

Avieli-Tabibyan, Kezia: *Idan ha-Eima ve-ha-Tikva: Pirkei Historiya la-Hativa ha-Elyona (The Era of Fear and Hope: History Lessons for the High School Level) 1870-1970*, Ha-Merkaz le-Tekhnologiya Hinukhit (Matah): Ramat Aviv, 2001

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## Content

The book is divided into five units and a number of chapters. In this analysis, reference is made to the parts where one learns about the difficult relationship between Jews and Arabs:

- Unit three (the period between 1919 and 1939), chapters A and B, pp. 134-187, portrays the different *Aliyot* (pl. of *Aliyah*, i.e. stages of Jewish immigration) and explains how the Yishuv built Israeli society, and its institutions (chap. A, pp. 134-159). Further features are: the definition of the terms '*Eretz Israel*' and '*Palestine*' (pp. 134-5); Jews and Arabs under the rule of the British Mandate (chap. B, pp. 160-87); Palestinians regarding *Eretz Israel* as part of Greater Syria and how they rejected any negotiation with the Zionists (pp. 160-1); the role of the Western Wall (the so-called 'Wailing Wall') as a 'flashpoint for conflict between Jews and Muslims' and the role of Amin al-Hussayni (p. 163); the Arab uprising against the Zionists and the British of 1936-39 (pp. 166-68) and the subsequent reaction of the British since 1936 (pp. 169-71); the proposals of the Peel Commission (p. 174-5); the 'Arab violence' against the Yishuv (p. 176) and the reaction by the *Haganah* (p. 177); how the Yishuv dealt with the 'Arab question' [*ha-She'ela ha-Aravit*] (p. 181).
- Unit 4, chap. C (dealing with matters relating to the Yishuv during WWII), pp. 240-255, is about 'the Yishuv during the war and the Shoah', the founding of *Lehi* (p. 241), the *Palmach* (p. 243) and the 'Jewish Brigade' (p. 246), and their fight against the British (pp. 248-252).
- Unit 5 (the period between 1945 and 1970), chapters B (the Middle East 'between East and West'), C (the War of Independence) and D (the establishment of the State of Israel), pp. 273-343, deal with the process of modernization in Israel's periphery (Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon) and the founding of the PLO; the Yishuv on the eve of the founding of the State of Israel (pp. 291-5); the role of the United Nations (pp. 296-8), and the War of Independence in two stages: between 1947 and 1948, when the conflict was mainly between the Yishuv and the Arab population (pp. 299-303), and between 1948 to 1949 when the newly

founded State of Israel had to fight against its Arab neighbours (pp. 304-18), as well as the question of national security in the aftermath of the war (pp. 331-38).

## General Structure

The textbook is made up of units, chapters and sub-sections with a large amount of source material including pictures and figures. Information is given on different people of interest (e.g. Yehuda Magnes, p. 184; Anwar al-Sadat, p. 278; Glubb Pasha, p. 284) and certain terms (e.g. Palestine, p. 135; White Paper, p. 162; Muslim High Committee, p. 163; Gush Etzion, p. 300). Moreover we find additional elements enhancing the main body of work: 'from literature' [*min ha-Sifrut*], 'documents' [*Te'uda*], 'from research' [*min ha-Mehkar*], 'and more' [*ve-od...*], as well as tables, figures and maps. At the very beginning of each unit there is an introduction about the aims of the particular unit; questions are asked throughout the main text, and each chapter ends with exercises on 'names and terms' [*Shemot u-Musagim*] as well as different topics for further discussion [*Nos'im li-Vhira*]. The textbook defines its learning objectives, e.g. 'to understand the connection between the British, the Jews and Arabs in *Eretz Israel*' (p. 132); 'to become acquainted with the unifying and dividing factors [*Gorme'i ha-Likud ve-Gorme'i ha-Perud*] among the countries of the Middle East and how the conflict between them has come about'; 'to discuss the process which led to the declaration of the State of Israel'; 'to examine the central events of the War of Independence and to discuss its results', and 'to evaluate the difficulties in matters of security, economy and society which the State of Israel and its citizens had to handle during the first decades after its foundation' (p. 256).

## Perspectives and Approaches.

Different perspectives are represented through texts and questions referring to them, e.g. in 3-B we learn about how the Yishuv dealt with the 'Arab question' [*ha-She'ela ha-Aravit*], Ben Gurion's position on this, Brit Shalom's concept of a bi-national state and, through a 'document' we become acquainted with Jabotinsky's relationship to the Arabs and his idea of creating an 'iron wall' [*Kir Barzel*]. The questions do not only refer to 'what' happened, but also ask the student's opinion about the different approaches towards the treatment of the Arab population

(pp. 181-4). Materials which provide a multi-perspective approach are mainly provided for the Jewish side in this conflict.

‘The Other’

A more subtle problem could be the lack of differentiation between Muslim, Christian and Druze Arabs, a fact which is of some importance. For example, the first minority unit in the Israeli army was founded no later than in 1948, which shows that the Yishuv treated the religious groups among the Arabs differently from the beginning.

