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Palestinian Education in Israel: The Legacy of the Military Government

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Abstract

This essay analyses the ways in which the military government (1948-1966) and its policies positioned the Palestinian Arab community in Israeli society, with a particular focus on public education. The educational system for the Palestinian Arab community developed within the context of military government, and while the formal administrative structures have changed, the legacy of using education as a tool for political purposes has endured and continues to define the educational experience of indigenous Palestinian Arab students in Israel today. Despite the formal abolition of the military government in the mid-sixties, its ongoing legacy continues to shape educational policy and practice, as well as the broader status of the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.

Introduction

This essay explores the ways in which the military government (*Mimshal Tzvai*) and its policies positioned the indigenous Palestinian Arab community in Israeli society. I will focus specifically on the government's educational practices and policies during and beyond this period, and their impact on the development of Palestinian Arabs. I will argue that despite the formal abolition of the military government in 1966, its ongoing legacy continues to shape the place of the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel.

The Palestinians who stayed within the part of Palestine that became the state of Israel in 1948 had to cope with the multifaceted challenges imposed by their new reality. Many were suddenly cut off from their own family, relatives and community members who were dispersed as refugees in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the surrounding Arab countries.

They had to cope with the abrupt change in their status from a majority with national aspirations in mandatory Palestine to one of a dominated minority. In addition, they had to deal with an Israeli policy of control over all aspects of life such as education, planning, economic development, health, etc. Finally, the *Nakba* (the dispossession and dispersion of Palestinian people) left them without a leadership, or social and cultural institutions (Mar'i 1978).

The small remnant of Palestinians in Israel was granted citizenship, the practical implications of which were circumscribed by additional administrative policies, which virtually stripped the term 'citizenship' of its meaning. Two of the most critical of these policies were the imposition of an extended military government that for all practical purposes was applied only to Palestinian Arab citizens, and the legislative designation of a significant proportion of the group as 'present absentees'. These policies created a legacy that penetrated many aspects of public, private and civic life, and has continued to shape the Palestinian Arab experience in Israel, long after the military government's formal discontinuation.

The Military Government

Between 1948 and 1966, the Palestinians in Israel were placed under a strict military government, and were treated like a fifth column. The military government served as an important tool for consolidating governmental control over the indigenous Palestinian Arab community. It was run by a staff under the command of a military governor who was entitled to exercise his authority directly. This delegation of authority from the Defense Minister facilitated the intensive daily enforcement of military government regulations, which included the large-scale confinement of the population to designated areas, the imposition of curfews and the requirement of special permits to leave their villages and towns to look for jobs, education, and trade, etc. During the military government, the governing authorities developed and refined an extensive, three-pronged system for controlling the Palestinian Arab community based upon segmentation, dependence and co-optation. The policy of segmentation involved keeping Palestinian Arabs separate from Jews physically. The use of designated 'closed areas' and travel restrictions were targeted tightly to control the Palestinian Arab population movement within the boundaries of the state. This was evidenced by the fact that the military government's rule was never enforced over the Jewish community. As the State Comptroller reported:

> An order from the military governor declaring an area closed is, in theory, applicable to all citizens without exception whether living in the area or outside it. Thus anyone who enters or leaves a closed area without a written permit from the military governor is in fact committing a criminal offense.

> In practice, however, Jews are not expected to carry such permits and in general are not prosecuted for breaking the regulations in Article 125 … There is something wrong in this law, which was drafted to apply to all citizens in the country but is in fact enforced only against some of them (State Comptroller's Report 1959: 56).

This physical separation served to keep Palestinian society in Israel separated from Jewish society economically, socially, and politically as well.

The government also separated Jews and Palestinians administratively in many spheres of life. For example, during the military government, a separate court system was established for the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Judges in these courts were army officers, usually not jurists, who were in fact part of the military government. Furthermore, it was not possible to appeal their decisions (Jiryis 1976). This had significant implications both in terms of reinforcing the image of the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel as part of 'the enemy', and in terms of determining the type of justice they were to receive. One of the most reprehensible examples of this was the massacre of Kafr Qasim. On 29 October 1956, the Israeli Border Guard entered Kafr Qasim and imposed a curfew on the village while many of its residents were out working in their fields at some distance from the village. When they returned, unaware of the curfew, 51 of them were massacred (including 12 women and girls, 10 boys between the ages the ages of 14 and 17 years, and 7 children between the ages of 8 and 13 years) and 13 others were wounded (Hadawi 1991). At first, efforts were made to cover up the incident, but when news of the massacre leaked out, and it transpired that the soldiers' orders had been shoot to kill, the Israeli government had no alternative but to hold a trial. One of the Border Patrol members who participated in the incident appeared as a witness, and said in his testimony: 'I feel that the Arabs are the enemies of our state … When I went to Kafr Qasim, I felt that I went against the enemy and I made no distinction between the Arabs in Israel and those outside its frontiers'.[1] On 26 February 1959 – over two years after the massacre – the commander of the Border Police who gave the order was sentenced to 'a token fine of two cents for exceeding his authority by imposing an absolute curfew on an Arab village in Israel in 1956'.[2] As this incident illustrates, the military government's Palestinian-only administrative structures served to keep the Palestinian citizens of Israel in a conceptually separate place from Jews, where they remained the 'faceless enemy'.

In addition to the segmentation of the Jewish and Palestinian Arab communities, the government attempted to split the Palestinian Arab community into a number of smaller groups. Residents in different geographical areas

1. Jewish Newsletter, 8 July 1958, quoted in Hadawi (1991: 156).
2. New York Herald Tribune, 27 February 1959, quoted in Hadawi (1991: 157).

(the 'Galilee', the northern region; the 'Triangle', the central region; and the 'Negev', the southern region) were physically isolated from each other, and travel restrictions kept even those in the same region but in different villages, towns or tribal areas separated from each other. The government also attempted to emphasize religious or lifestyle differences (e.g., Muslims, Christians, Druze, Bedouin) and turn them into mutually exclusive identities in order to reduce the Palestinian Arab community into as many small, disconnected 'minorities' as possible. By treating these groups differently (e.g. conscripting the Druze to military service, allowing the Bedouin to volunteer for military service, and at the same time not allowing other Muslims to serve in the military) the government hoped to seed intergroup distrust and conflict between the different sectors of the Palestinian Arab community (Lustick 1980; McDowall 1989; Seliktar 1984; Zeedani 1997).

The second control technique developed by the Israeli government during the military government was to marginalise the Palestinian Arab community economically and make it as dependent as possible upon the majority Jewish infrastructure. This was accomplished through massive confiscation of lands through the Abseentees' Property Law and other measures (Lustick 1980; McDowell 1989; Seliktar 1984). During the course and aftermath of the 1948 war, one half of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel became internal refugees who left their homes and property temporarily – sometimes due to the direct orders or actions of the Israeli military – and were never allowed to return (Lustick 1980). 'Present absentees', a term unique to Israel, was the bureaucratic oxymoron applied to these Palestinian citizens of Israel who were 'present' because they had not left the country, and had remained through the 1948 war and the years following. However, they were designated as 'absentees' by the 1950 Absentees' Property Law because they were not present on their property at some time between the announcement of the UN Partition plan (29 November 1947) and the time of the law's enactment, regardless of the reason. Peretz (1958) explained that:

> Every Arab in Palestine who had left his town or village after 29 November 1947 was liable to be classified as an absentee under the regulations … The 30,000 Arabs who fled from one place to another within Israel, but who never left the country, were also liable to have their property declared absentee. Any individual, who may have gone to Beirut or Bethlehem for a one day visit, during the later days of the Mandate, was automatically an absentee (quoted in Jiryis 1976: 84-85).

This legislation prevented 'present absentees' from regaining their property, homes, and land (Jiryis 1976; Lustick 1980; Masalha 2003; 2005), and also provided a retroactive legal justification for Arab lands that had already been seized (Lustick 1980). The enforcement of these and similar

measures against the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel had far-reaching and eminently practical consequences. Piterberg (2001) explains that:

> What the term 'present absentees' designates is the history of the dispossession and displacement of those Palestinians – their number is estimated at 160,000 – who found themselves within the state of Israel between 1948 and 1952. It tells of the tacit axis of apartheid that defines the state of Israel to this day: the interplay between the formal inclusion of Palestinians as citizens and their structural exclusion from equal rights within the state. This is the particular dialectic of oppression – of a population formally present but in so many crucial ways absent – that makes the legal-administrative definition of these Palestinians so coldly accurate (2001: 42-43).

