, writing European history using *their* sources once freed of 'literal elegance'<sup>45</sup> meant assessing Europe critically, as a human reality rather than an omnipotent metaphysical entity.

Occasionally translation was explicitly noted, but in most cases, reproduced full paragraphs or sentences were not referenced at all. An early example of the latter is Zaydan's *General History*, mentioned as a source in Palestinian textbooks, which was copied almost verbatim from Peter Parley's (pseudonym) *Common School History*, first published in 1837 by Samuel G. Goodrich (1793–1860), an American writer and publisher of numerous children's books and textbooks for schools.<sup>46</sup> Parley's book is mentioned last in Zaydan's list of sources, which casts a different light on his own rigorous statements on copyright issues and accredited translations on the pages of *al-Hilal* a short while before the publication of his textbook.<sup>47</sup>

For the critical reader of historical texts, Zaydan's plagiarism is noticeable from the start in his description of geography as seen from a hot air balloon, an invention few Egyptians or Syrians were familiar with.<sup>48</sup> In other instances, the text needed to be changed: Zaydan omitted Parley's description of Isaac's sacrifice (Abraham's favourite son) and left the Qur'anic narration out, as well, only adding that Ishmael is the father of the Arab nation.<sup>49</sup> Parley's depiction of the Arabs as 'enemies to the rest of mankind, and mankind enemies to them', and the denigration or ridicule of the Prophet had to be omitted or revised as well.<sup>50</sup>

The treatment of Islam and the Arabs is also problematic in Myers's book.<sup>51</sup> Sentences stating that 'after the Hebrews and the Phoenicians, the

<sup>43</sup> Al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh urūbā al-ḥadīth*, 264.

<sup>44</sup> Tejaswini Niranjana, 'Translation, Colonialism'.

<sup>45</sup> Al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh urūbā al-ḥadīth*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Ben A. Smith and James W. Vining, 'Samuel Griswold Goodrich'.

<sup>47</sup> Nicole Khayat, 'Historiography and Translation', 27–9.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel G. Goodrich, *Peter Parley's Common School History*, 7th ed (Philadelphia: Marshall, Williams & Butler, 1840), 9.

<sup>49</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *al-Tārīkh al-'ām, mundhu al-khalīqah ilā ḥādhihi al-ayyām* (Egypt, 1890), 32–3.

<sup>50</sup> Some examples of Parley's depiction of the Prophet include: 'He pretended that he had ridden up to heaven on an ass... many of his stories were as ridiculous as this.' Goodrich, *Peter Parley's Common School History*, 65–6.

<sup>51</sup> Several editions of Myers's book were published. My analysis is based on the 1906 edition. The first edition of the book (1889) took a more belligerent stance towards the Arabs and

[Arabs are the] most important people of the Semitic race', were plainly rewritten to resituate the Arabs as equal in importance.<sup>52</sup> However, the Arabic translation mostly remained faithful to the Eurocentric English original, and depicted the Prophet as a 'deeply stirred' soul and Islam as 'a system unfavourable to social progress'.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, despite Islam's articulation of 'inspiring truths', it is overall regarded as a backward force, a threat to Europe that is paralleled to the Huns.<sup>54</sup>

For historians, the bibliography is a professional, cultural, and ideological coat of arms. Its analysis captures the sources that were physically available at the time, the languages known to them, their intellectual circle, and the historiographic world to which they belonged or wished to belong. The presence of Ottoman, Egyptian, Lebanese, English, and French historiographies reflects the rich intellectual world of these authors and the transitional or hybrid historiographic phase Palestine was going through. No Palestinian history textbooks during the Mandate were, in themselves, quite Ottoman, Egyptian, Lebanese, English, French, or American: rather, they were an amalgamation, a mixture of all these sources. Palestinian authors selected what they considered pertinent for their national story, borrowing from late Ottoman sources while depicting the Ottoman period as a dark age, venerating the rise of modern Egypt, but not at the expense of Palestinian freedom, and favouring Western historiography, while challenging its cultural essentialism. What stands out in these texts is the dominance of relatively new sources and the abandonment of classic or traditional historiography.

## A Small World Indeed

Mandate Palestine witnessed a rapid growth in literacy and print culture led by a burgeoning community of authors and intellectuals. Still confined to the three urban centres of Haifa, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, it was a dynamic and vocal but fairly small community. Educators who wrote textbooks were not

Islam. Philip Van Ness Myers, *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1889), 392–402; Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:222.

<sup>52</sup> Philip Van Ness Myers, *A General History for Colleges and High Schools* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1906), 511; P. V. N. Myers and Salim Tannus Haddad, *al-Tarikh al-'amm lil-kulliyat wa-al-madaris al-'aliyah* (Bayrut: al-Matba'ah al-Amirikiyah, 1912), 219.

<sup>53</sup> Myers, *A General History*, 1906, 363, 370–1; Myers and Haddad, *al-Tarikh al-'amm*, 220, 224.

<sup>54</sup> Myers, *A General History*, 1906, 368; Myers and Haddad, *al-Tarikh al-'amm*, 222.

the leading 'luminaries' of their age who reshaped its discourse and bounded its frontiers, but rather acted as 'reproductive historians' who diffused, in modified form, a popularized version of history based on notions originally articulated by 'luminary' historians.<sup>55</sup> This group of historians wrote instrumental histories that were actually used, read, and had greater exposure than 'proper' history books.

I have found twenty-five history textbooks authored by twenty-two authors (see list on page 308–309). A closer look at their biographies shows what appeared to be, for the most part, a close-knit community and intellectual network of writers and educators who knew one another, worked together, studied together, shared the same ideals in most cases, and were partners in achieving the same goals. Their tight interrelations had a considerable effect on the widening shelf of history textbooks.

The best place to start is the Arab College. No institute had a greater effect on the production of history textbooks in Palestine. To be more accurate, the first six years under Totah's administration were a hothouse for the most productive group of authors. Totah can be seen as a 'Palestinian Yankee' for spending half of his adult life abroad, but he was also amongst the first Palestinians to acknowledge the pivotal role of education in Palestine's development and liberation.<sup>56</sup> Totah's inclination to 'smooth over the conflicts' with the British was part of his constructive Arab nationalism, an approach that did not undermine his ardent opposition to Zionism.<sup>57</sup> Totah's pioneering *The History of Palestine* was not only the most comprehensive work on the history of Palestine and the joint work of a Muslim and a Christian Arab, but the book reconciled religious strife in a bid for an all-encompassing Arab identity. *The History of Palestine* was the most belligerent anti-Zionist textbook to date, a fact that officially led to its banning by the government, but it also openly criticized the reshaping of the Middle East by Britain and France.<sup>58</sup>

While Totah headed Dar al-Mu'allimin (1919–1925), Darwish al-Miqdadi was the institute's charismatic 'inspiring' history teacher, in the words of Mahmud al-'Abidi. Nicola Ziadeh (1907–2006), an acclaimed Palestinian educator and intellectual, described Totah and Miqdadi as two of the three

<sup>55</sup> Edward Shils, 'Intellectuals'; The distinction between 'luminaries' and 'reproduction' intellectuals is based on Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam*, 89–90.

<sup>56</sup> Ricks, 'Khalil Totah'.

<sup>57</sup> Rochelle Davis, 'Commemorating Education'.

<sup>58</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 98–9. The anti-Zionist tone is argued as a reason for its ban. Bernard Wasserstein, 'Clipping the Claws of the Colonisers'; Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 157–9.

most influential teachers in the college: real men, patriots, and Arab nationalists.<sup>59</sup> Ziadeh taught in Acre for ten years (1924–1934) after graduating at the same time as Akram Zu‘aytir, who was working under Ahmad Khalifa, their district inspector. Ziadeh describes Khalifa as a wise man who was fond of reading. Their friendship, Ziadeh remarked, was based on their discussions and love of books.<sup>60</sup> Zu‘aytir was ‘Izzat Darwazah’s student in al-Najah; he recalls his teaching of the principles of nationalism, nationalist writing, and attending Darwazah’s historical plays performed in ‘nationalist clubs.’<sup>61</sup> Darwazah’s principal in his elementary school was Zu‘aytir’s great uncle, Sheikh Muhammad Zu‘aytir, who brought up Zu‘aytir’s father.<sup>62</sup> Zu‘aytir and Darwazah later became co-founders of the Istiqlal party. Zu‘aytir and Radi Abd al-Hadi were close friends, as teachers in Acre and Ramleh; they wrote each other letters discussing national issues and initiated mutual visits with their students.<sup>63</sup> Similar relations existed between ‘Abidi and Radi, who were headmasters in Safad and Nablus, respectively; both were rebuked after ‘Abidi collected donations from his students to help Radi’s school without the permission of the Department.<sup>64</sup> Overall, formally and bureaucratically, they were employed and supervised by the Department that served as a hub for co-inspectors such as Ruhi, Wasfi ‘Anabtawi, and Khalifa, or at the meetings of the committees of the Palestine Board for Higher Studies (PBHS) attended by Tamimi, Totah, Ziadeh, ‘Anabtawi, and others.<sup>65</sup> Finally, most of the textbooks printed in Palestine were published by two printing presses: Maṭba‘at bayt al-Maqdis and al-Maktaba al-‘aṣriyah, both established by another textbook author, Anton Shukri Lawrence (b. 1878), a prolific writer and polyglot, who taught Arabic at the Frères school prior to the First World War and at the Rashidiya school and the Cardinal Ferrari during the 1920s.<sup>66</sup> Thus almost all of the authors of textbooks not only knew each other personally but most likely were also friends, colleagues, and partners.

<sup>59</sup> The third being George Khamis: Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, vol. 1, 28–9; Davis, ‘Commemorating Education’.

<sup>60</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:165–6.

<sup>61</sup> Yoram Kahati, ‘The Role of Education’, 28.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Izzat Darwazah, *Mudhakkirāt*, 149.

<sup>63</sup> Zu‘aytir, *Bawākīr*, 33.

<sup>64</sup> See correspondence between Radi Abd al-Hadi to DIE, 26 February 1935. Farrell himself interceded and asked Radi to respect his superiors and change his conduct after the incident: Farrell to Radi, 27 February 1935. Farrell’s reproach worked, and Radi submitted a letter of apology to the DIE, and even went to his home personally to apologize: Radi to DIE, 7 March 1935, ‘Radi Abd Al-Hadi’, M1049/5, ISA.

<sup>65</sup> Further links between the members of this group can be found in their personal files at the Department of Education, ‘Mahmud Suleiman ‘Abidi’, M1026/8, ISA; ‘Radi Abd Al-Hadi’, M1049/5, ISA; ‘Ahmad Eff. Khalifa’, M1020/11, ISA; see also Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 81, and ‘PHBS, History Sub-Committee’, M2498/67, ISA.

<sup>66</sup> Ya‘qūb ‘Awdāt, *Min a‘lām*, 562–3.

Nablus stands out as a prominent starting point for Palestinian nationalism, but also as a cultural centre. Six of these authors were born in Nablus or in its vicinity, and they attended primary school there. The differences have to do with their opportunities to leave their hometown or village to pursue a more advanced education or a career by moving to the hustle and bustle of the big city. Darwazah (Nablus), Khalifa (Safad), and Barghuthi (Deir-Ghassaneh), for example, all studied or worked in late Ottoman Beirut. In the words of Tamari, they experienced a 'transition from a clear pride in local aristocratic privilege to the adoption of urban nationalist affinities and an urban lifestyle'.<sup>67</sup> By themselves in the big city, far from the confines and support of their family, new networks of affiliation gradually replaced the more traditional ones. This led to a much broader concept of the self. Rafiq al-Tamimi ceased to be a Nabulsi and became an Arab-Ottoman in the Ottoman school. Later he was to become an Arab intellectual in Paris, studying at the Sorbonne, and a member of secret Arab societies.<sup>68</sup>

There is no coincidence that Paris, however distant from the Arab world, was the venue for the first Arab congress, of which al-Tamimi and Darwazah, both from middle-class Nabulsi families, were active members. The two cooperated as central figures of al-Fatat. Tamimi's broad horizons, knowledge, and nationalist passion left a deep impression on the less-experienced and less-educated Darwazah.<sup>69</sup>

Some went further than Beirut and Istanbul; Shukri Ḥarami earned his BA at the University of Indiana; Ziadeh from University College London (UCL); Tamimi from the Sorbonne; 'Anabtawi from Cambridge; and most others had either graduated from the Arab College or the higher secondary Ottoman schools. Nevertheless, Totah was the only one to have had a postgraduate degree at the time he was writing his history textbook: he earned his MA in education from Teachers' College, Columbia University,<sup>70</sup> New York (Ziadeh was awarded his PhD from UCL in 1950). Ironically, the most popular textbooks (with the exception of Totah and Barghuthi's *The History of Palestine*) and the ones discussed in the literature were written by Darwazah, a self-made intellectual who did not complete his secondary education.

<sup>67</sup> Salim Tamari, *Mountain against the Sea*, 133–4.

<sup>68</sup> Avi Rubin, 'Falestin bi-shenot ha-milhamah'.

<sup>69</sup> Darwazah, *Mudhakkirāt*, 1:161–2.

<sup>70</sup> Totah earned his PhD at the same university in 1926.

A noticeable feature of this group of historians is their central role in the inception of Arab nationalism, first as soldiers in Faysal's army that entered Damascus, or as participants in the battle of Maysalun (Taysir Zubyan, 1901–1978), and later even as members of his government (Tamimi and Darwazah). These three, representing the older generation of authors, only wrote their textbooks after the failure of Faysal and their disenchantment with the collapse of the vision of Greater Syria. Khalil Totah was not present at Maysalun. However, he served in the Ottoman army for a few months (against his will) before the War. He managed to escape Palestine on the eve of the war, but volunteered to serve with the US forces as a YMCA secretary in France.<sup>71</sup> Totah worked towards the defeat of the Ottomans and Germans, and was loyal to his American 'hosts', but his primary concern was the future of education in Palestine, as highlighted in his 1919 article discussed in the Introduction. Education was their first choice; this preceded their political activism in later years.

The younger generation of authors, born at the turn of the century or a few years later, experienced the war as either children or young men, and witnessed what for them was the collapse of the old Ottoman house of cards that made way for a new one, heralding new possibilities. In the words of Ziadeh, they were the 'products of the First World War'.<sup>72</sup> They grew up on the eve of the new order that would dominate Palestine, with its centre in London. Like every new reality, adjustment and adaptation were critical for those who wanted to improve their relative social positioning. Radi, for example, was eight years old when the British entered the country. At some point in his teaching career, he decided to improve his English after his District Inspector of Education (DIE) reported to the Department on his 'ignorance in any foreign language'. He required proficiency in English for both developmental and instrumental reasons. The first had to do with his interest in becoming a better teacher and a better author, having mostly English history books as sources of reference. The second was his drive to climb the promotional ladder of the Department of Education.<sup>73</sup> Knowledge of English was more than an obligatory steppingstone in the colonial administration. It could also be a symbol of independence and capability under colonialism, a type of knowledge that often came with a form of performativity. Ḥarami, a graduate of the Anglican St George's school and later

<sup>71</sup> Ricks, 'Khalil Totah'.

<sup>72</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:66.

<sup>73</sup> See DIE's Report on Teaching Staff Member, 30 July 1931, 13 March 1932, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA.

the 'redoubtable' Headmaster of Madrasat al-Umma, resigned as a teacher in St George's, and founded the Nation College.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, when he addressed his students in public ceremonies, he chose to do so in English and not in Arabic, stating that his school was 'run on the lines of an English public school'.<sup>75</sup> For this group, English, in particular, and education, in general, meant social mobility.

Mobility was a prime commodity since none of these men were directly linked to a rich family; some were even poor. Ziadeh, for example, lost his father during the war, and his mother worked as a laundress during the war and was later unemployed.<sup>76</sup> Al-'Abidi, the grandson of the village's knowledgeable *kuttab* sheikh, was the son of a simple peasant, raised by his father's second wife after his mother passed away at a young age.<sup>77</sup> They represented the growing urban middle class, the advocates of modernity. They hoped to smash the old order, not only because this suited their idea of progress, but, primarily, because that meant greater chances of social repositioning, where their self-achieved cultural capital would count as much as being wealthy.

Akram Zu'aytir, who matured to become an ardent Arab nationalist, was an English teacher at the beginning of his career. His memoirs begin with the double tragedy of his father's death. 'Umar Zu'aytir was the mayor of Nablus and its representative in the Ottoman parliament and, hence, a central political figure. Upon his death, the family home was repossessed because of unpaid debts. Akram's older brother, 'Adel, who was educated in Paris, later lost the municipal election to Suleiman Tuqan, thus stripping the Zu'aytirs of their political influence and economic status. Zu'aytir was only sixteen when this story of riches to rags occurred, forcing him to quit law school at the AUB to become an 'ordinary' teacher under the British. In his memoirs, he proudly recalled passing the English exam to become an English teacher, and being appreciated by the new regime in which his father's credentials were no longer valid. This was why he repeatedly requested a scholarship from the Department that would allow him to study

<sup>74</sup> Walid Khalidi, 'On Albert Hourani'.

<sup>75</sup> *Palestine Post*, 16 July 1943.

<sup>76</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:59; Darwazah was the son of a shop owner in Nablus, whom he considered to be neither rich nor middle class but in between. However, when he returned to Nablus after the war, he only had a small sum of money. Because he refused to work for the English in the local post office, he tried his luck in commerce. His appointment as principal of al-Najah in 1921, only a year after he made his foray into business, suggests this attempt failed. Darwazah, *Mudhakkirāt*, 1:46, 48.

<sup>77</sup> Fawzī Ḥasan al-as'ad, *Maḥmūd al-'Abidi*, 3–4; 'Abd al-'Azīz Muḥammad Būrīnī, *al-'Abidi*, 49–56.

law in England or Scotland, before he became an Arab nationalist.<sup>78</sup> Zu'aytir first looked westward, and he internalized it as the proper trajectory a decade before he would become an Istiqlali.

But then again, Zu'aytir was not genuinely interested in teaching. After being appointed as a teacher, he recalls locking the door to his room and bursting into tears over his bitter fortune.<sup>79</sup> During his short career as a teacher, he kept asking the Department for permission to leave teaching to become a lawyer. 'Abidi had more patience. He waited seventeen years before asking to be reassigned to a post without direct education responsibilities. In his late thirties, he kept trying to find the loophole that would enable him to escape his predicament. Numerous incidents of slander and conspiracy concocted by the local community made it impossible for him to enjoy his job in Safad. Initially, he attempted to transfer to the Welfare and Probation Service, then to the Welfare Department in Haifa, and finally, to the Department of Antiquities (a job he took after the Nakba).<sup>80</sup>

In fact, all of the personal files of authors of history textbooks who worked under the Department that are accessible today tell the forlorn story of a group of men who felt used and abused, unappreciated, and most of all, lonely in their work. Radi requested permission to teach eight extra hours on Sundays in another school after being denied a pay raise, even though he was an appreciated headmaster of an important school.<sup>81</sup> In his letters to the Department, Radi wrote about the 'golden age' he had fostered in the Hebron Secondary School, a belief he shared with his superiors and the Hebron community. '[Does] not a man who devoted twenty years of his life...and has given full satisfaction to his superiors...' deserve to be paid accordingly? he asked his superiors.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Zu'aytir to DE, 15 December 1928, request for a scholarship to study law in Scotland 'Akram Zu'aiter', M1012/15 ISA.

<sup>79</sup> Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 14–6.

<sup>80</sup> See 'Abidi to DE, 2 June 1944, 12 September 1944, 'Abidi to Director of Social Welfare, 28 May 1945, 'Abidi to Chief Secretary Jerusalem, 18 November 1946, 'Abidi to DE, 1 January 1947, 'Mahmud Suleiman 'Abidi'.

<sup>81</sup> Radi was appreciated as an educator by the local communities as well. In Khan-Yunis, when rumour of his transfer reached the ears of the local notables, a mazbata was signed, arguing it would 'deprive their sons of an education' (*ḥirmān abnā' inā min thaqāfa*): The people of Khan-Yunis to DO Jerusalem, 11 April 1936, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA. When Radi planned to leave Hebron, al-Ja'abari, the president of the municipality, demanded he should stay: Mahmoud 'Ali al-Ja'abari, President of the Municipality Committee in Hebron to DoE, 19 July 1945, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/6, ISA.

<sup>82</sup> Radi to DoE, 20 November 1946, similar request in Radi to DoE, 27 January 1946, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/6, ISA.



Considering their unsatisfactory financial situation, publishing textbooks with a wide circulation and the likelihood of multiple editions might very well have been a major incentive for writing, although this was usually portrayed as a sacred national cause. As in the case of 'Abidi: 'I saw the libraries devoid of any outline of Arab history, and [...] I saw how impossible [the situation was for] Arab student who is deprived of a book he can use to learn about the history of his nation, as his loyal teacher would like....'<sup>83</sup> Thus, most books were published by private printing presses and in many cases, were connected to local bookshops.

The financial gain was not only the writer's; it also extended to an entire circle of beneficiaries. Bulus and Wadi' Sa'id, the owners of one of the main bookshops in Jerusalem (the latter being the father of the late Edward Said), paid 100 pounds, an impressive fee by any standard, to Totah and Barghuthi, for authoring *The History of Palestine*.<sup>84</sup> 'Abidi's book went through four editions; Abd al-Hadi's and Khalifa's books had three. This was a lucrative deal for the employees of the Department since the books were purchased in bulk by the Department and distributed free to students.<sup>85</sup> That was why most books stated they covered the Department's syllabus on their front cover (even when they did not). In some cases, the mass circulation of textbooks also involved political corruption, as mentioned by Ziadeh, when in the late 1920s, a history book was highly publicized, and it enjoyed mass circulation in both Palestine and Egypt because its author was a personal secretary of the Egyptian Prime Minister.<sup>86</sup>

Nevertheless, financial gain was not the sole reason behind the production of textbooks; it was simply not profitable enough. Personal ambition and the quest for cultural capital were probably more influential. 'Abidi was 31 years old when he published his first book. At the time he was a young, unappreciated principal who, according to his DIE, was a teacher with poor capabilities and as Headmaster 'had not the moral courage to point out to his staff their moral defects.'<sup>87</sup> Radi was considered a good teacher, but the DIE noted his 'inclination for noisy patriotism. He likes to make speeches, writes articles about things which he has not a fair knowledge of'.<sup>88</sup> Radi was twenty-six years old when his eight notebooks of manuscript were

<sup>83</sup> Al-'Abidi, *Tārīkh al-'arab*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> Barghuthi, *al-Marāḥil, tārikh siyāsī*, 260.

<sup>85</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 96–7.

<sup>86</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:172–3.

<sup>87</sup> See 'Abidi's Confidential Report on Teaching Staff, 27 July 1933, 6 September 1935, 'Mahmud Suleiman 'Abidi'.

<sup>88</sup> Confidential Report on Teaching Staff, 15 August 1932, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA.

returned to him with Farrell's rejection of his book on *The Kingdoms of Western Europe*.<sup>89</sup> Thus, publishing a textbook meant recognition from the Department, and becoming an active part in the production of knowledge within the system.

Perhaps these individuals perceived themselves more as intellectuals who were interested in the great chain of being and less in disciplining their teachers who came late for work, or in standing in front of an overcrowded classroom, teaching the same basic courses repeatedly to a reluctant crowd. Indeed, other less reluctant crowds were abundant.

These authors were very successful in finding ways to circulate their newly acquired knowledge. Formal education was only one way to hear of their ideas. History writing, history teaching, giving lectures, and broadcasting talks and lectures on the PBS (Palestine Broadcasting Service) were some of the ways out of the mundane world of noisy boys and the annoying ringing of bells.

The most 'modern' form of the dissemination of thoughts and ideas, and possibly becoming a celebrity (among those listeners who had access to a radio), was having one's own radio programme. The topics discussed varied, but it was clear that the speakers dealt primarily with the virtues of Western civilization, the encounter/clash between Arab and Western cultures, Arab identity, and Arab nationalism. 'Anabtawi, Khalifa, and Ziadeh broadcast their talks. The three were warmly embraced by the Department of Education and were sent on a full scholarship to study in the UK. For them, Europe was much more than a place. It was an idea, a concept, a method worth telling about and learning from. Broadcasts such as 'My impressions of the Institution of Education of London University', 'English people as I knew them',<sup>90</sup> and 'Paris, Eye Witness Account', were devised for this purpose.<sup>91</sup> The challenges of this encounter were also discussed in a series of talks entitled 'The Arab East and Europe'.<sup>92</sup> Broadcasting could also relate to nationalist topics, but it was dealt with cautiously, not explicitly, but through an academic filter such as book publications. A radio show on Constantine Zurayk's *On National Awakening* could be used as a platform to talk about the Arab national awakening on British radio.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Farrell to Radi, 25 April 1932, *ibid*.

<sup>90</sup> Broadcast by Khalifa in 1939–1940, *Palestine Post*, 3 March 1939, 21 March 1940.

<sup>91</sup> Broadcast by 'Anabtawi, *Palestine Post*, 21 January 1938.

<sup>92</sup> *Palestine Post*, 14 March, 11, 18 April 1940.

<sup>93</sup> Broadcast by Ziadeh, *Palestine Post*, 9 August 1940.

Another important medium was public lectures in the flourishing scene of cultural, literary, youth, and religious clubs.<sup>94</sup> Newspapers during the Mandate had specific columns devoted to lectures held in different clubs. These authors were active participants in this endeavour. 'Abidi asked for the day off from his teaching duties to give a lecture on Salah al-Din al-Safadi (d. 1362) in Jerusalem. Al-Safadi was 'discovered' by 'Abidi, who hoped to rescue him from oblivion because of his Palestinian origin. He would later write about al-Safadi and establish a society dedicated to his memory.<sup>95</sup> Zu'aytir, while still a teacher, founded a Muslim Youth Society in Acre (1928), where parties were held and lectures were given; Radi asked to become a member, as well, which required permission from his superiors.<sup>96</sup> Not even Radi's DIE could authorize his membership. Bowman himself gave the green light after the DIE assured him that the society had 'no political aim.' Radi and 'Abidi's correspondence with the Department illustrates the extent to which formal social engagements were delicate issues in the Department and required sensitive treatment.<sup>97</sup> Radi's bid worked, and he was later elected secretary of the association.

Upon his return to Palestine from London, Ziadeh was determined to work for the sake of his country; teaching history and geography were no longer enough. The clubs founded by Miqdadi and the vibrant intellectual and cultural experiences in London were sources of inspiration.<sup>98</sup> His personal contribution, according to his memoir, was giving lectures. These should not be seen as intellectual leisure time, but as a central social, political and cultural medium. Lectures were not given from an academic perspective; they put forward a vision, a trajectory for a society on the move. Crucially, when delivering these lectures, the speakers were far from the eye of Department officials. What could not be said in the classroom or under the auspices of the Department was reserved for these lectures. In a way, these authors discarded their loyal professional personas and, for a few hours, put aside their uniforms as mediators between the government and the people, which enabled them to interact face to face with their people.

<sup>94</sup> Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural*, 91.

<sup>95</sup> Mahmud al-'Abidi, 'Ṣalāḥ al-dīn al-ṣafadī, 1296–1362', *al-Minbar* 1, no. 2 (1 February 1947): 77–82.

<sup>96</sup> Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 25.

<sup>97</sup> See correspondence between Radi, his DIE, and Bowman on this issue: DIE Southern to Bowman, 7 May 1928; Bowman to DIE Southern, 10 May 1928, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA.

<sup>98</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, Vol. 2, 61; see also Ziadeh's lecture: Ideas and Ideals of Young Arabs-YMCA Renaissance Travellers in Syria YMCA, *Palestine Post*, 5 December 1944.

This is why the Shai kept its ears open to what was said in these lectures. A report on 'Abidi's lecture titled 'Safad 200 years ago' (April 1945) states that 'Abidi marginalized the role of the Jewish community in Safad by depicting them as a worthless minority, and added that 'Abidi 'is known to be an extremist'.<sup>99</sup>

However, the main medium for circulating ideas and especially intellectual concepts was the written press, local and national. During Al-Tamimi's tenure as Headmaster in Jaffa, he founded a literary-sports club and served as its chair. This club was used as a proxy by al-Tamimi for the publication of pamphlets about Arab and Muslim history, Western philosophy, Arab-Jewish relations, and the devastating effect of Zionism.<sup>100</sup> Anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish ideology was also expressed on the pages of *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif*. Taysir Zubyan, who taught at Rawda College for a short period, wrote that the Jewish population in Palestine had increased excessively (*fāḥish*) in recent times, had exploited the land's resources, and 'had the government in their grip' so they could do as they pleased. The Jews, he claimed, could establish schools, colleges, and societies because of their wealth.<sup>101</sup> This kind of explicit ideological writing was popular and possible for private institutions that were not under contract from the state. Under governmental supervision, a certain amount of tact and cautiousness was employed, combined with higher standards of academic writing.

Over the years, various articles on the teaching of history, archaeology, geography, and Arab, Islamic, and European history were contributed to the Arab College's journal by these authors. It was the most prestigious arena in the field of education in Palestine and is, therefore, an invaluable source since it was an official journal published under the aegis and scrutiny of the Department, and it represented the top institute of secondary and postsecondary learning (Bowman and Farrell themselves contributed to its issues). The *Majalla* was the Arab Palestinian parallel to a university journal, a space for its staff and graduates to publish their ideas and research. However, it should also be seen as a space where these frustrated and poorly paid educators expressed themselves and showed they had more in them than administrative skills. The topics that were chosen by these authors highlight their pedagogical perspective, intellectual influences, and worldview. The

<sup>99</sup> Arab Shai report, 9 April 1945, 105/73/47, HA.

<sup>100</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural*, 23–5.

<sup>101</sup> Taysir Zubyan, 'Al-madhāhib wa-al-adyān fī sūriyā wa-filastīn, al-yahūd', *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif* 2, no. 3 (1 January 1922): 72–3.

trajectory traced in their articles would later coalesce in their textbook writing in the years to come.

Numerous articles dealt with the role of technological, scientific, and geographic discoveries. One article recommends reading *National Geographic* magazine and describes its colourful photos with awe; another documents British air routes for aeroplanes.<sup>102</sup> British travellers like Captain Cook and Livingstone are exalted as heroes who pursued the scientific and humanistic calling of discovery, and were the saviours of the poor who brought advanced European culture to the savages.<sup>103</sup> The lifting of the veil (*kashf al-ghitā*) from the terra incognita (*majāhil*) and wilderness (*fayāfi*) are treated as the 'greatest victories of our era', and archaeological excavations in Palestine are admired for exposing new knowledge about the country.<sup>104</sup> While these articles often argue that Eastern discoveries preceded Western ones, they focus on the latter because they represent the current hegemonic power, and apparently were more attractive to them as scholars. Cook and Livingstone were more relevant than ancient Egyptians or even Arab travellers as role models. Although one article articulates the connection between their discoveries and imperialism, they are not criticized for representing an imperial interest but rather venerated for their devotion to science. Likewise, in 'Abidi's article about foreign archaeological sites in Palestine, they are not portrayed as an imperialist encroachment.<sup>105</sup> Quite the contrary, in one of his pleas to leave the headmastership for the Department of Antiquities, he noted that while touring the sites, he wrote a thousand pages of notes.<sup>106</sup> For 'Abidi, these sites unearthed truths about his country that had been hidden for years; he wanted to do just that and even more. Writing about Palestine's antiquity, as we shall see in detail in the next chapter, linked the spatial with the historical. Like the excavations in Egypt and the Pharaonic nationalism that ensued,<sup>107</sup> ancient Palestine and its glorious past emerged

<sup>102</sup> Both articles were translated from English, Totah's article from *National Geographic* and Ghunaym from the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Khalil Totah, 'Sūr al-ṣīn', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimin* 3, no. 6 (31 March 1923): 129–31; Husayn Ghunaym, 'Ṭuruq al-'ālam al-jawwīyah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah*, no. 4 (10 July 1938): 248–67.

<sup>103</sup> Radi Abd al-Hadi, 'Ṣafḥa min al-istikshāfāt al-jughrāfiyah' *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah* 10, no. 3 (10 May 1930): 42–53; Radi Abd al-Hadi, 'Nubdhah 'an istikshāf astrāliyah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah* 10, no. 4 (1 July 1930); Wasfi 'Anabtawi, 'Istikshāf al-qutbain', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah* 14, no. 2 (2 February 1934): 9–18.

<sup>104</sup> Husayn Ghunaym, 'Ummahāt al-istikshāfāt afriqiyyā', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah* 18, no. 4 (10 July 1938): 273–80.

<sup>105</sup> Mahmud al-'Abidi, 'Al-Insān al-qadīm fī filastīn', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabīyah* 13, no. 2 (15 February 1933): 23–7.

<sup>106</sup> 'Abidi to Chief Secretary Jerusalem, 18 November 1946, 'Mahmud Suleiman 'Abidi'.

<sup>107</sup> Israel Gershoni and James P. Jankowski, *Egypt, Islam*.

as a pertinent foundation for a particular Palestinian historicity. Ziadeh's articles in the journal *al-Muntada*, focusing on medieval or eighteenth-century Palestine that traced the advanced social, cultural, economic, or political life in the country under Islamic rule, gave further authority to Palestine's spatial and historic relevance.<sup>108</sup> Even in his late thirties, Ziadeh had garnered fame and recognition for his authorship and public lectures.<sup>109</sup>

In conclusion, this was a geographically small world of interrelations and affinities, an intellectual community of men of similar class and similar training, who tried to make the most of their careers as educators. Nevertheless, the inhabitants of this intimate world of authors, with their limited means of production, aspired to be men of the larger world and find a space for Palestine in it. As educators, writers, broadcasters, and lecturers, they aimed as high as they could and did as much as they could to bring the larger world closer to their students and community.



**Photo 7** School Staff, Friends Boys' School, 1930, (The principal, Khalil Totah, is seated second from the right).<sup>110</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Nicola A. Ziadeh, 'Filastīn fī riḥlat al-'uṣūr al-wuṣṭā', *al-Muntada* 1, no. 4 (1 July 1943): 6, 19; Nicola A. Ziadeh, 'Filastīn fī al-qarn al-thāmin 'ashar', *al-Muntada*, 25 May 1946, 7.

<sup>109</sup> *Filastīn*, 4 August 1945.

<sup>110</sup> *Madrasat frendz lil-ṣibyān*, Ramallah, 1930.



**Photo 8** Chaim Arie Zuta circa 1912.

Source: Wikipedia.

However, this motivation sometimes extended further than the local and intimate. The works and ideas of Palestinian educators made an impact across the region and beyond. Khalil Totah, for example, published in the Egyptian *al-Hilal* but also a book and articles in English.<sup>111</sup> Izzat Darwazah's 1924 textbook on Arab and Islamic history was placed on the curriculum of the Iraqi Ministry of Education.<sup>112</sup> As shown by Hilary Falb Kalisman, the constant movement of educators and pedagogical ideas between the Mandates established a network of 'transnational educators' who created and debated notions of 'transnational nationalisms'. Akram Zu'aytir and Darwish al-Miqdadi both stand out in this respect. Starting with their engagement with anti-colonial Pan-Arab debates and speeches as students at the AUB's *al-urwah al-wuthqa* club, their Arab history textbooks were used all over the region, and they provided a historical manifesto for the

<sup>111</sup> Barak A. Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism', 200.

<sup>112</sup> Weldon Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 54.



anticolonial movement in Iraq and Palestine.<sup>113</sup> Through their AUB education where they befriended students from across the region, their positions in Iraq and Transjordan, and their publications and lectures, this community of educators conveyed a message of particular Palestinian essence which nevertheless was one they considered to be pertinent to all Arabs.

### A Small World into 'Olam Qaton

The Jewish contemporaries of the Palestinian authors were similar in many ways but with some key distinctions. None of the nearly-thirty Jewish authors from this list (pages 310–311), born roughly between 1850 and 1910, were natives of Palestine. All but Abraham Avikzer (1866–1944), who was born in Tafilalt (Morocco), hailed from Europe, mostly from Czarist Russia, but later also from Germany and Hungary. Avikzer, who was educated in a *heder* and a Beit Midrash in Jerusalem (1870s), and Baruch Ben-Yehuda who completed his secondary education in Tel Aviv's Gymnasia Herzliya (1914), were the only ones educated in Palestine. Still, the earliest Hebrew history textbooks authored in the early 1890s, for Hebrew schools in Palestine and abroad, were written in Jerusalem. This first pre-First World War generation of authors paralleled the emergence of modern history textbook production in Arabic. Like the *Nahda* Arab intellectuals, these early Jewish authors were autodidacts imbued with graphomania, and modern-Hebrew enthusiasts who were engaged in massive translation projects, including children's literature, writing and editing in the Hebrew but also Yiddish press, and speaking and teaching Hebrew. Reading and writing for Hebrew journals enabled the establishment of a Hebraic republic of letters, which in a way compensated for the absence of national institutions.

Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and Ze'ev Yavetz (1847–1924), who separately authored the first history textbooks, were the founders of Va'ad ha-Lashon, the Hebrew Language Committee, along with the educator David Yellin and others. The two, along with the educator Yehuda Grazovski (1862–1950), a prolific author of Hebrew pedagogy, a four-volume history textbook (published in 1900), and the first modern Hebrew dictionary, and the educators and authors David Yudelevitch (1863–1943) and Yosef Meyuhav (1868–1942) were also known for insisting that their family members converse exclusively in Hebrew, probably their fourth or fifth spoken language.<sup>114</sup> Meyuhav

<sup>113</sup> Falb Kalisman, 'Schooling the State', 125–36.

<sup>114</sup> Haramati, *ha-Morim ha-halutsim*, 72–82; Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution*, 107; Assaf Yedidia, *Le-gadel tarbut 'ivriyah*, 46; Basmat Even-Zohar, 'Yetsirat ha-ma'arekhet', 364–5.



and Yellin were brothers-in-law, as both married the daughters of the prominent scholar and Rabbi, Yechiel Michel Pines. Yavetz married Pines's sister, making him part of the family as well. Meyuhav and Yellin were students and later colleagues of Ben-Yehuda, and the latter two were teachers and close friends with David Yudelevitch, who coauthored with Grafovski a series of Hebrew textbooks in the early 1890s.<sup>115</sup>

In January 1893, Grafovski, Ben Yehuda, and David Yudelevitch jointly edited the first Hebrew children's journal in Palestine. The author, Hemda Ben Yehuda, Eliezer's wife, offered to name it after a Russian children's journal, *'Olam Qaton*, 'Small World', and its declared goal was to 'amuse our children... teach them knowledge and plant love and the spirit of loyalty to their people and country (*'ammam ve-artzam*) in their hearts.'<sup>116</sup> In its one year of existence and only seven issues, *'Olam Qaton's* style, content, and writers were the reflection of the emerging community of Hebrew education enthusiasts. The short stories, poems, riddles, and useful surveys on agriculture and nature were written in a didactic tone aimed at creating a vivid engaging culture for Jewish children in Hebrew.

As was the case for the Arab authors, their primary education, especially in the first generation, was traditional; it began in the *heder*, followed by the Yeshiva, and continued to secular higher education far from home, in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. During his sojourn in Berlin in his early twenties, Zuta reported to the Hebrew Warsaw-based newspaper *ha-Tzifira* on the achievements of German Jewry. Zuta, born in Kaunas, Lithuania, was impressed with their ability to express their thoughts freely, set up organizations, and arrange public meetings, and he wrote with admiration about the lectures he attended on great Jewish personages. He contrasted these achievements with the waves of poor Jewish refugees from the East that arrived hungry and helpless in Berlin. The 'splendour' (*hadar*) of German Jews inspired the young educator, who believed that this convergence of East and West could only occur in Erets Yisrael.<sup>117</sup>

Proficiency in a Western language was essential to social mobility for Eastern European Jews, as well as for their Arab counterparts. For the Jews it was German, the key to the academic centres of Berlin, Frankfurt, and Vienna. Eliezer Rieger, who spoke and read Yiddish, struggled with his poor Polish in the Polish Gymnasium, while independently learning Hebrew, all

<sup>115</sup> Basmat Even-Zohar, 'Yetsirat ha-ma'arekhet', 36–44.

<sup>116</sup> *Haor*, 30 December 1892.

<sup>117</sup> *Hatzfira*, 3, 17–18, 21–2 June 1891, 18, 21–2 February 1892.

prior to enrolling in Vienna University.<sup>118</sup> Their sojourn in German-speaking Western Europe was their departure from the old and traditional. The new Jewish diasporic communities established by Russian and Polish Jews in Germany and Austria were fertile terrain for the absorption of new ideas and ideologies. Similar to the Arab authors, it was this encounter detached from their childhood surroundings that changed their attitudes towards the old and the traditional. It is worth noting that none of these Jewish authors studied in the UK or the United States, in contrast to the strong Protestant Anglophile education of their Arab counterparts.<sup>119</sup> In fact, the hegemony of German education over the Yishuv's intellectual culture was yet another reason for its unwillingness to cooperate or tolerate any form of pedagogical subordination to the British.

This German academic orientation is noticeable in the academic biographies of most of these authors. Moshe Auerbach (1881–1976), a pioneer in Hebrew education in ultra-orthodox schools, was the author of a history textbook for the Mizrahi trend in the 1940s,<sup>120</sup> and he earned his PhD from Strasburg University (1905). Jacob Katz (1904–1998), who authored textbooks for the Mizrahi trend, as well, and Nahum Glatzer (1903–1990), an outstanding student of Martin Buber, who taught at the Reali school in the 1930s and published a history textbook in the 1940s, were awarded their doctorates from the University of Frankfurt (1934, 1931, respectively).<sup>121</sup> Dr Avigdor Tcherikover (1894–1958), one of the founders of the History Department at the Hebrew University and the author of a number of history textbooks which were published in the 1930s and used for many decades, studied at the University of Berlin (1925), as did (ca. 1930) Dr Hans Lichtenstein (later Zvi Avneri, 1901–1967), who taught at several schools in Haifa and published a two-volume history textbook in 1939.<sup>122</sup> Rieger studied at Vienna University (ca. 1912), and so did (1917) Noah Hacham (1881–1950), one of the founders of the Mizrahi Teachers' Seminary in Jerusalem and the author of two history textbooks, as

<sup>118</sup> Ben Zion Dinur, *Benei-dori*, 177; Noah Hacham had a similar story: Mosheh Bar-Asher, Noah Hacham, and Yosef Ofer, eds., *Teshurah le-'amos*, 539.

<sup>119</sup> See for example Katz's admission of his poor English prior to his immigration to Palestine in Jacob Katz, *Be-mo 'enai*, 89.

<sup>120</sup> Kimmy Caplan, 'Ha-dor ha-rishon.'

<sup>121</sup> Glatzer took over Buber's position as head of the department of Jewish Religious Thought and Social Ethics at the University of Frankfurt in 1931, but fled Germany to Palestine after the Nazi rise to power: Nahum N. Glatzer, *The Memoirs*, 11–12.

<sup>122</sup> Prior to Berlin, Tcherikover worked under the great Russian historian, Robert Iur'evich Vipper, in Moscow.

well as Dr Isaac Brawer (1897–1961). Baruch Ben-Yehuda had a doctorate from the University of Brussels (1924) and Eliyahu Blank (1887–1955) studied at Budapest University (1913). Some attended rabbinic seminaries: five are known to be graduates of the Rabbinical and Teachers' Seminary in Vienna, and others from the Hildesheimer Rabbinical Seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, and the Higher Institute for Jewish Studies in Berlin. Born as of the 1880s, especially in Czarist Russia, they were young men when the spirals of violent anti-Semitism and institutional exclusion from the university began to exacerbate.<sup>123</sup> Glatzer, born in Lemberg (Lvov), recalled how in his German Gymnasium in Bodenbach (Podmokly) he was the 'official Jew'. 'I was enough of a Jew', Glatzer noted in hindsight, 'to realize that as a Jew you have to carry this burden of misunderstanding and take it without hitting back'. This kind of humiliation was one of the reasons that prompted him to establish a Jewish society to encourage the reading of Jewish thought and the presentation of progressive sermons. Later in Frankfurt, he would quit his Orthodox Yeshiva against his father's will, join a Zionist youth movement, and write for Zionist and Jewish periodicals.<sup>124</sup> Glatzer's Zionism, as a student of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, was that of Brit-Shalom. His short tenure as a teacher in the Haifa Reali school was perhaps related to what he considered the 'fierce nationalism' in Hebrew education.<sup>125</sup>

For these few thousand East European students, academic training in Western Europe did not only offer cultural capital in the form of an academic title. The relative freedom of political thought and expression made it possible to found student clubs and movements, and turned rabbinic seminaries and universities into centres of Jewish thought and debate over the present and future of European Jewry.<sup>126</sup> The West offered institutionalized scientific training and thought, and the East offered Jewish nationalism as a conduit for its validation. Zionism (or immigration) became an appealing alternative for the growing numbers of Jewish scholars with academic

<sup>123</sup> Katz, *Be-mo 'enai*, 36; This exclusion occurred in Poland as well, Ephraim Shmueli, *Ba-dor ha-yehudi*, 159.

<sup>124</sup> Glatzer, *The Memoirs of Nahum N. Glatzer*, 10–11, 44–6, 51. See also the film dedicated to the Glatzer's life story, directed by Prof. Judith Glatzer Wechsler: *I Am a Memory Come Alive*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCF7UtsKOAu>, accessed 12 March 2018. I wish to thank Prof Glatzer Wechsler for sending me the link to her film and for the information she shared about her father.

<sup>125</sup> Glatzer, 61.

<sup>126</sup> Noah Hacham, for example, got acquainted with Zionism only while studying in Vienna: Bar-Asher, Hacham, and Ofer, *Teshurah le-'amos*, 540.

accreditation who had been excluded from university positions. By the early 1930s, with its newly founded Hebrew University and an expanding Hebrew education system, Palestine seemed safer and with far better prospects than Nazi Germany.<sup>127</sup> These developments accelerated the expansion of the Yishuv's academic community. Especially from the 1930s onward, Hebrew schools benefitted from an influx of highly qualified refugee/immigrant academics with an urgent need of employment.

As we have seen, Totah was the only Arab author to have held a post-graduate degree while writing his textbook. By contrast, various Jewish authors had earned a PhD before writing their textbooks. Nevertheless, like the Arab authors, formal education did not necessarily mean popularity. Zuta, Isaac Spivak (1886–1977), and the acclaimed historian Simon Dubnow (1860–1941), whose books were widely circulated in schools and libraries, only had a basic traditional Jewish education with a smattering of informal higher education. Zuta spent only two years as an auditor at the University of Berlin (commonplace among Jewish scholars who were prevented from enrolling in universities because of the *numerus clausus* laws), although he was one of the most prolific writers for children in the pre-Mandate years and beyond.<sup>128</sup>

The second generation of Jewish authors, mainly those who worked as educators in Palestine during the Mandate period, grew up in a period when Zionist ideas and institutions of Hebrew education—although still representing a small minority—were considered a *fait accompli*. Before attending Zionist youth movements or Hebrew school in turn-of-the-century Rzeszów (today in Southern Poland), it was Shlomo Horowitz's mother who introduced him to Zionist ideology. As a small child, he recalled seeing her cry for the first time at the death of Herzl.<sup>129</sup> Fleeing with his family in 1914 from the Russian army to Vienna, the capital of the Empire, Horowitz's family apartment became a hub of activity for Hashomer Hatzair, and he and Eliezer Rieger (the president of the movement) were among its founders and leaders.<sup>130</sup>

Before his immigration to Palestine, Rieger headed the Yavne school in Łódź.<sup>131</sup> Ephraim Shmueli (1908–1988), who published two volumes of a history textbook in 1941, studied under Rieger's brother Shaul, who was the principal of a state recognized secondary Hebrew-Polish school in the same

<sup>127</sup> Myers, *Re-Inventing*, 34–9.

<sup>128</sup> Haramati, *ha-Morim ha-halutsim*, 105–16.

<sup>129</sup> Moshe Yaari-Wald, ed., *Sefer zikaron di-kehilat Risha*, 224–7; Aviva Halamish, *Me'ir ya'ari*, 25–6.

<sup>130</sup> *Davar*, 19 April 1954; Halamish, *Me'ir ya'ari*, 30, 33.

