THE GENERATION OF BROAD EXPECTATIONS: NATIONALISM, EDUCATION, AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN SYRIA AND LEBANON, 1930-1958[1]

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The period between 1930 and 1958 was a crucial time for the history of nationalism in Syria and Lebanon. The emergence and rapid growth of radical organizations, like the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) and the League of National Action ('Uṣbat al-'Amal al-Qaumī), demonstrated a growing political self-confidence of the educated 'new middle class'. With a more radical form of nationalism, these groups directed their criticism not only at the French rule in Syria and Lebanon, but at the whole colonial system as such. By this, they called the legitimacy of the emerging territorial states into question, as well as the claim of the conservative-nationalist notables to rule these prospective post-colonial states. Their idea of decolonization was tightly connected to their call for a comprehensive reform of the nation. Industrialization, technical modernization, and nationalist education were to transform the society from a state of 'miserable backwardness' to a 'higher stage of civilization', able to cope with the West. Within this envisaged political and social modernization, the radical nationalist parties claimed a leading role, referring to their members' acquired higher education and their 'modern' knowledge.

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The close interrelation between the spread of education and the emergence of radical nationalism is a generally supposed fact, one hardly studied in detail however. Therefore, it is the aim of this article to elaborate and assess some interrelations between school and university education and political socialization or rather radicalization.

The main historiographical interest in nationalism has concentrated on its origins in Syria and Lebanon during the period from the late 19th century until the end of King Faysal's rule in 1920.[2] The following stage of radicalization, however, has been less under discussion. The most comprehensive description of this particular era of the Syrian history is Philip Khoury's work on "Syria and the French Mandate", in which he describes the complex interrelationship between the new radical nationalist groups (esp. the League of National Action) and the traditional nationalist movement.[3] In his approach, he relates the analysis of political discourse and action to contemporary social and economic changes. A monograph of comparable complexity on the same period of Lebanese history, as well as on the post-independence era of both countries, is still missing. Studies on particular parties or organizations are unequally distributed. Works on the Ba'th are manifold, but mostly written with a view to the party's later rise to power, thus treating its organizational forerunners—like the League of National Action—and the early history of the party as a prelude.[4]

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[2] For a survey of the debate, see: C. Ernest Dawn: The Origins of Arab Nationalism, in: Lisa Anderson et al. (eds.): *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, New York 1991, pp. 3-30. Recent studies: James L. Gelvin *Divided Loyalties. Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire*, Berkeley 1999 and idem: The Social Origins of Popular Nationalism in Syria: Evidence for a New Framework, in: *IJMES* 26 (1994), pp. 645-661; Mahmoud Haddad: The Rise of Arab Nationalism Reconsidered, in: *IJMES* 26 (1994), pp. 201-222; Hasan Kayali: *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-18*, London 1997.

[3] Philip S. Khoury: Factionalism Among Syrian Nationalists During the French Mandate, in: *IJMES* 13 (1981), pp. 441-469; P.S. Khoury: *Syria and the French Mandate. The Politics of Arab Nationalism 1920—1945*, London 1987, pp. 219ff; and P.S. Khoury: The Paradoxical in Arab Nationalism: Interwar Syria Revisited, in: James Jankowski and Israel Gershoni (eds.): *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, New York 1997, pp. 273-288.

[4] For the history of the Ba'th-Party before its rise to power in 1963, see: Kemal S. Abu Jaber: *The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party. History, Ideology, and Organiza-*

The most comprehensive study on the Syrian Social Nationalist Party is still Yamak's book.[5] Most of these studies on single nationalist organizations have in common that they emphasize questions of ideology and party structure, but tend to neglect social and cultural factors in a broader perspective. In a more general sense, a growing historiographical interest concentrates on the interrelationship between education and social mobility on the one hand, and socio-political change on the other hand. In this context, special attention is paid to the crucial role of the "intellectuals" (*muṯaqqafūn*), or the so-called "effendiyya", in the process of the radicalization and spread of nationalism.[6]

A new insight into the complex interrelationship between education and political socialization can now be given on the basis of numerous autobiographies, which have been written and published by (former) radical nationalists. Concerning this specific material, there is a growing number of studies which approach autobiographies primarily as a literary genre.[7] The usefulness of

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tion, Syracuse 1966; Nabil M. Kaylani: The Rise of the Syrian Baʿth, 1940-58: Political Success and Party Failure, in: *IJMES* 3 (1972), pp. 2-23; John F. Devlin: *The Baʿth-Party. A History from its Origins*, California 1976; David Roberts: *The Baʿth and the Creation of Modern Syria*, London – Sydney 1987; Hanna Batatu: *Syria's Peasantry, the Descendants of Its Lesser Rural Notables, and Their Politics*, Princeton 1999. For the political socialization within nationalist organizations see Hinnebusch's instructive study on the (Baʿthist) Revolutionary Youth Movement after 1963, in: Raymond A. Hinnebusch: Political Recruitment and Socialization in Syria: The Case of the Revolutionary Youth Federation, in: *IJMES* 11 (1980), pp. 143-74.

[5] Labib Zuwiyya Yamak: *The Syrian Social Nationalist Party: An Ideological Analysis*, Cambridge 1966. Beside this, Daniel Pipes' rather peculiar interpretations of the SSNP should be mentioned: Daniel Pipes: Radical Politics and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, in: *IJMES* 20 (1988), pp. 303-324 and idem: *Greater Syria*, Oxford 1990.

[6] Israel Gershoni: Rethinking the Formation of Arab Nationalism in the Middle East, 1920-1945: Old and New Narrative, in: J. Jankowski and I. Gershoni (eds.): *Rethinking Nationalism*, loc. cit., pp. 3-25, here esp. pp. 18ff; Michael Eppel: The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958, in: *IJMES* 30 (1998), pp. 227-250;

Donald M. Reid: *Lawyers and Politics in the Arab World, 1880-1960* (Studies in Middle Eastern History, vol. 5), Minneapolis–Chicago (Bibliotheca Islamica) 1981. ʿAbdullāh Ḥannā: *al-Muṯaqqafūn fī as-siyāsa wal-muǧtamaʿ. Namūḏaǧ al-aṭibbāʾ fī Sūrīya*, Damascus 1996.

[7] See e.g.: Fedwa Malti-Douglas: *Blindness and Autobiography. Al-Ayyām of Ṭāhā Ḥusayn*, Princeton 1988; Tetz Rooke: *In My Childhood. A Study of Arabic Autobio-*

autobiographies as historical sources, however, is controversially discussed among historians.[8] Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus that autobiographical texts cannot be regarded as transparent records of the past. In fact, for the historical analysis of autobiographical material one has to distinguish three different kinds of 'facts'. First, there is the representation of facts and events in the narrower sense, which can only be verified by a cross-check with other contemporary sources or, in comparative perspective, with other autobiographies. Second, every historical period leaves its specific imprint on the narrative plots, by which the authors bring their individual life experience and the recent past of their society together in one comprehensive story.[9] And, last but not least, there are the socio-cultural patterns of self- and world-perception which can be regarded as a result from the authors' upbringing and their life-courses, i.e. their socialization. In this latter regard, the work of Pierre Bourdieu provides an interesting approach for the theoretical conceptualization of the complex interrelation between a) the socio-cultural conditions of the authors' early surroundings, b) the processes of their socialization, and c) the resulting patterns of their social 'habitus'.

For this purpose, two aspects of Bourdieu's social theory are of

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graphy (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, vol. 15), Stockholm 1997; Nadja Odeh: *Dichtung–Brücke zur Außenwelt. Studien zur Autobiographie Fadwā Tūqāns*, Berlin 1994; Robin Ostle et al. (eds.): *Writing the Self. Autobiographical Writing in Modern Arabic Literature*, London 1998.

[8] Most historians stress the value of autobiographical material for the field of cultural and intellectual history. Socio-historical approaches, however, remain sparse. See e.g.: Elie Kedourie: *Arab Political Memoirs and Other Studies*, London 1974, p. 177-205; Thomas Philipp: *Ǧurǧī Zaidān. His Life and Thought* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, vol. 3), Beirut 1979; idem: The Autobiography in Modern Arab Literature and Culture, in: *Poetics Today* 14 (1993) no. 3, p. 573-604; Sergei A. Shuiskii: Some Observations on Modern Arabic Autobiography, in: *Journal of Arabic Literature* 13 (1982), pp. 111-23; Martin Kramer (ed.): *Middle Eastern Lives. The Practice of Biography and Self-Narrative*, Syracuse 1991; Charlotte B. Looß: *Libanesische Immigranten in Ghana. Selbstwahrnehmung und Rollenzuschreibung in autobiographischen Schriften*, Frankfurt/M. 1999.