The Palestinians residing within the 1948 borders of Israel were present in so far as they were obliged to contribute to the national coffers by paying taxes and national insurance. But, in terms of their rights to a representative share in the country's policy-making and planning circles, and its assets and resources (e.g., land, water, education, infrastructure and employment), they were absent.

The loss of so much agricultural land and the displacement of so many communities made Palestinian Arabs acutely dependent upon the Jewish sector for employment. In addition, the involvement of the military government penetrated virtually all areas of life. This strengthened its control of the Palestinian Arab community and kept it dependent upon good relations with the authorities to obtain basic life necessities.

The third control technique developed under the military government was co-optation through the use of 'side payments' to Palestinian Arab elites, or potential elites, with the aim of extracting resources and maintaining effective surveillance of the community (Lustick 1980: 77). From the outset of the military government, a broad network of collaborators was developed, many of whom were assigned to leadership positions within the community (e.g., *mukhtars, shaykhs,* Muslim religious leaders, mayors, etc.) or given jobs in the separate bureaucratic apparatuses that dealt with the Palestinians (e.g., educational supervisors, school principals, teachers, employees in the Arab section of the broadcasting authority, etc.). Throughout the duration of the military government, no teacher or civil servant could hope to be appointed without enjoying the favour of such agents of the state (McDowall 1989; Murkus 1999; Sa'di 2003). In addition, Palestinian community members had to go through these collaborators in order to receive a broad array of minor benefits from the state, such as obtaining permits for a variety of purposes which included seeking medical treatment in the city, importing a machine (mainly tractors), getting work or access to educational opportunities (high schools, teachers' colleges, universities) outside one's restricted locality, getting a travel permit to visit relatives living in other localities, getting a telephone line, etc. Other

benefits were of a collective nature, such as obtaining state support for building a school, paving roads, etc. (Sa'di 2003).

In light of the general injustice and oppressiveness of the military government, opposition began to develop among number of Jewish and Arab political leaders, scholars, and political organisations, including representatives of 20 kibbutzim and about 200 of the most prominent intellectuals in Israel, including 70 professors and lecturers at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. They characterised the military government as unnecessary, unjustifiable, and discriminatory and called for its abolition in 1958 (Jiryis 1976).

It took another eight years to build enough opposition to the military government in Israeli society to have it abolished. Ironically, some of the top Palestinian Arab collaborators who were Knesset members voted against ending the military government in the early 1960s. As Sa'di (2003) explains:

> on 20 February 1963 a crucial vote in the Knesset took place on four motions to abolish the military government. The government was able to vote down one of the those motions with a slim majority of 57 to 56 because two Arab Knesset members – Jabber Dahish Mu'adi and Diab 'Obeid – voted with the government, while the other two – Ahmad Kamel Al-Dahir and Elias Nakhleh – played the tactic of abstention and voting against each of [the other motions] at a time … They did so despite immense public pressure placed on them by the Palestinian population (2003: 76).

The process of abolishing the military government was finally advanced by the fact that segmentation, dependence and cooptation of Palestinian society in Israel had been firmly established. Thus, after 18 years it was formally dismantled, and replaced by a system of control that was less visible (Lustick 1980; Sa'di 2003). On the basis of this general description of the military government, we will now turn to an examination of how the education system developed and was shaped by these same forces.

Education under the Military Government

In Israel, the public educational system was shaped by the objectives and actions of the early Eastern European Zionists who began to settle in Palestine from the 1880s onwards with the intent of establishing a Jewish state, including its institutional structure, ideological content, and language of instruction (Hebrew) (Swirski 1999). As such, the Palestinian Arabs were, from the outset, 'present absentees' in an educational system that was designed for a different people and based upon an ideology in which they, at best, had no place, and at worst, were 'the enemy'.

Separate school systems were developed for Jewish and Palestinian Arab students who lived in physically separate – and for the Palestinians

– restricted, spheres throughout the tenure of the military government. The school system was separate, even in towns that had a mixed Jewish/Arab population (e.g., Haifa, Acre, Lydda, Ramle, Jaffa) and differed in language of instruction, curriculum, facilities and budget allocations (Abu-Saad 1991; 2004; Al-Haj 1995; Cohen 1951; Mar'i 1978). As such, it was both a product, and a perpetuator, of the governmental policy of segmentation, and the separation of the Jewish majority and the Palestinian Arab minority.

In 1949, the Knesset passed a Compulsory Education Law applicable – formally – to both Arabs and Jews, according to which the state, together with local authorities, guaranteed to provide eight years of free compulsory education to children between the ages of five and thirteen. The state was responsible for supplying teachers, training and paying them, and providing the curricula. The local authorities were in charge of school buildings, furniture, and maintenance (Al Haj 1995; Jiryis 1976).

Implementation of the Compulsory Education Law among the Palestinian Arab community was hampered by a lack of facilities and materials, as well as by the control apparatus of the military government. Furthermore, the new Israeli institutions were busy with the absorption of Jewish immigrants, and thus, inevitably, schools for Arabs were not a priority (Abu-Saad 1991, 2006; Swirski 1999). The conditions of the school facilities were extremely bad, and classrooms were overcrowded, even though in some places students were taught in two shifts (both of which remained overcrowded). In many cases, pupils were sitting on boards, boxes, window ledges and even on the floor due to the lack of furniture. Many of the buildings in which the schools were located were in poor condition, and some had been damaged during the war and ensuing violence (Cohen 1951). Many others were never intended for use as classrooms, as Nimer Murkus, a teacher during the military government described. Murkus' first teaching appointment under the Israeli state/military government was in the western Galilean village of 'Arraba, where he described the conditions of the school as follows:

> The village school consisted of rooms built from stone and cement during the British time, which provided classrooms for only some of the pupils. The rest studied in rented rooms spread throughout the village … The vast majority of my weekly teaching was in one of the rented rooms … The room was very small. Half of the pupils sat on wobbly old chairs and half sat on the concrete ledge that was built around the circumference of the walls. There was only about one meter of space at the front of the classroom between the blackboard and the first row of pupils' seats, and this was the space in which I stood to deliver the lessons (1999: 115).

After one year of teaching in 'Arraba, he was transferred to the school in another village, Al-Bi'ina, where the conditions were even worse. All of the

classes were held in rented rooms, widely scattered throughout the village. Murkus' classroom was in the house of a farming family, and in order to enter it, it was necessary to pass through a stable housing two oxen and a donkey. There was virtually no furniture in the room, and students either sat on the concrete ledge around the circumference of the walls, or brought stools from home. Other essential supplies were also lacking, such as chalk, so sometimes students would be sent to collect a soft, white stone from the hills that could be used as chalk, and other times the teachers would buy it from their own money when they had a chance to travel to a larger town. Textbooks, most of which were from the British Mandate time, were also lacking. In many cases, he used the blackboard to replace the individual textbook by copying passages from the book on it, so it could serve as the textbook for the whole class.

The 1948 war had dispersed a large number of Palestinian Arab teachers and administrators and paralysed the school system that had existed during the British Mandate. However, teaching and administrative staff could not be hired without the approval of the General Security Services. The military government was interested both in promoting the most 'favourably-minded' teachers and keeping tight control over the emerging new Palestinian Arab intelligentsia (Swirski 1999), and this extended to the training as well as the hiring of teachers. Again the experience of Nimer Murkus (1999) provides insight into the negative ramifications this had for the development of the Palestinian Arab schools. Murkus completed high school in a private high school in Acre during the British mandate, and he was appointed as a teacher in a public school from 1946-1948. After the establishment of the state of Israel, he applied to the new authorities for a teaching position. He waited for two years without receiving a response to his application, even though there was a great shortage of qualified teaching candidates for Arab schools at that time. As he described:

> Due to this shortage and other reasons, the Arab Education Administration was accepting applicants to teach in Arab schools who had completed only elementary school. The acceptance of teaching candidates was done selectively, based on the recommendations and decision of the Military Government and General Security Services (GSS). I was not, nor was my family, among those close to these two offices, or from among their 'tails' [Arabic colloquial term for 'collaborators'] (Murkus 1999: 110-111).

In 1949, the Arab Education Administration opened an intensive teachers training course, to which some of the people from Murkus' village were accepted. Murkus had not applied for the course because he was already a qualified teacher, with two years of teaching experience. However, since his application for a teaching position remained unacknowledged, and he was not willing to obtain a position through channels that left him indebted to the good graces of the authorities, he resigned himself to the fact that his

former teaching qualifications would not be recognised, and decided to obtain new teaching qualifications from the Israeli state:

> The following year the Arab Education Administration opened another intensive teachers training course, so I relented and applied for it. I was accepted to the course! I didn't use the avenues of patronage, and I wouldn't have accepted a place in the course based on patronage, so how did this happen? I later discovered that one of the collaborators who was from my village and a former friend of the family, recommended that I be accepted when he was asked about me by the Military Government and GSS authorities. He didn't know me personally, as there was a great difference in our ages. So he based his recommendation of me on his knowledge of my parents, who he said were "simple people who didn't get involved in politics" (Murkus 1999: 111).