<sup>131</sup> Dinur, *Benei-dori*, 178.

city.<sup>132</sup> Baruch Walwehler (Avivi) and Nathan Perski, who coauthored a three-volume history textbook in the 1940s, met at the State Seminary for Teachers of the Mosaic Religion in Warsaw, another bilingual institution where an increasingly Zionist and Hebrew ideology was inculcated in the 1920s.<sup>133</sup> In these schools, along with the study of Polish literature, they read Ahad Ha'am, Bialik, and Tchernichovsky, and engaged in debates about the future of Jewish life in the Land of Israel or Europe.<sup>134</sup>

For others, Zionism was a clear departure from home. Jacob Katz came from an Orthodox background and grew up in a small village in Western Hungary. Brought up speaking Hungarian, Katz recalls his shift from Hungarian patriotism to Jewish nationalism while a student at the famous Pressburg Yeshiva in Bratislava, where he first encountered Hebrew authorship along with Schiller and Ibsen. His curiosity about Zionist thought gradually distanced him from the yeshiva, and he established a secret society for the learning of Hebrew, and published an article criticizing Hungarian Jewish orthodoxy.<sup>135</sup>

The story of Hans Lichtenstein represents a similar departure from home and family. The son of judge from Kyritz in north-eastern Germany, he grew up in a secular German family with little interest in Jewish tradition. Unlike Katz, who was drawn to Zionism because it symbolized the passage to a new world that was much more intriguing than the secluded Yeshiva, Lichtenstein's curiosity about Zionism converged with his rejection of Jewish assimilation in Germany. He went to a non-Jewish school and was expected to follow in his father's footsteps by studying law in Heidelberg and Königsberg. There, probably to his father's discontent, he joined the Jewish student's union and the Zionist youth movement Blauweiss. He later quit law school, left for Berlin, and switched to the study of Semitic languages in the university while studying at the Hochschule. He then worked on the Encyclopedia Judaica project and wrote his dissertation on the Scroll of Fasting. Zionism for Hans meant intellectual introspection, regaining

<sup>132</sup> Shmueli, *Ba-dor ha-yehudi*, 131–32, 165. This contrasted with the Tarbut schools that were widespread in Russia and Poland and offered a Zionist curriculum in Hebrew that was not recognized by the State. Joseph Marcus, *Social and Political History*, 145–62. Walwehler would later return to Kovel, his hometown, and teach at the Tarbut Hebrew Gymnasium, where he himself studied earlier under Leib Hazan (1891–1969), his teacher of Jewish studies in the 1920s, and later in Palestine, became a prolific author of children's literature and a history textbook.

<sup>133</sup> Alexander Guterman, 'ha-ide'ology ha-hinukhit shel ha-seminar', 44–59.

<sup>134</sup> Shmueli, *Ba-dor ha-yehudi*, 138–41, 152–7.

<sup>135</sup> Katz, *Be-mo 'enai*, 52–6.

what was abandoned by his father, whereas for Jacob, it was a ticket out of what seemed to him to be intellectual isolation. Both immigrated to Palestine shortly after completing their dissertations in Berlin and Frankfurt, in the 1930s.

Katz rushed to submit his dissertation in the spring of 1934, fearing the anticipated ban on academic Jewish life in Germany that came in the summer of that year.<sup>136</sup> In many ways, writing history either, academic or educational, was a personal answer turned collective. They used the scientific methods they learned from a world that rejected them as a mechanism of self-acceptance, proving to themselves and the world that their skills were still valid, that their story was worth telling. It was also a way to find a place for the culture they left behind, in most cases personified by their father whom they rebelled against.

There were also more mundane motivations involved. Writing history textbooks, for Jewish writers, entailed a financial incentive that clearly was an important factor for these educators, who in many cases were living on educational administrators' or teachers' salaries. School textbooks were promoted in the Hebrew press from the beginning, and advertisements for Grafovski's books, for example, appeared in the first issues of *'Olam Qaton* in the 1890s. Jacob Naftali Simhoni, one of Shmueli's history teachers, was a charismatic lecturer in Hebrew with a phenomenal memory, a gift that was in great demand since there were no history textbooks for Jewish history.<sup>137</sup> Simhoni confessed that his teaching position in Lodz and the writing of the history textbook he was commissioned to write distanced him from his academic work he was much more interested in. In Lodz, where he had moved to work as a teacher, he was far from the Berlin libraries and his own manuscripts. 'I hope', he wrote to a friend, 'that soon I will be able to leave here (Lodz) and return once again to a place of knowledge (*torah*), for there are no books or scholars here'. This intellectual exile, and what was for him a waste of precious time teaching history and writing history textbooks, was probably meant to respond to a dire financial need.<sup>138</sup> Katz, who worked as a teacher to make ends meet, mentions that he wrote his three-volume

<sup>136</sup> Akiba Gilboa et al., eds., *Mehkarim be-toldot 'am-yisra'el*, 3; Katz, *Be-mo 'enai*, 83–4. Ephraim Shmueli immigrated to Palestine after submitting his dissertation at Friedrich Wilhelm University, Breslau, in April 1933.

<sup>137</sup> Shmueli, *Ba-dor ha-yehudi*, 146–8.

<sup>138</sup> Quotes taken from letters sent by Simhoni to Israel Davidson, 1923–1925, *Tziyunim*, 21–2, 28–9.

history textbooks for the Mizrahi elementary schools to be awarded the prize offered by a wealthy contributor to the trend.<sup>139</sup>

Perhaps more telling were the career shifts taken by these men. Very few, if any, remained schoolteachers. This was true for both generations of authors. Grazovski abandoned his teaching job for a position at the Anglo-Palestine Bank, and Yavetz left Palestine for Vilna to work as a journal editor. During his early years in Palestine, Katz hoped to be appointed to a position at the Hebrew University. Dinur, who had a part-time position at the Hebrew University, told him that scholars did research in their spare time while teaching in high schools. This was obviously not satisfactory for Katz or the others, since the financial and intellectual prospects, not to mention the cultural capital provided by a university tenure track always seemed more desirable. Katz stopped classroom teaching and began his impressive academic career at the Hebrew University in 1949 as a part-time lecturer.<sup>140</sup> The same trajectory was true for Ephraim Shmueli, Rieger, Lichtenstein, and Nahum Glatzer, who left teaching positions for university positions in Israeli or American universities. Those who had no academic training left teaching for administrative jobs. Baruch Avivi became the head of Tel Aviv's Education Department.

Some remained loyal to their calling as teachers, sometimes because of their inability to find a 'better' job. Dr Noah Hacham, Dr Isaac Brawer, and Leib Hazan were all teachers until their retirement. One exception was Baruch Ben Yehuda, who returned to the Gymnasia Herzliya in 1952 after holding senior administrative positions, to become the school's principal, and he remained there until his retirement.

As in the case of the Arab College, several Jewish schools were seedbeds for writers. The Reali School in Haifa, a prestigious institution, was home to Isaac Brawer, Shlomo Horowitz, Nahum Glatzer, and Eliezer Rieger, who were history, Bible, and geography teachers along with other acclaimed scholars. Dr Arthur Biram (1878–1967), the legendary principal of the Reali, himself a graduate of Semitic and Islamic studies at the universities of Berlin and Leipzig, established the school along the lines of the German Realschule and recruited scholars of the highest (German) scholarly caliber.<sup>141</sup>

Similar to the Arab group, the Jewish authors did not limit themselves to their jobs as educators or bureaucrats in the different education institutes.

<sup>139</sup> Katz, *Be-mo 'enai*, 113–14.

<sup>140</sup> Katz, 103–4.

<sup>141</sup> Reichel, "Ofakim" mul 'hagshamah'; Ofer Ashkenazi, 'The 'Biramshule' in Context'.

The classroom or office fell short of meeting their intellectual and ideological desires. Spivak, for example, translated, co-edited, and wrote numerous volumes of stories and history books, as well as publishing articles.<sup>142</sup> Zuta wrote poetry for children, and the first sex education book in Hebrew (1909).<sup>143</sup> He had his own publishing house where he printed most of his books and, like Spivak, edited a series of readers for students.<sup>144</sup> Spivak, Rieger, and Tcherikover also hosted radio shows on Jewish history, education, and democracy in the ancient world respectively.<sup>145</sup> They also worked together in Yishuv institutions. Isaac Spivak, Baruch Ben-Yehuda, and Rieger, for example, were members of the executive of the Teachers' Council for the JNF.<sup>146</sup>

For the most part, their careers were characterized by great enthusiasm for authorship, education, and institutionalization of the Zionist and Hebrew idea. As we have seen, it was only natural that questions of capital and cultural capital troubled them, as well, sometimes even more than the Hebrew educational project. Writing history for children was a combination of both motivations.

## Possible Encounters

These life stories and the underlying twists of fate in their memoirs suggest a commonality of notions of faith and vision in both Arab and Jewish authors. Zuta's memoirs tell a story analogous to Darwazah's. Both were disenchanted with the traditional *heder* and *kuttab*. Zuta sought other directions after a spiritual crisis he experienced at the age of seventeen, when he realized his 'soul was empty'. The religious pathos that filled his heart, Zuta wrote, 'had faded away', pushing him to read secular and forbidden Hebrew literature.<sup>147</sup> Darwazah's description of his *kuttab* is filled with disdain for the derelict conditions, the dampness, the violence, and above all, the

<sup>142</sup> *Yalkut Zioni*, a Zionist anthology about the history of Zionism, its leaders, and institutions that he co-edited in the mid 1940s, *Davar*, 18 April 1945; for one of his articles, see, *Hapoel Hazair*, 22 August 1924.

<sup>143</sup> Uriel Ofek, *Sifrut ha-yeladim*, vol. 1, 151.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid*, 150–1; Uriel Ofek, *Sifrut ha-yeladim*, vol. 2, 586.

<sup>145</sup> For Spivak's broadcasts: *Davar*, 1 June 1944, 21 February 1947; Rieger's broadcasts, *Ha-mashkif*, 20 February 1946, 27 June 1945; Tcherikover's broadcasts *Palestine Post*, 21, 28 February 1940; *Davar*, 16, 23 June 1946 and 14 March, 25 April, 2 May 1947; *Al-Hamishmar*, 21 March 1947.

<sup>146</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 24 May 1927.

<sup>147</sup> Chaim Arie Zuta, *Bereshit darki*, 9–10.



'sheikh's limited intellect and knowledge'.<sup>148</sup> For Zuta and Darwazah, the Melamed or Sheikh manifested ignorance and confinement in the narrow corridor of tradition. For Zuta, the son of a melamed, this denunciation was a personal act of rebellion. The remedy they both embraced was the new model of the teacher who was steeped in tradition but never ceased in his quest for new knowledge.<sup>149</sup> Modern education was therefore the symbolic and the aesthetic negative of the *kuttab* or *heder*. The dark rooms had to be replaced by light, airy spaces; the Sheikh or Melamed had to make way for younger, more modern, educated, and dynamic teachers. Both educators, having skipped the steamroller of Western academic education, dedicated most of their works to a modern interpretation of traditional literature.<sup>150</sup> It was their way of reinventing a tradition that was more compatible and digestible for their vision of the new school.

Were the two aware of these similarities? As far as the records show, Zuta and Darwazah never met to discuss their similar pasts or shared visions for their peoples' future. The only recorded encounters between members of the two groups were in the PBHS meetings. These were professional meetings, and as such political issues were excluded from the minutes. However, politics sometimes managed to barge in more overtly.

At the height of the hostilities between Jews and Arabs, Farrell opened the twenty-second meeting of the PBHS (16 June 1938) commemorating Avinoam Yellin, a senior inspector of Jewish schools, a member of the PBHS, an orientalist and a fluent speaker of Arabic, who had been assassinated the previous October at the entrance to the Department of Education headquarters. Yellin's father, Prof David Yellin, attended the meeting, and so did Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi and Totah. The contextual setting leaves little room for doubt: the meeting room was charged with tension caused by over two years of civil strife. Symbolically, the first discussion was about adding the words 'and Syria' to the exam on the history of Palestine (a distinction Totah strongly objected in his history textbook).<sup>151</sup>

The Board continued to meet to the very last days of the Mandate. Rieger and 'Anabtawi were amongst the members of its final meetings. This was

<sup>148</sup> Darwazah, *Mudhakkirât*, 1:146; for more on Darwazah's *kuttab*, see Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 27–30.

<sup>149</sup> Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh*, 2:18; similar criticism regarding the 'ignorant shaykh' taking advantage of the fellah's ignorance was voiced by the prominent Egyptian intellectual Lutfi al-Sayyid: see Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism', 227–8.

<sup>150</sup> Haramati, *ha-Morim ha-halutsim*, 109–12.

<sup>151</sup> PBHS, Minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> General Meeting, 16 June 1938, PBHS, Minutes of General Meetings Vol. III, 1936–1940, M2498/73, ISA.

a rare recorded encounter between two writers of textbooks.<sup>152</sup> Already senior officials, both were also members of the History Sub-Committee for the Matriculation exams under the board. As late as the summer of 1947, the two were still debating the required periods that the history Matriculation exam should cover.<sup>153</sup> This might suggest their detachment from what was happening outside the Department, and the assumption that the Mandate was there to stay, or alternatively a preference for business as usual, since they had no other choice. In any case, as discussed in Chapter 1, this technical, instrumental forum never challenged the national divides. On the contrary, the Board embraced and consolidated these separations, not by oversight but by a face-to-face encounter with the other. What is so interesting in these protocols is precisely the fact that they are not interesting: there were no conflicts or arguments and no profound pedagogical debates, just a banality of bureaucratic boredom.

The biographies of most of these authors, Arab and Jews, tell a story of loyal nationalists, fully committed to their respective national stories. Writing it, in a way, also meant living it, underscoring exclusivities rather than similarities with other nations. Their biographies, ideologies, and historiographies were conceptually linked, but politically, they were completely detached. We shall see later on how this separation found its way into their writings as well.

### **‘Anabtawi and Miqdadi’s ‘New Arabs’**

The creation of a new man or a new woman was a central theme in all these national movements. As discussed in the Introduction, under colonial rule, the *new* was determined as a compromise or perpetual clash between what was considered the authentic and genuine in the *old* that was worthy of preservation, versus the foreign, unjust but advanced and strong occupier who was therefore a source of inspiration and possibly emulation. In relation to Mandate Palestine, the new Arab or the new Palestinian was a product of local cultural manufacturing, an unsolved puzzle where among other

<sup>152</sup> Rieger met ‘Anabtawi and Totah a few times in these meetings; see attendance lists, Minutes of General Meetings: 21 July 1942 (all three), 9 March 1944 (Totah and Rieger), 3 September 1946 (‘Anabtawi and Rieger), 11 November 1946 (‘Anabtawi and Rieger), PBHS, Minutes of General Meetings Vol. IV, 1941–1947, M2498/75, ISA. Totah and al-Tamimi attended earlier meetings of the board where they met notable Jewish educators and senior education officials: PBHS, Minutes of Meetings, 1923–1932, M2498/71, ISA.

<sup>153</sup> PBHS meeting, 3 July 1947, PBHS, History Sub-Committee, M2498/67, ISA.

themes, the golden age of Islam and Anglo-Saxon supremacy required integration into one straight line that paved the way for emancipation. Educators, unlike luminary intellectuals such as Taha Husayn or Muhammad Husayn Haykal, did not attempt or did not feel obligated to give a definitive answer to these questions. Instead, their writings offered a collection of choices, a montage of complementary and in some cases contradictory dispositions. Rather than talking about the new Arab, perhaps it is best to talk about their new Arabs.

These authors of educational history felt their calling was to invent or envision an image of the new Arab(s), writing him into history and turning him into an historical reality. The dichotomy between old and new transcended the cultural and civilizational. For these educators, both colonial rule and the state of their society undermined and challenged their mental and physical capacity, and manifested itself intimately in their praxis. The new Arab denied and rejected the present-day old Arab and his perceived stagnant and lethargic spirit. The subjects of this project were their students: the standard bearers of this vision. Something fundamental needed to change to achieve this goal to enable the new Arab to fulfil his destiny as energetic, resourceful and free; in a word, modern.

The reason why pupils should learn history, a 1944 history textbook proclaimed, was to be aware of their ancestors' virtues and greatness, 'their level of progress in comparison to other peoples, their natural 'talents' (*mawāhib*)... this is how [we can restore the former Arab glory, and become like the advanced peoples (*al-shu'ūb al-rāqīyah*)]'.<sup>154</sup> This preface reflects what Heather Sharkey described as the struggle to indigenize modernity, to become part of a larger global community of Arabs and enlightened peoples in general while cultivating the particular and locally 'authentic' on which national identity must rest.<sup>155</sup> These writers perceived their current backwardness and weakness as a temporary disability that could be remedied. Different educators had different interpretations and concepts regarding the best method for the creation of the new Arab.

Two educators-authors in particular put forward strikingly different solutions articulated not only in their writings but also in their personal careers and biographies. Their different paths are characteristic of the dialectical nature so inherent to the modernizing project of the creation of the

<sup>154</sup> Salim Ḥadhwah, *Tārīkh al-ummah al-'arabīyah qadīman wa-ḥadīthan* (Jerusalem: Maktabat filastīn al-'ilmiya, 1944), 4.

<sup>155</sup> Heather J. Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*, 7–11; Lucie Ryzova, *The Age of the Efendiyya*, 3.

New Arab. Wasfi 'Anabtawi (b. 1903) and Darwish al-Miqdadi (b. 1899) were both influential educators, both born fairly close to the turn of the century to Sunni families. Miqdadi, after completing his elementary education in Tulkarm, was sent to Beirut to study at the Jam'iyyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya school (Maqasid Islamic benevolent society, est. 1878), a centre of modern Arabic and Islamic thought.<sup>156</sup> 'Anabtawi completed his elementary education in Nablus and his secondary education at the Anglican Men's College, where he was taught by the famous educator Nakhle Zurayk. Later, both obtained their BA from the AUB, 'Anabtawi on a government scholarship, at the same age in 1922 and 1926. 'Anabtawi proceeded to Cambridge, again on a government scholarship, where he read History and Geography for his second BA. Later, both were appointed to Palestine's most prestigious schools as teachers of history and geography.<sup>157</sup> Finally, both produced textbooks that were used in Palestine's schools and the rest of the Arab world.

The biographies of 'Anabtawi and Miqdadi, however, differed dramatically. While the former remained a loyal employee from the onset of the Mandate until its dissolution, taught in its prestigious institutions, and became a central figure in the Department of Education, the latter only lasted three years as a teacher at the Men's Elementary Training College. Still, Miqdadi's short and frustrating career as a history teacher did not undermine his heritage as one of the most influential educators in Mandate Palestine. His charisma and dedication during the electrifying early years of the institute echo in the memoirs of his students and in the annals of the College.

In 1925 Miqdadi resigned from the Department after a dispute over the establishment of an independent Arab scout group in the College. In his letter to Bowman, Miqdadi stressed the need for an Arab Scout group under an Arab flag like in the Jewish schools, one that was not aligned with the English movement of Baden-Powell which in his opinion was foreign and colonialist in spirit. Bowman, the head of the Palestine Scouts, objected to the idea of a quasi-militant anti-British movement in the College and Miqdadi resigned.<sup>158</sup> Miqdadi did not oppose the Scout movement as such and in fact was enchanted with the ideals of scouting (uniform, flags, hiking, and camping), however 'foreign' and 'colonialist'. But Miqdadi wanted an Arab

<sup>156</sup> Nadia Sbaiti, 'If the Devil Taught French'.

<sup>157</sup> Ya 'qūb al-'Awdāt, 'Darwish al-miqdādī'; Ya 'qūb al-'Awdāt, 'Wasfī 'Anabtawī'.

<sup>158</sup> A copy of the letter was published in *al-Itihad al-'arabi* on 30 April 1926; Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm, *Dār al-mu'allimin*, 60–1.

Baden-Powell, and what worried him was the symbolic package of the youth movement; he wanted to have the autonomy to shape it in his own way.<sup>159</sup>

At first glance, the pedagogy of 'Anabtawi and Miqdadi appear to be diametrically opposed. After all, one was an Anglophile who climbed the ranks of the colonial administration, while the other revolted against the British. His reluctance to play by colonialist rules turned him into a fugitive, his ideology uprooted, seeking refuge under distant patrons. However, looking beyond these differences can point to the ambivalent nature of the modernist discourse and reveal the similarities and space of analysis, praxis, and vision both educators shared.

To start with, their pedagogy derived from their refusal to limit their gospel to the classroom alone. Miqdadi wanted to start a scout movement, took students on long hikes in their free time, and engaged in informal and spontaneous discussions with them after teaching hours. While Miqdadi's pedagogy was holistic, incorporating body and soul, 'Anabtawi chose to kindle his students' imagination with his PBS broadcasts, where he told them first-hand about *Paris - an Eye Witness Account* or the *People of the World*.<sup>160</sup> 'Anabtawi, noted one of his students, 'opened amazingly broad spatial horizons'.<sup>161</sup> Using the methodology they each saw fit, whether by exploring their physical surroundings and discovering their ties to the soil or by hearing about enchanting distant places, the two sought to shake their students out of their localized comfort zone, the prime cause for the stagnation of the old Arab.

The negative image of the 'old' is clearly illustrated in their writings in the College journal. 'Anabtawi's articles focus on civilizational progress, and emphasize the Ancient East as the initiator of this process.<sup>162</sup> Linking the two civilizations ensured not only the Arab place within the Geist of modernity, but also a space for the new Arab in the revival of what was once his.

<sup>159</sup> Miqdadi was exiled to Iraq and taught at Dar al-Mu'almin al-'Aliyya (Higher Teachers' College) in Baghdad until he was expelled for his part in the Rashid Ali al-Gaylani coup d'état. Miqdadi's scout movement did not coalesce until he moved to Germany (1936–1939), where he founded a pro-Nazi Arab Youth movement. According to British intelligence, Miqdadi toured Europe with this group in an attempt to mobilize Arab youth to support the Nazi cause. Reeve S. Simon, 'The Teaching of History'; see also in Taysir Jabārah and Sa'id 'Abdulla al-Bishawi, *A'lām filastīn*, 107.

<sup>160</sup> *Palestine Post*, 29 October, 12 November 1936, 27 January 1937.

<sup>161</sup> Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā, *The First Well*, 162–3.

<sup>162</sup> Wasfi 'Anabtawi, "Alāqat al-tārikh wa-al-jughrāfiyā fī ḥawḍ al-baḥr al-abyaḍ al-mutawassit", *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 12, no. 4 (10 July 1932): 39–50; Wasfi 'Anabtawi, "Tārikh al-istikshāfāt al-jughrāfiyah", *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 11, no. 3 (10 June 1931): 39–43; Wasfi 'Anabtawi, "Tārikh al-istikshāfāt al-jughrāfiyah", *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 11, no. 4 (15 July 1931): 24–31.

'Anabtawi thus saw a connection, rather than rupture, between the Arabs and the West, a connection that will be examined in depth later on.

Miqdadi's writings, however, constitute a mournful portrayal of present Arab realities. He warns that a 'desperate, miserable nation despised by its sons is doomed to failure, humiliation and abasement', and stresses that the knowledge of its history of strife, chaos, selfishness, and tribalism could help solve the current problems of Arab society.<sup>163</sup> Miqdadi's Arabs prefer a tortoise-like gait over speed and development as though the Earth 'did not revolve around the sun and its axis, but centred on the ox's horns... we live in the twentieth century BC while they [the West] live in the twentieth century AD'.<sup>164</sup> Miqdadi clearly adopted a patronizing and highly critical gaze of his people, making him what might be seen as a 'self-hating Arab'. 'Anabtawi reconciled this so-called 3000-year gap by simply overlooking it. In his geography books, inspired or directly copied from American or British textbooks, the original protagonists, American or British travellers become the new Arabs who go out to discover the world, and the gap is bridged by a quantum leap.

Amin is one of those new Arabs in a book coauthored by 'Anabtawi: a diligent child travelling on a plane with his father the aviator to distant places in the world, so he can learn more about other cultures, all of which are equal as Amin's father tells him: 'Of course my son... their children are like our children, they like what we like and hate what we hate'.<sup>165</sup> The story of Amin and his father is an adaptation of an English geography textbook, the major difference being that in the original version, the protagonists are a man accompanied by the 'moon man'.<sup>166</sup> Father and son, two generations that represent knowledge and empowerment in a much more explicit way than the enigmatic 'moon man' and his companion. The Arabic version sought to personalize the journey by empowering its protagonists, and turning them into the makers of the(ir) story. The pedagogical relationship between father and son articulated a notion of national kinship that promoted a strong desire for the global while maintaining firm ties to the local.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Darwish al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah al-'arabīyah* (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-ma'ārif, 1932), i.

<sup>164</sup> Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Al-Sur'āa fī al-gharb wa al-tānī fī al-sharq', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 5, no. 1 (30 September 1924): 16–20.

<sup>165</sup> Sa'id al-Sabbagh, Wasfi 'Anabtawi, Abdallah Mashnouq, Jūrj Shahlā, and Khaled al-Hashemi, *Al-Jughrāfiyah al-ḥadīthah al-muṣawwarah* (Beirut: al-Kashshāf, 1935), 4.

<sup>166</sup> James Fairgrieve and Ernest Young, *Human Geography by Grades, Children of Many Lands* (New York: Appleton, 1923).

<sup>167</sup> Jacob, *Working Out*, 64.

Amin flies with his father to discover the world; his first stop is the desert, where he plays with Arab Bedouins. They are not portrayed as his brethren, but as subjects of interest. He looks at them the same way he will later look at the Sudanese, Pygmy, Eskimo, and Indian [Native American] children. The noble features attributed to the Bedouin Arabs, such as hospitality and peacefulness, are more anthropological than nationalist.<sup>168</sup> The most noticeable difference has to do with their encounter with the Bedouin schoolmaster (who is absent from the English version).<sup>169</sup> It was essential for 'Anabtawi and his coauthors to include a source of authority, a teacher, in the story. The teacher narrates a tale about a camel who wants to enter a Bedouin's tent during a freezing night, gradually convincing him (first the head, then the neck, and so on) to let him in while the hospitable Bedouin agrees, until he is finally kicked out of his own tent. In the English version, the story was an allegory on human selfishness,<sup>170</sup> whereas the translation focused on the generosity of the Arab, a virtue that led him to lose his home. Abu-Amin concludes the story by stating that 'this story, even if not true, is not devoid of a lesson to a reasonable/wise nation (*qawm ya'qilun*).'<sup>171</sup> The story clearly allude to the dangers of colonial rule and Zionism and the acute threat of losing their home or homeland. This explicit allegory is combined with the more nuanced national, even political overtones to the universalist values promoted in the book. At the end of the journey, Amin concludes that the Arab children were the 'closest to his heart'.<sup>172</sup>

Miqdadi's Arabs are unique and have distinctive features that can be traced to the pre-Islamic era; namely, the hospitality, altruism, pride, and gallantry that were each featured in a story.<sup>173</sup> Yet, for Miqdadi, these features were not mere nostalgia, but were meant to march the Arabs out of the desert and back into history. Miqdadi's closing paragraph of *The Arab Nation* calls for the unity of all Arabs 'just like Germany, America, [and] Italy', that united and achieved independence. The present state of social fragmentation with its local traditions, knowledge, and politics is a feature of primitiveness. Unity is cultivated by rationality, one truth that fits all. Muhammad in this context is not depicted as a prophet but as an Arab Bismarck, Washington, or Garibaldi, who was able to unite the Arab nation.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Al-Sabbagh et al., 25.

<sup>169</sup> Al-Sabbagh et al., *al-Jughrafiyah al-ḥadithah*, 1:22.

<sup>170</sup> Fairgrieve et al., 91–94.

<sup>171</sup> Al-Sabbagh et al., 1:25.

<sup>172</sup> Al-Sabbagh et al., 1:116.

<sup>173</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*; Akram Zu'aytir and Darwish al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkhunā bi-uslūb qīṣaṣī* (Jerusalem: Maktabat al-Andalus, 1937), 44–52.

<sup>174</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*, 520.



رجل من الاقزام وبجانبه أبو أمين

**Photo 9** Abu-Amin and a Pygmy man. An illustration from *Al-Jughrāfiyah al-ḥadīthah al-muṣawwarah* (Beirut: al-Kashshāf, 1935).

The sources employed are another case in point. In ‘Anabtawi’s case, most of his authorship is either predominantly influenced or directly copied from American or British textbooks. A close reading of Miqdadi’s book reveals that the framework of his Arab nationalism is delineated by the Orientalist scholarship of the time, rather than classic Arab scholarship. The most basic Islamic or ‘Arab’ ideas are taken from what Miqdadi would call colonialist literature: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (from which, for example, the description of the tribe of Quraysh is taken),<sup>175</sup> S. H. Longrigg’s *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *Four Centuries of Modern Iraq* (1925), written by a British bureaucrat in Iraq, who later headed the Iraqi Petroleum Company, and the British Colonel Harold F. Jacob’s *Kings of Arabia* (1923).

Miqdadi used Western superlatives to describe the virtues of the Arab nation, citing Philby’s findings in his *The Heart of Arabia* (1922) that in Antiquity the Arab Peninsula was inhabited more then, than now, by civilized people (*qawm mutaḥaḍirūn*). Jurji Zaydan’s *Islamic Civilisation* and *The Arabs before Islam* are Miqdadi’s most widely used sources, more than any other Western source. But Zaydan, although symbolizing the Arab *Nahda*, refused as an historian to base his arguments on the Qur’an and traditional sources, depended on European orientalists in his works,

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.*, 32.



and was targeted by other Arab scholars for that reason.<sup>176</sup> It is evident that Miqdadi, like 'Anabtawi felt closer, more confident, and secure with modern scholarship.

'Anabtawi perceived geography as an emancipatory discipline, and mostly wrote about 'the world'. In one of his translated geography textbooks, he replaces the travelling group in the American version with an Arab merchant. This is 'Anabtawi's role model, who like him, utilizes and appreciates his knowledge of a fascinating world. The Arab merchant or the child and his father are already part of modern society, and in his literature, they are treated as equal to the West. 'Anabtawi's scholarship, although cognizant of the distance between East and West, situates the Arab student on the path to progress. Miqdadi chooses to focus on Arab-Muslim warriors because his total disenchantment with the current Arab reality forces him to look a thousand years back; he finds inspiration only in what is long gone.

### Historiography and the Other

As of the nineteenth century, modern Arab and Jewish historians were deeply engaged with the history of Jews and Judaism or Islam and Muslims, respectively, as a religious collectivity. Whether appearing as an absolute/enemy Other or a neighbour Other, to borrow Emanuel Levinas' terminology,<sup>177</sup> Jews and Arabs were used interchangeably in this historiography to underscore the virtues of the Arabs/Muslims or Jews. Until the Mandate period, these historiographies were characterized by myriad performances of Arab-Jewish relations that were used as examples of religious inclusiveness and tolerance, highlighting the universalist attributes of both peoples. These attributes were not abandoned all at once during the Mandate, but the role of Arab-Jewish relations as one of its articulations was. The political implications of Arab or Jewish otherness, influenced by a direct encounter, became more acute. It became a distinction that was designed to delineate, separate, and distance the Other that symbolized a current and, therefore, a historical threat. From its inception, the Zionist-Arab conflict impacted both the Hebrew and the Arab production of

<sup>176</sup> Yoav Di-Capua, *Gatekeepers*, 38–41, 43; see Zaydan's lengthy description of non-Arab sources in contrast to classic Arabic literature in: Jurji Zaydan, *al-'Arab qabla al-islām* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Hilāl, 1908), 21–8.

<sup>177</sup> Lajos L. Brons, 'Othering, an Analysis'.

historical texts and reshaped its superstructure. In other words, the conflict literally changed history.

These Arabic and Hebrew national history textbooks dealt with the history of a people rather than that of a country, thus producing an exterritorial historiography that was not confined to geography but to what was perceived to be an organic evolving state of nationhood.<sup>178</sup> This implies that it is not sufficient to analyze intercultural encounters in Palestine alone, but rather to chart description of the Other through these histories; in other words, how encounters between Arabs/Muslims and Jews were recounted in history textbooks.

In his German magnum opus on Jewish history, Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891) idealized the relationship between Jews and Arabs. Jews under Islam experienced a long period of ‘interfaith utopia,’ a civilizational golden age. Islamic tolerance for the Jews was contrasted with the realities of persecution and humiliation under Christian rule. Graetz’s utopia was meant to serve a political end. In mid-nineteenth-century Germany, it highlighted what can be achieved when complete equality and cultural emancipation were granted to the Jews. It also underlined the cultural superiority of Sephardic Jews, who were championed for their rationality, moral strength, courage, and aesthetics, an ancestral role model that matched the German’s own perception or vision of the self.<sup>179</sup>

This historiography emphasizing cultural affinities demanded the incorporation of Arabic sources in the writing of Jewish history, and consciously rooted Jewish thought and texts in a dynamic and inclusive ambience. Graetz discusses how beneficial knowledge of Arabic, the Qur’an, and Muslim philosophy was for Jewish thinkers.<sup>180</sup> Dubnow and Yavetz, whose multi-volume histories of the Jewish people were published decades after Graetz’s, adopted his favourable view. Dubnow wrote about Judeo-Arab culture, the active role of Jews in the Arab renaissance, and the racial and linguistic affinities between them.<sup>181</sup> Yavetz wrote about the wellbeing and comfort the Jews experienced under Arab rule and the great respect Muslim rulers

<sup>178</sup> Firer, *Sokhnim shel ha-hinukh ha-tsiyoni*, 131.

<sup>179</sup> Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 3–4.

<sup>180</sup> See for example, Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Vol. 3 (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1902), 149, 224, 253, 255, 264.

<sup>181</sup> Simon Dubnow, *Divre yeme ‘am ‘olam: me-reshit heyot ha-‘am ‘ad saf millhemet ha-‘olam ha-sheniyah*, Vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1955), 717–18, 720–22, 732, 742, 743, 791, 917.

had for the Jews, shown, for instance, by appointing them to the highest positions.<sup>182</sup>

In lockstep, early Hebrew textbooks and Arab sources glorified these relations.<sup>183</sup> The educator, translator, and publicist Menachem M. Bronstein (1858–1944) authored a four-volume history textbook based on Graetz's work in the 1890s. Under Arab rule, he wrote, the Jews 'awakened into a new life under a dawning righteous sun (*Shemesh zedaka*)'.<sup>184</sup> In his textbook, Yavetz depicted the Arab nation as a 'brother to Israel', and Eliezer Ben Yehuda wrote about the 'Jews [as] allies of the Arabs' (*Ha-yehudim ba'alei brit ha-aravim*).<sup>185</sup> By contrast, in 1944, Baruch Ben Yehuda's textbook articulated a different tone: 'the true destruction of [the land of] Israel was caused by the Arab rule of the country. All their years of rule were one chain (*shalsholet*) of perpetual wars between kings, rulers and tribes who demolished the country and emptied it [of its Jewish inhabitants]'.<sup>186</sup>

Thus, during the Mandate period, the superlatives or nostalgia gave way to a more monolithic exclusivist national narrative. Hebrew sources—still borrowing from Graetz, Dubnow, and Yavetz—mentioned the cultural and spiritual prosperity in Andalus but stressed the spiritual and ethnic divisions between Jews and Arabs.<sup>187</sup> Some textbooks emphasized the Jewish integration in Arab culture,<sup>188</sup> but the stress was on the particularities of Hebrew poetry rather than the prolific Jewish authorship in Arabic, as proto-Zionist reactions to the unnatural (unhistoric) diasporic life. For instance, the great poet and philosopher Judah Halevi (1075–1141) was

<sup>182</sup> Ze'ev Yavetz, *Sefer Toldot Isra'el*, Vol. 9 (London, 1922), 82–3.

<sup>183</sup> Suleiman Bustānī, Najib Bustānī, and Nasib Bustānī, *Kitāb dā'irat al-ma'ārif wa-huwa qāmūs 'amm li-kull fann wa-maṭlab*, vol. 11 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-hilāl, 1900), 672–3.

<sup>184</sup> Menahem Mendel Braunstein, *Sefer divre ha-yamim li-vene yiśra'el*, Vol. 2 (Yarsha: Aḥi'asaf, 1904), 83.

<sup>185</sup> Ze'ev Yavetz, *Sefer Divre ha-yamim le-'am bene Yiśra'el* (Yarsha: Defus ha-Aḥim shuldberg, 1894), 60–1; Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, *Divre ha-yamim li-vene yiśra'el be-galutam* (Vilna: Y. Raznikovski be-'ir Slonim, 1912), 57, 70–1, 80–97; Yitshak Y. Inditski, *Historiyah [sic] 'ivrit* (Kračo: E. Tiškotsinski, 1905), 105–7; Israel Belkind, *Divrei yemei ha-'amim*, Vol. 2 (Yerushalem: ha-Hashkafa, 1901), 46–7; See also: Alexander Z. Rabinowitz, *Toldot yiśra'el. Histōriyah metsuyeret le-yalde yiśra'el* (Yarshah: Tushiyah, 1913), 7, 53–4. Rabinowitz's earlier textbook is more ambivalent towards Jewish–Arab relations: Alexander Z. Rabinowitz, *Toldot 'am yiśra'el me-reshit yamay 'ad ha-yom ha-zeh*, Vol. 2 (Yarshah: Tushiyah, 1897), 70–5, 82–5, 91, 118, 120 and Vol. 3, 24–5.

<sup>186</sup> Baruch Ben-Yehudah, *Toldot ha-tsiyonut: tenu'at ha-teḥiyah yeha-ge'ulah be-Yiśra'el* (Tel Aviv: Masadah, 1944), 32.

<sup>187</sup> Ephraim Shmueli, *Demuyot u-me'ora'ot be-toldot 'amenu shi'urim be-histōriyah 'ivrit* (Tel Aviv: Ts. Linman, 1940), 19.

<sup>188</sup> Shlomo Horowitz, *Ḳitsur toldot yiśra'el*. Vol. 1 (Haifa: Bet ha-sefer ha-re'ali ha-'ivri, 1936), 1–5.

recast as a 'national poet' whose heart 'was burning with a sacred love for the land of Israel'.<sup>189</sup>

In Arab textbooks, Jews are marginal or absent from the Andalusian golden age.<sup>190</sup> When mentioned, they underscore the role of Islam as a protector of the Jews, unlike Christian persecution, and as the main catalyst for Jewish prosperity.<sup>191</sup> Miqdadi's comprehensive survey of the Andalusian 'Arab paradise',<sup>192</sup> for example, does not include any Jewish figures or discuss their central cultural and political roles during that era. His sources for the period, though, namely the famous seventeenth-century account of Al-Maqqari (1577–1632) and the Dutch orientalist Reinhart Dozy (1820–1883), both drew attention to Muslim–Jewish cooperation and local Jewish agency.<sup>193</sup>

The possible educational value of a comparison was neglected for obvious national and pedagogical reasons. In both narratives, stressing the virtues of cultural assimilation and productive cooperation clearly compromised the exclusive ethnic paradigms. In the Zionist narrative, the prosperity of a diasporic community inextricably connected to a Jewish adoption of the Arabic language contradicted the foundations of Zionist ideology. In the Arab narrative, exalting the contribution of 'non-Arabs' to the zenith of Arab civilization could overshadow or challenge the national exclusivity of these achievements. The loss of Andalus was also presented as an exclusive collective tragedy directly linked to the present: 'and we lost a beautiful country that could have remained ours...' if only our ancestors had cooperated against the Catholics (Europeans).<sup>194</sup>

The contextualization of these texts exposes further layers in their political and ideological orientations. Ernest Renan classically argued for necessary

<sup>189</sup> Baruch Ben-Yehudah, *Toldot ha-tsiyonut*, 32–3; Chaim Arie Zuta and Isaac Spivak, *Divrei yemei 'amenu, helek sheni, sefer alef* (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1932), 75–6; Simon Dubnow, *Historiyah yehudit li-yeladim: 'im mapot, temunot ve-tsiyurim*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1936), 23; Zvi Lichtenstein, *Shi'urim be-divre-yeme-yisra'el*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1939), 14–16; Shlomo Horowitz, *Qitsur toldot yiśra'el. Vol. 1* (Haifa: Bet ha-sefer ha-re'ali ha-'Ivri, 1936), 9; Jacob Katz, *Yiśra'el ve-ha-'amim. Vol. 2* (Jerusalem: Sifre Tarshish, 1946), 119–27.

<sup>190</sup> 'Izzat Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārikh al-mutawassiṭ wa-al-ḥadīth* (Haifa: al-Maktaba al-waṭāniyah al-'Arabiyya, 1933), 83–5; 'Anabtawi and Ghunaym, *al-Mujmal*, 48, 51–2; al-Tamimi, *Tārikh ūrūbā al-ḥadīth*, 12–13; Ahmad Khalifa and Radi Abd al-Hadi, *Tārikh al-mamālīk al-'arabiyyah* (Jerusalem: Maktabat al-Andalus, n.d.), 85–92; Farah's textbook is an exception in his description of Jewish persecution under the Inquisition and his attribution of Spain's decline to the expulsion of the Jews, Farah, *al-Tārikh*, 78–9.

<sup>191</sup> Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 403; Mahmud al-'Abidi, *Tārikh al-'arab* (Safad: Dār al-ṭibā'ah wa-al-nashr al-filastīniyah, 1941), 97.

<sup>192</sup> Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 438.

<sup>193</sup> Maria Mata and Mikel de Epalza, 'Al-Andalus: Between Myth and History'; Reinhart Dozy, *Spanish Islam: A History of the Moslems in Spain*, 232, 325, 437–43, 606–8.

<sup>194</sup> Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 438–9.

collective oblivion in the construction of national memory. Thus, forgetting or underrating periods of Arab–Jewish coexistence or cultural hybridity fit the conflicted national projects of both communities in Palestine. Anderson, in his rereading of Renan, recognized that his call for collective amnesia involved the naming of what ought to be forgotten, thus paradoxically linking the act of forgetting with the national rite of memory.<sup>195</sup> A 1939 Hebrew textbook masterfully encapsulated this orientation. After thirty pages surveying Jewish achievements in Andalus, the author noted that ‘Jewish culture in Spain had reached the apogee of its development’, but then asked rhetorically: ‘Were they right, though, in calling this period ‘the golden age’?’<sup>196</sup>

The narration of the divine promise of Canaan to Abraham in Arabic textbooks is a similar case in point. The Jews, Barghuthi and Totah suggested, ‘believe (*ya‘taqidun*) that they are his [Abraham’s] offspring’, and Zubyan writes that Palestine was ‘allegedly’ promised to the Jews thus raising doubts as to the biblical ties of the Hebrews to their founding patriarch and stories related to their precedence over Palestine as part of a sacred covenant.<sup>197</sup>

In Zionist textbooks, however, Abraham appears as the ‘first Zionist’: the forefathers were ‘attracted in the vision of their hearts to the land of Canaan and only there did they envisage the happiness of their seed’. This covenant unified ‘the national consciousness, the knowing of God, and the knowing of the fatherland in Zion.’<sup>198</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, who studied the theology rooted in Zionism, argues that:

the national consciousness was not based on detachment from the theological perception, but by perceiving nationalism as an exclusive interpretation of this [theological] myth, as a sort of revelation that illustrates its true essence. Secular Zionism indeed challenged the Jewish tradition and redefined itself as the total negation of what was defined as religion, but did so while understanding nationalism itself as the ultimate interpretation of the religious myth based on the return to Jewish biblical sources.<sup>199</sup>

<sup>195</sup> Stathis Gourgouris, *Dream Nation*, 239; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 201.

<sup>196</sup> Lichtenstein, *Shi‘urim*, vol. 1, 29.

<sup>197</sup> ‘Umar Salih al-Barghuthi and Khalil Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 19; Taysir Zubyān, *Zubdat*, 40; omission of the divine promise, in Anton Shukri Lawrence, *Tārīkh filastīn min aqdam al-azmīna ila ayyāminā hadhihi* (Jerusalem: Maktabat bayt al-maqdis, 1934), 38–9; Shukri Harami, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 38–9; al-‘Abidi, *Tārīkh al-‘arab*, 7.

<sup>198</sup> Ben-Yehudah, *Toldot ha-Tsiyonut*, 2–3.

<sup>199</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, ‘En elohim aval hu hivtiaḥ lanu et ha-aretz’.

Raz-Krakotzkin's analysis can be applied to the Arab sources as well. These sources cite entire verses from the Qur'an and portray Muhammad as the prophet and master of all times (*ṣāhib al-zamān*).<sup>200</sup> However, he also becomes a secularized and nationalized prophet, 'our national hero' and 'founder of our great Arab state'.<sup>201</sup> The virtues of the Qur'an are also derived from a modern secular perspective, 'consisting of many of the advanced social and moral norms'.<sup>202</sup> Similar to the Zionist textbooks, divine revelation was only left with its symbolic role within the greater story of the nation, transforming the traditional Islamic canon into a useful mechanism of mass socialization.<sup>203</sup>

The narration of the biblical Hebrew kingdoms in Palestine established on the ruins of the Canaanite kingdoms was another conflictual historical period for obvious reasons. Jewish independence in Palestine is contrasted with the centuries of its absence in which the Jews play the role of a fifth column guiding foreign armies to conquer Palestine.<sup>204</sup> This makes it possible to depict the destruction of the Jewish temple and the subsequent exile as Nebuchadnezzar's 'fierce vengeance' for their 'deceitfulness' (*talā'ub*, 'treachery' (*khiyānah*), and 'hypocrisy' (*talawwun*).<sup>205</sup>

The translation in the late 1930s of Charles Higham's *Landmarks of World History* textbook into Arabic was commissioned by the Department and carried out by three senior supervisors, underscores this reconceptualization of Jewish history. *Ma'alim al-tarikh* (1937), the Arabic version of the book, does not omit the Jewish events narrated in the original. A closer reading of the translation, though, reveals how 'Zion was the name of their [the Jews'] own holy city' was turned into 'Zion is the city that was once named and is still named al-Quds', and 'the Jews who lived in Palestine' was rendered as 'lived in the southern part of Palestine'; the Jewish reference to the Bible, 'the sacred book of the Jews and Christians' now reads 'one of the sacred books for the Christians'.<sup>206</sup> These examples illustrate the ideological

<sup>200</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*, 79–80; 'Izzat Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-'arabī* (Haifa: al-Maktaba al-waṭanīyah, 1934), 95, 115.

<sup>201</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*, 64–6; Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-'arabī*, 112–13.

<sup>202</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-'arabī*, 115.

<sup>203</sup> Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 129.

<sup>204</sup> Al-'Abidi, *Tārīkh al-'arab*, 33; While referring to Jewish reliance on foreign powers or their gods, the authors state, 'And I wish to see the day when they only rely on themselves': al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filasṭīn*, 66, 103.

<sup>205</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm*, 49; al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filasṭīn*, 41.

<sup>206</sup> *ibid*, 180; compare Charles Higham, *Landmarks of World History* (London: Longmans, Green and co, 1935), 21–2, and Charles Higham, *ma'alim al-tārīkh, al-'juz' al-'awwal, min*

impetus and awareness of these translators of the political-pedagogic meaning of their work.

Jewish or Hebrew history could not be completely erased given the Western sources that were used, and the Islamic and Christian embrace of the Old Testament as a source book. Hence Ibrahim, Yousef, Talut, Suleiman, and others had to find their way into all books on ancient history. Although Arab history books of the time treat the Hebrews as a nation, with Palestine as its homeland, the lens employed made all the difference. These texts tell the story of the Hebrews that dwelled in Palestine and even established kingdoms, but also make it clear that this is a story not worth telling.

Early Jewish-Islamic relations added another layer of conflict, this time of a religious nature, that involved tracing the conflict between Jews and Muslims or Arabs to the early days of Christianity and Islam, or even prior to Islam. Jewish sources mention the enormous influence of Arab culture on Jewish life in the Hijaz, their language, names, customs, and friendly relations.<sup>207</sup> Some emphasize the differences and Jewish superiority within these intercultural proximities.<sup>208</sup> However, these Arabized Jews remain a separate entity in both stories because, in both narratives, the Jews are a nation with unique ethnic essence and, therefore, are described in contrast to 'pure' Arabs.<sup>209</sup>

This is interesting in view of one of the most highly cited works in Arab textbooks. Zaydan's monumental *History of Islamic Civilization*, stresses that 'Jews had an enormous influence on the Arabs of the Hijaz... the Arabs adopted many things from them that they were ignorant of... they taught them some of the stories from the Torah and chapters from the Talmud and spread their traditions and customs amongst them.'<sup>210</sup> Miqdadi, who draws heavily on Zaydan's work, makes an effort to minimize Zaydan's determinism regarding Jewish influence by describing the city of Yathrib and other Jewish settlements around it as colonies (*musta' marāt*),<sup>211</sup> and by underscoring their foreign, temporary, and unjust presence in the Hijaz. In the textbook Miqdadi coauthored with Zu'aytir, the Jews are presented as

*aqdam al-'uṣūr ilā fajr al-Islām*, trans. Ahmad Khalifa, Khalil Sakakini, and Wasfi 'Anabtawi (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), 34.

<sup>207</sup> Nahum Glatzer, *Ḳitsur toldot yišra'el: mi-hurban bayit sheni 'ad yeridat ha-ge'onot, 70–1040* (Haifa: Bet ha-sefer ha-re'ali ha-'Ivri, 1947), 67–8.

<sup>208</sup> Baruch Avivi and Nathan Perski, *Toldot 'amenu, ḥeleḳ shelishi, me-ḥidush ha-neš'ut ba-galil 'ad sof teḳufat ha-ge'onim* (Tel Aviv: Yavneh, 1946), 108, 112.

<sup>209</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*, 35.

<sup>210</sup> Jirji Zaydan, *Tārīkh al-tamaddun al-islāmī*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-hilāl, 1902), 15.

