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ABSTRACT

Unlike many Third World nation minorities living in Western societies, the Palestinians in Israel did not immigrate to the new system; rather, the system was imposed on them by the Israeli Jewish government. This paper argues that the Israeli government uses its hegemony over the educational system for its Palestinian citizens to manipulate and shape their collective identity according to its political interests. According to the paper, the Palestinians are resisting this process, and the consequential unresolved conflict indicates signs of failure of the school as a cultural socialization institution. The paper briefly introduces the process by which the Palestinians in Israel became a national minority and examines the structure of their collective national identity. It discusses aspects of the Palestinian educational system and the way education influences the development of a national and collective identity. The state of Palestinian education is assessed, and the politicization of its goals and curriculum is discussed. Special attention is devoted to informal education as it relates to the process of national identity building. The paper concludes by examining higher education among the Palestinians in Israel and compares it to that of the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians on the West Bank. (Contains a 28-item bibliography.) (BT)

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**EDUCATION AND IDENTITY CONTROL AMONG  
THE PALESTINIANS IN ISRAEL**

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## Introduction

*Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahlal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Gvat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Huneifis; and Kefar Yehushua in the place of Tal al-Shummam. There is no one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population.*

*Moshe Dayan, Address to the Technion  
(Israel Institute of Technology), Haifa  
(quoted in Haaretz, 4 April 1969)*

When Western commentators discuss the Israeli political system, they constantly single it out as the exception in a region otherwise lacking in democratic and representative regimes. They argue that Israel is the "only democracy in the Middle East," overlooking the fact that the real test of democracy depends, among other variables, on the way a political system treats its minorities and guarantees them civil, political and national rights. This peculiar situation becomes evident when we examine the way Israel treats the Palestinians in its midst.

Israel has to deal with three conflicting principles that determine its policy towards its Palestinian citizens. These principles are the fact that Israel was established as a Jewish state, that it defines itself as a Western democracy, and that it has extraordinary security concerns stemming from its conflict with the Palestinian people (Rouhana, 1989). It is a hypocrisy for Israel to claim itself as a Jewish state and a democracy at the same time. Rouhana (1989), argues that "a state that is defined as belonging to only one people, when its population is composed of two, cannot offer equal opportunities to all its citizens" (p. 40). Furthermore, the Jewish-Zionist nature of the state of Israel exposes its Palestinian citizens to an ongoing conflict between the civic and national aspects of their collective identity. The recognition of their national identity as Palestinians means for Israel viewing itself as a bi-national rather than a Jewish state, a dilemma which the state of Israel has ignored for so long. In fact, the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state in Palestine was based on the Zionist denial of the Palestinians' existence as a nation with legitimate claim for self determination in the same land.

Unlike many Third World minorities living in Western societies, the Palestinians in Israel did not immigrate to the new system; rather, the system was imposed on them. This distinction, according to Rouhana & Ghanem (1993), is important for three main reasons: First, immigrants who left their homelands and moved to a new country believed in the values of the new system and hoped to be governed by them. Second, while immigrants left their communities behind and assimilated into the new society, the Palestinians in Israel remained together as a community. Third, the state of Israel was established to serve the goals of another national group - the Jewish people - which were served on the expense of the national goals of the indigenous Palestinians.

The argument of this paper is that the Israeli government uses its hegemony over the educational system for its Palestinian citizens in order to manipulate and shape their collective identity according to its political interests. The Palestinians are resisting this process, and the consequential unresolved conflict indicates signs of failure of the school as a cultural socialization institution. This paper will briefly introduce the process by which the Palestinians in Israel became a national minority and examine the structure of their collective national identity. Several aspects of the Palestinian educational system, and the way by which education influences the development of their national and collective identity will be discussed. The state of Palestinian education will be assessed and the politicization of its goals and curriculum will be discussed. Furthermore, special attention will be devoted to the informal education as it relates to the process of national identity building. And finally, higher education among the Palestinians in Israel will be examined and compared to that of the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians on the West Bank.