The eight-month course was held in Jaffa. All of the teachers were Jews who spoke Arabic fluently. The students were cut off from the larger world, not having access to newspapers or radios, and all those who came from villages far from Jaffa were only able to visit their families once a month. Murkus (1999) gave an example of how tightly the students were controlled:

> Midway through the course, we were surprised by the expulsion of one of our classmates. No one gave us any explanation as to why he was expelled, so one of my friends and I agreed to raise this issue with the director of the course, Avner Cohen, and protest against his expulsion. When the director entered our class, I asked for permission to speak and requested that he tell us the reason for our classmate's expulsion. His response was, "This is the business of the administration; it's not your business" ... During the next break between classes when the classroom was empty, one of the students returned and wrote on the blackboard, "Woe to the sheep that can't tell the difference between its butcher and its shepherd". For the next few days, the course administrators were consumed with investigating the incident and discovering who wrote this statement. A few of the students, who were "the eyes of the administration", were constantly going in and out of the director's office, but no one asked me about it. It seemed like the director's investigative approach was not based on questioning people directly, but rather depended upon the information brought to him by his collaborators …
>
> Some time later … I found out that our classmate had been expelled because he was associated with the Communist Party.[3] Somebody saw somebody who had seen him at a [legal] demonstration a few weeks earlier in Tel-Aviv/Jaffa that was organised by the Communist Party (1999: 112-113).

At every level, the military government's security concerns took priority over educational and professional concerns in staffing Arab schools. This added additional layers of bureaucracy that further hampered the process. The extent of the military government's overriding control, and

3. The Communist Party was a legally registered and recognised party in Israel.

its disruptive effects, is illustrated in the following letter addressed to the military governor of the northern district by the official in charge of the Arab Education Administration. The official complained about the lack of coordination among various military officers, which prevented him from appointing a particular teacher:

> In your letter, you oppose the appointment of [name of candidate], on security grounds. Six weeks ago, when I visited Nazareth … and met the local Military Governor … [h]e and the Military Governor of Kafr Yassif begged me to nominate [name of candidate] to a teaching job, citing "national security" as a reason. I accepted their arguments, and nominated him, even though I had more desirable candidates. Later on, pressure was brought on me from another source to nominate him, citing other national interests. And now, it is you who finds the candidate unsuitable. Please let me know whether in your opinion he should be appointed, or not.[4]

Once appointed, Palestinian Arab teachers were forbidden from engaging in any political activities, and those who did not observe this were summarily fired. They had no professional organisation to protect their rights or address the specific problems they faced (Cohen 1951). Though they could be members of the General Teachers Union, they were also 'present absentees' there, where their needs and problems remained unrecognised. Again, the experience of Nimer Murkus (1999) over his seven years of teaching during the Military Government (1951-1958), provides an in-depth illustration. In 1952, a group of four teachers (including Murkus and 3 of his classmates from the teachers' training course) working in the western Galilee began meeting secretly and established an organisation aimed at raising awareness of the poor conditions of the teachers, and the quality of the education in Arab schools. The organisation produced leaflets that were sent to a large number of the Palestinian Arab teachers, and the whole operation, from the duplication of the leaflets to the mailing, had to be carried out secretly. The leaflets were not mailed from the villages in which the organisers taught, but rather from three different large towns. Furthermore, as Murkus (1999) described:

> Even buying stamps in large quantities [was risky, and so] we bought them from more than one post office branch. Once we needed more than we had originally purchased, so we sent (a younger brother of one of the members) back to the post office … to buy more. The postal clerk remembered that he had recently bought a large number of stamps and he became suspicious. He asked the boy to wait while he went to consult his superior. The boy realised that the postal clerk was going to report to someone who would then come to question or even arrest him, so he quickly left the post office without any stamps and returned to the house we were waiting in (1999:124).

4. Israel Ministry of Education and Culture 1950, quoted in Swirski (1999: 173-174.)

In 1953, Murkus also secretly joined the Communist Party. The Arab Education Administration then appointed him to a school in the centre of the country, far from his home, and he thought that this was a result of the officials becoming suspicious of his involvement in activities to which his 'citizenship' as a Palestinian Arab under military government did not entitle him. This transfer meant that he needed travel permits from two different military governors (one in Nazareth and one in Umm al-Fahm) in order reach his workplace. At the same time, the Arab Education Administration also transferred several other members of the clandestine teachers' awareness raising and support organisation to different schools scattered throughout the centre of the country, where there were no such organisations or activities. This isolated them from each other and the activities they had organised in the north. As Murkus (1999) described:

> It was clear that this transfer was despotic and incapacitating. It seemed that its purpose was to get us to give up and resign from teaching of our own accord. And if we accepted the transfer, we would be in a difficult position that would make us vulnerable to corruption or to the fabrication of reasons to fire us[5] … Of course, the purpose of the administrative authorities in imposing this incapacitating transfer upon us was not only to make our lives miserable, but also to frighten the rest of the teachers away from following our "rugged" path and deter those who sympathised with our movement. But the results were the opposite (1999: 138).

Murkus and his colleagues used this opportunity to develop contacts in the Palestinian Arab villages in the centre of the country and managed greatly to expand the support for their movement to improve teachers' conditions and Palestinian Arab education in general.

In 1955, six months after their transfer, for the first time in the history of the General Teachers Union, Palestinian Arab teachers were involved in organising a new list called 'the Democratic Teachers' which had both Arab and Jewish candidates for election to the Union Council. The Election Committee of the General Teachers Union voted against allowing the new list to participate in the elections, so the Democratic Teachers List took the dispute to court, and the court decided in favour of allowing the new list to participate in the General Teachers Union elections. They succeeded in getting four seats on the Union Council, one of which was filled by Murkus (1999).

Murkus' political and community organising activities continued to increase and became more public. Shortly thereafter, he and another two of his colleagues were summoned to appear before a joint committee

5. Author's note: for example, the difficulty of the travel and other conditions would make them vulnerable to agreeing to collaborate in exchange for being given a teaching job in their home area again, but if they refused to collaborate and refused to make the transfer, the authorities would be able to fire them.

Table 1 Jewish and Arab Schools and Educational Institutions during Military Government

	1948/49	1950/51	1952/53	1954/55	1956/57	1957/58	1958/59	1959/60	1960/61	1961/62	1962/63	1963/64	1964/65	1965/66
Jewish Education														
Kindergartens	709	1,090	1,669	1,885	1,894	1,900	1,936	2,008	2,015	2,108	2,201	2,303	2,384	2,491
Primary schools	467	722	945	945	1,042	1,100	1,132	1,149	1,151	1,161	1,188	1,195	1,216	1,253
Schools for handicapped children	–	39	74	51	60	64	74	82	94	98	106	114	114	131
Secondary schools	39	59	68	74	68	71	79	87	101	118	132	139	159	167
Vocational schools	26	42	41	42	46	52	55	60	59	66	114	134	159	187
Agricultural schools	–	28	32	34	36	37	31	30	29	31	44	41	33	28
Teachers' training colleges	12	17	24	24	23	25	31	30	32	37	38	42	47	56
Arab Education														
Kindergartens	10	87	91	81	104	109	116	120	131	135	139	142	150	151
Primary schools	45	99	108	114	115	119	131	138	152	165	166	170	178	181
Schools for handicapped children	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1
Secondary schools	–	–	1	5	6	5	5	5	6	9	10	8	8	8
Vocational schools	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4	5	4
Agricultural schools	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Teachers' training colleges	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

CBS, 1962, Table 1; CBS, 1963, Table 1; CBS, 1966, Table T/1

of the Arab Education Administration and the General Teachers Union. They were charged with insulting their employer (e.g., Arab Education Administration), based upon statements printed in some of their publications criticising the conditions in the Arab schools and some of the officials responsible for the Arab Education Administration. All three were fired and denied compensation (Murkus 1999).

The many non-educational factors that determined 'acceptable' teaching staff (e.g., the priority given to security concerns over educational needs and the complicated military government bureaucracy), and the loss of educated Palestinians during the 1948 war, combined with the general shortage of qualified teachers, had severely negative consequences for the development of Palestinian Arab education. First of all, these factors contributed to a very high pupil-to-teacher ratio. For example, in 1949, in the western Galilee, where most of the Palestinian Arab population in Israel was located, the average number of pupils per teacher was 61, and in other places, it was even higher. In the Jewish sector, the average number of pupils per teacher was 35-40, while in the kibbutz schools, the average was much lower than this. In general, Arab teachers had double the number of pupils that Jewish teachers had, while they received only half the salary of their Jewish counterparts (Cohen 1951).