<sup>211</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārīkh al-ummah*, 36–7.

bitter enemies of the Prophet and Islam.<sup>212</sup> *The History of Palestine* also refers to converted Jews who 'entered the Islamic religion to corrupt it and destroy it', responsible for conspiring to bring about the assassination of 'Umar and were the 'inventors' of the Shia faith and other non-Sunni beliefs that later destroyed the Abbasid empire.<sup>213</sup>

Hebrew texts, conversely, are usually straightforward in emphasizing the amalgamated nature of Islam and the Qur'an, which were influenced by Christianity and Persian cultures 'and especially by the Hebrew religion' that introduced Muhammad to faith in one God. In Arab sources this influence is marginalized or omitted.<sup>214</sup> Few Arab sources attribute the same features to Judaism, depicting it as an amalgamation of Babylonian, Persian, and other traditions.<sup>215</sup> Hebrew sources also stress Islam's inventive nature, depicting Muhammad as a hallucinating day dreamer.<sup>216</sup>

Hebrew textbooks also forefront the violent features of Islam, uniting all Arabia 'either by the sword or by flattery' or provide graphic portrayals of massacres led by Muhammad against the Jews.<sup>217</sup> In Arab sources these deeds are justified as a response to Jewish betrayal, their violation of the pact with the Prophet, and 'their efforts to spread strife (*fitna*) and corruption'.<sup>218</sup> One Arabic textbook presents a detailed description of massacres conducted by the Himyarite Jewish ruler, Dhu Nuwas, and his attempt to convert (*tahwid*) the Arabs. To emphasize his cruelty and injustice, the text tells a tragic story of the burning at the stake of a woman and child, who preferred to die rather than convert to Judaism.<sup>219</sup> These stories are told as though the

<sup>212</sup> See for example the narration of the poisoned goat story, Zu'aytir and al-Miqdadi. *Tārikhūnā*, 172–3.

<sup>213</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filastīn*, 105, 107.

<sup>214</sup> Zuta and Spivak, *Divrei yemei 'amenu, helek sheni, sefer alef*, 49–50, 53; Avigdor Tcherikover, *Historyah kelalit, yeme-ha-benayim* (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1937), 8–9; One clear example is the Arab translation of Higham, *Landmarks of World History*, 74; compare with Higham, *ma'ālim al-tārikh, al-Juz' al-awwal, min aqdam al-'uṣūr ilā fajr al-Islām*, 108; Avigdor Tcherikover, *Historyah kelalit, yeme-ha-benayim* (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1937), 8–9.

<sup>215</sup> Nicola Ziadeh, *al-'Ālam al-qadīm* (Jaffa: al-Maktabah al-'aṣriyah, 1947), 125; Ḥarami, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 39; al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filastīn*, 20–1.

<sup>216</sup> Zuta and Spivak, *Divrei yemei 'amenu, helek sheni, sefer alef*, 50–1, 53; Avivi and Perski, *Toldot 'amenu, helek shelishi*, 126.

<sup>217</sup> Zuta and Spivak, *Divrei yemei 'amenu, helek sheni, sefer alef*, 52; Eliyahu Blank, *Historyah kelalit*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Yavneh, 1937), 1945; Avivi and Perski, *Toldot 'amenu, helek shelishi*, 124; Glatzer, *Ḳitsur*, 70–1040, 68; Ephraim Shmueli, *Demuyot u-me'ora'ot*, 44.

<sup>218</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārikh al-'arabī*, 101–4; for the massacres and the selling into slavery of the Jews who survived, see Glatzer, *Ḳitsur*, 70–1040, 68.

<sup>219</sup> For instance, the questions section asks about the actions taken by Dhu Nuwas against the Christians and an example of bravery, Ḥadhwah, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 18; Another book mentions the Jewish massacre of 80,000 Anatolia Christians bought from the Persians and burned as revenge: al-'Abidi, *Tārikh al-'arab*, 33.



Other's cruelty is something natural or inherent, and they add a further layer of a profound theological rift.

In some cases, certain stories remain completely untold on points that contest the teleological flow of the national history especially in relation to the Jews. The Holocaust is one of these events because its repercussions had a direct influence on Palestine by increasing immigration and strengthening the Jewish claim to a state of its own. Only one Arab textbook on modern times covers the history of the Second World War. Tamimi's *History of the Present Age* (1946), however, contains a glaring oversight that is self-explanatory: in his detailed narration of the Nazi regime and the Second World War, the word *Jew* is not mentioned even once, although the Nazi race theory and nuclear bomb are surveyed.<sup>220</sup> It is clear why Tamimi, an educator and central figure in the Palestinian and Pan-Arab national movement, produced such an overview of the Second World War because omitting the Holocaust meant erasing its supposed historical importance and implications for the Jewish people and Palestine.

The absence or marginalization of Arab and Islamic history should be noted as well. In Hebrew sources, very little was written about the Arabs and their history in comparison to other periods or peoples in history. When these texts did mention Arabs, the depictions were similar to the orientalist language of the time.<sup>221</sup> Arab scientific and cultural contributions were attributed to their ability to mediate between cultures, or to the great role of non-Arabs and non-Muslims in their civilization.<sup>222</sup> Replacing a culture that remained silent for hundreds of years that had known the great Ibn Khaldun and Imru' al-Qais, came a 'little people whose hands were unable even to impersonate their predecessors', whose cultural revival was channelled to the 'nationalist press, which is more boisterous than serious'. Even Khalil Jibran, the great Arab poet, Eliezer Rieger's textbook argues, was nothing but 'a stutterer of immature pitiable essence'.<sup>223</sup>

Hebrew textbooks that discussed current affairs expressed disdain for Arab nationalism: 'with meagre powers and noisy plans... [leading a] boisterous politics, plotting the establishment of a great Arab kingdom destined for failure because of its reluctance to compromise'.<sup>224</sup> Arab anti-Zionist

<sup>220</sup> Rafiq al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh al-'aṣr al-ḥāḍir*, 262–5, 269–84.

<sup>221</sup> Heschel, 'German Jewish Scholarship'.

<sup>222</sup> Avivi and Perski, *Toldot 'amenu, ḥeleḳ shelishi*, 134–7.

<sup>223</sup> Eliezer Rieger, *Toldot ha-zeman he-ḥadash* (Tel Aviv: Kohelet, 1924), 239–40.

<sup>224</sup> Eliyahu Blank, *Hiṣṭoryah kelalit*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Yavneh, 1938), 217; Rieger, *Toldot*, 272.

activity, if at all mentioned,<sup>225</sup> is portrayed as irrational, vulgar, and unaccepting of Zionism's considerable contributions to the country. The 'bravery, dedication and wisdom' of the Yishuv's leadership, Blank states in his general history textbook, will be able to overcome these difficulties 'not only for the benefit of the people of Israel, but for humanity as whole'.<sup>226</sup>

Zionism, in Arabic textbooks, is treated as a contemporary peril. Three sources directly refer to the 'Zionist malice' (*shār al-ṣīhyūniyah*) caused by the European persecution of the Jews, derived from the Jewish 'predilection for excessive (*fāḥish*) interest rates, their desire to monopolize trade and their religious intolerance'. The national home is steered by Jewish 'arrogance' and manipulation of Mandate rule, enabling the 'Judaification' of Palestine, 'afflicting another catastrophe' (*nakabūha nakba thāniyah*) on the Arabs of Palestine already under foreign rule.<sup>227</sup> These sources highlight the unsustainable idea of the Mandate from its inception, that the Arabs will never accept, which will generate strife and bloodshed.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, favourable accounts of Arab-Jewish historical encounters that characterized the pre-Mandate period evolved during the Mandate into a narrative that reflected the growing tension between Arabs and Jews in Palestine. The perceptions of the Other emphasized the permanent hostility between Islam and Judaism. Concretizing Renan's necessary oblivion, they reinterpreted important historical periods of positive influence, cooperation, coexistence, and similarities between Arabs and Jews. These periods needed to be mentioned—if only for their omission—as a way to stress their impossibility. This not only shaped the way in which history was perceived, but rewrote the conflict over the land into history, and made it eternal, and inevitable.

## Conclusion

Writing history for students is the same as writing history for adults; it is the pedagogical function of the textbook that make the difference, in that it presents a cohesive narration of the past, demarcating immaculate borders

<sup>225</sup> See for example the absence of Arabs from post-First World War Palestine: Chaim Arielev Zuta and Isaac Spivak, *Divrei yemei 'amenu, Helek shelishi, sefer bet* (Tel Aviv: Omanut, 1934), 344–251.

<sup>226</sup> Blank, *Historyah kelalit*, 1938, 2:219; Firer, *Sokhnim shel ha-hinukh ha-tsiyoni*, 128–9.

<sup>227</sup> al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filastīn*, 295–7; Al-Tamimi, *Tārikh al-ʿaṣr al-hādīr*, 301; Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 515.

<sup>228</sup> Al-Miqdadi, *Tārikh al-ummah*, 515.

and erasing ambiguities. We saw how, within the colonial context, this undertaking was problematized by simultaneously adopting a hegemonic discourse and attempting to emancipate itself from it. Mandate Palestine emerges as a junction of historiographic knowledge and its new history reflected the (un)natural selection mechanism involved in importing valid narrations and revising or omitting problematic ones. The life stories of these educator historians, their formal education, and their life experiences help make sense of this selection mechanism. Growing up during dramatic periods of transitions in all fields of life, they found solid ground in history, and even though their history remained an expression of these transitions, they nevertheless utilized it to depict the creation of a new man, Arab or Jew. The encounter with the national Other was one of these challenges, and it was therefore written into these textbooks. The next chapter looks back to the ancient past, to further elucidate the ways in which these motifs of empowerment and challenge were employed in history textbooks.

## We the Semites: Reading Ancient History in Mandate Palestine

In practical politics the vital thing is not what men really are, but what they think they are. This simple truth, so often overlooked, is actually of tremendous import.

Lothrop T. Stoddard <sup>1</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth century, new archaeological discoveries uncovered ancient Semitic civilizations and identified their universal heritage and contribution to humankind. The term ‘Semites’ was a determinist racial label coined in a scholarly environment where the historicist tradition of the West had merged with biological research about the origin of the species. ‘Semite’ scholars, having been labelled as such by non-Semites, embraced a racial discourse in general and Semitism in particular as a racial relocation to the forefront of human history, with the objective of redeeming themselves from a marginalized or precarious present.<sup>2</sup> Their Semite ancestors were written back into history not only as the initiators of human culture, but as those who bestowed it upon the West. This created historical precedence and a significant connection to a currently ‘superior’ culture that was disenfranchising them politically, economically, and socially.

Arabs and Jews under the Ottoman Empire and in Europe wrote extensively on these topics, but under British colonial rule in post-World War Palestine, they took on new meanings and relevance. This chapter explores the narration of ancient history in history textbooks written for Arab and Jewish students by examining the translation, sociology, and movement of historical and Western knowledge. It underlines the essentiality and importance of periodization to the national narrative and how ‘ancient times’, however distant, were considered crucial to these writers because they encapsulated the inception of the national story, another realm in which to

<sup>1</sup> Lothrop T. Stoddard, ‘Pan-Turanism’.

<sup>2</sup> Elshakry, *Reading Darwin*; Jacob Shaviv and Jehuda Reinharz, *Darvin*.

stake a claim for their historical rights and to demarcate a cultural and geographical territory. This chapter discusses the similarities in historiographic engagement with ancient history in both communities, in terms of the adoption of scientific racial discourse, their use of sources and texts, and the conclusions they drew in relation to their ancient past. The second part of this chapter takes the narration of the colonization of Canaan as an example of an ancient point of bifurcation from racial and cultural affinities. These are abandoned when the Hebrews enter the Promised Land and the story becomes an historiographical articulation of the conflict over Palestine.

### Becoming Semites

The term ‘Semitic’ was coined in the late eighteenth century by August Ludwig von Schlözer, a German historian. It was meant to catalogue a group of languages or peoples. The term rapidly gained prominence among orientalists, historians, and philologists, and concepts such as ‘Semites’, ‘Semitic languages’, and ‘Semitic tribes’ were adopted as a scientific, descriptive label.<sup>3</sup> “Semite civilization” was then utilized to describe its polar opposite, the ‘Aryan’ or ‘Indo-European’ peoples and civilization.<sup>4</sup> This terminology later found its way into the writings of German-Jewish historians with the inception of Jewish historiography and works by Arab scholars who were increasingly exposed to Western knowledge either as travellers or as students in Anglican and American mission colleges and European universities. ‘Shem’ was a genealogical category in Arab and Jewish texts for many centuries before this process began, and its presence in classical texts may have facilitated its reception. However, it was the secularized-nationalist reinterpretation of this genealogy within this scientific discourse produced under this particular balance of power which infused it with a new meaning.

Jewish communities in Germany and Eastern Europe were well aware of advances in the study of ancient Eastern civilizations, and the critical readings of the Bible associated with them. As early as the 1850s, new archaeological discoveries and progress in the field of philology led to a *Kulturkampf* between the *maskilim* and the rabbinical orthodoxy.<sup>5</sup> For both sides, this

<sup>3</sup> Martin Baasten, ‘A Note on the History of ‘Semitic’.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan M. Hess, ‘Johann David Michaelis’.

<sup>5</sup> *Haskalah*, ‘enlightenment’ in Hebrew, was a literary, cultural, and social movement of modernist Jews that emerged in late eighteenth-century Germany but was still dominant among Jewish communities in late nineteenth-century Eastern Europe. A *maskil* was a person

was a battle over the essence and true nature of the Jewish religion itself.<sup>6</sup> To the *maskilim*, locating the evolution of Judaism within a wider civilizational context, as an influential but also as an influenced segment of human history, meant the rebirth of Judaism. This Judaism sought to maintain its perceived uniqueness, but instead of leading to cultural isolation, its aim was the creation of a bridge for cultural communication. This bridge also necessitated an epistemic incorporation of the Jewish corpus into the realm of scientific scrutiny. Old texts were now seen in a new light, and revelation alone ceased to be a satisfying explanation. Jewish scholars sought references in archaeological discoveries or 'extra-Biblical' evidence, as well as in the work of Christian scholars and theologians, to support and defend the reliability of their Hebrew Bible, which at the time also meant defending themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the discourse on race in general and on the Semitic race in particular received extensive attention in Jewish writing, in some cases with ambiguity and suspicion, as an attempt to redefine or reframe Jewish history and Judaism.<sup>8</sup> As early as the 1860s, Moses Hess (1812–1875) maintained that 'the Jewish race is an original [*ursprüngliche*] [race], which...reproduces [itself] in its integrity...[and] remains always the same throughout the course of centuries.'<sup>9</sup>

Jewish scholars appropriated the scientific discourse of the 'Jewish racial question' as a modern expression and definition of Jewishness within a 'scientific' paradigm. This scholarship responded to an existing discourse that sought to exclude them as different.<sup>10</sup> The engagement of Jewish scholars, whether supportive or resistant to this racial discourse, amplified identity and political quandaries regarding their 'diasporic' existence. Paradoxically, for some Jews, accepting the racial difference provided a solid epistemic ground.

By becoming members of the glorified Semitic family, Jews took an active part in the invention of Semitism as a 'natural' ontological category.<sup>11</sup> Adopted with ambiguity and criticism by Jewish scholars, the new outlook

adhering to the ideas of this movement and contesting the religious rabbinical hegemony over Jewish society. Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, 1–17.

<sup>6</sup> Jacob Shavit, *The Hebrew Bible Reborn*, 204.

<sup>7</sup> Shavit, 200.

<sup>8</sup> Shavit and Reinhartz, *Daryin*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Mosse Hess, *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), 180, 59, as cited by, David Biale, *Blood and Belief*, 180.

<sup>10</sup> John M. Efron, *Defenders of the Race*, 4–5.

<sup>11</sup> Shavit and Reinhartz, *Daryin*, 241–2; Iris Idelson-Shein, *Difference of a Different Kind*.

on their ancient history became scientific proof of the authenticity of the Jewish canon, and it situated the Jewish people in a glorious past. For Jewish history, this meant the certitude of a distant past; for Zionism, it could be channelled into a separatist ethnic evolution of a nation from a familiar cradle of civilization. Anti-Semitism based on the enlightened race discourse prompted disappointment since it turned Semitism into the embodiment of Jewish social alienation in the diaspora. This transformation reverberates in the writings of the Jewish scholar and early Zionist Moshe Leib Lilienblum (1843–1910). Harif charts Lilienblum's transformation from his admiration of the Aryan and scorn of the East and the Eastern, as a follower of the ideas of Gobineau and Renan in the 1870s, to his post-1880s reaction to the pogroms, when he proclaimed that 'we are strangers by race... the sons of Shem within the sons of Yefet, a Palestinian tribe from Asia in European countries'.<sup>12</sup> The disenchantment with integration in Europe led to the conclusion that 'if Jews cannot become European in Europe, they might as well become European in their own country'.<sup>13</sup> Zionism's embrace of this racial discourse further cemented the dialectic tension inherent to Jewish nationalism. Accepting it meant a long-hoped-for return to history as a nation among nations, while ratifying the exclusive organic difference between the Jewish nation and other nations, between the Jew and the non-Jew.

By the turn of the twentieth century, these concepts had found their way into textbooks for Jewish education as well. Dubnow described the Hebrews as 'a branch of the Semitic race', 'Semitic nomads', or 'Semitic Shepherds'. The Hebrew people, Dubnow argues, while 'moving from the deserts of Arabia in the direction of Mesopotamia and Western Asia, detaches itself clearly and distinctly from the dim background'.<sup>14</sup>

The adoption of the racial-civilizational discourse in the Arab-Ottoman world operated similarly to the Jewish case as both corresponded to European theories classifying the East as inherently inferior. As of the 1880s, scientific racial theories were popularized among Arab readers, translated from European languages or discussed by local scholars and published in the pages of *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilal*.<sup>15</sup> The concept of an Islamic civilization emerged in the post-Tanzimat Ottoman world, the age of reform, when the Ottoman Empire aimed to reconceptualize itself as 'a partner of the West

<sup>12</sup> Harif, 'Teḥiyat ha-mizrah', 6, 17–23.

<sup>13</sup> Gil Z. Hochberg, *In Spite of Partition*, 12.

<sup>14</sup> This is an English translation of a German translation from Russian, published in 1893: Simon Dubnow, *Jewish History*, 46–7, 57. Other examples can be found in the writings of Joseph Klausner: Shavit, *The Hebrew Bible Reborn*, 151.

<sup>15</sup> El-Shakry, *The Great Social*, 58–9.

rather than its adversary'.<sup>16</sup> It emerged as the product of an intellectual dialogue that aspired to refute Orientalist theories of Aryan/Christian supremacy over the Semitic/Islamic civilization,<sup>17</sup> thus reflecting a complex mechanism of self-defence within an uneven balance of power and a desire for inclusion in what was considered modern and progressive. For European Zionist Jews, redemption from their otherness meant colonialism outside of Europe. For the *Nahda* intellectuals and early Arab nationalists, becoming Semites meant a historiographic emergence from a backward Ottoman world in favour of an alignment with modernity and progress propagated by European imperialism. Redemption from their otherness in relation to the West required an epistemic shift.

Several sources discuss the use of the term 'Semite' (or 'Semitic') in the Arabic language, and in particular, its relationship to the consolidation of an all-encompassing Arab identity prior to the days of Islam. For the Arab world, this term was charged with new meaning after the First World War, when reclaiming Semitic history and identity became directly linked to a national political project. The exploitation of Western scholarship by Arab writers and the subsequent amalgamation of the scientific and the ideological was central to the emergence of pan-Arab ideology in the interwar period.<sup>18</sup>

Dawn argues that the theoretical framework of Pan-Arabism was made possible through what is known as Semitic wave theory, which claims that the Semitic peoples originated in the Arabian Peninsula and later migrated to the Near East and were the sources of the Eastern civilizations and the Arabs. Dawn stresses the influence of Breasted's *Ancient Times* especially after its translation in 1926. Semitic wave theory was an important source of reference for Arab nationalists.<sup>19</sup> Breasted's work became one of the most important textbooks for the teaching of history in Palestine, used as a key source for the Palestine Matriculation Exam.

However, modern scholarship on Semitic peoples and languages dates back to the late eighteenth century, and, therefore, its appearance in Arab scholarship may well be located even earlier and deserves more careful scrutiny. Attributing the emergence of an idea to the translation of a single

<sup>16</sup> For Ottoman adoption of European categories of progress and stagnation see, Ussama Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism'. Especially relevant here is Makdisi's depiction of the Ottoman orientalizing of the Arab provinces.

<sup>17</sup> Elshakry, *Reading Darwin*, 184–5; Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism*, 48–54.

<sup>18</sup> Nimrod Hurvitz, 'Muhibb ad-Din al-Khatib's'.

<sup>19</sup> C. Ernest Dawn, 'The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology'. Similar periodization in usage of the term can be found in Reeva S. Simon, 'The Teaching of History in Iraq'.



book in the 1920s overlooks almost half a century of scholarship and expropriates or disregards the agency of local intellectuals. Elshakry, for example, showed that Arab intellectuals engaged extensively with racial theories from the late nineteenth century onwards, and saw them as relevant categories of collectivity.<sup>20</sup> Thus, although the historiographical debate over the genesis of Arab nationalism has sometimes forcefully attached the history of ideas to political or social events, this may create an artificial parallel between them since, in many cases, they evolved at a different pace.

The modern connection between ancient Semitic people and an Arab identity can be traced back as far as the second half of the nineteenth century, when this discourse reached the Middle East, either with missionaries or with Arab scholars returning from Europe. An early example is the prolific scholar Butrus al-Bustani (1819–1883).<sup>21</sup> In 1876, al-Bustani launched his ambitious project of writing the first encyclopaedia in Arabic. The entry ‘Shem’ begins by stating that Shem was the eldest son of Noah and the ‘father of the Arabs’ (*abu al-‘arab*), and the reader is also referred to the entries for ‘Semitic languages’ and ‘Semitic Nations’ (*al-umam al-sāmiyya*).<sup>22</sup> This use of the term ‘Semitic’ appears to correspond to Semitic wave theory, and it implies that both this theory and its translation into Arabic were percolating in al-Bustani’s intellectual circle.<sup>23</sup>

In his 1884 history textbook, Harvey Porter incorporated the idea of a Semite civilization and the direct link between the ancient Arabs and the Semitic civilizations of the ancient world.<sup>24</sup> Another early example is Zaydan’s *General History* where he mentions the group of Semitic languages and the places of residence of the three sons of Noah, stating that ‘the ancient Arabs are descendants of Shem, son of Noah.’<sup>25</sup> Zaydan discussed the disputes amongst scholars regarding the origins of the Semites in his *History of the Arabs before Islam* (1908). This essay traced the Arabs to the cradle of civilization in Iraq, and it widely uses the terms ‘Semites’, ‘Semitic’, and ‘Semitic languages’ when discussing the origins of the Arabs.

<sup>20</sup> Elshakry, *Reading Darwin*, 88–9, 184–5.

<sup>21</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 47–8.

<sup>22</sup> See the entries for ‘Shem’ and ‘Hebrews’ in vol. 9, 401–2 and vol. 11, 658, respectively. Butrus ibn Būlus Bustānī, *Kitāb Dā’irat al-ma’ārif*.

<sup>23</sup> This encyclopaedia had 115 subscribers in Palestine alone in 1876, and Bustani’s journal *al-Jinan*, probably enjoyed a wider audience in Palestine: Ami Ayalon, *Reading Palestine*, 49–50.

<sup>24</sup> Porter taught history at the SPC for a few decades: Fruma Zachs, ‘From the Mission to the Missionary’; Porter, *al-Nahj al-al-qawim fi al-tārikh al-qadim*, 91–103.

<sup>25</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *al-Tārikh al-‘amm*, 19–20, 52–4, 70–1.

Zaydan dedicated subchapters to answering questions about the identity of ancient personages, such as 'Is the Hammurabi state Arab?', and he provides proof of the Arabness of ancient kingdoms.<sup>26</sup> In his book *Classes of Nations* (1912), an adaptation of A. H. Keane's *The World's Peoples* (1908), Zaydan dedicated a chapter to the Arabs 'who preserved the original [Semitic] pure features'.<sup>27</sup> Zaydan's book, which situates the Semitic Arabs as members of the white or Caucasian race, served to respond to both cultural and practical-legal challenges, like those of Syrian immigrants to the United States who required proof of their whiteness to enable their naturalization in the country.<sup>28</sup>

Scholars' emphasis on Semitism did not necessarily serve exclusive Arab nationalism or Zionism, and a few did in fact contest this dominant trend in Jewish and Arab historiography. Two examples are worth highlighting.<sup>29</sup> Rabbi Binyamin (Yehoshua Radler Feldman, 1880–1957) called for Pan-Semitism with the local Arab population prior to his arrival in Palestine (1907). In his prophetic poem *Maša 'arav* (*A Vision of Arabia*), he called for the merger of the two peoples in Palestine: 'And one species found its own species and became one'.<sup>30</sup> Binyamin viewed anti-Semitism as also being anti-Arab, and his call for Pan-Semitic solidarity and Jewish-Arab brotherhood was a racial defence strategy and his answer to both peoples' marginalization. An active Zionist, he felt that this was the only path towards the fulfilment of the Zionist vision.

Parallel to the works of Binyamin, similar ideas of kinship and racial, cultural, and religious affinities between Jews and Arabs were promoted by the Lebanese Shahin Makaryus (1853–1910), one of the co-editors of *al-Muqtataf*. For Makaryus, these shared racial features were a necessary link to Europe and the Europeans. This belief prompted Makaryus's support of Zionism as a positive civilizing mission in the Orient.<sup>31</sup> Makaryus's approach towards the Jews was no different from that of his contemporary Zaydan. Their appreciation and respect for Judaism and its ties with

<sup>26</sup> Zaydan, *al-'Arab qabla al-islām*, 32–6, 43, 49–51.

<sup>27</sup> Jurji Zaydan, *Ṭabaqāt al-umam*, 230–4; See also Jurji Zaydan, *al-Hilal* 22, no. 6 (1 March 1914): 403–15; El-Shakry, *The Great Social*, 60.

<sup>28</sup> Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White*, 64–6; see also Elshakry, *Reading Darwin*, 245–7.

<sup>29</sup> On pan-Semitism and its advocates, see Harif, 'Teḥiyat ha-mizrah'; See also, Efron, *Defenders of the Race*.

<sup>30</sup> Binyamin later one of the founders of Brit-Shalom and the editor of its journal: Yaron Peleg, *Orientalism*, 37; Ehud Ben-'Ezer, *Be-moledet*, 10–11.

<sup>31</sup> Jonathan M. Gribetz, 'Their Blood Is Eastern'.

Arab-Islamic history also mirrors the liberal, diverse worldview they sought to promote in the pages of *al-Muqtataf* and *al-Hilal*.

Nevertheless, this scholarship failed to go beyond a vague vision and words of flattery. Zionist Pan-Semitism remained loyal to the colonialist civilizing mission of the backwards East and the ascent of political Zionism, whereas Arab nationalism, overshadowed the scarce Arab scholarship that promoted Arab-Jewish harmonious coexistence.

These examples confirm that the modern concept of Semitism emerged earlier than previously thought and laid the groundwork for its fuller embrace after the First World War. The introduction of these concepts into the Arab and Jewish educational arena reflects their hegemonic scope and their acceptance as 'legitimate knowledge'. In this process, according to Asad, the 'West' ceased to act as a cultural system and became a 'vast moral project, an intimidating claim to write and speak for the world'. 'Lower civilizations' were forced to become 'better than they were', making the destruction of old and traditional 'native' categories and the construction of modern ones a moral obligation, an object of desire.<sup>32</sup> We have seen, however, that the passion and genuine need for self-definition within a changing vocabulary of racial scientific distinctions were as dominant in this process as foreign forces and intimidation.

### Adopting Racial Categories

Nearly all Hebrew and Arabic textbooks on ancient history trace their respective peoples' lineage to the Semites, or sons of Shem. The people of Israel are mentioned as the descendants of the 'ancient family of the sons of Shem' originating from the Arab peninsula, 'the ancient fatherland of this family of peoples' which evidenced a high level of culture and a shared language.<sup>33</sup> In these texts, the Semites are treated as the natives of the area, differentiating them from the 'foreign peoples' (*Amim zarim*, or, *nokhrim*), or foreign invaders such as the Elamites or the Hittites that were 'far removed in their race from the Semites'.<sup>34</sup> Darwazah stresses the foreignness of Persian rule over the region, stating that 'after the Semites had ruled

<sup>32</sup> Talal Asad, 'Conscripts of Western Civilisation'.

<sup>33</sup> Yakov Naftali Simhoni, *Divre yeme yišra'el* (Jerusalem: Moriyah, 1922), 12–13.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, 12–13, 16; other examples in, Isaac Brawer, *Toldot ha-z'man ha-qadum* (Haifa: Dfus Weingerten Yerushalaim, 1934), 10; and on the sons of Ham and the Semites, Chaim Arie Zuta and A. Sternberg, *Qadmoniyot* (Tel Aviv: Masadah, 1934), 2.

over Iraq for a long period, rule was transferred to the Aryans'. Darwazah characterizes Persian rule as colonialism (*istī'mār*), against which the Semites 'revolted (*thārū*) ... [with] a desire for freedom and independence'.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, in order to be a member of the Semitic race, one must first accept the division of humanity into races and the affinity between race and physical appearance, a pseudo-scientific notion popular as of the eighteenth century, including among Jews.<sup>36</sup> This division appeared in history textbooks in Europe, the United States, and late Ottoman history textbooks, and was also adopted by Arab and Jewish writers.<sup>37</sup> A school principal during the Mandate, Sa'id al-Sabbagh's geography textbook described the racial division between the white, yellow, black, and red races, although all were said to be descendants of the same mother and father. The white race was said to be the 'prettiest and the most developed' of all races.<sup>38</sup> Darwazah wrote about the 'apparent' physical division separating races, including colour, facial features, and height. For example, members of the white race (i.e., Europeans and West Asians) have strong colour and small noses and lips, as well as straight hair (the Arabs belong to this latter subgroup), while members of the black race have flat noses, thick lips, and curly hair.<sup>39</sup> Nicola Ziadeh divided the white race into three groups that differ in terms of skull size and the colour of their hair and eyes, and states that the 'Mediterranean race' and the 'Nordic race' have the same skull size but differ in eye and hair colour, possibly suggesting more than a physical familiarity between the two.<sup>40</sup> The implication is that as far as racial taxonomy is concerned, the Asian Semites were similar to Europeans.

Physical features were then linked to character and cultural progress. In the book they coauthored, Totah and Barghuthi argue for an association between climate and human character, a geographical determinism that dates back to the writings of Herodotus and Ibn Khaldun. In the warm Sudan area, they argue, people have a tendency towards laziness and stagnation, and they sleep under the shade of their palm trees and in their caves, unlike the inhabitants of cold areas, who spend their time actively.<sup>41</sup> 'Progress categories' were also attributed to each race, to prove the point

<sup>35</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārikh al-qadīm*, 100.

<sup>36</sup> Idelson-Shein, *Difference of a Different Kind*, 108–48.

<sup>37</sup> Goodrich's and Myers's history textbooks are two of many examples.

<sup>38</sup> Sa'id al-Sabbagh, *al-Jughrāfiyah al-ibtidā'iyah* (Sayda: Maṭba'at al-'irfān, 1924), 24–6.

<sup>39</sup> 'Izzat Darwazah, *Mukhtaṣar tārikh al-'arab wa-al-islam* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-salafiya, 1925), 11–12.

<sup>40</sup> Ziadeh, *al-'Ālam al-qadīm*, 10.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filastīn*, 4–5.

that unlike other races which had remained underdeveloped, the white race was a fertile terrain for the nurturing of great nations and a progressive culture that had influenced human history as a whole.<sup>42</sup>

This use of racial divisions thus seems to be an attempt to redeem both Arabs and Jews from their apparent racial hybridity ('white but not quite', in the words of Homi Bhabha) which left them hanging in racial in-betweenness. Although this division left brown-skinned, curly haired Arabs and Jews out of the equation, it created a racial comfort zone where Arabs and Jews are both on the right side of the equation. But being white was not enough, as Semites have distinctive characteristics. In Breasted's book, explicit connections were made between the Semites and their physical appearance. In the caption to a famous Egyptian painting of nomad Canaanites, he writes, 'Note the type of face, with the prominent nose, which shows that Hittite blood was already mixed with Semitic blood in these early dwellers of Palestine'.<sup>43</sup> In an illustration, Breasted also juxtaposed a modern Armenian's profile with an ancient Hittite sculpture, noting that 'the strongly aquiline and prominent nose of the Hittites was also acquired by the neighbouring Semites... including the Canaanites'.<sup>44</sup>

The famous picture of Canaanite nomads also appeared in a few Hebrew textbooks.<sup>45</sup> Brawer's textbook goes as far as to claim that 'We see the faces of these nomads, with great resemblance to the faces of the Jews from Poland or Russia'.<sup>46</sup> Brawer also relates to the Hittite nose: 'they resemble the Armenians the most, and also many of our people... The common feature in the Hittite face is the grown nose 'a respectable piece' that the *goyim* are accustomed to calling a Jewish nose, crooked at its end and which often has a bump in its middle'. Referring to Ezekiel 16:3, Brawer concludes that this nose 'is an inheritance from our Hittite mothers and the Hittite blood mixed in ours'. While the verse in Ezekiel was clearly derogatory, denouncing the assimilation of the Israelites in Canaan, Brawer interprets it as ancient proof of this racial fusion. It is also harnessed to demonstrate the physical features of the Jews (whether aesthetic or not) and their connection to the land of

<sup>42</sup> Moshe Y. Nadav, *Hiṣṭoriyah kelalit* (Vilna: Universe, 1923), 14–15; David Tems, *Hiṣṭoriyah kelalit* (Jerusalem: Hozat ha-gimnasia ha-ivrit, 1925), 1.

<sup>43</sup> James Henry Breasted, *Ancient Times* (Boston: Ginn, 1916), 197.

<sup>44</sup> Breasted, 240; James Henry Breasted, *al-'Uṣūr al-qadimah* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-amīrkāniyah, 1926), 152, 183.

<sup>45</sup> Dubnow, *Hiṣṭoriyah*, 9.

<sup>46</sup> Brawer, *Toldot*, 18; this type of reference to the racial origins of the Jewish nose was not uncommon in Zionism: see Etan Bloom, *Arthur Ruppin*, 86–7; Saposnik, *Becoming Hebrew*, 170.

Israel, implying that 'our nose', which differentiates Jews today from their current neighbours, is a familiar sight in the Jewish homeland.

Only one textbook, by Avigdor Tcherikover appears to have rejected the racial-cultural connection. In his textbook for the fifth to eighth grades, Tcherikover states that 'people' (*'am*) and 'nation' (*umah*) are cultural terms and not racial, and are based on a spiritual similarity rather than physical resemblance. Tcherikover adds that the attempt to use race to explain human characteristics has no scientific value, since pure races do not exist.<sup>47</sup> This strikingly different history textbook challenges a variety of racial simplifications with regard to ancient civilizations, while remaining loyal to the 'historical facts' that were known to Tcherikover. The tone of the book, published in 1935 by a graduate of the University of Berlin, was probably a reaction to the utilization of race theories in Nazi Germany. However, since a complete rejection of the inextricable link between race and nation meant challenging the foundations of nationalism itself, it was seldom found in history syllabi or textbooks, despite the repercussions of this link in the 1930s and 1940s. Ironically, race categories continued to dominate classroom historical discourse.



Photo 10 'An ancient Hittite and his descendant the modern Armenian'.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Avigdor Tcherikover, *ha-mizrah he-'atik*, 13–14.

<sup>48</sup> James Henry Breasted, *al-'Uṣūr al-qadīmah* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-amīrkāniyah, 1926), 183.

### East, then West

Both Zionists and Palestinian educators saw themselves as the natural cultural mediators between East and West and, during times of peace, as partners in the British imperial project. Tibawi, when referring to the educational goals of the British in Palestine, mentioned the 'common origins in Hellenism and Semitic monotheism' of the British and the Arabs that made 'the attempted harmony not particularly hard'.<sup>49</sup> Tibawi's Palestine merged Christianity (the West) and Islam (the East) to justify the prospects of East–West cooperation.<sup>50</sup> Eliezer Rieger took a similar approach to British rule over Palestine. He concluded his history textbook for high school students with his belief that the Balfour Declaration marked British acknowledgement that the Jews could act as mediators between East and West, because they had seen the Jews revive the wilderness.<sup>51</sup> Educators like Tibawi and Rieger, both educated in the West, perceived their nation as fit for a joint civilizational project for Palestine under the British. One sought to bring the masses westward, while the other saw its colonization with Westerners as a solution.

The personal biographies of these authors help explain why looking westward while feeling physically or conceptually rooted in the East was both palatable and desirable. Although conceptually they abandoned tradition, they still needed to find a place for it and for themselves in their new history. Their writing on ancient Semites and their ties with the West should also be read through the eyes of these young Easterners who were struggling for their place in an environment that was only willing to accept them after they had surrendered to modernity.

These authors embraced the meta-historical dichotomy between East and West and the historiographic approach that operationalized the role played by the Semites in human history. Ancient history was nationalized by the Semites, who now demanded acknowledgement of their achievements from the currently superior West. Echoing the words of Benjamin Disraeli, Nadal writes, 'While the Aryans were still savage shepherds... the Sons of Shem were living in fairly organised kingdoms.'<sup>52</sup> In al-Sabbagh's words, it was the East that 'sparked the light of ancient civilizations and lit up the whole world'.<sup>53</sup> The subtext therefore reads, not very subtly, that

<sup>49</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 242.

<sup>50</sup> Tibawi, 4–5.

<sup>51</sup> Eliezer Rieger, *Toldot*, 274–5.

<sup>52</sup> Nadal, *Historiyah kelalit*, 14–15.

<sup>53</sup> Al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 6; Zubyān, *Zubdat*, 13, 73.

Eastern progress not only preceded that of the West but also was the source of its greatness.

The precedence of Semitic culture does not mean that the ancient Eastern world did not have its flaws. Ziadeh, for example, highlights Greek rationality, as opposed to the heavenly moral values 'found in the East', along with principles of freedom of speech and thought and the spread of knowledge between all peoples.<sup>54</sup> Hacham claimed that Eastern stagnation was the result of polygamy and tyranny.<sup>55</sup> Within these juxtapositions, the admiration for Alexander the Great, a Western conqueror of the East, stands out because he embodied everything the writers yearned for: the unification of East and West and equality and respect for all races and creeds.<sup>56</sup>

These ideas mesh with Chakrabarty's call for the 'provincialisation of Europe', which marked the moment when historians ceased to see Europe as the sole theoretical sovereign over all histories and as the point of departure for the subaltern rewriting of its own history.<sup>57</sup> Nonetheless, in our case, the sovereignty of the West remained unquestioned, and its paradigms, categories, and diagnoses remained intact. Rather, the adoption of the aetiology of progress and civilization inevitably located Europe as a teleological endpoint.<sup>58</sup> However, while aware of Talal Asad's argument of the unavoidable coercion and seduction involved in the transformation from the traditional to the modern, and Walter Benjamin's irresistible storm of progress, these historians' choice of interpretation of history is still crucial. These writers sought a historical path where East and West could coexist by recognizing the virtues of the Other. In other words, this was a plea for historiographic equality within a Western discourse, rather than a claim for superiority or even a challenge to the existing historical structure.

Both Palestinian and Jewish writers used racial categories in their history textbooks. Instead of contesting the racial paradigm, these texts reflect an adaptation of the Western hegemonic discourse. Although both national narratives chose a similar historical starting point, this similar 'imagined ancient past' was only useful as long as it served the national cause. The struggle between Canaanites and Hebrews over Canaan was one of many

<sup>54</sup> Ziadeh, *al-'Ālam al-qadīm*, 146.

<sup>55</sup> Hacham, *Taḥsīr*, 5–6.

<sup>56</sup> See Nadal 1923, vol. 2, 124; al-Barghuthi and Totah, 51; Hacham, *Taḥsīr*, 167. Alexander's image appears on the cover of Darwazah's *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm*, and his story is given much more coverage than other figures.

<sup>57</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Postcoloniality'.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern*, 147.



ancient battlegrounds reminding both the Arab and the Jewish student that this land was made for him and not the Other.

### Colonization of Canaan

As of the eighteenth century, the biblical story of the colonization of Canaan by the Hebrews and the annihilation of the Canaanites was primarily used by European enlightenment scholars for the critique or apologetics of colonial conquest or expansion. During the German Enlightenment, the colonization of the Hebrews was couched in terms of the moral and rational justification of a superior nation and race which was reclaiming what was rightfully theirs.<sup>59</sup> This centuries-old polemic took on symbolic importance in Mandate Palestine (Canaan) for obvious reasons. For the Zionist narrative, these 'triumphs made a lasting impression on the Israeli tradition' because the Israelite tribes fought 'in that great spirit of courage, unique to a young people conquering countries'.<sup>60</sup> The colonization of Canaan was paralleled to the modern return to Zion.

Pre-conflict Arab sources remained loyal to the traditional biblical narrative, where the conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews was a triumph 'under the grace of God'.<sup>61</sup> In contrast, Palestinian historians described it as an ancient clash of civilizations, and identified themselves with the Canaanites. This clash symbolized the embodiment of a Palestinian historicity, territoriality, and proto-national community, and provided the kernel for the narrative of a civilization that was destined to perish under a foreign occupier. This departed from the Egyptian and Lebanese emphasis on Pharaonic and Phoenician national and civilizational ancestry in both states' curricula, in that nationalizing the Canaanite story articulated the uniqueness of the Palestinian story.

In most textbooks the identification of the Hebrews and Canaanites with modern Jews and Arabs in Palestine seems clear.<sup>62</sup> Although the Hebrews

<sup>59</sup> Ofri Ilani, *Ha-hipuś aḥar ha-'am ha-'Ivri*, 81–105; Shavit and Reinhartz, *Daryin*, 277–8.

<sup>60</sup> Simhoni, *Divre yeme yiśra'el*, 28. Similar in Zuta and Sternberg, *Qadmoniyot*, 31.

<sup>61</sup> In particular the descriptions of the Israelite wars against the Canaanite coalition: Yūsuf Dibs, *Kitāb tārikh sūriyah*, vol. 2 (Beirut: al-Maṭba'ah al-'umūmiyah, 1895), 1, 189–90, 206–7. Bustani's entry on the Hebrews is also based on the biblical narration: Suleiman, Najib, and Nasib Bustānī, *Kitāb dā'irat*, 662–3.

<sup>62</sup> The one exception is Ruhi's book: Husayn Ruhi, *al-Mukhtaṣar fī al-tārikh* (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at al-ṣabāh, 1922).

are depicted as a nation returning to their homeland from exile (*ghurbah*),<sup>63</sup> Palestine is described as having been forcefully taken (*ighṭiṣabuhā*) as a fatherland (*mawṭinan lahum*)<sup>64</sup> from its native inhabitants, after the Israelite invasion (*ghazū*) and following the destruction (*tadmīr*) of Canaanite cities after facing a popular mobilization and 'strong resistance' (*muqāwamah*).<sup>65</sup> The questions addressed by Darwazah to the students at the end of the chapter emphasize the Hebrews' colonialism: Was Palestine devoid of inhabitants? Why did the people of Palestine refuse to allow the Jews to enter to their country?<sup>66</sup> The ancient drama of the Canaanites was indeed revitalized.

To further highlight the unjust nature of this conquest, Ziadeh undermines the Hebrews' precedence of *tawḥīd*, mentioning the building of temples for other gods and distinguishing between God and Jehovah, who was worshipped with austerity and simplicity, 'a brutal, cruel tribal God' (*qāsin, jāfin*).<sup>67</sup> While in most Arab textbooks there is a general consensus that the Jews were the first to believe in one god (*tawḥīd*),<sup>68</sup> this belief is said to be weak and untrue in comparison with that of the Muslims, who did not succumb to idolatry.<sup>69</sup>

Arabic sources emphasized the contrast between the wandering Bedouin tribes of the Hebrews, who worshipped their God in a tent, and the Canaanites' 'thriving civilization' (*madaniyah zāhirah*). Later, the Israelites left their tents and adopted the Canaanite national language (*lughatahum al-qawmiyah*) and culture.<sup>70</sup> While nomadism was usually defined as a noble invention of the Arabs, here the contrast between an advanced, sedentary civilization and a primitive, nomadic culture illustrated the unjust conquest of the land by a people who simply did not deserve it. In the ancient days of Canaan, the natives were the advanced ones, and the Hebrews were the savages.

The dangers of assimilation and racial or cultural impurity is a prominent notion in earlier and later periods in Jewish history. In Zionist historiography, racial and cultural purity meant national cohesion. The sign of cultural

<sup>63</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 20. Sa'īd al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat al-qadīma*, 50.

<sup>64</sup> Zubyān, *Zubdat*, 40.

<sup>65</sup> Lawrence, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 18, 20; Ḥarami, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 47, 65; Yusuf, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-ibtidā'ī*, 19–20; al-'Abidi, *Tārīkh al-'arab*, 8; al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 48–9; Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm*, 92–3.

<sup>66</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm*, 89.

<sup>67</sup> Ziadeh, *al-'Ālam al-qadīm*, 93–4; for other uses of 'Jehovah' instead of 'God', Lawrence, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 61.

<sup>68</sup> Darwazah, *Durūs al-tārīkh al-qadīm*, 88; al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 21.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 46.

<sup>70</sup> Lawrence, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 19; al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filastīn*, 7–8; al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*, 49; See also Ḥarami, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, 65.

superiority and the Canaanization of the Hebrews is interpreted in the Hebrew texts as a source of peril for the Hebrews, who 'stopped heeding their racial purity'.<sup>71</sup>

Intercultural ties are also portrayed as perilous, such that any kind of cultural dialogue is considered an abandonment of the genuine essence of the people in favour of an ersatz foreign culture.<sup>72</sup> Shlomo Horowitz depicted the Haskalah movement as an artificial attempt to "reform" the Jewish people so it could find favour and grace in the eyes of other peoples.<sup>73</sup> This is how the close ties between Jews and gentiles in Germany at the time of Jewish emancipation are portrayed. The 'court Jew', one of the symbols of Jewish relations with European polities, is depicted as a marginalized Jew who has a desire to rule. The teacher Zvi Lichtenstein even directed the reader to Feuchtwanger's *Jew Süß* (published in 1925 in German and in Hebrew in 1929) to understand the nature of this wealthy, powerful Jewish community.<sup>74</sup>

Total and Barghuthi criticized the exclusive racial propensities of the Jewish people and their religious prohibitions against assimilation because 'they are the chosen people of God according to their claim and the rest are gentile nations (*umam*), and this I swear is the culmination of extreme racism' (*mutanāhī al-ta'aṣṣub al-jinsī*).<sup>75</sup> This interpretation of the Jewish prohibition against intermarriage was a recurrent anti-Semitic theme that targeted the Jews as the ultimate other. However, here this criticism might also be interpreted as a manifesto by the colonial subject that people who claim to speak in the language of modernity and tolerance, namely the Jews, are in fact backwards and antiliberal.

In contrast to the shared racial beginnings, the colonization of Canaan in history textbooks is defined as the ancient inception of the conflict over Palestine, a mirror image of the current reality. As such, it was stripped of its religious meaning, left God aside, and turned into a national conflict between the worthy and unworthy. It was repositioned as a story of success and a source of pride for one nation and an historic warning to the other.

<sup>71</sup> Simhoni, *Divre yeme yiśra'el*, 29; Brawer, *Toldot*, 116.

<sup>72</sup> Jacob Katz, *Toldot yiśra'el ve-ha-āmim*, Vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Sifre Tarshish, 1944), 15–19.

<sup>73</sup> Shlomo Horowitz, *Ḳitsur toldot yiśra'el*, Vol. 2 (Haifa: Bet ha-sefer ha-re'ali ha-'Ivri, 1938), 87.

<sup>74</sup> Zvi Lichtenstein, *Shi'urim be-divre-yeme-yiśra'el*, vol. 2 (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1942), 150–3.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Total, *Tārīkh filasṭīn*, 11.

## Conclusion

Jewish and Arab nationalism translated and adopted a hegemonic Western racial discourse as a therapeutic emancipatory idea in a process that began in the second half of the nineteenth century. This conceptual and intellectual assimilation of Western racial discourse enabled a place in history for both national movements and, therefore, received ample attention in history textbooks.

If 'in Zionism, as in other projects of similar nature, the authority of history replaced the authority of god', there may be value in discussing the hierarchy of these histories.<sup>76</sup> The conflict over Palestine and over the rightful *kushan* of the land made 'Semitic' affinities between Arabs and Jews redundant and anecdotal. It is evident that Arab and Jewish educators had something else in mind. The next chapter examines the institutionalization of these themes and their translation into a systematic pedagogical doctrine.

<sup>76</sup> Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism*, 96.

## 6

# Teaching History

When the British occupied what was soon to become Palestine, modernized and secularized history syllabi in different phases of development already existed in certain Ottoman, missionary, philanthropic, and Hebrew schools. The postwar decades under British rule intensified this process through the centralization and supervision of the education systems, the standardization of the history syllabus, the introduction of matriculation examinations, and the proliferation of modern history textbooks written by local educators.