## Becoming a Minority

Arab-Palestinian society during the British Mandate over Palestine (1917-1948) was composed of three classes. The majority of the population was found in the lower class, including rural landless peasants and an urban proletariat. The middle class included different groups whose occupations required some level of formal education. They included shopkeepers, teachers, minor government clerks, artisans, and liberal professionals. The upper class consisted of big landowners, business people, the wealthy, and the social and religious notables of a countrywide level (Nashif, 1979). The size of the clan and its economic power, mainly land ownership, was a very important aspect of the social and political structure of the Palestinian society. Large and influential clans were found in the upper class and hence maximized their political power. In an earlier article, Nashif (1977) argues that political leadership among the Palestinian society "was largely concentrated at the upper tip of the socio-economic pyramid composed of a small group of heads of old and influential clans, other members of the land owning aristocracy, wealthy merchants and traders and some professionals" (p. 114).

In 1948, the state of Israel was established as a result of a war leading to a mass exodus of more than two thirds of the Palestinian indigenous population. All of the Palestinian leadership and intellectual elite was expelled, leaving 160,000 leaderless people under the control of the newly established state.

Mari (1978) describes the dramatic change in the status of the Palestinians in Israel in 1948. He candidly writes that

The Arabs who remained within the boundaries of the newly created state of Israel can best be characterized as emotionally wounded, socially rural, politically lost, economically poverty-stricken and nationally hurt. They suddenly became a minority ruled by a powerful, sophisticated majority against whom they fought to retain their country and land. It was an agonizing experience, for every family which remained had immediate relatives on the other side of the border. [The] Arabs in Israel were left without political leadership and an educated elite (p. 18).

Almost overnight, they were transformed from a majority in their own country to a minority who was forced to live, work and study in an alien system (Minns & Hijab, 1990). Under such circumstances, existence and survival had become the main concern for the Palestinians in Israel. Traditional as it was, the Palestinian leadership before 1948 at least gave some form of direction and hope to the society. Now that this leadership was gone, the Palestinians in Israel were totally disoriented. The Palestinian society following the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, was not only lacking any kind of national leadership, but the potential to develop to develop this leadership was not even there (Ashkenasi, 1992). The challenge for this hopeless minority was extremely difficult.

The day after its declaration of establishment, Israel imposed a Military Government on the territories populated by Palestinians. Under this form of internal colonialism, the Palestinians were restricted in their movement to certain areas and often to their home villages (Rosenfeld & Al-Haj, 1989). The Military Government was terminated only in 1966, after 18 years of tight control during which, the majority of the Palestinian's land was confiscated using different types of "self made" Israeli laws and regulations. Palestinians were transformed into a proletariat class "working mainly in low-skill jobs, living in overgrown villages with limited economic activity of their own" (Graham-Brown, 1984 p. 38). Consequently, the community was unable to produce the needed social and institutional formations to respond to its developmental needs until the mid-seventies.

During the first decade of Israel's establishment there was no sign of any political organization and leadership which would represent and advocate the interests of the Palestinians under its control. The political awakening among the Palestinians in Israel stems from local developments in Israel as well as in reaction to the evolution of the Palestinian struggle in exile. The first major change on the local level was the rapid numerical growth of the Palestinian community inside Israel. Since the establishment of

Israel, the Palestinian population has more than quadrupled, and now it numbers over 800,000. Based on this rapid growth, Touma (1985) concludes that "the Palestinian Arabs are no longer the demoralized, alienated, broken branches of the Arab national minority of 1948, but a strong, compact people, militant in their struggle on both internal and foreign issues, and proud of their national identity" (p. 76).

Another local change was the economic control of the Palestinian sector and its dependency on the Jewish majority, which is inherent in the general Israeli expletive policy towards them. Although in its policy, Israel intended to keep the Palestinian population economically and politically under control, too much pressure and oppression led exactly to the opposite results. In pointing out this development, Rouhana (1989), argues that "the massive expropriation of Arab land inadvertently created a background against which deep changes occurred in the socio-economic structure and social values of the Arab community" (p. 44).

One of the main characteristics of the political behavior of the Palestinians in Israel is that they became a natural extension of ideological and political developments among Palestinian in exile and in the occupied territories (Rouhana, 1989). In fact, the PLO with its different factions has become a reference point to any form of political organization among the Palestinians both in the occupied territories and inside Israel itself. Ironically, while the demoralized national minority of 1948 had gone a long way in its political development, its educational system is lagging behind and still playing a negative role in this political development.