Table 1 provides a summary of the physical and staffing development of the Arab school system throughout the course of the military government, and the contrasting growth and development of the Jewish school system. A simple glance at the table conveys again the impression of the Palestinians as 'present absentees'. There were no schools at all for handicapped Palestinian children until the 1963/64 school year, and then only one for the entire Palestinian population (the insufficiency of which was further exacerbated by the travel restrictions that existed at the time). The first high school was not established until the 1952/53 school year, and by the end of the military government, the number of high schools for the whole population throughout the country had grown to only 8 (and there was no high school at all in the Negev until several years after the military government ended). While specialised schools for vocational and agricultural education were opened in the Jewish sector within the first two years of the state's establishment, they were nonexistent in the Arab school system until the 1959/60 and 1962/63 school years, respectively, and consisted of 4-5 vocational schools and 1-2 agricultural schools for the entire Palestinian sector. Perhaps the most glaring 'absence' is that there was no teachers training college opened for Palestinian Arabs until 10 years after the establishment of the state, despite the extreme shortage of teachers after the disruption of Palestinian society in Israel in 1948.

Aims, Goals and Curriculum during the Military Government: From Enemies to 'Present-Absentees'

Private Zionist/Jewish schooling existed and was well-developed in Palestine prior to 1948.[6] After its establishment, the Israeli state seemingly continued to envision and to develop its educational system as if it were still only educating Jews. Israel's 1953 Law of State Education specified the following aims for the education system:

> to base education on the values of Jewish culture and the achievements of science, on love of the homeland and loyalty to the state and the Jewish people, on practice in agricultural work and handicraft, on pioneer training and on striving for a society built on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual assistance, and love of mankind (quoted in Mar'i 1978: 50).

These aims provide another metaphor of the way in which Palestinian Arabs were 'present' as pupils in the school system, and yet 'absent' where the educational vision for the state was formulated.

The physical separation maintained between Jews and Palestinian Arabs in Israel during the military government was replicated in many other aspects of public life, including the development of differing curricular content and textbooks for the Jewish and Arab school systems, under the complete hegemony of Jewish Ministry of Education officials. As in other school systems, textbooks dominated what students learned at school, and set the curriculum, as well as the facts learned, in most subjects; and were relied upon by teachers to organise lessons and structure subject matters. This was particularly true in Israel, since teachers were obliged to base their instruction upon Ministry of Education-approved textbooks. According to Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005):

> Due to the centralized structure of the educational system in Israel, the Ministry of Education sets the guidelines for curricula development and has the authority to approve the school textbooks. Thus, the ministry outlines the didactic, scholastic and social objectives to be achieved (Eden 1971), and the textbooks' contents reflect the knowledge that the dominant group of society is trying to impart to its members (2005: 159).

Even prior to the establishment of the state, Arabs were 'present' in the Jewish school system's textbooks, as represented by Jewish writers and pedagogical directors. Firer (1985) examined history textbooks from 1900 on, and their role in promoting Zionist socialisation. Firer found that all of the history books in the pre-state period (1900-1948) stressed the exclusive rights of the Jewish people to ownership of Palestine. Arabs, in turn, were portrayed as a backward, primitive people with no similar ownership rights in the 'neglected' land that was awaiting 'Jewish redemption'. As such, these

6. For further discussion, see Swirski (1999), chapter 4.

textbooks planted the seeds for relegating Palestinian Arabs to the status of 'present absentees' as well as 'enemies'. When violent conflict began to erupt due to the opposing nationalisms of the indigenous Palestinian Arabs and the Zionist settlers, Jewish history textbooks also began to refer to Arabs undifferentiatedly as easily agitated robbers and vandals. Bar-Gal's (1993, 1994) study of geography textbooks in the pre-state period found that at first Zionist authors who lived in Europe tended to completely ignore the presence of the indigenous Arab population in Palestine, while later, the textbooks written by authors living in Palestine began to represent them as a:

> … negative homogeneous mob that threatens, assaults, destroys, eradicates, burns and shoots, being agitated by haters of Israel, who strive to annihilate the most precious symbols of Zionism: vineyards, orange groves, orchards and forests. Again, the Arabs were viewed as ungrateful. According this view Zionism brought progress to the area and helped to overcome the desolation, and thus helped to advance also the Arabs. But instead of thanking the Jews for building the country for the benefit of all its citizens, they respond with destruction and ruin (p.181).

Throughout the military government, school textbooks continued to present Arabs negatively, according to the same ideological-educational perspective adopted during the pre-state period (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005; Firer 1985; Podeh 2002). The first textbooks published by the newly-founded state were influenced by the trauma of the Holocaust in Europe, and used the same emotive concepts from that experience to describe the Jewish-Arab conflict (Firer 1985). As Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) described, these textbooks completely removed the Jewish-Arab conflict from its actual context:

> Most of these books did not even mention the existence of a Palestinian nation, never mind its aspirations or the driving forces behind Palestinian nationalism. Thus, the Arabs' violence and resistance to Zionism, presented without explanation, looked absolutely arbitrary and malicious. It interfered with the noble and peaceful attempts of the Jews (described as victims) to return to their homeland (2005: 162).

The critical omission of Palestinian Arabs' history, pre-1948 life in Palestine, national aspirations, and their consequent dispossession, turned them into 'present absentees' in the historical sense. They literally became a minority in Israel that existed in the present, but that had no history in that place. The denial of Palestinian history and presence in the past was central to the Zionist version of the history of '*Eretz Israel*' (Land of Israel), which was disseminated through the Ministry of Education textbooks. The curriculum throughout the military government was concerned primarily with the needs of nation-building and the construction of a homogeneous

national identity, and to this end, it used mechanisms of denial, omission and vilification of Arabs (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005).

Bar-Gal (1994), however, suggested that there was a change in the way in which geography textbooks written after the culmination of the 1948 war referred to the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. He found fewer delegitimising labels, or references to them as primitive, backward, or 'the enemy' than previously. In a period in which Israeli Jews had little or no contact with their Palestinian Arab co-citizens, Ministry of Education-approved textbooks were re-making them into 'Israeli Arabs', who were stereotyped less negatively than Arabs living beyond the borders of the state, and ethnocentrically portrayed as integrating into Jewish Israeli society. The textbooks also emphasised the good treatment Israeli Arabs received from the state authorities, such as the provision of educational, health, and welfare services, and many of the other trappings of progress and modernity, as well as full equality. Again, they were 'present' in the terms in which the Israeli Jewish educators wanted to imagine them, yet completely 'absent' in terms of self-representation.

The approach towards Palestinian Arabs in the Israeli Jewish school system curriculum and textbooks adopted during the military government permeated other aspects of Israeli Jewish culture, including its literature. In a short story written by the prominent Israeli literary figure Amos Oz in 1965, entitled 'Nomads and the Viper', he described the interaction that occurred between the residents of a kibbutz and a Bedouin group who, following a particularly dry year, moved northward in search of grazing land. The invasion of Bedouin nomads into the kibbutz area brought devastation, foot-and-mouth disease, destruction of cultivated fields, and theft. The Bedouin's black goats were destructive, given their ability to climb over fences and eat every green leaf, and the story revolved around a young kibbutz woman, Geula (Hebrew name literally means 'redemption') and the Bedouin shepherd, a young man who was also black, like his goats. Geula considered him to be primitive, bestial, ugly, and wretched, yet he aroused an obsessive sexual desire in her. Eventually she fell victim to her desires because, while she was fantasising about him, a viper slithered along her body and bit her, thus bringing an end to Geula and her forbidden desires. According to Sa'di (2004), Oz's purpose was clearly to dramatise the unbridgeable chasm separating the lawful agricultural settlers and idealistic pioneers who settled on the edge of the desert from the primitive Bedouin Arabs. Moreover, his message was that any attempt to cross that chasm, even through fantasy, would be dangerous, if not even fatal.

Compounding the negative presentations of Arabs in Hebrew textbooks and literature during the military government, the Jewish school system further contributed to the marginalisation of the Palestinian community by giving Jewish students little, if any, exposure to the Arabic language or

culture. Despite the fact that Arabic was officially designated as one of the two official languages in Israel, the study of Arabic was not required in Jewish schools as a matriculation subject (e.g., a requirement for obtaining a high school diploma). The Arabic language, like the people, was present at some superficial level, but absent at the nuts-and-bolts, practical level that would shape Israeli Jewish education into the future.