Although the syllabi differed across private, mission, and government schools, the Western model dominated in all of them. Overall, the history class in Hebrew and Arab educational settings revolved around great men and their wars. Scant attention was paid to nonelite populations, and women were assigned an anecdotal and marginal role. These syllabi revolved around chronology rather than themes or dilemmas; they were a compulsory shopping list of knowledge. Arab and Jewish historical evolution was studied primarily with respect to their ties, clashes, and influences on the Greek, Hellenic, Roman, and later Western European cultures and societies of the past. Once Israel and Arabia ceased to be the centre of Jewish and Arab existence, their history was framed as a constant dialogue with the West, excluding all other histories. There was no mention of East Asia, Africa, or North American civilizations and their histories, revolutions, inventions, developments, or even the influences of some of these civilizations on Islam or Judaism (apart from a marginal discussion about the modernization of Japan, again in relation to the West). If mentioned, these did not appear as active subjects but as a target for Western colonialism and imperialism, which was depicted uncritically as one aspect of European hegemony over the entire world.

This chapter takes these assumptions as self-evident in the teaching of modern history. Instead, it examines the particularities of education in Palestine that did emerge, and the ways the colonial, Arab and Hebrew pedagogic encounter affected its evolution. Specifically, it explores the pedagogical roots of the Department's curriculum, the historical evolution of the history syllabus, as well as the similarities and differences between the

Hebrew and Arab history syllabi. We will look closely at the pedagogy of history instruction and its contradictory trajectories, the presence or absence of history textbooks in schools, and their usage in the classroom.

## Archaeology of the Curriculum

Public education 'has everywhere been Janus-faced, at once the very fount of enlightenment and liberty, and a vehicle for control and political socialisation' reconciling freedom and order.<sup>1</sup> Durkheim, whose works influenced key educators and intellectuals in the Arab world, argued that the role of public education in the nation state is embodied in the curriculum which re-enforces social solidarity, norms, rules, and the division of labour in society. The ideal school according to Durkheim 'possesses everything it needs to awaken in the child the feeling of solidarity, of group life'. History instruction was central because it can 'imbue children with the collective spirit... By making the history of their country come alive... we can at the same time make them live in close intimacy with the collective consciousness'.<sup>2</sup>

The state, according to Durkheim, behaves like a 'social brain' whose functions are to create representations for the collectivity. Bourdieu noted that these representations were of a class society rather than a cohesive harmonious body.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, curricula should be examined not as a mere table of contents for a certain semester, but as a reproduction site of an ideological, cultural, and economic superstructure.<sup>4</sup> In order to fully understand the 'essence' of a curriculum, we need to ask: whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organized this way, for this particular group? And finally, what is absent from this compendium and why?<sup>5</sup>

At first glance, the answers to these questions seem simple because the vast majority of modern curricula around the world over resemble each other. Modern education meant a particular curriculum and division of courses, and Hebrew and late Ottoman Arab education were not exempt from this process that was initiated in the mid-nineteenth century and

<sup>1</sup> Andy Green, *Education and State*, 179; For an historical survey on the establishment of state-controlled education systems, see Andy Green, 'Education and State Formation in Europe'.

<sup>2</sup> Salmouni, 'Pedagogies', 163–4, 218; Mahmoudi, *Taha Husain's Education*; Émile Durkheim, *Moral Education*, 248, 278.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility*, xviii.

<sup>4</sup> Damla Kentli Fulya, 'Comparison of Hidden Curriculum Theories'.

<sup>5</sup> Michael W. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, viii–7.

culminating under British rule.<sup>6</sup> These shared features in form and content took on multiple meanings rooted in diverse epistemic traditions of interpretations, which were further complicated by shifting centres of power, and challenged by a changing market of export and import of ideas. The more one investigates the Department and the Va'ad's curricula, the more difficult it is to determine its nature and rationales.

As a course, history was never as important as language (Arabic or Hebrew), foreign languages, or mathematics (see tables on pages 175–176). Rawda College for example included one hour of history and geography in the fourth and final elementary grade, whereas Qur'an, Arabic, English, arithmetic, and geometry were taught seven, eight, five, and five weekly hours, respectively. The course continued through the fifth year of secondary schooling and overall, and after six years of study, a student would have taken twenty-nine weekly hours of history, compared with thirty-seven, forty-six, and thirty-seven weekly hours in English, Arabic, and maths and geometry, respectively.<sup>7</sup>

The protocols of the 1920 Va'ad education committee show a similar tendency. A consensus was reached by the committee that the new Hebrew school would be based on labour and action rather than verbal and intellectual education. The teaching of the Talmud, for centuries the foundation of Jewish education, was considered by one committee member to be a 'burden' and unfit for child development, and was excluded from elementary education.<sup>8</sup> The committee's debate on the teaching of history was third in importance after covering the handicrafts (*melechet-yad*), Bible, and Talmud courses.

Academic knowledge of history was perceived as less important for the training of modern citizens than more 'useful and practical' courses or conversely, courses that had more direct cultural-national significance, such as Qur'an/Bible and Arabic/Hebrew courses. As in other Western education systems, the Hebrew system and the colonial Department considered instruction in the national language and the secularized reading of the Holy Scriptures to be crucial for cultural and national revival (interpreted differently by the colonists, the Arabs and the Zionists), thus demonstrating the

<sup>6</sup> See surveys of Ottoman, Jewish and Egyptian school curricula in Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 71–3; Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization*; and Ahmed Hassan Ebeid, 'National Policy', 426, 430.

<sup>7</sup> *Barnāmaj madrasat rawdat al-ma'arif al-waṭāniyah 1924–1925* (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at dār al-aytām al-islāmīyah, 1924).

<sup>8</sup> Va'ad ha-ḥinukh, *Tamtsit ha-proṭokolim*, 20–1.

adaptation of a Western educational prototype to a particular national trajectory, a 'local dialect of modernity'.<sup>9</sup>

In this curricular hierarchy, however, history was far from marginal; historical themes were recurrent in literature and religion classes, and dominant in Qur'an and Bible reading, language courses, and school ceremonies and activities. In these courses, the historical narrative was omnipresent, echoing either in the background or, in some cases, setting the tone and framework.

### Tabulating Palestine

The Palestinian curriculum introduced by the British, first under the military rule and later under the civil administration, was an amalgam of the British colonial pedagogical experience and late Ottoman and Egyptian curricula, which themselves already incorporated French, British, American, and other Western influences.<sup>10</sup>

From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, education emerged as a beneficial apparatus for social engineering, gradually turning the Egyptian and Ottoman rulers from mere sovereigns into educators. Educator intellectuals, ascending in their intellectual pedagogical scope and political-administrative power, debated and shaped their nations' curricula and syllabi for the production of a model citizen and society. For them, Western education overshadowed its deprived Eastern twin by its dynamism and scientific rationalism.<sup>11</sup> However, their insistence on cultural authenticity and scholarly borrowing rather than direct emulation resulted in the creation of two distinctive education systems in Egypt and across the Empire.

The development of Egyptian public education was the outcome of various intertwined processes. After a century of industrialization, modernization, and a cultural *Nahda*, the core features of this system were heavily structured within the push and pull negotiations between British imperialism and a developing educated middle class. Egyptian education under Douglas Dunlop, the British adviser to the Education Ministry in Egypt (1894–1906), went through a systematic process of Anglicanization,

<sup>9</sup> Watenpaugh, *Being Modern*, 14.

<sup>10</sup> The following analysis is a critical expansion of Tibawi's reading of the colonial curriculum: Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 78–9.

<sup>11</sup> Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism', 161–2; Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans*, 1–34; Avner Wishnitzer, 'Teaching Time'; Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 23–67.



so that their system would be taught strictly by British personnel and would make the teaching of English more important than French and Arabic.<sup>12</sup> This policy triggered nationalist discontent that led to a dramatic administrative shift in 1906 with the appointment of Sa'd Zaghlul as Minister of Education. Curricular changes were soon to follow that made Arabic the only language of instruction and excluded foreign languages.<sup>13</sup>

The Egyptization of Egyptian education did not however affect the dominance of Anglo-American pedagogy.<sup>14</sup> Rather, it prompted a pedagogical quest for parallels to the perceived strengths of the British-American systems. Egyptian pedagogues, like those who devised the Hamidian curriculum, emphasized the role of morals and the virtues of Islam in the curriculum to counter what was perceived as the spiritual emptiness reigning in the schools that was seen as a hurdle to national revival. History instruction was an essential form of leverage in this pedagogy, and Egyptian history teaching in general and history textbooks in particular had noticeable influence on education in Palestine.

The Ottoman state based its 1869 Regulations for Public Education on the French educational model. From that time on and until the collapse of the Empire, Ottoman education sought to create a sustainable equilibrium between modernity and tradition within the curriculum. This balancing act was a response to the growing pressure, influence, and challenges posed by Western education from within and beyond the physical borders of the Empire.<sup>15</sup>

The reformed Ottoman curricula, even under Hamidian rule, used non-Muslim school curricula as a model. Striving to unite a diverse, multicultural, multiethnic empire, late Ottoman education went beyond Islamic identity and unity. Its thrust was the promotion of an Ottoman citizenship and identity that could overcome ethno-nationalist tensions.<sup>16</sup> Education under the Young Turks stressed the importance of progress, modernity, freedom, equality, loyalty, obedience, and sacrifice even further. The Balkan Wars marked the shift to a more ethnic nationalism and Turkishness and a growing suspicion of the West and its values.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Michael Richard Van Vleck, 'British Educational Policy', 145–7.

<sup>13</sup> Vleck, 195.

<sup>14</sup> Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism', 350, 355, 199–200.

<sup>15</sup> 'Education for the Empire', 206–207, see also 17–18; Emine O. Evered, *The Politics of Late Ottoman Education*, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Evered, *The Politics of Late Ottoman Education*, 28–9, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism', 151, 721–22, 816–18.

Both pre- and post-1908 syllabi focused on classic Ottoman history with limited emphasis on European history or Western civilization, and expanded its scope on the Empire's decline and the age of reform.<sup>18</sup> The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) curricularists apparently continued the existing approach by focusing on early Islamic history and classic Ottoman history. They presented the latter as the last leader of the Islamic nation, and promoted a notion of community and brotherhood.<sup>19</sup>

A detailed comparison of the Ottoman and Egyptian and the Palestinian curricula reveals a noticeable affinity to the Egyptian model that nevertheless incorporated a few Ottoman singularities. Morality and civics courses that were considered central to the Ottoman curricula were marginalized in the Palestinian curriculum, but both devoted ample space to the rise of Islamic civilization. Conversely, the primal focus on the Ottomans switched to the Arabs, whereas Western civilization moved from the margins to the centre of the colonial Palestinian syllabus. Naturally, Turkish or Egyptian ethnicization of ancient history did not find its way into the Palestine syllabus. The importance of this trend lies, however, in its influence as a method and its mutation into an Arab national history.

The Egyptian influence came with the graduates of the Egyptian education administration who dominated the early days of the Palestine Department of Education, thus bringing British experience from Egypt and India, as well to Palestine.<sup>20</sup> Captain Tadman, who headed the Department in its first two years, had served in the Egyptian Education Department, and Bowman served there under Dunlop. Bowman severely criticized the Dunlopian system for its rejection of creativity, its demands for strict obedience to regulations and the syllabus, which were depicted as 'killing to the soul'.<sup>21</sup>

Another colonial educational experience that influenced the energy and vision brought to Palestine can be traced to Bowman and Farrell in Iraq. Iraq was Bowman's baptism of fire as Director of Education within a fragile colonial framework. In Bowman's eyes, his superior in Iraq, the colonial administrator Colonel Arnold Wilson, was everything Dunlop was not. Bowman admired Wilson not only for his intellectual acumen, but also

<sup>18</sup> Salmoni, 785–6.

<sup>19</sup> Salmoni, 'Pedagogies of Patriotism,' 786–7; Ünal, *II. Meşrutiyet öncesi Osmanlı Rüşdiyeleri, 1897–1907*, 47–9, 84–6.

<sup>20</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 78–9.

<sup>21</sup> Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 68.

for his ability to listen and respond to queries and pleas from the various sects.<sup>22</sup> At least in his own mind, Bowman adopted Wilson's approach, believing that the flexibility of the educational administration was the key to its sustainability. He adjusted the curriculum according to religious and sectarian lines, and conducted ongoing negotiations with local clerics for their approval and support.<sup>23</sup> While preparing an Iraqi syllabus for the first time, Bowman also commissioned the writing of an Iraqi history textbook in 1919 that would offer a unifying narrative of the former vilayets connecting ancient and modern 'Iraqi' history and emphasizing the benefits of British occupation.<sup>24</sup> Bowman entrusted this mission to Father Anastas al-Karmali (b. Baghdad, 1866–1947), a Carmelite priest, polyglot, educator, and esteemed scholar of the Arabic language.<sup>25</sup> He was also a trained priest of the Catholic faith, which represented a tiny fraction of the Iraqi population, a natural colonial selection.

In Iraq, Bowman made the curricular transition from Ottoman Turkish to Arabic.<sup>26</sup> In Palestine, the curricular transition was initiated prior to Bowman's arrival under Tadman. It was clear for the new administrators that the new curriculum would be taught in Arabic rather than Turkish or more importantly, English, and that the Arab Muslim culture would dominate its syllabi, a reality that already existed in Egypt but differed from other British colonies. The fact that Tadman's door was open to prominent national educators such as Sakakini to discuss the pedagogical future of education in Palestine and the appointment of the latter as principal of the only institute of higher learning in the country is another case in point.<sup>27</sup>

Although based on the Egyptian model, Bowman's Iraqi curriculum differed from it in significant ways, and it was only natural for him to implement it in Palestine, as well, because the country demanded a similar educational transition. The Palestinian curriculum bears clear resemblance to the Iraqi one in its division of hours and courses taught.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Bowman, 171–4; These feelings were apparently mutual, Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq*, 200.

<sup>23</sup> Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 194.

<sup>24</sup> Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History and the Nation-State*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> *Al-Adib*, no. 3, 1 March 1947, 46–7.

<sup>26</sup> See Bowman Proposed Educational Policy, cited in John Joseph Diskin, 'The 'Genesis'', 284.

<sup>27</sup> Moed, 'Hinukh be-tsel'. <sup>28</sup> Diskin, 'The 'Genesis'', 470.

## DISTRIBUTION OF LESSONS.

SUBJECT	1st CLASS 1	2nd CLASS 2	3rd CLASS 3	4th CLASS 4	5th CLASS 5	6th CLASS 6
Arabic language	11	12	9	9	8	8
Arabic penmanship						
Arithmetic	5	5	5	5	5	5
Geography	2	3	2	2	2	2
History						
Nature Study	2	2	1	1	—	—
Hygiene	1	1	1	1	—	—
Science	—	—	—	—	2	2
Drawing	2	2	1	1	1	1
Manual Work	2	2	1	1	—	—
Geometry	—	—	—	—	2	2
English	—	—	8	8	9	9
English penmanship						
Translation						
Religion	5	5	4	4	3	3
Physical Training	—	3	1	1	1	1
	30	35	35	35	35	35

NOTE:— No distribution of lessons in the preparatory class is laid down as universally applicable. The subjects to be taught are Arabic, Arithmetic, History and Geography, Handwork, Religion. About half the lesson time should be given to Arabic. The methods used in the kindergarten classes of the girls' schools should be followed so far as possible. Details are left to the discretion of district inspector headmasters and teachers.

**Photo 11** Distribution of Lessons, 1925 Elementary School Syllabus, Department of Education.

**Table 1.** Va'ad ha-ḥinukh, Educational Committee of the Zionist Federation, Curriculum for boys, 1923

Departments	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Subjects	23 Hours	23 Hours						
Bible			6	5	6	5	5	4
Hebrew			7	7	6	5	5	5
Mishnah							2	2
Moledet			7					
Geography				4	2	2	2	3
Biology					3	3	3	3
History						2	2	3
Arithmetic, Geometry, Accounting			4	4	5	5	5	5
Drawing, Painting				2	2	2	2	2
Singing			2	2	2	2	1	1
Garden Work				2	2	2	2	1
Gymnastics			2	2	2	2	1	1
English					4	4	4	4
Total			28	28	34	34	34	34

Moledet in the third department includes Drawing and Garden Work.

## The History Syllabus

The elementary school syllabi published by the Department of Education presented a comprehensive curriculum which included a schematic description of all courses. Initially, the Department differentiated between two types of schools. The town schools' curriculum was a seven-year programme that started with a preparatory class, followed by six elementary classes. The village schools' curriculum was a four-year programme composed of a preparatory class and three elementary classes. There was no curriculum for the village schools before 1929, and teachers were told to adapt the syllabus 'so far as local conditions and the special circumstances of each school allow'.<sup>29</sup>

The village schools tended to have a 'rural bias' that emphasized practical modern agriculture and avoided subjects that were considered impractical for the villagers such as English. Bowman, like his colonial-educators

<sup>29</sup> 1925 Syllabus, 5.

predecessors, feared that mass emigration of educated youth from villages to the cities to look for clerical jobs would deplete the countryside and overpopulate the cities.<sup>30</sup> '[O]nce the village life was attractive, clean, healthy, good water supply, literary lectures, magic lantern...', Bowman told a school principal in Tarshiha, 'the boys would not want to go away...'.<sup>31</sup>

This didactic and conceptual separation between rural and urban education should not be fully ascribed to colonial interests. During the same period, this separation was dominant in Egyptian pedagogy and primarily served as a vehicle for the preservation of the socioeconomic status quo, and a way to disseminate conservative values that would connect the *fellaḥin* to their land rather than to revolutionary ideas of social or political change.<sup>32</sup> The Department's problematic vision of infusing literacy and progress via the village schools had the contradictory aims of providing universal education while preserving social stratification.<sup>33</sup> Beyond these logistics and financial wherewithal, the differences between the village and urban syllabi also made it very challenging for the few village students who were able to pursue their studies in town schools.

During the 1920s the Department of Education published four full primary school syllabi. The 1921 town and village syllabus presented a general outline of the history and geography course. The 1925 and 1927 versions, which were practically identical, presented a detailed syllabus and the 1929 version for village schools defined a four-year programme.<sup>34</sup> During the 1940s a draft was written for a new history and geography syllabus for the sixth and seventh elementary classes, but its circulation remains unknown.<sup>35</sup> The detailed and thorough work on the curriculum in 1925, a year of relative stability that enabled a project of this magnitude, was not equalled until the end of the Mandate such that the same programme with only minor tweaks was used. It is no coincidence that the only formal primary syllabus drafted by the Va'ad during the Mandate was published in 1923.

<sup>30</sup> Humphrey Bowman, 'Rural Education in the Near and Middle East'. See also, *ibid*, 'Some Aspects of Rural Education in Palestine', BM, 2/6/149, MECA.

<sup>31</sup> Bowman's diary, 11 March 1932, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>32</sup> Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work*, 71–2.

<sup>33</sup> Miller, *Government and Society*, 152–7. See also in Abdulqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 134–5; Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 79–80.

<sup>34</sup> As far as I have been able to ascertain, there was no Arabic version of the 1921 syllabus or an English version of the 1929 village syllabus.

<sup>35</sup> The syllabus incorporated a detailed history syllabus of Arab history for the sixth grade, which included 'the Arab world in the twentieth century' and 'the great war and the Arab world', both of which were not mentioned in the 1925 Department syllabus, P3059/21, ISA. The Supreme Muslim Council published its own primary school syllabus in 1942 that also resembles the 1925 text with minor adjustments: Idārat taftish al-madāris al-islāmīyah, *Manhaj al-ta'lim al-ibtidā'i* (Jerusalem: al-Majlis al-islāmī al-a'lā, 1942).

A noticeable change took place after the appointment of De Bunsen as Director of Education, and it marked a shift in the relationship between the school and the administration that conveyed a message of dialogue and cooperation. In a radio interview, De Bunsen expressed his determination to revolutionize the Department's *raison d'être*. The power and initiative, he explained, was not in the hands of colonial bureaucracy, but in the hands of teachers.<sup>36</sup>

In the first and probably the last issue of a new journal for government teachers, De Bunsen highlighted the need for constant communication between the Department and its teachers. De Bunsen understood that the old syllabus, which corresponded to what remained of the old order, needed to be replaced and ordered the writing of a new syllabus. In an open letter to all government teachers, the Director of Education asked for their input and was straightforward about the old syllabus: 'I urge you not to follow it as you would a law (*kamā yutābi' al-qanūn*), as you are free to draw on your personal experience and observations'. De Bunsen emphasized that teachers would be given latitude in their teaching method (*ijtihād*), and could broaden (*tawassu'*) or narrow (*taqlīl*) its scope.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately, De Bunsen's vision for reform failed to materialize, and a new syllabus was never published. For twenty-three years, the Department of Education could not muster the time, energy, will, or resources to write a new syllabus or revise the old one. Bowman and Farrell wrote or supervised the successive programmes and perhaps did not see a justification for changing them. The administration probably decided it was best to let sleeping dogs lie in volatile times. For the British administration, it was an educational Catch 22. Pedagogically, the system could only develop through constant amelioration and adaptation of the curriculum, but bringing up the subject could have led to an inexplicable educational deadlock.

The identity of the syllabus authors remains unknown, although it is mentioned that 'persons mainly connected with schools outside the government sphere',<sup>38</sup> that is, primarily mission school personnel, took part. There are a few likely contributors including members of the Palestine Board for Higher Studies (PBHS) such as George Antonius. Farrell was highly invested in the teaching of history in secondary schools, and was a matriculation

<sup>36</sup> The complete interview appeared in *al-Muntada*, 28 March 1947, 6–7.

<sup>37</sup> Bernard De-Bunsen, "Nashrat' idārat al-ma'ārif", 2 July 1947, P3060/8, ISA. See also a report in *Filastin*, 8 July 1947.

<sup>38</sup> 1921 Syllabus, 5.

examiner and headed the History Sub-Committee of the PBHS.<sup>39</sup> Another possible candidate is Bowman, who read history at Oxford and dotted his memoirs with historical insights and history book reports. Bowman hoped to set up a more flexible and cooperative approach to the curriculum, which involved including local educators in the writing of the syllabus.<sup>40</sup> This spirit is manifested in the preface to the 1925 syllabus: 'It is not desired that the teacher's liberty to choose and develop his own methods should be restricted by too close an adherence to minute instructions.'<sup>41</sup>

The phrasing of the 1925 Arabic syllabus, by contrast to the 1921 version, implies that perhaps Khalil al-Sakakini and Is'af al-Nashashibi, two consecutive inspectors of Arabic and authors of Arabic textbooks, contributed to it. Al-Nashashibi, the 'gatekeeper of the Arabic language in Palestine', was known for being a stickler for correct grammar, his sanctification of classical Arabic, and for using so sophisticated a level of language that even the highly educated failed to understand him.<sup>42</sup> Sakakini was known for his vision of modernizing the language and his educational commitment to making it accessible and enjoyable to learn.

Al-Nashashibi's approach reverberates in the rigid language of the 1921 Arabic syllabus whose aim is 'to accustom the students to read, write and understand *correct Arabic*.'<sup>43</sup> It contrasts with the more flexible phrasing in 1925 stressing that 'grammar is only a means to an end' and that 'vulgarism and provincialism in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary must be carefully eradicated' in order to 'interest the pupil in the classical and modern literature of the Arab nation.'<sup>44</sup> Sakakini, whose Arabic textbooks were widely used in government schools, was appointed in September 1926 to supervise Arabic instruction and mentions in his memoirs that he was engaged in syllabi writing.<sup>45</sup> His views also permeated the course objectives which aimed to teach a 'easy and correct style which is both in accord with the tradition of the classical writers and adapted to the needs of modern life.'<sup>46</sup>

In step with contemporary pedagogy, the history and geography syllabus emphasized the involvement of all five senses in the educational process.

<sup>39</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 116.

<sup>40</sup> Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 68.

<sup>41</sup> Department of Education, *1925 Syllabus*, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 41.

<sup>43</sup> *1921 Syllabus*, 9, (emphasis added).

<sup>44</sup> *1925 Syllabus*, 8–9.

<sup>45</sup> Sakakini started writing his well-known textbooks for Arabic instruction, *al-Jadid*, in 1924, after reading British and American didactic literature his son sent him from America. Moed, 'Ḥinukh be-tsel', 184–5, 189, 194–5.

<sup>46</sup> *1925 Syllabus*, 8.



The syllabus encouraged short field trips and the use of a sand table, plasticine models, and photos of personages, all meant to turn instruction into an interactive experience. This methodology paralleled the British educational discourse of the time and could be seen in different publications.<sup>47</sup> The 1921 syllabus went as far as advising the use of *The Times Illustrated* or *The Graphic* magazines to make the classes 'more graphic', which were easy to obtain in Britain but in no way accessible to Arab teachers in Palestine.

The highly detailed history syllabus, which received more attention than any other course, is indicative of the level of control and supervision the Department wanted to enforce, in contrast, for example, to the flexible history guidelines in the British educational system.<sup>48</sup> This is suggestive of the dialectical nature of hegemony since the less detailed syllabus in British education implied a greater hegemonic presence and, therefore, required less detail. While on the surface the British approach was open and flexible, the texts discussing the teaching of history seem to reflect a very clear, precise idea of what should be taught, and what should not, without administrative interference. This clarity, consensus, and tradition in the teaching of the course are the manifestations of a functional ideological apparatus that was nonexistent in Palestine. A 'hands off' administrative policy in relation to the syllabus was therefore impossible in British eyes. This detail reflects weakness rather than strength, anxiety rather than assurance.

The village syllabus that consisted of only four classes adhered to the same syllabus as the seven-year programme: it had an abridged civics class that excluded a detailed presentation of political institutions. Prior to 1929, the year of its publication, no specific syllabus was issued for the village schools although they represented the bulk of government education. This did not mean that the 1929 syllabus was innovative as compared to the 1925 text. On the contrary, the history and geography syllabi were simply a compressed version of the latter, reproducing the same instructions with summaries of the topics. Whereas the 1925 syllabus seemed overambitious for its seven-year programme, teaching it in four seemed impossible and was thus likely to be viewed as irrelevant to the village teacher.

The history course for schools in urban areas was divided into two three-year cycles and a final year. In the first two years:

the teacher will confine himself mainly to Arab personages... In the three years together, an introduction is given to both general Arab history and

<sup>47</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 128.

<sup>48</sup> Harte, 115.

the history of Palestine with a few necessary references to other nations and personages, principally those who are of importance in Arab and local history.<sup>49</sup>

The second cycle focuses on regional geography 'and a connected general history of the world from the earliest times to the present' and 'stress is laid upon the geography and history of Arab countries'.<sup>50</sup> In the third year, the history of ancient civilizations is taught 'in relation to Palestine', and the fourth year focuses on the history of the Arabs 'from the 'Age of Ignorance' (inclusive) to the present day'. The fifth year focuses on medieval and modern Europe, and the final year is dedicated to the revision of both courses and a civics class covering the development of political institutions primarily in the Western world (ancient Greece to Western Europe) and an outline of institutions in Palestine.<sup>51</sup>

The history and geography syllabi reflect an historical period of transition, an unclear educational ethos, and, therefore, the reproduction of conceptual inconsistencies and contradictions. The 1925 history and geography syllabi mention the word 'Palestine' twenty-four times. The second cycle of the history course is devised 'with special relation to Palestine', and specific events and personages are mentioned in the context of local history, students are asked to draw maps of Palestine, and in the civics class, Palestine is studied as an administrative unit. Thus, through the syllabus, the British were apparently attempting to historicize Palestine and create a sense of a separate Palestinian identity.<sup>52</sup>

However, if this was one of the objectives of the syllabus, as a result of British cautiousness or ambiguity, Palestine simply emerges as a technical, bureaucratic unit and, in some cases, a random crossroads of important historical events. Palestine as a shared unifying notion, an entity of particular historicity, does not exist in the syllabus and is linked to Syria five times in the syllabus. In the concluding year under the 'History of Syria and Palestine', a 'revision in detail of the history of Palestine and Syria' is suggested, stressing the importance of *bilad al-sham* rather than Palestine, a concept and vision that the British did all they could to jettison into oblivion. The Department's attempt to achieve a compromise between the nationalists' own preference for the inclusion of Palestine in Syria and the Mandate's

<sup>49</sup> Department of Education, 1925 *Syllabus*, 28.

<sup>50</sup> Department of Education, 29.

<sup>51</sup> Department of Education, 37–44.

<sup>52</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 121–3.

goal of turning Palestine into a valid territorial unit resulted in the elimination of both territorialities, which neither intended.

Greater Syria, rather than Palestine, remained a source of geographic-historical reference and territoriality until the end of the Mandate in history textbooks as well.<sup>53</sup> This was explicitly stressed by Barghuthi and Totah: 'Palestine was, and still is, part of Syria, they are not separated by a natural border and therefore not by racial (*jinsi*) or historical elements.'<sup>54</sup> Colonial inconsistency could also explain the publication of an article in the government Men's Elementary Training College's journal in 1925 that described a long hike in northern Palestine and Syria with the title 'A Trip in Syria', that involved the crossing of artificial borders (*ḥudūd iştīnā'iyah*).<sup>55</sup>

These different syllabi reflect a strong preference for British and English history over other European countries. The 1921 syllabus for fourth-year geography advises teaching a 'regional geography of Europe with special reference to the British Isles and the colonies'. The British personages who were carefully chosen for the third- and fourth-year syllabus, second only to the Arabs in scope, are the heralds of discoveries (Drake), democracy (Edward I and Cromwell), modernity and progress (Watt and Stephenson), and freedom (William Wilberforce, and Gordon). Moreover, in the fourth year, the British occupation is described as having secured the recovery of Egypt after years of volatility, thus justifying British imperial rule in Palestine as well.<sup>56</sup>

Bowman was blind to this recurrent bias towards the British in the history and geography syllabi or the English course. He insisted in his testimony before the Royal Commission that '[w]e [the British] do not want to thrust down colonial ideas too much', stating that no British symbols such as portraits of the king were hung in class.<sup>57</sup> The Director of Education was keen to avoid the wrongdoings of his imperial predecessors but only succeeded in doing so symbolically. 'The Palestinian student knew more about Britain and its history and literature than the English' themselves, noted a graduate and teacher of the government system.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> This is made explicit in the title Sabbagh chose for his book and its content, which made Greater Syria the historical unit, al-Sabbagh, *al-Madaniyat*. See also the survey on the *Nahda* in Syria in, 'Anabtawi and Ghunaym, *al-Mujmal*, 142–4.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārīkh filasṭīn*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Darwish al-Miqdadi, 'Rihlah fī sūriyah', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimin* 6, no. 1 (30 November 1925): 39–61.

<sup>56</sup> See also, Elizabeth Brownson, 'Colonialism, Nationalism'.

<sup>57</sup> Bowman's testimony before the Royal Commission, 27 November 1936, Private/Secret Meeting, BM 2/2/97/3, MECA.

<sup>58</sup> Amin Ḥāfiẓ Dajāni, *Jabhat al-tarbiyah*, 99.

The syllabus furthered an appeasing phrasing towards British rule by fostering a notion of citizenship, partnership, and the student's 'duty to his country and his fellow-men'.<sup>59</sup> The 1925 syllabus stated that the instruction of history should underline 'the privileges and duties of good citizens'. This wording attempted to blur the absence of political rights of these citizens by highlighting a notion of partnership through references to the Executive and Advisory Council, virtually nonexistent or weak forums that had no influence, in the civics course.

Notions of progress and modernity were prominent in the syllabus.<sup>60</sup> The 1925 syllabus concluded that the graduate of the elementary stage should leave with 'an orderly idea' of the modern state and society and 'the duties of a citizen towards his country in modern conditions (1925 syllabus)'.<sup>61</sup> This orderly idea materialized in the syllabus as history lessons and a global perspective on Western societies and states throughout the centuries. However, the syllabus turned progress and modernity into an ultimate Other for the Arab student and made Arabness, as well as all features of Arab society in the syllabus such as the sheikh, tribe and village, the most basic mode of human development, second only to hunters and nomads.

Concluding the syllabus in this manner embodied the educational rationale behind the colonial civilizing mission. The Arab's civilizational stage, stuck between hunters and nomads on the one hand and the Greeks and Romans on the other, should strive to climb the ladder of progress that culminated in a sovereign Western state. The specific focus on Palestine, its administration, and the obligations of its citizens was marginalized and kept to the end of an overly compressed syllabus. In the problematic political state of British administration, good citizenship was not inculcated by stressing the relevance of loyalty to the benevolent government and an omnipresent omnipotent state, but by foreign sources of inspiration. The authors wanted to keep a safe distance from scrutiny of the ideology behind the Mandate administration. Instead, Roman, American, and French governments were defined as abstract role models.

The only attempt to inculcate an abstract idea of a particular historical duration and a sense of shared culture and history was in relation to Arab history. The word '*umma*' ('nation') appeared only once in the syllabus in the second class. The Arabic version of the syllabus stated that 'the teacher's ultimate *aim* (*al-ghāyah al-quṣwā*)... is to make the heroes of his students' nation loved by them (*ān yuḥabbib al-abṭāl fī ummat ṭullābuh*

<sup>59</sup> 1921 Syllabus, 16.

<sup>60</sup> 1921 Syllabus, 19.

<sup>61</sup> 1925 Syllabus, 44.

ilayhim)...the issue of love and fascination (*al-tashwīq*), is the most important in history teaching' in this class.<sup>62</sup> Arab and Islamic history were the most detailed topics in the syllabus. Out of more than 130 personages mentioned in the syllabus, over 70 were Arab or Islamic historical figures, and four years out of the seven-year curriculum revolved around Arab and Islamic history. Still, these syllabi were severely criticized by different scholars for their reinforcements of traditional values and emphasis on religious education at the expense of contemporary history and nationalist education.<sup>63</sup> They were seen as a system promoting alienation from personal and national heritage and political blindness.<sup>64</sup>

However, a comparison of the Department's syllabus to that of the Najah National College in Nablus shows the striking similarities to a syllabus produced by a centre of Arab nationalism in Mandate Palestine.<sup>65</sup> This resemblance made sense in that al-Najah prepared its students for the Department's Matriculation exam, but also because the colonial syllabus included an acceptable narrative that could, with some adjustments, fit their national pedagogy. Unlike the colonial policy in India, where British anxiety about political unrest triggered an intimate supervision of history textbooks prohibiting any historical reference to Indian unity or inclusive Indian identity, notions of Arabness were dominant in the Palestine curriculum. Interviewees who did have recollections of the history class usually mentioned topics that corresponded to the syllabus, particularly ancient civilizations and classic Arab history.<sup>66</sup> Thus, if Arab history and culture were widely covered in school, did Palestinian education indeed deprive its students of their heritage and culture?

In his testimony before the Royal Commission of Enquiry Totah accused the British of establishing an 'education so colourless as to make it harmless...They [Palestinian Arabs] feel Arab culture is neglected.

<sup>62</sup> Ḥukūmat filasṭīn, idārat al-ma'ārif, *Manhaj al-ta'lim al-ibtidā'ī* (Jerusalem, 1927) 39–40, (emphasis added).

<sup>63</sup> Majid Al-Haj, *Education, Empowerment and Control*, 93.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Haj, *Education, Empowerment and Control*, 47; Jabareen, 'The Palestinian Education System'; Miller, *Government and Society*, 93.

<sup>65</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 146.

<sup>66</sup> Ismail Husayn Ibrahim Abu-Shkadeh (b. 1926), Interview, Jaffa, 22 September 2013; Shafiq Matta (b. 1927), *ibid*, Acre, 16 December 2012; Lutfi Zreik (b. 1931), *ibid*, Jaffa, 15 December 2012; Hanna Abu Hanna (b. 1928), *ibid*, Haifa, 10 September 2013; Saleh Jabareen al-Qasem (b. 1934), *ibid*, Um al-Fahem, 25 December 2012; Muhammad Abdul Rahman Abu-Suoud (b. 1932 Qastina), interviewed by Rakan Mahmoud, Amman, 27 May 2009, <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Gaza/Qastina/Story16965.html>, accessed 20 May 2015.

The Arabs of Palestine feel there is no such aim behind their education.<sup>67</sup> A harmless syllabus reflected a pedagogically skewed orientation towards periods and topics that did not contest the legitimacy or good intentions of British rule in Palestine. Although a comparison with the Iraqi syllabi from the same period shows that for selected figures in Arab history in the Palestinian and the Iraqi syllabi there were interesting overlaps,<sup>68</sup> five of the seven in the Iraqi syllabus that did not appear in the Palestine syllabus were modern Arab leaders and symbols of Arab nationalism including 'Umar al-Mukhtar, King Husayn bin 'Ali and Faysal. In the Palestine syllabus, there was no mention of individuals of such contemporary symbolic magnitude,<sup>69</sup> and no detailing of the Arab revolt during the Great War.

The framework of the Iraqi syllabus sheds further light on these differences. The 1936 syllabus stressed that the primal aim of the history course was teaching the history of the fatherland and the nation's past, and its most important objective was strengthening the national sentiment (*al-shu'ūr al-waṭanī wa-al-qawmī*) in the hearts of its students. The history lesson should revolve around the history of Iraq and the Arab nation while the history of other countries and nations should be examined solely in terms of its relationship to the history of Iraq or the Arabs. The syllabus crafted by Bowman as Director of Education in Iraq in 1919 shaped a historical continuity of a glorified history from 'the birth of civilisation' in 'Iraq' to the rise of Islam when 'Baghdad becomes the centre of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts of the world.'<sup>70</sup> No such superlatives can be found in the Palestine syllabus.

Bowman left Iraq and went to Palestine in the midst of the 1920 insurrection. In his memoirs, he mentions that his entire work 'went by the board', and all the teachers and students 'went adrift' because most schools were closed: some were in ruins and all were out of his control.<sup>71</sup> This personal turmoil, occurring a little over a year after the publication of his syllabus, and paralleled by the proximity of an Egyptian revolution, must have

<sup>67</sup> Cited in, Miller, *Government*, 96; See also Totah's earlier criticism in, Khalil Totah, 'Education in Palestine'. The English article received attention in the local press see, *Filastin*, 3 January 1933; *Mirat al-sharq*, 7 January 1933.

<sup>68</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 120, 138; Simon, 'The Teaching of History in Iraq'.

<sup>69</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 138.

<sup>70</sup> 1936 Iraqi syllabus, *Manhaj al-dirāsah al-Ibtidā'iyyah*, 44; 1919 Iraqi syllabus, Diskin, 'The Genesis', 472–5.

<sup>71</sup> In a farewell letter to Colonel Wilson, Bowman seemed less pessimistic, assuring Wilson of the Department personnel's loyalty during the disturbances and the limited involvement of government employees in the 'political intrigue'. Bowman reported that most government schools were 'free of all taint of this kind', Bowman to the Colonel A. T. Wilson Acting Civil Commissioner in Mesopotamia, Baghdad, 12 August 1920, BM 1/4/134–5, MECA.

influenced his educational terminology as a colonial administrator.<sup>72</sup> Superlatives and optimism gave way to colonial circumspection.

Farrell, like Bowman, was a graduate of the colonial bureaucracy in Iraq, but had bitter experiences involving constant collisions with senior Arab officials, especially as regards the Arabization of the Iraqi education system personnel and the mounting power of Arab administrators over his turf, most notably that of Sati' al-Husri (1880–1968).<sup>73</sup> Farrell's vision of a British boarding school system, with its emphasis on 'character building via cold showers', was blocked by one of the greatest, most vocal Arab pedagogues of the time. Thus, whereas Farrell contributed to the writing of the syllabus, the British bias and the absence of historical coherence should be attributed to his educational ethos, which clashed with the principles defended by Husri.

This colonial circumspection did not necessarily mean there was an awareness of the shortcomings of the syllabus. Bowman saw no conspicuous flaws in the Palestine syllabus. On the contrary, after the long strike that initiated the Great Arab Revolt, Bowman testified that his Arab personnel had no problems with its implementation; it was effective and quite 'smooth'.<sup>74</sup> This self-assurance contrasted sharply with Bowman's gloomy entries in his diary about the Empire's blunders in Palestine. Miss Helen Ridler, the principal of the Women's Training College and inspector of girls' schools in Palestine, was also pleased with her institution's 'sensible' engagement and 'great importance', given to 'the history of the Arab nation and its geography'.<sup>75</sup>

A comparison of the Department's syllabus with that of the Va'ad helps clarify Totah's statement about colourless education. For Totah, Hebrew education was the source of reference as 'Jewish education has an aim. It is not colourless. Its aim is to establish Zionism, to establish a national home, to revive Hebrew culture'.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 242; Diskin, 'The 'Genesis'', 389.

<sup>73</sup> Rāhī Muzhir al-'Āmirī, 'Wizārat al-ma'ārif'; Ismā'il Tāhā al-Jābrī, *Hibat al-Dīn al-Shahrastānī*, 91–2; Magnus T. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past*, 200; Reeva S. Simon, *Iraq Between*, 76–7.

<sup>74</sup> Bowman's testimony before the Royal Commission, 27 November 1936, Bowman's files, BM 2/2/27, MECA.

<sup>75</sup> *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 8, no. 1, 15 December 1927, 39.

<sup>76</sup> Miller, *Government and Society*, 96.

## The Colourful Hebrew History Syllabus

The first complete Hebrew curriculum in Palestine was authored in 1903 by Simhah Wilkomitch (1871–1918), who headed the Rosh Pina school,<sup>77</sup> and focused on agriculture and labour.<sup>78</sup> In 1904, the Teachers' Union presented an eight-year curriculum, the first to be widely adopted in settlement schools. The curriculum gave history instruction ample attention, which was divided into general and Jewish history.<sup>79</sup>

In 1907, three prominent members of the Teachers' Union who served as teachers in the flagship institution of modern Hebrew education, the Jaffa Girls' School, presented another curriculum.<sup>80</sup> Joseph 'Ozrakovsky ('Azaryahu, 1873–1945), Yehiel Yehieli (1866–1937), and Mordechai Ezrahi (1862–1951) were of Eastern European descent and were active members in the reformed heder, *ha-Ḥeder ha-metukan*. Initiated in the late 1890s, it introduced the teaching of Hebrew in Hebrew and was the first to teach the Bible in Hebrew without the mediation of Russian or Yiddish, and aimed to modernize the teaching of Jewish national history.<sup>81</sup> Hebrew education in Palestine was the successor of these first attempts to establish a national education in the Pale of Settlement of Czarist Russia.<sup>82</sup>

The 1907 curriculum was never officially authorized by the Union, but its distribution and the debates that followed among Union members turned it into a model curriculum for Hebrew schools.<sup>83</sup> Its history syllabus was the first to integrate general history into national Jewish history, with the former dependent upon completing the latter. The school's 1911 programme offered an eight-year curriculum with some modifications on the 1907 curriculum, such as the omission of Arabic instruction. The teaching of history began in the fourth grade as part of Bible instruction and as an independent course in the fifth grade. The history course was presented

<sup>77</sup> On Wilkomitch's contribution to Hebrew education, see Haramati, *ha-Morim ha-ḥalutsim*, 94–104.

<sup>78</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-ḥinukh*, 34–5; Agudat ha-morim, an early version of the Teachers' Union made an attempt to author a general curriculum for Hebrew schools in Palestine in 1895 but the program was never implemented in schools, Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 70–1.

<sup>79</sup> Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 82–3; Elboim-Dror, *ha-Ḥinukh*, 1:210.

<sup>80</sup> Yehudit Shṭaiman, 'Morim ke-yazame tarbut'.

<sup>81</sup> These schools only represented a small fragment of Jewish education, which at the time was still almost entirely operated along traditional lines: Elboim-Dror, *ha-Ḥinukh*, 1:35–9; On the evolution of teaching Hebrew in Hebrew and its importance, see Shlomo Haramati, *Mehankhim yehudim*, 17–38.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Goldstein, 'Ha-ḥeder ha-metukan'.

<sup>83</sup> Yoram Bar Gal, *Moledet ye-ge' ografyah*, 36–7; Elboim-Dror, *ha-Ḥinukh*, 1:222.



as a table, with Jewish history on the right, representing the focus of the course, and related historical events in general history on the left. Jewish life in the Land of Israel formed the core of the first three years, leaving the entire diasporic history for the seventh year. The eighth and last class discussed the Enlightenment as a prelude to the national movement and the history of the Yishuv, and concluded with a detailed survey of biblical literature. This methodology, its outline of topics and personages, especially the marginal role and agency of Jewish life outside their homeland, became the foundation for history instruction throughout the Mandate period.<sup>84</sup> The curriculum became the general eight-year programme for schools all over the country and served as the model for the 1923 syllabus (table on 176).<sup>85</sup>

During the Mandate, each education trend published its own primary school syllabus. The Mizrahi trend published its full comprehensive syllabus in 1932, whereas the Labour Trend published its full syllabus only in 1937. However, private schools often worked according to their own syllabus. The General Trend published its one and only primary school syllabus in 1923 that was used until the end of the Mandate period. Each trend adhered to a different historical consciousness. The Labour Trend, closer to Marxist ideology, proclaimed that 'educators should always emphasize the economic features and social relations of each historical period'.<sup>86</sup> The Mizrahi trend had a religious overtone, stating in its history syllabus: 'the teaching of our inception (*toladah*) will lead the student to the realization (*hakarah*) of the unique role of divine providence in the course of history' that enabled the survival of 'our small poor people among various great peoples', which despite their might, have all perished. 'This acknowledgment will create a strong tie between the student and the people of Israel and the land of Israel...'<sup>87</sup>

These differences between trends were considered unbridgeable. The Labour Trend educators and political leadership accused the General Trend

<sup>84</sup> *Tokhnit ha-limudim shel bet-ha-sefer ha-'ironi le-vanot be-Yafo: Mosad hoveve-Tsiyon* (Jaffa: Defus A. Atin, 1911).

<sup>85</sup> Azaryahu, *Ha-hinukh*, 39–40, 44; (Joseph) Ozrakovsky, (Mordechai) Krishevsky, (Yehiel) Yehieli, Hatsa'ah le-tokhenit ha-limudim tarsi'a, 1906–1907, 8.103/3, Education Archive, Tel Aviv University; Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh*, 1:152, 219; Yehudit Shṭaiman, 'Morim ke-yazame tarbut'.

<sup>86</sup> *Kavim* (Tel Aviv: ha-Histadrut ha-kelalit shel ha-'ovdim ha-'ivrim be-erets-yisra'el, ha-merkaz le-hinukh, 1937), 11.

<sup>87</sup> *Tokhnit ha-limudim ha-nehuga be-vate ha-sefer shel ha-Mizrahi-* (Jerusalem: Maḥleket ha-hinukh shel ha-sokhnut ha-yehudit le-erets yisra'el, 1932), 20. See also Dan A. Porat, 'Between Nation and Land'.

of persecution and continuous attempts to abolish proletarian ideology and a socialist educational ethos.<sup>88</sup> Rabbi Meir Berlin, a leader of the Mizrahi trend stated that there was a chasm between them and the General Trend, where students are taught that 'there is nothing between true and false prophets but different social views... schools that educate in this spirit had better burn... Religion is not a course...'.<sup>89</sup>

Irreconcilable as they were, the history syllabus of all three trends adopted a similar historical framework. Differences in emphasis on socialist Zionism in the Labour Trend or the focus on great rabbis in the Mizrahi trend did not contest the paradigmatic overview of the nation's history as a distinctive process beginning with the Bible, continuing with the negation of the diaspora and culminating in Zionism or the centrality of the Land of Israel in Jewish history and revival. Thus, the influence of the Va'ad's history syllabus emanating from its earliest publication and its hegemonic role in the Yishuv is recognizable in all syllabi.

Similar to the methodology of the Department's history course, the Va'ad's was extremely detailed as well. It shared its pedagogical approach; advised teachers to use similar resources, to work as a function of the students' cognitive abilities; and emphasized the use of telling history as a story for simplification while highlighting the role of important personages. Superficially, the Arab and Hebrew systems appeared to share several central bodies of knowledge. As in the Department's syllabus, excluding the national history, the focus was only on Western history with an emphasis on the ancient Eastern civilizations. Another affinity was the reliance on an ethno-history of a golden age, a concept Smith attributes to diaspora nationalisms 'prefigured by pre-modern ethnic homeland memories and attachments'.<sup>90</sup> He notes that these 'ages of creativity and glory... were to prove crucial for the new secular religion of nationalism with its cult of the authentic and pure'.<sup>91</sup>

Whereas a premodern ethnic homeland was an abstract concept rather than a place, Arab nationalism had its own exile that began with the demise of Arab dominance in the Abbasid Caliphate and the loss of national vitality.<sup>92</sup> For centuries, they were exiled from their homeland and were no longer masters of their own destiny. Arab history in the syllabus corresponded to

<sup>88</sup> Yuval Dror, 'Irgun 'ovdey zerem ha-'ovdim'. Zvi Zameret and M. D, *Davar*, 29 June 1937.

<sup>89</sup> *Ha-Tzofe*, 24 April 1940.

<sup>90</sup> Anthony D. Smith, 'Diasporas and Homelands', 3.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, 8; see also Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 65–6.