### Collective Identity

Most social scientists who studied this community were limited in their research questions, not only by the scope of their discipline, but also by their political and ideological perceptions regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Probably the most controversial aspect of studying the Palestinian national minority in Israel is the issue of its collective-national identity. An examination of the different names given to the Palestinians in Israel by different scholars reveals a strong correlation between the political ideology of these scholars and their social scientific research. Israeli Arabs, Arabs in Israel, Israeli Palestinians, Arabs of the inside and Arabs of 1948, are labels given to the same group - Palestinian Arabs who live inside the state of Israel. Not all names are used by all parties to the conflict. Politicians and social scientists alike, relate to the identity of this group according to their ideological and political points of view. In the Israeli official statements the term "non-Jews" is used very often in referring to these Palestinians ; as if they were culturally and nationally colorless.

Most of the researchers, according to the Rouhana (1985), agree on four basic elements regarding the collective identity of the Palestinians in Israel: 1) Few individuals will chose the term "Israeli" or "Israeli Arab" to describe themselves. 2) There is an increased tendency among Palestinians to chose the term "Palestinian" since the mid 1970s. 3) National identity is the most important component of the collective identity structure. 4) The terms "Palestinian" and "Israeli" are negatively correlated in their use.

Two major models have been applied to the study of the collective identity of the Palestinians in Israel. First, the conflict model assumes that the Palestinian and Israeli sub-identities must be in conflict. Rouhana (1985), rejects this model and argues that the state of Israel, being a Jewish state does not offer the Palestinians in its midst a true choice to adopt an Israeli identity. He distinguishes between instrumental and sentimental aspects of the collective identity. Since Israel can offer only instrumental identification for the Palestinians, there is no bases for the conflict between this identification and their sentimental identification with the Palestinian people at large. Second, the accommodation model assumes that Palestinization and Israelization are not mutually exclusive and can develop among the Palestinian population at the same time. The Israelization component, is mistakenly applied to the Palestinians' struggle for equality

within the Israeli system - the only government which is legally responsible for them. This political struggle for equal rights within the Israeli system should not be mistaken for acceptance of the Israeli identity. The political developments and identity composition among the Palestinians in Israel are largely influenced by the Palestinian Israeli conflict as a whole. Their political stands and perceptions of their identity correspond to the larger developments among the Palestinian people and their leadership.

While most of the research focused on the content and structure of the Palestinian identity, the process by which this identity is developed, constructed or manipulated seems to receive less attention. Collective identity development on the individual level as the basic unit of analysis is beyond the scope of this paper. The focus here is on the educational system as our unit of analysis and the process by which it manipulates the transmission of the "politically defined" content of collective identity to Palestinian students.

### **Palestinian Education in Israel**

Review of the literature reveals two contradictory expectations from the system of education as it attends to the needs of society. The functionalist approach maintains that one of the main roles of education is to pass on tradition and cultural values to the younger generation. It is argued that education has been involved in perpetuating existing structures and distributions of power and privilege in society. As such, the educational institution enforces tradition rather than promotes change (Mari, 1978). Contrary to this, there appears to be a strong relationship between education and social change. It is apparent that generally education, on the other hand, has been considered the main channel of upward social mobility and cultural change leading to modernization (Nakhleh, 1979). Here, education is viewed from a conflict perspective which asserts that the dominant group relies on the formal educational system for purposes of control and domination of the minority. The conflict approach provides a better insight into the situation of that of the Palestinian national minority in Israel, where a discrepancy between the national goals of the majority and the minority prevails.

Arab education in Palestine has never been independent. It has always been subject to political control and manipulation of external rulers. During the mandate period, and more so during the Turkish rule, it was controlled by authorities that represented different cultures and nationalities. The situation involving Palestinian education in Israel is even more polarized. In the current conflict situation, Palestinian education cannot be anything but political. While the Palestinians try to use their educational process in order to preserve their collective identity and instill national pride in their youth, the Israeli authorities retain antithetical goals. By maintaining control over education, the government seeks to inflict further control and domination over the Palestinian population and its national development. The importance of the educational system in shaping the Palestinian consciousness cannot be ignored. Hence, the Israeli authorities insist on maintaining tight control over its content (Graham-Brown, 1984).

While Israel declares itself as an egalitarian society, its concealed policy towards the education of its Palestinian population is characterized by systematic discrimination, oppression and cultural impoverishment. This policy has been vigorously formulated by Mr. Uri Lubrani, former Advisor to the Prime Minister for Arab Affairs. Here is what Mr. Lubrani has to say regarding Palestinian education:

If there were no pupils the situation would be better and more stable. If the Arabs remained hewers of wood it might be easier for us to control them. But there are certain things that are beyond our control. This is unavoidable. All we can do is to place our advice on record and suggest how the problems are to be dealt with (Haaretz, 4.4.1961; Abed Elrazik, Amin & Davis, 1977 p. 96).