[9] One such fact is—as will be shown at length later on—the remarkable tendency of all investigated autobiographers to embed their own life-stories in the broader historical context of their 'generation' as well as their pessimistic or rather negative assessment of their own experiences.

particular relevance.[10] First, a new perspective is provided by Bourdieu's analytical or rather constructivist re-definition of the notion of 'class'. For Bourdieu, class affiliation is not to be understood as the individual's ontological-economic position within the process of production, but as his analytically defined position in 'social space' (i.e. society), in terms of the relational differences to other positions, and corresponding to the economic as well as the cultural conditions. The most decisive factor, which characterizes the social position of an individual, is his disposal of different kinds of "capital", of which Bourdieu distinguishes three main sorts, namely 'economic capital' (material and financial property), 'cultural capital' (level of education), and 'social capital' (social prestige and good connections). The second concept of interest is Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus', which is mainly derived from his notions of class and social space. Habitus describes the intermediate between the individual's objective conditions and the patterns of his thought, perception, and action.[11] Therefore, habitus can be defined as a system of durable and transferable dispositions (not determinants!), which are acquired by socialization and social experience. Since Bourdieu understands socialization as a lifelong and open process, the habitus is neither static nor determinative.

Applying these rather theoretical reflections to the methodological question of using autobiographies as historical sources,

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[10] In this discussion, I mainly refer to the following works: Pierre Bourdieu: *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris 1979; idem: *Le sens pratique*, Paris 1980; idem: Espace social et genèse de 'classe', in: *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 52/3 (June 1984). For Bourdieu's theory in general see: Derek Robbins: *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu. Recognizing Society*, Boulder 1991. For a critical discussion of his central concepts: Craig Calhoun et al. (eds.): *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, Chicago 1993. The debate among German historians is of special interest because of its focus on the adaptability of Bourdieu's theory to historical methodology. See esp.: Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey: Kulturelle und symbolische Praktiken: das Unternehmen Pierre Bourdieu, in: Wolfgang Hardtwig and Hans-Ulrich Wehler (eds.): *Kulturgeschichte heute* (Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Sonderheft 16), Göttingen 1996, pp. 111-130; Sven Reichardt: Bourdieu für Historiker? Ein kultursoziologisches Angebot an die Sozialgeschichte, in: Thomas Mergel and Thomas Welskopp (eds.): *Geschichte zwischen Kultur und Gesellschaft. Beiträge zur Theoriedebatte*, München 1997, pp. 71-94.

[11] Concerning the concept of habitus, I mainly refer to P. Bourdieu: *La distinction*, loc. cit., ch. 3, and P. Bourdieu: *Le sens pratique*, loc. cit., ch. 3.

one can state that autobiographical texts are obviously shaped by the authors' patterns of world- and self-perception or rather by their social habitus. Beyond this, the biographical information of the texts permits drawing conclusions about the social and cultural conditions under which these patterns of the habitus were acquired. There is no doubt that autobiographies provide access to a rather small segment of society: only persons who are capable of, and experienced in, writing are able to compose and publish autobiographies. But it is this reason that makes autobiographies of even higher significance for the study of intellectuals as a social group. In the context of this study, I understand 'intellectuals' as persons whose social positions are characterized by a higher-than-average level of education or rather cultural 'capital'. Among this group, one has to distinguish between persons from upper class background (with a high level of inherited social and economic 'capitals') and persons from middle class background (with respectively little inherited 'capitals'). The corresponding Arabic notion, which is mostly found in the investigated sources as a self-description, is *muṯaqqaf*. Next to this self-selective character of autobiographies, only books of authors who regard, or formerly regarded, themselves as nationalists were put into consideration in this study.

The Educational Situation

On the threshold of the era of independence, the educational system in Lebanon and Syria was characterized by its outstanding variety, a situation which can be described negatively as 'fragmentation'.[12] The common form of traditional learning was, since the Middle Ages, mainly tied to the religious communities. Islamic education especially was based on highly developed educational institutions from the elementary Koranic schools (*kuttāb* or *maktab*), to the advanced religious schools (*madrasa*), and it was crowned by famous institutions like al-Azhar in Cairo, the Süleymaniye in Istanbul or az-Zaytūna in Tunis. Christian education had also

[12] On education in the Ottoman Empire and the central and eastern Arab lands see: Michael Winter: "Maʿārif", in: *EI*², vol. V, pp. 902-915.

deep historical roots in the region, but it experienced a tremendous change due to the missionary activities of the West. In fact, it was mainly the liberalization policy of Ibrahim Pasha's rule in *Bilād aš-Šām*, which attracted Western missionaries to the Levant. Since 1843, the centre of the Jesuit mission was Ġazīr, which later became the Université St. Joseph (USJ) in Beirut. American Missionaries were present in Lebanon since the 1820s. Their most prominent institution, the Syrian Protestant College—later known as the American University of Beirut (AUB)—was opened in 1866. In the long run, the activities of foreign missionaries reinforced the educational efforts in all parts of society. Private denominational schools were founded by all religious communities in Syria and Lebanon, but also non-confessional schools were established by famous intellectuals, like Buṭrus al-Bustānī who founded the Collège National in 1863. The Ottoman administration, which had undertaken serious efforts to install reformed schools in the capital, now turned increasingly towards its provinces. The historical climax of this policy in Greater Syria was the foundation of a medical school in Damascus in 1903, which was re-established by King Faysal in 1919, and finally turned out as the nucleus of the University of Damascus.

So, at the end of World War I, the educational landscape of Syria and Lebanon was not only rather diverse, but educational opportunities were also very unequally distributed. The vast majority of the population was still illiterate and hardly had any access to educational institutions. Schools were mainly concentrated in the big cities and the areas of the former Mount Lebanon, while large parts of both countries had few or no educational institutions at all. The French Mandate did not change this situation much. Educational efforts mainly concentrated on the primary level, while the establishment of secondary schools was left to private initiative. As a consequence, the enrolment rate grew slowly. In Syria, the absolute number of enroled pupils tripled from 53,403 in 1923 to 162,818 in 1944/45, while in Lebanon the total number grew from 67,383 pupils in 1924 to 144,702 in 1944/45.[13]

[13] Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi: *Education in Arab Countries of the*

However, this expansion was diminished by the huge problems within the schools and classes. Teaching facilities in state schools were mostly poor, primary teachers were often not sufficiently qualified, and classes were overcrowded. As a consequence, the steady growth of enrolment rates was not really accompanied by a corresponding increase of graduates with a complete baccalauréat. Therefore, it is not at all surprising that the enrolment rates at the three universities—AUB, USJ, and Damascus University—grew at an even slower pace. A real explosion of the student numbers can be observed only for the period after the 1950s.[14] However, a significant improvement can be noticed for parts of the lower middle class. Since the French Mandate period, increasing numbers of individuals from this social stratum were enabled by scholarships to reach secondary and even higher education.[15] Here, a small door for social mobility was opened since the 30s for boys who did not stem from the absentee land-owning class or the urban bourgeoisie.

Education and Social Background

Not only were educational opportunities unequally distributed in Syria and Lebanon, but also social attitudes towards education

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Near East, American Council of Education, Washington 1949, Table 59, p. 351 (for Syria) and Table 72, p. 422 (for Lebanon).

[14] The impact on Lebanese politics and society is studied by Barakat, Bashshur and Hanf, while comparable studies on Syria are missing. Halim Barakat: *Lebanon in Strife. Student Preludes to the Civil War*, Austin 1977; Munir A. Bashshur: *The Role of Two Western Universities in the National Life of Lebanon and the Middle East: a Comparative Study of the American University of Beirut and Université St. Joseph*, Chicago (unpublished Ph.D.-thesis) 1964. See also: M. Bashshur: The Role of Education: A Mirror of a Fractured National Image, in: Halim Barakat (ed.): *Toward a Viable Lebanon*, Washington 1988, pp. 27-41. Theodor Hanf: *Erziehungswesen in Gesellschaft und Politik des Libanon* (Freiburger Studien zu Politik und Gesellschaft überseeischer Länder, vol. 5), Bielefeld 1969; idem: Le comportement politique des étudiants libanais, in: *Travaux et Jours* 46 (1973), pp. 5-52; idem: Die Hochschulen in den gesellschaftlichen Konflikten des Libanon, in: Ulrich Haarmann and Peter Bachmann (eds.): *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit. Festschrift für H.R. Roemer* (Beiruter Texte und Studien, vol. 22), Beirut 1979, pp. 230-253.