<sup>92</sup> See the adoption of the decline and reform nomenclature by Arab intellectuals in Sheehi, *Foundations of Modern Arab Identity*.

the notions of both the black and golden ages, from Saladin to Muhammad 'Ali. Similarly, the Hebrew syllabus dedicated six years of study, through the Bible and history courses, to the history of Jewish existence in Erets-Yisrael that ended in 132 AD, and two years to the remaining historical narrative. The 1800 years of exile mainly provided a story of national fragmentation and passiveness. In contrast to their history in Erets-Yisrael, Jews were no longer the protagonists but lived on the margins of historical development, which was examined through their relationship to the majority or ruling class.<sup>93</sup>

These short surveys in the syllabus have been attributed to an adherence to Dubnow's concept of 'shifting autonomous centres' in the diaspora that preserved the Jewish cultural heritage and maintained national unity while integrating Jewish and non-Jewish history.<sup>94</sup> However, the teaching of the whole diasporic history in the final two years of the history course beginning with the destruction of Beitar and ending with Zionism incorporated these Jewish centres while underscoring their *shift* rather than their *autonomy*. In the 1920s, Dubnow's concept and to a greater extent the living history of the Jewish diaspora could not be eliminated altogether. Gradually, it would occupy less and less space in the Hebrew history course.

Perhaps the most striking difference between the Department and Hebrew syllabi relates to its authors and the presence rather than the absence or vagueness of a speaker. In the Hebrew text, there is no conundrum and no reason for a conflict of interests with the government. Leading Jewish educators authored the programme and the Va'ad ha-Ḥinukh later approved it for circulation.<sup>95</sup> The syllabus was written in the first-person plural, surveying 'the history of *our* people' (*'amenu*), and the course was meant to 'revive in the hearts of the student a personal participation in the destiny of our people' (*goral 'amenu*).<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> For example, in the eight-year syllabus in *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer ha-'amamiyim ha-'ironiyim* [henceforth: *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*] (Jerusalem: Maḥleket ha-ḥinukh shel ha-hanhalah ha-tsiyonit be-erets yiśra'el, 1923), 58.

<sup>94</sup> Conforti argues that the 1923 syllabus was a 'compromise between the traditional approach and the pioneer-socialist approach, still not reflecting an activist and mobilizing orientation': Yitzhak Conforti, *Zeman avar*, 230–3; Porat, 'Between Nation'; On Dubnow's historiography, Shlomo Sand, *The Invention*, 88–95.

<sup>95</sup> All three trends were autonomous in authoring their syllabus. The Labour trend syllabus was authored by an elected Pedagogical Committee, Dror, 'Irgun 'ovdey zerem ha-'ovdim'; Rabbi Jacob Berman and Dr. Jacob Shalom Engel, two senior inspectors of the trend authored the Mizrahi syllabus, *tokhnit ha-limudim ha-nehuga be-bate ha-sefer shel ha-Mizrahi*.

<sup>96</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 9, 41 (emphasis added).

As in the government syllabus, national history took the lion's share. However, the framing of Jewishness as a common essence, 'our people' (*'amenu*) was depicted in warm colours in contrast to the distant phrasing on 'the students' nation'. In civics instruction, which was part of the geography or civics (*Moledet*) course, the Yishuv's agency was highlighted as 'our national institutions',<sup>97</sup> given the same scope and focus as the Mandate government.<sup>98</sup> The dominant presence of a speaker injected vivid motion into the historical narrative.

The postwar colonial setting was seemingly of less importance for the Hebrew syllabus. The entire Zionist historiography was based on the inextricable unity between the Jewish people and Erets-Yisrael, and the inconsistencies in the colonial history syllabus derived from random assignment of postwar borders did not exist in the Zionist case. The Land of Israel was an idea, an essence in Zionism; Palestine had not yet materialized as such for the Palestinian Arab.

While the history course only started in the sixth grade, the foundations for students' historical consciousness were laid as of the first year in school. The historical context was recurrent in the *Moledet* (homeland) course (parallel to the Department's observation course), where tales, legends, and personages were told in relation to the students' close surroundings and religious holidays.<sup>99</sup> The Bible course, narrating the history of the nation in its homeland embodying an organic connection between people and land,<sup>100</sup> began in the third year and was assigned thirty-one weekly hours, second only to the Hebrew course. The history of ancient Eastern empires was taught as part of the Bible class, corresponded to the biblical text, and was grounded in its narrative.<sup>101</sup>

The formal history course started with the first exile to Babylon (based on books of Ezra and Nehemiah) and ended with the Zionist movement, Herzl, and the Balfour Declaration, illustrating an historical watershed in Jewish existence where history had come full circle and the people returned to their homeland. The first year of the history course was dedicated to Jewish life in Palestine from the return to Zion up to Bar-Kochba, and the two final years covered more than 1800 years of world history. Jewish history in the diaspora was saturated with the suffering (*tela'ot*), expulsions

<sup>97</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 22.

<sup>98</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 57.

<sup>99</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 10.

<sup>100</sup> David Shahar, 'Ha-tanakh ve-ha-zika la-'avar ha-mikra'i', 39–58; Anita Shapira, *Land and Power*, 258–9; Elboim-Dror, *ha-Hinukh* 1, 1:234; Almog, *The Sabra*, 27–8.

<sup>101</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 28.

(*gerush*), and persecutions (*redifot*) of the Jews. Events such as the spread of Christianity, the rise of Islam, or the Crusades served merely as stage decoration for Jewish history and received limited attention.

The protocols of the 1920 Committee reveal the marginal value attributed to the teaching of general history by the leading educationalists of the time. The advocates of the virtues of general history articulated its importance in broadening students' horizons and its capacity to strengthen the ties with the Jewish communities by learning the histories of their countries. Others called for the removal of general history from the curriculum, arguing that it had no educational value and was burdensome for students and teachers alike. The committee decided by an overwhelming majority of twelve to three that general history would not be attributed weekly teaching hours and should be taught solely in relation to Jewish history, a decision that was materialized in the 1923 syllabus.<sup>102</sup>

Ben-Zion Dinaburg (1884–1973) later formulated and structured this approach. Dr Dinaburg, later Dinur, a graduate of a the reformed *heder* and a trained rabbi, went to Palestine in 1921 as a trained historian under the supervision of renowned historians. He was rapidly hired by the Jerusalem Hebrew Teachers' Training College in 1922 as the Bible, literature, and Jewish history teacher at the College, and from then on, had an immediate and immense influence on Hebrew education. From 1925 on, he was the acting head of the College, and from 1942 he was its principal until 1948, and from 1936, a professor of Jewish history at the Hebrew University. Dinaburg did not publish textbooks, but his formal roles, volunteer activities, and publications were of paramount importance.<sup>103</sup>

Dinaburg added two new courses to the College's curriculum, the history of Zionism and the history of the Yishuv, thus eliminating the division between the general and national history course. He believed that the study of two separate histories would fracture the 'homogenous unity' of Jewish history.<sup>104</sup> The teaching of general history should focus on the organic link between 'the history of [the people of] Israel and the history of the land of Israel'.<sup>105</sup> Dinaburg believed that while general and Jewish history could be taught simultaneously, as a collective, the Jews could only learn from one.

<sup>102</sup> Va'ad ha-ḥinukh, *Tamtsit ha-protokolim*, 22–4.

<sup>103</sup> Arielle Rein, 'Ben Tsiyon dinur', 377–90.

<sup>104</sup> Uri Ram, 'Zionist Historiography'.

<sup>105</sup> Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 229; *Tokhnit ha-limudim be-khitot alef-bet shel beit ha-midrash le-morim ha-ivri bi-yerushalayim*, 1941.

Dinaburg restructured the entire Jewish history around the organic connection between nation and land and defined this as the foundation for his 1929 history syllabus. This text took an accusative tone towards Hebrew historians, although it was clear that Dinaburg also had the 1923 syllabus in mind. It implicitly criticized them for not sufficiently stressing this particular lens, and went as far as to blame them for forging history, and for focusing on false dreams of civil or cultural integration in the diaspora, both of which were marginal if present at all in the syllabus. Dinaburg sought to reconceptualize the syllabus around the unbreakable continuous bond to the Land of Israel as *the* driving force in Jewish history. In light of the historic zeitgeist of the homeland's redemption, a generation of '*halutzim* and *ma'apilim*' ('pioneers and immigrants'), Dinaburg found it essential to highlight the 'generations' wars' for the Jewish character of the country. This adjustment had a pedagogical aim, in that it made the history class relevant and tangible for this generation.<sup>106</sup> Thus the Israelization of history by historians or pedagogues who were born, educated, and academically trained in Europe were also seeking acceptance and credence from what they perceived to be a growing community of young natives. Their imagined native consciousness played a role, as well, in the formation of a narrative.

The 1929 proposal was not accepted, and neither was another proposal he submitted in 1940 for an introduction to Zionist history course. Nevertheless, in particular as of the mid-1930s, his approach gained prominence and climaxed when Dinaburg, by then Dinur, was appointed Minister of Education in 1951 and became the official author of the new national curriculum.<sup>107</sup>

The 1923 syllabus reading material covered in the Hebrew class that included the literature course echoed these approaches to non-Jewish culture. The recommended reading list included roughly forty-five publications, of which only four were translated from foreign languages: one from Italian, one from English and two from German (De Amicis, Defoe, Schiller, and Goethe).<sup>108</sup> The reading list reflected modern trends in Hebrew and Yiddish early and contemporary Enlightenment literature of the time, including pioneer Hebraists, renowned Yiddish luminaries, and active Zionist authors. It was ethnocentric, but at the same time vibrant and illustrative of an

<sup>106</sup> Ben Zion Dinaburg, *Limud toldot israel*, 1–3. See also in Porat, 'Between Nation'; and, Myers, *Re-Inventing*, 129–50.

<sup>107</sup> Rein, 'Ben Tsiyon dinur historyon le'umi ke-mehanekeh umah'.

<sup>108</sup> Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"' 103–4; *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 61–2.

active cultural-intellectual movement in transition. By contrast to the Department's curriculum, the predominance of classical and traditional Arabic literature in the Arabic course which neglected the vibrant flourishing literary scene added to its greyness and dullness.

The bias towards British history did not exist in the Hebrew syllabus, and hence was yet another proof of the system's independence. The Hebrew student studied less English than the urban Arab student, and started the course in the fifth grade rather than the third, for a total of fourteen weekly hours compared to thirty-four in the Arab system. The Yishuv's fear of Anglicanization of its youth meant it approved a limited investment in teaching the language and little engagement with British culture, such that Britain was only discussed in the seventh-grade geography course.<sup>109</sup>

Thus, overall, the Hebrew syllabus differed from the Arab syllabus in terms of its coherence and educational determination. The Department's fractured and estranged historical narrative seems pale in comparison to the 'organic unity' of the Zionist narrative. The latter reflected its cohesion with a vision, ethos, and reality of an active community in Palestine, whereas the former dealt with abstract bodies of knowledge and overlooked or displaced the community's agency.

## No Other

Before delving into the history syllabus, it is worth examining the extent of engagement of both syllabi with the national Other. Neither syllabus provided language instruction in the Other's language, Hebrew or Arabic, at the primary level. The absence of Hebrew instruction in the Arab curriculum, which at that time represented the overwhelming majority in Palestine, is understandable. In Hebrew education, although the teaching of Arabic was a recurrent pedagogical issue, only a few schools offered Arabic instruction at the primary level. The instruction of Arabic was not on the agenda or in the curricula proposed by the 1920 committee.<sup>110</sup> In later years, Arabic instruction continued to be excluded from the primary syllabi of all three trends.

Arabs as a community or a majority were not mentioned in the Hebrew curriculum. The Moledet course, for example, encouraged students'

<sup>109</sup> Elboim-Dror, 'Memshelet ha-mandat'; *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 47.

<sup>110</sup> Va'ad ha-hinukh, *Tamtsit ha-protokolim*, 28–38.

familiarity with their environment. Under the topic 'inhabitants', the syllabus mentions: 'the inhabitants of the area and the surroundings according to their nationalities (*le-le'omehem*), their religion and professions'.<sup>111</sup> This treatment of nationalities (closer here to ethnicities) and religions of the 'inhabitants' tell the story of a noncommunity, a proliferation of identities. The word 'Arabs' did not appear in the homeland and geography course surveys of the country either.<sup>112</sup>

The history syllabus surveyed Arab history only once in the sixth grade in the section covering pre-Islamic and Islamic Arab history, and it included topics such as 'The Jewish influence on the Arabs; a Jewish kingdom in Arabia'.<sup>113</sup> Under the heading 'The Jews in Spain', the words 'Arab' and 'Islam' are not mentioned. Under 'The history of the country' in the eighth-grade geography class, the Arabs are mentioned as one of the conquering forces, after an overview of prehistory and biblical history concluding with 'the English conquest',<sup>114</sup> which externalizes the Mandate from the Yishuv's own history. As a current cultural or national collective, Arabs are nonexistent.<sup>115</sup>

The Yishuv or Jewish presence in Palestine suffered from the same invisibility in the Department's syllabus. The British feared that including problematic issues in the syllabus would highlight their commitment to the Jewish national home.<sup>116</sup> Historical events that were directly related to Jewish history were mentioned as part of local Palestinian history, but historical periods of cooperation between Arabs and Jews were not mentioned. This treatment of Jewish history was indicative of the Department's balancing act which corresponded to a policy of educational avoidance. This resulted in an educational trajectory that failed to deal with some of the most pressing issues for the Arab community in Palestine. Educators nevertheless found different ways to fill this institutional vacuum or educational void. Complex questions with regard to identity, citizenship, and the future of their country not only troubled their students; teachers also demanded pertinent answers for themselves as well.

<sup>111</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 10.

<sup>112</sup> *ibid*, 29; geography textbooks did mention Arabs. Bar-Gal suggests classifying the Arabs in Hebrew geography textbooks into four approaches: reservation, disregard, romanticism, ethnocentrism, and humanism: Yoram Bar Gal, *Moledet ye-ge'ografiyah*, 173–84.

<sup>113</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 51.

<sup>114</sup> *Tokhnit bate ha-sefer*, 56.

<sup>115</sup> Almog, *The Sabra*, 196.

<sup>116</sup> Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 126.



## Pedagogy between Centre and Periphery

In four articles published in the Men's Elementary Training College journal in the early 1920s, Miqdadi presented a detailed outline of proper history teaching.<sup>117</sup> His articles present a comprehensive approach to history in general and the teaching of history in particular. The fact that they were written by the most charismatic history teacher in the College, an Arab nationalist in the early years of this leading institution, adds weight to his perspective. His thoughts encapsulate the pedagogic tensions of an enlightened nationalist history teacher.

Miqdadi's science of history adhered to a Western framework that placed its inception with Herodotus the 'father of history' (*abu al-tārikh*) and contained a harsh critique of classic Arab historians (Ibn al-Athir, al-Tabari). Arab history, Miqdadi argued, was literary and poetic, and revolved around conquests and kingdoms, portraying the rulers as 'shadows of God on earth', and marginalizing the Arab contribution to the sciences. The weakness of the Arab states was derived from this historical negligence. The spread of practical science and not poetry wins wars, Miqdadi concludes. Instead of this traditional history, Miqdadi calls for more social history, arguing that great men are only capable of great deeds with the help of their nations (*musā'adat al-ummah*). Modern social history encompasses all aspects of human religious, economic, political, and social existence; hence, it is therefore democratic and beneficial to study the 'nation phenomenon'.<sup>118</sup>

Miqdadi's targeting of Arab historiography meshed with his general criticism of the Arabs. Here, their historiography symbolized the Arab failure to choose their historical battles, whereas social history defines another trajectory leading to national progress. This was why Miqdadi's pedagogical inspiration derived from current American and British publications. Drawing on Pestalozzi and Spencer, Miqdadi promoted psychological education that made students' cognitive capabilities its core and the development of the student's imagination, memory, emotions, and values the key principles of

<sup>117</sup> Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'al-Tārikh', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 3, no. 1 (October 1922): 11–15; Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Tadris al-tārikh', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 3 (31 December 1922): 54–60; Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Uṣūl tadris al-tārikh', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 5 (28 February 1923): 97–106; Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Kutub tadris al-tārikh', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 6 (31 March 1923): 121–9.

<sup>118</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'al-Tārikh'; al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Tadris al-tārikh'.

education.<sup>119</sup> The pedagogical texts of the time, in Palestine and the Arab world in general, had distanced themselves from recitation and the absorption of dry knowledge and encouraged students instead to ask questions and express their personal impressions. As early as 1925, Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi translated an English version of *The Montessori Method*.<sup>120</sup> Montessori's emphasis on 'unrestricted liberty' of the child through the exercise and the training of the senses echoes Miqdadi's history class, where the students become active participants rather than passive listeners and their grasp of content is based on their actions. The centrality of the child, personal progress, and will were considered the foundations of the educational process. At least on paper, the history class was treated as a holistic experience.

Deviating as much as possible from traditional rigid education, Miqdadi objected to appeasing, threatening, or hitting students as form of discipline. Instead, he encouraged teachers to show enthusiasm and elicit all the senses during the educational process by using maps,<sup>121</sup> building models, telling stories, conducting field trips, and using photos.<sup>122</sup> Even the traditional structuring of the classroom was upended by methods that introduced live theatre or an imagined scene from history.<sup>123</sup> Darwazah implemented this idea while principal of Najah College: he built a school theatre where students and staff members performed historical-nationalist themed plays written by him, that were designed to resurrect history itself.<sup>124</sup>

Although inspired by Western pedagogy, Miqdadi was not blind to its shortcomings, and he criticized the European nationalist trend in history education that exalted the history of the nation and excluded the history of others. In this kind of history teaching, the student 'imagines that his nation is the epitome of humanity's efforts... [and] sentiments such as "Germany above all" emerge and [the German student is] surprised why people refuse to succumb to his government's rule and refuse to become German citizens, and the Frenchman and Englishman do the same.'<sup>125</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Maḥādī' al-tarbiyah al-sāyikūlūjiyah', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 8 (31 May 1923): 185–191; Darwish al-Haj Ibrahim, 'al-Tarbiyah al-'aqliyah', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, no. 9 (31 July 1923): 213–32; see also, 'Tadrīs al-tārikh fi al-madrasa al-thanawiyah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah*, no. 2 (15 March 1932): 36–44.

<sup>120</sup> Maria Montessori, *The Montessori Method*.

<sup>121</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'al-Tarbiyah al-'aqliyah'.

<sup>122</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Uṣūl tadrīs al-tārikh'.

<sup>123</sup> Fakhri Jawhariyah, 'Idāḥ dars al-jughrafiyah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 10, no. 4 (1 July 1930): 68–72.

<sup>124</sup> Darwazah, *Mudhakirāt*, 1:540–1.

<sup>125</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'al-Tārikh'.

Miqdadi directed this criticism towards the Western superpowers, and insisted on the right of the colonized history teacher to fight for the centrality of his nation within the colonial context. Miqdadi's criticism of teachers who prioritize the history of other countries over Arab national history, and his preference for Arab history over all others corresponded with its marginal role in the colonial curriculum. He stressed the need to teach the nation's history as a linguistic, geographic, and religious unit as an interrelated block (*kutlah mutarābiṭah*). In another essay, he promoted a secular teaching of Arab history regardless of religious belief, thus perhaps suggesting that his concept of the religious unit was more flexible and inclusive than sectarian.<sup>126</sup>

Miqdadi's history class encouraged students to 'worship' heroes (*ya'budūn al-abṭāl*), 'sanctify' them as role models, and make pilgrimages to their graves. He argued that these heroes' virtues of loyalty, obedience and sacrifice were key to young Palestinians especially during an era when partisan interests overshadowed the general will, thus articulating the importance of historical knowledge for a better understanding of current times.<sup>127</sup>

McDougall suggested that national heroes 'are all iconic individuals invested with the admiration or adulation of those who see in them the embodiment of values through which the community at a particular time identifies itself, in whom it sees its protectors, "its salvation"'.<sup>128</sup> The lengthy list of over fifty Arab national heroes and historical themes proposed by Miqdadi as content for the history course included only two Christians (Imru' al-Qays and Jurji Zaydan) and five women (Zenobia, al-Khansa Shajar al-Durr, Khadija, Aisha) and focused predominantly on Islamic history of the Caliphs, kings, and generals.<sup>129</sup> Strikingly these role models chosen by Miqdadi were far removed from his proclaimed interest in secular-social history. His emphasis on Arab history was very similar to the one characterizing European education that he criticized. However, although these heroes represent the 'embodiment of [Miqdadi's] values' in his interpretation of Islam and Muhammad as a progressivist modernizing power, this list does not underline Islamic or Arab superiority. Whether it was pedagogically feasible or not,

<sup>126</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim; al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Kutub tadrīs al-tārikh'. See also al-Dabbagh, *Madrasat al-qarya*, 90.

<sup>127</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Uṣūl tadrīs al-tārikh'.

<sup>128</sup> James McDougall, *History and the Culture*, 150–1.

<sup>129</sup> The centrality of great men (*al-rijāl al-'iẓām*) was prominent in both the history writing and history teaching pedagogy. See for example Khalidi, *Arkān*, 153; Nicola Ziadeh, *Shakhṣiyāt 'arabiyyah* (Jaffa: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyyah, 1945); Anton Shukri Lawrence and Eugene Hoade, *'Uẓamā' al-māḍi* (Jerusalem: al-Maktaba al-'aṣriyyah, 1936).

Miqdadi aimed to extract secular and social values from a familiar, more relevant heritage as represented by this traditional list of iconic individuals.

Al-Dabbagh took a placatory approach to resolve this contradiction. While agreeing with Miqdadi's emphasis on patriotic education, he suggested that these notions should be taught 'with respect (*ihtirām*) to other nations for the rule of tranquillity, and peacefulness'. The love for our nation, argued al-Dabbagh, 'should not blind us to seeing the qualities of other nations, and conversely our respect towards the world must not distract us from our distinctive heritage'.<sup>130</sup> Khalidi agreed on this point, insisting that history instruction 'need not be confined to any one country or any one age'.<sup>131</sup>

Grating as these contradictions may sound, they were not unique to Miqdadi. Often, progressive humanist education went hand in hand with nationalist pedagogy.<sup>132</sup> Husri, for example, kept a statue of the revolutionary Swiss pedagogue Pestalozzi in his library and based on his readings of Montessori, and Froebel sought to go beyond religion and sectarianism when proclaiming, 'let us distance ourselves from intervention'.<sup>133</sup> At the same time, Husri attributed an almost metaphysical restorative and inspirational power to history and campaigned for instrumental history instruction that would mobilize young people.<sup>134</sup>

This pedagogical paradox was not confined to Arab nationalism, and there is no need to go as far as Montessori's albeit temporary embrace of Fascism to find similar examples. The same trends were found within the pages of the pedagogical English journal *The Teachers' Aid*, which Miqdadi mentions as one of his sources. A close reading of the issues of the time reveal the direct influence of the journal not only on Miqdadi's writing but also on the general outline and educational approach of the College journal.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Al-Dabbagh, *Madrasat al-qarya*, 88–90; A similar approach can be found in Jawhariyah, 'Idāh dars al-jughrafiyah'.

<sup>131</sup> Khalidi, *Arkān*, 155.

<sup>132</sup> For an analysis of the instrumentalization of these theories in Zionist education, see David Shahar, '“amlanūt” ve-“avodah” “atsmit”'; Yuval Dror, *National Education*.

<sup>133</sup> William L. Cleveland, *The Making*, 87; Orit Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 229–33, 250–4.

<sup>134</sup> Cleveland, *The Making*, 143–5.

<sup>135</sup> Examples from *The Teachers' Aid* include a focus on heroes and great men very similar to Miqdadi's terminology, the mention of Thomas Carlyle, and the importance of biographies as basis for history teaching and a reading list for each hero: Chas K. Herring, 'History and Geography', 13 December 1919, 253; a discussion on the work of 'individuals' and 'strong men', E. S. Stuart, 'The Analysis of History', 27 December 1919, 610; discussing the use of narratives and biographies in history teaching, 'Suggestions for the History Lesson', 29 January 1921, 286; about 'spicing up' the history lesson 'Teaching History', 18 December 1922, 191, and 'Story Telling in the School Curriculum', 25 September 1920, 412.

This weekly journal presented articles dealing with the teaching of history and gave 'hints' for the history teacher. It also addressed the problematic marginalization of general history and its importance to a better understanding of British history and argued in favour of cosmopolitanism and internationalism.<sup>136</sup> However, the periods and historical issues discussed in the journal focused essentially on British history, and the weekly column 'Great Days of History', for example, was dedicated to British notables, wars, and conquests.<sup>137</sup>

If these supposedly pedagogical impossibilities were not enough, the heavy burden of history teaching also required extensive knowledge of history. The information in history textbook was not enough for a 'real teacher' (*al-ḥaqīqī*), in the words of Miqdadi. Miqdadi attached a long reading list discussing Islamic conquests, and Khalidi advised teachers to read al-Tabari, Ibn al-Athir, Gibbon, and 'the best of modern historical books'.<sup>138</sup> Thus the abilities of these 'new model' history teachers went far beyond the syllabus. They were required to show interest, revitalize, and incorporate various methods of teaching and constantly update their historical knowledge by reading newspapers, books, and journals.

In practice, this far-reaching visionary pedagogy had very little in common with the vast majority of Arab schools, particularly in the early days of the Mandate. Access to written sources was scarce, even in the central city schools, for much of the Mandate period. The travelling libraries initiative at the beginning of the 1920s that provided a small selection of books carefully selected by the Department carried on animal transport, is a case in point.<sup>139</sup> Interviewees testified that even in the late 1930s, and until the end of the Mandate, daily newspapers could only be found in most villages when a resident would buy them while in a neighbouring town or city. Educational journals could only be found in urban centres. Thus, the vision of a well-read, knowledgeable teacher who carefully followed current events and historical discoveries was tantamount to a fiction because, in most schools, these sources were simply out of reach.

The few improvements made especially towards the end of the Mandate and primarily in the urban centres and secondary schools somewhat

<sup>136</sup> William H. Pick, 'The Teaching of General History', *The Teachers' Aid*, 24 July 1920, 264.

<sup>137</sup> See issues of *The Teachers' Aid* dated 1 April 1922–1923, March 1923.

<sup>138</sup> Al-Haj Ibrahim, 'Akhbār 'amr ibn al-'āṣ wa-akhlāqihī'; Khalidi replaced Al-Tabari, al-Athir and Gibbon with Green, Froude, Macaulay and Lecky in the original English version, Khalidi, *Arkān*, 154; Great Britain. Board of Education, *Handbook of Suggestions*, 115; similar in al-Dabbagh, *Madrasat al-qarya*, 88–9.

<sup>139</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 88.

facilitated history teachers' access to newer sources and journals. The Arab College library started with 250 books in 1923, but had 1600 volumes in 1927 and 7122 in 1946. At the 'Amiriyyah School in Jaffa, there were 1101 books in 1941, but 2000 volumes by 1945; the school library in Bayt Dajan increased from 600 to 1000 books during these same years.<sup>140</sup> Lutfi Zreik recalled that his secondary government school in Safad had a large library in the late 1940s during the time when Ihsan Abbas, who taught in the school in the early 1940s, invested his own time and money travelling to Jerusalem to buy books that could enrich his students' knowledge and enhance his teaching.<sup>141</sup> The presence or absence of written texts was crucial in enabling or impeding access for both teachers and students to knowledge, inspiration, and practical references, and it enabled or (in most cases) prevented them from going beyond the syllabus and exploring new worlds.

Hebrew history teachers had much greater access to these resources. Hebrew children's libraries had been established in Palestine in the new settlements as of the end of the nineteenth century, and by the Mandate period, there was one in every Jewish settlement and school. A Hebrew teacher or student who wanted to read a book could easily do so.<sup>142</sup>

The scarcity of teaching resources in the Arab schools was associated with other challenges. The unfortunate career of Ahmad Sha'ban 'Aydeh, a teacher in the government schools, that stretched over two unsatisfactory decades from 1922 to 1942, provides a good indication of the other difficulties facing the history teacher. In the village schools, one single teacher had the full responsibility for all subjects and all administrative issues. 'Aydeh, for example, taught history, geography, Arabic, religious studies, English, and maths, and according to the reports, submitted by his DIE, he 'was of limited knowledge', 'looks dull, inert, and does not adhere to the syllabus', 'and is slack'. 'Aydeh, like most teachers of the time had not taken the Teachers' Higher Certificate Examination although he was repeatedly urged to do so by his District Inspector of Education (DIE).<sup>143</sup> The severe shortage of teachers kept him in the system without formal training. 'Aydeh's DIE kept transferring him every few years to another village school even after he

<sup>140</sup> Abdul Latif Tibawi, 'Report on Education in the Southern District of Palestine February 1941 - October 1945', 5 January 1946, Tibawi, Box 3/5, 15, MECA; Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, 'Khitāb khadrāt mudir al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah*, no. 1 (15 December 1927): 10-13.

<sup>141</sup> 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'i*, 147.

<sup>142</sup> Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 273-85.

<sup>143</sup> See Confidential Report on Teaching Staff, 18 January 1924; 31 January and 18 July 1929; 5 February and 12 May 1931; 30 January and 8 August 1932; and 13 June 1933, 'Ahmad Sha'ban 'Aydeh', M1014/2, ISA.

had determined that 'he is not the type of teacher to be kept in the service'. A personal letter of warning was sent to him after his students in 'Ain-Houd failed to answer the questions presented by the DIE in history and geography, and their knowledge was described as useless and fragmented.<sup>144</sup>

'Aydeh's understandably defensive reply embodies the predicament of many village schools in Palestine. He argued that he had only been sent to the school a few months earlier and, therefore, could not be blamed for the lack of proficiency of his students because his students' education had been in the hands of 'no more than a Kuttab sheikh'. 'Aydeh depicted the village school in catastrophic Qur'anic terminology: as a 'levelled plain' (*qā'an ṣafṣafan*) and its students as 'frozen skeletons' (*hayākil jāmida*). He noted that history and geography were indeed important subjects that require substantial educational resources, like the ones available in city schools, but which were unavailable in his village. After noting that the syllabus was rigid, highly detailed, and extremely hard (*ṣa' b jiddan*), he stressed the dire need for new textbooks that corresponded to the syllabus and contained teacher guidelines. 'Aydeh concluded his letter to the Department dramatically by stating that 'the teacher is like your son, obedient to your command', and that the reprimand had landed on him like a bomb, 'killing him with politeness' (*taqṭalnī qatlan adabīyan*), but that nevertheless, he would continue to make an effort.<sup>145</sup>

This correspondence between an incompetent teacher with little knowledge of history and no pedagogical training with the system that appointed him highlights the fact that although aware of his (in)capabilities, the Department could not afford to lose him, train him, or supply the resources he needed to teach history well. The requirements of the history class outlined in the history syllabus were irrelevant and incompatible with the orientations of the 'frozen skeletons', his students.

Some history teachers who overcame the lack of means through hard work were nevertheless recalled for their exceptional educational skills and knowledge. Sa'da Sabbagh, a teacher in the Safad Elementary Girls' School, impressed her school principal and DIE with her efforts to prepare her history and geography classes, and although she did not have the books, she was able to engage with the students, interest them in the subjects, and

<sup>144</sup> DIE Galilee to 'Aydeh, 25 April 1931, *ibid*.

<sup>145</sup> 'Aydeh to DIE Galilee, 5 May 1931, *ibid*.

foster understanding. Sabbagh was an exception because she was a graduate of the Women Teachers' Training College and obtained its certificate.<sup>146</sup>

Unfortunately, the literature describing history teachers tends to be limited to secondary schools because these institutions produced students who later wrote memoirs of their school years. Teachers' lives were easier in the secondary schools because they could dedicate themselves to only one or two subjects. Thus, while enabling a glimpse into the history class, although crucial to the annals of Palestinian education, these depictions represent only small number of teachers.

The legendary history teachers in these institutions had a tremendous impact on their students. Jabra, for example, mentions Diya al-Khatib, his history teacher in the Rashidiya, who is remembered for his 'mastery of the material of his course...I felt he opened amazingly ramifying temporal depths in my way of thinking'.<sup>147</sup> There were also teachers who left the opposite impression on their students, even at the most prestigious schools. Dr Muhammad Hadi Haj Mir obtained his PhD in history from Tübingen University, though there were doubts as to the validity of his diploma.<sup>148</sup> One of the senior history teachers in the Arab College, Haj Mir was remembered as being strict and tedious. One student recalled his exhausting homework, a grading system based on the numbers of pages rather than content, and his shameless promotion of his brother's farm produce at the College.<sup>149</sup>

Ziadeh, Haj Mir's history teacher colleague at the College, criticized him for having no understanding of history and teaching slogans rather than its core through equations such as: 'Ali (Aisha+Talha+al-Zubayr) = Battle of the Camel.<sup>150</sup> It came as no surprise, Ziadeh noted, that so many of the Rashidiya and Arab College students shared no love of history when Haj Mir was its only spokesman.<sup>151</sup>

Some teachers praised themselves for the work they did. Zu'aytir wrote about his days in Acre as a history teacher for the sheikhs of al-Jazzar mosque, and how he used history teaching to ignite his students' nationalist

<sup>146</sup> See Confidential Report on Teaching Staff, 18 July 1927 and 7 May 1938, 'Sa'da Sabbagh', MI019/1, ISA.

<sup>147</sup> Jabra, *The First Well*, 162–3.

<sup>148</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:91; Najm, *Dār*, 75–6.

<sup>149</sup> From the memoirs of Ahmad Husayn al-Yamani (1924–2010), [http://www.suhmata.com/shhadat\\_u\\_mukablat\\_24.php](http://www.suhmata.com/shhadat_u_mukablat_24.php), accessed 25 July 2014.

<sup>150</sup> The Battle of the Camel took place in Basra in 656 between Aisha (one of the Prophet's wives) and her supporters against the newly appointed Caliph, 'Ali. The battle is known as the First Fitna, the first war where Muslims fought other Muslims.

<sup>151</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:92.





**Photo 12** Learning history at the Arab College with Dr Muhammad Haj Mir, 1942. The Bitmuna Collections, Photo Schwartz.

spirit.<sup>152</sup> However, in his formal teaching post, he was not appreciated and his teaching was depicted as rhetorical (*khiṭābīyah*), 'nervous' and lacking 'experience', ill tempered (*ʿaṣabī al-mazaj*), and susceptible (*sarī al-ta'athhur*).<sup>153</sup> Teachers, supervisors and students all perceived their own qualities differently.

These reports divest Zu'aytir's memoirs of some of their glory, but their mundaneness also illustrates the translation of the system's official policy into practice through the eyes of less senior, strictly Arab administrators. For example, the promotion of nationalist ideals in the history class were not encouraged, although they were acceptable to assessors.

<sup>152</sup> Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 33–4.

<sup>153</sup> See Confidential Report on Teaching Staff, 3 February 1928, 'Akram Zu'aiter', M1012/15, ISA.

Radi Abd al-Hadi's DIE reported that he had 'an inclination for noisy patriotism. He likes to make speeches, writes articles about things which he has not a fair knowledge of. But however is a good teacher of history and geography.'<sup>154</sup> This inclination did not stop the Department from constantly promoting this talented educator to become the principal of the Hebron Secondary School in 1943. Lutfi Zreik noted that his Syrian history teacher in the Safad Secondary School was a patriot (*waṭāni*) and focused on apogees in Arab history, making the students proud of being Arab. Zreik's story is one of many where *waṭāni* teachers had no problem educating according to their ideals in government schools. In fact, secondary schools educated the ideal age group for the inculcation of nationalist ideas, at a time when adolescents are searching for a worldview to relate to, and to consolidate their own identity. However, limited access to secondary education, more than administrative restrictions on nationalist education, meant a limited exposure of young Arab Palestinians to these ideas.

Nationalist sentiments could even be aroused unintentionally, as in the case of Miss Wilson's class. A teacher in the Bir-Zeit College, Wilson mentioned that an exercise 'on subjunctives or participles could be twisted into an allusion to the Arab cause'. For example, when Wilson talked about Disraeli, the students shouted 'but he was a Jew!', and while teaching British history, the students' thoughts drifted to Palestine.<sup>155</sup> While talking about Disraeli's phrase 'a great man is one that affects the mind of his generation', all of the students thought of Hitler.<sup>156</sup> For Bahjat Abu Gharbieh, the learning of English plays and Western history and his activities in the Department's scouts played a formative role in the development of his national consciousness that was as central as Arab history and poetry.<sup>157</sup> History teachers were not necessarily the ones to preach nationalism. Ibrahim al-Daqaq, who attended Rawdat a-ma'arif in the 1940s, mentioned that his chemistry teacher discussed Arab nationalism and history, and other student memoirs indicate that the school principal, a charismatic gymnastics or Arabic teacher, was behind the nationalist spirit of the school.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>154</sup> See Confidential Report on Teaching, 15 August 1932, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA.

<sup>155</sup> H. M. Wilson, 'School Year in Palestine, 1938–1939', 65; Heidi K. Berg, 'Education and Identity', 101–2.

<sup>156</sup> Hilda M. Wilson, 'School Year in Palestine, 1938–1939', 65.

<sup>157</sup> Bahjat Abū Gharbiyah, *Min mudhakkirāt al-munādil*, 20–1, 23.

<sup>158</sup> Ibrahim Jamil Al-Daqaq (b. 1929), Interview, Jerusalem, 12 September 2013; Samiḥ Mas'ūd, *Ḥayfā—burqah*, 138–39, 112–18.



Photo 13 The English Committee in Rawdat al- Ma'arif College, 1932.<sup>159</sup>



Photo 14 The students of Mikveh Israel on a field trip, 1932 (Wadi al-Milh/ Milek in the background), Hanna and Abraham Gershoni collection, Shoshana and Asher Halevy Photo Archive, Yad Ben-Zvi.

<sup>159</sup> *Majallat Rawdat al-Ma'arif*, 4, no. 2, 10 March 1932, 25.

Thus, throughout the bulk of the Mandate period and in most Palestinian schools, the average history teacher had limited pedagogical training and even less access to educational resources especially in the village schools. This contrasted with the central urban institutions, which were highly selective in terms of both students and teachers. The secondary schools of Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, and other developing urban centres employed university graduates to teach history, and were also able to supply all the resources such as textbooks and maps. The pedagogical discourse mentioned earlier thus merely reflects the teaching of history in Palestine's Ivy League schools.

### Used, Unused, and Misused Textbooks

It is difficult to determine what books were actually authorized or used in classes in different private or governmental schools. The scant evidence comes from newspaper articles, the correspondence of the Department of Education, and personal testimonies. In the early days of the Mandate, especially during the period of military rule and the early 1920s, Egyptian books were bought by the Department and distributed directly to government schools in the districts.<sup>160</sup> The military administration had to work fast to find practical solutions after the departure of the Ottomans. Politically and technically, it was easier to import resources from Egypt. This was also true in the 'Egyptian period' of the Men's Elementary Training College, which opened in March 1918 and was based on Egyptian methods, textbooks, and personnel.<sup>161</sup>

The dominance of Egyptian resources probably continued throughout the first decade of the Mandate. Stewart Symes, Chief Secretary to the government, noted in 1928 that 'the schools relied largely on Egyptian sources for the supply of text-books.'<sup>162</sup> For some periods of history, Egyptian textbooks were used until the 1940s.<sup>163</sup> The two volumes of the Egyptian textbook *Tārīkh ūrūbā al-ḥadīth* (*A Modern History of Europe*) were still

<sup>160</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:45–7.

<sup>161</sup> London Islamic Cultural Centre, *Arabic and Islamic Garland*, 28–9; Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:171–2.

<sup>162</sup> 'Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission', June 15, 1928, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E211072996E780B9052565F000651656>, accessed 25 October 2019.

<sup>163</sup> Al-Tamimi writes in his foreword that the secondary year students in Palestine were using Egyptian books, with slight differences from the Palestinian syllabus: al-Tamimi, *Tārīkh ūrūbā al-ḥadīth*, 3.

used at the Arab College in the late 1930s.<sup>164</sup> As a student, Ziadeh recalls reading from Egyptian books such as *The Nile Reader*, noting with irony that the students and teachers, because they had no other textbooks, knew more about the Nile than the Jordan River. Ziadeh later became a history teacher in Acre's secondary school in the late 1920s. Because there were no history textbooks, he summarized his history lessons from an English copy of Breasted's *Ancient Times* since the Arabic translation was not yet available in Palestine, and a copy of the *Tārīkh al-umam al-islāmīyah* (*History of the Islamic Peoples*) authored by the Egyptian scholar Muhammad al-Khudari. Ziadeh's use of an improvised copying machine to hand out his summaries to his students in a central secondary school of a central town is indicative of the shortage of history textbooks.<sup>165</sup>

A letter sent by the former Labour MP Susanne Lawrence to the High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope depicts the 'shocking lack of Arabic textbooks', warning Wauchope about 'objectionable and chauvinist views by means of biased history', as in the case of Germany and Russia.<sup>166</sup> Wauchope defended his Department of Education, stating that 'great difficulty has been experienced in finding persons with the gift of interesting narration in a clear and simple style'. The High Commissioner admitted that 'unfortunately' a history textbook for Palestinian pupils did not exist, but stressed the centrality of the detailed syllabus and the Department's supervision of its implementation. In response to Lawrence's criticism, Wauchope set up a committee with Farrell as its chairman to advise on the textbooks needed and 'how they can best be produced' and 'invite Arab writers to translate or adapt suitable textbooks'.<sup>167</sup> Wauchope briefed the Colonial Office about the correspondence, stressing that it was a matter of government expenditure but that he felt 'new text books are needed to replace one or two unsuitable ones'.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi to Bloom, 2 November 1936, Special Committee on Curricula and Examination 15 July 1936, M2500/102, ISA. Al-Tamimi's book was probably meant to replace the Egyptian version and correspond to the Palestine syllabus. See also in Ibrāhīm Khalil Sukayk, *Sharīṭ al-dhikrayāt*, 72–3.

<sup>165</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:171–72, 195; For more on the use of Egyptian textbooks in the late 1920s in Palestine, see Dajānī, *Jabhat al-tarbiyah*, 56. Copies of Breasted's textbook in Arabic were available in later years, probably as of the early 1930s, Ibrāhīm Khalil Sukayk, *Sharīṭ al-dhikrayāt*, 51–2; Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*, 95.

<sup>166</sup> 'Susanne Lawrence to Arthur Wauchope', no date specified but presumably early 1935, CO 733/273/5/28–9, TNA.

<sup>167</sup> 'Arthur Wauchope to Sussane Lawrence', 25 May 1935, CO 733/273/5/30–2, TNA.

<sup>168</sup> 'Arthur Wauchope to Parkinson, Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Colonial Office', 18 June 1935, CO 733/273/5/27, TNA.



This central initiative succeeded in producing a translation of one history textbook, *Landmarks of World History*, which was published by Longman, Green, and Co. in 1937. This was apparently the only history textbook that was fully funded by the Department and published by a British publisher.<sup>169</sup> The two subsequent volumes of the book, which were to cover world history up to the present time, were never published.<sup>170</sup> One reason why the trilogy was never completed was the inspectors' and teachers' reluctance to be reduced to mere translators.<sup>171</sup> Except for advertisements in several newspapers, there is no evidence of its actual use in schools.<sup>172</sup> Even though it was widely circulated in late 1939, a remarkable achievement given the political circumstances, this was overall a very poor achievement for the Department as a producer of history textbooks after more than two full decades in power.

The translation of a British history textbook could hardly respond to the need for a textbook written specifically for Palestine. This fact, along with the idea of printing the book on the more advanced presses in London rather than with a local publisher, Farrell viewed as 'negligible' and may be indicative of the government's mistrust and indifference towards the large local community of educators and publishers.<sup>173</sup>

The case of Farrell's refusal to publish Radi Abd al-Hadi's textbook is one example, possibly of many, of teachers who sensed the need and invested time and effort in writing a textbook that was not accepted by the Department. The eight notebooks he sent to the Department included *The Kings of Western Europe* and a geography textbook that were never published.<sup>174</sup> Abd al-Hadi, a teacher in his early twenties, nevertheless managed to coauthor a textbook that was authorized by the Department ten years later. The history textbooks written by Palestinian educators tended to be local initiatives on the part of educators, most of whom were employees of the Department of Education, although in the majority of cases, the Department was reluctant to either support them financially or circulate them widely.

Because it was the centre of British administration, Jerusalem spearheaded the textbook industry. Husayn Ruhi, a Baha'i educator and preacher of Egyptian descent, was a senior inspector in the Department

<sup>169</sup> A detailed description of publication processes and outcomes can be found in, Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 171–4.

<sup>170</sup> *Palestine Post*, 29 January 1939.

<sup>171</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 97.

<sup>172</sup> *Palestine Post*, 29 January 1939.

<sup>173</sup> Farrell, 'Memorandum', 23 October 1939, CO 733/431/8, TNA.

<sup>174</sup> Farrell to Radi, 25 April 1932, 'Radi Abd Al-Hadi', M1049/5, ISA.

of Education as of its inception. Ruhi was apparently the first to publish a history textbook in Palestine after the British occupation. The first edition appeared in January 1922, and the second in June of the same year. Ruhi also translated a biology textbook in 1921 and published a geography textbook in 1923 with the Department's funding and approval.<sup>175</sup> Oddly enough, the geography and history textbooks were published by the L.J.S Printing Press (London Jews' Society), the Anglican mission for the conversion of Jews. Totah and Barghuthi's *The History of Palestine* was published in 1923 after Totah had already published a geography textbook in 1920 entitled *The Geography of Palestine* with Habib al-Khuri (b. 1879, Kafr-Yasif), a teacher at the College. Taysir Zubyan was commissioned to publish a general history textbook in 1923, while teaching history in Rawdat al-ma'arif. Zubyan dedicated his book to Amir Abdallah and his noble efforts to 'raise the light of knowledge'.<sup>176</sup> The next history textbook, *History of Arabs and Islam* (1925), was published by Darwazah, the principal of the Najah College at the time. The last book to be published in the 1920s was *History* (1926), authored by Hannah Dahdah Farah, a school principal in Nazareth, originally from Gaza. Dahdah also authored a school song (*anāshīd*) book.

These local initiatives during the first decade of the Mandate are illustrative of the local potential and proven ability of their authors. The Department remained detached or indifferent to these developments and failed or refused to cooperate or co-opt these initiatives. It was not for lack of time that the Department did not publish textbooks, as a senior official argued in 1928, but rather the colonial (dis)engagement with the local actors frustrated their authorship.<sup>177</sup>

Thus independent initiatives continued throughout the Mandate by either inspectors or principals of government or private schools. The following decades were more prolific in the field of history and geography textbooks, which were predominantly written by inspectors of the Department of Education. The fact that a number of books (Ḥarami, Ruhi, Lawrence, Higham, and others) announced sequels or series that failed to materialize is indicative of the difficulties and lack of resources, although it shows their ability to think ambitiously.

<sup>175</sup> John E. Dinsmore, *Dars al-ṭabī'ah aw durūs al-ashyā'*, trans. Husayn Ruhi (al-quds: Idārat ma'ārif filastīn al-'umūmīyah, 1921).

<sup>176</sup> Zubyan, *Zubdat*.

<sup>177</sup> 'Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission'; See also Abdulqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 188.

Memoirs, archival materials, and school publications provide a partial map of the actual use of these textbooks. Darwazah's trilogy of ancient, medieval-modern, and Arab history is known to have been taught in several schools such as al-Najah, Rawdat al-ma'arif, and The Orthodox National School in Jaffa.<sup>178</sup> Jabra, for example, studied history from Darwazah's textbook, which was 'full of portraits and historical figures'; the author describes how he started sketching them, and was proud of one copy he made of Napoleon.<sup>179</sup> Al-Tamimi's *Modern History of Europe* was used in the Girls' Arab college and the Arab College.<sup>180</sup> Miqdadi's textbook was used in Rawdat al-ma'arif,<sup>181</sup> and Hadhwa's book, with its Christian bias, is mentioned as being used in the Latin schools, and it attracted the ire of critics who argued that it was 'sowing the seeds of criminal sectarianism and corrupting patriotism'.<sup>182</sup> One interviewee mentioned the use of al-'Abidi's *History of the Arabs* in a government school in Haifa in the late 1930s.<sup>183</sup> Other books mentioned in school syllabi that were not authored in Palestine but were widely used for preparation for the matriculation exam in secondary schools were Breasted's *Ancient Times* and Robinson's *General History of Europe and Medieval and Modern Times*.<sup>184</sup>

The circulation of a textbook in the government schools required the authorization of the textbook committee, which existed as of the early 1920s. In 1939, Farrell noted that the committee enjoyed a 'sufficient representation of educated Arab opinion', although he objected to the inclusion of representatives of a private school of 'lower standards' that would stir up 'controversies as to the suitability of chauvinistic Arab history books' and that the Department has not forbidden the use of any books in private

<sup>178</sup> Bayān al-madrasa al-waṭāniyah al-urthūdhuksiyah bi-yāfā, 1934–1935 (Jaffa: Maṭba'at filasṭīn al-jadīdah); Barnāmaj Rawḍat al-ma'ārif, 1934–1935 (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at dār al-aytām al-islāmīyah) and Barnāmaj al-najāh, 1938–1939 (Jerusalem: Maṭba'at dār al-aytām al-islāmīyah).