Lubrani's recommendations and his consequential government's discriminatory policies are reflected in the disadvantaged situation of all levels of the Palestinian

educational system . Al-Haj (1987), describes the condition of the Palestinian education in this way :

Lack of construction is the most painful problem. The average number of students per class in the Arab sector is 31.2, compared to 26.3 in the Jewish sector. Psychological services are extremely primitive. Only 20 per cent of Arab high school students are in vocational courses of study as opposed to 60 per cent on the Jewish sector (p. 14).

Neglect of Palestinian education is a well known practice of the Israeli Ministry of Education. When there is any attempt to improve the situation it is always past- rather than future oriented (Mari, 1985). In this manner, the system responds to a severe situation caused by accumulated negligence rather than develop a strategic plan to improve the many deficiencies of the Palestinian educational system.

This backwardness of the Palestinian education in Israel can be understood only in light of the magnificent educational achievements of the rest of the Palestinian people on the West Bank and in exile. A general assessment of the latter's educational accomplishment is essential in order to understand the acute enigma of the disadvantaged level of Palestinian education in Israel. Being subjected to a series of political, economic, and social crisis stemming from their uprooting and dispersion, the Palestinian people placed much emphasis on the value of education. If for whatever reason they were forced to move again, education would be the only thing they can easily carry with them to their new-destination. For the majority, education has been a means of survival, for only through their educational training and skills were they able to obtain jobs in their host countries. In his description of the Palestinians' achievement in education, Anabtawi (1986), writes that:

Whatever adversary, passions or judgment the subject of the Palestinians may provoke, there seems to be a near universal consensus that their achievement in the area of education has been nothing short of impressive. Indeed, it is perhaps the only tangible Palestinian accomplishment on which friend and foe alike would agree is worthy of recognition and acclaim. (p. 5).

It is evident that the Palestinians' aspiration for education is consequential to their situation as a people who were deprived from their natural right for independence and self determination. This situation according to Mari (1979), includes

The lack of statehood in terms of a political entity, the deep social structure transformation, the lack of dependence of the educated on internal economic structures, the trauma of repeated physical mobility (dispersion), and the somehow discriminatory policies practiced against the Palestinians in their host-affiliate Arab countries (p. 441).

Palestinians in Israel were subject to all of these experiences, and their longing for education is no different than the rest of their brethren, but their low achievement in this area sets them apart from the rest of their people. One can only attribute this huge difference to their direct control by the Israeli political system.

Time and again, Israel compliments itself for the relatively high level of educational achievement among the Palestinians in its midst. This is true when they are compared to people in some of the neighboring Arab states or to their own situation in Palestine before 1948. But this comparison is essentially invalid and lacks merit. Instead, two more pertinent comparisons regarding the educational achievements of this groups need to be conducted. Firstly, we should compare the educational achievements of the Palestinians in Israel to that of the Israeli Jewish population, for it is the Jewish population in Israel who, in terms of occupational and educational attainment, are considered to be a reference point for them. Secondly, if we carry out the comparison cross-nationally, it should be between the Palestinians inside Israel and those Palestinians outside it (Zureik, 1979). Both, Israel's Jewish population and the Palestinians in Diaspora are educationally better off than the Palestinians in Israel.

### **Politicization of the Palestinian Education**

Heterogeneous societies rely intensely on their educational systems in order to

bridge the ethnic differences and integrate the various groups into one "nation". This is true when both the majority and minority groups can identify with the national and ideological goals of the state. In the case of discrepancy between the national goals of the minority and majority groups, education becomes a source of conflict rather than a nation-building institution. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians in its midst adhere to full integration of the Palestinian community into the state's national goals. Israel, as a "Jewish state" cannot offer the Palestinians a full and genuine partnership. Due to the pervasive nature of the state's Zionist ideology, the Palestinians within it cannot be fully Israelis. In this state of affairs, the government carefully manipulates and controls their educational system and its goals with the aim to create a quiescent and politically impotent national minority.