Describing History

Other passages call for explanation, e.g. the passage on the massacre in the Arab village of Deir Yasin (9 April 1948), which is regarded as the equivalent to the German ‘Stalingrad’ in recent Palestinian national historiography (before it became replaced by Sabra and Shatilla, and more recently, by Jenin). A rather brief description informs the student that Deir Yasin was:

‘an Arab village, west of Jerusalem, which was attacked by members of the Irgun and Lehi. They gained control over the village and killed its inhabitants. The number killed is still not clear but is supposed to be somewhere between 100 and 254 people. This attack caused huge upheaval among the Arabs, causing more of them to flee in terror from the areas which the Jews had occupied [*Kavshu*].’ (5-C, p. 301)

The crucial point here is not that present research estimates the number of dead around 250, but that certain information which could have shed a better light on the Yishuv is surprisingly not mentioned at all, i.e. the fact that the civil and military leadership sent its condolences to Jordan's King Abdullah and that the Palestinian side killed more than 70 members of a Jewish medical convoy in retaliation four days later (cf. Krämer 2002: 366-7; Ansprenger 1978: 85-6). By the same token the only thing we learn about the events in the course of ‘Plan D’ [*Tokhnit D*], the Yishuv's decision to create a contiguous Jewish settlement area [*Retzef Teritoriali*], is that during it ‘the majority of its (the area’s) inhabitants [i.e. the Arab inhabitants - M.K.] fled.’ This is an exaggeration; about 300,000 people out of a total of 700,000 fled, which is less than half. On the

other hand, information about the howitzer attack that was used to take control of the old city of Tiberias does not appear. Also not mentioned is that during the occupation of Lod and Ramleh, so-called ‘*Operation Dani*’, the *Haganah* failed in Latrun and Ramallah, while Nazareth and Shafa Amr became sanctuaries for Arab refugees who had escaped from Zionist-controlled territory inland. The estimated number of those who escaped to Nazareth and Shafa Amr is about 100,000 [Krämer 2002: p. 368; pp. 411-2, ft. 18].

Apart from that, the rhetoric never stipulates a metaphysical legitimization of war and the term ‘terror [*Teror*] is not restricted to Arab armed attacks, but is also used to describe at least one military action by Lehi, the massacre of Deir Yasin (see above). Moreover the student becomes acquainted with the Palestinian perspective on the War of Independence; Palestinians refer to it as *an-Nakba* – ‘the catastrophe’ [*ha-Ason*] (p. 314).

#### Values and Intentions

Of course, we have to bear in mind that a textbook cannot be expected to acquaint the reader with every detail of the debate, but if we ask if there is a point of view which underlies the above descriptions of the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine/Eretz Israel (PEI), we find the answer in a key sentence at the very end of the book (5-C, pp. 313-4), in a section about the refugee question:

‘As result of the war, about half of the Arabs who used to live in the borderline area of Israel under the British Mandate, i.e. about 600,000 Arabs, became refugees. In most cases their expulsion from their houses was a direct result of the war and not due to a predetermined plan made by either the Jews or the Arabs. (...) When the scale of the conflict grew, and first the *Haganah* and later *Tzahal* were victorious, the exodus [*Yetzi'a*] of the Arabs from their cities and towns occurred because of their fright and fear of the armed forces. There was no plan by the civil or the military leadership to expel [*Legaresh*] the Arabs from the Jewish state. In places where good relationships between Jews and Arabs existed, there were widespread appeals not to expel the inhabitants (...). Nevertheless, the expulsion of the inhabitants of Ramleh and Lod was legitimized by the civil administration.’

The number of Arab inhabitants at that time is controversial. Other sources speak of no more than 156,000 people in 1948 (cf. Efrat 1996: p. 128), whereas Ansprenger estimates a maximum of 1.2 million in 1947 and for the refugees a figure of no more than 590,000 (Ansprenger 1978: p. 85). Though one must say that there is no indication whatsoever in the textbook that Arabs serve as an image of evil, and no attempt is made to present the Arabs as more cruel than the Zionists, we find a problematic point of view towards the Jewish-Arab conflict in general. In this framework of description the war seems to operate as a third party, separate from the Jews and the Arabs. The content is affected by the style of description when details of military actions are omitted (e.g. ‘the increase of military actions by which the *Haganah* and later on *Tzahal* became successful’: [*im Hitgabrut ha-Pe'ulot ha-Tzva'iyot she-bahen Nitzhu ha-Haganah ve-akhar kakh Tzahal...*]). This of course is not wrong by default, but is at least a questionable attempt of relating history and may raise the question: what is cause and what is effect during the war?

### The Language

In most cases, the undifferentiated usage of the term ‘the Arabs’, despite being an equivalent to the term ‘the Jews’, should be replaced by ‘Muslim Arabs’, ‘Christian Arabs’ and so on, because the relationship to the Jews was and still remains different. People in present-day Israel speak of ‘Arab terror’ although Christians and Druze are not involved in it. The language here reflects the official perspective of the Israeli authorities, which marks nationality in ID cards as either ‘Jewish’ or ‘Arab’. A figure on p. 135 about the different denominations in the country is the only reference to this point.

### Maps and Figures

Six maps deal with PEI in the period of time mentioned above. The map on p. 135 shows ‘*Eretz Israel* within the borderlines of the Mandate’; certain Jewish neighbourhoods are marked, but no Arab ones. By the same token the maps on pp. 146 and 154 are restricted to neighbourhoods of the 3rd, 4th and 5th *Aliyah* and the towns of the ‘old Yishuv’. The maps of the partition plans in 1937 (p. 175) and 1947 (p. 298) do not show settlements. The only map to do so is the map of the War of Independence [*Milhemet ha-Atzma'ut*] on p. 305, on which a selected number of Arab and



Jewish neighbourhoods are shown.  
 Regrettably, the maps seem to be incomplete  
 and we do not learn about the number of  
 inhabitants.

Map: “The War of Independence”, the Questions in the box  
 ask students to compare the borders of the UN Partition  
 Plan with the outcome of the war.

Bibliography

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