[15] According to Matthews and Akrawi, about one-third of the student body in Syria was exempted from tuition fees or even had scholarships in the 40s. R.D. Matthews and M. Akrawi: *Education in Arab Countries*, loc. cit., pp. 370f.

were different in the various socio-cultural milieus of the Lebanese and Syrian society. With a view to the autobiographical descriptions, one can classify roughly three different types of outlooks: the upper-class attitude, the "petit-bourgeois"[16] attitude, and, last but not least, the lower-class attitude.[17]

Upper class affiliation was characterized by a higher-than-average level of the three mentioned capitals: property, education, and social prestige. Especially in the urban milieu, the ruling class regarded good education as its natural privilege, and furthermore as a necessary means to preserve its inherited social position. The study of law was especially preferred because of its usefulness in safeguarding vested interests in juridical questions concerning personal property and for acting in the political field.[18] Most established advocates came from an upper class background and, moreover, until 1958, a large part of the members of the parliaments and cabinets of both countries held law degrees.[19] Autobiographers who stemmed from upper class background and became later members of radical nationalist organizations point out that the awareness of the importance of modern secular education was deeply rooted in their families. For them, it was a matter of social prestige to send young men (and even women) to the best available schools and universities, with the foreign provenance of these institutions being no obstacle at all.

One example of a radical nationalist from an upper class background is Hisham Sharabi (b.1928). Sharabi, who was an active member of the SSNP from 1946 until 1949, wrote two autobiogra-

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[16] In using the notion "petit-bourgeois", I refer to Pierre Bourdieu, for whom this class is more distinguished by its social attitudes than by its economic situation. Esp. in: P. Bourdieu: *La distinction*, loc. cit., chap. 6, pp. 500ff.

[17] It is important to stress here that the lower-class-attitude is not synonymous to "attitude prevailing in the lower class". According to Bourdieu, the social outlook is a central criterion for one's social position. A worker with a petit-bourgeois outlook is not 'estranged from his class', but is already about to change his social position.

[18] D. Reid: *Lawyers and Politics*, loc. cit., pp. 91ff.

[19] D. Reid: *Lawyers and Politics*, loc. cit. and R. Bayley Winder: Syrian Deputies and Cabinet Ministers, 1918-58, in: *MEJ* 16 (1962), pp. 407-29 and 17 (1963), pp. 35-51.

phies within a period of almost 15 years.[20] His second book especially describes his family background at length. In his childhood, Sharabi spent much time at his grandparents in Acre, while his parents lived in Jaffa. His grandfather served as higher Ottoman bureaucrat in Bosra until the end of World War I. Later on he lived on the revenues of his land possessions in Lebanon, which also helped him to finance the building of a new, comfortable house in Acre.[21] Only Sharabi's grandmother seemed to be worried about the young boy's religious education, and sent him to the sheikh of a neighbouring mosque for religious instruction. But after a few sessions, the young Hisham refused to go there and to learn 'uninteresting' and 'useless' things.[22] As in most other autobiographies of modern educated authors, Sharabi remembers the experience of traditional religious education as a short and rather bizarre interlude. From then on, he attended only British and American foreign educational institutions. First, he was enroled at a private British school in Jaffa and later became a boarder at the Friends' School of Ramallah. When his family moved to Lebanon in the late 30s because of the rumours of the national revolt in Palestine, Sharabi was enroled at the International College (I.C.), a secondary school which was closely connected to the AUB, where he started his studies of philosophy in 1943. All these schools were among the best available educational institutions in the region and were rather expensive, especially for boarders. In retrospect, Sharabi realizes his rather exceptional situation:

All those who studied at the American University of Beirut at that time came from the rich or, at least, from the well-to-do class. We were among the few of the ten thousands of young men of our people who had the

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[20] Hišām Šarābī [Hisham Sharabi]: *al-Ǧamr war-ramād. Ḏikrayāt muṯaqqaf ʿarabī*, Beirut[2] 1988 [1st ed. 1978]; the same: *Suwar al-mādī. Sīra ḏātīya*, Beirut 1993. For a literary assessment of Sharabi's autobiographies see: T. Rooke: *In My Childhood*, esp. p. 31 and 152. For a comparable autobiographer from the same social background see Nadim Dimašqīya (b.1920, member of the League of National Action): *Maḥaṭṭāt fī ḥayātī ad-diblūmāsīya. Ḏikrayāt fī as-siyāsa wal-ʿalāqāt ad-daulīya*, Beirut 1995.

[21] H. Šarābī: *Suwar al-mādī*, pp. 45ff and 77ff.

[22] H. Šarābī: *al-Ǧamr war-ramād*, pp. 95f.

opportunity to acquire knowledge and higher education. Nevertheless, we did not feel that we enjoyed special privileges, from which the rest was excluded. We were accustomed to living in spacious houses, we enjoyed life as we wanted, and we did not know the meaning of privation, as if happiness would be our natural right.[23]

On the contrary, the petit-bourgeois attitude saw education as the best way to realize the fervent hope for social ascent. The social position of the lower middle class families was characterized by few financial and material possessions, which was, however, still enough to be sold and invested in the children's education. The education (cultural capital) of the parents mostly lacked formal diplomas, but they had often acquired a remarkable level of knowledge by autodidactical efforts, which was enough to recognize the relevance and opportunities of modern education. An example of this social stratum is Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir (b.1920), who stems from a petit-bourgeois Shiite family from Baalbek and who later became a SSNP member.[24] ʿAbd as-Sātir's grandfather had spent a part of his life working as a peasant in a little village, until he moved to Baalbek and opened a butchery. Since he was an orphan, he enjoyed no school education in his former village, but was later able to attain some religious learning. The author describes his grandfather as the most important person in his personal surrounding and as setting all his hopes on his grandson. He wanted the boy to achieve the social ascent from which he himself had been barred. Although it is impossible to reconstruct the "real" personality of this grandfather by referring to ʿAbd as-Sātir's description, one can certainly say that the author himself was deeply marked by the described social orientation. His aspiration for social ascent provides one important leitmotif, which runs through the whole book, and it was certainly an important part of the author's self-view and of his life-project. From his autobiographical descriptions one can further assess the remarkable ef-

[23] Ibidem, p. 17.

[24] Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya. Min muʿānayāt muṯaqqaf ʿarabī*, Beirut 1982. For a comparable autobiographer from the same social background see Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn (b.1912, member of the Ligue of National Action): *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam. Sīra ḏātīya*, Damascus 1994. Furthermore an-Naqīb Adīb Qaddūra (b. 1917, SSNP-member): *Ḥaqā'iq wa-mawāqif*, Beirut 1989.

forts which his family undertook to make his studies up to the law diploma possible. Muṣṭafā's uncle, Abū ʿAlī Ḥusain, discovered a secondary school with low tuition fees in ʿAley (*al-Ǧāmiʿa al-Waṭanīya*), so that the family could afford his and his cousins' enrolment.[25] Obviously, the main criteria for the choice of this school was not quality but affordability. In contrast to the boarders from a wealthier background, ʿAbd as-Sātir and his cousins lived in small rented rooms and their parents assured their board by bringing everything by train from Baalbek to ʿAley. Some years later, the author decided to go to Damascus for his law studies for similar reasons. Life was cheaper there and, beside this, he had relatives in the Syrian capital with whom he could stay for the time being.[26]

The lower-class attitude toward education can be reconstructed historically only by autobiographical texts of authors who originally stemmed from this milieu, but succeeded in building themselves a petit-bourgeois existence and reaching a better level of education. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm (b.1928) provides an example for such a life trajectory.[27] The author stems from humble origins and was a member of the Baʿth-party from 1946 to the early 50s. He grew up in a conservative Sunni family of the peasant village milieu. His family's income came exclusively from peasant work and was therefore entirely dependent on the market prices for agricultural goods. So, the standards of living in his family were very low and even close to poverty.[28] Economically, however, the family was not dependent on others, as were urban workers or rural day labourers. Since his family held a small plot of land, its economic position has to be described, strictly speaking, as lower middle class. Nevertheless, the prevalent social habitus, especially the attitude toward social ascent and education, was clearly different from the above-described petit-bourgeois attitude and must

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[25] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qadīya*, pp. 32ff.