In describing the conflict over the Palestinian education in Israel, Nakhleh (1979), argues that "like any other system of values, the educational system is a highly manipulatable tool which can be used by those in control to instill the desirable goals" (p. 10). This situation is potentially conflictive. As Nakhleh further maintains, the "dominated minorities also tend to manipulate the educational system for their own goals. But to have control over it, that is to have it guided by the consciousness of the dominated minority, demands revolutionary action" (p. 11). Marie (1987), identifies a "deep conflict of interests between the state educational system and the cultural, economic, and national needs of the Arab minority as these needs are met by education" (p. 35). The interests of the two groups in the field of education are incompatible with each other. Moreover, the relationship is between one powerful and another powerless group, with the state of Israel having the upper hand. Under these circumstances, Graham-Brown (1984), asserts that: "In so asymmetrical power structure it was evident that the priorities of the Zionist state would determine how Palestinians should be educated" (p. 41). This asymmetry is based on the fact that all educational institutions in Israel, from pre-school to university, are run by the government.

In the early years of the state's existence, Israeli curriculum planners for the Palestinian schools had to deal with a critical dilemma regarding the goals of Palestinian education. As quoted in Peres, Erlich & Yuval-Davis (1970), Mr. Y. L. Benor, one of the planners, posed a critical question in this regard: "How can we encourage loyalty to Israel among Israeli Arabs without demanding a negation of Arab yearning on the one hand, and without permitting the development of hostile Arab nationalism on the other?" (p. 148). Based on this dilemma is the logical question, "to what extent does it help the young Israeli of Arab origin to see his path clearly and mold his own identity in a way which maintains a reasonable balance in his Arab nationalism and loyalty to the state in which he lives?" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 30). This particular aspect of the Palestinian education resembles the essence of their political status in the state of Israel, especially the status of their collective national identity. In a critical assessment of these educational goals, Nakhleh (1977), argues that "however ambiguous these criteria are, explicitly they are very political in nature. 'Arab nationalism,' 'identity,' etc. were to be defined by Jewish Israeli planners, whose existence was in negation to these concepts!" (p. 30). Because of the conflictive nature of Palestinian education in Israel and the difficulty to define educational goals that will satisfy both the Palestinian community and the state, official policy in this regard seems to have been to suspend making decisions (Landau, 1993). This "non-policy" situation, lead the then inspector of Palestinian education to claim that "the [Palestinian education] system has worked for 25 years without any defined goals" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 10).

Failing to declare formal goals for the Palestinian education did not prevent the Israeli system from striving to empty it from its cultural and national content. According to Mari, the de facto goals of Palestinian education in Israel set by the government are threefold: "to instill feelings of self-disparagement and inferiority in Arab youth; to denationalize them, and particularly to de-Palestinize them, and to teach them to glorify the history, culture, and achievements of the Jewish majority" (1987 p. 37). Given the choice,



the Palestinians would assign the exact opposite goals for their educational system. They would expect the system to

Preserve and reinforce Arab national identity - particularly their Palestinian identity - and to instill pride in their own culture, heritage, and nationality; and if were up to them, the education of their youth would engage in condemning Zionism, rather than praising and glorifying it (Mari, 1987 p. 37).

Demands for improvement in the educational system, and modification of its goals, are repeatedly expressed by the Palestinian leadership organizations. However, these demands had never exceeded the mere political protest within the Israeli political system and its rules of the game.

In *the resolution of conflict*, Deutsch (1973), depicts inter-class and inter-race conflict as forms of inter-group conflict. He argues that this type of conflict takes place between the "haves" and the "have-nots". Most pertinent, to the case under discussion is his analysis of the reasons "why class conflict did not develop into the intensely competitive process predicted by Marx's theory?" (p. 95). Similarly, the conflict between the Israeli system and the Palestinian population over education has never developed into direct confrontation and competition. As Deutsch predicts, the group in power prevents the conflict from intense competition by employing a variety of defense mechanisms. Two of these defense mechanisms are useful to the understanding of Palestinian education in Israel. First, there is *tokenism*, which attempts to appease the frustrated group by providing it with token benefits and gains. It is true that Palestinian education has improved under the Israeli system in comparison to its situation before 1948, but the Palestinians are comparing their situation to that of the Israeli Jews, citizens of the same state. Second, there is *sublimation*, which is the attempt to find a substitute solution. In this manner, the Israeli system provides more facilities for the Palestinian schools rather than giving them what they demand- control over their educational system and its goals. True changes in the goals of Palestinian education in a way that restores to them their national identity, are not feasible under the current state of affairs.