The aims, goals and curriculum for the Arab school system during the military government represented another set of problems, which were alluded to in the experiences of Murkus (1999). In 1951, Cohen (1951) wrote:

> the problem of the curriculum [for Arab schools] was much more serious than the problem of the physical conditions. Until now, the Arab schools do not have a curriculum and textbooks suitable to a democratic state. They are still using the same textbooks they used in the British Mandate (1951: 132).

Though the Arabs were basically 'absent' from the Jewish-oriented general aims formulated for the state educational system, no parallel aims were formulated for the Arab educational system. Once a curriculum for the Arab schools began to be developed, the specific curricular goals required students to learn a great deal about Jewish values and culture, while receiving superficial exposure to carefully screened and censored Arabic values and culture, and the results of this were clearly seen in the government-controlled curriculum for elementary and secondary schools (Al-Haj 1995; Mar'i 1978; Peres, Ehrlich and Yuval-Davis 1970). Arab students were required to spend many class hours in the study of Jewish culture and history and the Hebrew language (and in total, more than they spent on Arabic literature and history), while the story, values and national aspirations of their own people was absent from the curriculum (Al-Haj 1995; Mar'i 1978; 1985). In response to this one-sided curriculum Rashid Hussein, a leading Israeli-Palestinian poet,[7] issued the following warning in 1957:

> It is a known fact that he who has no self-respect will not respect others. He who has no national feeling cannot respect other nationalities. If the Arab student is hindered from learning about his people, his nationality and his homeland in school, he will compensate for the lack in his home and on the street … The school, which has deprived him of something in which everyone takes pride, will be regarded by him as an enemy. Instead of learning in school the meaning of nationalism imbued with humanism, he will absorb only a distorted version. What will the school have achieved? What kind of generation of Arab youth will it have educated? Instead of

7. Rashid Hussein (1936-77), an Israeli-Palestinian citizen from Musmus near Haifa; teacher and organiser of al-Ard movement; was at various times imprisoned by the Israelis. After 1967 he left Israel for the US, where he lived in poverty and died in a fire in New York.

> educating its students to believe in fraternity and peace and to believe in the sincerity of its teachers, the school will bring forth a bewildered and confused generation, which looks at the facts in a distorted manner, and considers other nations to be their enemies; a generation filled with inferiority complexes, feelings of abasement, unable to take pride in its youth, in its homeland and its nationality (1957: 46).

However, the concerns of the Israeli authorities about the education of their Palestinian citizens during the military government were of a completely different nature than the concerns of Hussein. They were perhaps best summed up by Uri Lubrani, the Advisor on Arab Affairs to the Prime Minister of Israel from 1960-1963, who openly stated:

> if there were there no Arab students perhaps it would be better. If they would remain hewers of wood perhaps it would be easier to control them. But there are things which do not depend upon our wish. There is then no escape from this issue, so we must be careful to understand the nature of the problems involved and to devise appropriate strategies.[8]

The question to be addressed in the remainder of this essay is the extent to which perspectives such as this, born during the military government, changed, or alternatively, endured, and continued to shape Israeli society and public education in the post-military government era.

Israeli State Policies in the Post-Military Government Era

As the era of the military government came to an end in 1966, the government developed other means for perpetuating the three-pronged strategy of segmentation, dependence and co-option that had successfully been used to control and marginalise Palestinian Arabs in Israel (Abu-Saad 2003; Lustick 1980; McDowall 1989; Seliktar 1984). The socio-economic gap that had developed between the Jewish and Palestinian Arab sectors in Israel during the military government ensured the continued segregation/segmentation, dependence, and vulnerability to co-optation of the Palestinian Arab community. Separate residential patterns were already well established by the mid-1960s, and little has changed. Even today in the country's five 'mixed cities' (Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Lydda, Ramle, Acre and Haifa), it is nearly impossible to find mixed residential areas.

Numerous state-wide policies were designed to keep the Palestinian Arab community as dependent as possible upon the majority Jewish economic infrastructure (Seliktar 1984; Lustick 1980; McDowell 1989), including: the continued expropriation of Palestinian Arab land and in most cases making it available to Jewish users only (Jiryis 1976; Yiftachel

8. Haaretz, 4 April 1961, quoted in Lustick (1980:68).

1999; Kretzmer 1990),[9] differential allocations of resources to Palestinian Arab towns (Rosenfeld and Al-Haj 1990), discrimination in the provision of services (Abu-Saad 2001; 2004; Al-Haj 1995; Golan-Agnon 2005; Sikkuy 2004), denial of recognition to dozens of existing Palestinian Arab (primarily Bedouin) towns and obstruction of the expansion of government-recognised Arab towns (Falah 1989; Rouhana 1998), placement of limitations on the access of Palestinian Arabs to senior positions in governmental and key private sector offices (Abu-Saad 2001; Dichter and Ghanem 2002), and denial of government-supported industrial development in the Arab sector (Khalifa 2001; Lewis-Epstein and Semyonov 1993; Rouhana 1998). In addition, there were hidden, yet official, government policies, which came to light in the late 1970s when the Israeli press released information on a secret document, known as the Koenig Memorandum, which the Prime Minister at the time declined to denounce or deny as Israeli government policy (Hadawi 1991; Lustick 1980).[10] Several relevant points from the memorandum included:

- Keeping the Arabs busy 24 hours a day searching for a livelihood, so that they would not have time to think about their general welfare or national educational needs;
- Imposing the most severe measures against Arab student leaders, closing the door to universities in the face of Arab students, putting obstacles in the way of their education, and at the same time facilitating the emigration of Arab youth and forbidding their return;
- Adopting a strong policy against the Arabs by imposing stiff taxes and fines that would deprive them of the financial and economic means to improve their standard of living or social status;
- Confiscating Arab lands for the establishment of new Jewish settlements thereon;
- Obstructing any natural increase in the Arab population, and to take such action as would reduce their number (Quoted in Hadawi 1991: 157-8).

Thus, the social, economic and educational sphere inhabited by the Palestinian Arab population was, by design, dependent, subordinate and marginalised. Current Israeli public statistical data reveals that the Palestinian Arab population has higher levels of unemployment (14 per cent versus the national average of 9 per cent), lower average income (3,992 NIS versus the national average of 6,314 NIS), and almost twice the rate of children living in poverty (58 per cent) as in Israeli society as a whole (31 per cent) (Fares 2004; NII, 2004). Since these national averages include the Arab sector, the above figures de-emphasise the extremity of the gap between Israel's Palestinian Arab and Jewish citizens.

9. Through the use of this and other laws enacted, 93 per cent of the land in Israel came under state control, and most of it was allocated for exclusive Jewish use.

10. The Koenig Memorandum was published in full (in Hebrew) in the Israeli newspaper 'Al-Hamishmar, 7 September 1976.

The government's continued maintenance of the dependence and marginalisation of the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel is due to the fact that they are still viewed as enemies or potential enemies, and their post-military government history includes another two massacres at the hands of Israeli security/police forces. In 1976, when Palestinian citizens of Israel throughout the country were demonstrating in protest at massive land confiscations in the Galilee, six were shot and killed by Israeli police. There was no official investigation into the incident, nor were any charges brought against the officers involved. Again, in 2000, the Israeli security forces used lethal force against Palestinian community members. Dalal (2003) described the incident as follows:

> In early October 2000, Palestinian citizens of Israel staged mass demonstrations in towns and villages throughout the country to protest the government's oppressive policies against Palestinians in the 1967 Occupied Territories. These protests erupted soon after al-Aqsa Intifada began in the Occupied Territories, during which the Israeli army and security forces killed and injured scores of Palestinians. The protests in Israel developed and were directed shortly thereafter in opposition to the use of lethal force by the police against Palestinian citizens in Israel.
>
> During these demonstrations in Israel, the police and special police sniper units killed 13 unarmed Palestinian citizens of Israel and injured hundreds more using live ammunition, rubber-coated steel bullets ('rubber bullets'), and tear gas. The firing of live ammunition and rubber bullets at protestors, including the use of snipers, are all prohibited by law and even violate internal police regulations. Israeli Jewish citizens also attacked Palestinian citizens of Israel, their property and their holy sites in early October 2000. Close to 700 Palestinian citizens of Israel were arrested in connection with these events, and hundreds, including scores of minors, were indicted and detained without bond until the end of trial. (2003: 9)

Initially, the government appointed a Committee of Examination, which had no legal powers or independence, to look into the incident. However, due to intense political pressure brought about by the families of the victims together with Palestinian Arab political leaders, NGOs and academics, the government dissolved the Committee of Examination and established an official Commission of Inquiry (the Or Commission) in accordance with the Commissions of Inquiry Law – 1968, which had a wide range of powers to conduct the investigation, including the power to call and subpoena witnesses to appear and testify before it (Dalal 2003). In 2003, the Or Commission reported its findings, and called for an investigation of the police forces involved in the shootings. The Ministry of Justice's Police Investigation Unit conducted an investigation, and on 18 September 2005, published findings which exonerated all officers involved in the incident of any need to be brought to trial. In reaction, Professor Marwan Dwairy (2005) wrote:

> the police continue to deal with Arab citizens according to the mentality of Kafr Qassem [sic], following which the leader of the massacre was fined [two cents]. In the face of the Israeli establishment's adherence to this manner of dealing with Arab citizens, which disdains the blood of our martyrs, how can our response be different from how it was in Kafr Qassem [sic] and on Land Day? (2005: 1)

The same broad coalition that pressured the government into appointing an official commission of inquiry challenged the outcome of the Ministry of Justice's Police Investigation Unit, and is committed to pursuing the issue until those responsible are brought to justice, and the guilty are punished (Dwairy 2005).