<sup>179</sup> Jabra, *The First Well*, 154.

<sup>180</sup> Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi to Bloom, 2 November 1936, Special Committee on Curricula and Examination, M2500/102, ISA.

<sup>181</sup> Barnāmaj Rawḍat al-ma'ārif, 1934–1935.

<sup>182</sup> Shawqi Elias, 'On Latin Schools', 24 September 1947, newspaper unknown, 105/315A/82, HA.

<sup>183</sup> Hanna Abu Hanna (b. 1928), Interview, Haifa, 10 September 2013.

<sup>184</sup> *Madrasat frendz lil-ṣibyān, Ramallah, 1930; Bayān al-madrasa al-waṭāniyah al-urthūdhuksiyah bi-yāfā, 1934–1935; Barnāmaj Rawḍat al-ma'ārif, 1934–1935; Barnāmaj al-najāh, 1938–1939; principal of Terra Santa to Bloom, Special Committee on Curricula and Examination, 15 July 1936, M2500/102, ISA; J. Thornton-Duesbery to Bloom, 6 October 1936, M2500/102, ISA; Lutfi Zreik and Ibrahim Jamil Al-Daqq also mentioned the use of the book in their schools in the 1940s.*



schools. Farrell, although supportive of the idea of censorship, objected to the restrictive censorship of textbooks in private schools and advised reforming the 'not very effective control' over the use of Hebrew textbooks. Aware of the 'autonomy which the Jewish system claims rather than deserves', the Director left it to the government to decide whether this kind of supervision was expedient.<sup>185</sup>

Farrell's statement does not clarify the question of censorship in government schools. In order for a book to be authorized, it first had to be reviewed by no fewer than two expert teachers who submitted reports to the committee that would then make recommendations to the Director.<sup>186</sup> In this process, there was no need for censorship, as it was highly selective, and the final decision was made by the Director himself. Tibawi mentioned two instances in which books were censored by the Department. The first was Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which was condemned as unsuitable for Palestinian youth (unsurprisingly, because it was banned and censored in the UK and other countries at the time), and the second was *The History of Palestine*. Nevertheless, direct censorship was not the only way to prevent a book from being published.<sup>187</sup> The Department could simply deny the right to publication with no further explanation, and although only two books were directly censored through the formal channels, many more were probably rejected through institutionalized, tacit censorship.

Total, in his testimony before the Palestine Royal (Peel) Commission mentioned censorship<sup>188</sup>: 'I was co-author of a book, *The History of Palestine* in Arabic for schools, and Sir Herbert Samuel the then High Commissioner banned the book... because it had a very inoffensive reference to Zionism. You could not write a history of Palestine up to date without making some reference to it. It was not rabid, it was not a violent attack on it... but the book was banned and is still banned.'<sup>189</sup> Barghuthi commented that the British objection to the book was initially fuelled by the Anglican Bishop

<sup>185</sup> Farrell, 'Memorandum'; Also cited in Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 155.

<sup>186</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 96.

<sup>187</sup> Tibawi, 88–9.

<sup>188</sup> This incident has been discussed in a number of studies, Davis, 'Commemorating Education'; Zachary Foster, 'Arab Historiography'; Ricks, 'Khalil Total'.

<sup>189</sup> Palestine Royal Commission, *Minutes of Evidence* (London: HMSO, 1937), 351–2; Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 198.

and Latin Patriarch, who demanded the removal of content not to their liking which the authors refused to accept.<sup>190</sup>

A detailed reading of the book might suggest other reasons for its censorship by the British, since it contested the post war settlements and the validity of its borders. British rule over the country, similar to depictions in the Hebrew syllabus, was described as simply yet another rule: 'Palestine is a land of occupation and colonialism and if it were not Jewish it was Assyrian or Babylonian or Persian or Egyptian or Roman or Greek or Turkish or English, and we do not know its fate'.<sup>191</sup> The most severe criticism was directed against the Jews, the Jewish religion, and Zionism, with anti-Semitic overtones.<sup>192</sup>

Even if the reasons stated by Totah for the banning of the book were correct, its censorship was not in fact fully implemented. The book was still used in the Men's Elementary Training College in the early 1920s and an advertisement announcing its publication in the official College journal proves that its circulation was no secret.<sup>193</sup> For three consecutive months in *Filastin*, an ad proclaimed the book 'the best modern history ever published', yet another example of its apparent availability in the country.<sup>194</sup> Furthermore, the use of the book was not considered problematic or clandestine. Over a decade later, a few months after Totah's testimony, the principal of the Anglican Girls' College in Jerusalem, a senior educator and member of the PBHS, mentioned the use of the book for the teaching of history.<sup>195</sup>

Although it was far from being flexible as to the acceptance and inclusion of textbooks, the Department's censorship policy was mild when compared to that implemented in India under British rule in the early 1900s. In the subcontinent, a textbook 'black list' was circulated and the use of an unauthorized textbook by a school meant its students could not take the secondary examinations or apply for government scholarships.<sup>196</sup> Moreover,

<sup>190</sup> Barghuthi, *al-Marāḥil*, 260–1.

<sup>191</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filasṭīn*, 76.

<sup>192</sup> Al-Barghuthi and Totah, *Tārikh filasṭīn*, 295.

<sup>193</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 34–5; Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 158 and *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn*, 28 February 1923, 117.

<sup>194</sup> See issues of *Filastin*, 17 April–13 July 1923.

<sup>195</sup> W. A. Coate to Bloom, 1 March 1937, Special Committee on Curricula and Examination, 2500/102, ISA.

<sup>196</sup> Sudipa Topdar, 'Knowledge and Governance', 61–76.

in some cases, a Palestinian employee decided whether a textbook was worthy of circulation in school or not.<sup>197</sup>

The use of banned books challenges the perceived notion of the colonial control of reality in the classroom. If this was the reality in the central secondary schools, it is certain that even less control prevailed in the periphery. The ban apparently served the administration and its own sense of control more than actually change the reality on the ground which would have taken more energy and spurred unwanted confrontation.

A few documents from the final days of the Mandate illustrate the mechanism of textbook circulation in the schools. A circular sent by the Galilee DIE regarding *The Illustrated History Reader* announces the Department's official permission to use the book for 'the second primary grade'. The circular further permits teachers to use the book as a function of their students' abilities and recommends its use 'to endear the student (*taḥbīb*) to landmarks through the use of illustrated textbooks and the practice of reading'. This official letter was lenient, allowing teachers to decide when to use the book, and it called on teachers to send reports on its implementation. More importantly, the Department indicated that it was unable to purchase enough books for all government schools.<sup>198</sup> The implication is that formal authorization was not necessarily followed by widespread usage of the book in schools. There were also less enthusiastic authorizations. The letter informing headmasters about the use of Khalifa and Radi's book *History of the Arab Kingdoms* stated that 'there is no objection' to using this book, and requested a report from headmasters as to its compatibility for elementary schools.<sup>199</sup> Newspapers would also publish formal announcements by the Department; 'Abidi's book was authorized by the Department in January 1945, and Ziadeh's *Ancient History* was authorized in December of the same year.'<sup>200</sup>

Conversely, the Department was very clear about unauthorized books, not only of history, but on all topics. Books that were not formally authorized were banned even if they had already been purchased and were in use, stating, 'it is not permitted under any circumstances to place a textbook in

<sup>197</sup> Ibrahim Snobar, Assistant Inspector in the Department, recalls how he was appointed by Farrell to decide on the circulation of several books to government schools: *Ṣanawbar*, *Tadhakkurāt ibrahīm ṣanawbar*, 26–7.

<sup>198</sup> DIE Galilee to School Principals, 5 September 1947, P3060/8, ISA.

<sup>199</sup> DIE Galilee to School Principals, 1 March 1947. See also the permission to use Mahmud Zaid's *Historic Tales*, DIE Galilee to School Principals, 27 July 1947, P3060/8, ISA.

<sup>200</sup> *Filastin*, 14 January 1945.

the hands of students, whatever topic it is, unless a written permission from the Director of the Department has been circulated authorizing its use. And if it should happen that students purchased unauthorized books, in these circumstances, those must be kept at their home.'<sup>201</sup>

This policy of authorizing without purchasing made the production process a financial risk, taken only by educators who felt the shortage of textbooks was detrimental, and in most cases, it led to the production of books of poor aesthetic quality, mostly with no or only vague illustrations and poor-quality paper and binding. The quality of the Arabic textbooks published in Palestine, especially in until the late 1930s, emerges clearly when compared to the colourful volume printed by Longman & Green for the Department, the only history textbook providing the coloured illustrations so crucial for the engagement of students with the classroom material. The separation between printing presses for Arabs and Jews also meant that the quality of Hebrew textbooks printed on more advanced printing presses was superior, especially after the transfer of Jewish printing presses from Nazi Germany in the 1930s. From the late 1930s, this difference was noticeable in most printed material for students.

The Hebrew and the colonial Department also differed in terms of autonomy in the authorization of textbooks. The Va'ad had its own committee for the approval of textbooks for each trend. The committee enforced a protocol similar to the colonial one for the authorization of textbooks, and its members were senior supervisors from the three trends. After reading a textbook and receiving input from teachers, the committee discussed its compatibility with the specific trend. In one meeting, for example, Moshe Avigal, a senior supervisor in the Labor Trend, advised the authorization of the second volume of Shmueli's textbook on modern Jewish history, but only for the General Trend, and he was uncertain whether it fit the Labor Trend. It was decided to send it to Dinaburg for further advice.<sup>202</sup> In another meeting, members commented on the 'religious imprint' of Jacob Katz's textbook and its aesthetic shortcomings, but it was authorized for use in the Mizrahi schools.<sup>203</sup> Avivi and Perski's book was considered 'nice' in shape and form. Although committee members were not in favour of the analogies

<sup>201</sup> Ahmad Tuqan, Assistant Director of Education Department to all DIE's, 22 October 1947, P3060/8, ISA.

<sup>202</sup> Minutes of the Committee for the Approval of Books for High-Schools, 15 February 1945, J17/4360, CZA.

<sup>203</sup> Minutes of the Committee for the Approval of Elementary Schools, 28 January 1945, J17/4360, CZA.

between ancient and modern times (Cyrus and Balfour) and criticized the lack of originality and the absence of primary sources, others liked the 'emotional inspiration' directed towards the 'of heart the child', and it was decided to recommend its use in Hebrew schools.<sup>204</sup> That joint work of supervisors from different trends at list officially suggests a shared sense of responsibility over Hebrew education and their greater autonomy to determine which texts spoke to the 'heart the child', and which did not.

History textbooks became a common phenomenon in the last decade of the Mandate. This was initially because of the novelty of modern Arab education in Palestine, but it turned into an administrative policy in later years. Imperial cautiousness and insistence on working with English publishers and English texts, and the Department's unwillingness to cooperate with local educators or publishers that in fact encouraged a local industry, impeded more rapid development and production of better, more appealing textbooks. While eschewing censorship practices common to other colonies, the nonencouragement policy was enough to prevent undesirable material from reaching students, as it was simply economically unviable. Colonial censorship, active or latent, did not apply to the process of Hebrew textbook production that was not dependent on government funds. The Yishuv's autonomous regulation of textbook circulation, unlike the colonial system, encouraged the expansion of a local community of writers, along with a local printing press industry.

## Conclusion

The contours of the history course were determined by the regional and Western historiographic heritage and were compromised by Departmental inconsistencies. The juxtaposition of the colonial Arab syllabus with the autonomous 'colourful' Hebrew programme highlights these inconsistencies and underlines the educational gaps between the two systems. While the Hebrew syllabus was a national locus of pedagogic engagement, and an integral part of a greater project, the government syllabus was a colonized locus unsuccessfully trying to make sense of the colonial project. The constant tension between the Department and its schools, and between educational centres and educational peripheries, further points to the challenges

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*

involved in implementing the educational policy. Examining the teachers' perspective sheds light on the inability of the system to supply them with the resources needed to fully fulfil their duties, and it casts doubt on the relevance of this pedagogical discourse for most teachers. The availability or absence of history textbooks, an essential resource for the history teacher, further reflects the Department's educational policy towards history instruction, and shows it to have lacked pedagogical initiative, renovation, and engagement. However, an emerging local pedagogical discourse and the development of an independent or semi-independent textbook industry reflect the interest, potential, and ability of the Arab community to counter-balance this policy. The next chapter focuses on the crown jewel of Arab education in Palestine, the secondary schools. These institutions deserve further scrutiny because they determined the pedagogical discourse, were hothouses for the training of textbook authors, and, in general, set the educational pace of the entire country.

## A Coalition of Good Will: History Instruction in Secondary Education

The principal of the Arab College Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi told us in his lecture, before taking the Matriculation exam: ‘When you approach the test questions sheet, do not tremble with fear or shiver in panic, but touch the sheet through and through, for you have waited long for it, like the long-anticipated encounter with a bride, coming to announce your success<sup>1</sup>...’.

In his interpretation of academic symbolic capital, Bourdieu argued that a diploma from a privileged school conveys much more than a qualification in a specific field; rather, it guarantees ‘a competence extending far beyond what they are supposed to guarantee’. People’s activities, hobbies, and tastes are a tacit, but, at times, are outward manifestation of the institutions in which they study.<sup>2</sup> Hence, first terms that come to mind when looking at the staged photos of the Palestinian secondary school students and staff (see photos on pages 270–1), all dressed in tailored suits, are *status*, *modernity*, *progress*, *prestige*, and *hope*. In the words of Lucie Ryzova, they were ‘enacting and performing modernity’.<sup>3</sup>

Whether under the French Catholic mission, the Anglican mission, the Supreme Muslim Council, or in national or government schools, secondary education became an *effendi*-making machine, an industry to produce a new Arab subject and a new Arab masculinity. It symbolized membership in a highly selective, prestigious group, ‘shaping an elite bound by a common school experience’.<sup>4</sup> This chapter analyses secondary education and the teaching of history, first by examining the role and importance of the

<sup>1</sup> Sukayk, *Sharīṭ al-dhikrayāt ‘an ghazzah qabla niṣf qarn*, 87.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Ryzova, *The Age of*; Such photos were used for the same purposes in the late Ottoman period: Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 126–7.

<sup>4</sup> See a similar description of Egyptian secondary education in Ryzova, *The Age of*, 185–6; The phrase ‘effendi machine’ appears in, Sharkey, *Living with Colonialism*, 65; Eugene Rogan, ‘The Political Significance of an Ottoman Education’, 77–94; Inger Marie Okkenhaug, ‘To Give the Boys Energy’, 47–65.

Matriculation exam and then through a reconceptualization of the idea and meaning of national history and national education.

The 326 students taking the 1947 matriculation exam (89 in English and 237 in Arabic) illustrate the selectiveness of secondary education. This number in fact represented an impressive increase compared with the first time the exam was administered in 1924, where there were only twenty Arab candidates. The 1947 class—made up of the graduates of nineteen secondary schools in Jaffa, Ramallah, Bir-Zeit, Gaza, Tulkarm, Nablus, Haifa, and Jerusalem<sup>5</sup>—was still a rare phenomenon in Arab society. However, these graduates and those from the few full-secondary schools offering a graduate diploma were disproportionately influential in all spheres of Palestinian society, especially in the field of education; as one graduate of the Arab College stated, we felt we were ‘the strongest people in the world’.<sup>6</sup>

Private education played an influential role in Palestine and in the evolution of the national movement. In secondary education, its influence went beyond its obvious numerical advantage over government secondary schools, especially in the first two decades of the Mandate. Bowman admitted that private secondary education was better than the public provision.<sup>7</sup> Their financial independence as a result of support to the mission and fees from students’ tuition enabled the employment of the best teachers and usually attracted the children of the elite. In order to regulate secondary education, the Department needed their cooperation and support; without them they were left with very little. This dependence on the voluntary cooperation of the principals was noticeable in their poor attendance at the meetings of the PBHS. Officially, the Board had around forty members, but only twenty or fewer took part in the meetings. Apologies for absence from its members to its secretary, Judah L. Bloom, fill the Board’s files.

Although Bloom struggled to popularize the board meetings and the most loyal members were employees of the Department, the Board’s policy, through the matriculation exam, exercised hegemony over the private

<sup>5</sup> Eighty-nine students took the exam in English, some of them Jewish students, and one-hundred and twenty-seven students took the test in the Hebrew version that year, M2497/36, ISA. A much larger number (1580 in 1946) of Arabs and Jews took the Cambridge or London University examinations, but there are no figures as to how many schools prepared for these exams or the proportions of Arabs and Jews.

<sup>6</sup> Dr Abdel Rahman Yaghi (b. 1924, Masmīyya), interviewed by Fawwaz Salameh, Amman, 19 October 2006, <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Gaza/al-Masmīyya-al-Kabira/Story1911.html>, accessed 25 May 2015; See also, Sukayk, *Sharīf al-dhikrayāt*, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Bowman’s testimony before the Royal Commission, 27 November 1936, 2/2/32, BM, MECA.



secondary schools' syllabi and led to the standardization of secondary education. Private schools with diverse ideologies and denominations thus gradually adopted the high standards of the history matriculation exam set by the PBHS.

### **Shouted from the Housetops: Matriculating in History**

'The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem was the meeting place of two civilisations: on its soil the East learned from the West, and perhaps still more, the West learned from the East' Explain this statement (Palestine Matriculation Exam, 1939)

On 11 July 1927, some dozen students took the London matriculation exam. A short while after they started their exam, a catastrophic earthquake shook Palestine.<sup>8</sup> '[T]he floor heaved, tables overturned... Candidates and invigilator raced to the door... The walls still shook... plaster was pouring from the ceiling'. This drama failed to terminate the exam. Once quiet was restored, all returned to write their exams. Only a second more violent tremor convinced the invigilator to halt the exam.<sup>9</sup> Earthquakes, natural or political, did not always succeed in challenging the matriculation. The last exam was held in March 1948, in wartime when Jerusalem was divided into closed security zones. De Bunsen, who was afraid he would not be able to get the written exams returned to the British zone, was handed them through the barbed wire that divided the city.<sup>10</sup>

These two incidents illustrate the importance, indeed the near sanctity, of the Palestine Matriculation Examination. It was initiated in 1924 by the PBHS and with slight changes continued until the end of the Mandate. In order to pass the exam, the student had to satisfy the examiners on six topics, three of which were mandatory: language, English, and mathematics; the student chose the remaining three. The centrality and ample attention given by the Department to the matriculation exam was disproportional to the numbers of students taking the exam and had no practical relevance to over 99 percent of Palestine's Arab students. According to the surviving files of the Department, no other topic received such close attention on the part of prominent educators as the matriculation exam, in contrast to the

<sup>8</sup> Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 303.

<sup>9</sup> Bowman, 303.

<sup>10</sup> De Bunsen's Diary, 24 March 1948, De Bunsen's papers, held by De Bunsen's widow.

lack of pedagogical attention to primary education, although on the declarative and financial levels, the Department was primarily committed to supporting it.

This imbalance is emblematic of the vision of the most central figures in Palestinian education, Arabs and British alike: the establishment of a Palestinian secondary education of the highest standards. To serve this purpose, the Department insisted on incorporating acclaimed local and international academics as members of the Board and as examiners for the matriculation and postmatriculation exams.

After initiating the matriculation exam, the Board sought accreditation by British, Egyptian, Lebanese, and American universities, a prerequisite that necessitated long, drawn out correspondence with various universities.<sup>11</sup> It was time-consuming for the Department, and the Department was forced to work under British guidelines to parallel the University of London, Cambridge, and Oxford matriculation exams so that the students sitting for the exam could continue directly to British university education.

Palestine was not unique in this sense. Nigerian grammar schools in the early twentieth century operated on a British curriculum in order to receive government funding. Furthermore, so that their students could take the Cambridge and the College of Preceptors of London Matriculation Exams, they were completely dependent on the guidance and direction of the British Examining Boards.<sup>12</sup> The Phelps-Stokes Commission of Inquiry on education in African states criticized the British bias in education and the complete disregard of local history, remarking that 'if we asked about history, we soon discovered what happened in 1066, but of their own story nothing'. Mission and government schools rejected the Commission's recommendations to reform the British bias, and this trend continued until Nigerian independence in 1952.<sup>13</sup> Indian education under British rule was no different.<sup>14</sup>

This was not the case in Palestine. The matriculation syllabus was a product of joint efforts (within a colonial pedagogical hierarchy) that included leading Arab educators; the exam could be taken in Arabic; and part of the exam was devoted to the history of the region and to Arab and Islamic

<sup>11</sup> See correspondence with the Egyptian University, which recognized the Palestine matriculation in 1942, M2500/92, ISA; for correspondence with UCL, see CO 859/84/8,9, NA, also in Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 111–12.

<sup>12</sup> A. A. Adeyinka, 'Major Trends'.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa*, XIX, 27, 67.

<sup>14</sup> Krishna Kumar, 'Textbooks and Educational Culture'.

history. Bloom, the Board secretary, consulted Arab literature teachers on the content of the Arabic syllabus. In replying to his queries, teachers congratulated the Board on this initiative and highlighted the inclusion of modern poetry and literature and the unjust marginalization of the Jahiliyyah in their comprehensive letters. One commented that the syllabus could lead to a division between Muslim and Christian students because of its overemphasis on Islamic history and the Qur'an. The Board also consulted the historian Constantine Zurayk, who advised it to widen the scope of selected works in the syllabus.<sup>15</sup> For history instruction, syllabus issues were debated either in Board meetings or in the History subcommittee.

Since the Department never published a secondary school syllabus, the required content for the exam determined the content of the syllabus, which was published every year in a booklet by the Department that specified all the requirements. Not all schools immediately gave up their own syllabi, however. The English High School for Girls, for example, continued to prepare their students for the Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board School Certificate Examination.<sup>16</sup> French schools were very hesitant to align themselves with British education. Because of the detentative relations between the Empire and France during the early years of the Mandate, any interference in the curriculum of the French schools triggered an immediate alarm bell that reached diplomatic ranks. This suspended their inclusion in the matriculation exam. However, the need for a recognized school certificate enabling employment in government ranks changed this approach towards the government curriculum and government recognition, although in the French Catholic School in Jaffa and in Jerusalem's Dame de Sion, this only took place in the late 1930s. Even then, the number of candidates sitting for the Department's exam was low because the government continued to recognize the schools' certificate for government jobs.<sup>17</sup>

Elsewhere, over the years, most secondary schools joined ranks with the Department's exam. This growing community made the teaching of history the centre of attention, and naturally it became the most extensively discussed topic in the PBHS as well. These discussions, however, only led to minor revisions in the structure of the exam, with no actual changes in its

<sup>15</sup> Munif al-din Zayd al-Kailani, Majdal Secondary School, to Bloom, 25 June 1943; Muhammad Rushdy al-Khayyat, Bir-Zeit College to Bloom, 20 June 1943, Collège des Frères Jerusalem to Bloom, 28 June 1943; Constantine Zurayk to Bloom, 14 June 1943, M2497/41, ISA.

<sup>16</sup> S. Emery's report to the Royal Commission 1936, S. Emery, Box 2, 150-1, MECA.

<sup>17</sup> Ichilov, *Between State and Church*, 29-32, 119-22; Mona Hajjar Halaby, 'School Days in Mandate Jerusalem at Dames de Sion'.

content.<sup>18</sup> In most cases, Arab and Muslim history never went beyond 1492, and it focused mostly on the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. Modernity and modern times in the exams, as at the elementary level, dealt with Europe, and the outline of British history was the most contemporary.<sup>19</sup>

The high standards or what were considered the impossible demands of the exam were criticized by secondary school principals. They viewed the history matriculation exam as 'the most burdensome subject', and there seemed to be a consensus that its scope should be limited and simplified. The students were 'struggling with a history text and a dictionary' even when using simplified textbooks. One principal mentioned that the Arab students were intimidated by the exam, and they refused to take it because of its 'severe demands'. The principal of St Mary's school protested that her students 'are so busy cramming' for the exam that they had no time for original work. Thorenton-Duesbery, the principal of St George's, suggested popularizing the exam and shouting 'from the housetops' that this certificate meant a government job and ranked higher than any other exam.<sup>20</sup>

In their negotiations with the Department, the content of the syllabus was not criticized; it was a nonissue. The concern was that there was just too much of it. This pedagogical obedience was not confined to Anglican or missionary schools. The Rawda and al-Najah colleges, neither of which was represented in the PBHS, taught history and geography for matriculation in Arabic and English, using Robinson's textbook in English, although their students took the exam in Arabic.<sup>21</sup> This was the case in institutions which emphasized their commitment to 'true Arab education...so the student could be inculcated with the morals of his glorious nation.'<sup>22</sup> The brochures written by Rawda and Najah; both emphasized the validity of their certificates for admission to universities, and their history syllabus adhered to the

<sup>18</sup> Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 90; Harte, 'Contesting the Past', 277–84. See also the publications of the PBHS, Majlis al-ta'lim al-'ālī al-filastīnī, Ta'dil qawānīn wa-manhaj imtiḥān shahādāt al-ijtiyāz ila al-ta'lim al-'ālī, 1925, 1928, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1942.

<sup>19</sup> History Matriculation Exams examined for 1924, 1938–1943, National Library, Jerusalem and M2496/29, ISA.

<sup>20</sup> St George's Headmaster to Bloom, 10 July 1931, M2500/103, ISA; Headmaster Notre Dame De Sion to Bloom, 12 September 1936, Special Committee on Curricula and Examination; S. H. Semple Scots no 'College to Bloom, 18 July 1936; Headmaster of Terra Santa to Bloom, 15 July 1936; W. A. Coate to Bloom, 1 March 1937, M2500/102, ISA.

<sup>21</sup> *Barnāmaj madrasat rawḍat al-ma'ārif al-waṭāniyah* 1924–1925, 20–3; *Barnāmaj kulliyat rawḍat al-ma'ārif al-waṭāniyah* 1934–1935; *Barnāmaj madrasat al-Najāh al-waṭāniyah* 1938–1939.

<sup>22</sup> *Barnāmaj rawḍat al-ma'ārif* 1924–1925, 5; *Barnāmaj al-Najāh* 1938–1939, 4–5.

matriculation prerequisites.<sup>23</sup> Judging by the syllabus and the use of Robinson and Breasted as textbooks, these schools apparently made no attempt to fundamentally contest the Department's requirements. Neither did the other nationalist schools, including the Jerusalemite al-Umma and al-Nahda colleges, whose students took the exam in English.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, these institutions placed stronger emphasis than government schools on English instruction, initiating it earlier in primary education, with extensive weekly hours. The preference for English as the language of instruction, although it was not mandatory, reflects a hierarchy in educational goals. They knew they would be assessed primarily on their academic standards and ability to award their graduates credentials that would enable occupational mobility. The publication of the full student pass list for each school in the Arab press and the *Palestine Post* every year made this a public issue.

The secondary history syllabus leading to the matriculation exam was determined by the requirements of the main institute to which it would send its graduates, the American University of Beirut. There were other universities in the region, but the AUB remained the most popular destination for Palestinian students throughout the Mandate. There were 230 Palestinians at the AUB in 1936, and 336 in 1939, including Jewish students,<sup>25</sup> and several of the Department's most senior members were amongst its graduates. This was due to not only its geographic proximity and scholarly prestige but also its Anglo-Saxon Protestant traditions that fit those of the British like a glove. Bowman's diaries reveal this proximity; he frequently visited the University and had a very close relationship with its principals. After one of his visits, Bowman noted that the AUB 'is a wonderful place, with an excellent moral basis, without being at all 'missionary' in the old fashioned sense'.<sup>26</sup>

This connection to Beirut, rather than Cairo, determined the secondary history syllabus. It is no coincidence that the Palestine matriculation exam was based on two popular American textbooks that were previously used at AUB and were written by two American rather than British historians, J. H. Robinson and J. H. Breasted. The adoption of Breasted's book was also linked to Bowman's great admiration for Breasted's work; Bowman had

<sup>23</sup> *Barnāmaj rawḍa al-ma'ārif* 1924–1925, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Khalil Totah, *Arab Progress in Palestine*, 14–16, see also M2497/36, ISA.

<sup>25</sup> Bowman's testimony before the Royal Commission, 27 November 1936, 2/2/33, BM, MECA; Tibawi, *Arab Education*, 111.

<sup>26</sup> Bowman's diary, 27 February 1924, Bowman files, MECA.

heard him lecture and had met him a few times.<sup>27</sup> Robinson's textbook, the only reference to modern history in the Palestine matriculation, embodied the linear historical narrative of the triumph of progress and Western success.<sup>28</sup> The Arabs were marginal in Robinson's history, sinking into oblivion around the time of the Crusades. Robinson highlighted the dreadful destiny of non-Muslims according to Islam and described parts of their Qur'an as 'dull and stupid to a modern reader'.<sup>29</sup>

The popularity of this work led to its early translation into Hebrew in 1926, and to its wide use in Hebrew secondary education. Although mentioned as playing 'a most important part in the economic development in Europe', Jews, like Arabs, are given no significant role in history and are mostly mentioned for their 'ill-starred' destiny.<sup>30</sup> Both education systems adopted this textbook, not only for its clarity but also for its historiographical trajectory.

The important difference in the Yishuv schools was that Robinson was translated, and that history instruction was delivered strictly in Hebrew. General history instruction relied on Hebrew textbooks such as Brawer's on ancient times, Tcherikover's on ancient Greece and Rome, or Rieger's on the modern period. These books did not contest the framework of modern historicism but still articulated closer consideration of Jewish history within it. Except for a few private Hebrew high schools that took the matriculation exam, the main Hebrew high schools prepared their students for the Bagrut exams. In the 1940s, between 600 and 800 students sat for the Bagrut exams, and between 100 and 200 took the Department's matriculation.<sup>31</sup> By writing their own exams, which were regulated by the Va'ad and the Hebrew University, the Yishuv produced a syllabus with a strong emphasis on Jewish and Zionist history intertwined with general history.<sup>32</sup> Similar to the Department syllabus, its demands were academic but devoid of the latter's inconsistencies.

<sup>27</sup> Bowman's diary, 1 April 1928, 10 March 1929, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>28</sup> Betty Anderson, *The American University*, 33–4.

<sup>29</sup> James Harvey Robinson, *Medieval and Modern Times* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1918), 65, 69.

<sup>30</sup> James Harvey Robinson, 212.

<sup>31</sup> Department of Education, *Annual Report for the School Year 1943–1944* (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1946), 9–10; Department of Education, *Annual Report for the School Year 1944–1945* (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1946), 10–11; Department of Education, *Annual Report 1945–1946*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> On the Va'ad's reluctance to allow any Departmental interference, see Silbert, 'Ha-ma'avak', 68–90; on the instruction of history in urban Hebrew high schools and the infusion of humanistic and nationalist values, see Reichel, 'Ben "kartanut"', 240–3.

As in primary education, the Department's exam syllabus presented the same hodgepodge of European, British, Ancient Near Eastern, Palestinian, and Arab or Jewish histories. Mastering all of the above was a serious challenge for most students. Often, examiners were displeased with the level of answers on the exams. Dr Moshe Burstein, a 1941 examiner, noted that the knowledge of general history was poor. 'Anabtawi reported that the candidates' Arabic was full of mistakes and although the 'answers on the whole not bad, candidates could not in many cases differentiate between Gallipoli and Garibaldi'. One student wrote that 'at about 200 BC, the Near East was populated by Semites together with some mountaineers'.<sup>33</sup> The examiners' demands were hard to satisfy, resulting in a high percentage of failing candidates—over 50 percent—for the bulk of the Mandate period.

The burdensome syllabus, according to one graduate, forced students to memorize the curriculum to the detriment of other topics, and produced graduates who were highly ignorant of issues that were not on the exam.<sup>34</sup> Hanna Abu Hanna, a student at the College during the 1940s, testified that while preparing for the matriculation exam, boarding students at the Arab College covered their windows with sheets so that they could escape the curfew and continue studying during the night.<sup>35</sup> As a student, Ihsan Abbas translated Wellhausen's *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* for the exam,<sup>36</sup> and another graduate of the college proudly noted that the strict discipline and demands were just like Eton College.<sup>37</sup>

In the stressful preparation for the Matriculation exam, nationalist values or moral historical lessons were downplayed or ignored. For progressive nationalist educators, the medium was the message. Success on the exam was a nationalist aim in itself. For the colonial man on the spot, establishing an academic standard that paralleled his own education in Britain meant imperial success. Sending graduates—however few—of this system to the best universities in the UK was the realization of a conscious or unconscious goal, the production of natives that were identical to them, spoke their language, and sought the promotion of their interests.

<sup>33</sup> Dr M. Burstein, Report submitted on 10 August 1941, M2500/100, ISA; Report submitted by 'Anabtawi on 1 September 1941, *ibid.* Dr M. Burstein, Report submitted on 1 August 1940, M2497/45, ISA.

<sup>34</sup> Abdulqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 183–5.

<sup>35</sup> Hanna Abu Hanna (b. 1928), Interview, Haifa, 10 September 2013.

<sup>36</sup> 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'ī*, 121–2.

<sup>37</sup> Dr Abdel Rahman Yaghi, interviewed by Fawwaz Salameh, Amman, 19 October 2006.

In addition, there was no simple dichotomy between 'authentic' nationalist and 'imposed' colonial pedagogy, and the dividing lines are vaguer and more complex than might appear at first glance. The criticism and controversy over the rigid policy of Latin instruction provides a good example.<sup>38</sup>

## Sola Scriptura

The students of the 'Amiriyyah school in Jaffa, who saw the Latin course as a redundant colonial imposition, announced a boycott of the course and went on strike. The crisis left Tibawi, the DIE, "distressed".<sup>39</sup> One of the reasons for the emphasis on Latin and Greek in high schools was Farrell and Bowman's passion for both subjects. Farrell even volunteered to teach interested students the course and allocated scholarships to British and American universities for the study of Greek and Latin.<sup>40</sup>

As part of the PBHS history subcommittee, George Hourani, a philosophy and Latin teacher at the Arab College, suggested eliminating Latin from the curriculum, given the students' poor performance and lack of motivation and its 'not altogether appealing' literature. Rather than coercing students to study ancient languages and history, Hourani underlined the key benefits of modern history which he felt had therapeutic value because it made Arab students aware of the ties between the past and the present and its influences on the Arabs. Hourani warned that 'for lack of experience our former students tend to adopt extreme views on these subjects or to ignore them altogether'. This could be corrected by 'explaining the impact of Western ideas on the Arabs and enabling Arab students to adopt a *sound attitude* towards them'.<sup>41</sup>

Khalidi, however, objected to dropping Latin from the curriculum, arguing that it had 'raised the level of studies at the college' and helped the students understand and appreciate the inner meanings of the English

<sup>38</sup> Abdulqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 187–9; a similar account can be found in, Davis, 'Commemorating Education'.

<sup>39</sup> A. L. Tibawi, Report on Education in the Southern District of Palestine February 1941–October 1945, submitted to the Palestine Director of Education, 1 May 1946, Tibawi, Box 3/5, 26–7, MECA. Another example of criticism on Latin instruction at the Arab College in the early 1940s is in Davis, 'Commemorating Education'.

<sup>40</sup> Bowman's autobiography is filled with Latin quotes and poetry, *Middle-East Window*, 22–3.

<sup>41</sup> Dr George Hourani to Bloom, December 1946, PBHS, History Sub-Committee, M2498/67, ISA (*italics added*).





**Photo 15** Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi (*Huna al-Quds*, No. 13, 6 December 1942)

language. The objection to the study of Latin, Khalidi maintained, was initially an 'artificial movement' from Jaffa, 'encouraged by parents and the press' and initiated by boys who were not fit to take advanced secondary classes. The poor results in Latin were due to 'intentional' neglect of the subject by students who chose it as their sixth topic for the matriculation exam. However, he concluded, this failure in itself should not become a reason for abolishing Latin, as suggested by Dr Hourani, since similar results had been obtained in geography, and no one suggested its abolition.<sup>42</sup>

In his revised syllabus, Hourani also stressed the need to increase the engagement with Arab history and noted that far from being 'hot-beds of nationalism', the Government school graduates were 'ignorant of the history

<sup>42</sup> Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi to Bloom, 29 December 1946, PBHS, History Sub-Committee, M2498/67, ISA.

of the Arabs. They studied far less of it than English boys do of English history or Jewish boys of Jewish history...our students would be more eager to study Greek and European civilization if they felt that their own history was not neglected'. Since the syllabus was already 'overcrowded', this addition should come at the expense of the Roman period, 'the parent of Western Europe', a history that was 'not valid' for Palestine.<sup>43</sup>

Khalidi took a different stance on nationalist education. A prolific writer of Arab history, Khalidi was wary of the implications of overemphasising the scope of Arab history in the existing syllabus which he considered more satisfactory than Hourani's proposal.<sup>44</sup> In Khalidi's suggestion for the history syllabus, Arab and modern history were still attributed one year each out of four (from fifth to eighth secondary). Khalidi objected to Hourani's omission of Roman and Medieval history to give more room for Arab and modern history. His objection stemmed from his insistence on the teaching of history as a continuous linear narrative.

However, Khalidi's argument did not stem from his estrangement from nationalism, but rather his complex interpretation. Khalidi, according to one student, was a 'stentorian voice' who demanded his students' 'pursuit of knowledge and distinction as a relentless patriotic tenet'.<sup>45</sup> For Khalidi, 'the dean of Education in Palestine'<sup>46</sup>, patriotism did not run counter with what he saw as his educational responsibility. Abu Hanna recalls one instance where Jamal al-Husayni invited them to a demonstration in the city but Khalidi waited for them at the gate, stating that anyone who left to demonstrate would not be able to come back.<sup>47</sup> After the October 1933 mass demonstrations, Khalidi closed the college because his students went on strike and refused to attend classes.<sup>48</sup>

His patriotism did not prevent him from maintaining a close friendship with Bowman himself, who appreciated him. Such relationships took

<sup>43</sup> Dr George Hourani to Bloom, December 1946, PBHS, History Sub-Committee, M2498/67, ISA.

<sup>44</sup> Khalidi is also mentioned as the most enthusiastic supporter of the conference of the Muslim Clubs in Jaffa, in April 1928: Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 28–9.

<sup>45</sup> Jabrā, *The First Well*, 185; Zu'aytir, *Bawākīr*, 28–9.

<sup>46</sup> A published interview held on 6 June 1945, concluding twenty years of Khalidi's educational career at the Arab College, published 16 June 1945, 105/73/64–5, HA.

<sup>47</sup> Hanna Abu Hanna (b. 1928), Interview, Haifa, 10 September 2013.

<sup>48</sup> Bowman's diary, 29 October, 5 November 1933, Bowman files, MECA.

their toll in some political circles.<sup>49</sup> Bowman trusted Khalidi for his uncompromising stand against what he described as the politicization of education. After the tense summer of 1929, Bowman wrote that Khalidi was 'holding it like a knot day after day... Wonderful when one gets really strong Arab, far better than Englishmen: but no doubt Ahmad Samih Khalidi [is] not pure Arab. Turkish blood, perh[aps]. European? Fine type anyhow of oriental. Wish we had more like him'. Bowman attributed the success and stability of the College during these turbulent times to Khalidi's administration and leadership.<sup>50</sup>

The polemic over the syllabus illustrates the problems associated with a one-dimensional concept of national education and its attributes. Hourani, a British Oxford graduate of Arab descent, taught his courses in English, spoke English to his students, and made an effort to expose them to Western culture, for instance, by playing classical music records on a gramophone, giving short lectures on the musical pieces, and sometimes bringing English books to class for the students to read.<sup>51</sup> Yet it was Hourani who proposed the emphasis on modern and Arab history and the removal of Latin, and Khalidi who opposed it.<sup>52</sup> Khalidi's extensive writing on both education in the Western world and Arab history reflects his progressive educational nationalism; he was a proud Arab nationalist, devoted to the modernization of Palestine through education. If extensive teaching of Arab history came at the expense of Western wisdom such as Latin or Roman history, he would be the first to oppose it.

These examples of progressive nationalist education were not unique to Khalidi or Palestine. Secondary education in Iraq and Egypt placed similar emphasis on English instruction at the expense of Arabic instruction in some cases. In addition, the available syllabi suggest that secondary history instruction in Iraq and Egypt also confined Arab history to its golden age and limited the study of modern contemporary times to European history.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *Al-Jāmi'ah al-'arabiyyah*, 8 March 1934, and entries in Bowman's diary, 29 October 1933, 8 March 1934, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>50</sup> 'Bowman's Diary', 20 October 1929, Bowman files, 4A, MECA; Bowman, *Middle-East Window*, 263; Walid Khalidi, Interview, Cambridge, MA, 21 November 2016. According to Jacob, Turkish masculinity was considered to represent stronger will and honor than Egyptian or Arab masculinity: *Working Out*, 56–8.

<sup>51</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Najm, 3. Hanna Abu Hanna (b. 1928), Interview, Haifa, 10 September 2013.

<sup>53</sup> *Al-Madrasah al-thānawiyah al-markaziyah nashrah 'āmmah 'an siyar qismihā al-nahāri wa-al-masāyī fi al-sanah al-dirāsiyah* (Baghdad: Maṭba'at al-'Irāq, 1928); Wizārat al-ma'ārif al-'amūmiyah, *Manhaj al-dirāsah al-mu'aqqat bi-dār al-'ulūm* (Cairo: al-Maṭba'ah al-amīriyah, 1923); Wizārat al-ma'ārif al-'Irāqiyah, *Manhaj al-dirāsah al-mutawassitah* (Baghdad: Maṭba'ah al-Ādāb, 1931).

The AUB and leading Arab universities were still temples of Western knowledge, and they set the standard for this curriculum. However, the writing of this knowledge into the history syllabi by nationalist educators was not strictly a coercive act of colonial dominance. It reflected a complex pedagogical discourse that combined, along with perceptions of practicalities and cultural capital, a belief in the existence and importance of a 'correct' body of historical knowledge that, despite its detachment from the nation's history, was nonetheless considered inextricable from a proper education. Thus, the concept of national authenticity in education requires a more flexible interpretation in which so-called foreign wisdom is authenticated and interlaced in the construction of a new Arab identity. The next chapter focuses on the learning experience of the students who studied in these schools and their interpretation of this authenticity.

## Learning History

‘[O]ur history teacher...ignited our imagination with his vivid descriptions, sailing away with us to distant countries...In his lectures about the *Hasidut* we all became *Hasidim*; in his lectures about the French Revolution we were alternately Girondins and Jacobins...[T]here were also pop quizzes and oral questions. The latter followed a set pattern: ‘What can you tell us about Judah Maccabee?’ ‘The Doctor’ opened his class...Kholodenko (the student): ‘could the teacher please repeat the question?’... (the teacher while grinning): ‘What can you tell us about Judah Maccabee- Kholodenko!?’...The entire classroom was filled with smiles, for there is no greater joy than rejoicing in another’s failure... ‘only good things, our master, only good things.’<sup>1</sup>

This chapter examines the learning of history in the schools and the place and role of educational methodologies extending beyond regular class instruction. Complementing the previous chapter on the teaching of history, this chapter focuses on students’ experiences of their history education and their interpretation of the material they were taught.

The sources—school journals, testimonies, and memoirs—are scarce and problematic. Apart from all the obvious challenges of using them as historical documents, school journals, especially in Arabic, were products of the elite secondary schools and, therefore, represented only a fraction of the education system. The essays published in these journals were written by a small number of students, and they reflected the choice of the editor after censorship by the principal. These essays thus adhere to the dominant pedagogical discourse in schools translated by the students and reproduced on the pages of the school’s journal. Mapping this mechanism of knowledge transfer sheds light on the educational process as a whole. This is why students’ voices are crucial to an understanding of the educational system.

<sup>1</sup> Dov Ben Meir, *Metsahtsehim shinayim la-parot*, 93–4.

Chapter 5 briefly discussed the central role of history beyond the history class, and the forms it took in various courses and circumstances. However, history was not confined to courses or the school environment: as an educational product, history was everywhere. Here as well, there was a noticeable imbalance between Arab and Jewish students. As we shall see, Jewish students' exposure to history education was much greater and institutionalized than that of their Arab neighbours.

### Inventing an Educational Calendar

Modern education plays a central role in disciplining society to believe, rejoice, and mourn its national history through a cyclical, repetitive nationalized calendar of celebrations. The social meaning and importance of the 'commemorative locus', a specific date on the calendar and at a specific geographic site, is enhanced by its inclusion as an integral part of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup> Children, even before they learn to read and regardless of their emotional or intellectual development, are integrated into a 'mnemonic community' through rituals and commemorations that create a sense of collective cohesion and distinctiveness.<sup>3</sup> Commemorations aspire to achieve omnipresence, and both affect and can invade public and private spaces, impact the work place, and permeate leisure time.<sup>4</sup>

The Zionist version of the Jewish calendar incorporates a number of historical events. Reinvented within a national interpretation, the Jewish holidays were commemorated in all Hebrew schools, and extensive teaching time was allotted to telling their stories and rituals. Although the historical interpretation of these holidays varied in the different educational trends, its common features and shared cyclic commemoration played a key role in forging a shared imagined historical consciousness.

The connection between the traditional and the secular national became nondetachable. As Margalit Rubovitz, a sixth grader from Evelina de Rothschild (EDR) wrote, 'We now celebrate Hanukkah.... Before our eyes after thousands of years of exile, the bitter and courageous period that resulted in

<sup>2</sup> Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 139.

<sup>3</sup> Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 4; Meir Hatina, *Martyrdom in Modern Islam*, 176.

<sup>4</sup> Hizky Shoham, *Mordekhai rokhev 'al sus*, 29–30.

the Festival of Lights (*Hag ha-nerot*)... There are no heroes like the heroes of Israel and the Maccabees.<sup>5</sup>

The Teachers' Council for the JNF, an independent organization, had considerable influence on formal and nonformal Hebrew education, especially in terms of celebrations and commemorations, the backbone of Zionist education according to the Council. The pedagogical debates within the Council resulted in a new Hebrew calendar and a formalized commemoration of each festival, thus turning the school into a 'performative space' and the students into 'active performers.' Its publications included detailed manuals for every celebration or pageant that specified what texts to recite, how to decorate the classroom, how to stage and choreograph the rituals, and how to organize a procession. They also included visual aids to complete the holistic experience.<sup>6</sup>

The educational instrumentalization of the Muslim or Christian calendars was different. Similar to Hebrew schools, the Muslim and Christian religious calendars received ample attention in the curriculum. However, Muslim and Christian holidays were charged with a religious-traditional historicity that was shared by all Muslim and Christian denominations all over the world. By contrast, the religious divide between Arabs prevented, undermined, or challenged the possibility of secularizing or reconceptualizing the traditional calendar and turning it into a shared imagined historical consciousness.

A Palestinian particularism with its own political calendars and shared martyrology did emerge during the Mandate. The mass *mawasim* (festivals) to Nabi Musa, Nabi Rubin, Nabi Saleh, and the celebrations of *mawlid al-nabi* (the Prophet's birthday) gradually evolved from local religious events into politicized national events transcending religious divides.<sup>7</sup> As of the 1920s, the Palestinian national movement also had its own martyrs, relating in the 1930s to the execution of three Palestinians for their roles in the massacres of 1929, the 1935 killing of al-Qassam, and others later during the Revolt. These martyrdoms took on collective significance and led to the creation of a national vocabulary of sacrifice fostered mainly through the daily press but also through youth activism. In June 1934, for the three

<sup>5</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1935, vol. 1, 8–9. A more detailed survey of this journal in, Laura S. Schor, *The Best School*, 162–200.

<sup>6</sup> Sitton, *Hinukh be-ruah ha-moledet*, 135–74; Jacob Shavit and Shoshana Sitton, *Staging and Stagers*, 52–4.

<sup>7</sup> Mahmoud Yazbak, 'The Muslim Festival'; Tamir Sorek, 'Calendars, Martyrs'.

martyrs' memorial day, a commemoration was held at al-Najah attended by national leaders, intellectuals, and students. These events had a similar script: reading a verse from the Qur'an, three minutes of silence, and the reading of poetry and speeches.<sup>8</sup> A similar event was held in Safad, where the local scout troop was in charge of order and sang national songs.<sup>9</sup> In government schools, public commemorations rarely took place, and they were more local and spontaneous. While studying at the Arab College during the Revolt, one of Ihsan Abbas's friends and fellow College student died in combat after joining the rebels. Abbas recalls he read a poem during his friend's commemoration event at the College in which at least one teacher was present.<sup>10</sup> The meaning and magnitude of this event helps explain how a commemoration of this type could have taken place in such a prestigious colonial institution: the College could mourn the death of one of its students, but not the rapidly growing death toll on a national scale. Remembrance remained personal and local.

The British crushing of the Arab Revolt, the exile of its leaders, and the strict censorship on the press all prevented the institutionalization process of national Palestinian commemorations, which were only partially revitalized after the War. The political leadership, weakened by British persecutions and inner rivalries, lacked the 'hegemony-producing mechanisms' to turn these national sites of memory into a long-lasting, living culture.<sup>11</sup> Historical lessons or ethos in these cases remained a by-product of these events. Mass pilgrimages to holy sites, especially when politicized, could strengthen the historical connection to the land and the notion of national collectivity. However, these events did not find their way into the official colonial curriculum. Thus, their role as agents of historical consciousness remained active only as long as they took place, and were relevant mainly to those who participated actively in them.