Nakhleh (1980), argues that the Palestinians in Israel need to create what he calls "Liberation-Prone Mentality, [a] consciousness that is created over time, and manifested in daily behavior" (p. 9). This is a call for a cultural revolution in which the conservative aspects of the Palestinian society must be changed from within in order to repel the Zionist oppression and exploitation. In order to create this type of mentality, Nakhleh (1980), further illuminates the essential role of the educational system in such a process: "we simply need to have full control over our educational processes, from pre-school nurseries to the university. Our educational goals cannot be attained by restricting our demands to an addition of classroom here and a laboratory there" (p.13).

A critical and comparative study of the Palestinian and Jewish curricula in Israel was conducted by a group of Israeli researchers (Peres, Ehrlich & Yuval-Davis, 1970). They compared the stated educational goals of both groups in four different subject matters: history, literature and language, religious studies, and civic studies. These subjects were selected because they relate to the field of "instilling values". Also the researchers justify their selection of secondary school for a comparative study because it is in this level that "education makes it possible to deal with social, historical, and political problems in a mature and complete way" (p. 149). The results of the study are astonishing. They clearly support the repeated argument that the Israeli educational policy for the Palestinians aims at nothing less than their de-Palestinization and denationalization. To illustrate this situation, it is sufficient to present the researchers' conclusions and evaluations of the differences in teaching history in both school systems. They write:

The Arab curriculum lays special stress on the contribution of both peoples, Jewish and Arab, to the development of world culture, whereas the Jewish curriculum emphasizes only the part played by the Jewish people, the contribution of the Arabs being included among that of 'the nations of the world.' [Secondly], the Arab pupil is thus expected to serve the State not because the latter

is important to him and fulfills his needs, but because it is important to the Jewish people with whom the Arab nation is 'linked by a common destiny.' [And finally], whereas the Arabs are required to take an example from the great men of Israel, the great figures of the Arab world are not deemed worthy of special attention in the Jewish curriculum, but lumped together with the world's great men (Peres, Ehrlich & Yuval-Davis, 1970 p. 150-153).

The same stated goals for teaching history in Arab and Jewish schools in Israel were summarized by Al-Haj (1995) more than twenty five years later, which indicates the consistency in Israel's approach to Palestinian education. The peculiar differences between the two groups speak for themselves.

#### History in Jewish schools

1. To regard the culture of mankind as the result of the combined efforts of the Jewish people and the nations of the world;
  - a) to evaluate our share in creating it
  - b) to strengthen the recognition of human cooperation.
  - c) to develop aspiration for peace and good will.
2. To implant a Jewish national consciousness, and strengthen the feeling of a common Jewish destiny;
  - a) to sow in their (the students') hearts a love of the Jewish people - throughout the world.
  - b) to strengthen their spiritual lives with the nation as a whole.
3. To instill the importance of the State of Israel as the means of ensuring the biological and historical existence of the Jewish people ;
  - a) to develop personal responsibility for the development of the State.
  - b) to import the readiness to serve the State in all ways.
4. To mold the character of the pupils after the deeds of the great men of our people and of the peoples of the world.
5. To train and accustom him to deliberate and come to conclusions when dealing with problems of society, and to try to solve them through independent critical thought.

#### History in Arab schools

1. To regard the culture of mankind as the result of the combined effort of the nations of the world;
  - a) to evaluate the part played by the Jewish and Arab nations and by other nations in creating it.
  - b) same
  - c) same
2. No parallel paragraph
3. To instill the importance of the State of Israel for the Jewish people throughout the ages, and to implant a feeling of the common fate of the two peoples.
  - a) same
  - b) same
4. To mold the character of pupils after the deeds of the great men of the world, and in particular the Jews and Arabs.
5. Same

Source: Al-Haj (1995, pp. 129-130).

The late Palestinian educational psychologists Sami Mari, was teaching arithmetic in elementary school in the 1960s. He recalls from his own teaching experience that "even the field of arithmetic, which is supposed to be neutral, was contaminated by the policy of imposing the feeling of Arab inferiority vis-a-vis Jewish superiority on Arab

youth" (Mari, 1984 p. 8). Mari points out that in a textbook that was written by Jewish authors and translated into Arabic for use in Palestinian schools,

An arithmetic problem was exposed to the effect that a small number of Israeli tanks had wiped out many of a large number of Syrian ones. The pupils are to find how many Israel lost in relation to the larger losses of the Syrians (p. 9).