Education in the Post-Military Government Era

Public education in Israel has undergone many developments since the military government was lifted, while continuing to maintain segregated school systems for Jewish and Palestinian Arab students. The development of the Arab school system in Israel must be evaluated in light of the educational disparities that arose as a result of separate, differentially resourced school systems. These disparities did not develop as a matter of chance, but rather as a matter of policy, and have been of key importance in perpetuating the broader political and socio-economic governmental vision for the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel expressed by Lubrani in the early 1960s. A look at the distribution of the Ministry of Education budget reveals that the Arab school system has consistently received much less than the Jewish school system (Education Budget for 2003; Sikkuy 2004; Golan-Agnon 2005). For at least the last ten years, Israeli government bodies have acknowledged that the government spent more on Jewish students than on Palestinian Arab students (Human Rights Watch 2001; Golan-Agnon 2005). The State Comptroller documented this gap in several annual reports in the 1990s, revealing enormous discrepancies on every criterion measured, including school budgets, teaching hours, professional resources and facilities (Abu-Saad 1995; Comptroller's Report 1992; Human Rights Watch 2001). Specifically, in the 1990/91 school year, the annual per capita expenditure of the Ministry of Education and Culture was 308 New Israeli Shekels (NIS) for Jewish students, and 168 NIS for Arab students (Comptroller's Report 1992).

A more recent study on school budget allocations required all school principals in Israel to divulge their school budgets (excluding teachers' salaries) (CBS 2004b; Golan-Agnon 2005). The findings revealed that for each Jewish student, schools had an average of 4,935 NIS per year (some $1,097), while for each Palestinian Arab student, schools had only 862 NIS per year ($191).

The distribution of extra support funds for special programmes that the Ministry of Education gives to associations and non-governmental organisations acting outside of the education system has also been inequitable, and has had an important impact. As Daphna Golan-Agnon (2005), chair of the Committee for Equality in Education in the Ministry of Education's Pedagogical Secretariat from 1999-2001, explained:

> In 1999, the Ministry of Education gave NIS 1,309,588,679 (some $350 million) to associations, less than 1.5% of which went to Arab associations. In other words, every year the Ministry of Education assists in the promotion of associations and bodies working on behalf of education (youth movements, newspapers, museums and so forth) but gives almost no help to Arab associations (2005: 205-206).

Inferior buildings and insufficient facilities remain very common in Palestinian Arab schools, where overcrowding is also the norm. The Follow-Up Committee for Arab Education estimated in 2001 that the Arab education system needed 2,500 additional classrooms (Follow-Up Committee on Arab Education 2001). As a result of the classroom shortage, many classes in Palestinian Arab schools are still held in rented spaces, in some cases only a room in a private home, or in prefabricated buildings, locally called 'caravans' (Abu-Saad 2004; 2006; Human Rights Watch 2001). The Human Rights Watch (2001) report on Palestinian Arab education in Israel documented the striking physical differences between Jewish and Palestinian Arab schools, including both classrooms and auxiliary facilities (e.g., libraries, laboratories, gymnasiums, art rooms etc.). More Jewish than Arab schools had libraries (80.7 per cent vs. 64.4 per cent). Where science and computer laboratories existed in the Palestinian Arab schools, they were also poorly equipped, often with outdated equipment, if any at all.

This brief review of the material development of the Arab school system since the end of the military government reveals that despite all of the changes to present, in fact, immense gaps between it and the Jewish school system have been perpetuated and maintained by the state's educational policy.

Educational Aims, Goals and Curriculum in the Post-Military Government Era –Still 'Present-Absentees'

The aims of public education in Israel, as stated in the 1953 Law of State Education, were amended in 2000, and by and large, reaffirmed. They continue to maintain educational objectives for public schools that emphasise Jewish values, history and culture, while ignoring Palestinian values, history and culture (Adalah 2003). No parallel aims for the education of Palestinian Arabs in Israel have ever been appended to the Law of State Education, though in the 1970s, 1980s, and as recently as the 2005 Dovrat

educational reform, a number of committees, all of which were directed by Jewish educators and policy makers, have drafted aims specific to Arab education (Al-Haj 1995; Dovrat 2005). Instead, the narrow educational aims, which speak to the identity of three-fourths of the state's students while overlooking the other fourth, have continued to dominate official discourse about education in Israel. In June 2001, Minister of Education, Limor Livnat, stated that she would like to see that 'there is not a single child in Israel' who did not learn 'Jewish knowledge and values' (Fisher-Ilan 2001). The Ministry of Education operationalised such goals through programmes such as the '100 Concepts' curriculum unit that was introduced to the middle schools in the 2004/05 school year. While separate lists of the 100 key concepts were developed for the Jewish and Arab educational systems, they largely reaffirmed the status of Palestinian Arabs in Israel as 'present absentees'. The heritage section for the Jewish school system was entitled, 'Concepts in Jewish Heritage', while the list for the Arab school system was entitled, 'List of Concepts in Arab Heritage for the Arabic Sector', a qualification suggesting that they were of no importance or relevance for any other sector of Israeli society. The Jewish list included broad concepts about ancient Jewish history and religion, and National Holidays (e.g., Purim, Independence Day, Hanukah, Jerusalem Day, etc., which despite being called 'national' are not holidays for all citizens of the country). The Arab list contained concepts from both the Muslim and Christian religions, thus providing a more superficial treatment of each; and other general concepts chosen as characterising the Arabic culture from a perspective of romanticising the orient (e.g., Arab markets, hospitality, generosity, the tent).

The second section of the 100 Concepts programme dealt with Zionism. The Jewish list contained 33 items dealing with the Zionist movement, 15 prominent, modern Zionist/Israeli leaders (including 3 women), the 'wars of Israel', pre-and post-state waves of immigration, and institutions that have become inseparable/indistinguishable from Zionism, such as the Holocaust Museum and the Israeli military. The parallel Arab list included many of the same items as the Jewish list, as well as the names of 3 Arab citizens of Israel. These three Arabs did not, of course, appear on the Jewish list of Zionist concepts, which instead included additional items about the pre-state Zionist settlers and their victories over the indigenous population, the unauthorised pre-state immigration of Jews to Palestine, and the absorption of the first massive post-state Jewish immigration. There was not a single mention for either Jewish or Arab students of the history of the Palestinian people, the consequences they suffered as a result of the fulfillment of Zionist aspirations, or the Palestinian national movement. Programmes such as the '100 Concepts' demonstrate how the educational aims and goals that were established in the 1953 Law of State Education

are continually being renewed, and continue to keep Palestinian Arabs from being fully present in their own education, and largely absent from Jewish education.

Curriculum in the Jewish School System Post-Military Government

Similar to the aims and goals, not much has changed in the curriculum in the Jewish schools in the post-military government era. From the late 1970s to the early 1990s, the overwhelming trend in portraying Arabs in the Jewish curriculum formally (including history, geography, civics studies textbooks and Hebrew readers) remained negative as Bar-Tal and Zoltak (1989) described with regard to the portrayal of Arabs:

> in 50.7% of the items, the presentation was negative, in 29.1 per cent it was neutral, and in the remaining 20.2% positive. Most of the positive images were in the context of individual presentation. The majority (60%) of the behavioral descriptions and 46% of the trait characterisations referred to violence and aggression. In this context, delegitimising labels such as "human savages", "bloodthirsty", "gangs of murders", "infiltrators and terrorists", or 'robbers' appeared frequently. The books presented 82% of occupations held by Arabs as being related to either violence (soldiers, robbers, or gang members) or to primitive farming and manual labor. Only 12% of the Arabs presented were professionals or white-collar workers. Positive descriptions of Arabs referred mainly to undefined situations, in an undefined time, either in the desert or in an undefined place, often in legends about the exotic East (1989: 168).