The religious-traditional calendar was only one of the historical timelines used in schools. Modern historical events, particularly those that occurred during the Mandate, gave birth to new invented traditions. The Arab community commemorated the date of the Balfour Declaration, 2 November, every year until the end of the Mandate with varied intensity. Some schools would shut down for the day, and in others, students went on strike. This was a commemoration in the form of a national protest against British

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 21 June 1934.

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 20 June 1934.

<sup>10</sup> 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'ī*, 141.

<sup>11</sup> Tamir Sorek, *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel*, 19–39.



policy that took on additional political meanings with each passing year. In certain years it unified the bulk of the urban Arab community. Since the commemorations took the form of anticolonial protests, they could not be institutionalized as an administratively regulated tradition, and although students played a central role in them, most schools did not.

Primarily in urban schools, some students remember being encouraged by their teachers to demonstrate on 2 November.<sup>12</sup> However, some students had very limited understanding of why they were protesting because the issue was not seriously addressed in school.<sup>13</sup> A student from the Acre Secondary School recalls how instead of shouting '*yasquṭ wa'd balfūr*' (down with the Balfour Declaration) they would shout '*yasquṭ wāḥid min fawq*' (down with someone from above) while marching under the city's balconies, as a joke.<sup>14</sup> A few schools encouraged local student organizations and discussed the demonstrations and their importance in the classroom, but these were an exception.<sup>15</sup>

The second of November, the first Palestinian national commemorative day (2 November), embodied and canonized the connection between victimhood (in this case of imperialism) and righteousness in Palestinian nationalism. In terms of historical consciousness, commemorating this day deliberately undermined the foundations of British education in Palestine as it questioned the Mandate's historical right to existence. However, the objection of some Arab educators to protests in government schools and the adamant restrictions on political mobilization in the mission schools compromised its ability to turn into a sustainable unifying event beyond sporadic demonstrations and strikes in the urban centres. Hovering over the latter was the physical presence, monitoring, and intervention of British police, secret service, and army troops in

<sup>12</sup> Iḥsān 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'ī*, 88.

<sup>13</sup> This comment was made by a student at Rawdat al-Ma'arif, Ibrahim Jamil Al-Daqaq (b. 1929). Interview, Jerusalem, 12 September 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Shukri Arraf (b. 1931), interview, Mi'ilya, 27 November 2012. This chant was sung by the Palestinian AUB students during their annual march in Beirut. Yusef Srouji remembers marching through the Jewish quarters, hoping to meet beautiful Jewish girls, chanting, '*tasquṭ wāḥidah min fawq*' ('Let a girl fall down from above!'), Yusef Srouji (b. 1926), interview, Nazareth, 3 December 2012.

<sup>15</sup> In the Safad Secondary School, the students set up their own association that organized anti-British demonstrations. Lutfi Zreik (b. 1931), interview, Jaffa, 15 December 2012. On encouragement and teacher–student engagement with national demonstrations in the al-Nahḍah al-Islāmiyah elementary Supreme Muslim Council school in Jaffa, see in Tahir Qalyoubi (b. 1929), interviewed by Said 'Ajjawi, Amman, 3 November 2007, <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Jaffa/Jaffa/Story8198.html>, accessed 17 May 2015; Tahir Qalyoubi. '*Ā'ilāt wa-shakhṣiyyāt min yāfā*', 277–8.

schools that turned political engagement into a risky business, especially in secondary schools that posed the greatest political threat, in particular, during the Arab Revolt. Amin al-Dajani (b. 1920) recalled that the recurrent visits of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in the Rashidiya school, that involved arresting, interrogating and spying on students were part of their academic reality.<sup>16</sup> As a student, Ihsan's? Abbas' letters were read by the police, and during one of his vacations in 'Ain Ghazal, he was publicly beaten and humiliated in the village square by British troops for no apparent reason.<sup>17</sup>

Institutionalizing initiatives that dated back to the turn of the century, the Yishuv invested enormous energy and creativity in inventing traditions and giving them an educational rationale. The combination of an autonomous education system, a dynamic civil society, and the overall belief in an educational historical ethos enveloped the Hebrew student in historical lessons. 'Mutually supportive [educational] devices' enabled this education, and a combination of formal and informal educational institutions (especially youth movements) was responsible for the creation of a Zionist civil religion.<sup>18</sup>

History was widely instrumentalized by youth movements to reinforce their ideology. Although the role of youth movements in Zionist education has been studied extensively,<sup>19</sup> it is worth comparing a few of its features with Arab informal education, in particular, in terms of history instruction.

Similar to the 2 November commemoration, the Yishuv adopted the traumatic events of Tel-Hai (a small agricultural settlement in the upper Galilee where eight Jewish settlers were killed in a battle against a group of local Arabs on 1 March 1920), as an example of victimhood, righteousness, and the embodiment of the historical myth of heroic martyrdom.<sup>20</sup> The Tel-Hai commemoration constituted a recasting of Jewish martyrdom to sanctify God's name, into Zionist martyrdom which sanctified death for the homeland.<sup>21</sup> *Yom Tel-Hai*, Tel-Hai day, became the first national memorial day in modern Palestine. The educational commemoration of Tel-Hai, initiated a short while after the bloody event, is only one example of the

<sup>16</sup> Amin Ḥāfiẓ Dajānī, *Jabhat al-tarbiyah*, 86–7; see also, Aḥmad Shuqayrī, *Arba' ūn 'ām*, 57–8.

<sup>17</sup> 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'i : sirah dhātīyah*, 77, 125.

<sup>18</sup> Yuval Dror, 'National Education', 16–23.

<sup>19</sup> A comprehensive survey of all the youth movements operating in Palestine can be found in Mordechai Naor, *Tenu'ot ha-no'ar*.

<sup>20</sup> Anita Shapira, *Herev ha-yonah*, 141–56.

<sup>21</sup> Almog, *The Sabra*, 37–8.

'mutually supportive devices' that established a holistic historical education. The story of Tel-Hai was presented in numerous literary publications that turned it into a legend, giving the story an a-historic dimension in which its martyrs were resurrected on different occasions, unrelated to Tel-Hai, to voice their vision. Josef Trumpeldor, the hero martyr of Tel-Hai, entered the pantheon of mythologized Hebrew heroes such as Bar-Kokhva and Yehuda Hamaccabi, and strengthened the historical ties between ancient Jewish history in Palestine and its contemporary existence, thus establishing a unified canon of heroic folklore.<sup>22</sup> The Tel-Hai myth was learned and commemorated in schools in a 'cultic ceremony', and it was given due weight in all contemporary educational publications.<sup>23</sup> The educational process was completed by ideological discussions in the youth movement clubs followed by local ceremonies, and finally by a pilgrimage to Tel-Hai and the commemoration of its ethos with a ceremony.

The inauguration of the Roaring Lion monument in 1934 concretized the story of Tel-Hai and turned it into a pilgrimage site. This monument and ones like it enabled the construction of a 'national landscape' and served as a representation of sovereignty and a hegemonic narrative over space.<sup>24</sup> During the same period, several Palestinians, including young people, expressed ideas and devised plans to erect monuments to the memory of al-Qassam, his fighters, and other national or local martyrs of anticolonial struggle.<sup>25</sup> Aware of its educational significance, an article published in late 1936 discussed building a monument to the unknown soldier in Taybeh near Tulkarm as a pilgrimage site venerating the ethos of sacrifice as a lesson for the nation's youth.<sup>26</sup> According to Tamir Sorek, no monuments of this type were built during the Mandate as a result of British antagonism towards projects that glorified anticolonial martyrdom. Although such sites could be found during that period in neighbouring Arab states,<sup>27</sup> Palestinian young people did not engage in this kind of pilgrimage.

<sup>22</sup> Yael Zrubavel, 'The Historic'; Yael Zrubavel, 'The Politics of Interpretation'.

<sup>23</sup> Jacob Shavit and Shoshana Sitton, *Staging and Stagers*, 76–8.

<sup>24</sup> Sorek, *Palestinian Commemoration*, 88; a youth group from Nablus planned to build a monument for al-Qassam, *Filastin*, 26 December 1935; the National Committee in Gaza planned on building a monument for a local martyr, *Filastin*, 27 May 1936.

<sup>25</sup> Sorek, 35–6.

<sup>26</sup> *Al-Difa'*, 24 December 1936.

<sup>27</sup> On the Lebanese Martyrs' Monument in, *Filastin*, 23 December 1930; Peter Wien, *Arab Nationalism*, 164–8; Elie Podeh, *The Politics of National Celebrations*, 213–15.

## Knowing the Land

Tel-Hai was only one event in the educational calendar that sought to structure a new national historical timeline. Students were inculcated in many ways including outside the classroom. Field trips, organized by both the youth movements and schools, were central to Zionist education as of the 1880s.<sup>28</sup> The fascination with knowing the land stemmed from Zionism's vision of reterritorialization of the Jews, which would redeem them from the deterritorialized exile of endless wandering. Touring the land enabled direct physical contact between the Hebrew individual and the land; assimilating its paths, mountains, and historical ruins was a manifestation of desire.<sup>29</sup>

Trips were taken to national historical sites using the Bible, or one of the many historical guides published during that period, as a guidebook. These field trips, often depicted as challenging and adventurous, were part of an educational rationale to ensure that history lessons would be associated with actual physical locations. The field trip became a critical addition to the history class in schools, and the physical encounter with history, along with creative activities such as the role-playing of historical figures, was meant to turn history into a living personal experience. The symbolic importance of Arab villages that were part of the landscape, their names and locations, did not derive from their present but from their biblical past. For the students of the Herzliya Gymnasium, for example, the existence of the village of Battir was only worth mentioning for the preservation of its Jewish past; namely the fact that it was built on the ruins of the ancient Jewish city of Betar. Thus, this historiography not only Judaized the landscape, but associated its contemporary Arab reality with a Jewish national past.<sup>30</sup>

Students sometimes depicted viewing these sites as a mystical experience. One student wrote about her intense emotional experience when visiting the Wailing Wall, 'like a magical rope tying my heart to the ancient wall... my soul longs for it...'.<sup>31</sup> When Asher Rivlin went on a field trip with his class in Jerusalem, he saw the ancient city come back to life before his eyes.<sup>32</sup> Another

<sup>28</sup> Basmat Even-Zohar, 'Shituf ha-yeladim', 52–3.

<sup>29</sup> Boaz Neumann, *Teshuvot ha-halutsim*, 32, 34–6, 40–3, 46, 94–7, 117–18; More about field trips in Zionist education in Almog, *The Sabra*, 164–8.

<sup>30</sup> 'Oded Avisar, 'Tov le-tayel be'ad artsenu', 49–51.

<sup>31</sup> The Western Wall, *The School Magazine*, 1935, vol. 1, 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Benenu*, March 1936, 5–56.

student mentioned her emotional experience when visiting the flourishing Judea Jewish settlements, where once there was nothing but wilderness. She expressed her hope to become a farmer one day.<sup>33</sup>

In particular, long field trips were taken to commemorate the historical myth of heroism and sacrifice at Masada. Although trips to Masada started in the 1920s, it only became a popular pilgrimage site for youth movements in the early 1940s. The trip was preceded by a five-day seminar dedicated to the study of topography and history, which thus transformed the field trip into an historical journey.<sup>34</sup> Masada's ethos of Jewish heroism and independence became even more pertinent during the war years. The connection between the historical ethos and the call for duty was embodied in the recruitments to the Palmach conducted by the movement leaders on the mountain top.<sup>35</sup>

Hiking was also a form of resistance against the 1937 partition plan, in that it adhered to the ethos of *Shlemut ha-'aretz* (the land as a whole). 'The Land of Israel is all ours and we will hike everywhere', proclaimed a famous educator in the mid-1940s.<sup>36</sup> Especially for the youth movements affiliated with *ha-Kibbutz ha-Meuḥad* (the United Kibbutz, est. 1927), such as *ha-No 'ar ha- 'Oved* (the Working Youth, est. 1924) and *ha-Maḥanot ha-'Olim* (est. 1926), *Shlemut ha-'aretz* symbolized the connection between the land's mythical national past and its utopian future. As of the late 1930s, the biblical terminology and adamant rejection of the partition plan by both movements reflected a nativist consciousness and sense of belonging to the country as a whole felt by the new generation that was born in Palestine.<sup>37</sup>

Field trips with a similar educational rationale are mentioned in the annals of the Arab College. Khalil Totah took students on historical field trips to Jerusalem and its surroundings and organized a five-day field trip to the Dead Sea area during the winter break.<sup>38</sup> Darwish al-Miqdadi saw field trips as an integral part of the history class and took his students on long field trips in Palestine, Transjordan, and Syria.

On these hikes, Miqdadi emphasized the historical heritage of the sites, especially the Christian and Muslim locations, often quoting verses from

<sup>33</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1936, 18–9.

<sup>34</sup> Shapira, *Herev ha-yonah*, 427.

<sup>35</sup> Nachman Ben-Yehuda, *Masada Myth*, 83–123. On the militarization of Zionist youth movements, see Uri Ben-Eliezer, *Derekh ha-kayenot*,

<sup>36</sup> Tseyiyah Katsenelson Ben-Tsevi, 'Ze ḥozer elay', 8.

<sup>37</sup> Yaacov Tsur, *Min ha-yam 'ad ha-midbar*, 70–3, 132–3.

<sup>38</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 44–7, 56–8.

the New Testament or Arab sources. In his long essay 'A Trip in Syria', although Miqdadi quotes from the Bible, he overlooked Jewish history and mentions Jewish settlements as colonies built on the ruins of the native villages. Miqdadi encouraged the patriotic man to travel around his country, Syria.<sup>39</sup>

Ziadeh, who joined Miqdadi on these trips, wrote about them in the College's journal and continued this tradition when he became a history teacher at the Institute.<sup>40</sup> 'You will not love your homeland unless you read it with your feet', he used to say to his students.<sup>41</sup> Rawdat al-Ma'arif had similar field trip traditions. In the school's journal, stories about visits to historical Arab heritage sites were juxtaposed with descriptions of new Jewish settlements and the loss of Arab land. Thus, descriptions of school trips were transformed into 'tools for political action.'<sup>42</sup>

In general, however, field trips were rare in the Arab educational system in Palestine, and few students took part in them. Even at the Arab College, Totah's field trips to Jerusalem appear to have ceased during the late 1930s.<sup>43</sup> When field trips were conducted, they usually reflected a different educational rationale. Field trips organized by the Christian missionary schools usually focused on Christian historical or religious sites.<sup>44</sup> At the elementary level, this corresponded to a curriculum defined to suit a particular denomination. Students in French Catholic schools in particular recall the strong emphasis on French geography and history and a marginalization of Arab history and culture.<sup>45</sup> Suleiman Jubrail, from the first secondary class at Bishop Gobat School (BGS), shared his camping experience in the school journal: '[W]e stood up and began to pray to God and what an awful silence there was... As soon as I stood at the entrance of our bed tent I looked around and saw the two sacred cities, Bethlehem and Jerusalem – the birth cave and death grave of Christ'. Issues of the BGS journal were filled with reports on scouting activities but reports that went beyond the itinerary of the trip were rare. Jubrail mentioned the sites but

<sup>39</sup> al-Miqdadi, 'Rihlah fī sūriyā'.

<sup>40</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 43.

<sup>41</sup> Hanna Abu Hanna, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Greenberg, 'Majallat Rawdat Al-Ma'arif'.

<sup>43</sup> 'Abbās, *Ghurbat al-rā'ī*, 123.

<sup>44</sup> Jabrā, *The First Well*, 140–6; Ilyās Salīm Sarūjī, *Min murūj al-Jalīl*, 44–6. On the French mission schools in Jaffa in Fakhri Geday, interview, Jaffa, 10 December 2012; Philip Zakkak (b. 1928), interview, Jaffa, 26 August 2013; French Catholic schools in Haifa, Alfred Shehady (b. 1937), interview, Haifa, 4 December 2012.

<sup>45</sup> Sarūjī, *Min murūj*, 44–6.

attached no historical depiction.<sup>46</sup> Saleh Ahmad Sakik from the third secondary grade at BGS wrote about a field trip to the Jarisha River. Sakik did mention that they went (only) to 'let their souls breathe the air' (*tarwīḥ al-nafs*), but then mentioned singing nationalist songs about love of the homeland (*ḥubb al-waṭan*).<sup>47</sup> However, no national value was attributed to the trip itself, and emotional descriptions comparable to the ones in Zionist education were rare.<sup>48</sup>

In his recollections of the Acre Secondary School Nimer Murqus asked:

And what did we know about our homeland after graduating...? Knowledge from maps and what we learned from textbooks. We knew and memorised its cities. We knew and memorised the names of its mountains and plains, but we never climbed on it[s soil] and did not cover our feet with dust while walking on it... the aim of the rare school trips was to get some fresh air.



**Photo 16** Students from Herzliya Gymnasium on a field trip to Sodom and Masada, 1930. The Bitmuna Collections, Herzliya Gymnasium Album.

<sup>46</sup> 'The Week End Scout Camp at Jabal Daher', June 14th-16th, *The Bishop Gobat School News*, April-July 1934, 13.

<sup>47</sup> See also, *ibid*, 3-5.

<sup>48</sup> Najm, *Dār*, 42-3. See also Labib Dajani, 'A Trip to the Citadel', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, April-July 1937, 8-10.

He stated that, as students, they were not familiar with the neighbouring villages, let alone places of lesser proximity to Acre.<sup>49</sup>

### Scouting the Land

There were exceptions to Murqus's disillusioned retrospective account. In the spring of 1932, the Tariq ibn Ziyad scout troop from Acre embarked on a long hike across Palestine. Leaving Acre in a van adorned with the Arab and troop flags, the group paid visits to the Abbasid troop in Ramleh, the Islamic hiking group in Jaffa, and the Nablus Khalid ibn al-Walid troop, and hiked around Nabi Saleh and Wadi Hunayn. Wherever it camped, the troop enjoyed a warm welcome from the local notability and fellow troops. In Jaffa they met 'Isa al-'Isa, and a party was organized for them, and in Tulkarm, they were welcomed with banners and met the mayor.<sup>50</sup> During the 1930s the hikes and encampments of different troops received extensive coverage in the daily press, highlighting the educational and national importance attributed to this activity. In the burgeoning Palestinian public sphere, the scout movement became another pedagogical production site of nationalism and masculinity associating its loyal members to an idealized Arab and global modern middle class that was aiming to find its equilibrium between cultural authenticity and colonial symbolism.<sup>51</sup>

Field trips and camping were pillars of the educational methodology of the Palestine Scout Movement. With its roots in the late Ottoman period and its high point in the mid-1930s, the Arab movement was supported and headed by the Department from the early 1920s onwards. With the establishment of British civil rule, Herbert Samuel, the first High Commissioner, was approached by the Jewish *Histadrut ha-Tzofim be-Erets Israel* (the scouts' association in the land of Israel, est. 1919) to act as honorary president. Samuel, who saw in the unification of the scout branches a vehicle for intercommunal cooperation, refused and instead set up a joint council for the Arab and Jewish scouts under the auspices of the missionary and

<sup>49</sup> Nimr Murqus, *Aqwá min al-nisyan*, 72–3; Nimer Murqus (b. 1930), interview, Kafr Yasif, 11 December 2012. A similar description can be found in Anis Sayigh, *Anis Sayigh*, 120.

<sup>50</sup> *Filastin*, 27 April 1932. See also the coverage of the Gazan troop 'Umar al-Faruq's hike to the ruins of Bayt Jibrin, *Filastin*, 13 April 1932. Other hikes can be found in *Filastin*, 19–20 September 1930; 19 April, 23 May, 3 August 1932; *al-Difa'* 29 April, 8 May, 4 August 1935.

<sup>51</sup> Jacob, *Working Out*, 94; Keith David Watenpugh, 'Scouting in the Interwar'.



government schools. The Palestinian branch of the Baden-Powell movement was recognized in 1920, but the Jewish scouts' leadership refused to join the international movement, thus renouncing government organizational and financial support. The leadership feared that unification with the Arabs would compromise the movement's independence and national values and damage their ties with other Jewish youth movements. It rejected the Christian overtones of the Baden-Powell movement, and insisted on co-ed troops that did not exist in the international movement.<sup>52</sup>

Bowman served as County Commissioner of Scouts as of its inception, until he left Palestine, and based on his diary, he felt strong personal ties to the movement. When Baden-Powell visited Palestine in 1921, Bowman personally organized the welcome rallies and mentioned he felt 'very intimate' with him.<sup>53</sup> The Director attended the camps, travelled to the movement's seminars, identified with the movement's ideals, and considered it an educational calling.<sup>54</sup> During a training camp in September 1924, Bowman told the campers he was 'no longer *mudir al-maaref*, but just their elder brother and scoutmaster', and he engaged in heart-to-heart talks in his tent with all the participants.<sup>55</sup> The rapid growth and relative spread of the movement in Palestine was due undoubtedly to Bowman's commitment.

Apart from Bowman, a staff that was mostly Arab led the movement, and like him, were fully committed to the movement's ideals. By 1936, their cooperation and enthusiasm had led to the founding of one hundred scout troops with 3,187 scouts, headed by 167 leaders.<sup>56</sup> During the late 1920s, private schools began establishing their own private scout troops. Those established within the mission schools were local initiatives usually directly associated with the church or linked to Baden-Powell's movement, as in the case of the St George's School troop, whereas those operating in the Supreme Muslim Council's schools often had a stronger nationalist bias and took part in ceremonies and marches organized by the Council.<sup>57</sup> Scouts, mainly

<sup>52</sup> Hemda Alon, *Heyeh nakhon!*, 36–7, 43–50; Eitan Bar-Yosef, 'Fighting Pioneer Youth'.

<sup>53</sup> Bowman's diary, 8 April 1921, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>54</sup> In November 1923, Bowman was made Camp Chief of Palestine, 'an honour which I feel I am very far from deserving...but I am enthusiastic, and a real believer in the good of the movement', Bowman's diary, 8 August, 21 November, 1923, MECA.

<sup>55</sup> Bowman's diary, 24 September, 1924, *ibid*.

<sup>56</sup> Arnon Degani, 'They Were Prepared'; Another source mentions that the movement had 3,344 members, Abdulqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 246–7.

<sup>57</sup> *The St. George's School Magazine* 1, vol. 6, Christmas Term, 1929, 11–15. The school magazine published articles about the troops' popularity and activities with no nationalist themes mentioned: Gordon Boutagy, Scoutmaster, 'Our Scouts', *St. George's Magazine* 2, vol. 6, Summer term 1930, 18–20.

those affiliated with nongovernment schools, headed the funerals of national leaders with their flags, songs, and bands and were active during the *mawasim* as well.<sup>58</sup> In March 1935 after attending a scout rally in the Muslim Sports Club in Jaffa, Bowman noted that the scouts were still loyal, although the Mufti was trying to establish a rival national movement.<sup>59</sup>

For Bowman and his staff, the movement was a personal joint effort to build character and manhood, commonwealth style. Yet for the colonial rule, it was also a way to foster obedience on the part of the native population, and to mask the colonial hierarchy by fabricating a notion of independence and freedom. In all cases, this policy backfired because the movement usually turned against colonial rule.<sup>60</sup> The Palestinian national movement sought to establish its own independent sports clubs and scout troops as of the 1920s, but this vision only materialized in the early 1930s. The Istiqlalists, with their emphasis on Pan-Arab ideology and anti-Imperialist zeal, were paramount in the foundation of independent scout troops and athletics clubs.<sup>61</sup> These independent scout troops directly engaged with the burning issues of the Zionist–Arab conflict, and Hebrew newspapers published articles about the rise in nationalist tendencies in the scout movement.<sup>62</sup> Scouts were reported uniting against land sales, touring the coasts, spotting illegal immigrant ships, joining demonstrations, and independently arresting illegal Jewish immigrants and bringing them to trial.<sup>63</sup>

Bowman gave his extensive scouting experience only one line in his autobiography. He was probably devastated by the way in which, as he saw it, his efforts had turned against its own values during the Arab Revolt. It was Bowman who issued the ban prohibiting the wearing of the movement uniform in response to the scouts' active participation in the first year of the revolt.<sup>64</sup> Shutting down the movement was consistent with the unprecedented violent crackdown of the British on all spheres of Palestinian civil society.

The Arab Revolt was the movement's historical watershed, and its greatest manifestation of power. Scouts, one of the few organized youth apparatuses

<sup>58</sup> Jabrā, *The First Well*, 52–3; Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 233–4; *Doar Hayom*, 5 August 1934; *al-Jami'ah al-'Arabiyah*, 5 August 1935.

<sup>59</sup> Bowman's diary, 3 March 1935, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>60</sup> Jacob, *Working Out*, 101, 107.

<sup>61</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 32–3, 51, 59–60, 62–4, 121, 155–56, 183–85, 268.

<sup>62</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 5 September 1927, 21 April 1933; *Davar* 11 September 1931.

<sup>63</sup> *Davar*, 18 January, 13 August, 27 December 1934, 6 August, 16 October 1935; *Doar Hayom*, 29 October 1933.

<sup>64</sup> Abdalqadir, 'British Educational Policy', 246–7; Degani, 'They Were Prepared'.

in Arab localities, not only led demonstrations but also enforced the strike, engaged in violent attacks on Jews on the roads and in the mixed cities, and helped in the organization of local armed groups.<sup>65</sup> Scouts were active in Arab cities, towns, and villages, and organized troops also crossed the lines and entered Jewish settlements to convince workers not to break the strike.<sup>66</sup> This presence of organized youth groups in uniform triggered great alarm in the Yishuv, which protested to the High Commissioner: 'These nice youngsters are walking around freely, wearing uniforms within the perimeter of Hebrew settlements while the agitation increases.'<sup>67</sup> Reports about clandestine military training of scouts for the establishment of a future army were published.<sup>68</sup> In later years, the Arab scouts attracted the attention of the Shai, as well, which monitored the activity of all the 'young radical enthusiast[s]' that headed them.<sup>69</sup> Shimoni, a central figure in the Yishuv's intelligence, depicted the movement in 1947 as 'undoubtedly extremely nationalist' and pan-Arabist.<sup>70</sup>

While Jewish students had been active in the Haganah since its establishment with a growing involvement after 1929, the Revolt increased and formalized the role of students in its ranks. In the summer of 1939, the Hebrew Education Department authorized the incorporation of premilitary education as an integral part of the high school curriculum through physical training. It was called *ḥagam*, an abbreviation for '*ḥinukh gufani mugbar*', 'extended physical training'. In the following year, the Haganah's headquarters, which had been using student volunteers since its establishment, formalized the draft of 16 (later 15) year olds to the organization. Soon enough, clandestine military training courses started with a comprehensive physical and ideological curriculum. By 1945, the Haganah's *Gadna* (an abbreviation for *gedude no'ar*, youth battalions) and the *ḥagam* had approximately 12,000 participants.<sup>71</sup> Often, *ḥagam*

<sup>65</sup> *Doar Hayom*, 20, 22, 24 April; 3–4, 14; and 17 May 1936, *Davar*; 22 April 1936; Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt*, 123.

<sup>66</sup> *Davar*, 28, 30 April and 1, 8 May 1936; *Doar Hayom*, 1 May 1936. See also Yuval. Arnon-Oḥanah, *Falaḥim*, 70, n. 40; Na'ama Ben Zēv, 'Civil Associations'; Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*, 103.

<sup>67</sup> *Davar*, 17 May, 21 July 1936.

<sup>68</sup> *Davar* reported that there were rumours of Syrian militants going to Palestine to train a future army based on the scout movement, *Davar*, 5 August 1935. See also reports on the armed military training of scouts in Hula and Tirah, *ibid.*, 29 October 1935, 10 March 1936.

<sup>69</sup> 'Itanay (reporter), 3 February 1945, 8/klali/7 (scanned file), HA; 'ha-Tsofim ha-'arvim be-e'y', 7 October 1945, see also 105/162, HA.

<sup>70</sup> Shimoni, 'Arve erets-yisra'el, 376.

<sup>71</sup> David Dayan, *Ken, anahnu no'ar!*, 21–85; Yonathan Shapiro, 'Ilit le-lo mamshikhim, 107–14.

schoolteachers were active Haganah members, which made it easier for the militia to recruit students directly from schools. After sunset, school buildings were turned into paramilitary bases for the recruitment and training of the militia.<sup>72</sup>

Accounts of this historical shift which usually attribute it to the violent confrontations during the Arab Revolt and the repercussions of the Second World War overlook the reciprocity of this process. The advent of organized Arab youth groups fully committed to a national cause and their invasion of the Jewish public sphere played a central role in the Yishuv's encouragement of student militarization. This worked both ways. Field trips by Hebrew schools and youth movements often intentionally passed through Arab settlements. Marching fearlessly throughout the country was another way to demonstrate physical dominance by the appropriation of landscape.<sup>73</sup> Early on, Zionist institutions were aware of the politically detonative potential of these trips. In the summer of 1919, while the borders between the British and French mandates were still being negotiated, Chaim Arie Zuta and some students climbed to the top of Mount Hermon, raised a flag, sang the *ha-tikvah* anthem, and left a message in Hebrew commemorating the event marking the conquest of the mountain.<sup>74</sup> In April 1920 the Bureau of Information reported that this act sparked enormous bitterness in the Sharifian camp.<sup>75</sup> One of these trips during Passover 1924 attracted the attention of an Arab man travelling from Nablus to Tulkarm who stated, 'A large battalion of young immigrant Jewish girls and boys was walking to Nablus.... At first, we thought that they were about to conquer Nablus by force of arms... each company with its own leader guiding them... [.] This is just a small example of Jewish solidarity, unity, order and discipline... And us? What means do we Arabs have to defend ourselves against all this?'<sup>76</sup> The sight of organized groups marching towards Nablus left a strong impression on the writer and instantly triggered introspective national questions. Tahir Qalyoubi (b. 1929), a student at the 'Amiriyyah secondary school in Jaffa, mentioned the establishment of an independent scout troop by the students after Farrell shut down the school's troop for participating in

<sup>72</sup> Ben Meir, *Metsahtsehim shinayim la-parot*, 21–30, 33–8; *Lo yekhola akheret*, 28.

<sup>73</sup> Shapira, *Herev ha-yonah*, 368–9.

<sup>74</sup> The flag and the message attached to it were brought to Faysal in Damascus, and prompted a diplomatic incident between the British and the French: Yehuda Ziv, 'Se'u tsiyonah nes va-degel', *Et-mol*, no. 183 (2005): 10–13.

<sup>75</sup> Report from 1 April 1920, Booklet 1459/21–2, Shneerson's files, HA.

<sup>76</sup> The article was originally published in *Filastin* and later translated into Hebrew: *Doar Hayom*, 29 April 1924. See also Sarah Ozacky-Lazar and Muṣṭafá Kabhā, 'The Haganah'.

a demonstration, which was started after watching Jewish youths hiking around the country in their khaki shorts and white hats, getting to know their land. 'We did the same thing,' he noted, camping and hiking across the country.<sup>77</sup> It was no coincidence that the Sports Festival (*al-mihrajān al-riyāḍī*), the first of its kind in Palestine in which the Arab scouts played a central role, took place in Jaffa during the summer of 1935, three months after the 1935 Maccabiah. For the Yishuv, the Maccabiah was a manifestation of Jewish strength and unity in that Zionist symbols, and especially flags, were displayed during the gigantic parades down the streets of Tel Aviv.<sup>78</sup> For the Arabs, primarily Husayn's party that had organized the Festival,<sup>79</sup> it signified a nationalist response of the same magnitude as the Maccabiah for the Jews and the British.<sup>80</sup> The festival, organized by the Palestine Sports Association, began with a parade of fifty Bedouins on horseback carrying Arab flags; the presence of the Mufti lent an aura of prestige to the event.<sup>81</sup> Although the general national festivity of the event was compromised by inner political strife, the Mufti's mouthpiece, *Al-Jamī'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, published articles about the national importance of the festival and the sanctity of the national symbols.<sup>82</sup>

The Palestinian scouts were much more than an attraction at national festivals. Their diverse nationalist activities were deeply rooted in their historical consciousness. The nongovernment troops were named after the national Arab Islamic conquerors, such as Abu 'Ubaida (Tulkarm), Usama (bin Zayd, Qalqilya), Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas and 'Umar al-Farouq (Gaza), and Al-Muthanna ibn Haritha (Safad),<sup>83</sup> visited historical sites on their field trips and staged plays with historical themes.<sup>84</sup> This Islamic symbolism became widespread throughout the Arab Middle East. As suggested by Hassan al-Banna, making Mahammad the ultimate scout rather than Baden-Powell was a mechanism of authentication of a Western product,

<sup>77</sup> Tahir Qalyoubi (b. 1929), interview. See also in Tahir Qalyoubi, *al-'Amiriyah* (Amman: Personal publication, 2010), 17–20.

<sup>78</sup> This unity was not complete, in that the Histadrut-affiliated ha-Po'el sport association did not take part in the event: Haim Kaufman, 'Ha-makabiyot ve-hashivutan'.

<sup>79</sup> *Al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, 18 July 1935.

<sup>80</sup> Issam Khalidi, 'Coverage of Sports News in Filastin'; Issam Khalidi, 'Husayn ḥusnī, rā'id'.

<sup>81</sup> *Al-Jamī'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, 16 July 1935.

<sup>82</sup> *Al-Jamī'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, 18 July 1935; Issam Khalidi, 'Palestine Sports and Scouts'.

<sup>83</sup> Some troops were also named after contemporary national Arab leaders; the Lydda troop was named after Faysal, and the Silwan troop after King Ghazi: *al-Jamī'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, 7 January 1934.

<sup>84</sup> *Filastin*, 23 May 1932; *al-Difa'*, 8 May 1935; Harte, 'Contesting the Past'.

and although the troops were not unified under a joint institution, they shared ideas and visions and made frequent visits to neighbouring countries.<sup>85</sup> Unfortunately, there is no record of the publications of the independent Palestinian troops. The only surviving written publications about scouting are those authored by Fawzi al-Nashashibi, a teacher at the Rashidiya and one of Bowman's close colleagues in leading the scout movement (Nashashibi burst into tears when informed by Bowman of his departure).<sup>86</sup> Nashashibi was keen on proving that the scouts were loyal Arab nationalists,<sup>87</sup> yet almost all his guidebooks for the government scouts lack a national historical connection and were heavily influenced by the a-political Baden-Powell literature.<sup>88</sup> The attempt to establish a united independent national movement sought to remedy these a-political tendencies. At the conference held in Jaffa in 1934, an attempt was made to disengage from government control, change the flag and constitution, appoint King Ghazi as Chief Scout, and unite all the Palestinian scouts under independent national leadership. Nashashibi tried to argue against this union and in favour of Baden-Powell, but his speech was interrupted by the crowd, and his motion was rejected unanimously.<sup>89</sup> This incident captures the tension between the government scouts and the independent troops that was not resolved until the end of the Mandate. The Arab scouts' short years of glory heralded the movement's decline. The efforts to unite the movement under a national independent leadership failed,<sup>90</sup> and local government troops, representing the bulk of the movement, suffered a severe blow during the Revolt. Their political mobilization turned the movement into a hot potato for British administrators after Bowman's departure. Sidney John Hogben, Bowman's Deputy in the Department, and his temporary successor as County Commissioner of Scouts after his departure, noted that there was no room for a quasi-military uniform-wearing movement in the country, thus highlighting its role as yet another institution that was driving Jews and Arabs further apart rather than drawing them together.<sup>91</sup>

The movement only renewed its activity after the war and nominated Fawzi al-Nashashibi as its new chief scout. Gradually it regained its pre-Revolt numbers and magnitude, reaching 10,000 scouts in November

<sup>85</sup> Jennifer M. Dueck, 'A Muslim Jamboree'; Watenpaugh, 'Scouting in the Interwar'; Jacob, *Working Out*, 109.

<sup>86</sup> Bowman's diary, 24 September 1924, 21 April 1930, 23 April 1934, Bowman files, MECA.

<sup>87</sup> *Filastin*, 9 April 1932.

<sup>88</sup> Degani, 'They Were Prepared'.

<sup>89</sup> *Al-Jami'ah al-'Arabiyyah*, 7 January 1934; *Filastin*, 10 January 1934; *Davar*, 7 January 1934.

<sup>90</sup> *Davar*, 7 January 1934.

<sup>91</sup> Miller, *Government*, 115.

1947.<sup>92</sup> The organizational skills and experience of its members served as a basis for the Futuwwa and Najjada, the semimilitary youth organizations established in the late 1940s.<sup>93</sup> However, the fractured, volatile nature of the movement frustrated its educational potential. The quick rise and fall of local scout troops impeded the crucial continuity needed for a profound educational process. If indeed 'memory survives only in repetition' with regard to the dissemination and inculcation of an historical consciousness, the history of the Arab scout movement remains marginal within the wider picture of Arab education during the Mandate.

The situation was different in the Jewish youth movements, the *ḥagana* and *Gadna*, which were supported by institutions that were able not only to maintain their activity throughout the Mandate (most are still operating to this day), but invested great energy and available capital in producing educational material in a range of methodologies to widen their circles of influence within their own movement and the Jewish community as a whole. Each movement had its own journal, published its own educational and ideological materials, and, in many cases, even local branches had their own magazines. Although only 20 percent of all young people were members, the movements were pivotal in forging an ongoing collectivist ethos of loyalty, responsibility, and action, rather than 'just talk'.<sup>94</sup> The multiplicity of youth movements and youth organizations reflected a constructive diversity in Jewish civil society. Although each movement in principle represented a different ideology, almost all were ardent Zionists, sharing the same nationalist vision of Jewish sovereignty in Palestine, and, as the conflict intensified, they became highly militarized.<sup>95</sup> Ben Gurion's vision of unifying all the centre left youth movements under his leadership starting in the late 1930s failed, but the rivalry between the movements strengthened their inner social and political cohesion, which although they prevented political unity, established capable strongholds that could be easily mobilized against a common enemy.<sup>96</sup>

This period of stalemate and the recuperation of Arab youth was a time of relative constructive challenge and development for Jewish youth. This was reflected numerically in the over 11,000 Jewish youth organized in youth movements in the early 1940s, whereas there were only 10,000 Arab

<sup>92</sup> Kabha, *ha-Paleṣtinim*, 72.

<sup>93</sup> Anderson, *Nationalist Voices in Jordan*, 103. Hillel Cohen, *Good Arabs*, 53.

<sup>94</sup> Anita Shapira, *Yehudim ḥadashim*, 141–4; Tsur, *Min ha-yam*, 91.

<sup>95</sup> Yonathan Shapiro, 'Ilit le-lo mamshikhim, 114–25.

<sup>96</sup> Uri Ben-Eliezer, 'Pilug be-shem iḥud'.

scouts by the end of the Mandate.<sup>97</sup> The militarization of the Arab scouts was anticolonial in nature, and it faced a British policy of zero tolerance while the militarization of the Jewish youth, especially along the ranks of the British army, was enabled and encouraged by the government. The latter backfired as well after the war.

### Elusive Voices: Students' Essays in School Journals

School journals were the imagined portrayal of the school spirit and community. The journals reported on student activities such as the local scout troop and the results of the latest athletic competitions with other schools. The careers and achievements of school graduates were published, and graduates often contributed articles. However, while mainly devoted to news about the school, all journals sought to transcend the school environment of their readership and offered subscriptions to nonstudents, especially graduates. Inspired by the academic standards of the Arab College's journal or even its predecessor the American University of Beirut's *al-Kuliyya* (1910), other journals also printed articles on pedagogy, transcribed lectures, and featured stories, poetry, and contributions by Arab intellectuals. Like the college's soccer team and its students' results on the matriculation exam, the journal was another symbol of the school's intellectual-social standards and atmosphere.

Publishing an article in the school's journal was an act of empowerment, especially for the students on the editorial board, where students were encouraged to state their views. The incorporation of articles written by students next to those written by the teaching staff on a document bearing the institution's name gave a feeling of partnership and equality to the students and the readers. The language employed, where often students and teachers wrote open letters to the school, turned the school into a conversing community, and challenged the staff-student separation. Beyond its role as a reflection of the school's educational ethos and the school's symbol of prestige, the importance of the journal lay in the articulation of the (perhaps false) notion that the institution was a joint project of an open, functioning community. The long articles by the college principals at the beginning of each issue delineated the clear boundaries of this emancipatory platform.

<sup>97</sup> Shapira, *Yehudim hadashim*, 348, n. 29.



The scarcity or in most cases the absence of expressions of resistance, criticism, or deviation from the school's ideology furthered their weight as an historical document exposing another layer of the mechanism of knowledge transfer.

In the Arab school system, research suggests that only secondary schools produced journals.<sup>98</sup> The journals studied here (table on page 279) were published mostly by Jerusalemite schools but also by schools in Ramallah, Bethlehem, and Haifa. The school journals of the most prestigious of Palestine's colleges articulated a distilled version of what the pedagogical elite was trying to achieve, 'a lens through which we can understand the link between education and identity'.<sup>99</sup> Although each college was administered by different institutions and followed supposedly distinctive educational trajectories, a close reading of the journals published regularly by the Arab College, St George's School, BGS, Terra Santa College, and Rawdat al-Ma'arif reconstructs the shared reality of students and commonalities between the schools, especially in the field of personal and collective identity.

The journals' circulation is unknown, but it can be assumed that the few hundred students of the school, its staff, and a few of the school graduates read it. It is also probable that the journals were circulated in the educational community. The Blue Books published by the government between 1931 and 1938 mention the publications of the Arab College and Rawdat al-Ma'arif, including their yearly subscription rate of 250 and 300 mills, respectively (around a quarter of a Palestinian pound). By comparison, a yearly subscription for *Filastin* cost 1500 mills, and the monthly salary of a certified government teacher was between 9–12 Palestinian pounds.<sup>100</sup> While this may be evidence of the journals' readership beyond the school, each journal is best seen as a product published by the school community and directed towards it.

The Arab and Jewish students' essays can be grouped into four central themes, (which will be discussed next): the importance of knowledge and education, the students' connection to their homeland, their writing on historical topics, and their analyses of the national Other.

<sup>98</sup> Jacob Yehoshua, *Tārīkh al-sihāfah*, 224–42.

<sup>99</sup> Greenberg, 'Majallat Rawdat Al-Ma'arif'.

<sup>100</sup> Dajāni, *Jabhat al-tarbiyah*, 101; Government of Palestine, *Blue Book 1931*, 262; *Blue Book 1932*, 178; *Blue Book 1933*, 192; *Blue Book 1934*, 202–3; *Blue Book 1935*, 188–9; *Blue Book 1936*, 381; *Blue Book 1937*, 406; *Blue Book 1938*, 457.

## Darkness Surrounds the School

The importance of knowledge, modern knowledge, and learning was a common trope in Arabic *Nahda* discourse and a central theme in these journals. The most popular topic, 'knowledge', represented much more than accumulated information. The meanings of *jahl* (ignorance) and '*ilm*' (knowledge) were charged with a cultural, historical trajectory and accompanied by a gospel of a brave new future.

The students thought of themselves as part of the solution: they were the enlightened few who in their minds had 'undergone a personal metamorphosis',<sup>101</sup> and their school was a beacon lighting the surrounding darkness of ignorance, stagnation, and superstition.<sup>102</sup> Ignorance accounts for all misfortunes, wrote one student, while portraying Knowledge as the ultimate panacea, the basis of civilization, ('*umrān*) symbolizing unity, progress, and development. As one student observed, people without knowledge are like sheep without a shepherd.<sup>103</sup> A student from St Luke's depicted the teacher as carrying a torch, illuminating the path, standing 'at the forefront with the strongest fighters for the salvation of his homeland' (*inqādh al-waṭan*).<sup>104</sup> In fact, like Ryzova's account of the Egyptian effendiya, schools in the eyes of students were 'claimants for the status of guardians of the Light of Gods'.<sup>105</sup> Iraqi schools during the same period, as shown by Bashkin, were similarly perceived as scientific institutions that could rectify the mistakes of the past, and march the nation forwards.<sup>106</sup>

Given the importance of education and knowledge, the students criticized the government's policy towards education in Palestine. Parallel to what was written at the time in the press, students stressed the Arabs' passion for education, as well as the sad lack of schools and their low standards. Anyone who can sign his name can become a teacher, a student noted.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Ryzova, *The Age of*, 6, 24.

<sup>102</sup> 'Il'a fatah filastīn', *Bākūrat Jabal shīyūn* 3, no. 3, 1 July 1924, 14–18; 'Oriental Superstitions', *The Review of Terra Sancta College* 11, 1941, no. 29, 28, 34.

<sup>103</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal shīyūn* 1, no. 2, April 1922, 42–4.

<sup>104</sup> Myasi-almualm *St. Luke's School Gazette* 2, no. 3, June 1947, Morgan's papers, Box 1, MECA; See also *Bākūrat Jabal shīyūn* 2, no. 2, July 1923, 5–7; *Majallat al-kullīyah al-'arabīyah* 1, vol. 8, 15 December 1927.

<sup>105</sup> Ryzova, *The Age of*, 241.

<sup>106</sup> Bashkin, *The Other Iraq*, 2008, 229.

<sup>107</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, January–March 1933, 1–3 and October–December 1933, 3–6.

In these essays, knowledge symbolizes power and as what brought the West to its greatness. In order to achieve this greatness and emancipation from Western enslavement, students suggested that the West should be used as a role model, and that students should be sent to Western countries so they could return with modern wisdom and techniques. A number of articles are dedicated to modern inventions and scientific discoveries.<sup>108</sup>



Photo 17 Teacher and students, al-‘Aqer, 1940. The Bitmuna Collections, Photo Schwartz.

<sup>108</sup> On gravity and Newton, *Bākūrat Jabal šihyūn* 2, no. 2, July 1923, 14–15; on the telegraph, *Bākūrat Jabal šihyūn* 3, no. 2, April 1924, 11–15; *Majallat Rawdat al-Ma‘ārif* 1, no. 5, 1 April 1922, 124–6. On modernization and development, *Bākūrat Jabal šihyūn* 4, no. 1, December 1924, 14–17; *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 2, no. 2, Christmas 1931, 83–9.

The younger generation plays a crucial role in this patriotic process, students noted.<sup>109</sup> Amin, a student from BGS concluded by stating that the homeland is in need of young men and women infused with the 'new spirit of civilization' (*rūḥ al-madaniyyah al-jadīd*).<sup>110</sup>

The East–West dichotomy thus found its way into students' writing. As a student at the College, Ziadeh echoed his admired teacher Miqdadi's severe criticism of the East's predicament. In one of the earliest issues of the College journal, fifteen-year-old Ziadeh wrote a poetic description of the long deep slumber of the East (a popular metaphor in other journals as well),<sup>111</sup> awakened by the light of the West and rising like a lion, asking for guidance. Ziadeh presented a detailed renaissance plan, including role models such as German educators (Adalbert Falk, Bismarck's Minister of Education) who would turn the education system into an apparatus of national unity. We in the East, argued Ziadeh, talk but do not act, something that ought to be reversed. Ziadeh further emphasized the notion of collective self-respect, the only thing that guarantees 'our place in human society' (*al-mujtama' al-insānī*).<sup>112</sup> This vision of inclusion in the new world could be achieved through a particularistic development plan.

'Time is money!' wrote one of the students in English, as part of his article in Arabic calling for an economic renaissance. 'This phrase', he noted, 'shows the importance of time', while comparing hard working Americans such as Henry Ford and British frugality in domestic consumption to the Eastern tendency to squander money on luxuries and dependence on God rather than work.<sup>113</sup> Another student wrote that while the Englishman asks who you are, the German asks what you know, and the American asks what you can do, the Easterner asks what your religion is. The student preferred the American mode of thought; namely, what we can do and what we can

<sup>109</sup> 'ibnā al-yawm wa-rijāl al-ghad', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 2, no. 2, July 1923, 16; 'Wājibatuna al-madrasīyah', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 4, no. 3, July 1925, 22–6; 'Li-mādhā naṭlubu al-'ilm', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 4, no. 3, July 1925, 26–9; 'al-shabāb', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Christmas Term 1940, 6–7.

<sup>110</sup> 'Al-waṭan wa-al-wājib', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 2, no. 2, July 1923, 24–5.

<sup>111</sup> Slumbers of the East metaphor can be found in *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 2, no. 1, March 1923, 28–9; 'al-'ilm wa-al-qūwah' *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif* 7, no. 1, 19 December 1934, 12–16; *The St. George's School Magazine* 2, Easter 1933, 4–6.

<sup>112</sup> Nicola Ziadeh, 'Qudwat al-sharq wa-'awāmil ruqīnā', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 3, no. 2 (30 November 1922): 25–9.