What such a curriculum does to the Palestinian teacher is not less than frustration and bitterness. The students, however, being supposed to absorb and identify with such a content become antagonistic to the school, the teachers and the subject matter. Consequently, their motivation to study and their overall achievement drop.

### Nonformal Education and the National Identity

The Israeli formal educational system for the Palestinians not only neglects their national identity and its development, but actively seeks their cultural invalidation and national humiliation. The denial of Palestinian nationalist content by the formal educational system does not, of course, eliminate it from the student aspirations. Since the government has the upper hand regarding the definition of the formal educational goals, the Palestinians turned to an informal educational setting for that matter. As outlined by Mari (1987),

In community and cultural centers, clubs, and other ad hoc activities - as well as consistent effort by political groups and parties - the relevant content of identity, nationality and culture have been transmitted to a younger generation hungry for such knowledge (p. 38).

Palestinian indigenous organizations involved in informal education are neither established by the government nor acquire its blessing and recognition. According to Nakhleh (1991), "these organizations emerged in order to fill the huge gap in the services offered in the social, educational, health and economic spheres, thus becoming a means of liberation and struggle against a strategy of deprivation and oppression" (p. 4). As of July 1991, there were 228 such Palestinian organizations in Israel. Of these, 92 per cent were established within the last fifteen years (Nakhleh, 1991). This indicates the growing political and national awareness of the Palestinian community in Israel, a process that has had a strong momentum over the past two decades.

The contest over the content of Palestinian education is not limited to the formal school setting, where the Israeli authorities retain full control. Informal education has become another ideological "battleground" for that matter. Palestinian organizations are systematically harassed by the government and their educational work is subject to a tight censorship. In Um al-Faham, an organization called *Al-Hadaf* (The Target), established the biggest public library in the Palestinian sector. As the organization's newsletter reports, it has not been an easy process for them. The newsletter accounts that,

Two representatives of *Al-Hadaf* traveled to Egypt to buy books for the library from the Cairo book fair. The books finally arrived in Lydda airport three weeks ago. Then the Israeli censors wanted to take a look at what we bought. They also like to read. In fact, the Israeli censors liked our book selection so much they took 51 of them. We noticed that the censors had quite specific reading interests. For instance, they seemed very interested in books on Palestinian history and politics (*Al-Hadaf* newsletter, July 1988; quoted in Minns & Hijab, 1990 p.--).

The Israeli censorship cannot possibly prevent the Palestinians' exposure to the massive amount of information conveyed by radio and television programs. Radio and television stations received from the neighboring Arab countries, have been actively involved in filling the needs for national identity among the Palestinians in Israel. Through these programs Palestinian youth in Israel have been able to re-establish their belonging to the Palestinian people and the Arab nation and to reinforce their pride in this belonging (Mari, 1978).

Another source of identity building among the Palestinians is the various political groups and parties. There are some major differences among these political parties in their political programs. However, the main concern for the majority of them is to

preserve the national identity of this community as an integral part of the Palestinian people. In his comprehensive survey of indigenous organizations in Palestine, Nakhleh (1991), contends that "a number of national level organizations were established on factional or sectarian bases, whose objective is to advance the views or programs of their specific political faction or religious sect, locally or regionally" (p. 12). Although most of the programs of these organizations, are limited to the political agenda of their respective parties, their contribution to the general process of Palestinian national identity development, especially among their youth participants is very crucial.

Two contradicting educational processes are in competition over the Palestinian student's national identity: identity-blurring through formal education, and identity-emphasizing through nonformal education. In this conflict, it seems that the latter has gotten the upper hand. The Palestinian organizations of nonformal education did not only fill the gap created by the school system, but actively re-built and sustained the Palestinian national identity. Mari (1987), states that

As far as this specific point is concerned, the struggle is over, from the Arab viewpoint: identity is maintained and reinforced. At least 85 per cent of Arab youth in Israel (irrespective of sex or religion) declare themselves to be Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship (p. 39).

The government of Israel still applies a "computer model" to the Palestinian educational process. By controlling the input of the formal education, it is believed, the output is guaranteed: a quiescent and nationally impotent Palestinian minority. A call for immediate change in this peculiar situation was made more than a decade ago by Mari (1978):

Unless curricula in Arab schools in Israel are thoroughly rethought and clearly re specified in favor of the development and encouragement of an Arab national identity which *is not* and *should not* be necessarily anti-Jewish, the Arab educational system in Israel is doomed to a functional death; its curricula will antagonize the Arab community (p. 89).