[26] Ibidem, pp. 55ff.

[27] Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād. Sinīn ḫaṣība wa-ṯamār murra*, Beirut 1994. For a comparable autobiographer from the same social background see Bašīr al-ʿAzma (b.1910, later Nasserist, but not organized): *Ǧīl al-hazīma. Baina al-wahda wal-infiṣāl. Muḏakkirāt*, London 1991.

[28] On the theme of poverty in Arabic autobiographies see: T. Rooke: *In My Childhood*, pp. 200-36.

therefore be named as lower class.[29] In ʿAbd al-Karīm's family, the educational level was restricted to a smattering of religious knowledge for only a few persons, with the overwhelming majority of the family members being illiterate. Under these circumstances, social ascent was not even a dream, let alone a realistic life project. Every person capable of working was urgently needed in the fields, and every bad harvest could threaten the economic survival of the whole family.

When ʿAbd al-Karīm enroled at the secondary school in Damascus, a room had to be rented. This expense was a heavy financial burden for his family. The unstable income from the agricultural work seriously threatened the completion of his secondary education several times.[30] Only the support of his elder brother, who helped his father in the fields, enabled ʿAbd al-Karīm to finish his secondary education. But beyond this, he had to face stubborn opposition to his education from outside his family. For some peasants, the young pupils were just "lazybones and jobless", while the notables of the village tried to convince Aḥmad's father that a brevet-degree and a career as village policeman would be an 'appropriate' goal.[31]

> We [my cousin ʿAbdallāh and I] took off the village clothes and put on the new Western clothes for the first time in our lives. From this moment on, we became "effendiyya" in the view of the village people. For us, it was an important and fundamental crossroads, but for the sons of our village, it was even more. By completing our secondary education, we became, in their view, absolutely different in content and form, because we took the *ʿAqqāl* and the *Kūfīya* off from our heads. From this time on, some of the village sheikhs began to call us even the 'bareheaded', by which they meant that we would not accept their traditions and customs anymore, only because we uncovered our heads.[32]

In contrast to the petit-bourgeois attitude, which aimed at social ascent by education at any costs, in the conservative lower class

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[29] In this distinction, I follow Bourdieu's characterization of the working class habitus, in: P. Bourdieu: *La distinction*, loc. cit., chap. 7, pp. 585ff.

[30] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, pp. 47ff and 70.

[31] Ibidem, p. 71.

[32] Ibidem, p. 54. Similar problems faced S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, pp. 127 and 143.

milieu, reservations against higher education in general, and against secular Western education in particular, prevailed. The short overview on the social attitudes toward education shows that there was no uniform outlook on education enclosing the whole Syrian and Lebanese society at that time. The most important differences followed the boundaries of the socio-cultural milieus and cannot simply be attributed to religious affiliation.[33] As the expansion of the educational system progressed and access to secondary and higher education became easier, the petit-bourgeois attitude grew correspondingly. In 1961, already 94 per cent of the household heads in the poorly developed Lebanese Bekaa-plain considered education as being "very important for both boys and girls" and said that they would "undergo deprivation to provide a respectable amount for their children".[34]

The Experience of Education

For every author, the biographical period of the school and university days was an important experience, and it therefore occupies an important place in all life narratives.[35] This period of time was mostly connected to several more or less comprehensive biographical changes. As secondary schools were to be found only in the big cities and universities only in the two capitals, Beirut and Damascus, most pupils had to move at least once in the course of their education. This new spatial distance from the families could be experienced either as loneliness and isolation or as a new freedom. Thus Hisham Sharabi writes ironically in his second autobiography:

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[33] This argument has to be stressed with view to recent tendencies of cultural essentialism within the German 'oriental sciences'. See: Tilman Nagel: Die Ebenbürtigkeit des Fremden—Über die Aufgaben arabistischer Lehre und Forschung in der Gegenwart, in: *ZDMG* 148 (1998), pp. 367-378.

[34] Touma G. Khoury: *The Lebanese Educational System and its Relation to Lebanese Society*, Wayne State Univ. (Ph.D.-thesis on Microfilm) 1974, p. 79. Khoury refers to a study which was carried out by George C. Fetter: *Attitudes Towards Selected Aspects of Rural Life and Technological Change Among Central Bika's Farmers*, Beirut (AUB) 1961, pp. 66-69.

[35] On the theme of education in Arabic Autobiographies: T. Rooke: *In My Childhood*, pp. 97-102.

Leaving the bosom of the family meant the beginning of freedom. At that time, I discovered that there were many forms of freedom, of which smoking cigarettes was the most important one.[36]

However, the pupils enjoyed this new freedom only outside the school buildings. Inside, they were confronted with new forms of discipline and authority, which were rather different from home. The Jesuit schools, for example, were well-known for their strict rules.[37] The dense timetable with its continuous succession of lessons, sport activities, and religious services very effectively prevented the pupils from engaging in political and other activities. Beside this, it was strictly forbidden to bring outside books, magazines, or papers into the schools. No wonder that the history of the Université St. Joseph knows few political student activities.[38] But the reasons for this are manifold. On the one hand, the USJ was not a campus-university, a fact which impeded the organization and realization of political activities. Beside this, most students of the USJ came from a relatively homogeneous and predominantly well-to-do social stratum. The career prospects of USJ-students were generally very good and the students did not want to endanger their opportunities. So the dominant political current among the students was a conservative or liberal Lebanese patriotism, as represented by the Kata'ib or the Destour Party.[39] However, Arab or Syrian nationalists with more radical attitudes were not absent from French Catholic institutions. One example was Sa'īd Abū al-Ḥusn, who got in touch with—and later joined—the League of National Action during his education at the Jesuit School of Beirut. The first political conflict which he experienced in his class

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[36] H. Šarābī: *Suwar al-mādī*, p. 104.

[37] R.D. Matthews and M. Akrawi: *Education in Arab Countries*, loc. cit., p. 465. D.K. Emmerson summarizes on Catholic institutions in the Third World: *"Catholic institutions generally impose stricter discipline on their students. A shared religious commitment in a highly structured campus environment allows the Catholic university to function more effectively in loco parentis."*, in: Donald K. Emmerson: Conclusion, in: idem (ed.): *Students and Politics in Developing Nations*, New York 1968, pp. 390-426, here p. 400.

[38] For a comparative analysis of student activism at Lebanese universities, see: Ra'uf S. Ghusayni: *Student Activism at Lebanese Universities, 1951-71*, London (SOAS, Ph.D.-thesis on microfilm) 1974, esp. pp. 108ff, 283ff and 308ff.

[39] R.S. Ghusayni: *Student Activism at Lebanese Universities*, loc. cit., pp. 283ff.

was the refusal of his soccer team to play under the leadership of a French captain. The author describes the impact of this event on the political atmosphere at his school as follows:

> It must not be stressed again that this event reinforced the impact of the common intellectual atmosphere. The result was an almost complete segregation of those [student] groups which believed in their nationalism as well as in their right for an independent, free and dignified life and in their struggle for this goal. These groups became the object of surveillance and a psychological war was waged against them, which aimed at making their point of view the object of amusement and sometimes even mockery.[40]

The directors of the French private institutions were in no way willing to tolerate student activism, least of all anti-colonial or nationalist activities. Nevertheless, as Abū al-Ḥusn remarks, the common politicized atmosphere was too strong, and its influence on the students could therefore not be eliminated. Even direct repression did not prevent a number of activists from engaging in politics.

Compared to the French Catholic schools, the Anglo-Saxon educational institutions allowed more room for personal development. Timetables were not so dense and the general emphasis was placed on a rather broad education.[41] Nevertheless, since the Darwin affair of 1882,[42] the history of the AUB was marked by a series of student protests. The centrality of the university campus as well as the international composition of the student body eased political exchange among the students and the organization of activities.[43] Especially since the 1930s, student activism increased, although the university administration tried time and again to restrict the political commitment of their students. During the Sec-

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[40] S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿala al-qimam*, p. 161.