<sup>113</sup> Ḥabīb Wahba, 'Hājatunā ilā naḥḍah iqtisādiyyah', *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 3, no. 6 (31 March 1923): 135–8. See also, 'Al-waqt min dhahab', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣiḥyūn* 3, no. 1, 20 December 1923, 14–17.

produce.<sup>114</sup> The East was at the bottom of the list, its reasoning irrelevant and obsolete. The fact that the same metaphor was published in 1910 on the pages of *al-Kuliyya* underlines the existence of a broad regional critical cultural vocabulary that transcended time and place during this period.<sup>115</sup>

Yet another student warned against a blind Eastern imitation of the Europeans.<sup>116</sup> The journals articulated a moralistic accusative tone against 'Western' illnesses, such as the consumption of alcohol that prevented people from working and being productive while the country was already in an economic crisis.<sup>117</sup> Others wrote about the proper way to spend one's free time, and discussed the negative effects of the cinema, the need for patience, and the dangers of hypocrisy.<sup>118</sup>

These articles reflected the students' internalization and reproduction of European perceptions of the Orient. The concept of *Jahl*, in this sense, did not target a few cultural failings, but covered more or less everything concerning the life of the ordinary masses. This 'invention of ignorance' negated the archaic and traditional *being*, remodelling 'ilm as an opposite entirety, a new world order.<sup>119</sup> At the same time these articles reflect an awareness of the intensity of the cultural shift they were going through and stressed their free will to choose what to adopt from the West and what to preserve from their own culture.

### Saving the Drowning Homeland

The homeland and the nation, a very popular theme in all journals, was usually depicted within the context of a dramatic crisis. Amin Abu-Rahma, a student at BGS compared Palestine to a drowning young woman overcome by the waves, desperately calling for help while people remain indifferent. We need to act quickly, Amin wrote, or we shall lose her.<sup>120</sup> Abd al-Hamid Yasin from the Arab College, associated the personal progress of a man and

<sup>114</sup> 'Akhlāq al-ummah: ṭarīqah jadīdah lil-istidlāl 'alayhā, *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif* 1, no. 3 (March 1922): 76.

<sup>115</sup> *Al-Kuliyya* 1, no. 2 (March 1910), 36–7.

<sup>116</sup> 'Imitation', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, October–December 1933, 12–13.

<sup>117</sup> Essays against the abuse of alcohol, *Bākūrat Jabal ṣhiyūn* 3, no. 3, 1 July 1924, 30–3; see also *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 5, no. 1, 30 September 1924, 12–16.

<sup>118</sup> On patience, *Bākūrat Jabal ṣhiyūn* 2, no. 2, July 1923, 29; about spare time, *Bākūrat Jabal ṣhiyūn* 3, no. 1, 20 December 1923, 27–9; on hypocrisy, *Bākūrat Jabal ṣhiyūn* 4, no. 2, April 1925, 18–20; on the cinema, *The St. George's School Magazine* 1, Christmas Term, 1932, 27–8.

<sup>119</sup> See engagement with these themes in McDougall, *History and the Culture*, 113–14.

<sup>120</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal ṣhiyūn* 3, no. 3, 1 July 1924, 14–18.

the progress of the nation.<sup>121</sup> The homeland was personified, and given a face that they had the duty to protect.

Students declared their willingness to die for their nation and sanctified the virtue of sacrifice.<sup>122</sup> 'My life for my country, my blood for my country', wrote a third-grade student in a poem; a glorified death 'is better than a life of weakness and humiliation', wrote another.<sup>123</sup> Others wrote about the virtues of spiritual rather than physical courage for the sake of the nation.<sup>124</sup>

Direct engagement with politics was rare, although not completely absent, as noted by the editor of the *St. George's School Magazine*: 'The freedom of the press seems to be disciplined right and left. But we don't care for we are not concerned with what they call Taboo topics.'<sup>125</sup> One exception was *Sawt ul-Kulliyah*, Bir-Zeit College's journal, first published in the volatile year of 1947. The principal, Musa Nasir, published an article attacking the Jews, Zionism, and the unjust principle of the Mandate.<sup>126</sup> Criticism of government policy was usually more indirect. Greenberg reported that the *Rawda* journal called for its readers not to take government posts.<sup>127</sup> One student from BGS spoke of Arab unity as a force that would enable the Arab nation to rise up against the aggressor and liberate the homeland from the hands of those who had taken it by force (*mughtaşābīn*), probably meaning not only the English but also Zionism.<sup>128</sup> A student from Terra Santa published an article about Tel Aviv, presenting it as a gardenless, chaotic city of unrelated immigrants. Although the Jews seek liberty, the student noted, Jews are always afraid of 'them' since they have a tendency to fear, and if there is no cause for such fear, they will invent one.<sup>129</sup>

In the days of the Arab Revolt, under the title 'Revolution! Revolution!', a student from BGS called for an educational revolution that could end the chaos (*fawḍā*) in the country.<sup>130</sup> Another student wrote against the

<sup>121</sup> *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 3, no. 7, 30 April 1923, 153–6.

<sup>122</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 1, no. 1, January 1922, 28–30, 10–12; *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 3, no. 1, 20 December 1923, 17–20; *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Summer Term 1939, 9–10, 14.

<sup>123</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 1, no. 2, 1 April 1922, 54–6; On the brave death of heroes and shahada, *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Summer Term 1941, 5–6.

<sup>124</sup> *Sawt al-kullīya* 2, vol. 1, August 1947, 1, 3–4.

<sup>125</sup> 'Editor's Note', *St. George's Magazine* 2, vol. 6, Summer term 1930, 1–2.

<sup>126</sup> Musa Nasir, 'The Basis of a Solution to the Palestine Problem', *Sawt ul-kullīyah* 2, August 1947, vol. 1, 1–8: the same issue includes an interview with an American priest, that challenges his support for Zionism, 5–8.

<sup>127</sup> Greenberg, 'Majallat Rawdat Al-Ma'arif'.

<sup>128</sup> 'Al-wahḍah al-'arabīyah', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Summer Term 1944, 5.

<sup>129</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 10, no. 27, Easter 1940, 54–7.

<sup>130</sup> 'Al-thawrah! al-thawrah!', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, October–December 1938, 5–6.

indifference to the casualties caused by the repression of the Revolt and called to assist 'our brethren the orphans'.<sup>131</sup> Although direct criticism of the British was rare, during the Revolt, students found a way to express their views through historical examples. Abdallah Saleh, a first-year secondary student, presented an historical overview of Arab elocution that emphasized its decline under foreign rule and its renaissance in Egypt and during the Great Arab Revolt.<sup>132</sup> Hisham Mulhis wrote about the importance of Arab unity for the future of the nation.<sup>133</sup>

In the Arab College journal, there was not a single mention of the Revolt,<sup>134</sup> an omission that is indicative of one of two things: either Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi insisted on the elimination of politics from the journal as the only way to maintain what he saw as pure academic standards, or the censorship employed during the Revolt prevented any kind of engagement in local political issues. In any case, it is clear that explicit discussions on the topic were not given space on the pages of the college journals. Whether because of government censorship or local educational censorship, this detachment underlines the tension between the lighthouse and its homeland, between the personal and the actual contemporary collectivity. Keeping the students away from local politics and focusing strictly on academic progress was a protectionist strategy for these educators, and was considered a price worth paying for future benefits. The school journals articulated a similar balance between the parameters and the challenges of 'progress', community organization, and national aspirations under colonial rule.

## Language and Nation

The heavy curricular emphasis on English and the exposure to non-Arabic literature placed Arabic on the defensive. While aware of the advantages of learning foreign languages, especially English, students voiced criticism about the marginalization of Arabic instruction in the Rawda journal and in mission school journals as well.<sup>135</sup> A sixth grader from BGS noted that

<sup>131</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Christmas Term 1939, 5–6.

<sup>132</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, January–April 1938, 3–4.

<sup>133</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 7, no. 19, Summer 1937, 141–3.

<sup>134</sup> Only three issues of the journal from the period of the Revolt are available: May 1937, July 1937, and July 1938.

<sup>135</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 4, no. 10, Easter 1934, 64–5; *Bākūrat Jabal šīhyūn* 3, no. 2, March 1924, 21–4; 'Speak English', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Christmas Term 1939, 10–11.



Arabic should be learned thoroughly for the sake of the nation. Some students, the writer observed, preferred to speak in foreign languages because they believe they are more civilized; this preference, he noted, 'has disastrous consequences on the student, his country and his nationalism'.<sup>136</sup> In these essays, which adhered to a familiar motif of the *Nahda*, the revival of the nation went hand in hand with the revival of the language. Students stressed the need to modernize Arabic and incorporate modern terms, thus enabling the importation of foreign knowledge.<sup>137</sup>

In the journals that were divided into English and Arabic sections, the medium was the message. In most cases, students chose to publish their essays about Arab history, Arab culture, and Arab nationalism in Arabic rather than English. When *The St. George's Review* published its first Arabic section in 1931, Khalil Baydas, who taught Arabic at the school, inaugurated it with an article on 'the iron will' of great historical figures from Alexander the Great to Napoleon, Newton, and Bismarck. In the next issue, Baydas presented an article on pre-Islamic Arab proverbs, stating that the Arab poetry and literature were superior to those of all other nations, and a few years later, published an article about Arab culinary culture.<sup>138</sup> Sakakini, who contributed essays to several school journals, published a fictional story in the Arabic section of *Bishop Gobat School News*, about how a backwards pious community became modern and successful thanks to the efforts of one educated young man who returned to his people and despite their reluctance, modernized them.<sup>139</sup> Stories such as these, written by either prominent pedagogues or students, turned the Arabic section into a safe cultural-national expression zone. For the students, this amplified the performativity of their language by turning its use into a political statement in a depoliticized space and, hence, an expression of their identity.

<sup>136</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, April–July 1933, 2–3.

<sup>137</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, October–December 1937, 1–4; See also *Sawt ul-Kulliyah* 4, vol. 1, issue 4, November 1947.

<sup>138</sup> Khalil Baydas, 'al-irādah al-ḥadīdīyah', *The St. George's Magazine* 1, vol. 7, April 1931, 1–12; *ibid* 2, vol. 7, July 1931, 1–13 (see also *ibid* 2, 1934, vol. 9, 1–11 for another article on the same topic); *ibid* 1, Christmas 1933, vol. 9, 1–14; 'Ṭa'ām al-'arab', *ibid* 1, Christmas 1935 10, 1, 7–18.

<sup>139</sup> Khalil al-Sakakini, 'Lūlū dajāja', *The St. George's School Magazine*, Christmas 1934, vol. 10, 1, 1–5. Sakakini wrote for other school journals as well. In *Bākūrat Jabal ṣīhyūn*, he published an article criticizing dependence on God and in favour of man's responsibility: 'Ḥadhihi hiya al-ḥayāh', *Bākūrat Jabal ṣīhyūn* 4, no. 3, July 1925, 3–6. See also Sakakini about the poet Ahmed Shawqi in *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 4, no. 10, Easter 1934, 48–55.



## Our History, Their History

Essays about historical topics in school journals were exceptional in their depth and scope. These essays often included footnotes, references, and the use of multiple sources in more than one language, Arabic and English, but French as well. In most cases, they were not just stories, but included an argument, and a conclusion.

The students' writing about history echoed the pedagogical historical discourse, and the topics rarely deviated from their syllabus. History teachers and authors of history textbooks were central contributors to college journals, especially the Arab College journal. Radi Abd al-Hadi not only contributed articles as a teacher but had also been the editor as a student for a few years. Except for Ziadah who wrote for the college journal while still a student; the rest were already working as young teachers. The articles in the school journals authored by Zubyan, Miqdadi, 'Anabtawi, Ghunaym, Anton Shukri Lawrence, 'Abidi, and Radi helped to turn history into a popular writing topic, set a high writing standard, and influenced the choice of topics.

The differences between the students and their teachers emerge most clearly in the absence of the nuanced, complex styles of their teachers' prose. The students' essays are usually shorter, less informative, and more explicit in their message. In most cases, their texts correspond to a kind of strictly educative model where a story is the basis for a lesson. This approach to history is indicative of the way they were taught history, or the way the writers wished to portray it: a story of great personal and collective relevance carrying a clear message for the present.

When discussing Arab history, students chose to write about the Arab golden ages of unity and strength as a source of national pride and inspiration.<sup>140</sup> Students often wrote about Arab Islamic or pre-Islamic historical figures as role models of human virtue.<sup>141</sup> One student wrote of the great enthusiasm in class while learning about the bravery of the pre-Islamic hero-poet 'Antarah because it taught them about the virtues of their ancestors. The students were then asked to write about the 'Antarah of their era.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>140</sup> 'al-waḥdah al-'arabīyah', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Summer Term 1944, 5. 'al-ummah al-'arabīyah', *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 7, no. 19, Summer 1937, 141–3.

<sup>141</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 4, no. 9, Christmas 1933, 27; *The Bishop Gobat School News*, October to December 1934, 9–12.

<sup>142</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal ṣihyūn* 1, no. 2, 1 April 1922, 51–2.

Zahdi al-Daudi from BGS wrote about the humility of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab as a role model for the entire nation.<sup>143</sup> Another student devoted an essay to the acquittal of 'Umar from the fabricated charge of burning the Library of Alexandria. Islam and Arabs, the student noted, do not burn books.<sup>144</sup> The Terra Santa debate team spent one of its meetings on the question 'Who had greater influence, the Abbasids or the Umayyads?' in the fortification of Arab glory.<sup>145</sup>

The call to emancipate Arab women and encourage their progress and development as a critical national project was a recurrent theme in all journals.<sup>146</sup> To promote this cause, students often described historical heroic women figures from either the Jahiliyyah or the Islamic conquests.<sup>147</sup> Once again, there was an attempt to find familiar and national role models to promote a vision of progress.

Various essays focused on aspects of progress and modernization in the Arab East in relation to the West. The scientific progress in Andalus, a very popular topic in students' and teachers' essays, was seen as civilizational proof of Arab competence, while 'ignorance ruled in Europe and Africa.'<sup>148</sup> 'I am an Arab and I was nurtured to love the Arabs by an Arab mother', wrote Mahmud Qa'war, while suggesting that the West should be emulated and reform (*ijtihād*) instigated in contemporary Arab society.<sup>149</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* dedicated a series of articles to the scientific contribution of the Arabs in history, and gave specific examples of scholars and their inventions and discoveries. To prove his point, the author used Western (*ifranj*) sources, because 'when they [the Western scholars] conduct research, they only seek the truth.'<sup>150</sup> 'Our Arab authors-unfortunately-are deprived of literary study in its true sense of the word...', wrote another student.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>143</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 4, no. 2, April 1925, 15–18.

<sup>144</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 3, no. 2, 1 July 1924, 8–14, 24–8.

<sup>145</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 5, no. 12, Christmas 1934, 35–42.

<sup>146</sup> *The St. George's School Magazine* 2, Easter 1933, 4–6.

<sup>147</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, January–April 1938, 1–2.

<sup>148</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, July–October 1938, 4–5; *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif* 1, vol. 7, 19 December 1934, 3; *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 5, no. 1. (30 September 1924): 25–31 and *Majallat dar al-mu'allimīn* 5, no. 5 (31 January 1925), 136–42.

<sup>149</sup> 'Al-ijtihād wa-al-ṣabr y'amalan 'ajaib', *Bākūrat Jabal shīhyūn* 1, December 1924, 24–7; See also *ibid* 3, 1 July 1924, 8–14; *ibid* 2, July 1923, 8–9; *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 5, no. 13, Easter 1935, 57–61.

<sup>150</sup> 'Futūḥāt al-'arab al-thaqāfiyah', *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 1, no. 2, 1930–1, 35–42. See also, *Majallat Rawḍat al-Ma'ārif* 5, vol. 1, 19 April 1922, 110–15.

<sup>151</sup> *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 4, no. 9, Christmas 1933, 18–22.

Western history was almost as popular as Arab history for students. Students chose to write on a wide array of topics including Ancient Greece and the pantheon as a source of inspiration for humanity,<sup>152</sup> the discovery of America and the 'New World' as the centre of civilization,<sup>153</sup> Alexander the Great and unification of East and West,<sup>154</sup> and Napoleon and Hannibal as the greatest leaders in history for the strength of their will.<sup>155</sup> These topics were usually part of the syllabus and reflected the relevance of this history for the students, and their ability to draw personal and collective conclusions from it.

The journals portray a community of young writers with a very strong historical penchant. History emerges as the key enabler of mediation and analysis of their reality. Its ubiquity was manifested in its frequent appearances in the school environment. Their personal understanding of history, usually utilized to convey a collective moral stance, helped them define their identity, embrace their sources of inspiration, and chart a path and a vision for the future. Rather than reflecting an epistemic subjugation to the West, the dominance of Eurocentric, progressivist historical tropes reflects a creative redeployment of these historical themes for their own purposes. The fusion of these themes with classical Arab history, placing 'Antarah, 'Umar, and heroic women from the Jahiliyyah alongside Napoleon, Bismarck, and Alexander the Great, was a means of appropriation and manipulation of colonial paradigms to give sense and meaning to their own national heritage within the larger picture. As James McDougall's analysis of Algerian historiography suggests, debating the civilizational role of the Abbasids and Umayyads was used to rejuvenate the Arab civilizing mission, and challenge the perennial nature of foreign hegemony.<sup>156</sup>

### Missing Jews

College journals hardly ever published articles about Jewish history or Zionism. In the mixed schools, only Jewish students published favourable or informative articles about Jewish or Zionist history in either English or

<sup>152</sup> *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Christmas Term 1939, 11–12.

<sup>153</sup> *Bākūrat Jabal šihyūn* 1, December 1924, 27–32.

<sup>154</sup> *ibid*, 1, 20 December 1923, 30–2. <sup>155</sup> *ibid*, 25–7.

<sup>156</sup> McDougall, *History and the Culture*, 157–60.

Arabic.<sup>157</sup> In most cases, however, the historical role of the Jews in articles in these journals were written by teachers who were future authors of textbooks. In his article about King Herod, 'Abidi described him as a great *Arab* king who brought progress and culture to Palestine only to be criticized and accused of apostasy by the ungrateful Jews. In another article by 'Abidi, the Jews were depicted as the obstacle to the unification of East and West which was lifted when the Romans banned the Jews from entering Jerusalem.<sup>158</sup> Radi, in an anti-Shia article, accused Shia of aiming to destroy Islam. It is no wonder, he noted, that most Shiites are Jews, Christians, Persians, and idolaters.<sup>159</sup>

The rare mentions of Jewish history or Jewish contemporary life relate to the general detachment from political issues of these journals. The negative referencing of the Jews in history or the omission of their history as it appears in the school journals is another example of the Zionist–Arab conflict writing itself into the school environment as in other spheres.

### An Alternative Tomorrow, *al-Ghad*

Were there any instances of students' writing that was not restricted to these themes, that went beyond the clear limits set by the schools? The independent journal of the Arab Students' Union in Palestine (*Rābiṭat al-ṭalabah al-'Arab bi-filasṭīn*) *al-Ghad* (Tomorrow) is a good source to explore students' weltanschauung based strictly on school journals. *Al-Ghad* is also useful because it was the brainchild of the Anglican BGS, the result of an encounter between Ra'if Khoury (1913–1967), a charismatic teacher of Arabic language and literature, who was an intellectual and a Communist of Lebanese descent and a number of students. Students flocked around

<sup>157</sup> Maurice Setton, 'Eliezer Ben-Yehuda', *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 3, no. 8, Easter, 1933, 68–71; Haim Sasson, 'Yahūd al-khaybar', *The Review of the Terra Santa College* 10, no. 27, 1939, 27–8. One exception is a favourable description of the Hebrew University after the BGS students went on a visit: 'The Hebrew University', *The Bishop Gobat School News*, Spring Term 1941, 7–8.

<sup>158</sup> Mahmud al-'Abidi, 'Hirūdus al-kabīr', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 14, no. 2 (2 February 1934): 32–46; Mahmud al-'Abidi, 'Ḥaḍārat al-yūnān fī bilād al-shām', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 16, no. 4 (1 April 1936): 251–9.

<sup>159</sup> Radi Abd al-Hadi, 'al-Shi'ah', *Majallat al-kulliyah al-'arabiyah* 12, no. 1 (10 December 1931): 38–51.

Khoury, who introduced them to socialist and anticolonial ideas and to his friend, Abdallah Hanna Bandak. The two, along with a few dedicated students, were fundamental in the establishment of the Arab Students' Union in the dramatic summer of 1937. Their objective was to fight illiteracy, provide assistance to Palestinian orphans, and through *al-Ghad* (1938–1941), educate, and introduce the masses to an ideology of social and cultural reform.<sup>160</sup> The union also organized and participated in demonstrations and conducted visits to villages, 'so we could get to know the lives of our people', as noted by one of its central activists.<sup>161</sup>

The publication was made possible by the support and ideological devotion of Bandak, who edited the journal with a student board. By the late 1930s, he was an active member of the Palestine Communist Party, the editor of *Sawt al-Sha'b*, and the owner of a modern printing press in Bethlehem. Bandak's extensive experience in journalism and printing accounted for the journal's exceptional graphic quality, which included photos and illustrations. His Communist, anti-imperialist ideology nurtured students and budding writers such as Emile Touma and Tawfik Toubi who later became party leaders.<sup>162</sup> The Department prohibited the circulation of the journal in its schools and forbade students in government schools from writing for it, a policy that led to its demise. It resurfaced in 1945, but not as a student journal.<sup>163</sup>

The journal's logo, a hand squeezing a bloody heart who droplets fuel a flaming torch, and its rhetoric, 'in the name of God, in the name of Arabism and in the name of freedom,' reflected the spirit of the journal.<sup>164</sup> However, rather than militant Communism, the journal focused mainly on cultural and national issues and the main goal of the union, namely, combatting illiteracy as part of the liberation and modernization of Palestine.

In its three years of existence, especially the first year, *al-Ghad* published essays written by students from most secondary schools in Palestine, as well as a few from Transjordan, and it included essays by female students. Its independent platform of expression was exceptional and appealing to young upper-class idealists interested in the here and the now. The homeland and its dire need of rescue was a dominant theme, along with debates about

<sup>160</sup> Merav Mack, 'Orthodox and Communist'; Elias Ṭūbī and Olga Ṭūbī, eds., *Tawfiq ṭūbī*, 10.

<sup>161</sup> Ṭūbī and Ṭūbī, *Tawfiq ṭūbī*, 11.

<sup>162</sup> Shmuel Dotan, *Adumim*, 273–80.

<sup>163</sup> Jacob Norris, 'Civil Society and the Local Press'; Adnan Musallam, 'al-ṣiḥāfah al-ʿarabiyyah al-baytlaḥmiyyah'.

<sup>164</sup> *Al-Ghad* 2, no. 1, April 1939, 2.

the East's ability to become Western,<sup>165</sup> as in the other journals. However, *al-Ghad* spoke more openly about the role of colonialism and tyranny in bringing the people to their present sorry state, and openly called for Arab independence.<sup>166</sup> In this area, as well, the treatment of knowledge and the sanctity attributed to it paralleled the school journals. The notion of an awakened enlightened few (hence the torch as the symbol) was a dominant theme. The students drew attention to the illiteracy crisis and the shortcomings of the Department of Education, and hoped to enlighten (*tanwīr*) the fellahin with their 'primitive traditions and customs, dominating their mentality', who based their lives on distorted truths.<sup>167</sup> The Union's focus on orphans was indicative of a social awareness of Palestinian society beyond knowledge. Essays about the orphans' misery and poverty and the obligation of self-sacrifice for their benefit echoing a class-based emancipatory ideology, were published frequently in the journal.

Unlike other school journals, *al-Ghad* published articles on contemporary regional and global issues. When King Ghazi of Iraq died, students qualified the event as a national tragedy, and when the Second World War broke out, the journal published a number of articles against fascism and the atrocities of war.<sup>168</sup> *Al-Ghad* also published poems and short stories about unrequited love and intense emotions that normally were not given space in school journals, and encouraged young writers to publish their works. It saw itself as an open arena for cultural expression of young, radical, passionate youth.

Like the school journals, historical themes were popular in *al-Ghad*. Arab history remained confined in many essays to the golden ages, mainly for their scientific and intellectual capacities in relation to the West.<sup>169</sup> The journal even devoted three articles to the scientifically proper way to write history, including the correct way to use and cite sources. In his third

<sup>165</sup> See engagement with East versus West, *Nahda*, and methods to modernize the Arabs, *al-Ghad* 4, no. 1, May 1941, 170–1; *al-Ghad* 4, no. 3, July 1941, 33–6, 47.

<sup>166</sup> See, for example, the use of the Prophet's biography to criticize contemporary Islamic society, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 3, June 1939, 128–30, 136–7; *al-Ghad* 2, no. 2, May 1939, 99–101.

<sup>167</sup> *Al-Ghad* 2, no. 2, May 1939, 68, 112, 114; Tawfik Toubi on the importance of secondary education for women, *al-Ghad* 2, May 1939, no. 2, 77–9, 117; see also *al-Ghad* 2, June 1939, no. 3, 140–2; against the hijab, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 8, January 1940, 6; about the fellahin, *al-Ghad* 3, no. 8, February 1941, 141.

<sup>168</sup> An article calling on all Arabs to unite against fascism (and about the atrocities of war in the same issue), *al-Ghad* 2, no. 5, October 1939, 4–6; essays on the death of Ghazi of Iraq in 1939, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 2, May 1939, 76; see also the poem *al-Ghad* 2, no. 3, June 1939, 131.

<sup>169</sup> *al-Ghad* 3, no. 7, January 1941, 122–3; on Arab mentality, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 5, October 1939, 9–10; on culture in Andalus as superior to Europe, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 6, November 1939, 36; on the Prophet and Muhammad bin Qasim the Umayyad conqueror, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 3, June 1939, 128–30, 149–53.

article, the writer commented on the scientific historical writing of the West and the corrupt way in which it was used by the Arabs, and concluded with the hope that the new Arab universities would engender change.<sup>170</sup>

This historical consciousness expressed in an *independent* political journal illustrates how the educational process inculcated the prism through which the historical narrative was understood, perhaps to a greater extent than in school journals. *Al-Ghad* did not present a new version of history; rather it differentiated itself by the mosaic of topics it covered which enabled different ways to draw connections with the past. Essays about contemporary Arab literature, including the biographies of its protagonists, and mourning them with words of collective national grief were a manifestation of the connection between the students and a living, vibrant Arab culture.<sup>171</sup> Along with debates over issues such as the abolition of illiteracy and helping orphans, critical reporting on global events and the response they required from Arabs gave agency to the students and increased the relevance of older eras in history. Golden age Arabs, rather than remaining a distant utopia, became another expression of contemporary Arab competence.

### School Journals in Hebrew

Hebrew journals for children were published in Palestine from the late nineteenth century onwards. The Teachers' Union published a children's journal called *Moledet*, from 1911 until 1947, and from the beginning of the Mandate, Hebrew newspapers and teachers made several attempts to publish children's journals.<sup>172</sup> The most popular children's newspaper was *Davar's* children's supplement, *ha-musaf li-yeladim*, first published in 1931, and *Davar li-yeladim*, an independent weekly supplement published regularly from 1936 until 1985. This journal, which published texts by famous authors and educators, employed 'hegemonic proletariat poetics' to articulate a desirable Hebrew nativeness under the ideological guidelines of labour Zionism, as rooted in the proletarian-settlement ideology. *Davar li-yeladim* had a strong influence on Hebrew education as well. Often, teachers used

<sup>170</sup> *Al-Ghad* 2, no. 7, December 1939, 62–3, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 8, January 1940, 89–90; *al-Ghad* 3, no. 1, April 1940, 9–10.

<sup>171</sup> On Ameen Rihani, *al-Ghad* 3, no.5, October 1940, 90–1; on Mahmoud Taymour, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 6, November 1939, 17–18; stories of Ibrahim al-Yaziji, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 3, June 1939, 177; on the Iraqi poet Jamil, Sidqi al-Zahawi, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 7, December 1939, 75; about the history of Arab press and its importance, *al-Ghad* 2, no. 10, March 1940, 149.

<sup>172</sup> A comprehensive survey of children's journals, Ofek, *Sifrut ha-yeladim*, 2:583–620.

articles written by educators in the classroom.<sup>173</sup> *Davar li-yeladim* ('Davar for children'), the 'children's campfire' is one outstanding example of a publication that incorporated the writings of children.<sup>174</sup>

Children's essays in these journals were not only directed towards the prominent authors who contributed to the journals. The Hebrew child was surrounded with Hebrew literature and translated literature for children, a central project in Hebrew and Zionist culture. This literature focused on creating collective notions of an idyllic Hebrew childhood by reinventing a Jewish childhood in Palestine, 'the land of the child' in the words of the author Levin Kipnis. The central themes of this literature were the Hebrew child as a mythical hero, strengthening of the attachment to the land and ties to the collective, the structuring of a monolithic national territorial Hebrew identity, incorporating children into the future of the nation and their mobilization, and the denial of the Diaspora mentality while nurturing an exclusive native elite.<sup>175</sup> Ya'el Dar noted the considerable expansion of publications for children and the launching of children's magazines such as



**Photo 18** Students publishing a school journal, Tel Aviv, December 1937. The Gustav Rubinstein collection, Beit Ha'ir Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, Tel Aviv Municipality, and Yad Ben-Zvi Photo Archive.

<sup>173</sup> Ya'el Dar, *Qanon be-khamah kolot*, 1–9, 15–20, 53–60.

<sup>174</sup> Meir Chazan, 'A Fighting Press'; Meir Chazan, 'Nof yaldut'.

<sup>175</sup> Celina Mashlach, *Yaldut u-le' umiyut*, 13–21, 165–239.



*ha-Boḵer li-yeladim*, *Shay mishmar li-yeladim*, and *‘Atidot* during the early 1940s. During this period, the Holocaust prompted a ‘reconciliation with exile’, and a toning down of Zionism’s criticism of Diasporic Jewish life as stronger solidarity with the child victims/refugees surfaced. Later, when clearer reports of the Nazi atrocities reached Palestine, writing for children became a conduit for the social and militarist mobilization of young people with greater emphasis on the strength and bravery defining the warlike prototype of the young Sabra.<sup>176</sup> Local school publications corresponded and were influenced by this literary environment that developed its own aesthetics and vocabulary.

### Children’s Literature in Arabic

Hebrew children’s literature has received ample attention in studies on the Yishuv. By contrast there have been no studies on Arab children’s literature in Palestine during this period. Modern Arab children’s literature and the translation of Western literature for children began in 1912 in Egypt and only started to expand in the late 1920s. However, little is known about its reception in Palestine.<sup>177</sup> An op-ed published in 1933 mentions the shortage of children’s literature, proverbs, and poetry in Arabic as the greatest difficulty for teachers in Palestine, who lack texts written especially for children.<sup>178</sup> In the late 1940s, several books were published as part of the *Popular Culture Series* (*silsilat al-thaqāfah al-‘āmmah*), and a few other children’s books were authored in the 1940s, mainly by teachers.<sup>179</sup> The production of children’s literature as part of an Arab Palestinian national project was not comparable to the rapidly growing Hebrew industry. Thus, the relationship between children’s or student writing and an imagined ethos of childhood, which was so prevalent in Hebrew school journals, is less tangible, if not absent, in Arab schools.

<sup>176</sup> Ya ‘el Dar, *Umi-safsāl ha-limudim luḵaḥnu*.

<sup>177</sup> Sabeur Mdallel, ‘The Sociology of Children’s Literature in the Arab World’; Sabeur Mdallel, ‘Translating Children’s Literature in the Arab World’; Taghreed Mohammad Alqudsi, ‘The History of Published Arabic Children’s Literature’, 62–3.

<sup>178</sup> *Mirat al-Sharq*, 22 April 1933.

<sup>179</sup> Ziadeh, *Ayyāmī*, 1:73–4; Ziadeh’s short book focuses on a number of Arab or Arabized historical figures from ancient times to modernity, Ziadeh, *Shakhṣiyyāt ‘Arabiyyah*, 6 This series included books by Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, Ali Shaath, Abd al-Hamid Yasin, and Fadwa Touqan. ‘al-adab’, *al-Mawsū‘ah al-filasṭīniyyah*, accessed June 14, 2018, <https://www.palestinapedia.net/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AF%D8%A8/>.

## High School Journals and the Darkness Surrounding the Hebrews

Like the Arab journals, Hebrew journals focused on school life, reporting on its different activities and accomplishments. Contrary to the Arab journals, these had no obvious academic pretention and usually included shorter, less edited, students' essays.<sup>180</sup> The Hebrew student did not share the Arab student's feeling of remoteness and alienation from an illiterate primitive majority. The omnipotence of knowledge appeared only rarely, as did the connection between learning, leadership, and national development. Hebrew students seemed less interested in the enlightenment or modernization of their people in Palestine. Instead, Palestine itself became their objective, and in particular, redeeming it from its primitive state. For the Arab student, Palestine was a country of great resources and potential that could progress through education and technology. For the Hebrew student, Palestine was an arid land that would blossom through Zionist intellectual, technological, and moral capabilities.

'Less than a century, [sic] ago', concluded Margalit Rubovitz from EDR, 'Palestine was a desert, an unheeded spot in the universe. Now Palestine is one of the most prosperous countries and the most civilized in the Near East...Palestine has grown, is growing, and will continue to grow and become the most important location in the universe.'<sup>181</sup>

The East–West dichotomy was also less noticeable. Students who wrote about their family trips to Europe as tourists or while visiting their homeland rarely used words such as 'the West' or 'modernity' when describing these sites.<sup>182</sup> While discussing Hebrew and Western literature in their book reviews, there was not a sense of cultural priority or superiority. Because of the efforts to translate Western literature into Hebrew, students were exposed to Western literature in their national language. As a result, these books became part of their culture.<sup>183</sup>

<sup>180</sup> Yuval Dror, 'Sugyot ishiyot ve-le'umiyot'.

<sup>181</sup> Margalit Rubovitz, 'Palestine', *The School Magazine*, 1935, 18.

<sup>182</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1936, 15–16; see also *ibid*, 1938, 10–11; *Shtilim*, February 1939, 10.

<sup>183</sup> See reviews of Hermann Hesse's *Narcissus and Goldmund* and Somerset Maugham's *Theatre* in their Hebrew translation, *Benenu*, June 1941, 14–16; see also *ibid*, March 1941, 9; A book review on Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*, *Shtilim*, April–May 1939, 11–13; See reviews of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Ha-Talmid*, Februar–March 1931, 5–6; review of Schiller's *William Tell*, *Niv*, April 1936, 4.

The abundance of translated articles from Western journals in Arab journals reflects a different kind of cultural outsourcing than in the Hebrew journals. When publishing translated articles, the Arab colleges, students, and staff took the role of importing and mediating knowledge that was perceived as beneficial and had not yet been Arabized. The Hebrew school did not engage in this role of cultural mediation, because of the combination of the ideological emphasis on Hebrew and a rapidly growing Hebrew bookshelf that included Western literature.

Like the Arab student, Jewish students were wary of blind imitation of hedonistic European youth that could draw them away from their duties to the nation. A student from the Reali School criticized the imitation of other nations (*goyim*), in particular, young people in the Diaspora and Palestine, for dancing the foxtrot, 'a symbol of decadence in European society'.<sup>184</sup> To prevent imitation, another student argued against general education and in favour of nationalist education in the spirit of the prophets, 'strengthening the power of our people in its historic land'.<sup>185</sup> This decadence and lack of authenticity targeted by Arab and Jewish students alike, could be cured, according to both, by a stronger nationalist emphasis in their education.



**Photo 19** Khalid ibn al-Walid football team with trainer, Rawdat al-Ma'arif College, 1932 (Haj Amin al-Husayni at the centre).<sup>186</sup>

<sup>184</sup> *Ha-Talmid*, February–March 1931, 1–3.

<sup>185</sup> *Ha-Talmid*, June–July 1931, 14–15.

<sup>186</sup> *Majallat Rawdat al-Ma'arif* 5, no. 1, 19 December 1932, 5.

## They Are the East

The East does exist in Hebrew language journals, but as a general trait ascribed to the Other, the Arab, rather than a personal or a collective part of Jewish identity. 'Both cities are so different. The one is Orient and the other Occident...', wrote Ruth Karpf while comparing Jerusalem and Nuremberg's old cities. Originally from Nuremberg, Karpf described the contrast between Jerusalem's Bedouins in rags and their 'mysterious dark bazaars and with all the interesting oriental things in them' and Nuremberg's elegant residents, poets and painters, strolling down its lanes filled with 'sun and light'.<sup>187</sup> Nevertheless, Karpf and the other students at the EDR 'saw themselves as participants in the modernization of Jerusalem'.<sup>188</sup>

The Arabs had a much more noticeable presence in Hebrew journals than the reverse. In some essays, students wrote about the cordial hospitality they were offered in Arab villages, or detailed joyful Arab folklore, not without a patronizing tone. 'The life of the Arabs is very interesting', wrote Elka Eden when describing an Arab wedding.<sup>189</sup> Her sister, Menuha, added that at the end of the wedding, 'she [the bride] belongs to him [the groom] now and no one can touch his property... he can hit her'.<sup>190</sup>

In most cases, the Arab appeared as a negative image of the Jew. There is no mention of 'civilized' urban Arabs,<sup>191</sup> but only the poor, and the unkempt, with their black hair and deep black eyes.<sup>192</sup> The stagnant, primitive Arab existence, their homes, their villages, their place in the natural landscape, are contrasted with the Zionist passion to develop and build.<sup>193</sup> In one essay, the hill that was once Mustafa's (a random Arab figure), with his donkey and his rock, are replaced with new buildings built by Jews.<sup>194</sup> While hiking and looking for Jewish historical sites, a popular topic in student essays, the Arab village appears as a breach of the historical landscape.<sup>195</sup>

During the Arab Revolt, 'all the sights, events, arguments, conflicts and especially the bloodshed gushed into the classroom', recalled Dov Ben Meir,

<sup>187</sup> Ruth Karpf, 'Nuremberg and Jerusalem', *The School Magazine*, 1936, 28–9.

<sup>188</sup> Schor, *The Best School*, 189. <sup>189</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1935, 16–17.

<sup>190</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1937, 19–20.

<sup>191</sup> When mentioned, they are depicted as enemies of their nation, *Niv*, 8 February 1936.

<sup>192</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1936, 17–18, 25–6; *Benenu*, July 1937, 9–10; *Ha-Talmid*, February–March 1932, 4–5.

<sup>193</sup> *Kol-bo*, October 1934, 3–4; *Haverenu*, November 1935, 3–4.

<sup>194</sup> *Ha-Talmid*, January 1933, 7.

<sup>195</sup> *Benenu*, March 1936, 6 June 1936, 7–8, March 1941, 13–14.

a student in a Mizrahi elementary school in Tel Aviv.<sup>196</sup> Students wrote about their fear and about incidents of violence targeting innocent Jews for no reason.<sup>197</sup> There is no mention of the Revolt or a political organization of any sort. Only 'the miserable Arabs' (*ha-'Aravim ha-'aluvim*), robbers and murderers who carry out chaotic attacks, are mentioned.<sup>198</sup> The answer to the attacks was courage and mobilization to protect and pursue the Zionist project, '...that is the only thing for us Jews to do. We must continue to build our country'. In some cases, the suggested response is plain revenge.<sup>199</sup>

A Realist student interpreted the Arab national movement after reading a T. E. Lawrence book. The student stressed Lawrence's dismay at the Arabs, 'a people of very low quality', and argued that the Revolt was in no way an Arab national initiative. Nevertheless, he wrote, there is an 'Arab danger' since they were able to unite, and he concludes by asking whether the Jews will be able to survive this threat while they are threatened with assimilation and only have Zion.<sup>200</sup>

The Arab was thus depicted as a romantic symbol of the oriental, a challenge that needed to be removed to modernize the country, or as a direct threat to Zionism through violent attacks. This portrayal of the Arabs reflects the educational policy of the schools and the narrative on the Arabs in the curriculum.

## Making History

History was a popular topic in the Hebrew school journals, and as was the case in the Arab journals, attention was paid to Jewish and non-Jewish history. Ancient Jewish history was often mentioned in relation to the religious holidays, and the history of sites was described in field trip reports.

The difference between the Arab and Hebrew journals corresponds to the difference in the syllabus, where modern Arab history was nonexistent and Zionist history was given ample room. Students published articles on the lives of past and present Zionist leaders. The popularity of these historical essays highlights the extensive attention to Zionist history in the curriculum.

<sup>196</sup> Ben Meir, *Metsahtsehim shinayim la-parot*, 154.

<sup>197</sup> Chazan found similar themes in the published children's newspapers, 'Nof yaldut'.

<sup>198</sup> *Maba*, 12 February 1937, 5–6; *The School Magazine*, 1938, 13–14, 20–1, and 1939, 12–13, 16–18; *Benenu*, July 1937, 2–3 and June 1936; *Shtilim*, January 1939, 4.

<sup>199</sup> Sarah Loberbaum, 'Courage', *The School Magazine*, 1939, 24–7; *Beneu*, March 1938, 1–2; *Shtilim*, April–May 1939, 15–16; *Maba*, 14 March 1937, 3.

<sup>200</sup> *Ha-Talmid*, November–December 1931, 1–3.

Writing about contemporary leaders created a personal, relevant connection between students and their living national history, as was the case in *al-Ghad*.<sup>201</sup> This historical connection between the ancient national past and the present national existence was clear in the Hebrew school journals. Arab students, who were not taught contemporary national history, could only find sources of national inspiration in the distant golden ages, and the only contemporary history they learned was Western. This imbalance in history instruction amplified the dichotomies between East and West and left the students with a foreign source of inspiration but without a local, familiar one.

## Conclusion

This comparison between the different experiences of Hebrew and Arab students highlights a shared instrumentalization of historical knowledge. For the students who wrote about history, as much as acting as an articulation of their identity, history enabled an engagement with their present. An attentive reading of the students' creative fusion of Western and Eastern motifs and their interpretation of historical-cultural themes, tinted with outspoken collectivist emotional zeal, helps define this generation's voice. Colonialism was their only existential experience (that was amplified in secondary education), and its structures of meaning and expression suffused their worldview. In particular during the identity formation typical of adolescence, their constant search for reassurance through cultural or national authenticity was their way to differentiate and designate themselves within the colonial reality and make sense of their role in it. However, rather than finding expressions of dissent or some kind of resistance or alternative to what they were taught inside or outside their classrooms, the evidence reflects a reproduction of values and content. This reproduction also alludes to the success of conscious or unconscious self- or institutional censorship of any textual trespass into unwanted realms. Within the clear limits set by the school, government, or mission, Arab students' views were principally an expression of what they learned for the demanding history matriculation exam: an inviolable historical narrative within a highly selective elitist education, orchestrated by Arab or non-Arab 'Etonians'.

<sup>201</sup> *The School Magazine*, 1936, 6–9; *Benenu*, March 1936, 2–3, July 1937, October–November 1936, September–October 1944; *Shtilim*, April–May 1939, 9–10; *Ha-Talmid*, November–December 1931, 5–7.



# Epilogue

While working on this book at a library in Tel Aviv University, a librarian asked me to sum up my research in one sentence and remarked that knowing how to do it was essential to all researchers. Giving her a definite answer was a challenging task then and it remains so now while summing up this book. Initially, it is a book about the Mandate period, but while writing the history of education, the late Ottoman period appears not only as background but as the essential foundations of the postwar reality. This was not confined to the educators that filled the ranks of Arab and Hebrew educational administration during the Mandate. The institutionalization of educational segregation and inability or reluctance to challenge it started before the first British soldier set foot in Palestine. This is a book about the British colonial project in Palestine and its grave repercussions in the field of education for its native population. The colonial Department advocated a policy of educational restraint, articulated in a history syllabus that sought to cleanse history itself from collective lessons, national ethos, and political agency. But the colonial angle tells only a partial story because this policy was met with a growing community of Palestinian educators and students who (naturally) found in the past a space in which they could ask questions about the present, and events or people that served as inspiration and possible models for the future.

This community and its textual products are at the centre of this book, but their history was essentially different without their encounter with Zionism. Trying to fit this encounter into a coherent analysis that also includes the particularities of each community is the greatest challenge in constructing *Educating Palestine*. It is rooted in the conflictual nature of this settlers–natives encounter and its subsequent historical narrative of dispossession, victimhood, and righteousness.

The challenge of writing one history of the two communities, also derives from the profound differences between the two. Zionists wrote extensively about Palestinians, studied their history and spied on them, and it was relatively easy to trace this documentation. The lack of symmetry here is noticeable while attempting to survey the Palestinian and Zionist views and



ending up writing much more, based on the Hebrew sources. This is perhaps the greatest deficiency of any study that seeks to examine an encounter between an overwhelmingly illiterate society and a hyper-literate community through the texts they produced. Moreover, Hebrew education was autonomous and practically independent and thus could be analysed at its face value in Israel's state archives and National Library. Conversely, Palestinian voices are often heard within the colonial or missionary contexts and require a complex analysis that takes these structural limitations into account. Palestinian statelessness, exile, and life under continuous oppression prevented the establishment of (or destroyed existing) central archives and open access libraries. Making it even harder to distil a coherent story, even more so while juxtaposing it with the Zionist narrative.

These challenges, limitations, and lack of symmetry characterized the encounter between Arabs and Jews in Palestine since the late nineteenth century and consequently wrote themselves into its study. The ongoing Nakba of the Palestinian people and perpetual waves of Israeli–Palestinian violence is the rocket fuel and heavy burden of this scholarship.

In his critical essay 'The French Revolution is over', the eminent French historian François Furet pointed to the inherent political bias in the historiography of the French Revolution, which is expressed as a contemporary partisan rivalry where the historian 'must produce more than proof of competence. He must show his [political] colours... the writing is taken as his opinion... Once he has given the password, his history has a specific meaning, a determined place and a claim to legitimacy.' This bias in French historiography, according to Furet, derived from the metaphysical attributions ascribed to the year 1789 as a historical watershed, 'the key to what lies upstream and downstream'. Once it has no definitive end, the Revolution becomes 'boundlessly elastic', not only serving as an explanation of contemporary history, but becoming contemporary history.<sup>1</sup> Furet's call to end the French Revolution did not intend to stop people from studying it, but rather to stop turning it into a living reality, a far too obvious historiographic manipulation of the past that prevents a closer analysis of the truth.

Indeed, when a historiographic war is fought in the trenches, it is futile, and its central victim is history itself. Perhaps, however, since the only history worth studying is the one that redefines our present and challenges our views of the future, calling for its end would cut off its vitality and its relevance. Moreover, there is perhaps no (need for) extrication from a

<sup>1</sup> François Furet, *Interpreting*, 1–3.

politicized historiography, or any such possibility, since we can never know what the defining moments are without studying many moments and making a human, political decision and choice about their significance. Thus by partially adhering to Furet, I suggest studying history as a human dialogue and exploring it within an open, attentive historiographic debate.

This argument has three prongs. The first is general and conceptual; the second is contextual and particular; and the third has to do with the modification of the particular in light of the general. First, a constant need for a new narrative of the past is a component of dynamic societies that engage with their past in order to understand or redefine themselves in periods of transition. Within the colonial discourse, this new story was written and taught and was the outcome of debates between local educators, students, and the British Empire. Second, this new narrative was also the product of the intercommunal dialogue of fear and suspicion orchestrated by a disastrous British policy of nonintervention that furthered animosity and tension on the ground. The third point relates to the history of the conflict. For obvious reasons, historiography focusing on 1948 or the Mandate period resembles the French revolutionary historiography criticized by Furet in its politicised orientation, in that it provokes political questions and creates a divide between two historiographic camps. This book, rather than suggesting an 'end' to the Mandate period or the study of its education, attempts to pave the way to new scholarly 'beginnings' that are conscious of their necessarily politicized ramifications, but at the same time are willing to take an active part in a dialogue on the (re)construction of the past.



# Appendix

**Table: School Journals**

School	Journal
Dar al-Mu'almin, al-Kuliyya al-'Arabiyya	<i>Majallat Dar al-Mu'almin, al-Kuliyya al-'Arabiyya</i>
Rawdat al-Ma'arif	<i>Majallat Rawdat al-Ma'arif</i>
St George's School	<i>St. George's Review</i>
Bishop Gobat School	<i>Bakurat Jabl Sihyun, The Bishop Gobat School News,</i>
Terra Santa College (Jerusalem)	<i>The Review of the Terra Santa College</i>
Bir-Zeit College	<i>Sawt ul-Kulliyah</i>
St Luke's	<i>St. Luke's School Gazette</i>
Independent	<i>Al-Ghad</i>
Evelina de Rothschild, Girl's School	<i>The School Magazine</i>
Bet ha-sefer ha-tikhon bet-ha-kerem, Jerusalem	<i>Benenu</i>
The Hebrew Gymnasium, Jerusalem	<i>Shtilim</i>
Real School, Haifa	<i>Ha-Talmid, ma hu omer?</i>
Nordia Gymnasium, Tel Aviv	<i>Niv, Maba'</i>
Bet ha-sefer ha-tikhoni le-mishar, Tel Aviv	<i>Kol-bo, Haverenu</i>



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*Filastin*  
*Mirat al-Sharq*

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*Doar Hayom*  
*Ha'aretz*  
*Ha-Magid*  
*Ha-Mashkif*  
*Ha-Melitz*  
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*Ma'ariv*

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