Despite all this, the curricula used in the Palestinian schools are still empty of any emphasis on Palestinian national identity. The pool of high school graduates from which Palestinian university students are selected "is molded to a large degree by this [educational] system" (Nakhleh, 1977 p. 35).

### Higher Education

The ratio of Palestinian students to the total student population is very low comparable to that of the Jewish students. In 1989/90 Palestinian students composed 5.4% of the general student population in Israel's universities, whereas the Palestinians composed 16% of the total Israeli population (Al-Haj, 1995 p. 193). The fact that only one third of the potential Palestinian students population attend college must be viewed within the political context of their minority status.

Higher education has two major domains of values: socio-economic and socio-political (Mari, 1979). The economic value prevails when higher education provides the individual with potential chances for upward socio-economic mobility. Politically, however, higher education is valued when it is relevant to the socio-political needs of the individual and society. According to Mari, "non-economic values of higher education seem to have special significance to developing societies as they try to develop national and political identification with their respective nation state" (1979 p. 435). The economic reward of higher education among the Palestinians in Israel contrasts most markedly with their counterparts on the West Bank. Mari (1979), found that the average income of the university graduate on the West Bank was 285% of that of a peer who did not attend university, while in Israel a Palestinian university graduate earned only 109% of his or her non graduate peer.

Lack of economic reward is not the only reason behind the low ratio of Palestinian university students in Israel. The poor level of high school education, and the university entrance exams create an additional set of barriers. Graham-Brown, argues that the

university entrance exam "has been criticized in some quarters in the West as containing inbuilt cultural assumptions which favor those who come from the dominant culture or social class" (1984 p. 57).

Universities are the only educational institutions in Israel where Palestinian and Jewish students are fully integrated. In fact, it is the only situation in which Palestinians and Jews, as individuals, engage in direct interaction with each other on a presumably equal bases as students. It is because of this integration that the universities find it difficult to apply double standard in their attempt to limit Palestinian students' political activism while at the same time allowing the majority Jewish students the freedom of political organization. However, the relationship between the Palestinian students and the university authorities is conflictive and corresponds to the government's problematic policy towards the Palestinian population at large. Nakhleh (1979), maintains that Palestinian students are politically alienated due to the educational context of the universities being in contradiction with their national aspirations. He argues that the "Israeli universities are dominated by Jewish-Zionist ideology, and this ideological basis frequently gets reinforced by rituals. Such a context places heavy sanctions on an Arab nationalist expression" (Nakhleh, 1979 p. 113). For the majority of the Palestinian students in Israel's universities this educational context is suitable for their involvement in political activism which in turn illuminates their collective identity and political development. Despite the low proportion of Palestinian students, their existence is intensely noticeable in all campuses due to their high level of social and political activism.

### Conclusion

In this paper, the field of Palestinian education in Israel as it relates to their collective identity was explored. The conflict between the Palestinian community and the government over educating for a Palestinian national identity or blurring it was not limited to the arena of formal education only. It was found that when the Palestinian community realized that it lacks control over the content of the formal education of its youth, nonformal organizations mushroomed throughout the community to fill the pressing need for building a national identity. Educating a national minority in a conflict situation is politically laden. It cannot avoid dealing with the political consequences of the conflict. The entire Palestinian educational process, is determined by majority-minority dynamics. Decisions regarding budget allocation, curriculum, educational goals, teachers' employment, etc. are mostly political rather than educational. In this manner, the educational process has been manipulated in order to maintain the status quo.

It was revealed that the Palestinian educational system is disadvantaged. The content of the Palestinians' education is politically determined and aims at stripping them of their collective identity. Nonformal education has been actively involved in providing alternative means to build and maintain Palestinian national identity. As such, it was viewed by the government as an inciting process and one that should be controlled. Nevertheless, the input of nonformal education on the Palestinians' collective identity has been enormous.

Higher education seems to be the weakest link in the educational hierarchy. The selection process for university admission and the economic investment in higher education generally operate against the interests of the minority groups. It was found that this selection process was the main factor behind the low ratio of Palestinian students in the Israeli Universities. Those who succeed in being admitted to the university are pessimistic regarding their opportunities of future employment. For the majority, teaching is the only job opportunity, one that is usually not their first choice. In addition, the content of the subject matter they teach is alienating to them as teachers and to their students. The outcome is high school graduates ill prepared to enter the university--and we are back at square one; the vicious circle closed.

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