[41] See T. Hanf: *Erziehungswesen in Gesellschaft und Politik des Libanon*, loc. cit., pp. 196f.

[42] For the so called Darwin affair see: T. Philipp: *Ǧurǧī Zaidān*, loc. cit., pp. 172-206; Elie Kedourie: The American University of Beirut, in: the same: *Arab Political Memoirs*, loc. cit., pp. 59ff. In general: Adel A. Ziadet: *Western Science in the Arab World. The Impact of Darwinism, 1860-1930*, London 1986.

[43] R.S. Ghusayni: *Student Activism at Lebanese Universities*, loc. cit., pp. 244ff and Seymour M. Lipset: University Students and Politics in Underdeveloped Countries, in: idem (ed.): *Student Politics*, New York—London 1967, pp. 3-53.

ond World War, every student had to declare that he would refrain from political activities. At the same time all political organizations on the campus were disbanded.[44] However, after 1945, political life returned to the university and was additionally reinforced by the enduring crisis in Palestine. Especially the SSNP gained much support among the students making the AUB the party's most important stronghold in the region. The most active Arab nationalist group on the campus was the Ğamʿīyat al-ʿUrwā al-Wuṯqā. This association, which was founded under the supervision of the AUB professor Constantine Zurayk, was originally dedicated to the cultivation of Arabic culture and language, but became increasingly politicized.[45] After violent demonstrations against the Baghdad Pact, it was dissolved by the university and, simultaneously, five students were suspended. In general, the AUB administration was in a constant state of tension between the two poles, namely the dedication to its liberal principles and the political pressure from the Lebanese state or the Mandate authorities.[46]

The situation at the government schools and the state university in Syria was quite different from this, although it covered a broad scale of regional varieties. In the minority provinces of Latakia and the Jabal Druze, the French mandate authority had some success in imposing its educational policy. The prevailing atmosphere at these schools was pro-French and anti-nationalist. Teachers with apparently nationalist attitudes had to be aware of disciplinary measures. The pupils were encouraged and sometimes even forced to participate in anti-nationalist or rather separatist manifestations. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus (b.1914), an ʿAlawite who grew up in the province of Latakia, tells of a speech he had to make in French on the occasion of the governor's visit, the text of which was written

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[44] R.S. Ghusayni: *Student Activism at Lebanese Universities*, loc. cit., p. 35.

[45] Descriptions of Zurayk by: N. Dimašqīya: *Mahaṭṭāt fī hayātī ad-diblūmāsīya*, p. 23 and Ğamāl aš-Šāʿir: *Siyāsī yataḏakkar. Taǧriba fī al-ʿamal as-siyāsī*, London 1987, p. 42.

[46] An important change of the university's policy toward student activism can be observed, when Stephen Penrose followed Bayard Dodge in the presidentship of the university. Penrose was an ardent anti-communist and tried to restrict student activism by severe measures. R.S. Ghusayni: *Student Activism at Lebanese Universities*, loc. cit., pp. 36ff.

by his teacher.[47] Another similar occasion for pro-French manifestations in the mentioned provinces were the annual celebrations of the 'national holidays' of these would-be states. Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn, who grew up in the province of Jabal Druze, describes the trip of his class to the provincial capital on occasion of the 'Independence Day', whereas he ridicules the whole celebration with its uniforms, titles, and symbols.[48] Even if there are no corresponding autobiographies which tell about these events in positive terms, one can see from the descriptions that, at that time, the schools were a battleground for both sides, the pro-French forces and the nationalists. Therefore, pro-French celebrations could easily switch into nationalist manifestations. Bašīr al-ʿAẓma, who was a pupil in the well-known Maktab ʿAnbar during the early 20s, reports one instance in which an official celebration suddenly turned into its opposite.[49] When the High Commissioner, Henri de Jouvenal, made his first visit at Maktab ʿAnbar after the end of the Great Revolt, he was welcomed with shouts and whistles. Finally, the boy, who was designed to read a prepared French speech, insulted the High Commissioner and his company. De Jouvenal left Maktab ʿAnbar immediately, but the unfriendly reception had apparently no consequences.

This event hints at the opposite side of the above-mentioned scale. Probably only few schools in the Middle East were as nationalist as some of the Syrian state secondary schools. These schools were especially situated in the bigger cities, like Aleppo, Homs and Hama, whereas the most outstanding institution was, at that time, the Damascene Maktab ʿAnbar and, later on, the preparatory school known as "at-Taġhīz al-Ūlā". Here, the French authorities were apparently unable to get the nationalist activities under control. This is the more striking, as all Syrian secondary teachers were trained in France until 1946.[50] The politicization of these

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[47] ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus: *Muḏakkirāt ad-Duktūr ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus*, Damascus 1992, pp. 30f.

[48] S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, pp. 40ff.

[49] B. al-ʿAẓma: *Ǧīl al-hazīma*, p. 69. See also Ẓāfir al-Qāsimī: *Maktab ʿAnbar. Ṣuwar wa-ḏikrayāt min ḥayātinā aṯ-ṯaqāfīya was-siyāsīya wal-iǧtimāʿīya*, Beirut 1964, esp. pp. 123-129.

[50] On the education of teachers in Syria see: R.D. Matthews and M. Akrawi:

governmental schools grew increasingly since the early days of the mandate period. With an apparently ironical undertone, Bašīr al-ʿAẓma describes the first wave of patriotism, by which Maktab ʿAnbar was caught after the end of the Ottoman empire:

> After the withdrawal of the Turks, a revolution (*inqilāb*) in all fields took place from one day to the next. Our identity became Arab and our hymns nationalist. I, myself, wrote the following hymn as a reply to the rising and roaring wave: 'The Arab lands are our fatherlands (*bilād al-ʿarab awṭānunā*), we do not want any solicitude! Into the war, get up to war, thou Arab people!' [...] I participated with a group of children, who were controlled by their teacher, in parade-like student manifestations, whereas the occasions for these events occured almost daily. So, I participated in a demonstration, close to the Hijaz Station, within the rows of the school and under the cane of our teacher, which he swung above our heads or beat upon the ground between our feet.[51]

From other autobiographical reminiscences, one can make out two main factors in the politicization of the pupils: the content of the instruction, on the one hand, and the personal charisma of particular teachers, on the other. The teaching of Arabic literature and history, for example, was almost automatically regarded as a nationalist manifestation by the pupils and students. It was not even necessary that the teacher added political statements on this. Michel ʿAflaq left an especially deep impression on his pupils as a rousing history teacher. Riyāḍ al-Mālikī (b.1922), the brother of the famous Baʿth-officer, ʿAdnān al-Mālikī, and himself a later Baʿth member, describes the lessons of Michel ʿAflaq as follows:

> Despite his subdued and slow voice, he excited the pupils by his outstanding lectures, in which he shed light on the history of the Arabic nation and its Semitic civilization. He stirred joy and happiness in our young and yearning souls by the knowledge of the glorious legacy of our nation and the history of its inherited civilization. Actually, the syllabus was intended to teach French history, but this we evaded from the elementary school onward until the end of the secondary level.[52]

Education in Arab Countries, loc. cit., p. 379; Fahim I. Qubain: *Education and Science in the Arab World*, Baltimore 1966, pp. 470ff; and Tarek Ahmad Hamdi al-Doughli: *A Historical Review of Education in Syria, with Special Emphasis on the Effects of Arab Nationalism on Education from 1920-62*, East Texas State Univ. (Microfilm) 1970.

[51] B. al-ʿAẓma: *Ǧīl al-hazīma*, p. 57.

[52] Riyāḍ al-Mālikī: *Dikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wal-hazīma*, Damascus 1972, p. 44.