More recently, some of the geography textbooks for high school published in the early 1990s portrayed the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel in terms of a 'demographic problem', due to their higher rates of natural increase than Israeli Jews – a new type of threat to the Zionist vision of a 'Jewish *and* democratic' state (Bar-Tal and Teichman 2005; Orni and Efrat 1992; Sorkis, Raf and Sharar 1991). One of the primary proponents of this new means of 'enemising' the Palestinian Arabs in Israel is Haifa university professor of geography, Arnon Sofer (Cook 2001; Galili 2002). Sofer said the following in a *Haaretz* interview in 2003:

> an emergency government is needed, as in 1967, with the national goal of a war to reconquer the territories inside Israel … Deterministic processes are threatening to destroy Israel. We won't succeed with democracy and pretty words. If we do not exert all out efforts in the Negev and Galilee, with an emergency regime, in another three to five years a dictator will do it. The Bedouin have won in the Negev, with an 8 percent annual birth rate and families of ten children living off the state (Ratner 2003: par. 3-4).

The curriculum in Israeli-Jewish educational institutions has been instrumental in constructing and maintaining the image of Palestinian Arabs as

'the enemy'. The one-sided historical narrative that, through the educational system, is internalised in the Jewish Israeli psyche has, in turn, provided the basis for maintaining a deeply divided society and its many discriminatory practices. As Israeli-born academic Oren Ben-Dor stated:

> All my education in Israel was one sided, treating the other as the enemy, the murderers, the rioters, the terrorists … without alluding, in any way, to their pains and longings. For my teachers and, as a result, for me also, for many years, Zionism was beyond reproach; it was a return to the promised land as a result of persecution, it was draining the swamps, it was building a state based on Jewish genius (Ben-Dor 2005).

According to Podeh (2002), however, analysis of history textbooks for the higher grades published toward the end of the 1990s indicated a major and significant change in the depiction of Palestinians, Palestinian nationalism, Arabs, and the Israeli-Arab conflict. Some of these textbooks included recently declassified Israeli governmental archival materials and were based on critical historical research that shed a more balanced light on the conflict and for the first time portrayed Palestinian Arabs not only as spectators or aggressors but also as victims of the conflict. However, even with these much celebrated revisions in textbooks, Raz-Krakotzkin noted that:

> in all the textbooks there is not one single geographical map which shows the [pre-1948 Palestinian] Arab settlements – only the Jewish settlements are shown. Generally speaking, the land itself has no history of its own, and the history of the land is presented as the history of the Jewish myth about it. The whole period, between the second temple and the Zionist settlement is not taught at all. But more precisely, the Israeli student has no idea whatsoever about the settlement of the country before '48, that is to say, has no idea about the history of the expelled themselves and of their life before the expulsion. And so the mythical image of the country was created as 'the Promised Land of the Jews' and not as a cultural-geographical entity in which the [Jewish] colonization took place (1999: 5).

Even with the deficiencies Raz-Krakotzkin noted, though, the publication of the new history textbooks led to heated debates in Israeli society, and in November 2000, the parliamentary Education Committee decided to delay the use of one of these textbooks. Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005) said that this act revealed that 'part of the society and its representatives have difficulty in accepting changes in school textbooks that question the Zionist narrative' (2005: 72-3). They suggested that this decision was due to a counter-trend in Israeli society brought about by the 'outbreak of violence' with the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000, and further concluded that since the parents and grandparents of the present generation had been consistently presented with negative images of Arabs in school textbooks, it would take many years, indeed another several generations, to rewrite

and introduce a balanced presentation of Arabs into the school textbooks, without negative stereotypes and delegitimising labels. According to this argument, however, maintaining the same approach in the textbooks can only perpetuate the conflict as additional generations of Israeli Jews study from books that overwhelmingly continue to portray Palestinians as 'the enemy' and deny their history. Ironically, the logical conclusion following from Bar-Tal and Teichman's (2005) analysis is that it is *essential* to revise the textbooks in the Jewish curriculum to provide a more balanced picture of Palestinian history and aspirations, in order for the Israeli Jewish population to begin to understand the roots of the cycle of violence, and perhaps even to begin to break it. Instead, their historically one-sided focus on their own victimhood has blinded, and continues to blind them to the violence that has been suffered by their victims, and that is perpetuated by the current uncritical educational approach.

Palestinian Arabs remain present in the Jewish school curriculum through majority representation (or misrepresentation), but absent in terms of any significant self-representation through their own language, culture and literature. Currently less than 4 per cent of Jewish high school students voluntarily study Arabic as one of their matriculation subjects (Lev-Ari 2003). According to the Education Ministry Director General, Ronit Tirosh, Jewish students feel antagonistic towards the Arabic language. Tirosh stated that:

> [Arabic] is a language that is identified with a population that makes your life difficult and endangers your security. Even so, students understand that knowing Arabic helps them to view life in Israel through the eyes of the Arabs….We thought about making Arabic compulsory for matriculation, but concluded that if less than 10 per cent of students learn it voluntarily, it would be impossible to force it on the rest (Lev-Ari 2003).

Curriculum in the Arab School System Post-Military Government

The Arab school system still has a separate curriculum, which is still designed and supervised by the Ministry of Education, where virtually no Arab educators or administrators have decision-making powers. As Daphna Golan-Agnon (2005), Chair of the Committee for Equality in Education in the Ministry of Education's Pedagogical Secretariat from 1999-2001, stated:

> the Arab head of the Arab education system has no authority or budget, he never even says anything at the meetings. Between us, we call him 'the plant'. His deputy, a Jewish man appointed by the security service, actually runs the department' (2005: 207).

The warning Hussein (1957) gave during the military government about the consequences of denying Palestinian students the opportunity to study their own identity and heritage in the schools went unheeded by educational authorities. In the 1970s, a group of Israeli-Jewish researchers, Peres, Ehrlich and Yuval-Davis, addressed the same issues. They pointed out the absurdity of the expectation that the 'Arab pupil … serve the state not because the latter is important to *him* and fulfills *his* needs, but because it is important to the Jewish people' (Peres, Ehrlich, and Yuval-Davis 1970: 151). Nevertheless, the Arab school system has maintained its emphasis on the Zionist national project that has dispossessed and continues to marginalise the Palestinian people; while at the same time suppressing the students' knowledge of and identification with the Palestinian and broader Arab peoples/nations and excluding the Palestinian Arab literary classics studied throughout the Arab world (Adalah 2003). As a Palestinian Arab student stated:

> Everything we study is about the Jews. Everything is Jewish culture. We study Bialik[11] and Rachel.[12] Why do I have to study them? Why don't they teach me Mahmud Darwish?[13] Why don't they teach me Nizar Qabbani?[14] Why don't they teach me Edward Said? Why don't they teach me about Arab philosophers and Palestinian poets? ... [T]he educational system as a whole has a very negative impact on our identity. The whole world now recognises the existence of Palestine and … the Palestinian people. So why are they still teaching me about Bialik and Rachel? What is the problem in teaching us Palestinian history? The problem is that they are afraid. They don't want us, Palestinian Arabs, to develop an awareness of our national identity (quoted in Makkawi 2002: 50).

Reform efforts have repeatedly failed to bring about change, since none of the recommendations of the many committees appointed by the government to study or improve the Arab educational system have ever had any binding power (Abu-Saad 2001; Al-Haj 1995). As such, Palestinian Arab students continue to be subjected to a curricular and educational programme designed to address the needs and meet the concerns of the ruling majority, and ensure the marginalisation, subordination and control of the minority.

11. Haim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934) is one of the leading Hebrew poets of modern times.

12. Rachel Blobstein (1890-1931) is a well-known Hebrew poet.

13. Mahmoud Darwish is the Palestinian national poet. He is considered to be the most important Arab poet working today.

14. Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998), a Syrian poet, was one of the most prominent literary figures in the Arab world.

Staffing, Politicisation and Control in the Shadow of Military Government

Even though the military government, with its many formal restrictions, ended in 1966, Palestinian Arab educators continue to be subject to a number of less visible restrictions. There is still a great scarcity of Palestinian Arabs in upper-level administrative positions where the policies of the educational system are formulated. This does not only limit Palestinian Arab input into the Ministry's many pedagogical and educational programmes. As Golan-Agnon observed, the lack of Palestinian Arab representation in the higher echelons of the Ministry of Education also prevents Arab schools from gaining access to many of the education programmes that are administered on a discretionary basis (Golan-Agnon 2005; Human Rights Watch 2001).