This quotation shows how strongly the perception of the nationalist message was intertwined with the charisma of the teacher. For good reasons, Michel ʿAflaq was simply called "the teacher" (*al-ustāḏ*) by his adherents, whereas one of them even wrote ʿAflaq's biography under this title.[53] Many teachers were simultaneously regarded as political leaders and, likewise, some political leaders were treated like teachers. One of them was the founder of the SSNP, Anṭūn Saʿāda, who, in fact, taught at the AUB at the beginning of his career. Hisham Sharabi characterizes his personal relation to Saʿāda at that time: "I showed no resistance at all against the way of thought, as he practiced it, but rather submitted to him like the pupil to his teacher or the son to the power of his father."[54] In fact, the political influence of the teacher often transcended the walls of the class room. Some teachers, like Michel ʿAflaq, Constantine Zurayk, Zakī al-Arsūzī, or, during his time at the AUB, Anṭūn Saʿāda, invited their pupils to private meetings, which often constituted the core groups of later organizations. Beyond this, the common organization and participation in political manifestations was another important means for the further politicization of the pupils and students. In this sense, Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm tells about the political activities at the Taġhīz al-Ūlā:

> Our teachers played the first role in the preparation, promotion, and even leadership of the demonstrations. Often they even walked at the head, like the teachers Michel ʿAflaq, Ṣalāḥ al-Bīṭār [sic], Muḥammad al-Mubārak, Bakrī Qaddūra, Muḥammad al-Bazm, and Ḥimāda. Sometimes they sacrificed their duties and were arrested, but I don't say 'oppression', because, at that time, I never heard that something like torture happened in any prison [...].[55]

Nevertheless, one has to underline that the situation in Damascus was more the exception than the rule, compared to the rest of Syria. An important number of Syrian pupils were still enroled at foreign and private institutions, and not all of the state schools were as politicized as in the bigger cities. The same has to be said

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[53] Zuhair al-Mārdīnī: *al-Ustāḏ. Qiṣṣat ḥayāt Mīšīl ʿAflaq*, London 1988.
[54] H. Šarābī: *al-Ǧamr war-ramād*, p. 83.
[55] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, p. 69.

of Lebanon. Only in a few schools were the pupils directly imbued with nationalist ideology. Even though an atmosphere of patriotism and attachment to Arabic culture was widespread, most teachers regarded the political commitment of their students with outspoken scepticism. More than repression from the state and the mandate authorities, the teachers often feared a deterioration in the work of their pupils. Especially the young SSNP members were sometimes absolutely absorbed by party activities. ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir, for example, joined this party during their secondary school days.[56] Both were firmly admonished by their teachers to reduce their party activities, not because of the teachers' dislike of the party, but because they fell behind in their studies. However, the teachers had few means to hinder their students from their activities. This situation points to the most important factor in the political socialization of the pupils and students during the period of time at issue. Nearly no school was able to function *in loco parentis*. Especially the students who lived in rented apartments, but also the boarders, easily found opportunities to get in touch with nationalist organizations or even to get involved in party activities. All the above-mentioned autobiographers joined the respective organizations during their school days or their university studies. The educational institutions could try to curb or rather to reinforce this tendency, but not even the strict Jesuit schools were able to cut their pupils off from these influences.

Beyond the concrete contacts with radical nationalist organizations or parties, the common politicized atmosphere had a decisive impact on the political socialization of the young men, and it is therefore mentioned in every autobiography. There is not one book to be found of a former nationalist, in which the author does not describe how much he was impressed by the common "patriotic atmosphere" (*al-ǧaww al-waṭanī*).[57] Nearly every writer had

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[56] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, pp. 34f and ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda: *Awrāq qaumīya. Muḏakkirāt ad-Duktūr ʿAbdallāh Saʿāda*, Beirut 1987, pp. 25ff.

[57] Explicitly in: H. Šarābī: *al-Ǧamr war-ramād*, p. 20; M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, p. 33; S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, p. 160; ʿA. Saʿāda: *Awrāq qaumīya*, p. 20.

himself participated in nationalist demonstrations and describes his lasting impressions. The martyrs, the symbols, and the marching masses stirred the imagination of the young students. However, no particular event impressed all authors in the same way. Hisham Sharabi, for example, emphasizes the events of 1943, which lead to the Lebanese independence. Nadīm Dimašqīya witnessed the Kailānī Revolt in Iraq, when he was there with a student delegation, and thought about joining the uprising. The general strike and the demonstrations of 1936 were mentioned as particularly impressive by ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Yūnus and Riyāḍ al-Mālikī.[58] The events mentioned apparently vary according to the regional and biographical circumstances. But they all have in common the fact that the authors perceived them as manifestations of the nation's possible or rather future unity and harmony.[59] It would go too far to describe these kinds of events as 'formative experiences', but they show that the schools and universities were, at that time, situated in a complex and politicized atmosphere which had inevitable repercussions on the students, as well as on the educational institutions itself.

Nationalism and the Framework of an 'Intellectual Habitus'

Even though the social and cultural backgrounds of these autobiographers as well as the form and content of their formal education differed, all regard the period of their school and university days as pivotal in their biographies. One aspect of this importance

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[58] H. Šarābī: *al-Ğamr war-ramād*, p. 20; N. Dimašqīya: *Mahattāt fī ḥayātī ad-diblūmāsīya*, pp. 29ff; ʿAdnān al-Mulūḥī: *Baina madīnataiṉ. Min Ḥims ilā aš-Šām*, London 1990, pp. 121ff; ʿA. al-Yūnus: *Mudakkirāt*, pp. 41f; and R. al-Mālikī: *Dikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wal-hazīma*, p. 38.

[59] Riyāḍ al-Mālikī writes on the strikes of 1936: *"I was then 14 years old and my consciousness began to realize what was going on on the soil of this fatherland. The people formed, on one side, one firm block, which followed its patriotic leadership, struggled for its dignity and fought the despicable colonialism. They were confronted, on the other side, by the occupational forces, which were armed with the most superior and modern weapons of war [...]."* R. al-Mālikī: *Dikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wal-hazīma*, p. 38. H. Sharabi writes on the year of 1943: *"This period was filled with enthusiasm and patriotism. The Lebanese were working hand in hand for one goal which stood above all partial or confessional interests."* H. Šarābī: *al-Ğamr war-ramād*, p. 20.

is the professional training, which they received in the educational institutions, and which was decisive for their later professional careers. The other aspect refers to their politicization or rather radicalization, which took place during the same biographical phase. In retrospect, both aspects appear to be tightly intertwined. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir, for example, who later became an advocate and a middle ranking party official in the SSNP, assesses his time at the secondary school in ʿAley (Lebanon) as follows:

> During my school days in ʿAley, I experienced incidents which had a far-reaching impact on my life course. In this school, my ability to give speeches grew, which had a tremendous impact on my professional work in the lawsuits and in my nationalist political work. [...] The second incident, which had great influence on my life, as well as, later on, on the life of my family and the life of those who were influenced by me, was my joining the Syrian Social Nationalist Party.[60]

In the autobiographies of ʿAbd as-Sātir and other writers, the experienced parallelism of the professional training and the nationalist politicization flows into a common consciousness of forming a specific 'generation' (*ǧīl*). Of course, this 'imagined generation' does not comprise all persons of the whole nation, who were born in the same period of time. The two mentioned biographical experiences rather restrict the extent of this 'generation' to a distinct group, namely to the politicized and educated persons of a certain age. The consciousness of belonging to a specific generation was even more explicit among the pupils who participated actively in the struggle for independence. In this context, Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm remembers: "I was proud, because I was among the pupils of the First Secondary School in the capital. This outstanding school enjoyed a scientific as well as patriotic reputation, especially in the 40s, and was a stronghold of the national movement and the struggle against colonialism."[61] When the author later entered the first class of the War Academy in Homs, he was excited by the feeling of being exclusively among like-minded students from all over Syria:

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[60] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, p. 36f.

[61] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, p. 55f. The same assessment on this school: B. al-ʿAẓma: *Ǧīl al-hazīma*, p. 71.

The students came from all parts of the country and most of them stemmed from middle class families. As pupils of secondary schools, all had participated in the period of struggle and demonstrations against the French; therefore, the prevailing attitude among them was the deep belief in the fatherland and the Arab nation (*al-īmān al-ʿamīq bil-waṭan wal-umma al-ʿarabīya*).[62]

This patriotic or nationalistic outlook of the young men was already connected to a far-reaching disappointment with the policy of the ruling nationalist elite. In their view, the traditional notables lacked modern education, ideological commitment, radical determination, and appropriate organizational forms. When Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn was still in the Jesuit school of Beirut, he told his friends that it was now time for them to take the banner of the revolution, because "we are the new educated generation."[63] Similarly, Riyād al-Mālikī was sure that it is "our generation, which struggles enthusiastically for the realization of its national goals."[64] Here again, intellectualism and political determination appear not only as an aspect in the self-perception of this generation, but also as a means of distinction in regard to the ruling nationalist elite. The new radical organizations, which emerged during the 30s and 40s, like the SSNP, the League of National Action, or the Baʿth, were more an expression of than the cause for this new outlook. In retrospect, the entry into one or the other of these parties appeared for some autobiographers as almost natural, if not even as "a fateful necessity" (*amr muqaddar*)[65]. The already mentioned Jordanian politician and physician, Ǧamāl aš-Šāʿir, who joined the

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[62] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, p. 93. In this context, the author also mentions the problems which he and his classmates had in accepting the orders and the authority of the officers. This statement dovetails with van Dusen's analysis of the generational conflicts within the Syrian army of the post-independence era: "*Almost all cadets from this generation, in addition to its lower middle class origins, were completely politicized by the time they entered the military academy. The extent of the politicization is the crucial distinction between the post-independence cadets and their predecessors*", in: Michael H. van Dusen: *Intra- and Inter-Generational Conflict in the Syrian Army*, John Hopkins Univ. (Ph.D.-thesis on microfilm) 1971, p. 70.

[63] S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, p. 218. By the term 'revolution', the author refers to the Syrian Revolt of 1925, which he experienced as a child.

[64] R. al-Mālikī: *Ḏikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wal-haẓīma*, p. 20.

[65] H. Šarābī: *Suwar al-mādī*, p. 23.

Baʿth party during his studies at the AUB, writes about the political attitude of his generation:

My entry into the Baʿth party was neither exceptional nor difficult after the educational culture which I had experienced in the city of as-Salt, as well as the short experience in the Syrian Nationalist Party [i.e. the later SSNP], the events of 1948, the political atmosphere at the American University, and also in the cities of Beirut and Damascus. The generation of broad expectations, as they were expressed by the Baʿth party, saw the joining and support of this party as almost natural, since our generation believed in unity and democracy, as a course to dignity and strength, as well as a means to develop the country, and to realize a nationalist personality.[66]

However, political determination as a criterion for the adherence to the so-perceived generation was rather ambivalent. On the one hand, the graduates from the secondary schools and universities certainly had a specific political consciousness which was based on common experiences during the school days. But, on the other hand, political cleavages divided this imagined generation into hostile ideological camps. Nevertheless, beyond these political gaps, all groups were convinced that they represented a political as well as social elite. This elite-consciousness was partly transformed into specific political concepts, as in the leftist notion *aṭ-ṭalīʿa* (avant-garde) or the corresponding rightist notion *an-nuḫba* (elite). But even the general terms, like "party" (*ḥizb*) or "movement" (*ḥaraka*), were used in a rather elitist sense. In any case, intellectualism played a pivotal role in the political and social self-perception of the radical nationalists. It was mainly expressed in two forms: first in pride about the acquired education, connected to the respective formal diploma, and second in the high esteem of the acquired 'modern', 'scientific' knowledge. The specific political meaning of the elite concept becomes more apparent in the following quotation from a speech, which was made by Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir in the early 50s, during an election campaign of the SSNP:

What it [the underdeveloped people] deserves is a conscious, intellectual and brave leadership, who devote their knowledge, their thoughts, their

[66] Ǧ. aš-Šāʿir: *Siyāsī yataḏakkar*, p. 51.

experiences, and all their ability to raise the level of the people in all its parts and in all vital social fields, and who expend all their energies on service to the real social interests of the people which are often not recognized by the non-conscious masses and sometimes even contradict their feelings.[67]

This kind of elitism was confined not only to the political field, but played a very similar role in the professional self-perception of the respective authors. In general, graduates from the secondary schools, and especially those who acquired an academic diploma, turned either to the liberal professions, like medicine, the legal professions or the service industries, or rather worked as teachers, officers, or in the civil service. Whatever the profession of the respective author was, it is remarkable that everyone depicts his profession as being of outstanding political importance and pivotal for the future development of the whole nation. Bašir al-ʿAẓma, for example, who worked as a doctor and later became even a Syrian prime minister, dedicates a large part of his autobiography to the description of his professional work. However, what was meant as an account of his past efforts, turns out to be almost a sketch for a future national health program.[68] Similarly, Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn, who financed his studies at the Université St. Joseph partly by working as a teacher in the Jabal Druze, stresses that he regarded the education of the "future elite" as his national duty. In this sense, he felt he was "more a voluntary soldier than a professional teacher".[69] Later on, when the author became an advocate, he was convinced in the same manner, that the "real advocate" is "less the holder of a certain profession than of a mission (*li-ʾannahu ṣāḥib risāla lā mihna*)".[70] In a similar way, the

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[67] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, pp. 158 and 198.

[68] B. al-ʿAẓma: *Ǧīl al-hazīma*, pp. 121-168. In some autobiographies, the politicization of the legal profession is even more striking. Riyāḍ al-Mālikī tells little on his work in the courtyard, while he describes at length all the international conferences in which he participated as a representative of the Syrian National Bar Association. His speeches, on these occasions, apparently revolved more around the Palestine problem, rather than legal questions. R. al-Mālikī: *Ḏikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāḥ wal-hazīma*, pp. 67-96. See also: D. Reid: *Lawyers and Politics*, loc. cit., passim.

[69] S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, p. 257.

[70] Ibidem, p. 297.

Lebanese solicitor Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir regards the advocate as belonging even to "the highest level of the intellectual elite in society".[71] Yet the most crucial development in this regard was the politicization of the young army officers. Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm describes his professional self-perception at that time as follows:

> I believed that I belonged, by virtue of my membership in the Arab Baʿth Party and my position as an officer, to the front line of the combative elite of our people. [...] We all believed that the generation of the youth and the party, of which we were members, were enough to take over the mission of the nation (*risālat al-umma*), the realization of its goals, as well as the expectations of the people in Syria and the other regions [...].[72]

In general, one can say that the autobiographical texts considered here show a remarkable elitism, which is expressed by two main aspects: first an intellectual elitism, which results from a very high or rather over-estimation of the acquired knowledge and, secondly, a professional elitism, which results from a politicized perception of one's own profession. The narratives show that these patterns of social self-assessment constituted, at that time, a natural and unquestioned part of the authors' general outlook on society. In this sense, they can be described as internalized or 'habitualized' (Bourdieu) structures of thought and perception. As the social formation and the individual acquisition of these patterns are tightly connected to the biographical phase of formal education, the whole complex can be named as 'intellectual habitus'. However, it is to be stressed that the thought patterns of the intellectual habitus did not replace the habitus structures, which were acquired during an earlier stage of socialization, like in the family milieu. The latter were modified, but were not erased. However, the self-assessment of the nationalists examined here hardly corresponded to the realities of the social and political power distribution in Syria and Lebanon at that time. On the one hand, the young intellectuals claimed to constitute a new kind of elite, legitimized by their recently acquired cultural capital, as well as their political determination, their new organizational forms,

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[71] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, p. 64.
[72] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, p. 102.

and their comprehensive ideologies. On the other hand, the traditional leadership, legitimized by its economic power and social prestige, was not at all willing to give up its position or even to share its power. Therefore, the social and political outlook of the young intellectual nationalists became a constant anticipation of the future. As the social self-perception did not coincide with the social realities, the solution of this dilemma was projected into the future. The sharpest description of this situation is probably Ğamāl aš-Šāʿir's above-quoted dictum of "the generation of broad expectations". Hisham Sharabi describes the gap between expectations and reality as follows:

> At that time, our lives were dominated by the future. We experienced the main part of the present while we were waiting for the future, which would bring all our dreams to fruition. [...] I desired the same as all the others, who belonged to this rising generation: the basic transformation of this corrupt society. We wanted revolution. However, revolution was for us a theoretical matter or even a romantic event: we take the power and change the course of history.[73]

Of course, neither all nationalists nor all autobiographers were in pursuit of revolution. In most cases, the expectations, directed at the future, were rather vague. However, personal desires and political expectations were always tightly intertwined. One example is Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Karīm, who has already been introduced as someone stemming from a rural, lower middle class background and struggling hard to achieve secondary education despite the economic shortcomings of his family, on the one hand, and the scepticism of the conservative village elite, on the other hand. When he achieved his first successes at school and was even able to provide the village community with interesting and important information from the capital, his personal prestige as well as his expectations rose:

> This situation stimulated some desires in my soul, and my imagination deluded me into broad wishes concerning my own future and the future of my country. I was proud of my humble rural background and my diligence. I desired to sacrifice my life to my fatherland and, especially, to

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[73] H. Šarābī: *Ṣuwar al-māḍī*, p. 171 and idem: *al-Ğamr war-ramād*, p. 197.

the deprived rural areas, as well as to the struggle to raise its level and to the fight against all negative sides of the rural society.[74]

From this quotation, it becomes clear that, at that time, the author had neither an elaborated revolutionary plan in mind nor concrete plans for his personal future. However, he was sure that his personal prospects were tightly connected to the future of his nation. So, the reform of society and the individual's social ascent are drawn into one meaning pattern and expected to come true in the near future. In the following decades, the revolutionary transformation of the nation would turn out as a stony or even bloody path. However, the individual career patterns of the nationalists were as diverse as their social backgrounds and the different fields of their professional training. Members of the upper class usually found appropriate jobs rather easily. Hisham Sharabi, for example, left the Middle East with the help of his parents, as the SSNP was persecuted after the party's abortive coup of 1949 and the execution of Anṭūn Saʿāda. In the USA, Sharabi was able to transform his already attained cultural capital (education) into a secure position within the academic system.[75]

For members of the middle and lower middle class, career prospects were more dependent on the respective professional fields. The growth of the national health systems and the common need for technical expertise made the social ascent easier for graduates of these academic disciplines. One example for this career pattern is the biography of Bašīr al-ʿAẓma who stems from a rural middle class background and studied medicine at the University of Damascus. After his graduation, he immediately found a job in a Damascene hospital. His joy at his successful social ascent and his new responsibilities is remarkable:

> From one day to the next I was suddenly transported from earth to the seventh heaven. From woodcutter, football star, and grave-robber to doctor-dictator, on a small scale perhaps, but wielding absolute power. A truly liberating leap, like the leap of a creeping worm that has turned into a butterfly, and flits about as though dancing with its radiantly col-

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[74] A. ʿAbd al-Karīm: *Ḥiṣād*, p. 71.

[75] H. Šarābī: *al-Ǧamr war-ramād*, pp. 210ff and 217ff; and idem: *Ṣuwar al-mādī*, pp. 21ff.

ourful wings. It does not settle on a branch, but is filled with joy at its liberation from the dust of the earth, and joy in its mate.[76]

In contrast to this, the prospects in the legal profession were much worse, especially for graduates from middle class or lower middle class background. Despite the general growth and changing social composition of the law graduates, the legal profession in Syria remained dominated by the upper class, while, in Lebanon, especially the Maronite upper and middle class prevailed. Therefore, opportunities for newcomers were few in both countries. This dilemma is reflected at length in the autobiographies of Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn and Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir.[77] The latter describes his disappointment after his graduation from the Faculty of Law in Damascus as follows:

When I received my law degree, I was full of joy and I thought that the doors of happiness were wide open in front of me. How badly reality hit me soon after! I went to Beirut to look for a well-known firm of solicitors. I wanted to join it and to earn money immediately afterwards. However, I had to realize that some solicitors would even demand money for my joining their firm.[78]

In the political arena, individual success was even harder to attain for members of the middle class. Several of the mentioned autobiographers entered election campaigns, but they all had to face a nearly invincible network of coalitions between the notable families, as well as patron-client relations, corruption, and direct intimidation.[79] Only a few managed to gain a seat in parliament or in other political institutions.

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[76] B. al-ʿAẓma: *Ǧīl al-hazīma*, p. 83. A similar career pattern in: ʿA. Saʿāda: *Awrāq qaumīya*.

[77] S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, pp. 270-285 and 357ff. M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, pp. 58-72.

[78] M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyām wa-qaḍīya*, p. 58.

[79] Most impressive is probably the description of Saʿīd Abū al-Ḥusn, who dared to challenge the political primacy of the al-Aṭraš clan in the Jabal Druze: S. Abū al-Ḥusn: *Nīrān ʿalā al-qimam*, pp. 394-419. M. ʿAbd as-Sātir: *Ayyam wa-qaḍīya*, pp. 152-174; ʿA. Saʿāda: *Awrāq qaumīya*, pp. 49-56. ʿA. al-Yūnus: *Muḏakkirāt*, pp. 198ff. An example for a successful candidature is Riyād al-Mālikī, who defeated the candidate of the Muslim Brethren, Muṣṭafā as-Sibāʿī, in Damascus in 1957: R. al-Mālikī: *Ḏikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāh wal-hazīma*, pp. 197-216.

On the whole, one can say that, apart from some individuals who realized a certain social ascent, the intellectuals did not attain the political importance they felt was their right. They neither achieved social recognition as an elite nor were they able to replace the dominant power relations by a new political system. In retrospect, most autobiographers view the achievements of their generation with disillusionment. Though most regard a specific event as crucial for their disillusionment, the variety of the mentioned events is as broad as the variety of the individual life courses and their socio-political circumstances. Often the crucial events are connected to personal sufferings, like imprisonment, exile, or professional set-backs. Arab nationalists tend to mention, first of all, the defeat by Israel, the brutalization of the military regimes (esp. the period of Adīb aš-Šišaklī's rule in Syria), and the disintegration of the unity between Syria and Egypt, while (former) members of the SSNP refer mostly to the decline and persecution of their party. However, the implicit consensus of all authors seems to be that, compared with their initial "broad expectations" (Ğamāl aš-Šāʿir), their generation turned out to be a "generation of defeat" (*ğīl al-hazīma*), as Bašīr al-ʿAẓma programmatically titles his autobiography.[80]

Conclusion

In his article on the "effendiyya" in Iraq between 1921 and 1958, Michael Eppel states that this new educated stratum had, despite its rising influence on political life, "no special self-awareness or political identity".[81] The same cannot be said about the intellectu-

[80] Compare the titles of the following autobiographies: Bašīr al-ʿAẓma: "Generation of Defeat" [*Ğīl al-hazīma*]; Hisham Sharabi: "Embers and Ashes" [*al-Ğamr war-ramād*]; Muṣṭafā ʿAbd as-Sātir: "Days and a Cause. On the sufferings of an Arab intellectual" [*Ayyām wa-qaḍīya. Min muʿānayāt muṯaqqaf ʿarabī*]; Ahmad ʿAbd al-Karīm: "Harvest of Fruitful Years and Bitter Fruits" [*Ḥiṣād sinīn ḫaṣiba wa-ṯimār murra*]; Riyāḍ al-Mālikī: "Reminiscences on the Path of Struggle and Defeat" [*Ḏikrayāt ʿalā darb al-kifāh wal-hazīma*]; and, last but not least, the former SSNP-member Ibrāhīm Yamūt (b.1919): "The Bitter Crop" [*al-Ḥiṣād al-murr*], Beirut 1993.

[81] M. Eppel: The Elite, the Effendiyya, and the Growth of Nationalism, loc. cit., here p. 246.

als in Syria and Lebanon. Even though they lacked political and organizational unity, they had a remarkable awareness of their distinctiveness. Beyond this, the political discourse of radical nationalism can, with good reason, be regarded as the authentic expression of their political identity.

Crucial to the self-awareness of these intellectuals was the experienced parallelism of their advanced and higher education and their intense politicization during the 30s, 40s and 50s. This experience enveloped all young students, without regard to their social backgrounds. Their pride in the recently attained education and participation in nationalist activities flowed into their consciousness to constitute a specific 'generation', by which they meant, strictly speaking, a 'generation' composed only of intellectual nationalists. Beyond this, their notion of generation was tightly connected to their intellectual elitism. With reference to their academic knowledge and their acquired diploma, they felt themselves to be the real elite in society. Since this self-perception was hardly congruent with the socio-political reality in the two countries, the intellectuals tended to project their hopes into the future. The unification and modernization of the nation would bring about their own social and political ascent. In the end, this project either failed or dissolved in the bloody power struggles of the later decades. However, the political and intellectual history of the radical nationalist movements cannot be understood without looking at the crucial interrelation between education and political socialization.[82]

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[82] This article received the price of the Syrian Studies Association for the best paper on Syria for the university year 1999-2000 at the MESA conference 2000. (note of the editor)