Staffing in the public education system for Palestinian Arabs continues to be determined, first and foremost, by the consideration of maintaining control over the community. The hiring of teachers, principals and supervisory staff ultimately lies in the hands of the central Ministry of Education office in Jerusalem. Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel must still undergo a security check to get the secret stamp of *Shin Bet* (General Security Services-GSS) approval in order to get a teaching job, in a process from which they are completely excluded and have no means to appeal (Ettinger 2004; Sa'ar 2001; Lustick 1980; Al-Haj 1995; Golan-Agnon 2005). On the eve of the 2004-2005 school year, the Education Ministry Director General, Ronit Tirosh, publicly justified the necessity of the GSS security check in the hiring process of staff in the Palestinian Arab schools (Ettinger 2004). This security check continues to be utilised to exclude Palestinian Arab educators who openly express views not in line with those officially sanctioned by the school system. This selective staffing is another means used to maintain tight control over the Palestinian intelligentsia, and make the school an alienating place for Palestinian Arab teachers and students alike. As a young Palestinian Arab teacher stated:

> I belong to the state of Israel only in the geographical sense. According to an agreement they imposed on me. I am an employee of the Ministry of Education. Receive a salary. Live here. But in the spirit, in the soul, I belong to the Palestinian people. So you tell me how I can educate children in these circumstances. A simple example – I've run into a lot of students here who draw, let's say, a Palestinian flag. Now I've got to tell the student that this is forbidden. But the student will consider me a traitor. And maybe I'll also feel that I'm a traitor. But if I show any approval of his drawing maybe they'll fire me, or summon me for an investigation. So what do I do? I don't tell him anything. I pretend that I don't notice (Grossman 1992: 50).

The impact of this control system is such that even today, Palestinian Arab school administrators and teachers fear openly to criticise the Ministry of

Education, reminiscent of Murkus' experiences trying to organise teachers during the military government. In a *Jerusalem Post* article published on Dec. 14, 2005 that dealt with the substandard conditions of the school in a newly recognised Palestinian Bedouin village in the Negev, school administrators and teachers spoke only on the condition that they remain anonymous:

> speaking off the record in the scattering of temporary buildings that have housed the village's current elementary school for the past 30 years, teachers in Kasr al-Ser were far from optimistic about the present state and future prospects of education in the Negev's Beduin towns.
>
> "Every government office boasts of what it does, but a lot remains to be changed on the ground", said one school official. Since the new school will not be large enough to accommodate the village's large student population, teachers pointed out, the old school will remain operative despite its inadequate infrastructure.
>
> According to the official, the electricity grid passes by the school without actually powering it. "There are no land lines here", the official added. "For over five years, the computer lab was not connected to the Internet, and we still have no air conditioners and no school gym" (Halkin 2005: par. 3-5).

Another example that demonstrates the awareness among both Palestinian Arab teachers and students of the on-going control of the Ministry of Education and GSS was given by a high school history teacher:

> I was teaching about Napoleon's military campaigns to conquer Egypt, and the textbook said that Napoleon was coming to bring "progress" and "enlightenment" to the Arab world. I told the students that they should view this rationale the same way that they view the current rationale of America for coming to Iraq to bring "freedom" and "democracy". The students, who immediately understood the point I was trying to convey, laughed at this analogy. But then one of them said, "you had better be careful, or you'll lose your job".[15]

Thus, the manner in which the Arab schools and the higher echelons of the public school system are staffed plays an essential role in marginalising potential Palestinian community leaders and movements, while rewarding those who are quiet and complacent, and who can in a sense make themselves into 'present absentees' (Al-Haj 1995; Swirski 1999).

Conclusion

The Israeli educational system for the Palestinian Arab community developed within the context of military government, and while the formal administrative structures have changed, the legacy of using education

15. Personal communication, December 2005.

as a tool for political purposes has endured and continues to define the educational experience of indigenous Palestinian Arab students in Israel today. Throughout the rule of the military government till the present, the education system has been used as a mechanism of marginalisation and social, culture and economic control over Palestinian Arabs.

The Israeli public school system is functioning effectively to maintain the cultural, socio-economic, and political subordination of its Palestinian Arab citizens through the imposition of aims, goals and curriculum to which the students cannot relate, and the substandard and discriminatory provision of educational resources, programmes and services; all of which result in markedly poorer level of educational achievement and rates of students qualified to enter higher education. As with every other aspect of the education system in Israel, these inequitable outcomes are not a matter of chance, but rather a matter of policy. None of the reforms launched to address the inequities between the Jewish and Arab educational systems to date have had any notable impact.

The public school system's aims, goals, curricula and structures of control are designed to serve the Zionist national project, and as such, perpetuate racist and hostile images of Arabs to Jewish students, and silence the Palestinian Arab story while reshaping regional history for both Jewish and Arab students to fit the Zionist myth. While the sense of Palestinian Arab belonging to the Zionist national project – e.g., building the Jewish state – can only be partial and incomplete, if it exists at all, the development of identification with the Palestinian people and Arab peoples more broadly is suppressed. The study of extensive required curricular materials is used to make the Palestinian Arab student understand the history and empathise with the suffering of the Jewish people. Thus, the policy and content of the state-controlled educational system for Palestinian Arabs aim to re-educate the students to accept the loss of their history and identity. Together with discriminatory resource allocation, it prepares them – ideologically and practically – to accept the superior status of the Jewish people, and the subordination of their needs and identity to the needs of the national Zionist project.

In conclusion, we raise the question of the indirect, and perhaps unseen, consequences of the educational approach the Israeli state has adopted, not only for the Palestinian minority, but also the Jewish majority. The stereotypical and ahistorical picture of Palestinian Arabs fostered by the school system serves not only to encourage Jewish Israelis to maintain a sense of distance from and superiority over the Palestinian Arabs who are citizens of Israel. It also serves to cripple any efforts to resolve the conflict over land, nationality and the basic rights of Palestinian Arabs (whether those holding Israeli citizenship, living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, or living as refugees) since they are portrayed as a non-people, without a history.

Ironically, the state educational system's efforts to re-educate the Palestinian students to forget their history and identity, coupled with its discriminatory practices, may have ended up reinforcing their Palestinian identity and sense of the conflict with the Jewish majority. Rather than erasing their people's collective memory, it has provided them with a highly alienating educational experience, which has also served to maintain the separation between Israel's Jewish and Palestinian Arab citizens by fostering bitterness and enmity. As one Palestinian Arab student stated:

> I went to a very poorly developed and very poorly resourced high school that provided us with such limited, second-class opportunities for the future. Every day for 3 years we were bussed past a wealthy Jewish suburb – built on our land – and we watched the construction of a beautiful, modern, state-of-the-art high school for that community. In ways like this, the State has planted bitterness in our hearts. We weren't born with this feeling; it is the harvest of the discrimination we've experienced. [16]

Though it seems that not much has changed in terms of the government's thinly-veiled hostility and its suspicion-ridden views and treatment of its Palestinian Arab citizens, the citizens themselves have changed. Their on-going campaign in response to the massacre of 13 of their community members in October 2000 represents a break from the legacy that has relegated them to the status of 'present absentees'. In their quest to bring those responsible to justice, they have asserted their *presence*, through both national and international channels, and have, as a result, won concessions from the government. And despite all of the governmental and educational efforts to separate them from their people, their history and their identity, they are asserting their *presence* as Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel. Though this paper has clearly demonstrated that the legacy of the military government continues to affect their lives in many ways, there is also evidence of a new level of resistance on their part against continuing to live in its shadow.

One can only question whether governmental perpetuation of a quasi-military government approach toward Palestinian citizens in the post-military government era is, indeed, in the long-term interests of the State. Despite the narrowness of its Zionist ideology and mythology, Israel is in fact a state with an indigenous Palestinian community that makes up nearly one fifth of its population. For the present, the situation seems to be satisfactory to the Jewish majority, and the public education system will continue to aid in perpetuating it, with considerable impact. However, as the sense of bitterness and alienation grows within the Palestinian Arab population, so does the threat of political and civil instability.

Should the political will ever arise among the Jewish majority to change this situation, no effort will be successful without making radical changes

16. Interview by author, May 2003.

in the educational system. The exclusivist and Orientalist bent not only of the curriculum, but also of the system's overall aims and goals, must be uprooted and replaced with aims, goals and curriculum that do not deny or demonise Palestinians, but rather recognise the history and identity of the 'Others' who make up Israeli society; and, most importantly, allow them to speak for themselves, rather than being misrepresented through alternatively antagonistic and paternalistic majority perceptions. This is essential if the educational system, and Israeli society at large, are ever to move beyond the legacy of the military government.

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